

cleavages, and critical juncture, he modifies them to the point that they have little in common with their use in the comparative politics literature. As the author believes that post-communism is a unique world that requires completely different (unique) concepts and definitions, such an approach may be justified. However, by doing so, he contributes little to the accumulation of understanding of the key social and political phenomena. Conceptual stretching is supplemented by the proliferation of metaphors that at times obscure rather than reveal: to illustrate his points, the author describes the new nomenclature as 'permeat[ing] into all the pores of the political sphere' (p. 12), corrupt exchanges between politicians and economic elites are a 'Turkish bazaar' (p. 19) and a 'clientelist Schengen' (p. 25), and a 'definitional perpetuum mobile' is needed to elucidate a strategy of concept formation and definition of the key terms (emphasis added).

Informal Politics in Post-Communist Europe is an innovative and provocative work that enhances our understanding of the factors that contributed to the demise of the Czech party system dominated by the ODS and ČSSD. It provides plenty of examples of how democratic political parties got increasingly immersed in corrupt practices, and how portions of party organizations may be taken over by particularistic interests. It is less convincing in linking these processes to the legacies of the communist regime, and has a limited explanatory potential beyond the Czech case.

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Michal Kubát, Martin Mejstřík (eds.):

GIOVANNI SARTORI: CHALLENGING POLITICAL SCIENCE.

London – New York: Rowman & Littlefield / ECPR Press. 2019. 152 pages.

DOI: 10.5817/PC2020-2-217

A giant of political science, source of inspiration, provocative thinker, uncompromising critic of political life in Italy in particular. These are just some of the expressions used in the book *Giovanni Sartori: Challenging Political Science*. The celebration, or better *Festschrift*, of the political science classic, who died a few years ago, involves different perspectives and scholars. Strong, not only in number, is the representation of the texts by Italian political scientists: Gianfranco Pasquino, Oreste Massari and Giovanni Capocchia. The last of whom wrote the preface of the book. Klaus von Beyme, another great scholar, also contributed to the book. They are joined by several scholars from the Czech Republic, Michal Kubát, Martin Mejstřík, Miroslav Novák, and Maxmilán Strmiska, and Marek Bankowicz from Poland. This review reflects some ideas which interested me in the book.

The texts naturally reflect Sartori's contribution to various spheres of political science. However, his intense attempts to influence Italian politics in the spirit of his thinking are worth mentioning – as well as the poor result of this effort. Oreste Massari in particular describes Sartori's proposals for reforms of Italian constitutional institutions in the 1990s. During this period Sartori wrote not only scholarly texts and participated in consultative committees on constitutional reforms, but was also intensively engaged in public debate and even became a television star. In the end,

however, he had little influence on the design of the Italian political regime whose functioning has proved to be inadequate in political practice. Sartori was one of its sharp critics for the rest of his life. The same is true about his attitude towards some Italian politicians, most visibly Silvio Berlusconi.

This story is not atypical. Of the introduction of the direct election of the president in the Czech Republic in 2012, the editors of the book, Michal Kubát and Martin Mejstřík, mention note that “nearly every Czech political scientist (...) vehemently warmed against the reform” (p. 119). Nevertheless, the direct election was introduced and the effect on the political regime has been negative.

It is also worth mentioning another observation by Michal Kubát in the chapter devoted to Sartori's thinking, academic life and intellectual influence. Kubát highlights the strange paradox that Sartori, who lived in the US for years, and was inspired by American political science, had only limited influence in this environment, definitely much smaller than in Europe. He explains this in terms of Sartori's scepticism towards behaviouralism and in particular to the boom of quantitative statistical methods in the US. This trend did not square with Sartori's thinking. It is good to add that an analogical trend is visible in the contemporary European environment, which may have a similar effect in the future.

The book discusses broadly Sartori's influence on the research of party politics. Klaus von Beyme appreciates his typology of party systems and its flexibility, and that showed great vitality over time. However, Beyme's message also includes a sceptical tone due to new trends that are changing the party and social landscapes across the West. He mentions that ‘cultural problems have often been more important than socioeconomic problems’ (p. 76). This weakens Sartori's left-right framework based on the traditional (socioeconomic) milieu.

Maxmilián Strmiska analyzes the party concepts from another perspective, that of polarized pluralism. This is one of Sartori's most important innovations. Strmiska deals with this concept in the context of the evolution of the First Italian Republic (until 1994) and his chapter is the most critical of the great Italian classic in the book. He compares Sartori's view of this period with the attitudes of other authors (Girgio Galli, Paolo Farneti, Alessandro Pizzino). In Strmiska's perception, Sartori ignores some dynamic moments, especially the gradual transformation of the identity of the Italian Communists as originally the key anti-systemic force. He connects this with the discussion about ‘invisible’ politics, i.e. close relations among party elites. This ‘hidden consociationalism’ in Italy prevailed over ‘visible’ politics with its formal distance between the parties.

Marek Bankowicz's last chapter focuses on Sartori's interest in political philosophy, which sets this apart from previous chapters. The scholar's lesser-known works are analyzed, mostly from the beginning of his academic career. Bankowicz makes it possible to understand Sartori's negative view of Marxism, especially the ideas of the “mature” Marx, with their strong economic reductionism and historical materialism. The chapter offers a good explanation of Sartori's distrust of the transformation of the Italian Communists.

This book is a collection of essays. It exhibits some small weaknesses, especially repeated discussion of some topics. For example, the Italian electoral reform of the early 1990s and Sartori's negative attitude towards it is mentioned in perhaps half of the chapters. However, overall, the book is a solid ensemble that allows the reader to get a good overview of the life and work of a famous European political scientist. It is particularly recommended for those interested in comparative politics.