

authors move to analyze another high-politics issue, security in Central America, we find similar causation problems. For example, supranational agencies in charge of coordinating regional security (Central American Security Commission [CSC], Central American Armed Forces [CFAC]) are the result and the engine that drives domestic actors to reshape civic-military relations.

Low-politics issues such as democratic deepening and human rights, as stated above, are subject to fewer international pressures. In the case of democratic deepening, the lack of issue salience and the inability of international actors to impose their preferences results in a slowing down of the democratization process: “Consequently, all members agree that the OAS takes tepid, unenforceable measures, allowing problematic democracies to escape from close scrutiny or penalty” (p. 96). In the case of human rights abuses during Pinochet’s rule, foreign actors proved themselves incapable of forcing Chile into a “good behavior” mode.

In the end, *Transforming Latin America* provides an interesting but somewhat distorted view of Latin America. One in which self-interested international actors dominate the political process in the most substantive policy areas (neoliberal reform, regional security) and a select group of domestic actors gain relevance in “low-stakes” politics (democratic deepening, human rights abuses). These political actors engaged in low-politics issues are supra-national agencies (Organization of American States [OAS], the Spanish court) or NGOs loosely connected to the most significant political institutions that govern these countries. Lost in the process is a broad comparative scholarship that in the past decade has worked to understand the nuts and bolts of the political processes that define day-to-day politics in these Latin American countries.

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Meunier, S. (2005). *Trading Voices: The European Union in International Commercial Negotiations*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005.

European Union (EU) trade policy represents a fascinating area of research in international political economy and the study of European integration. From its very beginning in the Treaty of Rome, the EU was meant to be more than merely an international organization. At the core of the EU was the formation of a customs union—an institution that encompasses internal free trade and a common external tariff. The need to agree on a common external tariff implied that the members of the EU had to negotiate jointly on most issues in international trade bargaining. How does the EU translate the multiple interests of its member states into one voice on the international level? What are the implications of the fact that the EU negotiates as one bloc in most international trade bargaining settings?

Sophie Meunier's *Trading Voices* represents the first systematic attempt to address these intriguing questions. The book develops a comprehensive, conceptually sophisticated, and very compelling account of the role the EU plays in international trade negotiations. *Trading Voices* sets the standard for future research on EU trade policy making.

The requirement to present a unified bargaining position in international trade negotiations by itself does not necessarily strengthen the EU's leverage. Instead, Meunier's core argument is that institutional characteristics explain the outcomes of international commercial negotiations in which the EU is involved. According to Meunier, "the EU's institutional structure exerts an independent causal effect on the process and outcome of international negotiations" (p. 16). The EU's bargaining power is stronger or weaker depending on the type of delegation and voting rules used and the specifics of the issue.

Developing a single voice in international trade negotiations involves two levels of delegation within the EU: a formal one from the individual member-states to the collective entity and a practical one from the Council of Ministers to the European Commission for the day-to-day operation of trade policy. The combination of these two types of delegation according to Meunier yields predictable outcomes for the bargaining position of the EU in international negotiations.

The informal delegation of negotiating competence to the European Commission refers to the degree of flexibility the commission has in negotiations, its degree of autonomy from national governments, and its authority to make promises to its negotiation partners. According to Meunier, the chances of finding agreement in international trade negotiations improve with more extensive negotiating competence for the Commission.

Even more important than the informal delegation of negotiation competence are the formal voting rules. Whether the EU uses the rule of unanimity or majority voting is crucial for understanding the bargaining interaction at the international level. Meunier argues that when the EU uses unanimity voting, it strengthens the position of EU negotiators to resist demands for policy changes. On the other hand, unanimity voting weakens the ability of the EU to advocate policy changes. Under conditions of unanimity, the common EU position reflects the lowest common denominator. Thus, if negotiations in the World Trade Organization, for example, seek to change the current status quo—say to liberalize global agricultural trade—the most conservative position with respect to the existing status quo among all member states becomes the collective position of the EU. In the above example, the most protectionist position will become the collective EU position.

On the other hand, if the EU uses majority voting, single member-states are not in position to block proposals single-handedly. Majority voting most likely produces a less extreme EU bargaining position than the unanimity principle. It weakens the ability of the EU to resist demands for policy change but strengthens its ability to advocate change. Overall, this decision-making rule "has a liberalizing influence on the world economy, since it prevents states with conservative preferences from holding the EU position hostage" (p. 70).

Meunier tests these conceptual arguments in four case studies of international trade bargaining settings: EU-U.S. agricultural negotiations during the GATT's Kennedy Round (1964 and 1967) and during the Uruguay Round (1986-1993), EU-U.S. negotiations on public procurement (1990-1993) and the transatlantic open skies negotiations (1992-2003). The EU's bargaining behavior during the Kennedy Round represents the case of very restrictive delegation of negotiation competence to EU negotiators with little transfer of authority to the supranational level. Under these conditions, the least common denominator became the EU bargaining position with no room to compromise on liberalizing agricultural trade.

EU bargaining behavior during the Uruguay Round also underscores the basic argument that the unanimity principle leads to the adoption of the lowest common denominator despite the fact that many member-states had far more liberal preferences. Within this case study, Meunier shows nicely the shifts in EU bargaining behavior between situations when the Commission had greater autonomy and the unanimity principle was weakened, and when member-states reaffirmed their control over the Commission's activities and employed the unanimity principle. One of the consequences of the Commission's attempt to reach a compromise with the United States during the Uruguay Round was that member-states started to reign in the Commission and to strengthen the unanimity principle again.

The negotiations on public procurement feature the opposite preference distribution from the agricultural negotiations. According to Meunier, here it was the EU that tried to open up the U.S. domestic market. However, this bargaining interaction was characterized by the use of majority voting within the EU instead of the unanimity principle. The use of majority voting effectively strengthened the EU bargaining position because U.S. attempts to turn individual member-states against the joint EU position toward its own more protectionist stance were ineffective as long as the majority stuck to its position. Under conditions of majority voting, the lowest common denominator would not become the bargaining position of the EU.

The "open skies" agreements serve as an example of how much weaker the bargaining position of EU member states is, when they negotiate individually rather than with a single EU voice. Meunier shows that the absence of a joint European position allowed the United States to pick off countries one by one through bilateral agreements without having to make significant concessions. A single European voice would have most likely increased the leverage of the Europeans in international aviation negotiations.

Meunier demystifies a number of popular and conventional assumptions about EU trade policy. In particular, *Trading Voices* poses a number of important challenges to realist perspectives on European integration and international political economy. First of all, it is too simplistic to attribute the EU's bargaining leverage in international trade negotiations in realist fashion merely to its relative size in international trade relations. Similarly, the EU's bargaining position on trade issues does not merely reflect the average preferences of the member-states. The institutional structure is a critical, independent variable in determining the EU's bargaining power and bargaining position in international trade negotiations. Thus, the institutional

argument Meunier develops in this book contradicts conventional bargaining theories that attribute bargaining power either to the player that has structural power or to the player with the highest intensity of preferences.

Moreover, greater European integration is not necessarily a force for protectionism in the global trade system. The notion of a *Fortress Europe* does not fit all areas of trade. As Meunier's detailed case study of public procurement demonstrates, the EU may serve as a force for liberalizing international trade. In that case, the EU's institutional rules enhanced the chances for greater trade openness. Given the effects of the single-market program, it is quite likely that the EU will frequently be a force for market opening rather than protectionism.

Overall, *Trading Voices* is required reading for scholars and policy makers in numerous areas. Obviously, EU scholars and specialists on international trade will appreciate this first systematic account of the external consequences of Europe's joint trade policy. The book offers both of these groups important insights into the mechanics and the consequences of policy making within an institution that is neither an international organization nor a state. On one hand, *Trading Voices* underscores the nature of the EU as a special type of political entity and, therefore, helps to sharpen the efforts of EU scholars to conceptualize governance in the EU. On the other hand, it forces those interested in trade issues to broaden the analysis beyond the usual emphasis on governments and domestic interest groups, and to take the independent role of the EU's institutional structure into account.

In addition, the book also has much to offer to those scholars interested in questions of international relations theory and international cooperation more generally. Meunier's emphasis on the independent effects of institutional factors on trade bargaining has significant implications for how we conceptualize the role of power in international relations and the mechanisms of international cooperation. Given the increasing complexity and the continued growth of trade, Meunier's insights are bound to stay relevant for future research on this topic.

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