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Boekbespreking van: Policy, Office, or Votes? How Political Parties in Western Europe Make Hard Decisions

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mobilization processes. Tarrow, however, points especially to the role of contentious action itself in creating new repertoires, frames and solidarity. Contentious action, therefore, not only uses, but also reproduces resources for collective action.

In the third part, devoted to 'the dynamics of movements', Tarrow addresses the neglected issue of movement outcomes. A very interesting chapter is devoted to the cycle of contention. This is defined as phases of

heightened conflict across the social system with a rapid diffusion of collective action from more mobilized to less mobilized sectors; a rapid pace of innovation in the forms of contention; the creation of new or transformed collective action frames; a combination of organized and unorganized participation; and sequences of intensified information flow and interaction between challengers and authorities (p. 142).

During intense interactions with authorities and allies, and via diffusion processes, protest then reproduces protest. Besides, protest often produces reform – and this is the topic of another chapter – although rarely the reform for which the protesters had struggled.

Finally, as is discussed in a chapter devoted to 'transnational contention', protest spreads cross-nationally, giving rise to various forms of collaboration across borders. Tarrow remains sceptical about the idea of a new historical break after the creation of the modern social movements that accompanied the formation of the nation-state, and stresses, probably with good reason, that the nation-state shall remain for a long time the main target and broker of movement claims. Nevertheless, the addition of this new chapter to the second edition of *Power in Movement* reflects the recognition of the increasing role of transnational phenomena for social movements. The prediction is that, although truly global movements, with sustained interactions between transnationally integrated networks of protesters, will remain rare, loosely structured and temporarily limited forms of transnational collaboration are instead on the rise.

As this brief summary should have indicated, Tarrow develops many hypotheses on the past, the present and the future of social movements. Always accompanied by interesting and well-presented illustrations, they represent a stimulating contribution to further analysis and make this volume highly valuable reading for both 'insiders' and 'outsiders' to social movement studies. In general, the focus is more on action than on actors: the elaboration on the dynamics of a 'protest cycle' remains a dominant theme, while less attention is devoted to the mobilization strategies of social movement organizations. Moreover, the stress on the continuity in the modern repertoire of contention risks sometimes to reduce the attention from the most recent, quite relevant changes in the historically specific social movement family that has monopolized much of the research in the field since the sixties (the so-called left-libertarian movement family). Not only did social movements develop transnational links, they also – as Tarrow acknowledges at various points in the book – learned how to bargain

with the authorities; contributed to send their allies into governments; managed to have some of their activists hired as 'femocrats' or 'ecocrats' in the specialized bureaucracies established to deal with movement concerns and often directly with movement claims; built up professionalized lobbies, and succeeded in becoming the privileged market target for media and other firms. Protest, as disruptive action, has not become rare, but has become less and less dominant in the action repertoire of many of the social movements that are often quoted in Tarrow's book. Its is questionable whether the ecological or women's movements can still be defined as "actors that lack regular access to institutions" or present "new or unaccepted claims". Institutionalization or co-optation, however, are insufficient concepts to describe these new actors who, although not very similar to their predecessors in the seventies and the eighties, still differ clearly from interest groups or parties. The new emphasis on contentious politics that characterizes this edition satisfies the need, that is, I believe, widespread in the field, to go beyond established concepts and approaches, in order to take into account some of the more significant and recent changes in social movements. Maybe, if it was defined and developed better, the concept of contentious politics could contribute to this search for new frames of analysis the necessity of which *Power in Movement* stresses. However, this is a task that Tarrow leaves for future research.

Donatella della Porta

Wolfgang C. Müller and Kaare Strom (eds.), *Policy, Office, or Votes? How Political Parties in Western Europe Make Hard Decisions*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1999. Hardback ISBN 0-521-63135-1 £ 37.50, USD 59.95; paperback ISBN 0-521-63723-6 £ 13.95, USD 21.95.

Operating within the rational choice approach to the study of political parties, Müller and Strom have pulled together an interesting and useful study of how parties make hard decisions. Seeking to build upon earlier work by Kaare Strom, the editors and contributors ably demonstrate that party leaders face trade-offs in deciding what to do in a 'hard choice' situation.

The introductory chapter by Strom and Müller sets out the questions that the volume aims to answer: "How do party leaders make decisions on behalf of their organizations? What trade-offs do they face, and how do they resolve them? What are the constraints under which party leaders operate, both within their parties and in their larger environments?" (p. 1-2). The work assumes that party leaders work as 'political entrepreneurs' and that they face constraints on how they act to achieve their objectives. The rational choice tradition has established a well-defined set of objectives for political parties: office, votes, policys. Unlike earlier works in this tradition, the framework used here assumes that a political party is rarely a pure 'vote-seeker', 'office-

seeker', or 'policy-seeker', and since it is only on rare occasions that the party finds itself in a situation where all three objectives can be satisfied, a key role for the party leader will be to decide between these objectives when the situation calls for a decision.

Existing theoretical models of party decision-making were felt to be inadequate since they were seen to be too 'static', 'unitary', 'unconstrained', and 'demand driven'. Nevertheless, because of the complexities of the situations facing party leaders, the editors have decided to eschew formal modelling in this work, opting instead for a conceptual framework. Such a framework allows for an analytical description of the different party objectives and the relationships between them; it contains operationalizable terms, which can be applied to concrete situations; and it lends itself to future efforts at formal theory building.

In deciding how to choose between the often competing objectives, there will be a number of factors that constrain the entrepreneurship of the party leader. Müller and Strom group these into Organizational Factors (the nature of the party organization, the impact of party activists, etc.); Political Institutions (electoral, legislative, and governmental); and the Situational Context (parties involved in the bargaining, their initial endowments, constraints of past events, domestic and international contexts).

This conceptual framework is then used as a guide by the authors of the ten case study chapters. The cases were chosen to meet two criteria. First, they had to be 'hard choices', i.e., there had to have been a perception among the actors that substantial fortunes were at stake or that they might need to sacrifice some goals for others. Second, priority in case selection was given to events that were objectively important in the politics of that country. Each contributor was asked to address the following questions in their chapter: To what extent did leaders perceive goal conflicts in terms similar to those set out in the introductory chapter (outlined above)? What priorities, sacrifices, and trade-offs did the leaders make? To what extent were their choices explained by organizational, institutional or situational factors?

Marsh and Mitchell examine four situations within Irish politics between 1981 and 1992; Elklit looks at party behaviour in coalition formation in Denmark in the 1970s and 80s; Donald Share takes the Spanish Socialist Workers Party's transformation from a policy-seeking to an office-seeking organization as his case study; the Dutch Labour Party is the focus of the chapter by Hillebrand and Irwin; D'Alimonte studies the Italian Communist Party's behaviour at the time of the 'Historic Compromise'; Wolfgang Müller analyses the Austrian Socialist Party's decision in 1966 to give up the option of continuing in coalition government with the ÖVP; the astonishing failure of the Norwegian opposition to unite to bring down the government during the so-called 'Presthus debacle' of 1987 is examined by Strom; Poguntke's contribution about the German FDP offers an interesting insight into one of the rare occasions when all three objectives of policy, office and votes could be achieved; the trade-offs involved in the agreement to re-design the Swedish constitution in the early 1970s is covered by Bergman; and the final case study, by Huber, looks at two sets of budget negotiations in France in the late 1980s.

The cases in themselves offer some fascinating examples of the tough choices parties

have to make and are worth reading for that aspect alone. Measured against the conceptual framework set out in the introductory chapter they serve to demonstrate the validity and importance of many of the factors identified by Strom and Müller, which help to explain how parties behave. The editors summarize this relationship between the framework and the cases in their concluding chapter and, in light of the findings of the cases, refine the framework.

In answer to the first of the questions set for each of the contributors – on whether goal conflicts can indeed be identified – the evidence strongly supports the suggestion that such conflicts do exist and that party leaders recognize them as such. The conflicts often arise between the electoral objective and either or both of the other two. There is often a conflict between policy commitments and the present or future prospects of holding office, or when office control is available only at the cost of worsened electoral performance and a weakened commitment to the party's policy agenda. The cases also show clearly that leaders do make trade-offs when making decisions in such 'hard choice' situations. But, the real value in the case studies lies in trying to delineate those factors that determine how these decisions are made.

The evidence from the cases provides a mixed picture of the relative importance of these factors. In some cases institutional elements clearly take centre stage, whereas in others they hardly feature at all. For example, in the Spanish case there is evidence to suggest that the provision of public finance for political parties was an important factor that allowed the PSOE leadership to downplay policy concerns in favour of the search for votes and office. Spain and Ireland also provide evidence of how electoral institutions can impact on the behaviour of parties. The picture with regard to party system determinants is much clearer, with the number of parties in the system, the spatial location of the party, and the degree of electoral volatility all being shown to have an important impact on the decisions made by parties. The organizational properties of the party will also play a part in explaining behaviour: the case of the Irish Labour Party is the best example of direct membership pressure on the leadership. The presence of factions within the party will also be an important consideration, as will the incentives of the party leaders themselves (the case studies confirm that leaders place greater emphasis on 'office' than on any of the other objectives).

The final category of constraints examined by the cases related to situational factors or 'relatively short-term conditions that affect the calculus of the relevant party leaders' (p. 295). The empirical chapters do support the notion that exogenous factors such as the state of the economy can be important. There is also evidence to suggest that party leaders can be constrained by more endogenous factors such as their own prior choices or precommitments. The complexity of the bargaining situation is flagged-up as a possible determining factor, but the evidence from the cases is unclear. Greater clarity comes from the proposition that a party's endowments at the start of the bargaining process (in terms of votes, offices, or policies) will influence how it behaves during the negotiations.

Müller and Strom also draw out some conclusions about what the case studies tell us of the processes of party decision-making. For instance, the degree of power in the

hands of the leadership will be important in determining the ease with which constraints from within the party can be overcome. They also note how misinformation and misperception can play a part in the failure of seemingly rational strategies, taking the case of the Italian Communists and the 'Historic Compromise' to back up their claim.

In a final section of the conclusion, the editors attempt to show how the findings of this project impact on the role parties play in representative democracy. Taken together, Müller and Strom believe that the cases demonstrate the greater validity of the 'Interparty' or Schumpeterian model of democratic representation. Whilst there is evidence of 'Intraparty' considerations constraining the autonomy of party leaders, the overall picture is one where parties respond much more readily to the electorate than to their members and activists.

This book succeeds in answering many of the questions about how parties behave, which other works within the rational choice tradition had failed to address. Its importance lies in its attempt to introduce a much richer set of variables that can influence the choices made by party leaders. It does so with minimal costs in terms of parsimony and conceptual clarity. Nevertheless, and partly on account of this determination to remain parsimonious, there are still some important questions which receive only scant attention in the analysis. For example, the contributions relating to Ireland and Italy make important references to the preservation of party identity/ideology/values as a possible goal or objective for parties, which would sit alongside (and conflict with) the other three of office, votes, and policy. The response of the editors is unsatisfactory in that they place this within the electoral objective category. As they put it:

...party identity or unity may simply be a shorthand for future electoral considerations ... [and since] we believe in analytical simplicity, we opt for this shorthand. The fruits of our reductionism are an analysis that is more parsimonious and more compatible with existing rational choice explanations of party behaviour (p. 282).

However, in doing so there is a danger that important considerations taken in the decision-making process of the party are overlooked or are placed in unsuitable categories. As Marsh and Mitchell put it in their chapter: "[We would] suggest that the vocal, symbolic and ideological aspects of party culture go beyond mere policy and explain the difficulties some leaders have encountered in doing deals, however reasonable their motivations in doing so" (p. 60). Or from D'Alimonte: "... the hardest choice parties have to make are those that entail a threat to their survival. Very often these choices involve a drastic change in fundamental aspects of the party's historical identity" (p. 165). Reducing such factors to vote-seeking or even policy-seeking considerations makes for a tidy conceptual framework but at the possible expense of explanatory accuracy.

Nevertheless, this volume is an important and valuable contribution to the study of party behaviour. The editors make it clear they wish for the framework to be used and

refined where possible. The area identified above is one possibility, i.e., to attempt to improve the integration of ideology or value considerations. Since the focus of all the case studies is on decisions taken at a national level, it might also be useful to extend the application of the framework to sub-national coalition negotiations. In this way it would be possible to examine the impact of national-level factors on more local situations. For instance, when local party leaders are deciding whom to include or exclude from coalition bargaining at the sub-national level, to what extent are their choices delimited by the preferences of national-level elites or by considerations of possible conflicts with national-level party goals. The possibilities of further application (and refinement) of Müller and Strom's framework are many, and it is to be hoped that other scholars will take the opportunity to do so.

Overall, this is a worthwhile read. It is not perfect – it doesn't claim to be – but it certainly moves us a number of steps further forward in our understanding of how parties behave.

Craig Robertson

Paul Pennings, Hans Keman and Jan Kleinnijenhuis, *Doing Research in Political Science: An Introduction to Comparative Methods and Statistics*. London: Sage 1999. ISBN 0-761-951024, USD 31.00.

'Comprehensive' is this book's own description of its coverage of the theory, techniques, and application of the comparative method in political science. In this 369 page work, Pennings, Keman and Kleinnijenhuis have certainly earned this label. The text's span is broad: it starts with a concise history of the theory and method of the comparative approach, covers the material from at least four courses in quantitative research methods, and finishes with a brief examination of at least five great works from the past few decades of political science. Sometimes a broad span is good, especially when the work is intended for teaching or for use as a reference book. *Doing Research in Political Science* may be a bit overwhelming as a first text on comparative methods, but as a reference or as a teaching tool for linking topics and treatments usually gathered from disparate sources, it is a valuable and extremely useful work.

The approach in *Doing Research in Political Science* is to discuss not just the theory of the comparative method, but also to survey the practical techniques used to carry it out and to examine in practice a number of applications of the method to actual research. Aimed at the student, the text emphasizes organization and clarity, striving to be comprehensive in both its treatment of comparative approaches as well as applications.

The book is divided into three parts, each clearly identified with one of the authors. In Part 1, Hans Keman identifies, and carefully outlines, the comparative approach to social and political science. The last chapter of this section discusses the problem of interpreting variables and cases, and focuses on the practical issues of developing a