

SUMMARIES

Switzerland: a model for the European Union?

by Jean Blondel

The object of this paper is to look at what Switzerland and the European Union have in common and to draw some lessons from their common characteristics. The Author first ascertains what are the major problems which Europe has to face in its move towards integration and compares its problems with those faced by Switzerland. Then he turns to an examination of the nature of the institutional arrangements of the Swiss Confederacy and of those of the European Union to see to what extent they are similar and whether the European Union would gain by modelling its institutions more closely on those of Switzerland. Finally, some other characteristics of the Swiss political life are examined to see whether their introduction might benefit the European Union.

According to the Author, Switzerland can provide guidance to the European Union as well as demonstrate to both sceptics and enthusiasts that in the path towards unity, the cultural and social diversity of Europe can be protected and has to be protected. To make such a development fully acceptable the Author recognized that, above all, progress towards unity has to be slow, very slow indeed.

Mixed electoral systems: A classification

by Alessandro Chiaramonte

In the 1990s new electoral systems have emerged in many countries worldwide. The collapse of the communist regimes in 1989 and the transition towards democracy in some South American as well as Asian and even African countries have been often accompanied by the rebuilding of the institutional framework and, consequently, by the introduction of new voting systems. Moreover, electoral reforms

have occurred not only in emergent but also in established liberal democracies. Facing an increasing dissatisfaction with the working of the political system, Italy, New Zealand and Japan all changed their national electoral systems radically.

The common ground of most of these reforms has been the introduction of mixed electoral systems, i.e. systems combining majoritarian and proportional principles of representation. So, this paper tries first of all to define what *mixed* electoral systems are and to demonstrate the legitimacy of treating them as a distinct category, separated from both majoritarian and proportional systems. Secondly, it provides an overview of their basic characteristics – ballot structure, assembly size, district magnitude, electoral formula, legal threshold – and identifies four major types of mixed systems on the basis of their way of mixing majoritarian and proportional tiers. Thirdly, their effects on disproportionality and party system are investigated so as to highlight their practical working in each national context. Finally, this paper attempts to answer the question of whether mixed electoral systems are «the best of both worlds» (i.e. of the majoritarian and proportional worlds) as regards their ability to produce government stability and representativeness at the same time.

Conservative Parties in Western Europe. A Success in Need of Explanation

by Francesco Raniolo

The aim of this paper is to analyse how Conservative parties took advantage of the political shift towards the Right which took place in almost every Western democracies during the '80s.

The author firstly sheds light on the ideological families of right wing parties. Secondly, he tries to account for their electoral performance and shows that conservative parties fared better in the new political environment.

Two hypothesis are considered: the first one maintains that the Conservative success were determined by social, economic and cultural changes since the early '70s; the second one states that those parties adjusted more efficiently their organizations to the new challenges.

Trade Unions and Democratic Consolidation

by Davide Grassi

Trade unions are crucial actors in the consolidation of democracy: they retain organizational networks which facilitate an effective mobi-

lization of political support, rely upon a clearly defined collective identity, and can strategically use their power to control or exacerbate social conflict. The relationship between democratization, industrial relations and the position of trade unions has been differently explained in the literature by political, organizational and economic factors. The article investigates this relationship suggesting two relevant analytical dimensions – the degree of autonomy enjoyed by trade unions in the on with their counterparts, and their political mobilization on behalf of the government – and applying them to several cases of recent democratization both in South-America and Southern Europe.

On the concept of policy entrepreneur

by Marco Giuliani

The growing concern in the public policy literature with policy entrepreneurs is probably the consequence of their increasing role in the formulation and implementation of public decisions. The technical and social complexity of democratic governance probably calls for the innovative potential which this kind of actors can bring into the policy-making process. This article firstly explores the concept of policy entrepreneur, identifying its defining properties and suggesting a typology of entrepreneurship based upon a strategic and a cognitive dimension, and secondly presents some hypothesis regarding the resources these actors activate, and the conditions which favour their emergence.