

inational but as a 'democratic republic'. Chapter Six is devoted to the defence of *national*, religious, and racial minorities. Public administration, which the author refers to as 'centralised administration', is not addressed in the Constitution. Chapter Three concludes with a section entitled Ministries and Lower Offices. It is appropriate to refer to the administration as unified. Following the First World War the trend towards a unified state generally asserted itself, which was also connected with the introduction of proportional elections. In 1927, with the support of the HSĽS (Slovak Catholic Party) and German activist parties, administrative reform was passed, which introduced a provincial system. The bureaucracy in the administration was not political and was thus also acceptable for example to the Germans (according to reports of the German ambassador to Prague, Waltr Koch). Autonomous elements (elected) made up two-thirds of the members in the councils; one-third was named by the minister of the interior and the government. This was to guarantee the professional level of the councils.

The author's statement about 'stressing civil rights regardless of ethnicity, religion, and language', as cited above, makes no sense in the light of paragraph 106 in the constitution: "All inhabitants of the Republic of Czechoslovakia enjoy... complete and absolute protection of their lives and freedoms, regardless of their origin, state affiliation, language, race or religion". Paragraph 128 of the constitution reads: "All state citizens of the Republic of Czechoslovakia are fully equal before the law and in enjoy the same civic and political rights *regardless of their race, language or religion*". The author interprets the statement in the above-cited text in the exact opposite way. Perhaps it would be useful to also point out that the Charter of Rights and Freedoms that the author also refers to was, at the time when the constitution was drawn up, after the First World War, considered to be superfluous content – it was such a given that it was often not included in the consti-

tution. That the inclusion of this passage in the Czechoslovak constitution was a correct move proved itself in later developments, when human rights in many states were suppressed.

We have here devoted more attention to the author's approach and outcome because he is not unique among that generation, which is currently in its productive age, but was formed and socialised during the twenty years after the Prague Spring in 1968, i.e. in the period of inaccessible archives, banned authors and books, and a general embargo on information, so that the authors of this generation often evoke the sense that no suitable sources, materials, and analyses exist at home. We have also intended to show here that this kind of stance and research approach does not lead to systematic, analytic, comparative knowledge, but rather to an unsystematic description and inadequate generalisations.

Despite what has been indicated here, this is an informative book written by a talented and promising young author, of whom we can still expect many important and interesting contributions.

Lubomír Brokl

Martin Greiffenhagen, Sylvia Greiffenhagen (eds.): *Handwörterbuch zur politischen Kultur der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*

Wiesbaden 2002: Westdeutscher Verlag, 674 p.

Political culture has become a favorite topic of much writing in the field of political science and sociology, ever since Gabriel Almond published his seminal works on the subject in the late 1950s and 1960s. However, as the first years of political-culture research went by, some of the original hopes related to the concept's usefulness in answering central questions emerging from the scientific study of the political had to be abandoned, and an ill-founded optimism gave way

to a more sober treatment of political-cultural problems. The disputes over the explanatory force of political culture, which were a direct outcome of the disillusion with the political-culture approach as such, served, however, as a powerful incentive for attempts at the methodological sophistication and substantive enrichment of the concept. This brought political-culture research to areas quite distant from the original scope of the classic studies, such as Almond's and Sidney Verba's *The Civic Culture* (1963). This development was characterised, among other things, by a conscious effort to disengage political-culture research from the original operational definition of political culture, embedded in the behaviourist scheme of thought that was powerful in the early 1960s, but loudly denounced less than a decade later. Today, the range of political-cultural studies is so rich in approaches and problems that a social scientist, especially if political culture is not the field of his/her specialisation, can only follow with difficulty the recent developments in all the various branches of political-culture research. In such a situation, there quite naturally arises a demand for comprehensive works, which bring together all the different aspects of political-culture research and present their readers with a summary of the most important results achieved by students of political cultures.

It is this demand for a comprehensive summarisation of the research into political culture that has been met with a collective work edited by Martin and Sylvia Greiffenhagen. The contributors, leading German sociologists and political scientists, have created a rich mosaic composed of pieces of sociological and political analysis useful to both students and researchers, but also to non-specialists interested in various aspects of German politics. Their publication is primarily a compendium of findings about German political culture, but it can also serve its readers as an excellent summary of different methods and theories applied in the research of political cultures. The summarisa-

tion, discussion and assessment of different methodological approaches, which make the book valuable reading even for students of sociology and political science whose focus does not lie in German politics, is an added value resulting from the effort of the editors to offer as diverse a picture of German political culture as possible.

The dictionary of German political culture contains 115 entries on topics, ranging from the elucidation of the political-culture concept itself, to closely related ideas such as political participation, to contextually related issues like unemployment (or rather effects of unemployment on political orientations of the population). The editors have chosen to rank the entries in alphabetical order, which was perhaps the most sensible thing to do given the many overlaps and connections that occur among the entries. These numerous connections are accounted for by cross-references to related items listed at the beginning of every entry. Topics that were not given their own entry are listed in the Index. Wherever possible, the entries follow the pattern *definition – theoretical approaches – substantive problems – findings about German society*.

Although the alphabetical order spared the editors the pain of grouping entries according to a substantive criterion, there seems to be a clear design in the selection of issues covered. The broad theme of subjective orientations to politics, which is the common definition of political culture shared also by the editors of this volume, receives treatment in a cluster of entries, such as 'historical consciousness', 'identity', 'ideology' or 'party identification', to cite just a few of them. With another series of entries, the book testifies to the close relationship of the political-culture concept to research into values and value change. The editors evidently attach great relevance to the process through which political orientations are acquired, since they have dedicated ten entries to various aspects of political socialisation and a further four to education, childhood and

family. The German focus of the dictionary is apparent in the presence of another large group of entries that cover different structural components of German society: from rather general concepts like elites or milieus, to trade unions and the army on a more concrete level of analysis, to individual German political parties on the level of individual political entities. Specific to the German context are the entries 'GDR', 'new federal states', 'fundamental law' (Grundgesetz) or 'periods in German history'. Colour and diversity is added to the mosaic of German political culture by such topics as feminism, globalisation, political advising or political morality.

One salient feature of the book is that it maintains a balance between what have come to be known as the quantitative and qualitative approaches in social sciences. The quantitative approach that has been *the* methodology of political-culture studies in the tradition founded by Almond and Verba is complemented by the more recent methodological innovations, represented among others by the study of political symbols (the entry 'political spectacle/politics of symbols') or the utilisation of various anthropological concepts. In the latter case, however, one will look in vain for a separate treatment of some important borrowings from social anthropology, such as political myths and rituals, although both have been central topics of political culture research since the 1980s at the latest.

Another omission, but one that seems to have been committed in the best of faith and to have resulted from a certain substantive understanding of political culture, becomes evident when a comparison is made between the dictionary and some of the publications on political culture that have recently appeared in the English-speaking countries. Very telling is the comparison between the entry 'political culture' (M. and S. Greiffenhagen) in this dictionary and the same entry in the *International Encyclopedia of the Social and Behavioral Sciences* [Neil J. Smelser, Paul B. Baltes (eds.), Elsevier: Amsterdam 2001] by M.J. Aronoff. While both make at some

stage the obligatory reference to Almond and Verba, and both end with a plea for interdisciplinary approach to the study of political culture, the range of authors they review displays significant differences. The most conspicuous among them is that the US dictionary does not fail to mention the work of Michel Foucault and his followers in the field of cultural studies. To give political culture a poststructuralist reading is, in my view, to leave nothing but the names of Almond and Verba in the original concept they had coined. Yet, at least recognition of the existence of cultural studies could have found their way into the dictionary of German political culture – *via* developing or criticising their theoretical tenets and empirical findings when applicable. It is surprising – but perhaps typical of the cross-national communication in social sciences in the age of globalisation – that the contributors to the dictionary do not refer to the political-culture theory based on Mary Douglas' concepts of grid and group and developed by Aaron Wildavsky et al., which has become almost a fashion among American students of political culture today.

One of the undisputed qualities of the dictionary is that it offers a very broad overview of the state of German political culture today (and, one should add, of the state of German political-culture research) in a series of succinctly written, but exhaustive entries, which enable readers to find their bearings both in German society and in the complex landscape of political-culture theory and methodology. The publication can be used as a handbook by researchers interested in the subject matter of political culture on a more general level than that of a particular nation, since it at one time summarises the relevant theories, shows how they can be applied to a particular society and highlights the specific problems related to these theories. For readers unacquainted with German production in the field of political-culture studies, the dictionary is further useful as a rich source of references to crucial works

published in the German-speaking area. Since the focus is clearly on one society, the number of references to works published in other national communities is in some cases equal to zero, but in a number of others the reader is offered a list of the most important works concerning the topic in question of both German and international, mainly US provenience.

The Czech reader might find particularly interesting the entries dealing with the political culture of the former GDR and offering comparisons between the Eastern and Western parts of German society. Here, it might come as a surprise that the highly relevant topic of the post-communist political culture was not granted a separate entry, but perhaps the perception of relevance of this subject varies significantly between the Czech and German society. On the other hand, one cannot agree enough with the editors when they warn against a too hasty and unreflected application of Western standards to post-communist patterns of political orientations and actions (p. 398).

The Czech reader can hope that a similarly comprehensive picture of the Czech political culture will be composed in not so distant a future by Czech sociologists and political scientists. The fact that the German dictionary is the outcome of a thorough revision and updating of the first edition, which appeared in 1981, clearly shows that Czech political-culture research finds itself in an unequal position, given the virtual non-existence of this kind of research in the communist period. The several studies in Czech political culture that have appeared recently, and that are based on different methodological perspectives, are a promising sign that lost time can be made up for, at least in the long run. A more in-depth understanding of the political culture of a neighbouring country, made available in a concentrated form through this dictionary, can serve as an incentive for a more systematic examination of the political cultures of the Czech Republic and of other countries of Central and Eastern Europe.

Marek Skovajsa