

BOOK REVIEW**Book overview: Political Sociology 2 by Ilo Trajkovski****Kire Sharlamenov*****1. General characteristics of the book**

As the title suggests, the book *Political Sociology 2* is a follow-up to Prof. PhD Ilo Trajkovski, *Political Sociology 1* and covers topics, contents and approaches that are a logical extension of it. The book “*Political Sociology 2*” thoroughly and widely elaborates on the most important topics in the field of political sociology. The book is an overview of proficiently selected themes, logically arranged in a way to form a harmonious whole. The themes in the book build on and complement each other, enabling even the relatively uninitiated reader to pass on one’s knowledge and prepare for reading the other chapters. It can be said that although divided into ten chapters, the material in the book itself is well-aligned on several levels: at the content level - precisely defined and well-spaced content of each of the chapters, at the approach level - a unified and systematized approach with easily readable narration in each of the chapters, on a cognitive level - grading the knowledge presented in the book, so that the insights that can be gained in one and facilitate the reading of the other related chapters.

Each author has a specific style. In sociology it looks at techniques of research and presentation of the knowledge presented to the readership. These are specifics in which the authors differ from each other and are recognizable to the readership. In the case of Prof. Trajkovski, such specifics are the conceptual analysis and the combination of a thorough theoretical discussion with the contextualization and localization of globally relevant topics, supplemented by precisely used empirical data. In this respect, this book does not depart from Professor Trajkovski’s recognizable style of research and writing. Each of the chapters begins with a more conceptual analysis, to move on to a theoretical discussion, illustrated by empirical insights and comparisons between individual local contexts. An additional feature of Professor Trajkovski’s theoretical and research approach is the insistence on the importance of civic association for political sociology and sociology in general. As

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a top authority in this field, it monitors the processes of interaction between civil society and other relevant topics in political sociology.

The insight into the literature that the author invokes when elaborating on the themes in his book, "Political Sociology 2," reveals that extensive and relevant literature has been used. With the literature at his disposal the author made a successful synthesis and elaborated on the most important topics of political sociology in an original way.

The emergence of the book *Political Sociology 2*, fills a significant gap in the sociological thought and literature in the Republic of North Macedonia. Although works can be found to claim to cover, one or several, but still a limited number of topics in the field of political sociology, no comprehensive book could be found in the Republic of North Macedonia on the market of sociological thought, which covers all the most important topics in political sociology with a sociological approach to them. Hence this book, as well as the earlier work of Prof. Ilo Trajkovski, rightly tends to be an irreplaceable literature for anyone dealing with sociology, political science, and especially for those who are specialists in the field of political sociology, as well as for those who have such ambitions. The book also has all the necessary qualities to be used as a textbook for both undergraduate and postgraduate studies. The reason for this is not in the scarcity of such literature in the Republic of North Macedonia, although it is a fact that it exists, but in the quality of the book, the topics it elaborates, and the way it does it. Although the aim of the book "Political Sociology 2" is to acquaint the Macedonian public, both professional and general, with the basics and the latest achievements in political sociology, given the book's qualities it seems that with an adequate translation, this book would be relevant to a much wider market for intellectual products than the Macedonian one.

2. Comparative analysis of the book *Political Sociology 2*

The book *Political Sociology 2* corresponds to the most important books of its kind published in the international sociological public. The book has a lot in common with probably the best post-mortem reading in Political Sociology, "Contemporary Political Sociology: Globalization, Politics and Power" by Kate Nash, but also with a "Handbook of Political Sociology: State, Civil Society and Globalization" by Thomas Janoski, Robert R. Alfort et al. The book "Contemporary Political Sociology: Globalization, Politics and Power" by Kate Nash, after selecting topics, is modest and covers five thematic units, which can also be found in "Political

Sociology 2”. What is common to both authors is the dedication to civil society. For example, one of the five topics Nash deals with is entitled “Citizenship”. Professor Trajkovski also has a marked tendency for each of the topics he addresses to raise the question of its connection and intertwining with civil society. What distinguishes these authors, however, is that Nash pays a little more attention to the tendencies of globalization in contemporary politics, while Professor Trajkovski is more devoted to analysing the essential features of politics and the relation between the symbolic signifying dimension of terms and their implementation in observation of the relations of power on the one hand and the normative versus the realistic dimension of political action on the other.

The book, “Handbook of Political Sociology: State, Civil Society and Globalization” by Thomas Janoski, Robert R. Alfort et al. is impressive in scope and structure, but the choice of themes is more in line with Professor Trajkovski’s earlier book, “Political Sociology 1”, in which he pays attention to basic terms and categories in political sociology. Some difference is obvious in the approach when writing the two books. While Thomas Janoski, Robert R. Alfort et al., more committed to presenting as many theories in political sociology as possible and linking them to state and state policies, Professor Trajkovski maintains a broader perspective, paying serious attention to topics such as civic society and the public opinion.

The book “Political Sociology 2” by Prof. Ilo Trajkovski has a lot in common with the very successful textbook on political sociology, written by Andrews Shvirplus and Vaidas Morkevicius, professors who have failed to gain the fame of authors such as Kate Nash in political sociology. Although the textbook of Andrews Shvirplus and Vaidas Morkevicius is one of the best written in the last decade, it still lacks the ambition of “Political Sociology 2”, with a much more modest choice of topics, and on the approach thereof, it addresses only people with more modest knowledge of political sociology.

Comparing the book “Political Sociology 2” with similar relevant books in political sociology, one has the impression that this book analyses politics through the prism of sociological imagination in all its dimensions. The quality of a book that is usually lacking in similar textbooks is that it deals with clarifying political differences, both at the level of political ideologies and at the political parties, up to analysing elections and electoral processes. Normally, textbooks and books in political sociology deal with power, the state, and policies that are or need to be implemented, but the weak point is most often to put aside that dimension of policy that is related to the struggle for power. The reason probably lies in the delicacy of that process, and even the embarrassment of writing about it. It would not be an

exaggeration to say that the book *Political Sociology 2* faces and illuminates the processes that many authors are trying to marginalize.

In contemporary political sociology, when writing textbooks, there is a tendency for politics to be perceived through the prism of a certain sub-discipline within political sociology. Examples include Scott Frickel and Kelly Moore, “New Political Sociology of Science”, which focuses on the relationship between power and science, John Scott, “Lobbying and Society: Political Sociology of Interest Groups”, Jason Beckfield and Nancy Krieger, “Political Sociology and Public Health”, Carlos Torres, “Political Sociology of Adult Education,” etc. In this context, Prof. Trajkovski’s “*Political Sociology 2*” does not refer to any of the sub-disciplines of political sociology, but is instead written as a general political sociology.

3. Content analysis of the book

The book is divided into three parts: 1. Political Participation and Democracy: Institutions; 2. Stakeholders of Democratic Politics; 3. Consciousness and Political Action. Each section of the book is divided into several chapters. More specifically, the first part covers the first four chapters, the second part covers from the fifth to the seventh chapter, while the third part covers from the eighth to the tenth chapter.

The first chapter, entitled “Political Participation and Political Mobilization,” begins with a more in-depth analysis of political participation and its demarcation from partisanship, with a view to furthering political participation in the context of the political system, with particular attention to the democratic political system. An important place here is given to the form and degree of political participation. An added value, on the theoretical basis of the co-payment presentation, is the presentation of the results obtained from the latest empirical research. Especially important is the presentation of the findings by the European Social Survey (ESS) (Trajkovski 2019 A: 30). At the end of the first chapter devoted to political participation and mobilization, the author puts it in the context of apathy and apoliticism, to later consider the reasons for apathy that the results of empirical research point out. This chapter ends with a re-examination of the myth of apathetic youth.

The second chapter, entitled “Democracy”, typifies democracy directly and indirectly, with a detailed observation of the characteristics of democratic political systems. It is particularly important to point out to the author the influence of liberal tradition in shaping representative democracy. Many authors, due to the Puritan discipline in the categorization of political theories and political systems,

unfortunately fail to present to their readers this synthesis, which is crucial to understanding the nature of representative democracy. Since a key point has been made in linking liberal tradition with the development of representative democracy, it follows logically to focus on limiting power, delimiting particular types of power, and analysing the right to rule the political majority by guaranteeing minority rights. Although not explicitly stated here, the author points to the link between democracy as a political system and the way in which government is established in one country. This chapter concludes with an analysis of the democratization processes. Giving a globalist perspective to the process of democratization by focusing on the phases i.e. the “waves” of democratization are a relatively new, but common trend in modern sociology textbooks. But the author does not remain a superficial and spatial-temporal descriptor of democratization, as can be found in most textbooks, but has endeavoured to offer readers, both a structural and causal analysis of democratization. Within this framework, democratization is analysed in terms of economic factors, political culture, religion and social stratification.

The third chapter entitled “Democratization of the Republic of Macedonia” deals with the specifics of the democratization of the Republic of Macedonia. This part of the book begins with the pluralisation of the political life, which began in 1990, to further observe the evolutionary development and incorporation of separate mechanisms specific to Macedonian political reality into the Macedonian democratic system. One such mechanism is the Badinter majority (Trajkovski 2019A: 94). In this chapter, the author analyses the interaction between the rise of democracy, with populism and liberalism on the one hand, and the capitalism and corruption on the other. Although it is concluded that the people, i.e. the citizens are at the heart of both democracy and populism, the author Prof. Ilo Trajkovski cites liberal ideas of limitation, separation and control of power as a watershed between democracy and populism. While democracy is based on adherence to these principles, populism tramples on them. The work dedicated to the interaction between capitalism, corruption and democracy goes into the contemporary debates that challenge the axiom of a possible causal link between capitalism and democracy and critically observe it. Here the author traces the dominant thought in political sociology, which suggests that economic and political freedom are equally important for the development of a successful democratic system. In this sense, the development of democracy requires an economic infrastructure.

The first part of the book *Political Sociology 2* concludes with the fourth chapter, “Elections and Electoral Behaviour”. This chapter, besides defining elections as a social phenomenon, covers the manifest and latent functions of elections, as well as the factors that make them such as voters and elected persons. Often, the elections

and the elected persons are approached by legal prism, through reference to active and passive electoral rights. Although the author Prof. Trajkovski points to the right of citizens to choose and be elected, he pays more attention to the application of the sociological imagination that is reflected in the structural analysis of the electoral process stakeholders that offers us relevant sociological reading of electoral process. The original sociological approach to elaborating on the topic of elections is shown to readers and in the presentation of the next segment of this chapter. Namely, the very choice of voting patterns within the chapter for the election, the reader of this book will be able to find valuable information that theorizes the question of how individuals vote. In doing so, Prof. Trajkovski offers us five theoretically relevant models of voting: sociological, economic, ideological, problematic and rational. Aware that elections take place in a particular political context, and that observing their organization and implementation is important for controlling the regularity of the process, the author offers us a theoretically substantiated and practically applied explication of election observation. Also, wanting to point out that elections are not an end in itself, the author offers an outlook on the results of the election by analysing the processes that follow after the election.

In the fifth chapter, entitled as “Political Parties“, the author examines the role of political parties in democratic political systems. As a consequence of the debate on political parties, the book points to the role of the sociology of political parties, as the most important sub-discipline of political sociology, in fostering the relationships between the sociology of politics and political sociology (Trajkovski 2019A). According to the author, unlike the sociology of politics that insists on the class factor, political sociology, influenced by the sociology of political parties, points to the importance of independent variables in the analysis of political processes. The next important topic within the fifth chapter of the book, Political Sociology 2, is the Citizens’ Association and Political Participation as a dimension in which the dynamic essence of political parties can be measured. The author pays serious attention to the emergence of political parties, as well as to the assumptions for their occurrence. Furthermore, the author, Prof. PhD Ilo Trajkovski defines political parties in a more meaningful and structured way. The conceptual analysis covers the development of the use of the term political parties and its meaning. The structural analysis, on the other hand, is analysing the organizational structure and observing the interactions between interest groups and the political parties. At the end of this chapter, the author introduces us to the functions of political parties to further analyse the role and specifics of political parties in divided societies. This chapter concludes with the typology of political parties and party systems.

The sixth chapter entitled “Interest groups and pressure groups” deals with a pluralistic approach to politics. This chapter clarifies the differences and overlaps between the interest group and the pressure group. The next methodological unit is the Classification of Interest Groups, which further opens the prospect of analysing specific policies and looking at society as a equilibrium of interests. In one of the meta-units in this chapter, the author rightly notes that under certain conditions, interaction between interest groups and the state may result in the establishment of corporatism (Trajkovski 2019A: 235). While attention has been paid to the relations between political parties and interest groups, this topic seems that this topic in more concern political science than political sociology that considers elite theory rather than coalitions between political parties and individual interest groups. The chapter “Interest Groups and Pressure Groups” ends with a co-textualization of interest groups in democratic political systems, their place, role , mode of operation, efficiency and functions.

The chapter “Protest and Non-Institutional Stakeholders” is devoted primarily to social movements. Particular attention is paid to the presentation of dichotomy: classical - modern social movements. This chapter concludes with a classification of the contemporary social movements. The chapter introduces the reader to the latest layers of analysis of social movements in contemporary political sociology. It corresponds in particular with the findings of Kate Nash (2010) on this subject, but also with other influential contemporary sociologists, such as Charles Tully and Allen Touren. The processing approach on the material is authentic - sociological, in terms of analysing social movements as a social phenomenon and does not go far in their eventual use of political party campaigns, which can be found in the politicological perspective of analysing this topic. The book rightly captures the moment that classical sociology has long neglected other social movements, paying attention to the workers movement (Trajkovski 2019A: 256). However, the section on the interplay between the state and social movements, especially the workers movement, is also overlooked. In the section on the new social movements the precise characteristics of the new social movements are precisely marked, as the relations with the state shift.

The eighth chapter entitled “Political Consciousness and Public Opinion” is relatively new to political sociology and corresponds to some extent with political communications. The sociological approach to it is very important and opens up broad perspectives for analysing the relations between public opinion, the public, politics and society. Recognizing the importance of this topic for political sociology is a quality of the book Political Sociology 2. The chapter itself begins with a more in-depth analysis of the term political consciousness and the relation of consciousness

to the actions of individuals. Following is a presentation of political beliefs, public opinion, clarification of differences between public view and public opinion, public relations and human rights policies, categorization of the public on attentive and mass public, public opinion research and analysis of media relations and mass media and public view. The author notes and rightly points to the fact that public view may on one hand have the function of controlling public authority, but on the other hand may limit its operation to such an extent that any policies that go beyond the boundaries of generally accepted viewpoints in a society would be impossible.

Chapter 9 “Political Culture” covers the elements and functions of political culture. The author defines the political culture, its elements, functions and relations with the political tradition and political socialization in order to further localize the topic by moving to the next methodical unit through the presentation of the political culture in the Republic of Macedonia. Here the author presents results and points out the characteristics of Macedonian political culture, based on the findings of the report of the national field research on political culture in Macedonia (Trajkovski 2019A: 326). The author concludes this chapter with a brief overview of multiculturalism.

The tenth chapter, “Political Ideology,” begins by defining the term ideology, which is further analysed in terms of Marxist understanding, but also of the understandings of the ideologies of modern contemporary theories, with particular attention given to systemic and behaviourist aspects of the ideology. This chapter introduces us to the four most important contemporary political ideologies: liberalism, conservatism, neoliberalism, and socialism. In addition to successfully identifying the most important political ideologies, the author succinctly and accurately presents it to his readers.

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