

Book Reviews

Marco Giuliani and Eric Jones (eds.), *Politica in Italia. I fatti dell'anno e le interpretazioni*, 2010 edition, Bologna: il Mulino, 2010, pp. 433, pb € 30.00, ISBN 978-88-15-13935-1.

Politica in Italia is an annual collection of articles dealing with the most important political events of the year in Italy. The book is divided into three sections: the first focuses on politics; the second on institutions and the third deals with relevant socio-economic and cultural problems. In addition, it includes a detailed chronology and an appendix with demographic, economic and electoral data.

The selection of events in the *Politics* section covers the traditional themes of leadership, parties and elections. Gundle shows that although Silvio Berlusconi's sexual affairs have not become a real scandal leading to his retirement, the situation has weakened him by highlighting the contrast between his image as a *pater familias* and his real life as a playboy. The reasons for the absence of scandal lie in the biases of television coverage; in the ability of Berlusconi and his defenders to discredit the critics; in the unwavering support of the Catholic Church and Confindustria for the Government's policies, and finally in the contemporaneous scandals involving prominent members of the Opposition (Marazzo and Delbono).

The difficulties of the Left are highlighted by the process of consolidation of the Democratic Party (Partito Democratico, PD) analysed in the second essay (Hanretty and Wilson). The outstanding problems are caused by substantial disagreement on both policy and leadership. The most evident policy divisions are linked to the clerical versus anti-clerical cleavage dividing the two original parties: the Catholic Margherita and the non-confessional Left Democrats (Democratici di Sinistra, DS). But there are new divisions that do not correspond to the positions of the old parties: one concerning economic issues (pro-market versus pro-labour perspectives) and another one opposing the central party organisation to elected candidates on the sub-national level. Moreover, there are many problems concerning leadership: the complexity of selection procedures continues to ensure a potentially decisive role for top-down influences notwithstanding the adoption of primary elections. Finally, important

party officials (Massimo D'Alema and Francesco Rutelli) often refuse to accept the leaders so elected.

The section ends with an article on the European elections (Calossi and Bardi), which showed elements of discontinuity with the past. In fact, changes in the Italian context made the loss of support of the main European parties less severe than it might otherwise have been. A new electoral law with a four-percent exclusion threshold and the emergence of two new parties (the PD and the People of Freedom (Popolo della Libertà, PdL)), which unified the main forces on the left and on the right of the party system, greatly reduced the number of Italian parties in the European Parliament. Looking at the European parliamentary groups, the main change is the growing concentration of the Italian representatives in the three largest groups.

The second section on *Institutions* contains the largest number of articles and mostly focuses on the role of the executive. The first essay (De Giorgi) emphasises that, despite being able to count on one of the largest parliamentary majorities ever obtained, the Berlusconi IV cabinet continues to make massive use of emergency decrees, votes of confidence and maxi-amendments in order to (pre-)determine Parliament's decisions. In addition, the ruling coalition seems to disagree on important policies (federalism, immigration and security); and the cabinet's decisions in 2009 favoured the Northern League's flagship policies, such as federalism and security, to detriment of family policies or policies to support the South, reversing the PdL's priorities. Furthermore, there were many clashes involving the main parties' representatives, in particular Gianfranco Fini and Silvio Berlusconi. Overall, the picture shows a ruling coalition that is strong on paper, but which is much weaker in practice thanks to two main unresolved problems concerning the PdL: its organisation on the ground and the issue of Berlusconi's succession.

The lack of political capacity of the Government seems to be the common denominator of the other essays too. The best example concerns the need for reform of the overloaded, under-funded and overly bureaucratized judicial system (Frosini). While courts have, thanks to their function of interpreting the law, played an increasing role in policy-making (one that now risks invading the field reserved to the legislature), debate continues to be monopolised by Berlusconi's legal woes. During 2009, increasingly sharp conflict between the executive and judiciary forced President Giorgio Napolitano to provide firm mediation. The Prime Minister has clashed with individual judges, with both the main organisations of the Judiciary (the High Council of the Judiciary and the National Magistrates' Association) and even with the Constitutional Court, which rejected a new attempt to introduce immunity for the holders of the highest officers of State (the so-called Lodo Alfano).

Another example is civil service minister, Renato Brunetta's reform of public administration (Marra) which has achieved some positive results, even though it imposed change from above without taking into account variation in the requirements of different areas and contexts. This aspect, along with other limits (the centralisation of assessment processes, the inability to limit political interference in the selection of managers, the focus on intensive rather than extensive accountability) is likely to mean that the reform fails to live up to its full potential.

Finally, two other essays describe Italian foreign policy which seems to produce more symbolic rituals than clear, long-term plans. Alessandri's general analysis shows that Obama's election has not worsened Italian-US relations. But when the new American administration turned to multilateralism, Berlusconi's strategy for transforming Italy into a relevant actor in global relations failed. Italian foreign policy has ended up being conservative, able at least to maintain good bilateral relations with Russia and the Mediterranean countries. The G8 meeting, organised as a large media event held in L'Aquila, confirmed this trend: Italian foreign policy has turned out to be a mere "politics of location and catering" at the expense of projects with greater impact and political significance (Andretta and Chelotti).

The last section on *Society* focuses on issues that deeply affected Italians in 2009 and, especially, the economic crisis. Rovelli affirms that the Government's economic and industrial measures effectively protected firms and families, but there was no room for growth. The economic crisis is strictly connected with the difficult Welfare adjustments (Jessoula) and particularly the attempt to fund more generously the underdeveloped areas of welfare (unemployment, the family, poverty). Only temporary and emergency measures have been adopted in these sectors and the extension of social protection has been limited to a small proportion of the outsiders (women and youth).

Another important essay concerns the Immigration issue (van Genugten). On the one hand, populist rhetoric that confuses immigrants with Muslims brings enormous electoral success by focusing on security concerns, terrorism and organised crime. On the other hand, government decisions seem to be directed more towards repression than integration through the criminalisation of illegal immigration.

Finally, taking his point of departure from the sad end of Eluana Englaro, Pasini reconstructs the debate on living wills in Italy. He highlights the different positions that have divided both MPs and citizens across party lines. Surprisingly, the polls show that even believers seem to have more liberal positions than the political class as a whole.

The book has the merit of providing an – unfortunately not particularly optimistic – overview of the state of Italy in 2009. According to the message that the editors convey in their introduction, we can say that

Italy seems to keep on reproducing an old B movie that everybody has already seen, with an hesitant film director (the Government) playing it by ear.

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Matteo Jessoula, *La politica pensionistica*, Bologna: Il Mulino, 2009, pb €28.00, pp. 351, ISBN 978-88-15-12868-3.

Having been inspected by a retirement systems expert of the reputation of Maurizio Ferrera, editor of the Il Mulino series “Le politiche pubbliche in Italia”, this interesting and comprehensive study of Italian pension politics will have undergone very careful scrutiny before being published. Both its theoretical soundness and the considerable, indeed exhaustive, detail that Jessoula provides on the politics of Italian pension reforms from the late nineteenth century through to 2007 testify to the great amount of research that has been devoted to the writing of this book. The author’s main aim is to provide theoretical underpinnings to the expansion, derailment and near collapse of the Italian pensions system between the end of the Second World War and the dissolution of the First Republic, and to the ensuing retrenchment and slow conversion of a fragmented, Bismarckian retirement system into a modernised, less incoherent, multi-pillar configuration.

Jessoula’s work is divided into four chapters, loosely reflecting the two aforementioned periods. Chapter 1 provides a detailed comparative analysis of the development of pensions systems in Europe. The analytical tools developed in the first part of the book are then applied, in Chapters 2 and 3, to the politics of Italian pension reforms. Finally, Chapter 4 frames these developments theoretically, developing an innovative neo-institutional framework suitable for explaining the dynamics of reform, and the anomalies, of the Italian old-age retirement system.

The author adopts a dual perspective, analysing both the viewpoint of policymakers, who shape a retirement system’s institutional configuration, as well as the available policy options, serving different purposes and targeting diverse needs over time. By adopting sophisticated analytical tools, Jessoula categorises the objectives, instruments and effectiveness of different pension systems, and explains the Bismarckian-Beveridgean bifurcation that these systems underwent during their inception. The first chapter traces the systems’ maturation during the golden era of welfare capitalism and their overstretch in the face of increasingly adverse demographic and economic indicators in the 1970s. The last part of the chapter is devoted to the politics of retrenchment, debated across Europe during the last three decades. The author explains

that in addition to parametric reforms, deemed by authors such as Pierson or Esping-Andersen to be skidding on frozen landscapes and colliding with immovable objects, structural innovations have started to appear on the horizon. These have allowed for a fundamental restructuring of traditional public pension pillars, which in a number of cases have seen the adoption of multi-pillar designs, encouraging the expansion and development of occupational and individual supplementary pensions, more often than not managed by private providers.

As the author clearly points out in chapters 2 and 3 – the actual core of the book – Italy is no exception to this general trend. The maturation of Italian old-age pensions implied an extension of coverage to the whole working population and to the elderly in need as well as its strengthening through the application of the generous, defined-benefit, pay-as-you-go system to most employees and the self-employed. At the same time, however, Italian retirement has suffered “fiscal derailment” and through unrelenting waves of institutional layering has given rise to the so-called “pensions labyrinth”. The excessive generosity was not only financially unsustainable, but it also prevented supplementary private pension schemes, a reality in various European countries, from developing. The U-turn in Italian pension politics happened in 1992-93, with the Amato reform, which contained both emergency measures (a freeze on indexation and higher contributions) as well as more thoroughgoing changes, such as the gradual increase in the retirement age and the elongation of the calculation base. These parametric adjustments as well as the (rather unsuccessful) setting up of a framework for occupational private pensions planted the seed for the gradual transformation of the Italian pension system, leading to proper institutional discontinuity. The Amato reform was then followed by the path-breaking Dini reform, which turned the Italian first pillar into a notional defined contribution scheme and crucially reinforced the incentives to contribute to supplementary pension plans. Calibrating adjustments followed with the Prodi, Maroni-Tremonti and Damiano reforms.

Making sense of these developments is the task of Chapter 4. Jessoula explains the moral hazard of Italian politicians during the First Republic as the product of political competition between the Christian Democrats and the Italian Communist Party. In a context of blocked democracy and polarised pluralism, catering to insiders (e.g. public employees could retire after only twenty years of contributions) was an indispensable exercise in credit claiming. The abrupt passage from expansion to retrenchment rightly requires a more complex explanation, as it was not triggered by the political shock of the *Mani Pulite* judicial investigation. The author identifies two conditions that were necessary for that to happen: the “*vincolo esterno*”, i.e. external pressures represented by the Maastricht criteria and the skyrocketing public debt in the early 1990s, as well as the

capacity of Italian governments to legislate package deals in order to neutralise potential veto players, such as the powerful trade unions. Reforms followed negotiated bargains between the political and corporatist arenas (as opposed to Berlusconi's adversarial stance, which led to his government's resignation), led by de-politicised technocratic governments (Amato and Dini) which learned from previous agreement failures. This crucially facilitated the drafting of more acceptable policy solutions.

By engaging extensively with historical institutionalism, Jessoula provides the reader with interesting theoretical innovations. He defines the concept of "institutional gate", i.e. an institutional arrangement that can be employed by the policymaker to trigger institutional conversion. Jessoula applies this concept to the *trattamento di fine rapporto* (Tfr), a sort of severance pay, which facilitated, under adverse economic and political conditions, the conversion of the monolithic Italian pay-as-you-go system into the current multi-pillar configuration. Policymakers, in fact, diverted the Tfr contributions to private pension funds without either increasing non-wage labour costs or depleting scarce public resources. Finally, the author expresses concerns about the distributional consequences of multi-pillarisation, a theme he takes up again in subsequent writings. The development of Italian occupational schemes has not spread to what is an ever-growing category of workers, the so-called mid-siders – this thanks to their contractual arrangements (fixed-term or otherwise atypical), economic sector (less unionised service sectors, small and medium enterprises) and employment status (self-employed and public employees). Hence, the main change that Italian retirement has undergone in the last two decades is the abandonment of an excessively generous, fiscally unsustainable pension system, for one that does not provide adequate social guarantees to its retired population.

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Paolo Perulli and Angelo Pichierri (eds.), *La crisi italiana nel mondo globale. Economia e società del Nord*, Turin: Einaudi, 2010, pb €23.00, pp. xxii + 415, ISBN 978-88-06-20121-0.

Do the regions of northern Italy have common features distinguishing them from the rest of the country? Is it possible to devise a strategy that will allow this area to compete more effectively in world markets? Is it possible to develop unifying governance structures for the area such as to enable it to free itself from the constraints currently imposed on it by its membership of the Italian state?

These questions have given rise to a broad and ambitious programme of research entitled "The northern project" which has mobilised the energies of a conspicuously large number of scholars. The initial results are reported in the volume edited by Paolo Perulli and Angelo Pichierri. As the editors themselves emphasise, "The geographical and social capital of the North have been ...little studied: in general the South has attracted more scholarly attention, while investigation of the North has at most provided knowledge of its more or less recent past" (p. 30). This volume therefore fills a significant and unpardonable gap in knowledge, and offers students of the social sciences, and policy makers, a useful instrument for acquiring a more in-depth understanding of the richest and most dynamic area of the country.

According to Perulli and Pichierri, the view of the North "as a potentially unified economic area" is based mainly on a process of convergence currently underway between the North West and the North East. The former area has been affected by the crisis of the large Fordist enterprises which, in the last three decades, have been broken up and downsized. The latter area, with its characteristic industrial districts of small and medium-sized enterprises, has seen the emergence of leader firms, spearheading the growth of local economies. The unifying element is the convergence of the two areas on enterprises of medium size, such enterprises being particularly thick on the ground in Lombardia and Veneto.

Another unifying element is the financial system which, thanks to a recent series of mergers, and the incorporation of small local banks into large financial conglomerates (based mainly in Lombardia), has seen the creation of a national financial system that is unified and essentially northern (p. 11).

An important engine of change, one leading to the creation of a large, highly developed European area, has been the emergence of "a 'huge Padanian metropolis', an area that can now be regarded as a single large city, an unbroken urban landscape [t]he result of the fusion of the many cities of the area running from Turin to the Adriatic" (p. 7).

The North is therefore in search of a unifying image. The "classification conflicts" that derive from it pitch a construction (or representation) that is prevalent externally, against an internal self-representation. The first involves a view of the North (the advanced part of the country) as an area counter posed to the South (the backward part). In the second case the cardinal element is "the perception of 'status inconsistency' between the level of economic development of the northern regions, and the their political influence" (p. 19)

In terms of governance the book highlights the current absence of a unifying political subject; the North "is a global city-region, an economic and societal amalgam that is highly variegated and flexible, but not to any

great degree governed as a single system" (p. 30). The outcome the authors hope for from this point of view is the "proposal of a system of governance of the global city-region of the North that is coordinated and open and enables it to compete on the globalised world stage" (p. 30).

The book contains a wealth of information about the north of Italy – from the editors' introductory essay, which explains the basic hypotheses driving the research and especially, as we have seen, the causes of the emergence of a "Padanian macro-region", to the essays of the first part, dedicated to the "social formations": the urban context and the commercial and political systems. The second part, devoted to "incomplete modernisation", consists of two essays on the system of research and innovation, one on infrastructure and the other on immigration. The third part is devoted to "the future challenges" and consists of three essays: one on regional competitiveness; a second on the relationship between information technology and northern industries, and a third, by Arnaldo Bagnasco, which raises a number of problems and ideas for reflection concerning the possibility of seeing the North as a global city-region.

The book has as its point of departure the assumption that "there is a part of the European Mediterranean continent – the North of Italy – which exists as part of a system that includes the rest of Europe and the world aside from its relations with the rest of Italy"; this area "not only exists but is facing the dual challenge of knowing and governing itself" (p. IX). The insistence on the identity aspect of the "northern project" leads the authors to disregard entirely the relationships between North and South even aside from a reasonable reflection on the processes of globalisation. One of the objectives of the book, reflected in the title, is to consider the North in relation to the changes that are affecting the world economy. But these changes, as is well known, have particularly affected international exchanges along the East-West axis and are having a heavy impact on the Mediterranean. Yet the essay devoted to infrastructure (pp. 221-62) entirely ignores the connection with the southern ports (Naples, Taranto, Gioia Tauro) – though they are playing a significant role in the growth of traffic in the Mediterranean – instead focusing exclusively on the connection with central Europe. The idea that the North must participate more actively in the processes of globalisation cannot ignore the role of the southern regions in acting as a natural bridge in relations with the East. However much it is recognised that "the Mediterranean is experiencing a revival of its international importance, the desirability of reinforcing a northern strategy for the defence of its pivotal role is obvious" (Sen, p. 244)

With the exception of the interesting essay by Allasino on immigration (pp. 305-39), the topic of social and territorial cohesion is essentially overlooked if not to support the view that "increasingly in the North a differential, even antagonistic representation of the South is tending to prevail, rendering problematic all those policies that aim to

combat vertical inequalities on the basis of universalistic criteria of a national kind ... For example, any redistributive measure offered to citizens with low incomes would affect 73 percent of the population of the South and 27 percent of the population of the North. As can easily be imagined, such a skewed distribution would be very unlikely to win the support of taxpayers in the richer regions" (Feltrin, p. 149).

The analytic effort, which sometimes shows interesting elements of originality, starts from the assumption that there exists a "Padanian macro-region". The hypothesis of a homogeneous North has, however, been placed in doubt by numerous authoritative scholars. Most recently, the Italian Geographical Society (2010) in its annual report argues that "as a homogeneous ethno-cultural area, Padania does not exist. If we believe that the process of building a nation involves more than just the 'invention of a tradition' - a cloak which, according to Eric Hobsbawm, disguises the hegemony of the interests of the ascendant bourgeois classes - but also requires unifying ethno-symbolic values... then the non-existence of a Padanian nation appears still more evident" (p. 15)

Every nation is an "imagined community". For example, neither Italy, nor Italians existed before a cultural and political elite had decided to bring about unification on the basis of an idea of what a nation should be. So to place at the centre of scholarly investigations the "imagined Padanian community" makes sense only if the aim of building it is viewed favourably.

Finally, for some years, a group of southern economists has been trying to overcome the idea of a uniformly "late developing" Mezzogiorno, with the aim of highlighting its internal differences and celebrating its contrasting paths of development. The rhetorical notion of the "Mezzogiorno" was in the past useful for laying claim to measures of support on the part of the state but it no longer helps the cause of overcoming its perennial exceptionalism. To supersede the rhetoric of the Mezzogiorno means to give a global and locally rich dimension to the path of development and to define more varied policies and forms of governance. These reflections have even gone as far as to issue in calls (such as Viesti's in his 2003 volume *Abolire il Mezzogiorno* published by Laterza) to "abolish the Mezzogiorno". As we have seen, the book edited by Perulli and Pichierri identifies a path leading in the opposite direction: instead of valuing differences, they celebrate the elements of homogeneity of the Padanian macro-region; instead of celebrating the causes of equality and solidarity, they emphasise the elements of separatism necessary for the growth of efficiency of their own area.

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Lauren M. McLaren, *Constructing Democracy in Southern Europe. A Comparative analysis of Italy, Spain and Turkey*, London: Routledge, 2010, pb £24.95, pp. xiii + 321, ISBN 978-0-415-59161

In the past three decades excellent research on southern European politics has been published regularly. The southern European research community has been growing steadily. In many ways this has been due to the pioneering work of authors such as Geoffrey Pridham, Philippe Schmitter, Nikiforos Diamandouros, Richard Gunther, Nancy Bermeo and Leonardo Morlino, among others. This means that we already have a wide range of excellent studies related to aspects of democratic transition and consolidation in Southern Europe. Lauren McLaren's book is a further example of the high-quality work produced by this lively research community.

The author is Associate Professor in the Department of Politics at Nottingham University. One of the most salient aspects of her curriculum vitae is a period of over four years she spent living in Turkey, a country on which she has done extensive research. Her book is a review of the factors that may or may not have led southern European democracies to a state of greater or lesser consolidation. She has selected the largest countries of the region - Italy, Spain and Turkey - and carries out a longitudinal comparison of their trajectories towards democracy.

Already the inclusion of Turkey in the southern European region may be regarded as quite controversial. There are authors (for example, Giulio Sapelli) who include Turkey as part of the southern European pattern of politics; others limit the category to Portugal, Spain, Greece and Italy. The main journal carrying research in this field, *South European Society and Politics*, includes Bulgaria, Romania, Slovenia and also Turkey. This reveals that there are different understandings concerning the geographical extension of the region.

The selection of Turkey is one of the aspects that make this book interesting. It is clearly ambitious in scope; it has ten chapters with conclusions and an additional annex explaining the methodology and the criteria of selection of the case studies. The ten chapters deal with the problems of state building; the breakdown of democracy; pre-transition economic structures and economic development; constitution building; the representation of social and political cleavages; executive-legislative relations; the resolution of regional conflict; the professionalisation of the military, and external influences and democratic consolidation. Each chapter is based on a diachronic comparison of the three countries over a period of, in some cases, 120 years. Each of the factors is discussed by means of an historical reconstruction carried out in isolation from the other factors. This useful exercise leads to repetition and overlap between chapters, but at the same time makes it possible to identify institutionalist

path-dependent outcomes over time, and to gain a multi-faceted overview of the different dimensions of democratisation (Philippe Schmitter). It also becomes clear that some factors contributed more to democratisation than others. Indeed, without reflecting on it, McLaren makes us aware of the different simultaneous time frames of “partial regimes of democratization” (Philippe Schmitter). In this sense, one of the most important contributions of the book is that it views factors from the perspective of the *longue durée*, showing how they consolidated at different points in time in relation to a particular country. However, this so-called *Gleichzeitigkeit des Ungleichzeitigen* (Simultaneity of different time frames – Jürgen Habermas) is overlooked by the author and theoretical reasoning is not attempted.

A second contribution of the book is the inclusion of Turkey as one of the case studies. The author is able to make the case for similarities between Turkey, and Italy and Spain. Although Turkey appears to lag behind in terms of many of the changes that both Italy and Spain had to undergo, it seems that the direction of democratisation is similar. Socio-economic structures lag behind in Turkey in relation to Italy and Spain, but one can recognise problems similar to the ones these countries had at a previous stage of development. In this regard, the author has carried out a *tour de force* in getting all the historical data organised in such a way as to allow the different factors to be analytically separated. From the perspective of the three countries, Turkey’s democratisation appears to be similar to that of the other southern European countries.

A third contribution of the book is the fact that the author includes “stateness” as an important factor. In this sense, she goes back to the seminal article by Dankwart Rustow on democratic transition, published in *Comparative Politics* in 1970. Rustow also included Turkey as one of his cases. This issue of “stateness” and “state-building” highlights differences between the Turkish Republic emerging out of the Ottoman Empire, and Italy and Spain. Although centre-periphery relations are quite important in Spain, and of some importance in Italy, in the Turkish Republic centralisation and emphasis on the unitary nature of the country continue to act as obstacles to the resolution of centre-periphery problems, particularly in relation to the Kurdish minority in the eastern regions.

In spite of the historical research undertaken by the author, there is a large gap between expectations and capabilities. Seemingly because the author is not an historian, the issues of contingency, decision-making and critical junctures are not well-developed. Depth of analysis has been sacrificed to breadth of historical reconstruction. A more in-depth approach would have been better. In their present form, the chapters are somewhat superficial. One of the reasons is that the author examines each factor from the perspective of a very long period of time – with the result that it is very easy for the reader to see the gaps in her knowledge. On the one hand, she has been very courageous, and the resulting work is useful for readers

looking for an introductory text on southern European politics; on the other hand, the lack of "thick description" (Clifford Geertz) undermines the very idea of the book.

Furthermore, the individual variables are not linked to each other: there is no hierarchy or priority in terms of them. The approach seems to follow the principle of "Anything goes" (Paul Feyerabend). Although the conclusions in chapter 11 try to bring the various factors together, there is no real theoretical ambition apparent in the attempt to link them and explain better their differences. A table is used to assess quantitatively how important each factor is, but it is not clear how this was constructed.

Some chapters are better researched than others. The chapter on the professionalisation of the military, particularly the section on Spain and Turkey, is certainly one of the better parts of the book, while the quite crucial chapters on constitution building and the resolution of regional conflict could have offered more thick description and analysis. Constitution building is probably the most important aspect of democratic transition, but the author needed to discuss the issue in greater depth. The constitutional settlement in Turkey especially could have been expanded more, due to its overall importance in explaining the difficulty of democratic consolidation. The author is clearly aware of the importance of the constitutional settlement. Her most important sentence in relation to Turkey, one which expresses in a nutshell the difference with the other cases, is:

These officials seemed to believe that it was the rules themselves that mattered but did not appear to grasp the fact that the process of writing the rules may matter more (p.103).

In the chapter, "The representation of social and political cleavages", it is not clear what the author wants to do. Is the chapter about political parties, the political linkage between parties and social groups or about the dynamics of party systems? We do not get a lot of concrete information about the changing make-up of society, so that the structuring of the party system(s), party building and the linkage between political parties and social groups are not clear.

In the chapter on executive-legislative relations we do not get any information on aspects of parliamentarisation. Issues of professionalisation of parliament are missing, particularly in the cases of Spain and Turkey. The chapter is also quite descriptive, particularly in relation to the executive part.

Another major issue missing from the book is the judiciary and the rule of law. Such problems can still be seen in Turkey. The judiciary has been a target of criticism both in Italy and Spain. Party politics have partly undermined its credibility. Although already quite advanced, the rule of law remains work in progress in Turkey.

These criticisms are not intended to diminish the importance of McLaren's book which, on the contrary, shows how difficult it is to grasp the making of democracy. The author has had courage in writing a book which raises new and important questions about the democratisation process in southern Europe - a process that is still far from complete, if we look at Italy in particular, and at the countries of the area in general. The construction of democracy needs to take into account all possible groups in society in a constitutional settlement if it is to work. This is the main lesson to be learned from this pioneering book. More than the rules themselves, it is the common process of writing the rules and then accepting them that is the most important element of democratisation. Therefore all the factors that Lauren McLaren mentions matter in the historic conjuncture preceding the constitutional settlement. The author has contributed, probably unconsciously, to a sociology of the learning that must take place during long democratisation processes. In this sense, her difficult diachronic exercise has paid off and contributed significantly to advancement of the knowledge of the research community on southern European democratisation.

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Marc Lazar and Marie-Anne Matard-Bonucci (eds.), *Il libro degli anni di piombo. Storia e memoria del terrorismo italiano*, translated by Christian Delorenzo e Francesco Peri, Milan: Rizzoli, 2010, 463 pages, ISBN 978-88-17-04453-0.

This is a very interesting, timely and wide-ranging collection of numerous, if relatively short, papers, written primarily by French and Italian academics. The volume concludes with the reconstructions, on the part of various French witnesses, of the elaboration of the 'Mitterrand doctrine' in favour of granting political asylum to Italian left terrorists, and with the testimonies of Italian magistrates Gian Carlo Caselli and Armando Spataro on the one hand, and Luigi Manconi, an ex-extreme left activist who rejected the armed struggle, on the other. The two concluding sections underline both the specific 'French' perspectives of much of this volume (originally published in France) and the continuing relevance and controversial nature of Italian terrorism in the present day, which prevents this topic from being a matter for historians, as many contributors argue. Conversely, history takes second place to memory, and memory is often partisan or justificatory.

In the absence of a fully developed historiography, many of the papers take the form of a critical rethinking of the reasons accounting for

political violence and the armed struggle and assess in this light the (quite considerable) body of research produced to date. I found all these papers very informative and thought-provoking. Especially relevant among them are the contributions by Matard-Bonucci on the different use of the myth of the Resistance by the Red Brigades during the 'years of lead' and in the recent memoirs of some of their leaders; by Bravo on the relationship between Italian feminism and violence; by Sommier on the development and current state of the research on terrorism; by Lazar on the issue of whether the years of lead can be defined in terms of a 'civil war' and by della Porta on the need to integrate different levels of analysis – macro, meso and micro – and to incorporate the concept of 'entrepreneurs of violence', when accounting for the causal mechanisms of terrorism.

Other contributors articulate new and important research questions. Thus Panvini asks himself why extreme-right and extreme-left terrorist organisations did not openly fight each other, and offers as a tentative answer their identification of a common enemy beyond their deep ideological differences. Durand explores the complex role of the Catholics during the years of lead and their promotion of a process of social reconciliation, inviting historians to pay greater attention to these aspects. Giovagnoli reopens the issue of the political class's possible involvement in Moro's death and suggests that politicians had a minimal role in it.

The third part of the volume concerns visual and filmic representations of terrorism, offering insightful and revealing analyses of, respectively, photographic images, political posters, films and literature. While photographs are shown by d'Almeida to have been tools used by the terrorists to promote their cause and by reporters to highlight the plight of the victims, political posters, as Cheles demonstrates, were primarily an elaborate tool for identity and ideological constructions, even when they ostensibly commemorated and/or denounced terrorism.

The fourth section, on Franco-Italian relations, throws considerable light on the Mitterrand doctrine and on the ways in which Italian terrorism was debated, represented and often distorted through the lens of French revolutionary history and asylum principles. One of the controversial issues of the time, concerning the nature of the Italian state after the introduction of emergency anti-terrorism legislation, is revisited by public law expert Laffaille and Italian magistrates Caselli and Spataro. From their different perspectives, they conclude that the legislation did not alter the nature of the Italian constitutional state, in contrast to the position adopted by many intellectuals on both sides of the Alps.

The last paper presents a personal reconstruction of the years of lead on the part of an activist who rejected the armed struggle: the choice is obviously highly significant, as it both underlines the refusal to identify an entire generation with the turn to violence (identification often put forward

by former terrorists) and a perceived need to study those who did not embrace violence as much as those who did.

Amid the praise, I would like to raise one criticism. Despite its title, this is primarily a book on extreme-left terrorism. The few papers that include extreme-right terrorism in their analysis do so in general terms, whereas the research questions overwhelmingly address issues concerning the extreme left. Many contributors lament the paucity of studies on extreme-right terrorism, yet this should have been an incentive to include specific papers on the right, not least on the causal mechanisms of the bombing massacres, as opposed to the 'armed struggle'.

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