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The Future of Party Government

A Series under the General Editorship of
Rudolf Wildenmann

Volume 1

Visions and Realities of Party Government

edited by
Francis G. Castles and Rudolf Wildenmann



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Preface

This is the first volume to appear from a major research project on *The Future of Party Government* directed by Professor Rudolf Wildenmann and supported by the European University Institute (EUI). The primary objectives of the project as a whole were an analysis of the problems confronted by party government — the predominant institutional form of contemporary democratic government — in the modern state and an assessment of the probable and possible developmental tendencies of that institutional form.

The scope of such an endeavour is quite enormous, requiring, as it does, a review of contemporary social and political theory, the development of new concepts and the analysis of existing ones, a study of contemporary government in a large number of countries and an attempt, through comparative analysis, to locate patterns of similarity and difference in respect of such matters as structural development, political behaviour, policy-making and the emergence and possible resolution of the problems of modern industrial societies. It may be objected that the scope is too great and it verges on arrogance to bring so much within the compass of a single research project. But our justification is that these issues — and, most precisely, the linkages between them — are crucial to an understanding of the strengths and frailties of democratic government. It may be arrogant to attempt such a study; it is an abdication of scholarly and democratic responsibility not to do so!

Nevertheless, even with the very large group of European and American scholars who have participated in various aspects of this project in the period 1980-84, it was necessary to attempt to keep things within a reasonable compass. Thus, for instance, our discussion of democratic theory is specifically related to the problems of contemporary democratic states and we have not attempted to enter into any debate concerning normative goals or the history of ideas. Similarly, rather than develop any comprehensive social theory, we have located our analysis in an exposition of the difficulties faced by governments in the modern state. Further, we have been most fortunate in being in a position to build our analysis on a firm foundation of previous scholarship on a variety of aspects of the party government problematic provided by other recent research projects. These include a number of studies sponsored by the European Consortium for Political Research on "Recent Changes in Party Systems" (directed by Hans

Daalder, Mogens Pedersen and Rudolf Wildenmann), "Centre-periphery Problems" (Stein Rokkan and Derek Urwin), "Local Government" (Ken Newton), "Government Overload" (Richard Rose) and "Party Differences and Public Policy" (Francis G. Castles), as well as other studies on "European Elections" (Karlheinz Reif) and on elites in the Federal Republic of Germany (Rudolf Wildenmann, Max Kaase and Ursula Lange-Hoffman).

Many of the findings of the project on *The Future of Party Government* have already been published in journal articles or as working papers.

The first two major volumes of research appear in the form of this volume on "Visions and Realities" and a volume soon to be published, which brings together a number of country studies, examining the nature of party government in a number of modern states, including France, Britain, the United States, Germany, Italy, the Scandinavian countries and Switzerland. These two volumes are specifically interlinked, insofar as the hypotheses advanced and the concepts developed in the first volume are investigated, developed and refined in the individual country studies of the second volume. Subsequent volumes are likely to investigate a number of issues concerning political mobilisation and political legitimacy, which emerge from the research as being of primary importance in understanding problems of contemporary democratic government. Other projected volumes include one on contemporary approaches to the analysis of public policy, emphasising those problems which arise in times of crisis and dilemmas of welfare and warfare, and another on the relationship between political elites and masses. A further study will focus on the way in which European integration has influenced the nature of party government and the nature of the emergent relationships between the EC and the national governments. A final volume called "Learning Democracy" will deal with basic cleavage problems in modern society, evaluating existing approaches to the problems of "interests", mapping out the basic needs and attributing them to the various parties in different countries, whilst also trying to simulate possible scenarios of the development of party government with the major variables identified, thus contributing to the general "relative" theory of democratic government.

The guiding principles of the EUI are rightly insistent that major research projects of this kind should include substantial involvement by doctoral students. In furtherance of this idea more than ten individual dissertations on various themes connected with the project are currently under preparation by research students at the Institute.

This first volume on "Visions and Realities" attempts to encompass several objectives. First Rudolf Wildenmann's essay on "The Problematic of Party Government" sets out the programmatic agenda for the project as a whole: what are the problems faced by democratic party government in the late twentieth century and how may they best be resolved? The first step in that process is to clarify the whole host of concepts that surround

the notions of democratic party government (see essay by Dick Katz) and political problem-solving (Gunnar Sjöblom). A further step is to identify the linkages between party government and its capacity to resolve problems with the major institutional features of political organisation in modern societies. Here, we single out for particular analysis the impact of electoral and constitutional structures on the effectiveness of party government (Gianfranco Pasquino) and the problem of whether the bureaucratic structure of contemporary states is any longer controllable by the democratic parties (Giorgio Freddi). Finally, we turn to the emergence, maintenance and possible disappearance of democratic party governments. Giuseppe di Palma examines a variety of scenarios by which party government has arisen in the post Second World War period and identifies their strengths and weaknesses, and Gordon Smith, in a concluding essay, looks to the future to establish the parameters within which we may legitimately speculate concerning the developmental tendencies of party government.

The scholars connected with the project wish to thank the European University Institute and its governing bodies, especially the Academic Council and the Research Council, for the encouragement and support given to the project. Not only did the EUI provide the necessary funds for the project for three years, but it also proved to be a most appropriate place to carry out such a project, both in its institutional concept as a research institute and for the charming and intellectually stimulating atmosphere at the Badia Fiesolana, San Domenico, Firenze.

The Director of the project owes very special gratitude to the two Presidents of the EUI who were in office during the lifetime of the project. In the first year Max Kohnstamm with his immense experience in European affairs, his dedication to humanity, democracy and peace, his common sense and his loyalty to the Institute and its members, after some hesitation regarding the scope of the project, initiated the pilot phase and thereafter often demonstrated his faith in the research group. After the change in the presidency, Werner Maihofer put his full weight behind the project. Being a philosopher of law — most particularly, a philosopher of liberal democracy — he immediately realised the intrinsic value of the project and rendered most valuable advice and help. Also having had vast experience in government, he contributed in his own very special and personal way to the understanding of the problems of the research itself. Almost two decades of cooperation between Werner Maihofer and Rudolf Wildenmann since the time of the student unrest in the sixties (in fact a turning point for contemporary political and democratic values) proved to be a strong intellectual and emotional basis for a concern for the future of democratic government.

The research group also appreciates the assistance of ZUMA (Centre for Surveys, Methods and Analysis at Mannheim) in developing methodological tools and processing data and especially the help of Manfred Küchler, the then Acting Director of ZUMA.

We wish to record our special thanks to Luciano Bardi who made a very major contribution by facilitating the academic coordination of the project.

We also give our thanks for the professional administrative support we received from staff at the EUI, especially from the Publications Officer, Brigitte Schwab, and would express our gratitude to Rosmarie Wildenmann, who contributed very much to the final reading of the manuscripts and the proofs and who also prepared the index. Last but not least we owe much gratitude to our two secretaries: Maureen Lechleitner in the Department of Political Science and Elizabeth Webb, the project secretary. Their contribution was far beyond the call of normal duty. Not only did they cope in a dedicated and cheerful way with a never-ending flow of manuscripts from all quarters of the globe, but they also managed to resolve the many problems of the numerous scholars visiting the Badia during the life of the project.

The Director of the project gives his thanks to all the members of the research group who gave so freely of their time, experience and scholarship in pursuit of the development of this joint research endeavour. On behalf of all the contributors, he wishes to express his sincere thanks to Francis G. Castles for his enormous intellectual input and his painstaking efforts as the editor of this first volume. He also wishes to record his personal thanks to Francis G. Castles who transformed his German English into the idiomatic original English of his thoughts.

*Francis G. Castles
Rudolf Wildenmann*

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Chapter I

The Problematic of Party Government

RUDOLF WILDENMANN

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I. The Problem

"The party state — and is there any alternative?" (*"Parteienstaat — oder was sonst?"*) was the title Wilhelm Grewe gave his article, very influential in Germany in the fifties (Grewe, 1951). In it, he argues that the epoch of "democracy of the notables" is past and offers a programmatic presentation of the view that not only must democracy be representative, but governments must, like parliaments, derive from political parties. Rather similar ideas were expressed in other quarters; for example by Gerhard Leibholz, who became one the most eminent theorists of the party state concept, and through the Party Commission of the Federal Ministry of the Interior directed by Wilhelm Scheuner. To Grewe, the "integration of the state" could not be sought in a reassertion of the "Reich idea", the revival of the specifically German, romantic idealist ideology which Hugo Preuss had attempted to achieve in his draft constitution for the Weimar Republic, but must come through the dominant political activity of the parties: *sine parte nulla salus*.

By the time that Grewe's article was written, in fact, not only had parties been reorganised or refounded in the Federal Republic — following authorisation procedures by the American, British and French military

governments — but a new party system had emerged with three distinct political groupings: the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) and its Bavarian counterpart (CSU), the Social Democrats (SPD) and the (Liberal) FDP (cf. Wildenmann, 1954). In reality, Germany in the period from 1949 to 1957 saw the emergence of a system of party government and Grewe, Leibholz, Scheuner and others were acknowledging the normative force for German constitutional law of this *de facto* development. Yet what the Federal Republic was doing, in its own particular way, was but a reiteration of developments that had already occurred in other European nations or was, at least, occurring simultaneously. In Western Europe after the Second World War, two-party, multi-party and many-party systems became the rule — and still are. The British system of government, The “Westminster Model” was seen by many as the model of “party government”, and its advocates in the British military administration in Germany had successfully propagandised its virtues. The French Fourth Republic continued — with only a few alterations in the rules of the political game — the tradition of party parliamentarianism begun in the Third Republic. In the Benelux countries, Scandinavia and Ireland, multi-party systems formed the central core of the “ruling organisation”. In Italy after 1943 there had been constituted, following more than twenty years of Fascism, a new multi-party system. Austria, following a phase of “black-red” coalition (i. e. joint government by the ÖVP and SPÖ), developed by the mid-sixties a type of party government which is not only formally similar to that of the Federal Republic, but also similar in having three distinct party groupings.

More significant than the fact that most Western European countries had developed articulated party systems in the years after the Second World War was the fact that *party government* had itself become the norm — i. e. party had become the preeminent institution of political rule — although the extent of “partyness of government”, to use Richard Katz’s term, differed markedly from country to country (see Katz, 1982; also below, Chapter II). The trend was to continue with Spain and Portugal abandoning authoritarian for party government in the seventies. Paradoxically, de Gaulle’s attempt through the restructuring of the Fifth Republic to end the “rule of the parties” led to the transformation of French party parliamentarianism into an unambiguous party government (cf. Reif, 1983). Among the industrialised democracies, only two countries stand out as exceptions: Switzerland and the United States. The quasi “directorially” governed democracy of Switzerland, with its strong plebiscitary institutions and its specific federalism, does not meet the criteria for party government set out by Katz (see pp. 43–44 *infra*). In the USA, the two-party system which developed after the Jacksonian era — especially in respect of presidential elections — dominates the scene, and it does fulfil one important criterion insofar as the most important posts in the bureaucratic hierarchy are filled by party members or supporters of the incoming President.

However, the specific political coordination organised along party lines and through democratic parliamentary institutions, along lines familiar in Britain, Austria, the Federal Republic or France, is clearly missing in the USA. Governing by changing majorities is the rule in both the USA and Switzerland; nevertheless, the American President with his kitchen cabinet recruited along party lines, for the most part, exercises a central role.

In contemporary industrial societies, democracy is generally conceived of as party government, whatever other structural constitutive elements may influence or bring about political opinion formation. In such societies, it is to the parties' leading staff organisations that the central role of coordination and aggregation of interests, mediation of social values and political decision-making devolves, and this is clearly the more so for the parties in government. Moreover, this pivotal role is intensified both because of the sharp rise in governments' power to dispose of the national product and to allocate and transfer resources through budgets and because of the extension of politics into virtually every sphere of modern life, not excepting the Church and cultural institutions. Thus, the future of democracy has become closely bound up with the future of party government.

However, in the meantime, party government has become burdened with many new problems over and above the general problems inherent in government as such. A distinct section of the younger generation — and, indeed, some of their elders — dispute both its legitimacy and its ability competently to resolve what they consider to be the most vital issues of our times. The precise nature of the relationship between party government and other important societal organisations has been the subject of much speculation, not all of it comforting; as, for instance, the suggestion that neo-corporatist forms of decision-making, involving the collusion of parties and major organised societal interests, are subversive of democratic participation (cf. Schmitter, 1982). Moreover, the nature of information processes in countries with party government are becoming progressively more complex and difficult (see Wildenmann, 1983). Newly developed communications structures pose conundrums: do they make it more likely that political actors will be able to use their greater control of information to manipulate the populace, or can they, by providing greater openness and a wider breadth of offerings, give greater scope for critical reasoning in the formation of political opinion? Indeed, even greater availability of information at a popular level might not be an unmixed blessing, if problems of selecting information and 'overload' led to a mass retreat into apathy!

Finally, many important political decisions have been shifted out of the realm of government proper. Thus, monetary policy becomes chiefly the concern of central banks, fundamental evaluative decisions fall within the domain of constitutional courts and even the implementation of policy ceases to be exclusively a matter for government agencies, but becomes to

varying degrees a matter for quasi-governmental bodies and for self-regulation within and between major organised collectivities. The diversification and differentiation of executives and legislatures into specialised institutions and the consequent "mixed" implementation of political decisions give governmental systems a new quality. Very often coordination of goals, purposes or measures is lacking under such circumstances, which in turn increases the general uncertainty of political decisions and may lead to policies with effects diametrically opposed to those intended. Certainly, the contemporary literature on policy formulation is replete with examples of phenomena of this kind.

Thus, we are confronted with a fundamental problem. The party government idea is the major component of our conception of functioning democracy and the party government model is in diverse forms the common core of political organisation in modern industrial societies. Yet, in its contemporary workings, party government is beset by difficulties; whilst seemingly ubiquitous, it may perhaps have a greater burden of responsibility than a real ability to shape or change matters. Certainly, the degree to which the domain of party government has been and is being eroded as a consequence of the problems sketched above and the extent to which parties may have ceased to be the influential organs for the coordination and definition of issues requires much further empirical study. The project on *The Future of Party Government*, of which this book is but the first part, is premised in the view that the discussion and explanation of these issues requires both historical and systematic treatment. The broken relationship between normative theories of democracy (see Maihofer, 1983) and the realities revealed by the sociology of governmental power — a clear instance of the schizophrenia of political understanding — further makes it essential to take a concrete rather than an abstract approach, since social, economic, technical, scientific and cultural developments, each moving in different directions and at different speeds, interact to create situations, the understanding and explanation of which create specific intellectual problems. Hence democracy as such, and especially contemporary party government, can only be analysed by means of theories of sufficient complexity to capture the reality of such situations.

II. The Roots of Party Government

The primary objective of this introductory essay is to explore the main outlines of the problematic of party government, many aspects of which will be taken up in much greater detail in the analytical and country-by-country volumes which constitute the body of the research project on the *The Future of Party Government*. In particular, we shall here have something to say about the historical development of the party government form of

democratic organisation, the conditions under which it is maintained and the kinds of conflict which characterise it. Further, we shall examine some of the major dimensions of the problems that confront contemporary party government — most notably, recruitment and selection problems, the development of the mass media and growing international penetration. We then turn our attention to the future prospects of party government and advance a number of criteria by which further development may be judged.

In proceeding to examine the historical development of party government, an essential first step is to clarify somewhat both the concept of the modern “state” and that of “party government” itself. Max Weber’s classical definition of the modern state identifies a number of important elements which he combines into an ideal type; that is, inductively derived generalisations from the past — frozen history, as it were. By “state” (*Herrschaftsverband*) he denotes a “ruling organisation” characterised by a legal order — a distinct national system of laws and jurisprudence. The defining criteria of administration in the modern state are generality, equality of treatment, hierarchical structure, specialisation of function and a more or less intensive confidentiality. The ruling organisation controls the currency, the taxation system, public order, public works and the social services (in contemporary terms, the welfare state). Most important of all, however, in Weber’s view, the ruling organisation of the modern state has a monopoly of the exercise of force, and it is this monopoly, in particular, which creates its need for legitimacy. Heuristically, this definition of the “state” is still extremely valuable and contemporary discussions of the concept start from Weber not merely out of deference to the history of ideas. Nevertheless, it is important to stress that, in its general as well as in its particular national manifestations, the empirical reality of the modern state manifests great deviations from and complex intertwinings of the various features located by Weber in his ideal type, which was itself more than somewhat influenced by the Prussian-German context in which it was created.

From our standpoint, Weber’s analysis of the structure of the ruling organisation of the modern state neglects certain aspects crucial to an understanding of party government, particularly in a contemporary context. Most important, his concept of state does not differentiate between democratic (i. e. rational) ruling organisations and those based on charismatic or traditional legitimation, and the definition does not cover what Weber described as “organisations of violence” (a term he used of the CPSU of his own times). Moreover, understandably enough in the context of a conceptualisation drawn at the time of the ending of the First World War, a variety of international developments influencing the nature and functioning of the contemporary state are not foreshadowed. We shall return to this question of the international context of the modern state, since the contemporary problem of party government is very much a function of these developments of the post Second World War era.

Party government is the crucial agency of institutional legitimisation in democratic ruling organisations, distinguishing the democratic modern state from other types. It arises, despite all its varied manifestations in the different European countries, from a number of fundamental and similar developments since the French Revolution, the constitutional watershed of modern times. More than the American Revolution which preceded it, it sets the contemporary value horizon of European politics with its highly charged concepts of "liberty, equality, fraternity" and its demand for control of the rulers by the ruled. It was from the French Revolution that there developed those energies which have since made democracy as a social belief the dominant theme of subsequent political developments and political revolutions in a process of internalisation of values which has been universal in extent. At the same time, the idea of popular government formulated in the United States of 1776 has been taken up institutionally and constitutionally, finding its typical expression in the division of powers.

It is from this latter development that parliaments, chambers, or whatever the assemblies of popular representatives may be called in various languages, emerge. In Britain, the "Cabinet" separated out as a government, deriving its legitimisation no longer from the King but rather from the elected parliament. Switzerland, Germany, Austria and the United States, each in its own way and time, developed federal structures as a special variant of the division of powers, and one contrasting strongly with the centralism of France or Britain. The next great step came with the rise of organised mass parties and the prolonged struggle for universal suffrage, both a consequence of the emergence of political organisations of the working class. The workers' organisations confronted the socially rooted "conservative" forces and forced them in turn to found political parties (for a paradigmatic example relating to Swedish developments, see Nedelmann, 1975). In essence, the formation of these party systems along religious or industrial lines of conflict was substantially complete by the nineteen twenties (see Lipset & Rokkan, 1967).

An understanding of these diverse developments affecting the realms of values, constitutional and organisational forms, and of their complex interpenetration in the fabric of the modern state, is crucial for an analysis of the problems of government today. Democratic values may be realised in very different ways, and may even be transformed into their opposite; indeed, the democratic belief very often serves as a form of camouflage for organisations dedicated to the purpose of violence. Fascism, Nazism, Peronism, etc. are but the most flagrant examples of what one might describe as the alibi function of social beliefs. Similarly, the division of powers does not necessarily simultaneously imply democratic government, but is (or was) compatible with a variety of forms of authoritarianism. Federal structures follow rules of their own, and party systems do not necessarily result in party government. For analytical purposes, it is essential

to treat each individual element separately, but the crucial feature of party government is the binding together through parties of all these elements. Depending on how the parties permeate and dominate parliaments and other state institutions, on the way in which the ruling party (or coalition) obtains its legitimacy and its room for manoeuvre, and on the extent to which party leaderships have developed into a body that co-ordinates or mediates virtually all aspects of policy, the problems of democracy will themselves be different. Certainly, the German advocates of the "party state" had not imagined that the party organisations — formally acknowledged by the constitution, but formed outside the constitutional institutions proper — would develop into the real centre of power.

III. Conditions

Party government is fully developed where not only do parties compete for the electors' votes, but also where elections decide the next government in a virtually plebiscitary manner. The question of whether there is any real chance of a possible change of government thereby becomes the decisive criterion of popular government. In theory, the possibility of a change may always be assumed, but, in practice, the probability varies quite markedly. The possibility of change depends on: (1) the social basis of the parties competing for office, (2) the manner in which the electoral system converts votes into parliamentary mandates (cf. Wildenmann *et al.*, 1965) and thereby affects the formation of majorities, (3) the mode of institutional regulation of the competition for power (e. g. rules governing party finance — cf. Schleth, 1973 and Wildenmann, 1967) and its effect on voter mobilisation, (4) the nature of information processes, (5) the nature and extent of emotional and structural linkages between the electorate and parties, (6) the manner in which society is politically and socially structured, (7) the differential distribution of political experiences and attitudes as between different groups or layers of society and as between political activists and others, and (8) the manner and the rules by which the circulation of political positional elites takes place and the processes and institutions (e. g. media) through which reputational elites are redefined.

The interaction of these conditions makes for the diversity of forms of party government manifested in contemporary Western Europe. Italy has in the DC (Christian Democrats) a (crumbling?) "hegemonic" party (Sartori, 1976). In Sweden, the position of the Social Democrats is no less hegemonic — having been in government uninterruptedly for more than forty years and resuming office once more in 1982 after a gap of only six years. In Belgium, the Flemings are structurally in a minority amongst the positional elites and in the population, and the country has until recently been ruled exclusively by a Francophile positional elite. In the German Federal

Republic, the CDU/CSU's electoral chances (based on a level of voter support of 44-49%) are structurally greater than those of the SPD (38-45% of the vote), but — up to now — still leaving the FDP as the decisive factor determining coalition possibilities. In Britain, where in the post-war era parties have tended to alternate in office and there is generally a reasonable chance of a change of government at any given election, the legitimacy of governments elected in this way is meeting with increasing criticism, not only from liberal intellectuals (cf. *Finer*, 1980), but also from increasingly large groups of the voting population. The problem of representational legitimacy is particularly acute at the present time, when the opposition to the Conservatives is split into two camps with almost no possibility, under the existing relative majority system of election, of winning a parliamentary majority. Yet again, the existence of relatively large Communist parties in France and Italy creates special difficulties for party government in those countries. Examples can be multiplied almost endlessly to demonstrate the diverse manner in which conditions interact to produce specific manifestations of party government and create particular impediments to party government also functioning as fully democratic government.

There is a widespread view that competition by parties (or by "elites") for governmental status — by contrast with authoritarian, totalitarian or praetorian regimes — not merely permits a multiplicity of opinions, but allows the formation of, and gives recognition to, an organised opposition, which is an essential element of democracy as such. Moreover, government action itself is considerably, and as it were dialectically, influenced by the consequent openness of political goals and the discussion of specific measures so generated. It is certainly true that competition for government office and the connected principle of majority decision do count as essential and fundamental attributes of democracy (although not all theorists see them as sufficient conditions), but that does not exclude the possibility, to use a metaphor, that the feuding "party barons" of government and opposition may conduct their battles on the backs of the "peasant" electorate; that what we are dealing with is a kind of party feudalism, the structure of which is stabilised by the chances of mobilisation and manipulation in contemporary society. Even the degree of effectiveness of the opposition as a component of democracy in each case (i.e. the extent to which the opposition actually limits government action), is dependent on the nature of social and institutional conditions, as well as on historically and constitutionally shaped structures, all of which vary from country to country. Permanent minority status for groups or groups organised in parties is by no means rare. Moreover, election promises and government action quite frequently differ markedly, since the issues that inform electoral campaigning tend to be defined by the chances of winning and are remote from the issues actually faced after an election. In sum, it is often the case

that under the conditions of actual party government, verbal protestations of democracy are considerably at variance with the actual nature of the ruling organisation of the modern state. Here there is much scope for social and political criticism and for the empirical study of problems of party government.

The confrontation of the real conditions of rule with the elementary norm of democratic theory, that any particular government can be voted out, does not however exhaust the problem. Empirical observations in Britain, France or the Federal Republic — that is, even in countries with highly developed party government, and without even considering the presidential form in the United States — raise the issue of whether party government may not be developing in the direction of some quasi-charismatic legitimation of the ruling organisation. The suggestion is not that all top political actors must possess such charisma or preserve it after an election, but rather that we are witnessing a move towards a charismatic party collectivism, in which the popular charisma of individual leaders does constitute a definite resource in winning the political game. In Britain, commentary and debate on this theme has been current since the fifties, with a particular focus on the power of, and the constraints surrounding, the Prime Minister. In the Federal Republic, whilst a conception of “Chancellor democracy” is quite apparent in the conduct of the voters, such a structural development was not foreseen by the founding fathers of the constitution and was not inherent in the design of the constitutional machinery, however much a “strong democratic government” may have been wanted as an “answer to National Socialism” (A. Arndt, in the Parliamentary Council). In France, there has always been a real tendency towards a charismatic breakthrough to Bonapartism, but the institution of the Fifth Republic has had the somewhat paradoxical consequence of (unintentionally) creating the conditions for party government, whilst creating in the President a permanent quasi-charismatic focus of legitimation. In an historical garb, that changes from place to place, and in a relatively short-lived manner, the various political actors at the summit of politics are adulated, whether they be called J. F. Kennedy, Reagan, Thatcher, De Gaulle, Mitterand, Adenauer, Helmut Schmidt or Helmut Kohl. However, the persons of the powerful, typecast and hyped-up as they are by the media of mass communication, become more important in the eyes of the voters than the offices that are supposed to be entrusted to them for a period; hence the orientation to office ceases to be embedded in structural exigencies and becomes instead a matter of subjective qualities. Fine distinctions are important here: the distinction between an emotional, but at bottom rational recognition of leadership qualities, and the emotional symbolisation of individuals onto whom the wishes of the people or part of the people are projected; the difference between the readiness to trust oneself to an accepted party leadership, whilst maintaining the ability to criticise, and a

mass trust in the image of appearances; the difference between respect for a person on the basis of experience and a mass enthusiasm. These differences, however, categorically determine the content of the ruling organisation concerned.

The tendency to quasi-charismatic collectivism brings the issue of the legitimacy of party government into sharp focus. If democracy is understood in Schumpeter's or Down's sense as a competitive struggle by leadership groups for the temporary support of the voters, then one might well conclude that democracy existed so long as an essentially bipolar competition of leadership groups with reasonably equal chances of governing was guaranteed by institutional and organisational means (i.e. where the electoral system leads to the formation of a majority on the basis of an open society without any lasting political and social minorities). But the main problem with such an assumption is not so much the failure of this type of ruling organisation to match up the realities of democratic practice — an objection frequently encountered in the literature on "formal democracy" — but rather that such an open, informed and reasonable society is a marginal case. In reality, it cannot be achieved even with a majoritarian electoral system unless other conditions are such as to undermine hegemonic positions. Further, access to the party leadership groups tends to bring about a very one-sided selection of personnel in virtue of the *libido dominandi* (the lust for power). This issue of the constraints on leadership is closely tied to twentieth century assumptions about the limitless "manipulability" of politics by political actors in the modern state. Certainly, the probability of unconstrained manipulation is a function of the actual working of constitutions, the extent to which democratic values are internalised in society, how the media works and the nature of oppositional forces. Also, any judgement of the degree to which "lust for power" and "manipulability" are dominant depends on a careful differentiation between leaders' "aspirations for power" and their "aspirations for policy". Nevertheless, there are abundant examples of political leaders who have complied with the constraints before they achieved powerful positions, but once having done so, tried to ignore them to the greatest extent possible.

Issues of the match between democratic theory and practice are not the only ones to raise question-marks about the nature of contemporary quasi-charismatic party government. The gigantism of big party political organisations, as they have developed, especially since the Second World War, raises problems of its own. Furthermore, not only are there manifest problems concerning the legitimacy of this form of government, but there are also serious questions that can be and have been raised about its *effectiveness*, i.e. its capacity to cope with problems. These problems of legitimacy and effectiveness are closely interlinked, and a discussion and analysis of their nature forms much of the substance of this first volume on *The Future of Party Government*.

IV. The Importance of Conflict Areas

Party government is a phenomenon of industrial societies. Even if one does not assume, as in Marxist theory, that the ruling organisation of modern states is merely the "superstructure" of a capitalist society, but rather takes the view that party government is an autonomous institutional development, partly independent in its decision-making structures, it remains the case that there is a real correspondence with other structural developments in society. Its value conceptions correspond to democratic standards or relate to them, even where, as we have seen, legal norms take on the character of an alibi function. Its existence presupposes a high degree of demographic, technological, scientific and economic development, without which it would not in any sense be conceivable. The view that certain levels of economic development must be attained as a precondition of democratic development is not one that can be rejected out of hand (cf. Muller, 1979). Furthermore, party government is closely bound up with the development of legal rules that set boundaries of differing effectiveness to the scope for political action and which may be used by the ruled as instruments for exercising sanctions against the political misconduct of leaders. However, it should be noted, that not all groups in a society are in an equally good position to use these; there is evidence that the asymmetry of access to politics is appearing in a new form in contemporary states, with the state-employed classes having privileged access (see Kaase, 1981). Moreover, there has never been any lack of imagination on the part of politicians in getting rid of uncomfortable legal rules or getting around them; machiavellianism is less a matter of "morals" than of real constraints (the more so since the literature has not, whether in Kant, Durkheim, Piaget or Kohlberg, unambiguously identified either the origins or nature of moral concepts, and, indeed, this can hardly be clarified without taking into account the effectiveness of institutions).

The received wisdom concerning the predominant lines of conflict in industrial societies — and hence of the determination of party political preference and affiliation — is that class and religiosity constitute the primary dimensions. This basic picture of conflict between industrialists (managers) and workers, and between those with and without religious ties, does retain some crude explanatory power. With the exception of voters with a Protestant ethical affiliation, voters with church ties, especially Catholics, are extremely likely to be "conservative in values", while those without religious ties or lay people tend towards a more "progressive" stance. Workers have a leftist orientation and entrepreneurs a rightist one. However, this basic model of conflict and political orientation in industrial societies, always much more applicable in Europe than in the United States, is today generally breaking down and must be discarded in any detailed empirical analysis. New patterns are emerging, determined in a complex

manner by degree of organisation, degree of the individual means of subsistence (wealth) or collective welfare and by the profound primary political experiences of individuals. Above all, however, it is the very organisation of the party system in each country which has become the primary factor influencing the distribution of political orientations.

There is, moreover, a reciprocal interaction here, with the distribution of political orientations itself conditioning the freedom of action of party governments and their affiliated organisations. A bimodal distribution where, say, a few votes may bring about a shift in the positionally relevant allocation of parliamentary seats, favours the effectiveness of government action, since it is most likely to correspond with the conditions of party government. On the other hand, it has the disadvantage of a tendency to rigid party organisation and discipline and frequently to a larger discrepancy between electoral promises and subsequent government action. The marginal votes may well correspond to the ideal typical image of "middle" voter (of bourgeois provenance), as in the case of the Federal Republic, or, just as likely, be based on the extreme position or lack of political knowledge of the particular marginal voter. Obviously, as was noted previously, the nature of the electoral system is also a crucial factor here.

A multimodal distribution of orientations has a more or less opposite effect, with a centrifugal tendency to rigid and extreme conditions, as in Italy. Its most important drawback is the hiatus between electoral choice and government formation. The ultimate outcome of an election (assuming that it is possible to form a coalition at all), namely the formation of a government, cannot be predicted and is beyond the control of the electorate. Capacity for consensus can hardly be expected under such circumstances, unless in the cynical form that the voters are at one in their indifference to which party groupings eventually coalesce to form the government. On the other hand, the electoral system underlying this distribution may be perceived in public debate to be basically "fair", and, certainly, in terms of equal access to structural minorities, the unlimited proportional representation system is "fair" in giving minorities a possibility of articulating their views, if not always giving them a chance to govern.

The problem areas that politics in an industrial society has particularly to deal with and that confront contemporary party governments are the specific cleavages of such a society. In accordance with schema devised by Karl Deutsch, Bruno Fritsch and this author, eight fundamental areas of this kind can be identified, each of which has a corresponding source of social and political differentiation. They are:

- (1) The reproduction of economic capital including productivity increases, which is the source of industrial conflict.
- (2) The promotion of scientific and technical potential, which is the source of differentiation in terms of influence and status.

- (3) The degree of mobility, both horizontal and vertical, in a society, which is the source of differential chances of personal development.
- (4) The degree of mutual solidarity — including the “agreement between generations” as to horizontal social redistribution — which is the source of differential protection against the social risks faced by individuals and families.
- (5) The relationship between man and environment, the source of possible destruction or despoilation of man’s existential conditions.
- (6) The creation and maintenance of the conditions of creativity, which is the source of cultural distinctions between individuals.
- (7) The rule of law in domestic affairs, creating “security” of private and community life.
- (8) International security through peaceful and institutionalised conflict resolution.

In other words, economic, research, infrastructure, social, environmental, educational policies, lawful regulations of domestic conflict and international peaceful conflict resolution are the central tasks and central issues of contemporary government. Each of these areas has its own regularities, complexities and “speed” of development. In all these fields not only are concrete problems likely to arise as a consequence of social and economic change, but also specific social expectations develop with which governments have to cope.

Thus the welfare state demands — discounting more direct subventions in infrastructure and personnel — a redistribution of the social product which amounts to some 20% of GNP (see Flora, 1981) on average in the European states (with a range from 15-30%). This redistribution involves two cross-cutting flows: from one group of society to another and a horizontal distribution of an insurance kind. The welfare state has by its creation and extension created a massive rise in expectations of government action, just because its programmes cater to the most basic existential conditions of the citizen, by providing care in the form of sickness, old age and survivors’ pensions, unemployment and accident insurance and guarantees for family maintenance. But to the degree that the programmes of the welfare state actually increase the demand for the extension of the welfare state, these demands may well be in partial contradiction to the economic productivity conditions from the yield of which they must be ultimately financed.

Infrastructural expenditure in the contemporary state serves not only to finance luxury goods. The road network, for instance, guarantees individual mobility, which in turn is a precondition of the mobility of labour. Environment policy is not merely a symbol of, and a response to, the fundamentalist attitudes of the younger generation, but is a necessity for the preservation of reasonable conditions of existence for the great majority, leaving aside all considerations of romanticism. The new technologies

signal a massive transformation of social communication; developing them in a context of freedom involves very special problems of social consensus and liberty. Scientific progress is not only Janus-faced in offering the potential for both progress and destruction, but also presupposes vast financial resources and at the same time an educational policy geared to continuous long-term change. Demographic developments — virtual zero population growth in the advanced states and a changing dependency ratio (i.e. a continuous decline in the percentage of the economically active) — pose very major dilemmas, the solution of which seem scarcely resolvable without further (possibly, environmentally damaging) economic growth.

As these examples show, the problems faced by contemporary governments are closely interrelated, and their solution requires new social, economic and political ideas and codes of conduct. In other words, the legitimacy of democracies is dependent upon the effectiveness of government action, and this is in turn reciprocally linked to the nature of the government, its manner of governing, and the consensus it enjoys.

V. Recruitment and Selection Problems

The issue of governmental effectiveness is not merely a question of “overload”, that rising expectations and needs in society outstrip the resources available (cf. Rose, 1980). It is primarily a matter of whether party government is able to produce from within itself the people that need to be selected for official tasks and has the capacity to create a structure of communication and coordination that will mediate consensually between government action and society.

It is doubtful in the extreme whether personnel selection through party channels can fully match these challenges under contemporary conditions. The present system calls first of all for the freeing of those occupying specialised posts from all other tasks. Indeed, there no longer seems to be a place for “honourables” and thereby for a wide range of talents. In the Federal Republic, the trend towards a “parliament of bureaucrats” was already clear in 1953 (see Wildenmann, 1953). Central government tasks were, however, during that period of “high achievement motivation”, and because of the pressure of immediate problems (unemployment, integration of refugees, treaties with the West, European development and co-determination) often entrusted to people who did not come from party careers. Even in the SPD, the organisational solidarity of which is proverbial, the then chairman, Kurt Schumacher, asked that candidates for public office be chosen not on the basis of party seniority, but on the basis of ability. He himself in the period after 1946 took care to encourage young blood, which was subsequently, in leadership positions, to determine the fate of the party over a long period. Such a careful approach to the leadership

succession — the encouragement and bringing on of talent — has however, with notable or even outstanding exceptions, gone out of fashion. The appearance of the parties is primarily characterised by people belonging to the state-supported classes with specific professional training and roles, and, most particularly, by teachers.

A French study (Cayrol, 1983) demonstrates the extraordinary change in the composition of the French parties in the last thirty years. It is no longer lawyers, managers or the liberal professions that constitute the majority of representatives, but teachers paid by the state. The same tendency is apparent across Europe, and even the directly elected European Parliament is part of the same trend. To use Max Weber's categories, the politicians no longer live for politics, but from politics, which alone provides (or seems to provide) them with enhanced opportunities for success and social prestige. These then are professional politicians, who ensure themselves against the risks once inherent in party political activity by a reliance on guaranteed state funds. Those best able to do this are teachers of all kinds, especially given the "overproduction" in the educational establishment, which has also been a singular feature of the previous thirty years. Party government is based on a political class *sui generis*, freed from the compulsions of other professions, practised in making use of formal or informal behavior in the pursuit of political career, adroit in the arts of manipulation, subject only to the "rules" of struggle for position and interchangeable among different offices rather in the way that the procurators of ancient Rome were rotated from province to province.

The cultural peculiarities of individual countries may somewhat modify or disguise this fundamental tendency. Without literary or artistic competence, higher offices may scarcely be obtainable in France; the French national claim to speak for a universal human dignity is still kept alive. In Britain, a public school or Oxbridge background, with its accumulation of knowledge concerning the ability and particularly the "character" of candidates, is still a guide to personnel selection, especially in the Conservative Party. And, it may even be surmised that the rise of the British SDP may have such "elitist" structural causes. In Italy, even the petty officials of parties of the Left in municipal or regional office still make a show of the forms and elegance of cultivated manners. The Federal Republic may be the sole major country in which the levelling out of educational, and hence social, classes together with the collapse of the traditional educational ethos shows the more starkly monotonal structure of the "political class". Certainly, in Germany, the discrepancy in the selection procedure between the political and other social elites is particularly clear, and the opportunity for cultural elites to take public office is much circumscribed (effectively restricted to natural scientists, technicians, economists and, most prominently, lawyers). For the rest of the intellectual and

cultural elite, serious political activity is but a playground for licenced "court jesters".

Harking back to Mosca, one is tempted to suggest that the new "ruling class" is recruited out of the state-employed sector, and that the formula of its rule can be deduced from a kind of feudalism revisited, mainly that of state guaranteed income and pension provisions. For them, the state has become the "object" of education, of role significance, of income and of status allocation, as well as being the source of social meaning and legitimation. Among the developments that have led to this special type of party government, the penetration of parties by those belonging to the state-paid class has the predominant place. Other social groupings with clearly different conditions of existence, such as entrepreneurs, workers or even artists, have rather become objects of politics and have partly lost their character as subjects; despite all the class and status differences between such groups, this is the characteristic of their common fate.

VI. Media and Information Problems

The exceptions to this new political class stratification, which is becoming increasingly characteristic of contemporary party governments, are the journalistic actors of the mass media — or at least they may be exceptions! While such slogans as "the power of the media" or "control of the media" may be based on some element of truth, such as the increasing perception by journalists of their role as "co-politicians without a seat" (Carlo Schmid in a discussion), they, unfortunately, obscure reality more than they reveal it.

Two restrictive developments reduce the autonomous participation of the media in political decision making processes and their role of "agenda setting" — the latter, often much over-emphasised in the literature. On the one hand, technical constraints have brought into being huge publishing concerns, which no longer leave their "products" up to the free play of opinion, but trim them to fit a given audience according to the tenets of tested commercial success. The media are constantly attempting to divine the fears, resentments or submerged desires of their audience and to bring them to market (cf. Reismann) in a manner reminiscent of the attempts of party propagandists to market their idols. This is less true of such quality daily papers as "The Times", the "Süddeutsche Zeitung", "Le Monde", "Corriere della Sera" or the "Neue Zürcher Zeitung"; but it is very much so of the visual media, especially the TV monopolies, and of the weekly or monthly magazine productions. The trend to "mass communication as systems control" (Schatz-Bergeld, 1970) cannot be overlooked; and part of the struggle over the new media technologies, such as cable and optical fibre communications, reflects the efforts of these major commercial concerns to