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Summaries

Right-wing extremism

by F.G.J. Meijerink, C.E. Mudde and J.J.M. van Holsteyn

What is right-wing extremism? And, does this theoretical concept have empirical value? These are the central questions in this article. First, based on the existing literature, right-wing extremism is defined as a political ideology that is composed of a combination of six elements: nationalism, ethnocentrism, racism, xenophobia, authoritarianism and an anti-democratic attitude. Second, this concept (with some minor adjustments) is operationalized using a structural equations-model that, however, appears not to fit the data satisfactorily. Third, some adjustments of the structural equations-model are presented. Finally, several alternative research tools are discussed which, in future research, may help to establish the empirical value of the theoretical concept of right-wing extremism.

Reform by corruption in Russia

by Hans Oversloot

In the Soviet Union and its successor state, Russia, something has happened which was considered impossible by many commentators: Soviet socialism has disappeared and has been replaced by a system that is referred to, in the absence of a better concept, as a 'society in transition' or as 'post-communism'. In this article two questions are addressed. It is argued, in the first place, that several phenomena characterising real existing socialism have not been noticed because commentators have embraced the marxist critique of real existing socialism. The commonly accepted view of real existing socialism held that this system was characterized by a simple division between rulers and ruled and that all resources (including the 'ideological apparatuses') were used to support the existing order. Furthermore, it is argued that the elite, the 'ruling class', has become divided by its very attempts to *revitalize* Soviet socialism, thereby making a 'simple' reconstruction of the *status quo ante* an infeasible option.

Poll results as election predictors

by Hans Anker

This article postulates that public opinion polls should be viewed as election forecasts. In deriving an election projection from a poll four types of error can be distinguished: 1) technical errors that are inherent to any survey; 2) sample error; 3) the consequences of selective turnout; and 4) the consequences of electoral uncertainty. Assuming that the first type of error in principle is no longer present in contemporary professional research, the paper starts out with a brief inventory of the instruments that have been proposed in the political science literature to correct for the remaining three types of error. Several of these procedures are applied to data collected around the 1995-elections for the Provincial assemblies in the Netherlands. After evaluating the effects of these correction procedures on the predicted election outcomes, it is concluded that their effects are limited in size. This findings suggests that, in general, there is little room for successfully correcting the election projections after the data have been collected. It may be better, therefore, to shift attention away from such corrections to providing insight into the size and direction of existing electoral certainty at the moment at which the poll is conducted.

Medewerkers aan dit nummer

Dr. H. Anker is als universitair docent verbonden aan de vakgroep Politicologie van de Katholieke Universiteit Nijmegen

Dr. P.R. Baehr is als hoogleraar verbonden aan het Studie- en Informatiecentrum Mensenrechten van de Universiteit Utrecht en aan de vakgroep Politieke Wetenschappen van de Rijksuniversiteit Leiden

Dr. G.P. de Bruin is verbonden aan de Vakgroep Methoden en Technieken van de Faculteit der Politieke en Sociaal-Culturele Wetenschappen, Universiteit van Amsterdam

Drs. R. Eykelkamp studeerde in 1994 af als bestuurskundige aan de Universiteit Twente

Dr. J.J.M. van Holsteyn is als universitair docent verbonden aan de vakgroep Politieke Wetenschappen van de Rijksuniversiteit Leiden

Dr. J.E. Keman is hoogleraar Politicologie aan de Vrije Universiteit

Drs. A. Krouwel is verbonden aan de Vakgroep Politicologie en Bestuurskunde van de Vrije Universiteit

Drs. F.G.J. Meijerink is als docent verbonden aan de vakgroep Politieke Wetenschappen van de Rijksuniversiteit Leiden

Drs. C.E. Mudde is als assistent-in-opleiding verbonden aan de vakgroep Politieke Wetenschappen van de Rijksuniversiteit Leiden

Dr. J. Oversloot is als universitair docent verbonden aan de vakgroep Politieke Wetenschappen van de Rijksuniversiteit Leiden

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