

Preface

It is an extraordinary pleasure to present Klaus von Beyme as a *Pioneer in the Study of Political Theory and Comparative Politics* whom I have known as a scholar for over 30 years, and whom I have never ceased to like personally and to respect professionally. Let me assure you this happens rarely.

Klaus von Beyme and I struck up an acquaintance 11 IPSA congresses ago, at the 1979 World Congress in Moscow, an exercise in ‘peaceful coexistence’ held at Lomonosov University. When we stepped out of an elevator in the (since demolished) Rossiya Hotel, Beyme’s tightly packed travel bag burst open and spilled its contents on the hotel lobby’s floor. Without further ado, we both knelt and started dumping his clothing back into the bag. I like to picture the present moment, which I treasure, as a sort of late sequel to that act of spontaneous collaboration.

Klaus von Beyme once wrote that, in analyzing politics between, as it happens, Madrid and Moscow, he had let himself be guided by the principle to treat each country with as much empathy as his own. No wonder: Beyme is fluent in seven, and his works have been translated into 10 languages, including Chinese, Korean, Polish, Croatian, Slovenian, Italian, Greek, and Spanish—English as a matter of course. He has written on political theories and political systems (those of the United States, Soviet Russia, Spain, Italy, and Germany—the latter work, several times updated, has meanwhile seen 10 printings), on Central-East Europe’s transition from Communism, on interest groups, political parties and comparative politics, on policy fields such as health, traffic, and residential construction. And he has devoted an increasing amount of sophisticated thinking to ways in which political science relates to the social and cultural

This text represents an address by Rainer Eisfeld that was delivered at the Mattei Dogan Award Session on July 12, 2012, XXII World Congress of Political Science in Madrid. The permission to use this speech as a preface to this volume was granted by Rainer Eisfeld. See also the tribute at the IPSA Website at: <http://archive.org/details/AwardSession-2012PrizeOfTheFoundationMatteiDoganAwardedByThe?start=3113.5>

world around it, with a focus on architecture and on art. Whoever wishes to extend inquiries beyond the discipline's traditional limits, may draw encouragement from him.

Beyme was the first West German exchange student to study in Moscow during the late 1950s, and he distinguished himself as a Research Fellow at Harvard University's Russian Research Center immediately afterward. Lomonosov University made him a Honorary Professor only 2 years ago for his significant contributions both to the development of political science and to relations between that Moscow University and its German counterparts. For 7 years, Beyme served on the Research Council of the European University Institute in Florence. He was a Fellow both at the Wissenschaftskolleg Berlin and at the Maison des Sciences de l'Homme in Paris. Bearer of an honorary doctorate from Berne University in Switzerland, a former president of the German Political Science Association in the 1970s and of IPSA in the early 1980s, Beyme is a rare example of the political scientist as global scholar and public intellectual.

A public intellectual has been defined as one who seeks to advance both knowledge and human freedom. Beyme has always been extremely reticent about publicly avowing his fundamentally humanist orientation. But he did, now and then, refer to the impressions deeply imprinted on his memory of fleeing, as a 10-year-old boy, from the burning city of Breslau, only to find the city of Halberstadt, upon his arrival, equally in flames. Small wonder that he concluded a 1987 work on post-World War II architecture and urban development policies in the two German states with a remarkably unequivocal sentence. I quote: "The surviving Germans' sense of having escaped, in the Second World War, by the skin of their teeth needs to be transformed into the awareness that, in a Third World War, peoples would lose more than their cities' visual identity."

Even before he became IPSA President, Beyme supported admitting the German Democratic Republic to our organization. At the time, the East German delegates were still working miracles when traveling to IPSA conferences: They boarded their plane as jurists, economists or philosophers, exiting it as political scientists. "Change through closer ties" was Beyme's often affirmed policy. He and Secretary General John Trent even found a face-saving formula that allowed the Republic of China—at least for half a decade—to join IPSA without alienating Taiwan.

My German colleague Wolfgang Merkel has remarked about Beyme that "his theoretical creativity has always been constrained by the scruples of his enormous historical and empirical knowledge". Beyme's 1994 work on *System Transformation in Eastern Europe*, subsequently translated into English and Korean—another divided nation there—, provides a perfect example of a work saturated with conceptional and historical insight, replete with sophisticated observations. Every such study would have looked at institution building, dealt with social and ethnic cleavages and their effects on the establishment of political parties, focused on the formidable problem of synchronizing political and economic transformations. Beyme went beyond.

He provided an incisive analysis of 'transformation without elite exchange': in administration, in the economy, in academe (excepting the former GDR), but

also in politics, particularly in Albania, Bulgaria, Romania, Serbia, and Russia. He argued that the concept of civil society, developed as a counter ideology to actually existing socialism, mirrored not a few intellectuals' anti-political stance and their lack of familiarity with economic matters. In Beyme's opinion, the notion's idealistic features fit the often harsh new political and economic realities badly. He identified nationalism as a much more potent force when it came to providing political legitimation and psychological gratifications under conditions of economic downturn, and he correctly foresaw that it was nationalism which, for a considerable period, would come to fill the ideological vacuum. Beyme's account of ethnic policies under socialism—"culminating in the right to establish folk dance groups", as he ironically notes—their mobilizing post-1989 consequences, and a few beginnings of new minority policies—that account is among his book's most perceptive chapters.

In another masterful, tightly argued chapter, linking the three dimensions of the political—polity, politics, and policies—Beyme explored the complex processes which had steadily eroded the legitimacy of the socialist system. However, as Beyme has also emphasized time and again: The discipline had absolutely failed to predict the collapse of existing socialism, and theories of totalitarianism, with their emphasis on terror and coercion, had impeded rather than helped along any attempts at assessing future developments. Different paradigms had not prevented their advocates either from making false assumptions. Here Beyme was characteristically candid; he himself had preferred the interest group approach pioneered by Gordon Skilling. Ever the skeptical realist, Beyme maintained then, and he remains convinced now:

Political science cannot predict processes on the macrolevel. Neither the student rebellion, nor the oil crisis, nor finally the rise of fundamentalism were forecast by the discipline. "Informed guesswork", according to Beyme, is the best we may expect.

Comparative Political Science his almost latest book published 3 years ago, assembles 21 articles and chapters from the past decade in three sections—'Comparing Theories', 'Comparing Institutions', and 'Comparing Policies'. These pieces attest to Beyme's undiminished intellectual curiosity and creativity. As an example, a single chapter must suffice here: A tightly structured review of five decades of German health policy—of the visions and the conundrums, the decisions and the nondecisions, the attempts at regulation and the barriers against such efforts, the interplay of historical inheritances, institutional structures, and organized interests. These mere 10 pages impress the reader as nothing short of brilliant.

Of the volume's chapters, three focus on cultural and art policy. When Klaus von Beyme began writing about culture and politics in 1987, he started out with a book on the part played by architecture and urban planning in the process of rebuilding the two Germanys after 1945—because he held that "no field of art is as strongly impregnated politically as architecture and urban development". More such works followed: on German cultural policy; on *The Art of Power and the Countervailing Power of Art*; on *Age of Avantgardes: Art and Society, 1905–1955*; finally on *Fascination of the Exotic: Exoticism, Racism and Sexism in Art*.

The Art of Power and the Countervailing Power of Art contained the gist of Beyme's considerations on the relationship between art, polity, and politics. I quote:

Since the Renaissance, politics increased its autonomy by a symbiosis with art, which served the aesthetic legitimization of authority... In democracies with universal suffrage and parliamentary responsibility of governments, art and power abandoned that temporary symbiosis and began growing apart... Nowadays, aesthetical orchestration of politics pushes aside art as a technique for legitimating authority... To the extent that the state promotes art only marginally..., economics finds its way into art production.

In a chapter on "Architecture in the Service of Awe and Intimidation", Beyme identified early modern monumentalism as an expression of agonistic societal pluralism and subsequent twentieth century sites for mass rallies, to be filled with indoctrinated crowds, as a distinguishing mark of totalitarian dictatorships. In another chapter on "The October Revolution's Political Myths in the Arts", he argued that "mythologizing the collective" had been the revolution's most important integrative mechanism, on which Stalin had later been able to build his show trials.

In 2008, Klaus von Beyme received the Schader Foundation Award, one of the most important German awards given to social scientists, for distinguishing himself in the "dialog between the social sciences and practical life". Beyme's work provides an enduring incentive not to settle for political studies in the sense of a reductionist science focusing on the 'management' of parliamentary and party government. Rather, political scientists should sharpen their minds and open their hearts to addressing those pressing national, regional, and global challenges which transcend any self-imposed confines of our discipline. In concluding, I would like to refer to just a single instance indicating issues of the kind which a political science informed by Klaus von Beyme's example might be addressing more widely.

In his treatise on world poverty and human rights, Yale political philosopher Thomas Pogge has argued that Western political and financial institutions are deeply implicated in actively maintaining the corrupt and oppressive rulers of impoverished states, due to the interest of affluent democracies in obtaining access to natural resources and in issuing lucrative loans. Sufficient material may be found in Pogge's essays which the discipline might debate with a view to speaking out in favor of a more just and more equitable organization of political processes and institutions, both nationally and internationally.

It is my profound conviction that awarding the Mattei Dogan Prize to Klaus von Beyme for his outstanding achievements will provide a powerful boost to the kind of political science which does not shy away from incorporating historical dynamics, societal conflicts, and embedded power relations, and which supports men and women—wherever they may live—in their quest to participate more effectively, more knowledgeably, and more freely in today's political decision making.

Rainer Eisfeld

Klaus von Beyme

Pioneer in the Study of Political Theory and
Comparative Politics

von Beyme, K.

2014, XIII, 165 p. 11 illus., 6 illus. in color., Softcover

ISBN: 978-3-319-01534-7