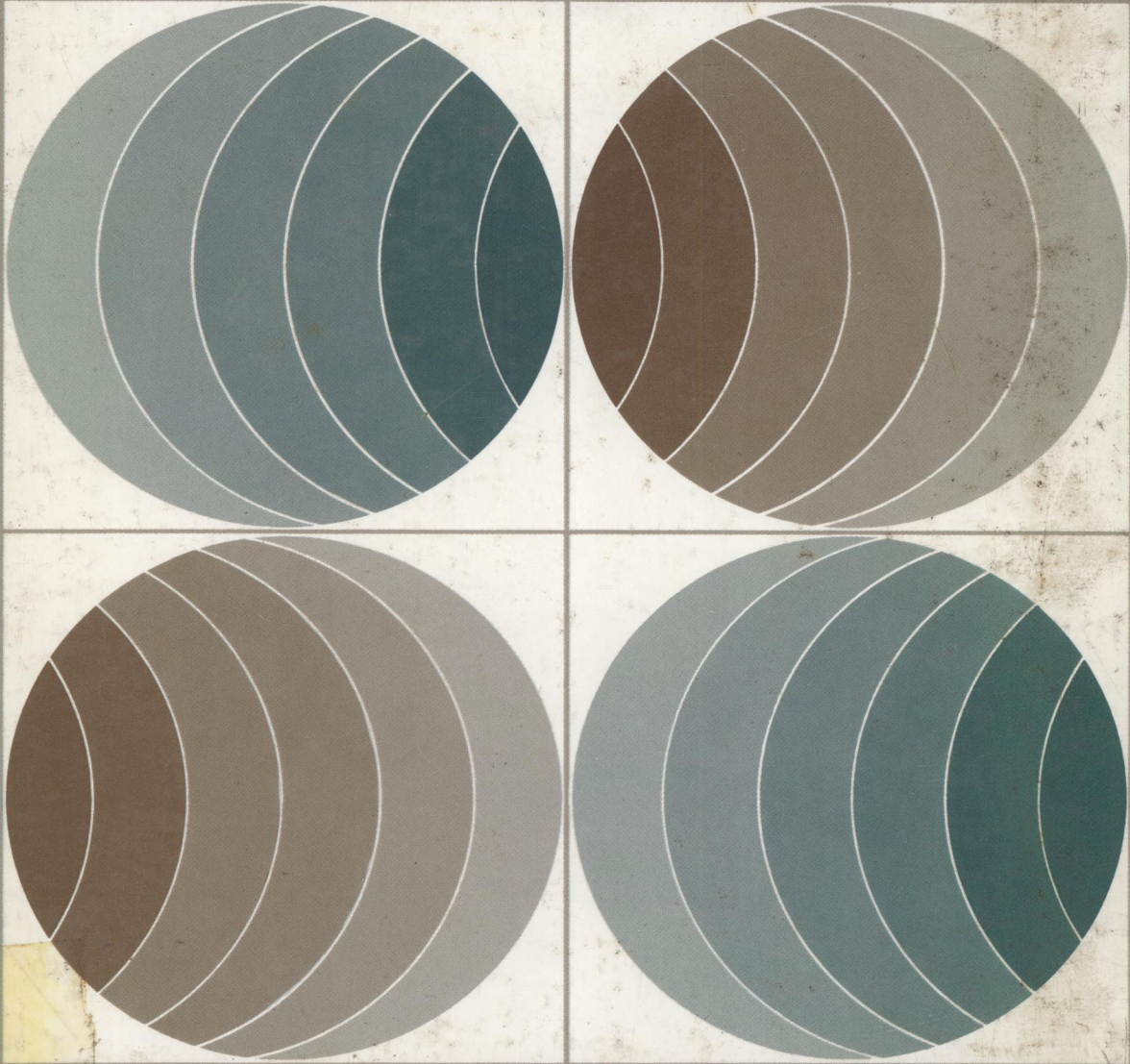


Modern Political Systems: Europe

FIFTH EDITION



ROY C. MACRIDIS, EDITOR

fifth edition

**Modern
Political Systems:
Europe**

Roy C. Macridis, editor

PRENTICE-HALL, INC., Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey 07632

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

Main entry under title:

Modern political systems.

1. Comparative government. 2. Europe—
Politics and government. I. Macridis, Roy C.
JF51.M6 1982 320.3'094 82-3727
ISBN 0-13-597195-0 AACR2

*Editorial production supervision
and interior design: Barbara Kelly
Cover design: Wanda Lubelska
Manufacturing buyer: Edmund W. Leone*

The extract on p. 3 is reprinted by permission of *Daedalus*,
Journal of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences,
Winter 1979, Boston, MA.

© 1983, 1978, 1972, 1968, 1963 by Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, N.J. 07632

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Printed in the United States of America

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

ISBN 0-13-597195-0

Prentice-Hall International, Inc., *London*
Prentice-Hall of Australia Pty. Limited, *Sydney*
Prentice-Hall of Canada Inc., *Toronto*
Prentice-Hall of India Private Limited, *New Delhi*
Prentice-Hall of Japan, Inc., *Tokyo*
Prentice-Hall of Southeast Asia Pte. Ltd., *Singapore*
Whitehall Books Limited, *Wellington, New Zealand*

*Modern Political Systems:
Europe*

VERNON V. ASPATURIAN

Soviet Politics

FRANCIS G. CASTLES

Scandinavian Politics

KARL W. DEUTSCH

D. BRENT SMITH

Politics of Western Germany

SAMUEL E. FINER

Politics of Great Britain

ROY C. MACRIDIS

Introduction

Politics of France

Politics of the European Common Market

Mediterranean Politics

Preface

This fifth edition is a continuing effort to translate recent theorizing and writing in the field of comparative politics into a text adjusted to the needs and also the level and the background of the average American undergraduate. It follows closely the overall plan of our fourth edition (1978). We have shortened the four major sections on England, France, the German Federal Republic, and the Soviet Union and expanded our coverage to include the Scandinavian and Mediterranean countries. There is also a special and revised section on the European Common Market. To include these new materials, we have reluctantly omitted some detail in order to give an overview. We used a thicker brush, but hope that the colors remain vivid.

All the authors in this volume have tried to

adhere to the same general view of politics we presented in previous editions. The political system is a part of a larger system of social relations. We have therefore made a special effort to place politics and government institutions in their appropriate ideological, social, historical, international, and economic settings. Although we insist that governments are decision-making agencies, making policy by choosing from among a variety of possible options, we have also tried to identify some of the recent problems that all democracies—and also totalitarian systems—seem to face today: the multiplicity and urgency of demands upon governments; the pervasive crisis of authority and legitimacy; and the necessity of developing a coherent economic policy that avoids recession or inflation or both.

So, this volume again deals with key concepts that guide students to study political systems and to make comparisons. It also deals with the basic institutions and their functions, and with the issues and problems that confront all of them.

Both I and the individual authors are grateful to Professors Vincent E. McHale of Case Western Reserve and Henry J. Steck of

the State University of New York (Cortland) for reading the whole manuscript and making some excellent suggestions for this revision. Professor Peter Lange of Duke University read the Mediterranean section and I thank him warmly for rescuing me from a number of errors. We are all responsible to others!

Roy C. Macridis
Waltham, Mass.
March 31, 1982

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I

Introduction

This volume is on European politics, with primary emphasis on the four major European nations: France, the United Kingdom (“England”), West Germany, and the Soviet Union. (England seems, at last, after joining the European Economic Community, to have become a part of Europe, but some may quibble about including the Soviet Union.) We also include overviews of the Scandinavian countries; the European Economic Community (the “Common Market”)—France, West Germany, Italy, Denmark, Belgium, Holland, Ireland, Britain, Luxembourg, and Greece; and the Mediterranean area—Portugal, Spain, Italy, and Greece. We hope to familiarize the beginning student with the respective historical backgrounds and political institutions of these countries.

We also hope to initiate the student into a comparative study that seeks to identify similarities and differences and, if possible, explain them by presenting a common set of questions. What is the socioeconomic structure of the country? What are the relations between citizens and the elite? What are their respective political cultures? How do citizens make their demands known? How are the government structures set up, what functions do they perform, and how well?

The Soviet Union, England, France, and West Germany are by all standards “modern.” So are the Scandinavian countries. The Mediterranean countries, on the other hand, are only now going through social, economic, and political modernization. We are therefore studying and comparing both highly developed systems and relatively

underdeveloped even if modernizing ones. *Modernization* and *development* may be viewed in general terms as the ability of humans, as social beings, to control their environment and use it to provide benefits for all. We control our environment, control our history, and make our history. A modern nation, then, is a collectivity in which the optimum rational and scientific techniques and procedures are used for the benefit of all.

An intricate historical process is associated with modernization. From a socioeconomic point of view, there must be adequate accumulation of capital, and capital must be used to increase productivity and shorten working hours. Division of labor is indispensable. With differentiation of tasks comes new forms of exchange, new forms of communication, and the need for a new solidarity on a national and at times even an international scale. The home or village economy, the regional and segmented economies, become *national* economies. The village mentality gives way to a broader national consciousness. The political order changes drastically to provide for mobilization and expression of interest, participation, role specialization, a greater degree of communication, and the transition from individualism and individual effort to associational and group structures.¹

Levels of modernization but also the rate of modernization have a direct impact upon political institutions and attitudes. In comparing the countries we shall discuss, we shall have to be particularly sensitive, therefore, to the relationship between socioeconomic forces and changes on the one hand and political forms, attitudes, and institutions on the other.

EMERGING TRENDS AND PROBLEMS

What are the common trends we note and the problems facing most of the countries we study?

In the 1960s many students of Western Europe viewed modernization and development in evolutionary terms. Technology would continue to provide both the resources and means for the satisfaction of expanding human needs. There was no question that the state and its various agencies would continue to redistribute wealth to the poor and the handicapped in an equitable fashion. The problem did not appear socially divisive or explosive simply because it was taken for granted that the gross national product would keep growing, and hence that it would be easier to slice off large parts of the increments to provide for social services—leisure, health, retirement benefits, social and communal services, education, transportation, and so on. It was generally agreed that with the fundamental problem of economic necessity overcome, politics would become in Lenin's terms (though in an entirely different context) the "administration of things." Politics was to be the instrument for a rational and equitable distribution of goods and services—a technical problem.

In addition to economic growth, so widespread between 1950 and 1970, there were other signs that seemed to support the over-all thesis of political stability. There was a growing participation of the experts—the technocrats, as they came to be called—in decision making. They were nominated in government, replacing the politicians. They brought with them their managerial skills and professional expertise in making decisions on the basis of rational and scientific considerations. The political

¹ See the lucid statement of this process in Samuel Beer's *Modern Political Development* (New York: Random House, 1974).

parties, it was also pointed out, were beginning to lose their sectarian and ideological character. Multiparty systems began to give place to large coalitions—two or three in number. Parties became increasingly comprehensive in their appeal; they came to be called “catch-all” parties, spreading their net far and wide to catch as many votes as possible from different groups, classes, regions, and interests. They became channels of compromise, where various heterogeneous groups sought and found accommodation. The catch-all party sought feasible solutions to existing problems. It would put an end to the instabilities of class or ideological politics and would surmount sharp social cleavages already toned down by the advent of prosperity. Like American parties, the Gaullists in France, the Christian Democrats and Social Democrats in Germany, even the Conservatives in England and the Communists in Italy seemed to move in the direction of catch-all parties.

Finally, the role of parliamentary assemblies became gradually confined to registering the existing consensus, expressing it in the form of laws that provided guidelines to the executive and the administration. The role of the Prime Minister and the cabinet in England showed the way. In Western Germany the preponderant power assumed by the Chancellor followed the same direction, despite the efforts of the framers of the Bonn Constitution to prevent executive predominance. In 1958 the French Gaullist constitution reversed the relationship between Parliament and the executive by reinforcing the powers of the latter to the point where many claimed that Parliament was muzzled.

Gradually a new consensus seemed to evolve. It crystallized around a number of beliefs: the inevitability of prosperity, the rational allocation and redistribution of the ever-growing wealth by experts, and the

development of welfare programs to provide support but especially to equalize the living conditions of the citizenry. Many equated this consensus with the emergence of a post-industrial society where, to put it bluntly, the problems of poverty and inequality would no longer plague the human condition. Abundance, peace, and domestic tranquility were just around the corner. An author summarized admirably these assumptions about European politics:

The argument in brief was this: that modernization and industrialization—and the economic growth, affluence, and widening opportunities for education they generated—were erasing the lines of cleavage that generated antisystem conflict within European societies. Radical movements and ideologies of both Left and Right fed on discontents that were drying up in contemporary societies. The inequalities of income, status, and power that had given rise to all-out challenges to the state in the past were diminishing. . . . Modernization and economic growth were making the working class affluent; the strength of working-class organizations compensated for the superior economic power of the capitalists. At the same time, universal education and the advent of mass consumer society were reducing the social significance of those goods which by nature can only be possessed by a few—titles of nobility, a Rolls-Royce, an Oxford education—and were replacing them with those goods which are available to all who have some money—Volkswagens, televisions, and university degrees. Thus the very wide differentials of income, status, and power of European societies in the past would be progressively narrowed, and the distinctive class groupings of these societies would disappear.²

This model in terms of which European politics were viewed is no longer applicable. Since the early seventies a number of new

²Suzanne Berger, in *Daedalus: Looking for Europe* “Politics and Antipolitics in Western Europe” Vol. 108, No. 1, p. 28.