The stability and survival of governments western democracies

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by David Sanders and Valentine Herman

European history since the Middle Ages can be viewed in terms of the attainment of stable political systems by a number of nation states. To the present day there have, more specifically, been movements towards the establishment and acceptance of national boundaries, and also towards the attainment of durable political orders. Writers who have focussed on political stability in recent years have concentrated on a limited number of quite distinct and separate aspects of this phenomenon.[1]

Firstly, the concept has been examined in terms of the stability of regimes or forms of authority: a stable political system has been viewed as one in which a particular pattern of government and a related set of constitutional norms have continued over time.[2] Secondly, stability has been considered in terms of the stability of governments and their personnel: in this sense a stable political system has been thought to be one in which the tenure of office of governments has revealed some continuity over time and where changes in the procedures whereby governments come to and leave office have been made in an orderly fashion.[3] A third way in which the term stability has been used is in connection with societies as a whole, and in the absence of violence in these societies aimed at producing illegal changes in regimes, governments or policies: a stable political system has been viewed as one in which the citizenry has manifested diffuse support for the regime and has complied with its basic political laws.[4] And a fourth and final way that stability has been used is in connection with the policies or outputs of polities: a stable political system has been taken to be one in which there have been continuities of political decisions over time.[5]

In the context of advanced industrial democratic societies (which are focussed upon in this paper) only two of these four types of stability are the subject of meaningful scrutiny in this last quarter of the twentieth century. The nature of the regime is widely accepted in each of these societies. Even though quite sizable so-called 'anti-system' communist and fascist totalitarian parties might exist in countries such as France, Italy, Iceland and Finland,[6] and even though separatist parties might exist in countries such as Belgium and the United

Kingdom, by-and-large these parties are not committed to the radical destruction of the regimes within which they operate.[7] In most instances the very opposite is the case and these parties have, over time, shown that they are content to further their causes by winning support through the ballot box, acting as a responsible political opposition, and, on occassions even entering into a government coalition with 'pro-system' parties. Similarly, the widespread absence of violence in these societies can be interpreted as a general acceptance of the 'rules of the political game' by the citizenry at large. Although acts of political violence – by, for example, farmers in Italy, students in France, Germany and the Netherlands, and trawlermen in Iceland and disputed Icelandic territorial waters – do occur from time to time, these are far from being either common events or accepted as legitimate forms of political activity.[8] Only the events of May 1968 in France seriously challenge our thesis that these countries are stable at the societal level.[9]

One of the other two forms of political stability we mentioned earlier – the stability of the policies or outputs of successive governments in any one country – has received but scanty attention in recent years. Only in the last few years have political scientists begun to systematically examine the policies and performances of governments. Although this state of affairs is to be regretted it would not be in order here to examine the reasons why it should have come about.

Our initial concern in this article is to undertake a critical review of the existing literature on governmental stability. One might expect that the study of the stability of governments should be a relatively simple, straightforward and unambiguous exercise. But, as we will illustrate below neither the terms 'government' nor 'stability' have been used in the past in either a consistent or an obvious manner by previous scholars. To date people have confused the terms 'government', 'administration', and 'cabinet', and, as a consequence, that which is supposed to be the subject of the study of 'government' stability has varied from work to work with rather alarming theoretical and methodological consequences. Furthermore, there has been relatively little agreement to date about what the 'stability' of governments actually constitutes: to some writers it has meant the longevity or duration of a government; to others, it has meant the continuation of certain ministerial personnel over time; to yet others it has meant the persistence of various governmental policies over time, and so on.

The tasks of this article are threefold:

– firstly, to undertake an evaluation and comparison of a number of different definitions of 'government' and 'stability' which have been advanced in recent years;

– secondly, to present and develop a further definition of government stability

which has been designed to overcome many of the deficiencies of previous definitions: this new definition will be called 'survival';

– and thirdly, to examine some of the correlates of both the longevity/duration and the survival of 329 governments which have formed in 20 western democracies in the period since the first post-war general election held in each country, to 1st January 1976.[10]

We now turn our attention to an examination of the work of three scholars who have written on the subject of governmental stability in the last ten years. Throughout this section we will be attempting to seek answers to the following questions: what is a government? what is stability? and most important of all to our present concerns, what is governmental stability?

We begin with a definition of a government as used by Jean Blondel in his paper 'Party Systems and Patterns of Government in Western Democracies'.[11] Blondel's definition was as follows:

> '. . . . any administration was considered as one government which fulfilled two conditions: that of being headed by the same prime minister and that of relying on the support of the same party or parties in the Chamber. No other operational definition appeared acceptable'.[12]

The number of governments this definition yields in each of our twenty countries is in the first column of Table 1.

In our opinion Blondel's way of defining a government has three major disadvantages. The first of these is that it is not the way that parliamentary democracies themselves generally define a government. For example, this definition produces a much lower total number of governments in countries such as Australia, Japan and Austria than the countries themselves acknowledge the existence of. In Australia, to provide just one illustration of this phenomenon, applying the Blondel definition of a government to the period 1949-66 would reveal the existence of a single government, a coalition of the Liberal and Country parties under the premiership of Robert Menzies. In contrast, the number of separate governments cited in official sources – and also widely accepted by politicians, voters and journalists sources as being formed by Menzies after each of the seven general elections held in these years is seven.[13] We do not maintain that there is anything necessarily sacred or sacrosanct about the way that countries themselves define and record governments, but if there are no obvious deficiencies in such a definition and if it is widely accepted, there seems little point in replacing it by something which is both more complex and less intuitively appealing.

The second major disadvantage of Blondel's definition is that it 'runs' governments across two or more successive Parliaments, and fails to take into account different circumstances – such as the size of legislative majorities, patterns of opposition, fractionalisation of the party system, and so on – which

Table 1: Number of Completed Governments Produced By Various Definitions of 'A Government'

Country	Number of Governments as Defined By: Blondel	Hurwitz	Dodd
Australia	8	17	4
Austria	6	14	4
Belgium	16	18	13
Canada	4	11	3
Denmark	14	17	11
Finland	32	32	30
France 4	26	26	21
France 5	10	10	8
Germany	7	9	7
Iceland	10	13	8
Ireland	6	9	5
Israel	20	26	22
Italy	31	34	26
Japan	13	21	6
Luxembourg	7	11	6
Netherlands	10	12	11
New Zealand	8	13	3
Norway	8	13	7
Sweden	3	11	3
United Kingdom	7	12	5
Total	246	329	203
Average Govts/Country	12.3	16.5	10.2

might exist in these Parliaments. For example, when applied to the United Kingdom in the period 1964-70 this definition would reveal the existence of a single Labour government, led by Harold Wilson, whereas in reality there were two quite distinct and separate governments – the first formed after the General Election of October 1964 which lasted until further elections were held in March 1966, and a second which was formed after this election and which continued in office until Parliament was prematurely dissolved in June 1970. These two governments were faced by vastly different parliamentary circumstances. In the 1964-66 Parliament, the government's original majority of 4 was reduced to 2 through deaths, resignations and by-election defeats: at no stage during this period was the government's scope for action and room for manoeuvre anything but extremely limited. By contrast, the government's majority in the 1966-70 Parliament ranged from 97 to 62 and the government was under far fewer constraints.[14] Notwithstanding the fact that both these governments were led by the same prime minister and based on the same party, the legislative performance, style and record of the two were markedly dif-

ferent.[15] To consider, as one is forced to in using Blondel's definition, that these two quite distinct governments were really only one government, is to fly in the face of reality.

The third and final disadvantage of Blondel's definition that we wish to draw attention to is that it yields figures for government stability – more correctly, governmental longevity – which are longer than the maximum term of office of each country's legislature (see column 1, Table 2).

For example, using Blondel's definition one comes to the conclusion that the average length of governments in Sweden in the post-war period has been slightly over 7 years, whereas the maximum term of office of the Swedish Parliament, the Riksdag, has until 1971 been only four years, and since that date only three years (see column 4, Table 2). We consider it to be rather bizarre that in a parliamentary system such as Sweden where the government is drawn from and is responsible to the Parliament, a government could, on average, remain in office for almost twice as long as the maximum legislative term. Yet such a nonsensical conclusion is inescapable when one utilises this definition of a government in the Swedish context. This occurs because Blondel operationalises governmental stability in terms of longevity or duration, that is in the amount of time that any government remains in office.[16]

On the 'plus' side of the equation, the most important advantage of Blondel's definition is that it considers – though this is not explicitly stated by Blondel – 'administrations 'rather than governments. In some ways it undoubtedly makes sense to talk of an administration rather than two or more distinct governments when the policies and personnel of these governments are almost identical. In the United Kingdom, to return to one of our previous examples, certain 'key' positions – such as the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Secretaries of State for Economic Affairs, the Foreign Office, Defence, the Home Office, etc. – were held by the same figures in both the government which came to an end in March 1966, and in the government which was returned to office after these elections.[17] In a country such as Sweden, another example of this same phenomenon, there has been very little turnover of personnel in major ministerial positions in the post-war years. In the period from the formation of the government formed in October 1948 after the first post-war elections to 1st January 1975 there has been only two Prime Ministers, three Ministers of Economic Affairs, and only four Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Defence, Finance and Justice.[18] The composition of cabinets in this era has been almost identical in the sense that the same individuals have held the same or different porfolios in successive governments, and the amount of structural and personal continuity across cabinets has been extremely high.[19]

In instances such as those referred to above, it does make more sense to talk about the Wilson 'administration' or the Erlander 'administration', rather than

Table 2: Duration and Survival of Government

Country	Average Duration (in months) of Government as Defined by: Blondel	Hurwitz	Dodd	Maximum Term of office (in months) of Legislature	Average Survival of Governments (%)
Australia	43,9	20,6	87,8	36	65,6
Austria	48,8	25,7	72,8	48	62,7
Belgium	21,2	18,9	26,2	48	41,6
Canada	68,5	31,7	67,0	60	55,6
Denmark	25,0	20,7	30,7	48	54,1
Finland	11,4	11,4	12,2	48	38,6
France 4	7,0	7,0	8,7	60	20,1
France 5	18,5	18,5	23,1	60	41,2
Germany	42,3	33,0	33,1	48	76,7
Iceland	32,9	25,3	41,1	48	64,4
Ireland	50,0	33,3	60,0	60	62,6
Israel	15,3	11,9	14,0	48	44,5
Italy	10,6	9,7	12,7	60	27,8
Japan	26,5	16,4	19,2	48	38,5
Luxembourg	47,1	32,0	59,0	60*	53,0
Netherlands	32,2	26,5	28,9	48	61,2
New Zealand	43,6	26,8	103,7	36	91,4
Norway	41,7	25,8	47,9	48	71,8
Sweden	84,3	27,3	36,0	48**	55,0
United Kingdom	47,4	28,3	67,8	60	52,4

* In 1954 the maximum term of office of Luxembourg's Parliament was changed from 6 to 5 years. As most of the period covered in this study occurs after 1954 a figure of 5 years is given above.

** In 1971, the maximum term of office of the Swedish Riksdag was changed from 4 to 3 years. As most of this period covered in this study occurs before 1971, a figure of 4 years is given above.

to attempt to identify a number of distinct governments which were artificially separated from each other only by the statutory requirement to hold parliamentary elections every so many years. This is especially so in the absence of any major changes in either the policies and/or the personnel of the successive governments which have formed under the same prime minister and been based on the same party or parties.

In this context we must note that 'administration' is a concept which is used more widely in the American presidential system than in any of the West European parliamentary systems. Hence when commentators refer to the Eisenhower, Johnson on Nixon administrations they usually refer to the periods

1952-60, 1963-8 and 1968-74, respectively, rather than to the separate terms of office for which the Presidents were elected (or appointed). This usage of the term 'administration' is probably best suited to the separation of powers model rather than to the parliamentary ones which form the subject of this article. To blur the differences between 'administrations' and 'governments', as Blondel does, adds a large measure of confusion to a set of basic and fundamental differences between the two phenomena and to the type of system in which each occurs.

The second work which examines the problem of governmental stability that we wish to consideer is Leon Hurwitz's 'An index of democratic political stability'.[20] Hurwitz defines a government as '. . an administration which meets any one of the following criteria (a) post-election formation; (b) change in the prime-minister; (c) change in the party composition of the cabinet; and (d) an inter-election resignation/reformation with the same prime minister and cabinet composition.[21]

It can be seen that elements (b) and (c) of this definition form the basis of Blondel's definition of a government which we considered earlier. The major, and a very important, difference between the two definitions is element (a), namely post-election formation. To Hurwitz the duration of a government is automatically terminated when the parliament from which it was formed comes to either a statutory or a premature end, and general elections are held for a new parliament. If the government that forms when the new parliament is assembled has the same prime minister and is composed of the same party or parties as the previous government (elements (b) and (c) of the definition) this is considered by Hurwitz to be a new and different government: to Blondel, however, the two governments would form one administration.

Applying these two definitions to the countries under consideration, results in different numbers of governments being found (see column 2, Table 1). In Australia and Sweden, to continue using our previous examples, the successive governments formed by Menzies and Erlander, respectively, after each general election would be recorded as separate governments under the Hurwitz definition, but as a single administration under the Blondel definition. In all but three of the twenty countries we are considering, more governments as defined by Hurwitz have occurred in the post-war years than would be recognised by Blondel. In the other three cases (Finland and the Fourth and Fifth French Republics) as all of the successive governments which have formed have involved changes in the prime minister and/or the party or parties which formed the cabinet, the same number of governments are recognised by both authors' definitions.

What are the main advantages and disadvantages of using Hurwitz's definition? Its three major advantages are the opposite of the disadvantages we en-

countered earlier when considering Blondel's definition. Firstly, it defines a government in the same way that countries themselves define a government, that is it utilises a common and widespread understanding of what a government is. Secondly, it takes into account the fact that each and every government is located within a particular legislative setting, and by placing emphasis on post-election formation does not attempt to 'run' successive governments together across parliaments while ignoring the different circumstances which might occur in these parliaments. And the third and final advantage of Hurwitz's definition is that it produces figures for governmental duration or longevity which are equal to or less than, but, importantly, not greater than, the term of the legislature within which each government is located. (see column 4 Table 2). The major disadvantage of Hurwitz's definition is something which we paid particular attention to earlier when considering Blondel's definitions, namely that it emphasises 'governments' at the expense of 'administrations'. Hurwitz also differs from Blondel in his conceptualisation of political stability. Although he argues that 'durability' or 'longevity' is perhaps the basic component in any discussion of political stability,[22] he criticises Blondel's index — and an earlier and very similar one advanced by Russett[23] — as being a 'monomeasure of longevity', which reduces stability to endurance. 'Persistence', he writes, 'is seen to be the government's ability to hold on, longevity, perhaps even stubbornness. All changes in the chief executive or the cabinet were seen as evidence of instability and by so doing, Russett and Blondel are unable to differentiate among the very real and non-theoretical types of government change in democratic polities'.[24]

Hurwitz contends that, 'Cabinets change for a variety of reasons: some changes *do not* present evidence of instability (elections, an additional party joins the coalition . . .) . . . while other types of change *do* present evidence of less stability (loss of a vote of confidence, a party withdrawal from the coalition, the assassination of the prime minister)',[25] and constructs a 'Persistence of pattern index', which allocates points on a scale ranging from 1.00 (highly stable) to 0.00 (highly unstable). Although we would not disagree that 'some types of governmental changes are more stable than other changes',[26] there are a certain number of theoretical and methodological objections which can be advanced to Hurwitz's persistence scores: these we return to later.

The final author whose work we wish to consider is Lawrence Dodd whose 'operational definition' of 'cabinet durability' is 'a cabinet exists so long as there is no change in the parties that comprise the cabinet'.[27] Here Dodd is explicitly focussing on a 'cabinet', but it seems to us that this definition is very similar to that of previous definitions of governments we have been considering. And, for reasons which we have elaborated at length earlier we consider this to be an inadequate definition of a government — it is not the way that

countries themselves define governments, it 'runs' governments across two or more successive parliaments, and it produces durability scores which bear no relation to the term of office of parliaments, (see Column 3, Table 2). In addition, a very serious limitation of this definition is that it conceptualises a cabinet exclusively in terms of the party or parties that comprise it, and places no emphasis whatsoever on the prime minister or prime ministers that might lead these governments.

An example from Australia is perhaps necessary to illustrate this point. Using Dodd's definition one would identify one only one Liberal-Country 'cabinet' in the period 1949-72, while using Blondel's definition one would identify five separate 'administrations' (led by Premiers Menzies, Holt, McEwen, Gorton and McMahon), while using Hurwitz's definition one would identify all of thirteen quite distinct governments.

On the subject of cabinet stability, Dodd writes:

> 'The key question is this: what constitutes a breakdown or change in a party coalition within the cabinet? A variety of answers can be given (1) any alteration in the distribution of payoffs (ministerial seats) among parties could be viewed as a breakdown in the old coalition and the formation of a new one, even if the parties retained the same number of seats; (2) only 'significant' alterations in payoff distributions could constitute a change; (3) only changes in the parties comprising the cabinet could be viewed as a change in cabinet coalitional status'.[28]

For reasons which we have just discussed, we consider the third of these answers as inadequate. The other two answers that Dodd gives are somewhat more plausible – the first, however, less so than the second. Our major objection to the first answer – any alteration in the distribution of payoffs among the parties – is that a change in the party control of a single minor portfolio would result in a new cabinet being defined for analytical purposes. Countries, it must be immediately noted do not themselves define cabinets on this basis. As some cabinets are very large in terms of the number of ministers they contain, some changes are inevitable over time. And such changes which may occur – through say death, ill health, or resignation – may have no political importance.

Dodd recognises the limitation of this first approach, and offers us his second answer which concedes 'only 'significant' changes in payoff distribution'. The major problem that this raises is in defining what are 'significant' changes. Even if it is possible to answer the question 'what is a significant change?' by examining changes in, say, four of the ten or so major portfolios which might exist in a country, it leaves a number of questions unanswered. Over what time period must these changes take place? Must these changes occur all at once, or may they take place over a certain limited period of time? Does a cabinet reshuffle – when three or four, say, ministers exchange portfoils with each

other – contribute the formation of a new cabinet or not? Unfortunately, Dodd offers us no insights as to how such crucial questions may be answered.

A related problem is the emphasis which Dodd places on payoffs. In the coalitional literature, payoffs are rewards that actors (in this instance parties) receive for entering into a coalition.[29] In the context of cabinets, a payoff to a party which enters into a government is control of certain ministries, and it is assumed that control of ministries implies control of the policies for which these ministries are responsible. For example, the payoff to a party which receives the agriculture portfolio, say, in a cabinet is not the portfolio *per se* but the ability to determine agricultural policies. It is theoretically impossible to separate policies from personnel in the context of payoff distributions, and this has important ramifications when one is attempting to define a government along the lines that Dodd chooses. Changes in the personnel of a cabinet may take place without involving changes in the policies of that cabinet, and changes in policy may, in turn, take place in a cabinet without involving changes in personnel. The first of these possibilities, if it involved a change in payoffs among the parties, would lead Dodd to conclude that such a change resulted in the formation of a new cabinet. Yet the second of these possibilities – which strikes us as being more likely to occur than the first – would not lead Dodd to conclude that a new cabinet had formed. Our point here is, quite simply, that conceptions of payoffs must embrace both portfolios and the control over policies attached to these portfolios: to concentrate on only one of these aspects, as Dodd does, strikes us as being inadequate.

Let us try and summarise the main lines of our argument to date. From this brief summary of some existing works on governmental stability two facts are hopefully evident. First of all there is very little agreement about what a 'government' is: Blondel equates a government with an administration, and Dodd a government with a cabinet; Hurwitz limits his definition of a government to a single parliament, Blondel and Dodd conceive of a government existing in two or more successive parliaments: Hurwitz and Blondel define a government in terms of its prime minister and party composition, while Dodd only takes into account the party composition of a cabinet. Secondly, we can point to the fact that there is equally little agreement about what stability entails: while Blondel has equated it with governmental duration or longevity, Hurwitz has attempted to score various events which lead to changes in governments, and Dodd has written of party, payoff, and even policy continuity. At this stage, it must be asked, is it possible to have a notion of governmental stability which overcomes many of the difficulties in the concept we have described above? In our opinion this is possible, and we propose to redefine the problem of 'governmental stability' in terms of 'governmental survival'. We

begin by defining a government in the same way as Hurwitz does: this seems to us to be the only realistic way of defining a government which satisfies our earlier criteria of being similar to the way countries themselves define a government, of not 'running' a government occurs two or more successive parliaments, of reducing the maximum duration of a government to a period of time not greater than that of the parliament, and of taking into account the prime ministerial and party composition of a cabinet.

'Stability' is more problematical. All of the works that we have been considering so far have either explicitly or implicitly equated the stability of governments with their longevity or duration. To our way of thinking such an approach suffers from two majors defects. First of all the maximum statutory period that governments can legally remain in office differs from country to country. For example, the House of Commons in the United Kingdom and the House of Representatives in Australia are elected for five and three years respectively: if a government is formed at the beginning of a newly elected parliament in each country and remains in office until elections are statutorily due at the end of the parliament, it makes very little, if any, sense at all to say that the government which formed in the United Kingdom was 66 % more stable than the government which formed in Australia, because it remained in office 66 % longer. Both governments are equally stable (or unstable); both survived the maximum period of time that they could.

The second, and closely related, problem associated with equating stability with longevity or duration is that, within each country there are different periods of time that each government, when it comes to power, can legally remain in office. For example, imagine a country where the parliament is elected for five years and a cabinet which is formed after the election lasts for four years before resigning and being replaced by one which remains in office for one year until the next parliamentary elections are statutarily due. In this instance, it does not make any sense to say that the government which lasted for 1 year is any less stable than the government which lasted for 4 years. In fact we would argue that the shortlived government is the most stable because it survived for the maximum possible time, whereas the longer government left office after completing only four-fifths of its maximum possible time.

What is needed to overcome both of these problems which arise from equating stability with longevity is a measure which, on the one hand, is based on the maximum period of time in which a government can remain in office, and, on the other, does not penalise countries where the term of office of parliament is short. This measure we call 'survival'. It is a measure which records the time that a government served as a percentage of the maximum possible (remaining) time that it can serve:

$$\text{Survival} = \frac{\text{time in office}}{\text{maximum possible (remaining) time in office}} \times 100$$

The survival measure records that governments which last in two countries for 3 and 5 years are equally stable if the maximum term of office of their parliaments are three and five years, respectively. And the survival measure also records that governments which last for the maximum possible period of time are equally stable however long (in months) they remain in office. Governments are penalised as being unstable if and only if they fail to serve out their maximum possible time in office. It is our contention that survival is a more meaningful concept than longevity because, on the one hand, it takes into account the maximum period of time in which any government can remain in office and, on the other hand, it does not penalise countries where the term of office of Parliament is short.

We turn now to investigate a series of models which explore the relationships between governmental survival and longevity, and a number of intra – and extra – parliamentary prediction variables. Here specifically, we intend to examine:

– the *bivariate* impact upon administration duration, government duration and governmental survival of a series of 'intraparliamentary' variables related to the numerical and ideological fragmentation of party systems;

– the *multivariate* impact of these intraparliamentary variables upon governmental duration and survival;

– the consequences firstly of dividing the 329 governments under analysis into *majority and minority subsets,* and secondly, of dividing them into *individual country subsets;*

– the impact upon governmental survival of several *'extra-parliamentary' protest variables* so as to assess the posible interrelationships between governmental stability and societal stability.

The bivariate impact of intraparliamentary variables

The first part of our empirical analysis is based upon an earlier study by Taylor and Herman which although entitled 'Party Systems and Government Stability'[30] was mainly concerned with the longevity or *duration of administrations.* Our intention is to compare their findings on the correlates of administration duration (over the period 1945-64) with our own findings (over the period 1945-76) on the correlates firstly of *governmental duration* and secondly, of *governmental survival.*

It is necessary initially, however, to set out the method of investigation which Taylor and Herman employed. They were attempting to test the general the-

Table 3: The bivariate impact of various intraparliamentary variables upon administration duration, governmental duration and governmental survival*

Hypothesis:	Measure of Government Stability (Taylor & Herman) Administration duration 1945-69	Government duration 1945-75	Government survival 1945-75
H_1: governmental stability is negatively correlated with number of parties holding seats in the Parliaments	–.39	–.26	–.23
H_2: governmental stability is negatively correlated (i) with Parliamentary fractionalisation (Fp)	–.448	–.33	–.32
(ii) with Parliamentary variance (Vp)	–.339	–.33	–.23
H_3: one party governments are more stable than coalition governments	D.M.T.S.	D.M.T.S.	D.M.T.S.
H_4: government stability is negatively correlated with the number of parties in the government	–.307	–.179	–.18
H_5: government stability is negatively correlated (i) with government fractionalisation (Fg) (ii) with	–.302	–.17	–.17
govt. variance (Vg)	–.227	–.11	–.07
H_6: majority governments are more stable than minority governments	D.M.T.S.	D.M.T.S.	D.M.T.S.
H_7: Governmental stability is negatively correlated with the number of parties in the opposition	–.103	–.147	–.140
H_8: Governmental stability is negatively correlated (i) with the fractionalisation of the opposition parties (Fo) (ii) with opposition	–.114	–.15	–.13
variance (Vo)	–.135	–.26	–.22
H_{10}: Governmental stability is negatively correlated with the total proportion of seats held by the anti system party (anti %)	–.45	–.4	–.39
H_{12}: Governmental stability is negatively correlated with the fractionalisation of the pro-system parties (Fpro)	–.354	–.202	–.19

D.M.T.S. = Difference of means test significant
* co-efficient reported are Pearson product-movement correlations (r)

sis that governmental stability (or more accurately, administration duration) varies inversely with the degree of numerical and ideological fragmentation of the Parliamentary party system. Measuring 'degree of fragmentation' in several ways, ten bivariate and three multivariate hypotheses were specified. The former are outlined in Table 3, which also reports the results of our own investigation of the same hypotheses using *governmental* duration and survival as dependent variables.

The *fractionalisation* scores in Table 3 attempt to measure the degree of multipartism present in any given parliament, taking into account both the number of parties and their relative sizes[31]: since a parliament or a government or an opposition can be composed of any number of parties of differing relative strengths, for any given parliament, measures of parliamentary fractionalisation (F_p), governmental fractionalisation (F_g) and opposition fractionalisation (F_o) can be defined. The *variance* scores in Table 3 (V_p, V_g, V_o) also follow measures defined by Taylor and Herman. They again provide an indication of the degree of multipartism but in addition attempt to take account of the *ideological differences* between the parties which compose each parliament, government or opposition.[32]

The overall pattern within Table 3 is immediately apparent: as might be expected, all the correlations are negative (governments tend to last longer when there are fewer parties in either Parliament or Government; they tend to last longer the more fractionalised the Parliament is, and so on), but more interestingly, the general level of correlations is lower for our measures of duration than it is for the Taylor/Herman analysis, and indeed is even lower still for our survival measures. Clearly, therefore, parliamentary characteristics are not such good predictors of governmental duration as the Taylor/Herman conclusions might lead us to believe. Moreover, if we use the notion of survival rather than duration, that is to say, if we define a government's stability in terms not simply of its duration but in terms of the extent to which it survives its maximum possible remaining term, then several of the intraparliamentary variables are clearly not important at all. The survival coefficient for government variance (V_g) for example, the extent to which governments are characterised by interparty ideological divisions, falls from r = –.227 to .07 which is not significantly different from zero.[33] Similarly, the coefficient for the fractionalisation of prosystem parties (F_{pro}) falls from –.354 in the Taylor/Herman study to –.19 for our survival measures.[34]

The most obvious explanation for the generally lower level of the *survival* coefficients is simply that the survival index, as a more sensitive indicator of governmental stability, is an inherently more difficult measure to predict than mere longevity. The differences between the Taylor/Herman findings and our *duration* coefficients, however, are somewhat more difficult to account for.

Part of the explanation undoubtedly lies in Taylor/Herman's use of 'administration' rather than 'government' as their unit of analysis, a definition which we rejected on purely theoretical grounds earlier. A second explanatory factor is perhaps the smaller universe of the Taylor/Herman analysis, which only covers the period 1945-69. While a smaller universe is not in itself likely to produce unrealiable statistical results, it seems to be the case that since the Taylor/Herman analysis was completed in 1971, party systems have tended overall to become more fractionalised. This is certainly true of the party systems in Italy, Finland, Norway and the U.K. In this sense the Taylor/Herman 'sample' was a relatively low variance sample skewed in favour of systems with lower levels of fractionalisation, a feature which could undoubtedly distort the values of any coefficients computed upon it.

We would not claim, however, that this combination of an inappropriate definition of government and a skewed sample of governments in terms of the overall levels of fractionalisation, is necessarily entirely responsible for the generally higher levels of correlation obtained in the Taylor/Herman analysis. Rather we contend that the relatively large differences between the findings of these different studies, particularly in view of the similarities between the government duration and government survival coefficients, serves to demonstrate in empirical terms the importance of differentiating between the concepts of government and administration: 'running' governments together (using administration rather than government as the unit of analysis) appears to exaggerate the effects of fractionalisation and variance upon governmental stability.

The multivariate Impact of intraparliamentary variables

It is clear from the previous part of our analysis that using governments rather than administrations as the units of analysis, governmental stability (with some exceptions) is harder to predict than earlier findings might have suggested. In this section we use the notion of prediction in a rather more technical way, in terms of multiple regression equations. We begin by replicating the three multivariate models reported by Taylor and Herman. As Table 4 indicates, however, the levels of statistical explanation achieved in our investigation are again lower than in the earlier analysis.

The Taylor/Herman multivariate models were derived essentially from relatively simple, common sense assumptions about the relationships between fractionalisation (of governments, opposition and the prosystem parties), the size of seats held by anti-system parties, and governmental stability. The approach which is adopted here is rather different in the sense that we are just as concerned with the *rejection* of hypotheses as with their confirmation.[35] While we would not claim that the hypotheses which we implicitly reject are

Table 4: Replication of the Taylor/Herman multivariate models

	Dependent Variable administration duration (Taylor & Herman)	Government duration	Government survival
Independent Variables			
F_o and F_g	$R^2 = .12$	$R^2 = .04$*	$R^2 = .025$*
F_{pro} and percentage size of antisystem parties	$R^2 = .246$	$R^2 = .173$	$R^2 = .161$*
F_g and percentage size of antisystem parties	$R^2 = .218$	$R^2 = .158$	$R^2 = .163$*

* denotes one or more coefficients not significant at .05 level.

necessarily of great theoretical import, we consider it useful to report our finding for the following reason. On the basis of the bivariate models presented in Table 3, even using the coefficients obtained by our own investigation, none of the Taylor/Herman hypotheses could be rejected as those hypotheses are stated in essentially probabilistic terms.[36] Despite these levels of *bivariate* correlation, however, we attempt to show in this section how the multiple regression model can be employed to establish which of the various intraparliamentary variables, when considered in a multidimensional as opposed to a two-dimensional space, have statistically significant effects upon governmental stability. We do this by attempting to construct 'best fitting' predictive equations for duration and survival.

Now of course, the question as to what constitutes 'the best predictive equation' is rather problematic since in order to secure a 'good' regression model, trade-offs often need to be made between explained variance, the avoidance of collinear predictors or independent variables, and the maintenance of parameter significance. The twin criteria which we employ here are firstly the maximisation of R^2 with all parameters significant at the .05 level[37], and secondly, the avoidance of intercorrelations between predictor variables greater than $r = .9$.[38] Table 5 identifies our 'best' equations for governmental duration and survival. Clearly, several of the intraparliamentary variables which we specified in Table 3 are omitted. Moreover, the direct implication of our definition of 'best' is that the inclusion of additional intraparliamentary predictors, either singly or in combination, furnishes nonsignificant parameters for those additional variables. Indeed, throughout the ensuing analysis our method of hypothesis rejection consists in identifying variables which do *not* appear in our 'best' equations. For any 'best' equation the potential independent variables *excluded* from it can be interpreted as having no additional predictive power

(and, therefore, no effect) over and above that of the independent variables *included* within it.[39]

Table 5: 'Best' prediction equations for duration and survival using intraparliamentary predictors*

Survival =	*Duration* =
a - b_1 ≠ parties in government	a – b_1 ≠ parties in government
- b_2 percentages size of anti-system parties	– b_2 percentage size of anti-system parties
+ b_3 majority/minority	+ b_3 majority/minority
+ b_4 size of government in seats	
N = 329 R^2 = .223	R^2 = .203

* Clearly the general form of the multiple regression model is $Y = a + b_1X_1 + b_2X_2 \ldots + b_nx_n + \varepsilon_i$. We use positive and negative signs simply to indicate the directions of slope of our estimates of the structural coefficients.

As Table 5 shows, the two best models are not dissimilar: the relative size of antisystem parties and whether or not a government has a majority predictably occur in both equations. Indeed in terms of the magnitudes of their respective standardised regression coefficients and t statistics these were the two most important variables in each model. The only difference between the two equations is that the size of government in seats predicts survival, but not duration. As we have suggested, however, the most valuable information which Table 5 reveals is the variables referred to in Table 3 which it excludes: (1) the fact that the coalition dummy variable is nonsignificant in (and therefore does not occur in) both equations indicates that controlling for the independent variables directly included in each of the equations, coalition governments tend to be just as durable and to survive just as long as single party governments; (2) despite their levels of bivariate correlation, the fractionalisation and/or variance of parliaments, of governments, of oppositons and of prosystem parties, and the *proportion* of total seats controlled by the government, are all unimportant in determining either duration or survival, again, when the other independent variables included in each of the two equations are controlled for. In other words, it appears to be the case that conceptually more rudimentary measures of multipartism, such as the number of parties in government, are better predictors of both government duration and survival than either fractionalisation or variance, both of which provide much more sophisticated indications of the degree of party system fragmentation. We find it difficult to offer a satisfactory theoretical explanation of this empirical finding: we can only observe that it seems rather bizarre that the relative strenghts of the n

parties which exist in any given parliamentary situation are less important in determining the stability of the government than the fact that k of these parties, for whatever reason, (join together to) form the government.

Our investigation so far has defined its data universe in terms of all the postwar governments in western parliamentary democracies, and accordingly our tentative generalisations have been based upon the pattern across *all* governments. At this stage, however, a caveat needs to be introduced. Since there are certain distinct types of government, such as majority/minority or coalition/single party, it can be argued that it makes sense to investigate these different types separately. Moreover, while all parliamentary democracies share certain obvious common characteristics such as competitive party systems and regular, free elections, it is nonetheless equally valuable to investigate the possible *differences*, which exist across the various systems[40] by undertaking a series of analyses of individual countries. It is these possible areas of differentiation which we now examine, although throughout this section we report our findings on *survival* only. This is principally because in the following models there is generally a reasonable degree of correspondence between the 'best' equations for survival and for duration, and to report the marginal differences between the two sets of models would obsfuscate the presentation of our findings.

Majority/Minority differences

As we saw in Table 3 differences of means tests indicate that majority governments are significantly more stable (both in terms of their durability and survival) than minority governments, and that single party governments are significantly more stable than coalition governments. However, as we saw in our multivariate analysis, when other variables are controlled for, while the majority/minority variable remains important, the coalitional status of a government has no signifcant impact upon either duration or survival. In conse-

Table 6: 'Best' survival equations for majority and minority subsets

For majority governments:

Survival = a – b_1 percentage size of anti system parties
+ b_2 ≠ of parties in government
R^2 = .175 N = 247

For minority governments:

Survival = a – b_1 size of Parliament in seats
+ b_2 percentage of seats controlled by the government
– b_3 ≠ parties in government
R^2 = .229 N = 82

quence, in this part of our analysis we only examine majority/minority not coalition/single party differences.

Table 6 identifies the 'best' model for governmental survival in both the majority and minority government subsets. For majority governments, the optimal equation for survival is virtually identical to the overall equations for duration and survival presented in Table 5. Clearly, since 247 of the 329 governments in our sample had a majority, the similarity is not surprising.

For minority governments, however, the position is substantially changed: in the survival equation for these governments, the percentage of government seats and the size of the Parliament itself become significant, while the percentage of seats controlled by antisystem parties, a variable which has until now appeared in all of our 'best' equations becomes nonsignificant and is accordingly excluded from the equation. The number of parties in the government remains significant. What is particularly surprising about the minority survival equation is the fact that parliament size occurs in the model at all.[41] Conventional theory, so far as we are aware, does not attribute much importance to parliamentary size as a determinant of anything. Nonetheless the fact that a significant negative coefficient for the parliamentary size variable was consistently observed under the different conditions of a number of models in our search for the 'best' minority government equation demands some sort of explanation. Our explanation in fact rests upon two simple but untested assumptions: firstly, that *ceteris paribus* it is easier to achieve and maintain the support of a relatively small number of people than a relatively large number; and secondly, that in minority situations, the greater the lack of support for the government within its own party ranks, the less likely the government is to survive.[42]

Given these two assumptions, our explanation of the observed relationship is fairly obvious: if Parliament A is larger than Parliament B, and if both have minority governments which control n% of the parliamentary seats, then the government on Parliament A will clearly have to maintain the support of more deputies than the government in B. From our first assumption, therefore, the government in A will find it harder, other things being equal, to maintain the support of its deputies; and from our second assumption, this will give it a lower probabilty of survival than the government in Parliament B. While we would not claim that our observations in this regard constitute a major theoretical breakthrough, we would suggest that coalition theorists would perhaps be well advised to take note of this simple yet consistent empirical relationship.

Within Country differences

We now turn to examine a series of models generated by searching for 'best'

survival equations on an individual country by country basis. By 'best', we again mean that model which maximises R^2, maintains parameter significance and avoids multicollinearity, with the direct implication that the addition of further predictor variables to any given equation would have detrimental effects on parameter significance, that is to say, that such additions would produce a 'worse' model even if there was some increase on R^2. The only principle difference, as we will see later, between these 'best' models and our earlier more generalised 'best' models is that we are no longer concerned with rejecting as unimportant those independent variables which fail to achieve significance in the various prediction equations, but rather, are using our individual country 'best' models as instruments for refining and qualifying our earlier conclusions.

Table 7 reports our 'best' survival equations by country, although the small sizes of many of the subsamples force us on occasions to operate at levels of

*Table 7**: Within country 'best' models for survival – Intraparliamentary Predictors only[43]

	N	'Best' within country predictor(s)	R^2	$'R^2$	level of significance
Australia	17	$\neq$ of parties in government, V_p	.31	.19	.20
Austria	14	F_o, % size of anti system parties	.45	.32	.20
Belgium	18	% size antisystem, government seats as %	.18	.07	.10
Canada	11	F_{pro}, V_p, government seats as %	.68	.56	.05
Denmark	17	F_g, F_o	.23	.10	.10
Finland	32	% size antisystem parties	.106	.105	.01
France IV	26	coalition/not	.10	.09	.25
France V	10	F_g	.29	.20	.05
Germany	9	none	—	—	—
Iceland	13	coalition/not	.49	.45	.01
Ireland	9	none	—	—	—
Israel	26	F_{pro}	.317	.25	.02
Italy	34	coalition/not	.09	.07	.10
Japan	21	size of governments in seats	.21	.17	.05
Luxembourg	11	% size antisystem parties	.39	.32	.05
Netherlands	12	none	—	—	—
New Zealand	13	none	—	—	—
Norway	13	V_o	.21	.14	.10
Sweden	11	$\neq$ parties in Parliament	.32	.24	.10
U.K.	12	F_p	.46	.41	.02

* all abbreviations are defined in Table 3
'R^2 denotes corrected R^2

significance which are somewhat suspect: in our own defence we can only argue that it is better to test a model at a level of probability of .20 (that is to say, to test a model and be 80 % certain that the results are accurate) rather than to avoid testing it altogether. The small sample sizes also lead us to report 'corrected R^2' as well as R^2, since it has been argued with some force that for samples of less than 20 or so, this statistic gives a more realistic indication of variance explained than conventional R^2.[44] Nonetheless, despite these qualifications two substantive observations can be made in relation to Table 7.

(1) The coalition variable, which has perhaps surprisingly not achieved significance in previous general equations for survival, finally does achieve significance in the equations for Iceland, Italy and the Fourth French Republic (France IV). These latter two are among the four countries in our sample (the others are Finland and Israel) which have had more than 20 governments, and which have had the worst government survival records, in the postwar period. Clearly, therefore, while there is no *general* relationship between coalitional status and survival, the positive significant coefficients in the Italy and France IV equations suggests that at the bottom end of the survival scale there is a tendency for coalition governments in fact to be more stable, than single party governments.

(2) As has been the case with all of the models which we have presented, the levels of statistical explanation achieved in Table 7 are not particularly high, averaging around corrected R^2 = .20. For Ireland, the Netherlands and New Zealand no 'best' model could be identified at all. On the other hand, the models for Austria, Norway, Iceland, Luxembourg and the U.K. all achieve corrected R^2's of greater than .30; while in Canada some 56 % (again corrected R^2) of the variance on governmental survival can be explained in terms of the variance of the Parliaments, the fractionalisation of prosystem parties and the percentage of seats controlled by the government.

The main problem involved in making any direct theoretical interpretations of these observations is that there appears to be no obvious reason, for example, why Ireland, Holland and New Zealand should cluster together in terms of their unpredictability, or why governmental survival should be easier to predict in Canada, Norway, Iceland, the UK and Luxembourg. In a sense, however, we do not wish to generalise about the pattern of relationships in Table 7. as we have already examined the general pattern of relationships in our search for the 'best' overall equations for duration and survival (see Table 5). Rather, the contents of Table 7 are more usefully regarded as *refinements* to our general ('best') equation for survival. An example will perhaps demonstrate the point we are trying to make.

It will be recalled that in our best survival model, the two most important variables were the percentage size of antisystem parties and the majority/mino-

rity status of the government. As Table 6 indicates, while the size of antisystem parties is a significant factor in the equations for Austria, Belgium, Luxembourg, Israel and Norway, the majority/minority dummy appears in none of the equations. The reason for this ommission is a simple one: those countries which tend to have stable governments are precisely those countries which tend always to have majority governments (hence the significance of the majority/minority variables in the overall survival and duration equations). However, precisely because most of these countries always have majority governments, when each of them is investigated separately, the majority/minority variable in fact becomes a (majority) constant. Consequently, *within* these countries, majority/minority status is not important for postdictive purposes. The evidence presented in Table 7, therefore, does not in any sense contradict the tentative generalisations which we advanced earlier in Table 5. Rather, it provides information about the additional variables which appear to affect governmental survival in the specific Parliamentary contexts of each of the countries in our sample. In this sense, therefore, when we observe for example that we can find *no* significant intraparliamentary predictors of governmental survival in the Irish Republic, we mean that no specific features of the parliamentary system appear to improve our ability to predict the survival of Irish governments beyond the ones we can make on the basis of our *general* 'best' equation for survival.

On the basis of the foregoing discussion we would clearly not claim to have identified the major determinants of governmental duration or survival. We would argue, however, that our 'best model' approach has enabled us to eliminate a good many potential predictor variables which by reference only to bivariate analysis would be retained and at the same time to establish which variables *do* have a significant impact upon governmental survival in different circumstances. Indeed, our substantive findings so far can be summarised as follows:

(1) The general levels of bivariate correlation between government duration (and survival) and the various intraparliamentary variables are somewhat lower than previous analyses suggest: stability is not so easy to predict as might have been supposed.

(2) The 'best' intraparliamentary predictors of duration and of survival are the relative size of antisystem parties and the majority/minority status of the government, with the size of the government in seats and (for survival only) the number of parties in the government also being of importance: together they explain some 22 % of the variance in survival. The more complex fractionalisation and variance variables, however, have no significant impact upon survival when these four variables are controlled for.

(3) For minority governments, the size of the Parliament itself and the per-

centage of seats held by the government become important in determining the degree of governmental survival, while the percentage size of antisystem parties loses its significance.

(4) As might be expected, when each country is analysed separately, different groupings of Parliamentary characteristics assume importance, although the relatively low levels of statistical significance involved mean that our findings (outlined in Table 7) can only be presented extremely tentatively.

The Impact of extraparliamentary variables

Since governments do not operate solely in a parliamentary context, it would be surprising if Parliamentary variables alone could account for their stability. In this part of our analysis we examine the role of several extraparliamentary variables in order to see if we can improve upon our predictive model of governmental survival. The specific variables which we investigate attempt to measure, on the one hand, political protest (protest demonstrations, riots and politcal strikes)[45] and on the other hand, acts of governmental coercion or 'sanctions'.[46]

Each of these variables have in previous analyses been employed as either indicators or predictors of political instability in the general sense.[47] In investigating the relationship between governmental survival and protest and sanctions, therefore, we really are investigating the relationship between two different aspects of political instability.[48] Rather surprisingly, it is a relationship which had received but scant attention in previous research: while it has been common practice in many of the factor analyses of conflict behaviour which have been undertaken to include some measure of governmental personnel change as well as various protest behaviours in the computations,[49] nothing concrete has been established about the interrelationships between governmental stability, coercion and political protest beyond their inclusion in either the same or different factors.[50] Moreover, while Russett examined both 'instability of (government) personnel' and 'internal war' (which includes similar measures to all of our protest variables) as early as 1963, the possible inter-

Table 8: The bivariate impact of extraparliamentary variables upon duration and survival

N = 214[51]	Governmental Duration	Government Survival
Riots	.049	.006
Protest Demonstrations	.208	.109
Political Strikes	–.108	–.191
Sanctions	.244	.169

relationship *between* the two variables was not investigated: they were analysed separately as different dimensions of instability, both being hypothesised to be dependent upon land inequality.[51]

Table 8 shows the relatively limited bivariate impact of the four extraparliamentary variables upon governmental duration and survival. Despite the lower levels of correlation for the survival scores however, it is in relation to these protest variables that the advantages of our survival index over duration becomes even more apparent. If we consider a hypothetical sample of countries in which, say, demonstrations are not related in any way to government longevity, we would expect for any given country within the sample, that demonstrations would occur randomly over time. It follows, therefore, that the longer any particular government lasts, the greater is the probability that its temporal span will encompass *more* demonstrations than a government of shorter duration. Consequently if 'the government' was the unit of analysis, (as it is in the present investigation) even if there were no 'real' relationship between demonstrations and duration, we would still expect there to be a positive correlation (of unknown magnitude) between the number of demonstrations and government duration. The notion of survival as we defined it earlier, however, circumvents this difficulty because even if government A on our definition 'survives' longer than Government B, A may in fact be shorter in actual duration than B. Consequently, with survival there is no inbuilt tendency likely to produce *spurious* non-zero correlations.

Given this qualification, the observed correlations between *duration* and the protest and coercion variables presented in Table 8 are somewhat unreliable. However, in relation to governmental *survival,* we can conclude with some degree of certainty (and this may be of interest to political activists) that protest demonstrations and governmental sanctions seem more likely to *promote* survival rather than hamper it. On the other hand, while political strikes appear to have some reductive impact upon survival, riots (r = .006) appear to have little or no direct effect at all.[52]

We turn finally to examine the combined multivariate effects of both extra- and intraparliamentary variables upon survival. Using our 'best equation' procedure the various extraparliamentary variables were added to the 'best' intraparliamentary survival equation (see Table 5) singly and in combination. The result 'best' model is shown in Table 9.

If we compare the predictor variables included within Table 9 with those in Table 5, it is clear that the addition of strikes, sanctions and demonstrations (riots proved to be nonsignificant) confounds the influence of the intraparliamentary variables which we have already identified in only a limited way: the number of governments seats is the only predictor from the intraparliamentary equation which is now nonsignificant. It would seem, therefore that the in-

Table 9: 'Best' model for survival using extra- and intraparliamentary predictors

Survival = a	– b^1 ≠ of parties in government
	– b_2 percentage size of antisystem parties
R^2 = .313 - N = 214	+ b_3 majority/minority
All parameters significant	– b_4 strikes
at .01 level	+ b_5 sanctions
	+ b_6 protest demonstrations

cidence of certain protest behaviour and of acts of governmental coercion are more important in determining the level of governmental stability than the actual number of seats which the government controls.

The inclusion of the extraparliamentary variables, however, has two additional consequences. Firstly, it raises the level of statistical explanation from 22 % (R^2 .223 in Table 5) to over 31 % in Table 9. Secondly although the relationships involved are highly stochastic, it serves to reinforce the observations which we made in relation to the bivariate correlations between survival and the protest and coercion variables: governmental survival consistently varies negatively with political strikes, and positively with protest demonstrations and with sanctions.[53]

This is not to say that these relationships are invariant, but it does mean that that while a greater number of political strikes will tend to decrease the probability of the government surviving till the end of its parliamentary term, a greater number of demonstrations and/or sanctions will serve to increase that while a greater number of political strikes will tend to decrease the litical strikes clearly seem to have a detrimental effect on governmental stability, more immediate expressions of antigovernment sentiment such as protest demonstrations perhaps only serve to reinforce the governments determination to remain in office for as long as possible.[54] With regard to the positive impact of governmental coercion upon survival, we can only presume that even in contemporary western democracies Machiavellianism of sorts still prevails as a succesful method of maintaining political power.

Conclusions

Defining governmental stability in terms of 'survival' rather than 'duration' we have attempted in this paper to identify the extent to which various specifically parliamentary characteristics of political systems determine the level of governmental stability. We have shown that while a number of these 'intraparliamentary' variables provide significant bivariate correlations, only a limited number of them are significant when they are considered in combination in a series of multiple regression equations. More specifically, the variables which

appear to have the greatest combined impact upon governmental survival are the relative size of antisystem parties (negative impact), the majority/minority status of the government, the number of parties in the government and the size of the government in seats (all positive impact). When these four variables are controlled for, the more sensitive measures of multipartism which we identified (the fractionalisation and variance of Parliaments, of oppositions and of governments; the fractionalisation of prosystem parties; and the coalitional status of the government) provide nonsignificant parameters and fail to produce anything more than a trivial increase in R^2.[55] Rather surprisingly, therefore, in view of previous research, we must conclude that in the context of the intraparliamentary prediction and explanation of governmental stability, simplicity in conceptualisation and measurement is more valuable than sophistication.

The final part of our analysis examined the additional impact upon governmental stability firstly of several indicators of 'societal' instability (protest) and secondly, of acts of governmental coercion (sanctions). Of the protest variables, only political strikes appear to have a reductive effect upon survival; and although protest demonstrations and sanctions clearly seem to encourage governmental survival, in this analysis we were in a position only to speculate briefly as to the mechanisms which might be involved in the generation of such empirical observations.

Finally, it is necessary to point out that given the generally low R^2's which our models achieved, we have been forced to emphasise parameter significance, (which is not to say parameter significance should ever be ignored). Given the nature of our data, however, low levels of statistical explanation were not unexpected: it would be rather surprising if either the structure of the Parliamentary system or the level of political power – or even both in combination – explained all of the variance in governmental stability. Clearly, there are numerous other influences which operate upon the stability of governments; the actions of foreign governments and the operation of the domestic economic system are of obvious importance. Indeed, we intend to examine the impact of various economic indices upon the models presented here in a later study. Despite these other influences, however, what must be emphasised is that over 20 % of the variance in governmental survival can be explained in purely intraparliamentary terms, a level of statistical explanation which can be increased by a further 10 % when political protest and acts of governmental coercion are incorporated into the relevant models.

Notes

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1 See Robert J. Jackson & Michael B. Stein, eds., *Issues in Comparative Politics,* (London; Macmillan 1971), pp. 195-212. Also see Claud Ake, 'A Definition of Political Stability', *Comparative Politics,* vol. 7, 1975, pp. 271-83, Ake 'Modernisation and Political Instability: A Theoretical Explanation', *World Politics,* vol. 26, 1973-4, pp. 576-91 and Leon Hurwitz, 'Contemporary Approaches to Political Stability', *Comparative Politics,* vol. 5, 1973-4, pp. 449-63.

2 See David Easton, *A Systems Analysis of Political Life,* (New York: John Wiley & Son, 1965), pp. 190-211.

3 This thesis was originally argued in A. Lawrence Lowell, *Governments and Parties in Continental Europe,* vol. 1 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1896), pp. 73-4. See also Lowell, *The Governments of France, Italy and Germany* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1914), pp. 70-4.

4 See Richard Rose 'Dynamic Tendencies in the Authority of Regimes', *World Politics,* vol. 21, 1969, pp. 602-28. See also Rose, *Governing without Consensus* London, Faber; 1971, pp. 25-41), Harry Eckstein 'A Theory of Stable Democracy', in *Division and Cohesion in Democracy: A Study of Norway* (Princeton U.P.; 1966), pp. 225-88. See also Ivo K. Feierabend, Rosalind Feierabend and Ted R. Gurr (eds.), *Anger Violence and Politics* (Englewood Cliffs Prentice Hall, 1972) and Douglas Hibbs, *Mass Political Violence: a crossnational causal Analysis* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1973). On the nature of diffuse support, see David Easton, *op. cit.,* pp. 320-331.

5 See, for example, T. Alexander Smith *The Comparative Policy Process,* (ABC - Clio, California, 1975), Raymond A. Bauer and Kenneth J. Gergen, eds., *The Study of Policy Formation* (New York, The Free Press, 1968), and Charles E. Lindblom, *The Policy-Making Process* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., Prentice-Hall, 1968).

6 See Giovanni Sartori, 'European Political Parties: The case of Polarised Pluralism', in Joseph Lapolombara and Myron Weiner, eds., *Political Parties & Political Development* (Princeton, U.P., 1966), pp. 137-77. Also see Robert A. Dahl ed., *Political Oppositions in Western Democracies* (Yale U.P., 1966), chapters 9-12.

7 For Belgium see, for example, Val. R. Lorwin, 'Belgium': Religion, Class and Language in National Politics', in R. Dahl, ed., *ibid* and D. W. Urwin, 'Social Cleavages and Political Parties in Belgium: Problems of Institutionalisation' *Political Studies,* vol. 18, September 1970, pp. 320-40. For the United Kingdom, see for example, *Royal Commission on The Constitution* 1969-73 (Cmnd 5460-1) 2 vols. and James G. Kellas, *The Scottish Political System* (Cambridge U.P., 1973), Chapters 7-12.

8 See Charles Taylor and Michael Hudson, *World Handbook of Social and Political Indicators: second edition* (New Haven and London, Yale University Press 1972), pp. 59-70.

9 See for example, Charles Posner, ed., *Reflections on the Revolution in France, 1968 (Penguin,* Middlesex, 1970), Gabriel & Daniel Cohn-Bendit *Obsolete Communism: The Left Wing Alternative* (Penguin, London, 1968), Patrick Seale & Maureen McConcille, *French Revolution,* 1968 (Penguin, London, 1968) & the 'Postscript' to Henry W. Ehrmann, *Politics in France* (Little Brown: Boston, 1968).

10 Our date are from *Keesing's Contemporary Archives,* Chris Cook and John Paxton, *European Political Facts,* 1918-73 (London; Mcmillan, 1975), Thomas T.

Mackie and Richard Rose *The International Almanac of Electoral History,* London, Macmillan, 1974) and Klaus von Beyme, *Die parlamentarischen Regierungssysteme in Europa,* (Munchen: R. Piper & Co., 1970) pp. 901-967. Switzerland and the United States are excluded from our universe of Western parliamentary democracies by definition as, in these two countries, the executieve is independent of the legislative.

11 Jean Blondel, 'Party Systems and Patterns of Government in Western Democracies', *Canadian Journal of Political Science,* vol. 1, 1968, pp. 180-203. This definition of a government is also used in Jackson & Stein *op. cit.,* in Michael Taylor and Valentine Herman, 'Party Systems & Government Stability', *American Political Science Review,* vol. 65, 1971, pp. 28-37, and in Valentine Herman 'Comparative Perspectives on Ministerial Stability in Britain', in Valentine Herman & James E. Alt *Cabinet Studies,* (London: Macmillan, 1975), pp. 55-76.

12 Blondel, *op. cit.,* p. 190.

13 See, for example, S. Encel, *Cabinet Government in Australia* (Melbourne U.P., 1962), especially parts 4 & 5.

14 See David Butler & Anthony King, *The British General Election of 1966* (London, Macmillan, 1966), Ch. 1., and David Butler & Michael Pinto – Duschinsky *The British General Election of 1970* (London, Macmillan, 1971), Chapter 1.

15 The legislative records of these governments are compared in Valentine Herman, 'What Governments Say and What Governments Do: An Analysis of Post-War Queen's Speeches', *Parliamentary Affairs,* vol. 28, 1975, pp. 22-30.

16 Blondel, *op. cit.,* pp. 190-1, 198-200.

17 For a general treatment of this theme see James E. Alt, 'Continuity, Turnover, & Experience in the British Cabinet, 1868-1970', in Valentine Herman and James E. Alt., eds. *Cabinet Studies* (London: Macmillan 1975), pp. 33-54. See also the data presented in David Butler and Anne Sloman, *British Political Facts,* 1900-75 (London; Macmillan, 4th ed., 1975), pp. 1-122.

18 This pattern should be contrasted with that of France in the Fourth Republic: see, for example, Roy Macridis, 'Cabinet Instability in the Fourth Republic', *Journal of Politics,* Vol. 14, 1959, pp. 643-58, Andre Siegfried, 'Stable Instability in France', *Foreign Affairs* ,1956, pp. 394-404. For a detailed comparative study of ministerial instability in France and Great Britain see, Mattei Dogan & Peter Campbell 'Le personnel ministeriel en France et en Grande-Bretagne', *Revue Francaise de Science Politique,* vol. 7, 1957, pp. 313-45 and 793-824. A general treatment of the composition of European Cabinets can be found in Valentine Herman, 'Continuity, Turnover and Experience in European Cabinets 1945-75; (Unpublished manuscript, University of Essex).

19 See Valentine Herman, 'Comparative Perspectives on Ministerial Stability in Britain', *op. cit.*

20 Leon Hurwitz, 'An Index of Democratic Political Stability: A methodological Note', *Comparative Political Studies,* vol. 4, 1971, pp. 41-68. See also Hurwitz 'Democratic Political Stability: some traditional Hypotheses Examined', *Comparative Political Studies,* vol. 4, 1972, pp. 476-490. This definition of a government is also used in Valentine Herman & John Fope, 'Minority Governments in Western Democracies', *British Journal of Political Science,* vol. 3, 1973, pp. 191-212, A similar definition of a government is used by Hans Daalder in 'Cabinets & Party Systems in Ten Smaller European Democracies', *Acta Politica,* vol. 6, 1971, pp. 282-303.

21 Hurwitz, 'An Index of Democratic Political Stability', *op. cit.*, p. 44.
22 *ibid.*, p. 43.
23 See Bruce Russett *et al World Handbook of Political & Social Indicators* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1964), pp. 101-104.
24 Hurwitz, *op. cit.*, pp. 43-4.
25 Leon Hurwitz, 'Communication', *American Political Science Review*, vol. 65, 1971, pp. 1148-49, (his emphasis). Similar attempts to consider the reasons why governments change can be found in Herman & Pope 'Minority Governments in Western Democracies, *op. cit.*, and in Valentine Herman, 'The size principle & Surplus Governments (Unpublished manuscript, University of Essex).
26 Hurwitz, 'An Index of Democratic Political Stability', *op. cit.*, p. 44.
27 Lawrence C. Dodd, 'Party Coalitions in Multi-party Parliaments: A Game-Theoretic Analysis', *American Politcal Science Review*, vol. 68, 1974, pp. 1093-1117.
28 Dodd, *ibid*, p. 1106, cf. Blondel, 'Party Systems and Patterns of Government in Western Democracies', *op. cit.*, pp. 190-1.
29 See, Eric C. Browne and Mark N. Franklin, 'Aspects of Coalition European Parliamentary Democracies', *American Political Science Review*, vol. 67, 1973, pp. 453-69. Also see Michael Leiserson, 'Faction and Coalitions in One-Party Japan', *American Political Science Review*, vol. 62, 1968, pp. 770-87, and Sven Groennings, E. W. Kelley, and Michael Leiserson, eds., *The Study of Coaliton Behaviour: Theoretical Perspectives and Cases from Four Cabinets* (New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1970), especially Chapters 1-4).
30 See Taylor and Herman, 'Party Systems, and Government Stability', *op. cit.*
31 Fractionalisation is defined as

$$F = 1 - \frac{1}{n(n-1)} \sum_{i=1}^{N} f_i \; N\,(f_i - 1)$$

when n is the total number of seats, f_i is the number of seats held by the ith party, N is the number of parties. F measures 'the probability that 2 deputies drawn at random from all the deputies . . . belong to different parties'. See Taylor & Herman *ibid.*, p. 30. Also see Douglas Rae and Michael Taylor, *The Analysis of Political Cleavages* (Yale U.P. 1970), Chapters 2 & 3.
32 Variance in this context in fact measures the degree of ideological nonadjacence (on a left right continuum) of the parties which compose either the government, the opposition or the Parliament as a whole. Variance is formally defined as

$$V = \frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^{N} f_i \; (x_i - x)^2$$

'. . . where n is the total number of seats; N is the number of parties; $f_1, f_2 \ldots . f_n$ are the number of seats held by the N parties; $x_1, x_2, \ldots x_n$ are the respective ideological positions of the parties on a left-right scale; x is the mean of the seat distribution'. See Taylor and Herman, *op. cit.*, p. 32.
33 That is to say, the t statistic generated from estimating the bivariate regression Survival = a + b V_g indicates that the relationship is non-significant.
34 The notable exceptions to this general inflationary pattern are V_0 and F_0 (variance and fractionalisation of opposition). While the Taylor/Herman coefficients for V_0 and F_0 are about the same, the coefficient for V_0 (which, it will be

recalled, takes account of ideological position) on our sample (r = -.26) is almost twice that for F_0, implying that the ideological unity of oppositions perhaps has a greater impact upon the level of governmental stability than the Taylor/Herman analysis might suggest. However, as we will see later, when other variables are controlled for V_0 loses its significance.
35 Given the accuray of Popper's contention that scientific enquiry is just as much concerned with the refutation of hypotheses as with their corroboration, such an exercise in hypothesis rejection is not at all academically unrespectable. On the refutability principle itself see Karl R. Popper, *The Logic of Scientific Discovery* (London: Hutchison, 1959), chs. 4 and 5.
36 There is of course a genuine philosophical question involved here which we certainly do not intend to address: how many deviant cases need to be found in order that a probability hypothesis might be refuted? On some of the problems involved in trying to resolve this question, see Carl G. Hempel, *Philosophy of Natural Science* (Englewood Cliffs; Prentice-Hall, 1966), pp. 54-69.
37 This usage of significance testing may initially seem inappropriate in the sense that the 329 governments which we investigate do not represent a random sample drawn from a well defined population. It should be noted, that *the sample* of governments examined here in fact *constitute the population* about which we wish to generalise. Significance test in this context cease to act as a means of generalising from sample to population, but instead assume the role of a criterion of demarcation for distinguishing between which predictor variables have an impact upon each dependent variable. This follows the practice of Hibbs (see D. Hibbs, *Mass Political Violence: A Cross-national Causal Analysis;* New York: Wiley, 1973) who points out that significance tests 'provide a decision rule for accepting and rejecting hypotheses' (p. 26). The underlying assumption of this usage is that if the kth parameter from a given regression equation is non-significant, then the null hypothesis that $B_k = 0$ cannot be rejected: if a predictor variable has a non-significant parameter, therefore, it cannot be deemed to have an impact upon the dependent variable. For a more detailed discussion of this point, see R. Wonnacott and T. Wonnacott, *Econometrics* (New York: Wiley 1970), pp. 63-67.
38 The procedure which was actually employed is analagous to the Stepwise regression programme which SPSS provides. On the basis of bivariate correlations we established which variable or non-collinear variables explained most of the variance in the dependent variable. A regression equation incorporating those variables was then estimated and if all the parameters were significant at the .05 level, the residuals from that equation were correlated against all remaining potential predictors. The predictor (or non collinear predictors) which explained most of the variance in the residuals was (were) then added to the original independent variables and the equation re-estimated. If all the parameters proved significant, the 'new' predictors was (were) retained . . . and so on . . . If the addition of a predictor rendered one of the preceding independent variables non-significant, but that additional predictor retained its significance, the preceding predictor was dropped from the subsequent equation. Of course it could be argued that our efforts in this regard are more concerned with 'eliminating predictors' than with 'rejecting hypotheses'. We consider however, that in this context the two processes are identical: the rejection of the model $y = a + b_1 x_1 + b_2 x_2 + \varepsilon$ on the grounds that b_2 is non-significant entails the simultaneous rejec-

tion of the hypothesis that 'controlling for x_1, y is influenced by x_2'. Not accepting a model, in this sense, is the same as rejecting a hypothesis: each time we reject a model, we reject a hypothesis.

39 It should be noted that all the models which we present here are linear additive ones. Several non-linear and interaction models (particularly with the coalition/not and majority/minority dummy variables) were tested and some gave quite satisfactory (i.e. significant) results in two-dimensional space. However, when the relevant non-linear/interaction terms were incorporated into the 'best' multivariate equations, the non-linear/interaction terms proved non-significant.

40 cf. Richard Rose and Derek Urwin, 'Social Cohesion, Parties, and Strains in Regimes, *Comparative Political Studies,* vol. 2, 1969, pp. 7-67.

41 Parliament size is in fact the most statistically significant independent variable in the model — on its own it explains 16 % of the variance of survival in minority governments.

42 This is not to say of course that lack of support in majority situations will not affect survival.

43 As we will point out later, since extraparliamentary predictors were only available for the period up to 1967, to have included extra-parliamentary variables in each individual country equation would have reduced the number of cases so much as to render analysis impossible.

44 Corrected R^2 or 'R^2 for the bivariate case is defined as

$$'R^2 = s^2_y \frac{\left(\frac{n}{n-1}\right) - s^2_{y \cdot x}\left(\frac{n}{n-2}\right)}{s^2_y \frac{(n)}{n-1}}$$

where s_y is the estimated variance of y, s_{yx} is the estimated covariance of x and y and n is the number of cases. See Mordecai Esekiel and Karl A. Fox, *Methods of Correlation and Regression Analysis* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1976) pp. 300-305.

45 All these variables are derived from the daily events section of the *World Handbook II* data collection. The definitions of these terms consequently follow those provided by Charles Taylor and Michael Hudson, *World Handbook of Social and Political Indicators (second Edition),* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1972), chapter 3 'Political Protest and Executive Change', pp. 59-70.

46 Again, for the relevant definition see *Ibid,* pp. 69-70.

47 The Feierabends, for example (while avoiding any tautology in their data analysis) use acts of coercion ('purges') as both a predictor (pp. 154-168) and an indicator of political instability (pp. 139-141). See Ivo K. Feierabend and Rosalind L. Feierabend, 'Systemic conditions of Political Aggression: An Application of Frustration – Aggression Theory' in Feierabend, Feierabend and Gurr (eds.), *Anger Violence and Politics,* op. cit., pp. 136-182. Feierabend and Feierabend also use strikes, riots and demonstrations as indicators of one of their dimensions of instability, see pp. 141-143.

On the basis of his factor analysis results, Hibbs uses riots, demonstrations and strikes as indicators of his 'collective protest' dimension of 'mass political violence', and uses this in turn to predict 'sanctions', which is then employed to predict 'internal war'. See Douglas Hibbs, *Mass Political Violence: A Crossnational*

Causal Analysis (New York: Wiley, 1973) chapter IX particularly page 184.

48 We confine our analysis to protest and coercion, ignoring the more violent manifestations of political instability such as guerilla attacks, assinations and deaths from political violence, as those events do not seem particularly relevant in the context of Western Parliamentary democracies. Inevitably, the events in Northern Ireland since and to a lesser extent the events in France in May 1968 reduce the validity of this statement, but since our protest data were drawn from the World Handbook II, the time period which they span only covers the period up to December 31st, 1967, which clearly excludes the more recent developments in Paris and Belfast.

49 See, for example, Feierabend and Feierabend *op. cit.,* Table 2, p. 142. Also Rudolph J. Rummel, 'Dimensions of Conflict Behaviour Within and Between Nations', in *General Systems, Yearbook of the Society for the Advancement of General Systems Theory* (Ann Arbor 1963), pp. 1-50; and Raymond Tanter, 'Dimensions of Conflict Behaviour within and between Nations', Journal of Conflict Resolution, Vol. X, No. 1 (March 1966), pp. 41-64.

50 cf. Feierabend and Feierabend *(op. cit.)* include purges and government personnel change in their 'power-struggle/purge' factor, and riots, demonstrations and strikes in their 'mass participation-turnout' dimension.

51 See Bruce M. Russett, 'Inequality and Instability: The Relation of Land Tenure to Politics', *World Politics,* Vol. XVI, No. 3 (April 1964), pp. 442-454.

52 The reason for the reduction in the number of cases is one which we hinted at earlier: since the World Handbook II data only covers the period up to the end of 1967, any correlations which include the extraparliamentary variables necessarily exclude all the governments in our sample which had not ended by December 31st, 1967. Thus our sample is reduced in this section from 329 to 214.

53 In relation to the role of the governmental sanctions variable, it should be noted that the familiar curvilinear relationship between the more violent form of political instability and coercion which both the Feierabends and Bury found to obtain in their separate analyses, does not spill over into the area of governmental instability: (recalling that survival is a percentage measure), tests for the curvilinear function

$(100 - \text{survival} = a + b_1 \text{ sanctions} = b_2 \text{ sanctions}^2)$

provided non-significant results.

See Feierabend and Feierabend *op. cit.,* p. 154-168 and Douglas P. Bury 'Political Instabilty in Latin America: The Cross Cultural Test of a causal Model', *Latin American Research Review,* Vol. III, no. 2 (1968), pp. 17-66.

54 This of course argues against the advisability of (the factor analyst's habit of) constructing a single measure of protest by aggregating its component variables.

55 By trivial in this context we mean less than .01.