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The stability and survival of governments in Western Democracies

by D. Sanders and V. Herman

This article commences with a theoretical evaluation and comparison of a number of different definitions of 'government' and 'stability' which have been advanced in recent years. The authors show that neither the term 'government' nor 'stability' have been used in either a consistent or an obvious manner by previous scholars. They then show that the terms 'government', 'administration', and 'cabinet' have all been confused, and that 'stability' has often been equated with 'longevity' or 'duration'. They present and develop a further definition of 'government stability' designed to overcome many of the deficiencies of previous definitions: this measure, called 'survival', records the time that a government serves as a percentage of the maximum possible (remaining) time it can serve.

The second part of the paper is an empirical analysis of some of the intra- and extra-Parliamentary correlates of 'survival' and 'longevity' in 329 post-war Western Parliamentary Governments. Using a number of single equation multiple regression models, the authors investigate the impact upon survival and longevity, firstly of various measures of party fragmentation; secondly, of the majority/minority and coalitional status of the government; and thirdly of several indicators of political protest and governmental coercion. The data suggest that with regard to the intra-parliamentary sources of governmental stability, the relatively sophisticated measures of multipartisan which coalition theory has advanced are less important than such 'common sense' measures as the number of Parliamentary seats controlled by the government, the majority/minority status of the government, and the relative size of 'anti system' parties. In relation to the extra-Parliamentary protest variables which are examined, the evidence presented suggests that while 'political' strikes may impair governmental survival, protest demonstration and riots tend in fact to reinforce it.

Decision Making in Academic Department Councils in the Netherlands

by D. J. Kraan and H. Schijf

In 1970 the system of Dutch university government was changed rather thoroughly by the introduction of a new law, called the Reformation of Academic Government Act (RAGA).

This act, which is applicable both to state and private universities, prescribes that Department Councils shall be composed of students, non-faculty personnel and faculty-members, all of them directly elected by the entire departmental body, but such that faculty-members take a least one half of the available seats. Department

Councils hold a variety of important powers including the ability to establish study programs and examinations rules, to nominate selection committees for faculty appointments and to approve research programs.

RAGA is a temporary and 'experimental' act. However, until now there has been very little empirical research regarding the effects of the new law. Therefore it has been decided that RAGA, that expired in August 1976, will be extended until 1980. This article aims at contributing both to the discussion of the theoretical foundations and to the empirical study of RAGA.

With regard to the theoretical foundations the paper suggest that it might be useful to discuss academic government in the framework of an economic model. It is argued that in terms of such a model it might be reasonable to qualify the students as the producers rather than as the consumers of educational services. Since universities are financed predominantly by central government it seems reasonable moreover to accept a certain degree of trade off between state control over academic output and internal democratization.

The empirical study that has been carried out is based on the so called decision-method of influence-analysis and focuses at voting and initiating behaviour of council members. It covers 18 departmental councils in 5 universities. The results show that students and nonfaculty personnel generate very small percentages of accepted proposals and have very limited influence on the voting outcomes. These results raise the question whether in the present structure there is an inconsistency between the power-sharing goal and the faculty-control-over-outputs goal of RAGA. The article suggests that the apparent inconsistency of those goals might be diminished by a separation of the powers typically involved with the quality of outputs at one hand and with the internal organization at the other and by the designation of those powers to committees exclusively composed of faculty and committees chosen on a one-man-one-vote basis by the entire departmental body respectively.

NB: Because of some technical difficulties, publication of the summary of the article of H. Daalder and J. P. van de Geer (Party distances in Dutch Parliament) was not possible. The summary will now be published in the october-issue of *Acta Politica* (XII nr. 4).

Mededelingen

Afrikaans Staatsrecht

Op initiatief van het Afrika-Studiecentrum heeft zich vanuit enkele juridische faculteiten een interessegroep Afrikaans Staatsrecht gevormd. Daarvan maken na de eerste bijeenkomst deel uit:

mevr. mr. J. E. Dopheide—Goldschmidt en mr. C. Flinterman (Leiden), prof. J. Griffiths (Groningen), mevr. mr. G. Hesseling (Univ. Amsterdam), prof. H. van Maarseveen (Rotterdam), en P. A. Emanuel (Afrika-Studiecentrum).

De groep verwelkomt ieder die zich met het onderwerp bezighoudt en zou gaarne informatie ontvangen over voorgenomen of onderhanden activiteiten. Tweede bijeenkomst is op dinsdag 6 september 1977, te Leiden.

Aanmelding of informatie bij P. A. Emanuel, Afrika-Studiecentrum, Stationsplein 10, Leiden, tel. 071-148333, toestel 4035 of 4062.

IX Congress of Sociology

Voor sectie VII van het Sociolinguistic Program van het IX World Congress of Sociology (14—20 augustus te Uppsala, Zweden), getiteld 'Language Planning and Socioeconomic Development', worden belangstellenden uitgenodigd om papers in te dienen. Daarbij gaat het enerzijds om een viertal 'position papers on the state of the art', anderzijds kunnen er ook papers ingediend worden, die op meer informele zittingen besproken zullen worden.

Belangstellenden kunnen zich wenden tot Prof. Brian Weinstein, Department of Political Science, Howard University, Washington D.C. 20059, USA of tot Prof. Evelyn P. Stevens, 14609 South Woodland Road, Shaker Heights, Ohio 44120 USA. Bij deze opgave dienen zij een korte beschrijving van hun benadering en een curriculum vitae te voegen.