

Summaries in English

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SUMMARIES IN ENGLISH

Structure, Culture and Voting Behaviour

R. Nef

This study deals with the inter-regional variations in voting behaviour in the 137 cases of Swiss federal votes which have taken place between 1950 and 1977, as well as the inter-regional variations of political preferences and those based on the aggregates of constituted cantons. It is shown that on the one hand, in the case of plebiscite verdicts concerning federal questions, the agreement does not vary in an amorphous fashion; on the contrary, there are, to a certain extent, some very well-defined dimensions of behaviour of a type not simply situational and particular, but constant. These dimensions can be considered as patterns of articulation or political preferences which reflect the macro-structural functions of the state in production, legitimation and integration. It is shown, on the other hand, that the relevance of these patterns of articulation or preference is determined to a large extent by two socio-cultural aspects and two socio-structural aspects of social differentiation. Also, in Switzerland, one can distinguish politico-cultural macro-regions with partially opposing political preferences. This study is the basis of a vast analysis of diachronic and synchronic inter-regional variations of relevance to different aspects of the "state" of Switzerland. (page 155)

Sociology of Intervention and Socio-Political Action Research*

P.-Y. Troutot

Within the perspective of a "sociology of intervention" directly linked to social and political action in the field, this article provides a provisional attempt at clarification and synthesis of the rules and foundations of action research. The basic intention which runs through this article is to situate and characterise a particular research procedure and to bring out some conditions. In other words, to contribute to the methodological reconstruction of an approach which takes social and political action as an objective and sociology as an instrumental support and specific practice. (page 191)

*This theoretical elaboration owes much to an example of intervention which took place between May 1978 and June 1979 for/with a group of Neuchâtel social workers within the framework of the COFOP (cooperative for continuing education) and the VPOD-Etat, with the support of the Swiss Council for Social Service-Schools.

Dependent Industrialisation and Demographic Disequilibrium in the Urbanisation Process of Peripheral Countries

A.A. Kyrtsis

The Industrialisation process not only entails an increase in the level of urbanisation, but also an unbalanced structure of urban systems in the countries in question. This article is in opposition to the thesis held by modernisation theorists, according to which the tendencies to polarisation in the urban systems diminish

at the same time as the effects of the spatial dispersion of economic growth appear, once a certain phase of economic development is achieved. But the inter-regional dispersion of economic growth presupposes mechanisms, which, during the development phase, are continually being obstructed. This depends, among other things, on the behaviour of the subsidiaries of multinational enterprises. With the aid of "cross-national analysis" (fifty peripheral countries) a positive relationship was established between the increase of demographic disequilibrium in the urban systems of peripheral countries and the degree of capital penetration in the manufacturing sector, that is to say, the degree of external dependence of the industrialisation process. In this area neither the influence of the per capita national product nor the economic growth is established. (*page 207*)

Conflict of Interest and Democracy of Negotiation

P. Farago

The process of political decision-making in Switzerland is usually described as being "low in conflict". The pre-parliamentary phase, in the course of which all interested parties are, as far as possible "given a hearing", is considered as a positive additional characteristic. However, an opinion poll of 300 personalities representing the political elite has revealed that there are wide discrepancies of views among them, which is in contrast to the idyllic image. The question, then, is to know how the image of harmony can be compatible with the conflicting opinions of the political actors. This problem will be perceived more clearly with the aid of a concrete example. For this purpose, the process of the revision of the law on vocational training (1967-1968) has been chosen, with particular attention to the debates of the federal commission of experts, of which all the minutes were available. The analysis of this decision-making process demonstrates that in the Swiss system there is an intervention in the decision-making process of mechanisms which systematically reduce to a minority status the principal employees' organisations (unions, parties). So effective is this mechanism that it is not possible to speak of giving equal consideration to all social interests. (*page 229*)

Field of Recruitment of Swiss Universities, Geographic and Social Origins of Students and Specialisation of Faculties

F. Hainard and A. Jeannin

The increase in the number of university students is often considered in relation to inequality of opportunities and to the democratisation of studies. This article presents another view: that of the variations in the flow of students between cantons equipped with universities, and the changes implied by this situation in the structure of faculties.

The first part of the article demonstrates the existence of reservoirs of student recruitment strongly polarised by certain Swiss universities. These reservoirs are linked, on one hand, by the linguistic zones and, on the other by the size of the universities. More specifically, for the cantons which have a university, it is shown that they have different capacities for retaining their students.

The second part of the article takes as an example the University of Neuchâtel and describes the process of geographic and social specialisation of the faculties, using a factor analysis of the interconnections. The results presented lead to some reflections on the causes and consequences of this development. (*page 245*)

WORKSHOP

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