CORPORATISM AND THE PROCESS OF LEGISLATION IN WESTERN EUROPE

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SPAIN, Country Report

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Introduction

Spain held its first democratic elections in June 1977, after 44 years of dictatorship. Following these elections a new democratic constitution was drafted and went into effect in January 1979 - only five years ago. Indeed, Spain is still in the process of consolidating democracy (a process that is not without surprises, as witness the attempted military coup in February 1981.

Because democracy is still so new any observations made in this paper must necessarily be considered tentative. Studies of this sort are completely new in Spain and only continued in-depth research will give us the certainty we need to draw more accurate conclusions.

The legacy of the Franco years and the political transition

The dictatorship of General Franco not only meant that the basic liberties were surpressed, but that there was a great amount of populist protectionism for workers and for Spain's wage earners in general. In exchange for their civil liberties and their right to unionize wage earners enjoyed protected employment, considerable social benefits and protectionist State intervention.

The Franco regime left Spain with an industrial structure that was heavily concentrated in the sectors most prone to crisis (the steel industry, shipbuilding, textiles, the automotive industry, etc.), badly organized companies with too many employees and a low rate of productivity, a negligible capacity for technological innovation, a public sector that was in a shambles and employers who advocated an end to State interventionism while simultaneously demanding that they continue to

receive the State aid and subsidies which were the fruit of the government's protectionist policy. Unfortunately all this was further aggravated by the fact that the transition period coincided with the grave world economic recession of the mid-Seventies.

Furthermore, the political scene was complicated by the continued existence of armed forces that shared Franco's right wing ideology and had a tradition of active and direct intervention in the government of the country. The public administration was inefficient, corporatist and corrupt. The police force and Civil Guards had ultraconservative ideas and almost no contact with a society which regarded them with animosity. The judicial branch was also extremely conservative and had no tradition of independence from the executive branch. The public education system was in grave financial straits, plagued by inefficiency and semi-feudal methods of promoting teachers. All mass media were subject to systematic government manipulation of public opinion. In short, Spain's State aparatus was designed for dictatorship and it was still practically intact when the new democratic era dawned.

With the exception of the Communists, the political parties that emerged during the transition period were hurriedly formed and more indicative of the desire of new or remodelled sectors to participate in power than of political ideologies shaped throughout the years.

With the transition to democracy there were moments of euphoria in which politics and the new political leaders were exalted and broad sectors of the population became politically active. But once the novelty wore off Spain began to experience the same phenomenon that has occurred in the rest of the world, and particularly in Western Europe: the aura that had surrounded all kinds of political ideologies began to dim and Spain soon ended up with a few political parties that represented, more or less sceptically, these ideologies.

After forty years of dictatorship and single party politics Spain had opted for the pluralist party system at a time when the rest of Western Europe was discarding its ideologies, at a time when supranational dependencies were becoming more and more marked and when political parties were having a harder and harder time connecting with those sectors of society that, in theory, should have comprised their rank and file. This situation was further aggravated in Spain because of the country's long history of absolutism and authoritarianism, interrupted only by brief periods of open conflict. After these first moments of intense political activity and participation the Spaniards began taking refuge in scepticism in a last ditch defense of their own individualism against possible political socialization. Currently Spain has a very limited percentage of political militants (the most powerful political party has one card-carrying member for every 100 voters), a definite tendency towards abstentionism (normal voter participation in elections is about 60%) and a general lack of participation in public life.

In this context practically all the political parties have become election machines which revolve around more or less charismatic leaders and which essentially serve to provide a selection of politicians and party executives but which are having an ever more difficult time channeling and connecting with social movements and aspirations.

The Cortes (Parliament) has also suffered from this growing public disenchantment. Public interest has been sparked only on very special occasions. The new constitution was drafted in such a way (via pacts and consensus reached in meetings behind closed doors) that although it may have served to improve the final draft of the text, it also served to disorient the public and eliminate any ideological passions the process might have aroused. Once again, politics had become an exercise for the selected few, whose often incomprehensible concessions and counterproposals were made after

dinner parties or late night meetings of party leaders who, just days earlier, had seemed to hold utterly irreconciliable positions. The public began losing interest in a process it didn't understand and gradually turned its back on a political scene to which it felt it had been denied admittance.

Political parties thus became the gates through which one could acceed to the Cortes : the sanctum sanctorum where major decisions are made. In Spain it is far more prestigious to be a deputy to Cortes than to be a labor or business leader: it is the deputies who have access to the ultimate seat of political power and decision-making. This is also a legacy of the Franco years when proximity to power was considered an automatic source of privileges.

The Spanish legislative process

An analysis of the first constitutional legislature (1979-1982) demonstrated that the Spanish legislative process has some distinct peculiarities (for further details see the paper, An Approach to the Legislative Production of Spanish Parliament , which I presented in Salzburg in April 1984).

The longest phase of the entire Spanish legislative process is when a bill is in ponencia. The ponencia is a sort of sub-committee made up of members of the permanent parliamentary committees. This sub-committee has broad powers to amend the texts of proposed bills. Because the ponencia can meet behind closed doors and operate with a considerable degree of flexibility there is a tendency to reach agreements that somehow reflect the interest group pressures which are exerted on the sub-committee via the political parties.

Although the plenary sessions of the Cortes tend to be more a forum for political discussion than a real phase of the actual legislative process, the fact that Spain's civil society is weak and decision-making highly central-

ized means that political leaders have a real opportunity to shine. As a result, agreements are sometimes reached in the plenary sessions even though positions held earlier were all but irreconciliable.

Furthermore, in Spain, as in a number of other countries, the role of the Senate is far less important than that of the lower house or Congress of Deputies, as witnessed by the upper chamber's limited initative and its very minor contribution to the final legislative output.

It can generally be said that parliamentary intervention in final legislation is quite pronounced in Spain and this is largely because political decision-making is so centralized. As a result, the leaders of the major active and organized social interest groups are all to be found in the Cortes as representatives of various political parties.

The interest structure

The two most important interest groups are the labor unions and the employers' associations. The Spanish labor movement basically consists of two major unions which together account for 80-90% of all union membership and all representation in Works Councils. These two unions are the Socialist UGT (Unión General de Trabajadores) and the Communist CC.OO. (Comisiones Obreras). Nonetheless, it must be remembered that Spain is one of the European countries with the lowest rate of union membership (currently no more than 15%) and that Works Councils in a great number of companies are dominated by independents.

It is important to note that union officials also acceed to the Cortes via the leftist parties. Currently several UGT leaders belong to PSOE's parliamentary group. This does not mean, however, that they act independently as a pressure group for the labor movement.

CEOE (Confederación Española de Organizaciones Empresariales) is by far the most important employers' association. In fact, the only others that exist are a couple of organizations of small businessmen. CEOE is closely linked to the more conservative political parties and it is by no means unusual to find CEOE leaders running for parliament under the aegis of parties like Alianza Popular or, formerly, UCD. Furthermore, CEOE is heavily financed by contributions from its member group of public companies.

The government and its agencies formally consult with these two major groups, but other interest groups such as the Chambers of Commerce, the fledgling consumer associations, retailers' associations or neighborhood associations also exist. Their power and influence on the decision-making process are very relative and depend upon where in Spain they are located as well as upon their tradition of existence. Generally speaking though, they could be said to have little influence.

A good deal more influential, although less formally so, is the Committee which consists of the presidents of all the major Spanish banks. Traditionally the Committee has had a great influence on government decisions on economic policy. This was the case during the Franco years as well as during the transition period and it continues to be the case even now with a Socialist majority. This influence dates back to the beginning of the century when Spain's neutrality in World War I led to important industrial profits and the banks became highly dependent on the country's industrial structure.

Since 1977 there have been three major meetings of social and political interest groups in attempts to reach economic and social agreements. The first of these was the 1977 meeting of the government with the leading parliamentary parties. The agreements reached

took the form of a pact which contained clauses on economic policy (prices, tax and Social Security reforms, control of public spending, public company policy, etc.) and on matters of a more political nature. The Cortes supported the Pact and both chambers announced that it would be implemented through legislation. In practice, however, there was a minimum of adherence to the Pact and it became a mere precedent for the consensus politics which resulted in the new Constitution.

In 1981 another meeting was held. Although this was a tri-partite meeting of Government, Business and Labor the practical results were still very modest. The basic object was to set a ceiling on wage increases for the following two years. In exchange, the labor organizations would be given some say in employment policy and price setting. This agreement was signed only a few months after the attempted military coup and almost everyone abided by the wage ceiling guidelines. The spirit of cooperation was no doubt a carryover from the Franco years when whatever was cooked up on the heights of power was swallowed whole for the common good. Still, little attention was paid to the other clauses of the agreement.

An attempt is currently being made to reconstruct this tri-partite economic and social agreement (discussions on its content are just now getting underway). This time, however, the participants are more concerned with employment policy than with wage ceilings. The Socialist government is coming to the bargaining table having stated that they are not willing to make any major changes in their economic policy and particularly not in their industrial reconversion plans. This means that the agreement will probably only serve to set a ceiling on wage increases and introduce more flexible terms for contracting employees.

An overview of this kind of bargaining in Spain leads us to conclude that greater value is attributed to the pacts themselves than to their subsequent implementation through legislation or amended government decisions. Any

pact will always be considered a government achievement and a guarantee of its future actions. In addition, such pacts serve to strengthen the social credibility of the other parties involved.

It is important to note that all these pacts theoretically affected all wage earners in Spain regardless of the sectors or fields of production in which they were employed. This meant they were very highly centralized and their terms were almost universally reflected in subsequent pacts at industry or company level. Employees and employers alike felt, and continue to feel, that these agreements are as binding as a ministerial decree - at least as regards the wage ceilings established.

Were we to sum up the situation of organized interest groups in Spain and their influence on decision-making, we would have to conclude that, although the interest group structure is formally comparable to that of any other European country, these interest groups are much less influential and play a much less important role in Spanish society than they do elsewhere. In most cases these organizations simply provide a showcase for an elite corps of professional leaders who have little real following and only maintain their influence because of the high rate of social and political apathy in Spain and the explicit or implicit support of a State that is anxious to demonstrate its ability to forge social pacts. This causes decision-making to become ever more centralized and gives political, labor and business leaders greater leeway to maneuver in their dealings with the "omnipotent" State.

Article 131 of the Spanish Constitution does establish that an Economic and Social Council similar to those which exist in France or Italy or to England's NEDC, will be formed sometime in the future, but does not specify when. This Council would advise and collaborate with the government on economic planning.

Differences between policy sectors

The various government policies are largely conditioned by the extent of social conflict which will be generated by implementation of a particular measure.

In Spain today, as in almost all of Europe, the problems of unemployment (2 1/2 million as of June 1984) and industrial reconversion are the most conflictive issues and the subject of highest government concern - to such an extent that they actually condition all government activity. In the specific field of economic and industrial policy the measures to be applied are so conflictive that the very act of decision-making tends to bode ill for consensus. Currently the Socialist government, with its absolute majority in the Cortes, its powerful labor union (UGT) and its agreements with the leading banks, has been quite inflexible in its decisions on industrial policy, which jeopardize thousands of jobs. It is very likely that a non-Socialist government would have been unable to stick to this policy because of its explosiveness, but the Socialist government has only agreed to negotiate when conflict assumed alarming proportions and affected entire segments of the population. Even so, the Socialist government has never considered actually backing down on its decisions.

International policy is primarily concerned with getting Spain into the Common Market. Here, the government is more inclined to negotiate with the affected interest groups in the most conflictive sectors because the schedule for entry gives them time for a more leisurely, anticipatory sort of policy.

Another major problem which has long concerned the Spanish government is terrorism in the Basque Country and the terrorist organization,ETA. This has never been an easy issue to negotiate because both sides have always, at least formally, insisted

on setting a series of conditions which were clearly unacceptable to the other. It is only lately that the government has sought to facilitate negotiations by proposing to help repentent terrorists re-enter the mainstream of society.

There are also conflicts between the central government and the new executive branches of the Autonomous Communities which emerged as a result of the quasi- federal state established in the Constitution. The central government has tended to unload some of its problems on the Autonomous Communities, which sometimes blame their very lack of experience or their inability to act on the government's centralist policies and their own limited financial resources.

Generally speaking, there is no efficient, formal and permanent mechanism for bargaining with organized interest groups in any sphere of government action. Negotiations and consultations are informal affairs based on personal contacts between leaders. The reason for this is that there is no pressing need to negotiate because there has never been an interest group powerful enough to block government action.

The Spanish policy style

In this section we will discuss whether there exists a specifically Spanish method for approaching solutions to political problems. Obviously, the answer was a definite "yes" during the Franco years. When application of a policy caused problems to arise the Franco government demonstrated a startling lack of innovative capacity. Its relationship to the other components of the political process was a classical example of authoritarianism: pure and simple repression of those considered enemies of the system; consensus and agreement with the limited number of people who benefited from the regime. In fact, one of the

Franco regime's most serious problems was its total inability to broaden its base of support or increase its ability to attain consensus and collaboration. The regime survived solely because of its repressive tactics and the fact that all of Europe was then enjoying an economic boom, of which Franco was able to take full advantage.

Today the mechanisms of political representation have changed radically and the Spanish political system is fully comparable to that of any other European country. Nevertheless, the government has tended to react to problems rather than anticipate them. This is probably because the new system is still not yet firmly implanted, the economic situation continues to be extremely grave, the country has still to be integrated with the rest of Europe and there continue to be problems in converting Spain to a state of autonomous regions. Still, the State has professed its desire to negotiate and arrive at a consensus with the other actors in the political process, even though this has been more often a case of words than actual deeds. The weakness of Spain's organized social structure, the centralization of decision-making in the hands of a privileged few, the tremendous wheeling and dealing capacity of the leaders mean that there is little corporatism in Spain, particularly in its more formal and organized sense. Furthermore, Parliament is the leading political arena,peopled not only by politicians but also by labor leaders, big businessmen and even high-ranking civil servants - all belonging to the various political parties. Problems are solved by direct negotiations with the government which are then formalized in Cortes by the various political and social leaders active there.

Implementation

The Cortes, like most Parliaments, shows little interest in subsequently following up the laws it passes.

The Cortes has no formally established mechanism for determining whether laws are actually implemented, i.e. developed via government decrees, regulations or orders which would prove that the executive branch really intends to enforce a particular law. Normally these regulations fail to specify the law upon which they are based and thus it is very difficult to get one's bearings in this wilderness of rules and regulations.

In practice it is easier to judge whether or not controversial laws are being implemented. As our previous research has demonstrated, those laws which take longest to get through Cortes , and particularly the ponencia stage, are generally the most controversial ones. It is also obvious that the sponsor of a law determines whether or not that law will be easily implemented. So, when a law based on a bill presented by some opposition party is accepted by the government and its party for reasons of political geo-strategy, it will prove difficult to apply and its architects will be powerless to exert any control over its implementation. Recently, it has been difficult to implement any Spanish law that affects the armed forces because of "non-explicit" resistance from the military forces themselves. Laws which tried to standardize the process by which a region may gain its autonomy have also encountered great resistance from historically nationalist forces in the Basque Country and Catalonia. Furthermore, the mining and shipbuilding industries have fought hard to prevent industrial reconversion measures from being applied. And last, but not least, the Catholic church and the most conservative sectors of Spanish society have opposed the application of Socialist education laws aimed at strengthening public education at the expense of private education which has long been monopolized by various religious orders.

municipal police). This leads to ill-defined, uncoordinated action which can only be corrected with time and a much-needed clarification of who has jurisdiction over what.

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New Challenges and Policy Change in Western Europe

A research proposal

Drafted by a research group sponsored by the European Consortium of Political Research, chaired by P. Gerlich and W.C. Müller, Vienna, and E. Damgaard, Aarhus, J.W. Foppen, Rotterdam, J.J. Richardson, Strathclyed and J. Subirats, Barcelona, as participants.

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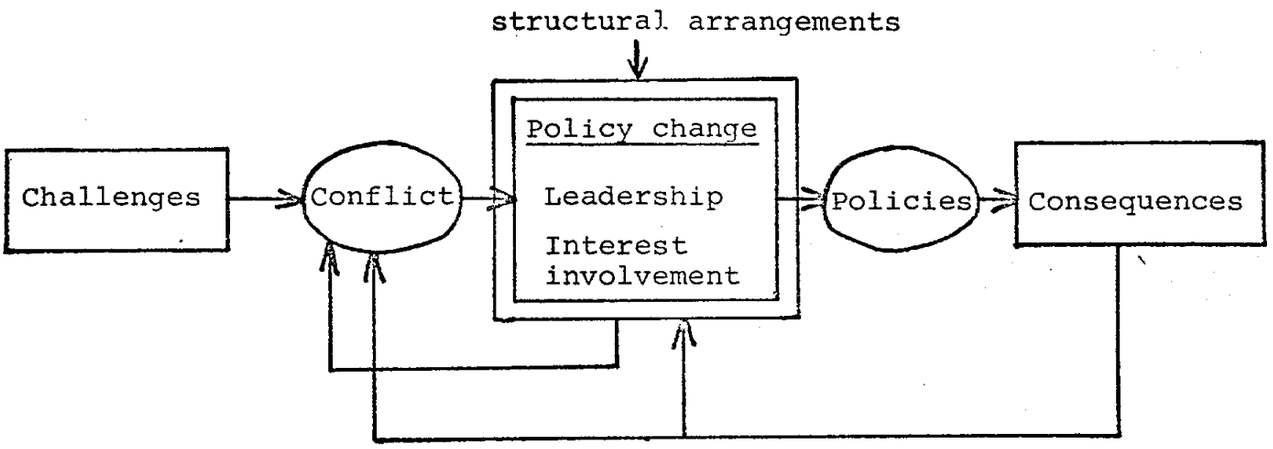
I. A model of Policy Change

The political systems of Western industrialized countries are increasingly confronted with new challenges. Political actors, especially politicians, but also other members of respective policy communities have to come to grips with new problems or at least problems of increasing size and complexity. In doing so they may and increasingly do resort to new ways of dealing with political matters, or more generally, introduce policy change.

It is the goal of our project to analyze these tendencies on a comparative basis trying to describe, contrast and evaluate trends in ten European countries. This will be done first for each country on the basis of an analysis of documentary evidence, existing studies as well as a limited number of qualitative interviews with knowledgeable members of the larger policy community. Secondly these country studies will be compared and general trends as well as possible future developments outlined.

The basic model underlying our understanding of the theme can be scetched as follows:



It may be assumed that the new challenges - which have to be analyzed in each case - politically lead first and foremost to an increase in the amount and level of conflict. And it is this situation to which policy makers primarely try to respond by new forms of behaviour. The projects main emphasis will be placed on the description and analysis the range of possible and actual responses. We think that responses will take place especially on two levels, first that of leadership which implies new patterns, techniques and skills of those who are the main actors in policy processes, mainly politicians, as well as secondly on that of changing patterns of group involvement. This refers to the type of development which has been the concern of the study of corporatism.

It is important to keep in mind, particularely in comparative perspective, that these changing behaviours are influenced and restricted by structural arrangements as well as cultural patternswhich may differ from country to country (and which may indeed become the object of policy change themselves).

If policy change takes place it will lead to policies which in turn will have consequences that should also be included in the analysis particularely with respect to feedback effects upon the level of conflict and the kinds of policy behaviour.

Finally it should be also noted that the new challenges need not exclusively be considered negative constraints of the policy process. Of course the new situation leads to difficulties, or implies hardship and even suffering for some groups. But it could also be interpreted as providing opportunities to introduce political changes, which in some respects might have been long overdue. These changes might be achieved only in a situation of impeding or actual crisis, because basic reorientations may only possibly under these special circumstances.

II. New Challenges and Conflicts

European countries face a number of challenges and new problems leading to conflicts in society and difficulties of governance. The types of challenges are at least four:

A) Economies of scarce resources

Economic crises and recessions have exacerbated old and well known problems, such as
- high rates of unemployment
- inflation
- slow growth
- balance of payment deficits.

The politics of abundance of the 60's and early 70's have been replaced by the politics of scarcity in the 80's. Slow growth and scarcity mean that there are limits to public expenditures. The public sector cannot continue to grow like in the past. But the increased public sectors are new features of European government and politics because new types of producer, client, and professional interests have been built into the governmental and administrative systems (e.g. the areas of social welfare, health, education).

In the private economy as well as in the public sector there is a strong need for innovations, and, not at least, adjustments to the developing high technological society. The challenges arising from economic difficulties are even more important because of unsolved problems of the past.

B) Accumulated problems

Accumulated problems are challenges in the form of reforms not made in the past, when, in principle, the increasing resources should make them more likely to succeed. All over Europe we are now left with strongly sectorized systems organized around particular political, administrative and organizational interests. Cross-sectoral policy-making and coordination is therefore very difficult in a time, when it has become more important than ever. Immobilized stalemate societies are likely to emerge. In addition, the regulation of the behaviour of citizens, firms, and institutions have presumably been carried too far. In order to solve problems governments have introduced more and more, sometimes conflicting, regulations which make lawyers busy and happy at the expense of ordinary citizens who ultimately bear the costs.

C) New types of demands

In addition to old and continuing problems in a number of areas (e.g. employment, housing, education, social security) aggravated by economic scarcity, new types of demands have appeared during the last decade or two. While some of them are not really "new", they are new in the sense that they mobilize significant numbers of people for political action, thus challenging established patterns and solutions. The new types of demands concern such issues as

- environmental problems at the local, national and international levels,
- equal treatment of sexes and minority rights,
- peace movements,

- anti-nuclear movements.

Some of these problems might be solved by money, though at great cost, while others cannot.

D) Unconventional participation

Many studies have shown an increase in the number and forms of unconventional political actions (grass root activity, demonstrations etc.).This development is to a large extent explained by the increasing level of education which seems to produce a more active and critical citizenry. Such activities are a challenge to traditional and established organizations.

In several countries the electorate has also become more volatile. Political parties cannot rely upon their voter support as in the past.

Finally, there is a demand for more direct participation of affected interests in decision-making. Often this demand cannot be met by established institutions.

This list of challenges is, although far from exhausting, more or less valid for all Western European countries. But there are important national variations as well as specific problems in most countries. These differences are relevant for the possible and appropriate response to new conflicts and challenges.

III. Dimensions of Policy Change

A) Introductory remarks

The project, having analyzed the variety of new and old challenges, will then go on to analyze the ways in which these democracies attempt to manage the conflict which results from these challenges. Conflict management is not, however, the sole focus of the study. It is equally concerned with policy change, as government's attempt to meet the various challenges facing them. It is the interface between policy change and conflict management which we see as a key aspect of the response of Western European democracies to challenges.

In practical terms, we believe that this interface can be analyzed by concentrating upon two features of the policy process. 1) Leadership strategies, 2) the involvement of interests in the policy process. It is important to note that by leadership we mean not just elected political leaders, but also leadership in terms of policy innovation and policy change - by other members of the relevant "policy community". Thus civil servants can, and often do, exercise leadership in the sense that they are in a position to recognise the opportunities for policy change as well as having a very good knowledge of the interest group network which needs to be mobilized to support the policy change if it is to be implemented successfully.No doubt other members of a given policy community will also be in a position to initiate policy change (e.g. interest group leaders, academics and even

jounalists). Similarily we have adopted a rather broad definition of "interest". Thus we use the term to include not only conventional pressure group interests, but also bureaucratic and agency interests which may have to be "accumulated" in the policy process. Whilst, as we suggest above, leadership strategies and interest involvement are two closely linked phenomena, it is convenient to specify these two phenomena separately. Before doing so, however, it is important to note that we are very conscious of the need to take account of the important effects of political structures on the choice of leadership strategies in response to new challenges. Thus, for example, countries which have party and electoral systems which tend to produce minority or coalition governments (e.g. Denmark) may have to reject leadership strategies while countries having governments with a clear majority may find quite effective. Similarly the existence of strong corporatist structures may influence the choice of leadership strategies, as will the degree of centralisation/decentralisation, and the type of relationship beteween political parties and key interest groups. There is also the difficult question of the importance of political culture in influencing both leadership strategies and interest involvement. Culture may, for example, encourage a dirigiste style of government, leading to a policy style in which policies can be imposed on groups, whereas in other cultures such a relationship might be quite unacceptable. In analysing both leadership strategies and interest

group involvement, therefore, we will set these in the context of distinctive national political structures and cultures.

B) Leadership Responses

Our listing of leadership responses to the combination of old and new challenges is not claimed to be comprehensive at this stage of the project. Indeed, an important aim of the project is to identify leadership strategies which are being adopted in the ten nations and to comment upon the various consequences which these strategies appear to have.

The range of possible leadership strategies appears to be rather wide (and, of course, mixed strategies will be adopted, e.g. governments may be very firm in pressing the principles of a policy but very flexible over its detailed implementation). In listing possible strategies, we are not at this stage indicating any ranking in order of importance or likely effectiveness.

One obvious strategy is that, in response to challenge and crisis, governments can decide to govern - what in Britain may be termed "toughing it out". Such a strategy will no doubt increase conflict, but governments do increasing deliberately challenge entrenched interests in order to serve policy change. In effect they are introducing "non-negotiable" policies and appear determined to push them through at all cost (e.g. nuclear defense policies in some countries). In some cases such a strategy may be successful in actually reducing conflict, as the participants come to accept what may be called a

"shut up" decision.

The exact opposite strategy may also be applied - namely to let an issue "stew" for a period, with appearant governmental inactivity. The objective of this strategy is that once the issue has been "stewing" for long enough, a situation will emerge which is propitious for policy change to take place. In effect, the participants will be either exhausted with the debate or will have come to recognise the "reality" of the situation.

A variant of analysing the participants (or even the general public) to recognise the reality is for governments to actively seek to manage people's perception of reality. As Schattschneider argued, the definition of alternatives is the supreme exercise of power. Thus, in response to challenges and problems, governments may seek to create a situation in which only one solution is seen as possible. For example much of the British Conservative government's strategy since 1979 has been directed to convincing the electorate, and key interest groups, that there is no alternative to the government's broad economic policies. Modern communication skills can be used to shift the ground of debate in such a way that even the opponents seem forced to accept underlying premises when advocating policy options. A closely related strategy is the manipulation of the definition of the problem to be solved. For example, the size of a problem can be influenced by the way in which statistics are collected (e.g. drug abuse, unemployment, crime, racial discrimination). To same degree, it may be

possible to define problems away, or even avoid their appearance on the agenda.

A quite different (but probably common) strategy to meet difficult challenges is to resort to structural change. This strategy may be summed up in the view that "if we can only get the structure and the organisation right, our problems will be solved".Thus many of the Western European nations have seen quite big reorganisations of existing structures - such as local government, the health service, central departments, nationalised industries, and even cabinets. It is possible that such a strategy may now be regarded with some suspicion on cost grounds alone.

Many observers feel that, as challenges increase in both intensity and complexity, leaders have come to recognise either their inability to act, or that actions would be too costly. Thus they resort to what are in effect symbolic (or placebo) policies. They know that the policies are unlikely to "work" (in the sense of actual solving problems such as drug abuse) but the policies are presented in such a way as to give the appearance of action. In the short run at least, the issue is removed from the political agenda. It may never return, or when it does so different perceptions and attitudes may have emerged, leading to different solutions.

In most policy areas, whatever the leadership strategy which is adopted to meet new challenges, there remains the question of how to "manage" the interest group network involved. Four main strategies may be (commonly)used. Firstly, leaders may resort to a very popular strategy in an attempt to by-pass or outflank entrenched interests. Secondly,

leaders may resort to "sham" consultation i.e.make every effort to "consult" as many interests as possible but with little intention of actually listening to the representations which are made. The original policy proposal is adhered to notwithstanding the consultation process which has been gone through. Thirdly, leaders may resort to what could be called "inner circle negotiation" with these interests who are thought to really matter (i.e. those who have a capacity to influence the effectiveness of the policies at the implementation stage). Forthly, this inner circle negotiation may lead to some form of institutionalised tripartite or even corporatist structures for determining policy change.

In analysing leadership strategies, we would be particularly anxious to make examples of what we see as "entrepreneurial skills" in sensing policy change. Thus, it is important to note that the various challenges which we have so far identified can also be seen as opportunities by some leaders to introduce their own ideas for policy change. The more skillful are able to so manage and manipulate the process that policy change does indeed take place. We think it important to identify the conditions under which such entrepreneurship can take place.

C) Interest involvement

In the past, in society, a lot of interest groups have appeared. Since the state started to do more than first defending the people from an outward enemy, people went to government to ask for help or support.

In the last century, the position of the state or government has been described as that of a night-watchman, because of the fact that government restricted itself to public order, law and safety.

However, state was active in the field of maintaining ways and waterworks, education and public health. Almost in the whole of Europe, the state erected an infrastructure, that was favourable to industrial growth, for instance by taking care of canals, railways and the supply of energy. Later on the state got occupied with social laws and security, urban landdevelopment and public housing. More tasks were realised by government, usually by means of legislation.

This led to a situation in which different people and groups did increase their expectations on what government could do for their interest. People organised themselves to get a better grasp on their interest and to stand a stronger position against government.

The amount of interests is large and the kinds of interests are very diverse. A lot of interests got institutionalised, a lot of them were not because of their ad hoc character.

The institutionalised interest groups have played an important role in building the nowadays welfare state. They are still very active.

Table x : Overview of interest groups in modern society

The relation between state and society, government and interest groups can be characterised by its degree of corporatism. That is to say the involvement of government with societal affairs and vice versa the involvement of societal interest groups with government.

Both parties, government and interest groups, have developed routines of behaviour. In situations that are stable this is the normal effect of closely or regularly working together. One can thus anticipate on each other's goals and possibilities.Policies become predictable.

This does not mean, however, that a stable situation - as we have known it during the continuous growth of the economy - has been a situation without conflicts. Very often government could not fullfill the wishes of interest groups. On other occasions different interest groups had different appeals on government of which only one or a few could be met.

As much as interest groups needed the support of government, politicians needed the support of the voters behind the interests. Both tried to maximize their benefits, sometimes with little, sometimes with much success. Political parties played an important role. Not only as the recruitment channel for politicians, but also and mainly as a platform for the different interests and interest groups.

Since the decline of economic prosperity, a lot has changed. Choice had to be made, with severe negative effects. One suddenly got aware of the fact that government itself had grown an enormous apparatus of public administration. Given the intense involvement with social affairs and activities, civil servants became quite important delegates and agencies of government. As such public administration itself had become an extremly important interest and its civil servants an interest group.

The predictable way in which government behaved, had its counterpart in the predictability of the behaviour of the interest groups.

This has changed rapidly. Not first because of the decrease of economic prosperity, but also because of the new demands that are posed. The fact that civil servants themselves have got an interest to protect complicates the situation even more.

To develop strategies to meet the demands and to cope with the new old and new challenges, government has to rely on what the reaction (or anticipation) will be of the interest groups on governmental initiatives. Rarely, interest groups will withdraw voluntarily. They will usually stick to their maximizing behaviour but now under different and changing new conditions.

This will mean that their continuous (and sometimes systematic) involvement with governmental initiatives may stop. Former cooperation with government and even advisory activities may cease. Some interest groups will try to

profit from this new situation by choosing a more autonomous position or strategy.

In cases where budget cuts or less support from government has to be efffectuated interest groups may try to resist, block or frustrate such decisions. In the case of new demands, government and the interest groups may be obliged to ad hoc behaviour or responses. Spontaneous actions and reactions may of a sudden create possibilities to have a demand met. The enormous growth of the governmental apparatus may lead to checkmate positions at different levels because of the interest at stake.

The change of policy style will create changes in the behaviour of interest groups. Even if the situation and its conditions may have changed, the goal of maximizing one's own interest will, however, always remain constant.

IV. Methodological Considerations

A) A sample of ten nations

It is intended to include the following ten nations in our study: Germany, Great Britain, France, Denmark, Sweden, Austria, Belgium, Netherlands, Italy and Spain.

This means that all three of the so called main European countries are covered and that the smaller states of Scandinavia, Central Europe and Southern Europe will be represented with two respectively three cases each. It can be expected that the study will show interesting contrasts not only e.g. between Northern and Southern Europe, but also within these regions. The main criterion for selection was to get a sample which covers a very broad spectrum of means for policy change, partly resulting out of different institutional-structural framework as well as different cultural patterns, which will have to be taken into account.

B) Methods used

The country chapters will be integrative ones, to a large extent they will be based on previous research. Own research will have the function to fill gaps. Besides the survey of literature and the use of documentary

evidence a series of qualitative interviews will be conducted in each country. At least two interviewees each should be selected out of the following groups:

- politicians
- civil servants
- outside observers (e.g. former politicians, jounalists ..)
- interest group representatives

It seems useful not to select front row people but those who are usually - at least - equally well informed, but will not be

- so hesitant to answer sensitive questions &
- so difficult to get access to

than most of the front row people. In particular, as civil servants are concerned, the interviewees will be selected from coordinating/central units, like the Prime Minister's Office or the Ministry of Finance, to avoide the sectoral biæs as far as possible.

The interviews will follow a commonly agreed guideline (not a strikt questionaire) and should produce interesting ideas as well as quotable remarks. In a sense they will also serve as a test of our ideas since they will add a perspective that should be largely independent from existing studies and academic interpretations.

C) Range of challenges to be included

As pointed out above different types of challenges will be distinguished. While these differences should be taken into consideration in drafting the chapters neither case studies not detailed descriptions of issue areas should be included in these country reports. Variations of policy styles between policy areas should be however pointed out and the analysis should not be limited to describing dominant policy style.

V. Technical Aspects

A) Contributors

So far the authors of five of the country studies are definitive, namely

Jeremy J. Richardson	(Great Britain)
Eric Damgaard	(Denmark)
Peter Gerlich Wolfgang C. Müller	(Austria)
J. Wil Foppen	(Netherlands)
Joan Subirats	(Spain)

For the other countries included we already have approached specialists in their fields who are either natives or working within the respective countries.

B) Time plan

The research project will have a timespan of roughly two years. A lot of activities and time will have the aim to guarantee the comparability of the country reports and - finally - to come up with a genuin comparative analysis and more general conclusions, which should be the task of a smaller committee. The following steps of research can be distinguished:

1) Further elaboration of the research design:
   This includes working out a common guideline for the qualitative interviews, further exchange of information on particularly interesting policy areas and compiling a preliminary list of leadership strategies. This step of research will be carried out first by written correspondence and finally in a two days meeting of the research group, which will take place before the start of the ECPR-Joint Sessions in Barcelona in 1985.

2) Survey of literature, collecting documentary evidence, field research leading to the first drafts of the country chapters.

3) Second meeting of the group, jointly with the ECPR-research group meeting in September 1985: discussion of the first drafts of the country chapters.

4) Preparation of the final drafts, additional research where necessary.

5) Third meeting of the group in April 1986 in Vienna: presentation and discussion of the final papers.

6) Last changes of the country chapters.

7) Comparative analysis on the basis of the country chapters, leading to more general conclusions.

Appendix

Summary information on project participants

Erik Damgaard is associate professor at the University of Aarhus, Denmark. He has published a number of books and articles on Danish politics and policy making. He is a former member of the ECPR Executive Committee, former chairman of the Danish Political Science Association and, currently, editor of the Scandinavian Political Studies.

Wil Foppen is an associate professor in public administration at the Erasmus University of Rotterdam. He is preparing a book on policy style and education policy in the Netherlands. He has published serval articles on policy-evaluation. In the seventies he was project leader of the Dutch national election studies 1972-1973. Together with others he edited some books on electoral behaviour.

Peter Gerlich chairs the Institute of Political Science at the University of Vienna where he has served as Dean of the Faculty of Social Science. He is the author of a number of books and articles on Austrian and comparative politics and has also been president of the Austrian Political Science Association. His books include Parlamentarische Kontrolle im politischen System (Springer, 1973), Abgeordnete in der Parteiendemokratie (with H.Kramer, Verlag für Geschichte

und Politik, 1968), Staatsbürger und Volksvertretung (with K.Ucakar, W.Neugebauer Verlag, 1981), Zwischen Koalition und Konkurrenz. Österreichs Parteien seit 1945 (ed., with W.C.Müller, Braumüller, 1983), Sozialpartnerschaft in der Krise (ed., with E.Grande and W.C.Müller, in print).

Wolfgang C. Müller who is lecturer at the University of Vienna has edited two books on Austrian politics and contributed to a number of journals, edited books and conferences mainly in the area of political parties, policy making and legislative studies. Currently he is preparing a book on Austrian industrial policy. He is a member of the editorial board of the "Österreichische Zeitschrift für Politikwissenschaft" and had served as General Secretary of the Austrian Political Science Association.

Jeremy Richardson is professor of politics at the University of Strathclyde. He has specialised in the study of the British policy process since graduating in 1964. More recently he has developed an interest in comparative public policy and has written articles on Swedish and Norwegian policy making. His publications include The Policy-Making Process (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969), Governing under Pressure: The Policy Process in a Post-Parliamentary Democracy (with A.G.Jordan, Martin Robertson, 1979), Policy Styles in Western Europe (ed., Allen & Unwin, 1982),

Unemployment: Policy Responses of Western Democracies (ed., with R.Henning, Sage, 1984).

Joan Subirats is a lecturer at the University of Barcelona. He has researched and published in the field of Spanish legislation and policy making.