

Preface

The impact of the institutions of party government on the determination of public policy is an area of research which must be regarded as a crucial component of democratic political analysis. Its significance is immediately apparent if we pose questions linking the key institutional structure of western democratic societies with the major policy issues confronting those societies: Are party government regimes more or less successful than others in dealing with issues such as inflation, unemployment, welfare, the security of the realm and environmental pollution? Yet, despite its significance, the nexus between institutions and policy outcomes has, until recently, been largely ignored by academic political science. Policy determination has been analysed without reference to the institutional matrix within which it occurs, and government institutions have been discussed without reference to their ability to formulate policies. In this way, a most important problem of political analysis has been largely overlooked. To understand the fundamental nature of modern societies and the role of government within them, we need to ask how diverse governmental institutions differ in their ability to cope with "problems" and what determines their capacity to resolve those problems.

These questions are inherently comparative in character and, hence, require research inputs with an explicitly comparative focus. Valid conclusions can only derive from a wide-ranging survey of diversity in both institutional forms and policy outcomes, rather than from a narrow emphasis on the singularities of the institutional-policy linkage in particular national contexts. This truth is the common starting-point of the studies contained in the volume, *Managing Mixed Economies*, which takes the recent efflorescence of scholarly analysis of comparative public policy and political economy one step further by its detailed consideration of such issues as conflicts of policy goals and the diversity of institutionalised policy formulation procedures within the general rubric of democratic party government. As in the other volumes in this series, the willingness to delve behind apparently simple linkages in the functioning of democratic government suggests a pattern of much greater diversity and complexity than revealed by previous analysis.

A starting point which recognises both the diversity and complexity of the phenomena under study does not make for simple conclusions or a short-term research perspective. All the authors who have contributed to this volume would agree that much further research is necessary before it is possible to set out a theoretically elegant picture of the linkage between institutional

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arrangements and policy outcomes. Nevertheless, quite apart from the intrinsic value of each individual contribution, the intellectual development of each reflects the synergetic power generated through the work of this sub-group of the Party Government project.

As with previous volumes, the support of the European University Institute was crucial to success. We are, therefore, once more pleased to record our gratitude to the EUI President, Werner Maihofer, and the Research Council for their sympathetic encouragement for the project. The procedures involved in taking a book from intellectual genesis to final publication can sometimes be rather slow, and for this reason the original versions completed in 1983 had to be modified and updated several times. The Publications Committee of the EUI and especially its chairman, Professor Gunther Teubner, together with the Publications Officer, Brigitte Schwab, deserve our special gratitude for facilitating the production process in the way they did.

Without the help of the staff in Mannheim, especially Sabine Lessmann, and the secretaries Bettina Alff and Waltraud Leininger, the publication of this volume would also have been far more difficult.

Finally, we hope, that with the publication of this third volume in the series, the overall scope of the Party Government project is emerging in clearer perspective.

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