

the report, and to dismantle stereotypes and commonplaces. Consequently, even the non-specialist is able to understand the mafia's most common strategies and mentality.

Beyond what the document tells us about the organisation and activities of the mafia, it is revealing in other ways, too. First, it shows how the Inspectorate conducted its inquiries, which lines it pursued, and how it was able to connect crimes that had no apparent link to each other. Second, it gives a flavour of the language used by mafiosi to speak of themselves (their nicknames, for instance, worthy of Verga), or to disparage the traitors, immediately labelled as 'sbirri' (cops) or 'cascittuni' (snitches). Interestingly, not only does the mafia have its own vocabulary, but the police, too, seem to have created one, responding with their own words and resorting to a specific semantic field to describe what they see. The book thus offers the reader the opportunity to retrace the origins of what, since then, have become the hackneyed metaphors of mafia, which help to shape our own image of the phenomenon. Consider, for example, how the metaphor of the 'malapianta' – which reaches our era with Nicola Gratteri's recent book on 'ndrangheta, simply titled *La malapianta* (Gratteri and Nicaso 2009) – is exploited throughout the document: 'sono le radici profonde della secolare malefica pianta'; '[la mafia] fu sfrondata, potata, quasi intaccata al tronco'; 'bisognava...ritornare ancora alla potatura della rinvirgata ramificazione'.

Relazione mafiose raises many questions about the relations between two different kinds of power in Italy, the political and the criminal. As such, it looks to both the past and the present. It also serves as a warning never to trust a government when it declares too loudly that it is firmly fighting crime.

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Teresa Franco
Somerville College, University of Oxford
Email: teresa.franco@some.ox.ac.uk
© 2013, Teresa Franco
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13532944.2012.747467>

Political Leadership, Parties and Citizens: The Personalisation of Leadership, edited by Jean Blondel and Jean-Louis Thiébault with Katarzyna Czernicka, Takashi Inoguchi, Ukrist Pathmanand and Fulvio Venturino, Abingdon and New York, Routledge, xii + 304 pp., £85.00 (hardback), ISBN 0-415-54736-9

The dominant role of social structure in accounting for citizens' political behaviour has long been virtually undisputed in political science. However, the erosion of traditional cleavages (most notably, class and religious affiliation) and the resulting transformations in the supply side of politics have rendered such an approach progressively less useful for our understanding of voters' behaviour in contemporary democracies. In recent decades, a growing body of empirical literature has shown the increasingly important part played by voters' attitudes towards relevant political *objects* such as issues, performance, and – most

notably – political leaders. Only in the last years, however, have political scientists started devoting their attention to the so-called *personalisation of politics* and its foremost implications for the working of representative democracy (Aarts, Blais and Schmitt 2011; Bittner 2011; Curtice and Holmberg 2005; Garzia 2011; Karvonen 2010; King 2002; McAllister 2007).

Firmly grounded in this emerging strand of literature, *Political Leadership, Parties and Citizens* proposes a psychological framework for understanding the increasingly important role played by personalised leadership in the political process. Although recognising the fundamental role of social cleavage analyses, the authors focus on the personal relationships and psychological dimensions linking citizens, the parties they support, and the leaders of these parties. Their endeavour is motivated by the contention that ‘European political scientists are not accustomed to deal with psychological concepts in the way they have been accustomed to do so . . . with sociological concepts’ (p. 2). Yet as long as personality characteristics – of both leaders and followers – are not taken into account, the analysis of political relationships ‘will be partial’ (p. 6).

The volume is divided into two main sections, with the first focusing on the theoretical and methodological problems involved in the analysis of personalisation, and the second devoted to six case studies of European (Britain, France, Italy, Poland) and Asian (Japan, Thailand) countries. In the first theoretical chapter, the authors do a good job in describing the declining relevance of social cleavages in linking traditional parties with citizens. Most importantly, they clearly identify the shortcomings of previous interpretations of societal change when it comes to its effects on voters. This discussion makes the case for a psychological interpretation of leader–follower relationships in contemporary democracies, whose main pillars are described in the chapters that follow. Chapter 3 frames the authors’ argument within classic theories of political leadership and elaborates on the emerging notion of personalised political leadership. Definitional matters relative to personalised leaders’ types of discourse and relationship with citizens are also extensively discussed. The following chapter deals with the psychological bases of voters’ relationships with parties, and the growing role of leaders in fostering such relationships – this being especially the case when it comes to ‘new’ parties. Chapter 5 provides an efficient typology for classifying leadership styles based on the leader’s degree of personal power in the party and his ability to boost support for the party. Only those leaders enjoying considerable personal power within the party, and at the same time able to bolster its electoral fortunes, are granted the status of ‘personalised’ leaders. The chapter concludes with a detailed survey of European personalised party leaders since the end of the Second World War. The introductory section ends with a chapter dedicated to the methodological challenges faced by previous scholars involved in the analysis of personalised leadership.

In the second main section, the authors assess the extent to which the phenomena of personalised leadership differ across countries. The comparative case studies concentrate on 11 prominent leaders from both Europe and East Asia (Thatcher, Blair, Mitterand, Chirac, Le Pen, Berlusconi, Bossi, Walesa, Lepper, Koizumi and Thaksin). Beyond shedding light on the specificities inherent to these widely different political leaderships, such comparison highlights several underlying commonalities among them. In doing so, the authors provide further ground for an interpretation of changing leadership styles not strictly bound to national peculiarities (as so often happens in discussions of Italy, for example).

The weight and range of evidence presented throughout the book clearly demonstrates the widespread emergence of a new style of political leadership. Blondel and Thiébault reach two main conclusions: ‘that the “personalisation of party leadership” in early twenty-first century Europe needs to be seriously considered, indeed systematically analysed, and that such an analysis requires giving to psychological approaches a place in European political science which it has not occupied so far’ (xii). In order to extend our understanding of the role of political leaders in European democracies, future research cannot afford to overlook these fundamental suggestions.

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Diego Garzia
European University Institute
Email: Diego.Garzia@eui.eu

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<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13532944.2012.752977>

Material Nation: A Consumer’s History of Modern Italy, by Emanuela Scarpellini, translated by Daphne Hughes and Andrew Newton, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2011, xv + 352 pp., £35.00/US\$65.00 (hardback), ISBN 978-01-995-8957-9

Material Nation demonstrates that consumption has been ‘a central element in the Italian nation’s affairs’ from ‘Unification through Fascism (when it entered into the Italianization policy of the regime) and even in the republican decades following the Second World War’ (p. vii). Part One, ‘Liberal Italy’, comprises an opening chapter on ‘Italian Society from Unification to the Belle Époque’, which applies economic history to uncover the private, domestic worlds of Italians, and three further chapters on consumption in the public realms of the state, the workplace and shops respectively. Chapter 1 compellingly examines, in turn, the lives of peasants, industrial workers, the middle classes and the aristocracy. We see Italy’s gradual entry into consumer society, following its more affluent European neighbours such as Britain. The point at which families begin to have disposable