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Boekbespreking van: Comparative European Politics

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Europe, the region's long separation from the West, the inefficient socio-economic system, and culture of intolerance, cynicism and public alienation are all expected to provide a fertile ground for populist and authoritarian leaders to subvert attempts for democratic and economic reforms. In other words, the perspective is close to the postulates of the modernization paradigm which argues that there can be no functioning democracy without favourable social, economic and cultural conditions to underpin it, and to those who argue for the uniqueness of transitions in the post-communist world. In contrast, the liberalization approach contends that if new institutions of democracy and market are created in a short space of time, they will provide new (supposedly liberal) incentives for elites, shape new identities and, in the long-term at least, help to militate against the shadows of the past so emphasized by the legacies approach. This perspective is, then, close to the previous studies in democratization which focus on the processes of change itself, which see democratization processes as broadly similar, and only partly constrained by the milieu in which they take place.

The employment of these two ideal-typical perspectives in empirical chapters has been carried out with remarkable consistency, and for this alone, the book deserves credit. Most importantly, however, the conceptual framework and the findings presented within it allow the authors to go some way towards bridging the usual gaps between theory and assumptions pertinent to democratization studies. The careful empirical work in two chapters comparing privatization processes in Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic by Meaney and by Róna-Tas, a chapter by Comisso analyzing the restitution process in Hungary, a chapter by Hanson on post-Soviet Russia, and two cross-regional comparisons – one on electoral rules and executive authority by Shugart and one on the relationship between party systems and institutional design by Geddes – all indicate that neither of the two perspectives individually provides an adequate approach to the study of post-communist regime change. While some communist legacies, such as an incomplete process of nation-building, are politically relevant and are undermining the process of liberalization, others are not, or are offset by positive effects of institutional reforms. Consequently, the editors turn to more sophisticated explanations and argue that “the constraints and incentives that shape current choices arise from the immediate context in which the actors find themselves” (p.31). If political debates are shaped by hegemony of liberal norms, which provide identity to (new) institutions, and if international aid and pressures support liberalization, the direction of regime change is likely to be *positive*. This will depend on the kind of institutions inherited from the communist regime and the geographic and cultural proximity to the West.

The book may disappoint those expecting the wider comparative perspective promised in the title. Most of the chapters are either intra-regional comparisons or single country case studies focused on Eastern Europe. Only the chapters by Geddes and Shugart provide systematic cross-regional comparisons. This does not mean that the hypotheses generated by this collection are not applicable to the context of regime change more generally, but one wonders how these elegantly formulated theoretical

alternatives to the two rather simplistic perspectives will fare in an environment other than post-communist Europe. The hypotheses presented here are, no doubt, a useful starting point for further theorizing on the determinants of regime change, yet they remain primarily formulated for a test within post-communist settings. However, the proposed new approach leads implicitly to a link with the theories of democratization, which highlight and attempt to conceptualize the international environment as a crucial factor affecting both the overall direction of regime changes and the kind of institutional order emerging within new democracies. Comparativists will, therefore, find enough material here to advance their theories, while the regional specialists will appreciate well-informed chapters, presenting often new and innovative evidence.

Petr Kopecký

Hans Daalder (ed.), *Comparative European Politics: The Story of a Profession*, Pinter, London, 1997, ISBN 1-85567-399-1, £ 65.00

With this genuinely fascinating collection of essays, Hans Daalder has compiled a volume of the memories, reflections and insights of a group of senior scholars in comparative European politics which together filter the history and development of a discipline. This is the varied intellectual autobiography of the (comparative) European profession, revealing its strengths rather than its weaknesses, and offering innumerable lessons about how the study of politics can and should be pursued. The lessons are easily found, and they are also often easily imparted, especially since the contributors are the acknowledged masters in the field and each was commissioned to write about his own personal formation and development. And, this is also why it is the strengths rather than the weaknesses which are revealed – it is difficult to imagine any of these scholars struggling to have their latest paper published. This is, in other words, the view from the top, reflecting the very best in the profession rather than the profession as a whole, with its warts and all, and it encapsulates the spirit of comparative political science from an age when the academic frontiers were being stretched rather than that of today, when the parameters have become largely routinized and inevitably less challenging.

Like all good books, *Comparative European Politics* can be read at a number of different levels. The personal stories themselves are often particularly appealing, since they bring to life those people who younger generations of scholars have until now only known through their rather impersonal writing and scientific work. It is also intriguing to see how some of the contributors seem to have relished the prospect of finally writing about themselves rather than about the political world outside, whereas others seem plainly uncomfortable with the idea, and quickly shift to more objective assessments of their formal academic development. Daalder has also inevitably afforded his contributors quite a free rein in this regard, and whereas childhood and upbringing

figure quite strongly in some of the tales, such details are often difficult to find in others. We learn that the ten-year-old Klaus von Beyme liberated coal and bread from the camps of the various occupying forces in Germany in 1945, for example, and that Jack Hayward grew up in the International Concession in Shanghai, later spending three and a half years as an internee in a Japanese camp. Ted Gurr, on the other hand, appears to have started life as a fully-grown graduate student in Ann Arbor.

At another level, we can also see how the present shape of the discipline of comparative European politics emerged in fits and starts, and how it progressively institutionalized. Many of the contributors, including Daalder himself, as well as Gabriel Almond, Jean Blondel, Gerhard Lehmbuch, Richard Rose and Rudolf Wildenmann, among others, were those who provided both the leadership and the ideas during the crucial period of the 1960s and 1970s. Indeed, in many cases, these were the founding professors of political science within their respective departments.

Finally, it is beneficial to read this book for the insights it provides into the individual academic trajectories. These are great scholars, after all, and include the first three winners of the prestigious Johan Skytte Prize in Political Science (Robert Dahl, Juan Linz and Arend Lijphart). To read their accounts of their sources of inspiration, as well as their experiences in coming to grips with practical as well as conceptual problems, is both inspirational and motivating.

Most of the contributors will be known, if sometimes only by reputation, to most contemporary scholars in the field. Some names one would expect to find are missing. In some cases, as Daalder reports, this is because they proved unable or unwilling to contribute. Maurice Duverger is absent, for example, as are Karl Deutsch and Seymour Martin Lipset and the now late Edward Shils, yet each is cited extensively by a number of the other contributors and all have proved highly influential in intellectual and/or institutional terms. There is also no female contributor, a point that is explicitly regretted by Daalder in his Introduction, although it can also be argued that this actually reflects a real feature of the profession in those earlier days, and a bias which still persists today. Indeed, apart from Suzanne Berger, Theda Skocpol, and perhaps a handful of others, the senior ranks of comparative European politics remains an almost exclusively male preserve. There are also additional chapters on three scholars who proved highly influential in the development of the European profession, but who died some years before this book was first conceived: Carl Friedrich (discussed by Klaus von Beyme), S.E. Finer (by Dennis Kavanagh), and Stein Rokkan (by Daalder). Rudolf Wildenmann's own account of his upbringing and development remained unfinished at the time of his sad death in 1993, and has been completed here by Max Kaase.

Including Wildenmann, there are a total of 24 autobiographies included in this collection, and their sociology is itself quite interesting. These are, first of all, and most obviously, the senior members of the profession, with dates of birth ranging from oldest in 1911 (Almond) and 1915 (Dahl) to the youngest in 1940 (both Pierre Birnbaum and Mogens Pedersen). The average age is almost 70, with the great

majority being born between the mid-1920s and mid-1930s. Inevitably, it is therefore the experiences of both fascism and communism, and especially that of World War II, which figure most prominently in their make-up. In some cases, these experiences were simply observed or learned about at one remove. In other cases, however, the influences were more direct, as in the case of Wildenmann, a former foot soldier in North Africa, who discovered education and scholarship in the relatively peaceful surroundings of a German POW camp in Canada; or in the case of Giovanni Sartori, who went into hiding in Florence in 1943 in order to escape a military call-up from the Salò regime; or even Almond and Dahl, who both served with the American forces in Europe during the closing stages of the War.

Second, at least in terms of their origins, they are a somewhat skewed sample. The 'big' countries are obviously over-represented – and this is surely one of the explanations for the big-country bias in comparative politics, a pattern that has often been lamented by Daalder himself – with as many as seven of the 27 contributors and subjects being born in the USA, five in Germany, and three in both France and the UK. In other words, two-thirds were born in one of the four 'great powers'. Conversely, not a single contributor was born, or indeed worked later, in Belgium, Ireland, Spain, Sweden or Switzerland, all of which now enjoy quite thriving political science communities. And what is perhaps particularly interesting here is that each of these 'missing' countries, with the exception of Belgium, remained neutral during World War II. Although this may be purely coincidental, I am inclined to discount that idea, particularly given the enormous influence of that War on the intellectual and political development of those contributors who are included, and also the impetus to the political science profession which was provided by the need to secure and consolidate democracy in the wake of 1945. Both of these aspects are also highlighted by Daalder in his valuable Introduction.

Third, and what is perhaps especially interesting in the light of the emphasis on comparative politics, the great majority of the contributors are home-birds. In other words, most have built their professional lives in their country of birth. Indeed, among the total 27 contributors or subjects, the only really emigrant scholars have been Jean Blondel (from France to the UK), Lijphart (from the Netherlands to the USA), Linz (from Germany, via Spain, to the USA), Rose (from the USA to the UK), and perhaps, if we stretch it a bit, Hayward (from China to the UK). To these might be added Friedrich and Sartori as commuting scholars, regularly moving back and forth between Germany and Italy, respectively, and the USA. The others have remained put, notwithstanding occasional periods abroad. What is also striking, however, and this can certainly be related to the generational profile, is how many of these occasional periods abroad have involved either sabbaticals or courses of study in the United States. Even more remarkable is the extent to which the renowned Stanford Center for Advanced Studies in the Behavioral Sciences crops up again and again as an important landmark, as it has been, for example, for Almond, Dahl, Sartori, Linz, Lijphart, Rokkan, Shmuel Eisenstadt and Harold Wilensky.

This latter aspect also draws attention to the enormous influence Gabriel Almond, and, in particular, his ssRC Committee on Comparative Politics, has had on the European profession, as well as on the study of comparative politics more generally. It has always been easy to underestimate the impact of this Committee, and the contributions to this volume now reinforce that impression. What emerges very strikingly here, however, is how Almond and his colleagues not only played a crucial role in providing the intellectual terms of reference for much of the post-war development of comparative politics, but also how they worked so successfully to bring diverse national scholars together, and to promote cross-national collaboration. As has sometimes been pointed out in the past, and as is now substantiated here, it was often in the American environment that Europeans learned about one another, and in this important respect the story of the European profession is also an American story. Both Almond and Dahl are extensively cited in this volume, each being explicitly mentioned by twelve of the other autobiographers, and it is interesting to note that the absence of citations from either is generally a feature of those scholars who remained away from the United States. Among the more strictly European influences, Stein Rokkan clearly emerges, and quite rightly so, in a class of his own, and is cited as a source of influence and inspiration in some 20 of the autobiographical chapters. Karl Deutsch is also cited quite widely, as are Arend Lijphart and Hans Daalder himself. References to the classic influences of both Durkheim and Weber, on the other hand, are fewer than might have been anticipated, seeming to confirm the relatively late start made by comparative politics as a component within the social sciences more generally.

These are almost all major scholars, and they have been primarily concerned with major themes: regimes, democracy, order, stability, and legitimacy. As the founding fathers of a new profession, they more or less began with a *tabula rasa*, and they then went on to set the principal terms of reference from which later generations took their intellectual cues. Rarely were they obliged to look over their shoulders or to worry about whether their plans met with the approval of a previously incumbent generation of professors. As Blondel notes, they were amateurs who became professionals, and they took full advantage of the freedom and flexibility which that trajectory afforded. The profession has become more of a profession since then, but it has also become more specialized and less sparkling. To read this excellent volume is, therefore, to be reminded of the potential which might still be resuscitated, and the value which might still be recovered. Daalder has done us a great service in making this book a reality; it can be recommended most strongly.

Peter Mair

Itai Sened, *The Political Institution of Private Property*, Cambridge University Press, 1997, ISBN 0-521-44120-7, £ 35.00

This book addresses one of the central questions of political theory: how do institutions come into existence, and more specifically, how can we explain the emergence of property rights? To address this question, the author makes use of the familiar notion of a social contract. However, his approach differs in two fundamental respects from the more familiar contractarian approaches in political theory. First of all, the contractarian analysis is stripped of its usual normative character. The central aim is to provide a *positive* theory of the emergence of (property) rights. Second, rather than presupposing the existence of natural rights and then analysing the emergence of governments, Sened presupposes the existence of governments and then analyses the emergence of legal rights. The basic idea is that the allocation and protection of rights is the outcome of a strategic struggle in which the government is entwined with its citizens. The allocation and protection of rights involves costs for a government. Governments will, therefore, only institute rights if they receive something in return from the citizens, viz. political and economic support.

Sened distinguishes his approach from classic approaches in political theory and philosophy as well as from neo-classical approaches. With respect to some classical theories about the origin of rights – the theories of Locke, Hobbes, Hume, Rousseau and J.S. Mill, respectively – Sened repeats the familiar argument that the notion of ‘natural’ rights is meaningless, because there are no clear standards for deciding which rights are natural. Moreover, even if we presuppose the existence of natural rights, we should ask ourselves why governments – as Locke and Hobbes assumed – protect natural rights. According to Sened, we should not *assume* that the sovereign will protect rights, but should *explain* why (or why not) rights are protected. A major flaw of neo-classical theories is, according to Sened, the fact that they ignore the political aspects of market interactions. The analysis of the market in itself can not yield an explanation of the existence of rights, because the free exchange of property rights presupposes an enforcement mechanism that protects those rights. Therefore, the political structure that allows the market to function should be taken into account.

To analyse the emergence of institutions, Sened adopts a game-theoretic framework. A game – i.e. a specification of a group of players, a set of strategies for each player and a function assigning a payoff to each individual for every configuration of individual strategies – is seen by Sened as an abstract description of a social event. Social events can, however, be changed by man-made rules. These rules may affect the set of players, their strategies or their payoffs and can thus transform the structure of a game. To illustrate, consider legal institutions. Essentially, a legal institution is a set of rules that changes a social event by giving individuals extra strategies (in the form of rights) and by changing the pay-off functions (in the form of sanctions imposed on certain behaviour). Describing the original social event in which rights did not exist by a