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## Boekbespreking van: **The Challenge of Pluaralism: Church and State in Five Democracies**

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pinch of salt. In an attempt to improve the cool, almost hostile relations between influential journalists and the president and his wife, Clinton reluctantly agreed to the idea of meeting various journalists off the record. The spinners hoped that this would help convince the journalists that Clinton was not so negatively inclined towards them, that he worked hard, and that he had a wide range of plans, also for his second term. Condition for participation in these meetings was that the journalists present would not make use of any of the information gained from these open discussions, except the remarks or suggestions that had been approved by the spinners.

However, the spin cycle can also proceed in a different, sometimes less friendly fashion. When bad news threatens, the spinners have other means at their disposal. First of all, McCurry ensured that he himself was not always fully informed. By not asking Clinton certain questions, during meetings with the press – the gaggle – McCurry was able to reply with a straight face that he did not know the answer and that he had not heard the President comment on the matter. This conscious non-response was also a protection against possible subpoenas to testify in the many legal proceedings against Clinton and his associates. In other instances exactly the opposite tactic was chosen. If a journalist, after long and difficult investigations, had discovered something and was about to publish it, the spokespersons would simply release the news, sometimes as part of a sudden wide-ranging rush of new facts. Not only was the scoop ruined, but the appearance could be maintained that the Clinton administration strove for openness and had nothing to hide. If this did not work, it was always possible to attempt to discredit the journalist's sources: Are you really planning to lower your respected newspaper/programme to such levels? And if matters became really threatening the political spokespersons could always fall back on the legal staff, to whom certain matters had been delegated about which no information could be released until a later, unspecified date.

The fact that the White House spokespersons do their best to ensure that any reports about their boss are as favourable as possible does not mean that the much-feared impression of a manipulated media is correct. For one thing the spokespersons do not always agree on the most sensible strategy: should something be made public or not, everything at once or incrementally, and who will receive precisely what information and when? This inevitably leads to misunderstandings and accidents. It should be noted that in general the spinners, McCurry in particular, are of the opinion that bad news should be made public as quickly and completely as possible, if only to keep it from becoming a long, drawn-out affair. It is preferable to accept one's losses early and in a controlled fashion than to become dependent upon what journalists manage to discover at a later moment, often assisted by leaks from the bureaucracy itself. Further to the differences in strategic insight, there is issue of tension between the political and the legal sections of the information sector: the legal staff – 'the Hezbollah wing of the White House' – was never willing to release a document or snippet of information without a struggle, so giving less important information extra weight. Finally there were, of course, the Clintons and vice-president Gore, whose own considerations and

actions more than once resulted in an inability to follow a particular strategy or even killed a strategy. In particular the somewhat clumsy Gore repeatedly got himself into difficulties, and in doing so may have endangered his chances as a future president.

The possibilities for spinners to manipulate news and image formation in the media are, in fact, limited because in the final analysis the journalists always have the greatest influence on determining what will be news. In his book, Kurtz presents numerous examples of carefully planned positive messages that never made it to the newspapers and of bad news that despite the efforts of the spin masters dominated the front pages and the talk shows. The relations between spokespeople and journalists may be tense, but at the same time they need each other. They are dependent upon each other, and the power of the spin is determined in part by the spinners but also by the journalists, whose relationship may alternate between cooperation and conflict. The spin cycle can only be understood in a broad political and journalistic context.

The story that Kurtz unveils is thus not one of evil geniuses who as one man manipulate the media and deceive the general public. Even if they wanted to, they are not able to do so. That they attempt to paint their own, positive version of reality is true; after all, it is their job. A difficult job actually: it is noteworthy for what short periods most people manage to last as a spin doctor, and how vulnerable they themselves are to journalistic and legal action. As long as political and journalistic multiformity are maintained, the power of the spin doctors, while present, will remain modest. Harsh judgments and point-blank condemnations are less appropriate than a thorough and accurate study of the processes of image and opinion formation in which each has a specific role. Kurtz demonstrates that although the spin doctors are sometimes the bad guys, the same can also be said, to no less a degree, of journalists and politicians themselves, such as Clinton.

Joop van Holsteyn

Stephen V. Monsma and J. Christopher Soper, *The Challenge of Pluralism. Church and State in Five Democracies*. Rowman & Littlefield, Lanham/New York/Boulder/Oxford 1997, ISBN 0-8476-8568-3 (hardback), 0-8476-8569-1 (paperback)

Although numerous, and sometimes very elaborate, typologies of church-state relations exist, the seemingly simple typology developed by American political scientists Stephen V. Monsma and J. Christopher Soper in their book *The Challenge of Pluralism. Church and State in Five Democracies* is an eye-opener. The five countries involved are the United States, England, the Netherlands, Australia and Germany. As the fact that all five are Western liberal democracies already suggests, the various models which Monsma and Soper distinguish are all in keeping with the liberal tradition within Western society. What nevertheless makes them differ, however, is

the degree to which they have been influenced by a specific kind of liberalism, that the authors refer to as 'Enlightenment liberalism'. Enlightenment liberalism basically rests on three assumptions, which are very much interrelated, namely:

that particularistic religion could be safely assigned to the purely private sphere without infringing on the religious beliefs and practices of its adherents, that a public realm stripped of all religious elements would be a neutral zone among the various religious faiths and between faith and nonbelief, and that religious freedom would flourish in the absence of governmental restraints and with no need for positive governmental actions to equalize the advantages enjoyed by religious and nonreligious groups. (p. 9)

Of the three models that Monsma and Soper distinguish, the strict church-state separation model is without doubt the one most influenced by Enlightenment liberalism. In this model:

[r]eligion is seen as a personal, private matter, best left to the realm of personal choice and action. (...) The state should be neutral on matters of religion and this neutrality is assumed to be achieved best by keeping religion and politics separate. (p. 10)

The United States is probably the main example of a country with this type of church-state relations.

The opposite of the strict church-state separation model is the established church model, in which

the state and the church form a partnership in advancing the cause of religion and the state. (...) The state provides the church with recognition, accommodation, and often financial support; the church provides the state with an aura of legitimacy and tradition, recognition, and a sense of national unity and purpose. (pp. 10-11)

Church establishment can be both formal and informal, and there can be either one particular established church or a system of multiple church establishments. England is an example of a country with a formally established church.

Somewhere between the strict church-state separation model and the established church model lies the pluralist or structural pluralist model, according to which government is supposed

not to take sides among the plurality of religious and secular worldviews swirling about in society. It is to seek equal justice for all of them, with justice essentially defined as giving them all their freedom and neither advantaging or disadvantaging any of them. (p. 12)

The Netherlands is traditionally the clearest example of a country with this type of church-state relations, although in practice Australia and especially Germany come close.

Monsma and Soper judge the various models and the results of the case studies by the standard of the basic goal of governmental religious neutrality, which – as they

rightly admit – is in itself, of course, not neutral. State neutrality on matters of religion is defined by them as

government neither favoring nor burdening any particular religion, nor favoring or burdening religion as a whole or secular systems of belief as a whole. Governmental religious neutrality is attained when government does not influence its citizens' choices for or against certain religious or secular systems of belief, either by imposing burdens on them or by granting advantages to them. (p. 6)

As this is at least theoretically the case when the pluralist model is applied, it doesn't really come as a surprise that they believe there is "much to learn from the Dutch experience. (...) [T]he Dutch may do a better job at securing religious rights than almost any other country in the world" (pp. 82, 201).

It would have been interesting to have had a somewhat more elaborate evaluation of the pluralist model in this book than is presented in the concluding chapter, in particular whether it should indeed – as the authors argue – be regarded as the most appropriate answer to the increasing religious pluralism in Western society, or whether, on the contrary, it potentially threatens societal unity by exacerbating existing religious tensions. However, this normative question is dealt with in a separate volume edited by Monsma and Soper, which *inter alia* contains chapters written from a Christian separationist, an American Jewish, and a Liberal separationist perspective (*Equal Treatment of Religion in a Pluralistic Society* 1998).

A more relevant criticism of the present book is, therefore, the empirical observation that the authors seem to underestimate the changes that have taken place in Dutch society and politics since the 1960s. As historian James C. Kennedy pointed out in his dissertation (*Building New Babylon: Cultural Change in the Netherlands during the 1960s*, 1995), there is a fundamental difference in cultural climate between the United States and the Netherlands. Whereas many Americans are characterized by a strong sense of cultural and political continuity and therefore believe that the legacy of the 1960s is in principal reversible, Dutch elites tend to see basically everything as being subject to change so that there can be no travelling back in time. This certainly also applies to the pluralist model of church-state relations, which was introduced during the constitutional revision of 1917 under pressure from a political alliance of orthodox Protestants and Roman Catholics, but which has increasingly come under attack since the 1960s. The present coalition of Socialists, conservative Liberals, and Democrats is held together by the philosophy of Enlightenment liberalism, and thus favours the strict separation model of church-state relations.

In short, at a time when there is growing criticism of the model of strict separation in the United States, usually combined with interest in especially the pluralist model of church-state relations, in the Netherlands ironically a shift from the pluralist model towards strict separation can be discerned. Moreover, whereas in the United States, after several decades of controversial decisions by the Supreme Court in the area of religious liberty, gradually more people believe that Congressional action is

appropriate, in the Netherlands the courts might well prove to be more responsive to religious minorities than the political institutions. Thus, although Monsma and Soper are right in claiming that in the past "judicial interpretations have not been a dominant influence on the development of free exercise rights, as they have in the United States" (p. 63), the shift from the pluralist model to strict separation is likely to be yet another factor contributing to the judicialization of politics in the Netherlands.

Hans-Martien ten Napel

Irmtraud N. Gallhofer and Willem E. Saris, *Foreign Policy Decision-Making: A Qualitative and Quantitative Analysis of Political Argumentation*, Praeger, Westport 1996, ISBN 0-275-95433-1, \$ 65.00;

Irmtraud N. Gallhofer and Willem E. Saris, *Collective Choice Processes: A Qualitative and Quantitative Analysis of Foreign Policy Decision-Making*, Praeger, Westport 1997, ISBN 0-275-96029-3, \$ 59.95.

These two volumes cover two decades of research into foreign policy decision-making. The objective is twofold: in the first book ('Argumentation' below), it is to study the structure of individual argumentation in political discourse, and in the second book ('Choice' below), it is to determine collective argument as a sequential process whereby individual contributions lead to a collective decision. Principal data sources are documentary data in the form of available minutes of cabinet meetings, and associated documents such as memoirs of participating politicians.

The first volume consists of two parts. Part 1 presents in seven chapters and a summary a qualitative analysis of individual argumentation. Part 2, consisting of six chapters and a summary, presents a quantitative study of the arguments used by individuals.

After a general introduction to argumentation theories in chapter 1, the authors unfold their own framework and methodology in chapters 2 and 3. The concept of a decision tree and its decision table is used: from the root (the event or problem to be decided) the set of decision alternatives (strategies) branches out to the respective outcomes each with its (subjective) probability of effectuation and associated utility. With respect to its application the authors follow a rather pragmatic approach, based on the likely level of detail (with intensity/without intensity) to be observed for the probabilities and utilities as mentioned in political discourse. 'With intensity' denotes the verbal expression of graded indications such as 'certain', 'very likely', etc.; the 'without intensity' category denotes dichotomized expressions such as certain *vs.* impossible, and good *vs.* bad.

A combination of these categories for both probabilities and utilities leads to four classes of information precision: Class I (probabilities and utilities both with intensities), Class II (graded probabilities, ungraded utilities), Class III (ungraded

probabilities, graded utilities) and Class IV (both probabilities and utilities without intensities). In practice, Class I, with its rather sophisticated level of detail, proved to be rare in political discourse.

For each class, appropriate decision rules should lead to the choice of a strategy by the individual decision-maker. For Class I these rules involve computational activities (expected utility) which are not likely to be observed in explicit form in discourse. Class II is seen to be determined by risk-avoidance rules: positive for select strategy with highest probability of positive outcome; or negative for select strategy with lowest probability of negative outcome. For Class III a complicating factor is the relevance of outcomes with multiple attributes and corresponding multiple attribute utilities (MAUT). For a simple case a minimax (or maximin) rule can suffice, but for MAUT several rules are conceivable, such as lexicographic, utility sum and dominance rules. The dominance rule (choose the strategy that is better on at least one dimension and not worse on others) is expected to be most likely here. Class IV, finally, is characterized by what the authors refer to as Simon rules. 'Simon's rule' chooses the strategy with only positive outcomes; 'reversed Simon rule' excludes all strategies leading only to negative outcomes, if an alternative with at least one positive outcome is available.

The result is a template with which an argument can be represented as a decision tree or table, corresponding to one of the classes, together with its inferred decision rule, some information concerning relevant conditions, and the preferred outcome as its conclusion. Thus a uniform framework is given for the type of argumentation used by individual political actors to formulate and legitimate their own preferences in political debate or discourse. Chapter 3 develops coding procedures with good reliability for the application to individual political argumentation in texts.

This type of argumentation analysis is demonstrated in the chapters 4 to 7, covering four critical situations in recent history. First, the argumentation of members of the Austro-Hungarian Common Council of Ministers in July 1914, leading to the declaration of war on Serbia and World War I; second, a sequence of three decisions made by Hitler between November 1937 and August 1939, initiating World War II; third, the arguments of President Kennedy and his advisers during the Cuban missile crisis of October 1962; and last, the deliberations in the Dutch cabinet, which in December 1948 led to the second military operation of the Dutch against the Indonesian republic. The qualitative analyses of Part 1 conclude with a description of the various types of argument and rules found for 31 individual arguments studied in that way.

In Part 2 of 'Argumentation', six chapters report several quantitative studies concerning the general validity and applicability of the basics of the decision template in individual argumentation. The qualitative study demonstrated that the decision rules, by which individual decision-makers came to their conclusion, did not appear in their argumentation. Apparently these were obvious to others. In chapter 8 these findings are tested in two studies. The first study involves a random sample from a population of 136 Dutch cabinet decision situations in the first half of the twentieth century – 42 in the period 1914-1945 and 94 in the period 1945-1955 (the Indonesian