

SUMMARIES

What is « politics »

by Giovanni Sartori

The notion of political science can be reconstructed, historically, as a succession of encounters between two variables: « politics » and « science ». The argument is constructed, therefore, along two columns: one following the variations of the meanings of politics, and the other following the separation of science from philosophy and the various models and standards of what is deemed scientific. The variations of the idea of politics are far greater, and more intricate, than the variations of the idea of science. The Greek idea of politics was horizontal, hardly vertical, and it is a misconception to search for how the political related to the social, for the latter term is Latin. On the other hand, the Latin words *civis* and *civitas* convey quite a different meaning than the Greek *polites* and *polis*: and while the Greeks construed politics anthropologically, the Romans conceived politics juridically. The complexities of the medieval elaborations are enormous. At any rate, our present meaning of politics was not expressed by the word politics, but rather by terms such as *principatum*, *regnum*, *dominium*, *gubernaculum*. The word politics acquired its vertical dimension, and was associated with power, only in modern times. Within this frame of reference and variation, the following points are discussed: the autonomy of politics, the discovery of society, and the identity (as well as the current crisis of identity) of politics. The variations and varieties of the idea of science, in their encounters with politics, are referred to a second part in the forthcoming issue of the Journal.

The Performance of Political Systems

by Harry Eckstein

This article is concerned with the identification of some « compelling » dimensions of political performance. Two of them — civil order and legitimacy — are here discussed at length. These dimensions are selected according to three general criteria: on each of them polities must perform well in some degree, if they are to attain effectively any special goal; the higher a polity ranks on them, the more likely it is to attain sets of special goals; and the opposite of the assertion that high rank implies high performance could not be reasonably held.

Civil order is defined as the absence of unregulated collective resorts to violence in order to achieve private or public objectives. *Legitimacy* refers to the extent that a polity is regarded by its members as worthy of support. Theoretical justifications are given and empirical considerations are formulated for including both these dimensions in a general score of political performance. Finally, problems of counting and scoring are underlined.

In particular, since legitimacy must not be confused with mere compliance, *value-depriving policies* can be used to measure the amount of legitimacy enjoyed by any regime. Therefore, voluntary compliance with the policies that entail severe value losses by given groups are supreme tests of their political commitments. A final point must be stressed: the two dimensions are treated in such a way as to suggest a strategy for survey research and empirical testing.

Consensus and Opposition in the Italian Parliament

by Franco Cazzola

The article is an initial contribution to the analysis of the development, over 20 years of the Italian Republic, of the competition between the parties of the government majority and the communist opposition, within Parliament. To this effect, the research considers a sample of laws in the procedure these follow in the Chamber of Deputies. From the analysis of the data, it is clear that communist opposition cannot be identified — at least judging by the statements of principle, which indeed appear the only valid ones at this level — with the abstract goals of a neo-capitalist society: in general terms, one may therefore exclude a possible identification with Graham's models A (inter-party opposition), B (constitutional opposition), C (opposition of method), D (opposition of conscience). Models G and H also appear as having to be excluded, since we are considering

the parliamentary phase of the PCI's existence, in which — due to its very position — the party cannot refuse to accept and use the « rules » which the parliamentary game, as such, call fair.

Models E and F thus remain to be considered. If one can refer back to the latter the cases examined in which the PCI votes against the bills of law, it seems more interesting — considering the quantitative results of the research — to examine model E, that is to say the most frequent case (defined by Graham as « ideological opposition ») of a PCI which disagrees with the « abstract aims » of the system, accepting however not only its instruments of decision, but also the policy implemented by it (in this case, very clearly, outputs = laws). In fact, the PCI often admits adhering explicitly, though with some regret, to this policy: confirmation of this is to be found in declarations of vote, often formulated using the leit-motiv « we would have preferred a more progressive law, but this one is nevertheless better than nothing ».

Socio-economic Changes and the Party System under the Fifth Republic by Vincent E. McHale

The relationship between socio-economic development and political behavior has long held the interest of political sociology. However, while considerable attention has been directed toward this nexus in the context of the Third World, few studies have probed the political and electoral consequences of recent developmental change in Western European societies in any systematic fashion. Yet conditions do exist in many of the industrially-advanced countries of Western Europe which appear to make developmental analysis a highly useful approach, especially in understanding the contemporary political setting, and in relating the aggregate electoral behavior of various socio-political forces to the configuration of their respective party systems.

This article focuses on political life in France, especially the electoral parties, from the vantage point of a modernizing system confronted by the challenges and destabilizing currents of economic development and social change. While quantitative analysis on both the individual and aggregate levels tends to diminish the role of social structure as a causative agent in contributing to party division and political fragmentation in France, the pattern of relationship observed between a variety of socio-economic indicators and electoral outcomes is strongly supportive of the view that developmental change has been a major factor in the growing bipolarity of French political life since 1958.

PR, Fractionalism and Party Crisis: Quid Prior? by Stefano Passigli

The article is an attempt to answer Sartori's previous article on the same topic. A distinction is made between genetic and morphological theories. Sartori's distinction between fractions of convenience (spoils-oriented) and fractions of principle (ideological) is considered to be essentially morphological. His genetic assertion that intra-party PR causes the rise of spoils-oriented fractions, is considered to be logically deduced from the asserted principle that party life is determined by the allocation of incentives and remunerations, rather than empirically based on the experience of Italian parties. Two alternative explanations for the origin of Italian fractionalism are then offered. One points to the lack of alternative government majorities and the consequent mobility offered by the possibility of fractional realignments. The other points to the possible strategy of the élites (both of government and opposition) of « freezing » social conflict by intentionally limiting the scope of political decision-making. The author maintains that under these conditions the « game of politics » would tend to produce spoils-oriented fractionalism.

Intra-party PR is then examined and considered to be the rationalization of an existing highly fractionalized system. The author concludes by stating that the sequence « PR-Fractionalism-Malfunctioning of the party system » could be reversed, and that in the Italian case the reverse sequence is a more likely explicatory pattern. Under the circumstances, Sartori's suggested abolition of PR within the major Italian parties would not bolster considerably the functioning of the Italian party system, while running the risk of deepening the ever present crisis of legitimacy of Italian institutions.

Independent Access to Resources: the Determinants of Fractionalism by Giovanna Zinconé

Starting from Sartori's essay on fractionalism, published in the previous issue of this Review, which considered PR inside the party the main reason for the origin of fractions, the author seeks first to analyze the sources of strength of party fractions. To this end, she identifies some parameters of their strength: dimension, positioning, composition, organization, reach, vote-control, recruitment, leadership, duration and rigidity. These features, in the author's view, influence the fractions' coalition potential, that is, their capacity to be included in the governing majority of the party and to accede to the distribution of spoils.

The article, then, tries to identify the different causes of fractionalism, following Ozbudun's scheme, that is party structures, social structure, political culture, and constitutional systems. Some of them are found to have little impact while others are more important, influencing both the genesis and the consolidation of fractionalism. The latter are, in particular, lack of control on the part of the governing majority on the agencies of recruitment, socialization, integration and vote structuring, and lack of control on the sources of funds.

Pressure Groups

by Gianfranco Pasquino

Empirical researches and theoretical studies on pressure groups reveal considerable ups and downs coinciding with the fortunes of the pioneering book by Arthur Bentley (1908). This review article intends to systematize the conspicuous literature, both its recent and most significant products, according to the main topics covered. First, assets and liabilities of the group theory politics are evaluated in the light of its assumed theoretical contributions. The second section is devoted to the characteristics that distinguish interest groups, pressure groups, lobbies, and political parties. The label « pressure group » is preferred to « interest group » and « lobby » since it indicates a *pattern of activity*. Pressure groups are differentiated from political parties because they do not aim at fulfilling three fundamental functions: electoral competition, *direct* power management and democratic promotion of the « public interest ».

Thirdly, the main *resources* of pressure groups are identified as being: money, size of membership, representativeness and specialized knowledge. These resources are then related to the *channels of access* to the administration, the political parties, the government, and even the judiciary. Finally, the role played by pressure groups to foster or hinder democratic stability and development is carefully assessed, particularly by looking at their internal organization — is the « iron law of oligarchy » still at work?

Less secrecy will not suffice to promote the democratic development of society as long as the interests of the under-privileged remain unorganized and left aside. It seems as if an extensive and unrestrained activity by pressure groups may be the best indicator that a polity is on the verge of decay and breakdown.

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