

Alma Mater Studiorum Università di Bologna  
Archivio istituzionale della ricerca

Review of Alexandre M. Cunha and Carlos Eduardo Suprinyak, eds., Political Economy and International Order in Interwar Europe (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2021), pp. 1–xix, 434, \$159.99 (paperback). ISBN: 978303041040

This is the final peer-reviewed author's accepted manuscript (postprint) of the following publication:

*Published Version:*

Michele Alacevich (2022). Review of Alexandre M. Cunha and Carlos Eduardo Suprinyak, eds., Political Economy and International Order in Interwar Europe (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2021), pp. 1–xix, 434, \$159.99 (paperback). ISBN: 978303041040. JOURNAL OF THE HISTORY OF ECONOMIC THOUGHT, 44(3), 480–482 [10.1017/S1053837222000098].

*Availability:*

This version is available at: <https://hdl.handle.net/11585/914229> since: 2023-02-08

*Published:*

DOI: <http://doi.org/10.1017/S1053837222000098>

*Terms of use:*

Some rights reserved. The terms and conditions for the reuse of this version of the manuscript are specified in the publishing policy. For all terms of use and more information see the publisher's website.

This item was downloaded from IRIS Università di Bologna (<https://cris.unibo.it/>).  
When citing, please refer to the published version.

(Article begins on next page)

This is the final peer-reviewed accepted manuscript of:

**Michele Alacevich, Review of Alexandre M. Cunha and Carlos Eduardo Suprinyak, eds., *Political Economy and International Order in Interwar Europe* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2021), pp. 1–xix, 434, \$159.99 (paperback). ISBN: 978303041040.**

The final published version is available online at: [10.1017/S1053837222000098](https://doi.org/10.1017/S1053837222000098)

Rights / License:

The terms and conditions for the reuse of this version of the manuscript are specified in the publishing policy. For all terms of use and more information see the publisher's website

### **Review products**

Alexandre M. Cunha and Carlos Eduardo Suprinyak, eds., *Political Economy and International Order in Interwar Europe* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2021), pp. 1–xix, 434, \$159.99 (paperback). ISBN: 978303041040.

[Michele Alacevich](#)

As Alexandre M. Cunha and Carlos Eduardo Suprinyak, the two editors of this volume, note in their introduction, studies of the process of European integration have frequently tended to adopt a teleological perspective. By focusing on the structural dimension of institution-building, scholars have

often discussed the past only in terms of the final outcome. The book edited by Cunha and Suprinyak resists this historiographical bias. As they put it, “What draws together the different analyses and results contained in each of the chapters is their attention to historical detail and context, moving away from broad theoretical frameworks that could indirectly reinforce the narrative of progressive history” (p. 4).

Following the work of scholars such as Patricia Clavin and Adam Tooze, Cunha and Suprinyak argue that this exercise in historical complexity can be particularly fruitful if applied to the interwar period. In those decades of political, social, and economic upheaval, several attempts were made at elaborating the principles of a new order and the conditions of a durable peace, and economic and financial issues were considered by all a priority. At the same time, it was utterly uncertain what would have lasted of that debate. In this book, Cunha and Suprinyak propose to reflect on past attempts at social and economic stabilization as a way to inform current debates on the difficult balance between democratic deliberation and technocratic rule, without losing sight of the openness and unpredictability of historical change. The essays collected in this volume offer a fascinating discussion of the many faces of the prism of political economy in the interwar years.

Part one of the book is dedicated to “Economics and Order”. The chapters in this part address how the notion of order was central to the interwar discourse on political economy. Part two deals with “Democracy and Technocracy”, highlighting the inherent tensions between the quest for increasing technocratic expertise in government functions and the principles of universality that characterize democratic participation. Part three, entitled “The Power of Ideas”, offers a number of examples of how ideas inform institutions and influence historical developments. Though

the chapters finely correspond to the major theme of the section to which they belong, they also dialogue across sections. So, for example, the power of ordoliberal ideas emerges in a number of different essays.

In the first chapter of the book, Raphaël Fèvre addresses the opposition between John M. Keynes and Walter Eucken from a novel perspective, emphasizing how they both integrated economic analysis and policy-making in order to shape the economic order of their respective countries. Ordoliberalism is also discussed in the last chapter of Part two. In it, Timo Miettinen emphasizes the fact that ordoliberalism cannot be understood as a mere economic or political doctrine. On the contrary, it was a “philosophically motivated theory” that aimed at providing new foundations for the liberal order (p. 271). Focusing on broader neoliberal ideas, Antonio Masala and Alberto Mingardi discuss how three prominent twentieth-century liberals—Luigi Einaudi, Friedrich von Hayek and Wilhelm Röpke—understood the problems of international order and the political economy of the European continent. In particular, the two authors show that Einaudi, von Hayek and Röpke, witnessing the crisis of the interwar period, broke in important respects with the nineteenth-century pacifist liberal tradition.

Corporatism is another thread that runs across a number of essays. In a fascinating chapter, Alexandre M. Cunha explores the intricate history of personalism, corporatism, and federalism in interwar France as a way to elaborate a third way between liberal capitalism and totalitarianism, between the individual and society, and between nationalism and statism, with a special focus on the polyhedric work of François Perroux. António Costa Pinto examines corporatism as the institutional solution for a right-wing organic view of society in opposition to liberal democracy. If Cunha’s chapter focused on an in-depth and erudite analysis of third-way

perspectives in one country, Pinto offers a very enjoyable and likewise erudite panoramic view of corporatism in several European countries, from Portugal to Italy, and from Austria to Eastern European and Baltic countries. Corporatism is also central to Valerio Torreggiani's analysis of tripartism in the International Labour Organization (ILO). The tripartite-corporatist representation of the interests of government, employers, and employees became a foundational principle of ILO, and Torreggiani argues that its importance resides, among other things, in its pervasiveness outside of ILO. In the interwar period, this "regime of codetermination" was widely adopted, often under different labels, and it informed the shaping of postwar coordinated capitalism as well (p. 216).

Among the major sources of tripartism was British pluralism, the subject of Carlos Eduardo Suprinyak's chapter. In particular, Suprinyak traces the evolution of G.D.H. Cole's thought and political economy on socialist pluralism and the role of the state in the economy. Originally quite diffident of the economic role of the state, in the 1920s Cole increasingly elaborated on economic planning by a centralized political authority not only as a technocratic solution to the limits of liberal capitalism, but also as a way to strengthen the communal values that he envisioned for a new and peaceful new economic order.

The question of order, of course, was not exclusive to the interwar period, and in fact it re-emerged powerfully in the post-World War II era. Thus it is not surprising that most of the chapters devoted to discussing it exceed the volume's self-imposed time horizon. Several chapters show the continuities and changes that existed between the interwar and the postwar period. For example, Katia Caldari discusses convincingly how Jean Monnet's vision for postwar Europe was imbued with neocorporatist and planning ideas deeply rooted in the 1930s. Pierre-Hernan Rojas examines the innovative

approach of Robert Triffin to issues of monetary reform and international economic integration from the 1930s to the 1950s, showing how previous experiences in 1930s Belgium and 1940s Latin America informed his work in postwar Europe.

Jan Tinbergen's view on Europe, discussed in Erwin Dekker's chapter, changed perhaps more significantly in the transition from the interwar period and the postwar era. And yet, his claim, articulated after the end of World War II, that Europe could play a third way between liberal capitalism and communism had been a common element of the interwar debate. Certain patterns of the intellectual conversation, these chapters seem to suggest, might have changed, but did not really disappear.

Finally, a number of chapters discuss how ideas informed the historical evolution of institutions, and in turn, how certain institutions created the conditions for new ideas to take shape. An example of the first case is Oksana Levkovych's chapter, in which she offers a detailed narrative of the initiative of Labour's Chancellor of the Exchequer, Philip Snowden, to counter the tide of protectionist measures based on his belief in free trade. At least partially successful, Snowden offer, in Levkovych's hands, a convincing case of the importance of individual agency in critical historical junctures. The last two chapters of the volume offer an example of the second case. Harald Hagemann examines the Institute of World Economics at the University of Kiel, and the diaspora—or "(In)Voluntary Internationalization"—that followed the seizure of power by the Nazis in 1933. Roberto Lampa discusses the Oxford Institute of Statistics (OIS) as a "sanctuary" for anti-Nazi economists in the years 1935-44 (p. 383). The two chapters are in direct dialogue, as Lampa reveals that research conducted at OIS had a distinctly "continental" flavor, and both chapters

show how ideas were developed in specific networks and institutional settings.

In a very fine reflection, James Ashley Morrison and José Luís Cardoso recapitulate a number of themes that run across the book, namely, the re-elaboration of ideas on the state in the interwar period, the philosophical discussions on the foundations of law, the development of new methodological approaches, and the view of a new European order. As Suprinyak put it, in the interwar years, “issues of sovereignty, economic organization, technocratic rule, and international order were often part of the same . . . conversation” (p. 250). We must be grateful to the contributors to this volume, and especially to its editors, for having produced a fine example of historical scholarship.