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## Boekbespreking van: Afscheid van het laatste dubbelparlement

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have been interesting, for example, to discover which perspective of the rich tradition of various IPE-approaches to international environmental politics had more explanatory power under which circumstances. Her criticism of realism seems to be at least partly refuted by the data.

Kolk's dissertation is very rich in terms of the interrelationships between variables and actors. Kolk touches upon some very interesting concepts, especially concerning the changed significance of sovereignty in international relations in view of environmental issues. She offers a very concise and well-documented study. Although the study seems well organized, it is at times quite repetitive as is underlined by the numerous references to other sections.

Two important findings in the book demand more scholarly attention in the field of IPE. The first is the significance of the internationalization of the environment to the concept of sovereignty. The second issue is the significance of the upcoming and changing role of NGOs and international organizations for the international relations between states. The role of US NGOs in influencing the American Congress and public is particularly interesting and revealing. The "American approach" as opposed to the "European" or "Southern" approach – if one can actually label them as such –, and the power basis of US NGOs due to the US political system and importance of the American financial contributions to major International Organizations are only two other issues that deserve further attention and elaboration.

In terms of policy formation NGOs can learn a lot from the book with respect to "best practices", strategies to influence politics by various types of NGOs – especially the US NGOs –, and the attitude of some governments and the World Bank towards NGOs. These insights, of course, are very significant for policy-makers in governments and international organizations alike. Besides these insights, the book gives a concise overview of the state-of-the-art concerning international forest policy, and of the history of criticism raised against the World Bank and its consequent reactions and changes to these criticisms.

I would like to conclude by saying that the author is rather radical in her presumptions and criticism of the positions and actions of actors involved in the political game around international forests, but extremely moderate and subtle when it comes to drawing scientific and policy-oriented conclusions. From a political science perspective I would have preferred to have seen more radical theoretical conclusions pointing towards few variables that explain a lot, while taking a more moderate position towards political positions. Hence, I recommend the book to those involved in environmental practice and looking for provocative criticism rather than to researchers interested in new perspectives and theoretical exercises.

Hadewych Hazelzet

Wilfried Dewachter, Inge Thomas and Sam Depauw, *Afscheid van het Laatste Dobbelparlement (Bidding farewell to the last double parliament)*, Acco, Leuven, 1997, ISBN 90-334-3768-6, 995 Bf.

Regionalism has always been a characteristic of some European countries, particularly Germany. Over the last decade it has become a major runner-up in many more countries, for example, Spain, Italy, the United Kingdom and even France. Regionalism tends to take the shape of political structures such as a parliament, a government, and sometimes a court system.

Belgium is an outstanding case. The country is composed of two major language groups: the Dutch-speaking Flanders in the west and the French-speaking Walloon provinces in the east; there is also a small German-speaking community close to the border with Germany. The language difference has always been much more than a difference of mother tongue. For centuries, French was the language of the socio-political upper class and the Walloon provinces acted as the dominant area of Belgium. After the Second World War this relationship of political inequality began to reverse. Modern economic activity took off in Flanders. The region gained self-confidence and self-reliance. The Dutch language became a symbol of socio-political emancipation.

Increasing tensions between the two major language groups resulted in series of compromises (pacification) at the level of the elites. The aim was to transfer government powers from the national (now federal) level to that of the communities. A major compromise was made in 1992 regarding the bicameral parliament, i.e. the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate (more or less comparable to the UK House of Commons and House of Lords). By 1995 it had restricted its functions to the federal level and transferred its sub-national powers to five new councils for Flanders, the Walloon region, the bilingual city of Brussels, the French speaking community (in fact the Walloon provinces plus one part of Brussels) and the German community. The national parliament which had been elected in 1991, appeared to have become Belgium's last so-called double parliament.

This book, written by political scientists at the (Flemish) University of Leuven, is not a memorial to that parliament. The authors' objective is to describe and analyse what happened to the parliament and its members as soon as it became clear that its double function was over and that five new councils would be born. Does a body behave differently as soon as it is aware that amputation is close at hand?

Five more specific questions they endeavour to answer are the following. The first regards the position of the parliament in the political system. Is it the major platform of representation, the major decision-maker, in balance with the executive, divided by government majority versus opposition or some complex mix? These so-called models of parliament are compared with a range of twenty different functions of parliament. The second question of research is much more behavioural: what do the MPs do? Their activities, particularly in the fields of legislation and control, are counted and weighted for the years 1988-1995 and compared with those rising in the newly born sub-national councils.

The third question regards the recruitment for these new councils. Many national MPs wanted to get, of course, a position in these new councils. Did they anticipate their candidature? Did this ambition affect their behaviour in the last double parliament? The more specific fourth question is: what did the national MPs say and do during the plenary debates, both in general and on the issue of power transfer? The fifth question of research (and one which receives least attention) is about the attitudes and perceptions of the Belgian citizens regarding the parliamentary institutionalization of regionalism in Belgium.

Some of the authors' major conclusions are the following. There is not one particular model of parliament or set of functions typically valid for the Belgian parliament. In fact the authors say: more research is needed. During the last years of the double parliament the volume of activities declined; it rose rapidly in the new councils. The MPs with a double mandate (national and sub-national) were most active. Half the membership wanted to get a position in the sub-national council and most got it. This ambition was reflected in their contribution to the plenary debates. The Belgian citizen, however, appears not to be informed about or interested in all this sub-national institutionalization. Belgian politics, apparently, is far from home.

What do we learn from reading the book? The authors' objective is very interesting: the description of a partially terminal parliament. However, their approach is loose and limited. The various chapters or research questions are not an integrated whole, but a loose collection of papers. There is imbalance in the collection. For example, dozens of pages are devoted to the counting of activities (even in hours per MP), while only a few pages cover the represented people or citizens. There are also many limitations. The chapter on models and functions is highly traditional and without any empirical testing. The measurement of activities is limited to formal activities, such as posing questions, motions, interpellations, etcetera. The findings are interpreted in terms of power or influence relationship. This, of course, is incorrect because it neglects all sorts of inspired questions and especially the informal activities behind the scenes, which are highly important in Belgian politics. Similar doubts can be raised against the interpretations of the findings on the plenary debates. What do "Words, words, words" (the title of that chapter) really say? Who is the real audience: the government, the opposition, the party rank-and-file, the television ...? The survey among the citizens is small by size and length and certainly not sufficient to justify any conclusion.

Anything is better than nothing, however. At least some data has been collected and presented on a fascinating case of parliamentary loss of power. And the authors have indeed proven that more research is needed.

M.P.C.M. van Schendelen

Albert J. Jongman (ed.), *Contemporary Genocides: Causes, Cases, Consequences*. PLOOM, Leiden, 1996, ISBN 90-71042-84-7

In one of Euripides' plays the women of the defeated Troy mourn for the dead. The city had been sacked, the men had been killed, the women had been killed or raped, and the survivors were now waiting, together with their children, to be shipped off as slaves to unknown lands. Throughout history, such war related grief has been recorded, and there is no end to it. It is, however, only since World War I that peoples and states publicly commemorate the victims of organized violence rather than the organizers. Monuments are for the dead, rather than for the generals. The war memorials in Northern France and Belgium; the memorials in Hiroshima and Nagasaki; the concentration camps in Europe; the Vietnam war memorial in Washington; these and many, many more mark a turning point in history: they have pushed the Nelsons of history and the Arcs de Triomphe aside.

Sheer numbers may have brought the change. This century, some 38.5 million deaths from war have been counted. Additionally, partly overlapping with the previous number, genocides have taken a similar toll of about 38.5 million victims, according to the various records presented in this volume. Another turning point is that attempts to put those responsible for crimes against humanity to fair trial have been made since 1945.

This book analyses these dark sides of civilizations and the recent attempts to deal with them. The effort is coordinated by PLOOM, the 'interdisciplinary research programme on root causes of human rights violations' at Leiden University. PLOOM should be praised for this volume, if not for its work in general. Human rights issues tend to fall between academic disciplinary chairs. They are a sub-field of international law (with respect to the various human rights charters and tribunals on war crimes); of international relations studies (with respect to structural imbalances in the international system); of sociology (with respect to enmity/amity patterns, and grassroots movements); of psychology and psychiatry (with respect to individual motives); and history (with respect to tracking the tragic records of genocides). As a consequence, the subject is too overwhelming and comprehensive for most faculties. Its marginalization is a result. In The Netherlands, PLOOM is one of the few attempts to escape this fate, and the insights provided by *Contemporary Genocides* show how well this pays off. Moreover, the subject is politically sensitive. This is indicated by the fact that the costs of the book have been covered mainly by non-governmental organizations (Novib and Kerken in Aktie, in addition to PLOOM itself), while the most explicit political statements about the consequences of the facts revealed in this book are made by a politician: the Dutch Minister for International Cooperation, Jan Pronk.

His conclusions in the excellent 16 page Preface are, that humanitarian interventions in failed states are a duty, that development cooperation has a role to play in prevention, and that a permanent criminal court for crimes against humanity should be established.