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Boekbespreking van: Electoral change, responses to evolving social and attitudinal structures in western countries

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teresseerden' in de politiek, onder wie studenten politicologie. Krijgen dezen een beter zicht op 'waarom de politiek werkt zoals zij werkt'? Het politieke systeemmodel is bedoeld om het zicht op 'de politiek' te verbeteren. In die zin is de keuze voor dit model als basis begrijpelijk. Wel blijft hier de algemene kritiek op het systeemmodel natuurlijk gelden, bij voorbeeld dat deze benadering wel erg is gericht op continuïteit en weinig aandacht besteedt aan barrières in de politiek. Hier had een hoofdstuk over het barrièremodel uitkomst kunnen bieden. Onder de eerste doelgroep vallen ook studenten politicologie. Hier ligt volgens mij een manco van dit boek. Ondanks een inleiding en een eerste hoofdstuk waarin het politieke systeemmodel in hoofdlijnen uit de doeken wordt gedaan, wordt het de lezer c.q. student in het vervolg niet bepaald gemakkelijk gemaakt. Dat begint al met zoiets eenvoudig als een ontbrekende paragraafnummering (om sneller zicht te krijgen op de structuur van een hoofdstuk) en een uitgebreide inhoudsopgave, maar blijkt verder ook uit het ontbreken van korte inleidingen bij ieder kernthema waarin het thema kort wordt getypeerd en geplaatst én uit het ontbreken van een min of meer gelijke opzet van ieder thema. Natuurlijk is het bij een bundel onvermijdelijk dat hoofdstukken hier en daar elkaar overlappen en soms zelfs tegen elkaar ingaan. Toch blijft het werken met teams van auteurs hinderlijk bij het schrijven van studieboeken.

De tweede doelgroep is die van politicologen die een bijdrage willen leveren aan de verdere ontwikkeling van de politieke wetenschap. In het geven van een overzicht van de stand van zaken slaagt het boek royaal en vormt het een, voor zover te beoordelen, goede samenvatting van de politicologische literatuur. Daarmee is de bundel vooral een boek 'voor en door politicologen': het is plezierig dank zij een boek als dit op de hoogte te worden gehouden van trends en ontwikkelingen binnen de (Nederlandse) politicologie.

Samenvattend is 'Kernthema's' een boek dat zich richt op algemeen geïnteresseerden in de politiek en politieke wetenschappers. In 'het verspreiden van wetenschappelijk verantwoorde kennis en inzichten ten aanzien van politieke verschijnselen' slaagt het boek redelijk. In hoeverre het ook geschikt is voor de eerste doelgroep, met name studenten politicologie, blijft de vraag. Daarvoor lijkt de bundel vooral didactisch op een aantal punten te kort te schieten.

P. Schuszler

M.N. Franklin, T.T. Mackie and H. Valen (red.), **Electoral change, responses to evolving social and attitudinal structures in western countries**. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1992.

Since World War II the social structure of industrial democracies has changed tremendously. Assuming that electoral outcomes depend on social structure, electoral changes should have occurred as well. In fact, until the late 1960s party systems were 'frozen', while since that time drastic political changes have occurred. On the basis of these considerations M. Franklin, T. Mackie and H. Valen formulate the follo-

wing central research question: if electoral change is a consequence of social change, why did political effects occur so late? The authors regard this question as an antipode to S.M. Lipset and S. Rokkan's (1967) question of why party systems in Western societies are so stable. The editors formulate four possible answers to their question. First, social change is irrelevant for electoral change. Second, in the old days a connection existed between social structure and electoral outcome, but nowadays this link is absent. Third, new and strong cleavages have overruled the impact of social change. Fourth, political change has been delayed as it has been effected by the slow replacement of older generations by newer ones. The accuracy of these answers is ascertained in the various chapters of this volume.

The book consists of three parts. The first one contains two chapters: the editors' introduction, in which the main research question is set out, and a chapter in which T. Mackie and M. Franklin review social changes since 1960 and formulate hypotheses on their impact on electoral change. Their major hypothesis is that since occupational structures were upgraded – *ceteris paribus* – the electoral strength of leftist parties should have declined.

The book's second part contains 16 chapters, each chapter dealing with a single country and written by country specialists. The countries (and authors) are: Australia (I. McAllister), Belgium (A. Mugham), Britain (M. Franklin), Canada (H. Clark and M. Steward), Denmark (O. Borre), France (M. Lewis-Beck and A. Skabalan), Federal Republic of Germany (F.U. Pappi and P. Mnich), Greece (P. Dimitras), Ireland (M. Marsh), Italy (T. Mackie, R. Mannheimer and G. Sani), the Netherlands (C. van der Eijk and K. Niemöller), New Zealand (C. Bean), Norway (H. Valen), Spain (T. Lancaster), Sweden (M. Oskarson) and the United States of America (A. Miller and B. Lockerbie). The editors use a similar format in every country chapter. Each starts with a description of party system features, party system change and social change. In addition, the results of 'core analyses' are presented. In these analyses the relative effect of certain social variables (occupation, age, union membership, income, education, sex and religion) and attitudinal variables (subjective class and religiosity) on the chances of voting for left-wing parties are investigated. On the basis of at least two election surveys, results are reported on changes in the relative effects of social and attitudinal variables. The first survey was conducted not long before 1968, and the second one as recently as possible. In most chapters also a third survey, somewhere in the middle of the research period, is used. Finally, the authors of the country chapters attempt to specify what is special about the country concerned. In these country chapters not only the presentation of the data is uniform but also the handling of data. Similar coding schemes and analytical techniques were employed in each country chapter. Because of these editorial decisions on the presentation and handling of the data, the country chapters are extremely valuable as standard texts for anyone interested in the effects of social structure on voting. They are a treasure-house of relevant results from various national election studies. Until now these results had been difficult to obtain, since usually they are reported in publications on one country in the language of that country. It is the main gain of this project that these are now collected in one volume in English.

In the third part of the book the editors summarize the main findings of the country chapters and relate them to their central research question. This part again consists of two chapters. In the first one M. Franklin presents these results in a comparative format, highlighting findings that are similar for most countries and analyzing deviant cases. The editors find a declining effect of social variables on party choice for all Western countries. They assert that this decline in cleavage politics in some countries was already completed before the 1960s and started in other countries only during the 1980s. In the last chapter the editors and C. van der Eijk spell out some of the implications of these findings. These pertain to the nature of the electoral change in the societies under consideration and the consequences of the shift of their occupational structures towards post-industrialism. The authors draw attention to the particularization of voters' choices. One cause of this particularization they suggest is the increase of cross-pressures on voters. Another is the existence of political parties that have been successful in the past, but that are presently unresponsive to change. Cleavage politics decline when long-standing social conflicts are being resolved and present social problems are no longer adequately articulated by parties based on those resolved conflicts. Under these conditions, individual citizens are increasingly occupied with their individual interests as compared to their group interests.

However great the merits of the book, a few critical remarks are in order. The first of these concerns the research questions. This study contains an example of conflating different questions into a single one. Furthermore, it provides an example of an explanatory question that is based on false descriptive statements. The central question of the book is: if social change makes for electoral change, why did electoral change occur so late? On p. 3 the reader, almost by accident, learns that according to the editors 'electoral change' comprises three things: the extent to which the electorate votes for new parties, changes in the electoral strength of parties, and changes in the predictability of voting behavior. In effect this formulation implies three distinct subquestions about electoral change. The first subquestion, the one about new parties, is shelved by the editors. They do so by restricting their core analyses to voting for all leftist parties taken together (p. 16). The second subquestion, why the strength of parties has changed so much, turns out to rest on a false assumption (p. 46). It was assumed that the strength of parties would have changed a lot, but for a majority of countries virtually no change was found. Taking this into consideration, the editors had to refocus their major research question (p. 49). They do so by narrowing it to their question of voter (un)predictability.

Our second critical remark concerns the conclusions. We find it somewhat disappointing that only parts of the results presented in each country chapter are used in the concluding chapters. The comparisons among countries remain restricted to the percentage of variance in voting behavior within a country explained by social variables. This leaves unanswered other descriptive and explanatory questions contained in the central research question of this volume, for instance: are there any differences between countries with regard to relative effects of social background variables on voting?; do changes in the relative impact of these variables display patterns?;

why is the effect of religion in some countries smaller than in others?; and: why did the relative impact of a certain variable increase? Attempts to answer these questions would have placed this book squarely in the tradition of Rose's seminal study *Electoral Behavior: A Comparative Handbook* (1974).

Our last point of criticism concerns the presentation and reliability of the results of the country specific analyses. These are open to some doubt. For any reader interested in answers to questions as the ones we formulated above, the similar coding schemes, analytical techniques and substantive cores in the country chapters would appear to offer an opportunity. However, some difficulties arise. First, although regressions are meant to be comparable, analyses contain different numbers of variables (compare for instance tables X.2 and X.3). Second, readers are warned in appendix B: 'In practice, there are many indications in the analyses reported in this book that too much reliance should not be placed upon the exact value of effects computed in our regression analyses'. For this reason the editors only compare the percentage explained variance and not the values of effects computed in the regression analyses. The reader wonders why the indications for the unreliability of the effects computed do not apply to the percentages of the computed explained variances.

P. Nieuwebeerta en W.C. Ultee

Michèle Barrett and Anne Phillips, **Destabilizing Theory. Contemporary Feminist Debates**. Polity Press, Cambridge 1992.

Feminism has changed dramatically. This view is presented by all feminist theorists who contributed to this collection of essays: Sylvia Walby, Rosemary Pringle and Sophie Watson, Chandra Talpade Mohanty, Biddy Martin, Moira Gatens, Griselda Pollock and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak as well as the two editors. The feminist debates, which the subtitle refers to, are concerned with the status of theory, which is correctly indicated by the main title: *Destabilizing Theory*. It is predominantly old feminist theory that has been destabilized, though other political and sociological theories have been challenged in the same sweeping movement. 'Grand', 'universal' theories still working in the tradition of the Enlightenment project are declared useless for feminism. The book reveals that the old pacts between feminists and liberals, marxists and socialists are definitely broken up in favour of a new pact between feminists and post-modernists. The editors speak of a 'paradigm shift' between 1970s feminism and 1990s feminism.

What, then, was wrong with the feminism of the 1970s, when these and other grand theories still, explicitly or implicitly, inspired feminist thinking? The editors mention several defects. First, the assumption that a cause of women's oppression could be specified. Secondly, the fact that the notion of oppression as the general condition of all women was not questioned. Thirdly, the fact that 1970s feminists searched for the cause of women's oppression at the level of social structure. Finally,