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# Boekbespreking van: The Political Economy of NATO: Past, Present, and into the 21“ Century

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with the history of racism and slavery in the United States. Separate facilities for ethnic or religious groups may very well be morally correct in other political societies. In fact, separate facilities are not even necessarily immoral in the United States. While Americans find separate toilets for blacks and whites discriminating, separate toilets for men and women are considered desirable (Carens 2000: ch. 4). A small note of criticism: given this general emphasis on culture and context, I do not quite follow why Western European countries should not be allowed to treat their Muslim minorities slightly different from their traditional orthodox protestant minorities. Once more, look at the Dutch example. Dutch political elites over the years have allowed protestant minorities to send their children to special schools, to withhold vaccination (vaccination supposedly hinders the plans of the Lord) thus risking these children's lives. These privileges may have much to do with the fact that the Netherlands used to be a protestant country and has only been secularized during the last thirty years or so. Why shouldn't this latitude be granted to new minorities as well? It may very well be that the present political elite feels deeply disturbed by the vaccination exemption, but does not quite know how to change it, because it has become a tradition by now. Surely, this failure should not oblige them to tolerate lighter forms of female circumcision in Muslim minorities?

In sum, the three books discussed here offer new guiding notions, substantial progress on difficult issues such as international justice, external criticism, and cultural minorities, as well as interesting differences between the authors. (For example, Miller's view on ethnic minorities differs from the one Carens presents: Miller advocates some sort of deliberative republicanism where majority and minorities give shape to a collective national project.) All this is illustrated with fascinating examples from all over the world. In short, I can recommend all three books wholeheartedly, as they are important attempts to extend Walzerian political philosophy.

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# Book Reviews

Todd Sandler and Keith Hartley, *The Political Economy of NATO: Past, Present, and into the 21st Century.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1999. 309 pages. Hardback ISBN 0-521-63093-2, £ 59.95; paperback ISBN 0-521-63880-1, £ 29.95.

The two authors of this publication are economists with a long and distinguished track record of work in defence economics (or 'economics of the military' as those of us who are less convinced of the pacific goals of our leaders sometimes call it). They apply economic methodology to the problem of alliance formation and membership and to the NATO in particular. Their main concern is economic variables. Indeed, the book can be seen as a collection of essays on how to carry out the NATO tasks as efficiently as possible. However, they go beyond the narrowly economic. 'Political Economy' is used in this book in the sense of an economic approach to political variables. Many of the topics they discuss could be categorized as economics of defence. Critical theorists, who use the same term, will be sorely disappointed. Others, however, will find the book stimulating, although more limited than the authors seem to realize. Like so many economists, they use their tools to provide some excellent insights but sometimes fail to resist the temptation to go over the top.

The basic theoretical position of this book is that actors, in this case states, will join an alliance if it is in their interest to do so and will be accepted by the members of the alliance if it is also in their interest. Though apparently platitudinous, the implications of these statements are often not self-evident. The economic methodology fully justifies itself in the authors' careful working out of some of these implications. However, it is not a deeply technical work. The reader does not need to be an economist and the ability to follow through a few simple diagrams is all that is required. The authors are to be congratulated on their clarity. They make a central distinction between the 'public goods' model of an alliance and the 'joint product' model. Once a public good is provided, either by a single actor or a subset of actors, its benefits cannot be denied to other actors. This opens the classical problem of the free rider and the controversies concerning burden sharing. In the joint product model the good is jointly provided and the free-riding issue is less significant. There can, of course, be mixed models. While this is well known in alliance theory, and the free-riding issues have been discussed often in the context of NATO, there is a freshness about the analysis in this book and its concern to test hypotheses that make it valuable.

The book is not without weaknesses. These spring from two sources. First, the authors are rather narrow in their use of political science approaches to decision-making, particularly those from the formal approaches. Secondly, both authors are within the establishment consensus and lacking criticism thereof. They are good NATO men who have a basic 'good guys/bad guys' view of the international system. They claim to present an impartial view, but this seems to mean that they are impartial between European and American perspectives. They overlook the fact that in many parts of the world the aims and ambitions of the NATO countries, in particular those of the United States, are not regarded with much benevolence. Thus, many people in Latin America see the United States as part of the problem, not part of the solution. The authors dutifully mention a number of issues such as the problems involved in the arms trade, but, having mentioned them, feel their duty is done. They therefore overlook a number of fascinating problems that could have benefited from their analysis.

First, I shall look at some of their neglect of contributions from political science. To their credit, the authors do not take a simplistic view of states or their bureaucracies, believing decision-takers necessarily work to maximize the 'common good' in some sense of the phrase. The motives of actors and groups lower down in a bureaucracy are acknowledged. Unfortunately, they do not elaborate on this sufficiently to be particularly useful. They accept, without comment, a rather simple version of the budget-maximizing hypothesis. According to this view, bureaucrats are held to maximize their budgets either for its own sake or as an index of their power. This is a useful first step. However, if one is to go in search of the utility function of a bureaucracy in terms of the utility functions of its constituent actors then something more sophisticated is needed. There is no mention of Dunleavy or Dowding. Indeed, despite the authors' claims to be presenting an approach that reflects both economic and political science approaches, they seem rather slim on the political science literature except where it directly relates to NATO. Even Riker, along with Olson, the grand old man of alliance theory, does not make an appearance.

Some of this literature could have expanded their analysis in a beneficial way. For example, one interesting issue about NATO is why it has lasted so long compared with most military alliances. Threats to leave, other than those made by the French, have not been very serious. Though the authors discuss one or two issues in terms of the prisoner's dilemma, they do not mention Axelrod (though they must be familiar with his work). The games, after all, are not one-shot games but more appropriately thought of as supergames. A possible argument is that, when an alliance exists for a while, the discount rate diminishes. This increases the 'shadow of the future' and further re-enforces the tendency to longevity. I do not know whether this is true. Certainly, it would not be easy to investigate empirically. However, they are the ideas that might arise from an approach that is a bit more sensitive to political science approaches to the problems.

Practically all problems are raised at some point but sometimes rather cursorily. Thus, to what extent is the production of weapons supply led rather than demand led?





Weapons manufacturers, particularly in those areas which are particularly subject to increasing returns to scale, are all too eager to expand their markets and, of course, to stimulate the domestic market. But this can lead to all sorts of curious situations, as the authors acknowledge but do not really analyse. Too often the armed forces of a weapons exporting power find themselves pitted against weapons made in their own country. However, this is not surprising. NATO may be a stable alliance, but this is unusual. Many alliances and enmities in the world shift over time, often within a decade, and such shifts are often hard to foresee. This means that arms exports outside a small circle of stable friends is a risky business. It can only be rationalized economically and politically by assuming a very high discount rate, so that anything beyond the near future can be ignored. It is plausible that arms firms have such discount rates, as do democratic governments who always have an election somewhere on the horizon. However, there is no particular sense in which this is 'rational'. A 'social discount rate' would arguably be much lower and thus sensitive to the future. The discount rate, once we have left pure market situations, is a preference that comes in from the outside. Again, unfortunately, the authors do not put sufficient emphasis on these issues and make the analysis appear an exercise in technique from fully accepted value premises.

The suspicion that suppliers can influence a market unduly is enhanced by the lack of clear criteria for determining what is adequate defence and how it should be distributed amongst different types of military goods. No simple utility function comes to mind. Saudi Arabia has been one of the main importers of weapons and has a vast arsenal. However, these were insufficient against one of its more obvious possible enemies. When attacked, it required allies. I do not think the arms portfolio of Saudi Arabia, and hence its patterns of arms imports, is explained either by a rational analysis of military need or, for that matter, a bureau maximizing hypothesis. Similarly, an earlier paradise for the arms industry was pre-revolutionary Iran. In that case, the regime got the wrong enemy. It was unfortunate that the high tech weaponry was irrelevant to the internal threat from Islamic militants.

These sorts of problem are recognized by the authors but dealt with rather superficially. However, the arms trade and the role of NATO within it is a central problem and it will become even more so if NATO turns its attention more to issues outside its own area.

The authors have provided us with an interesting analysis. It is of value to scholars of NATO, practitioners within and around NATO, and those interested in formal approaches to political science. Its weakness is that it accepts the establishment consensus uncritically and for that reason does not consider a broader range of problems that could be of interest. I leave as an exercise for the authors a problem that we would probably all accept as interesting and which would be a useful illustration of their methodology. In what sense is or has Switzerland been irrational in not joining NATO? Is it all explained by different sets of goals, in particular the prime importance of neutrality in Swiss foreign policy? Could we see it, in the jargon of the trade, as a case of an unusual utility function compared with other Western European states? Or

could it be interpreted as a case of free riding? On the other hand, given the high preparedness of the Swiss military, it is a very expensive form of free riding. How does one distinguish between the hypotheses?

*Michael Nicholson*

**Sydney Tarrow, *Power in Movement. Social Movements and Contentious Politics*, 2nd edition. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press 1998. Hardback ISBN 0-521-62972-4 £ 40.00, USD 59.95; paperback ISBN 0-521-62947-0, £ 14.95 (USD 18.95).**

The first edition of Sidney Tarrow's *Power in Movement*, published in 1994, received well-deserved praise as a rich synthesis of studies on social movements and a seminal contribution to the field. Although also useful as a textbook on, and a review of, the growing literature concerning protest, the book is the most complete attempt to develop a political theory of social movements. Tarrow is one of the founders of the so-called 'political process' approach to movements and author of path-breaking research on protest cycles. In *Power in Movement,* he refers to many and diverse historical cases in order to build hypotheses on the internal dynamics of movements as political actors, as well as their interactions with 'normal politics' – with the institutions from which they draw resources and which they hope, and often manage, to influence.

The revised edition takes into account in various ways the most recent developments in a still very dynamic field. First of all, in terms of empirical references, it enlarges the range of illustrative cases, especially in the direction of the social movements that emerged outside the Western world, in particular during and after democratization in areas of the world as different as Eastern Europe and South Africa. Second, from the theoretical point of view, the second edition addresses two new challenges. On the one hand the attempt to locate social movements inside a wider category of contentious politics, on the other the potential for the development of protest in political settings outside the nation-state.

The introduction to the volume, revised for the new edition, is devoted to the definition of social movements. Three main definitions can be found in the field. First, social movements can be identified substantially on the bases of what they do, as carrier of protest. In addition, they can be singled out on the bases of their organizational structure, as 'networks of networks'. Lastly, they can be conceived as common beliefs or interests. Although, as an author within the 'political process' approach, Tarrow prefers the first option, his definition goes beyond action, including also references to structures and values. Social movements are in fact defined as "those sequences of contentious politics that are based on underlying social networks and resonant collective action frames, and which develop the capacity to maintain sustained challenges against powerful opponents" (p. 2). While the first edition presents social





movements as "collective challenges by people with common purposes and solidarity in sustained interaction with elites, opponents and authorities" (1st edition, p. 4), the new edition draws the attention to the concept of 'contentious politics', on which the author is conducting research together with other colleagues. As Tarrow writes, "[c]ollective action becomes contentious when it is used by people who lack regular access to the institutions, who act in the name of new or unaccepted claims, and who behave in ways that fundamentally challenge others or authority" (p. 3). What really distinguishes social movements is therefore their positions as sustained challengers of established authorities. The emphasis on peculiar forms of action seems instead somehow weakened in the second edition: the term "contentious action" is in fact often used as a substitute where the terms "protest" or "disruptive action" were used in the first edition.

The first chapter revisits rather than revises various contributions and approaches to social movements in order to single out their contribution to what Tarrow sees as "the most forceful argument of this study", namely, that "people engage in contentious politics when patterns of political opportunities and constraints change and then, by strategically employing a repertoire of collective action, create new opportunities, which are used by others in widening cycles of contention" (p. 19). Coherent with this stress on political opportunities and constraints, the first part of the volume is devoted to a fascinating analysis of the birth of modern social movements. Drawing from a large number of contentious forms of politics since the 18th century, Tarrow highlights the close relationship between the emergence of the nation-state and social movements. Following Charles Tilly, he shows how the territorial and functional process of centralization of political power, the granting of civic and political rights, as well as new technologies (in particular in the field of communications), allowed for the development of a new repertoire of collective action that was modular (in the sense that the same form could be used by different actors), national in scope, and based on autonomous organizations.

If the nation-state provided the context necessary for the development of social movements, it is, however, only in relatively recent times that social movements, as actors that can be distinguished from parties and interest groups, gained momentum. In the second part of the volume, the attention shifts to contemporary movements with the aim of illustrating the 'powers of movement'. The main 'power' of movement, Tarrow suggests, comes from political opportunities. Ordinary people pour into the streets, "when institutional access opens, rifts appear within elites, allies become available, and state capacity for repression declines" (p. 71). In agreement with most research since the sixties, Tarrow stresses that social movements in fact do not emerge just when there are grievances, but when there are opportunities to mobilize these grievances. Although political opportunities are most important, he recognizes the active role of those who seize these opportunities, the symbolic activity of assigning meanings to the external reality, and the practical activity of mobilizing resources into organized activity. The repertoire of action, cultural themes and social networks available in a society are the classical raw material that activists can use in their