Boekbespreking van: International Cooperation between Politics and Practice: How Dutch Cooperation Changed Remarkably Little after a Diplomatic Rupture

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contributions are reasonably well argued, they lack a clear link to the theoretical perspectives that were presented in the first part of the book. An exception to this rule is the contribution by K.M. Fierke. Her exposition on the possibility of an ethical foreign policy gives a very nice reflection on the way in which both theory and practice can come together in constructing and evaluating such a policy.

The last part of the book contains critical studies of the foreign policies of the United States, the United Kingdom and the European Union. All three chapters consider the extent to which these states and international actors conduct foreign policy with an ethical dimension. Are they really consistent in the way they approach the ethical issues that they have tried to put on the foreign policy agenda? Take, for example, the various principles and fundamental values that underlie the different conventions and basic documents of the European Union. Among these are the indivisibility of civil and political rights, and the interdependency of democracy and human rights. A good example of this can be found in the preamble to the *European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms* (1950) in which the different members of the Council of Europe reaffirm their belief that democracy and the rule of law are essential for ensuring respect for the fundamental rights and freedoms of every individual. European Union membership is even conditional on satisfying these criteria. The same line of thought, with the same human rights clause, can be found in different trade agreements of the European Union, like for example Article 96 of the Cotonou agreement (the former Lomé Convention), and the Code of Conduct on Arms Export (1998). All these different conventions and codes of conduct point to the fact that the European Union tries to incorporate human rights considerations into its foreign policy. But the real question, of course, remains the same. How consistent has the EU been in incorporating these considerations? "Is it a good international citizen; does it forsake commercial and political advantages where they conflict with human rights?" (p.193) The same question applies of course to the United States and the United Kingdom. Especially intriguing is the chapter by Dunne and Wheeler on Great Britain under Tony Blair. Their contribution makes up for some of the weaker parts of the rest of the book. One is left with the overall impression that *Ethics and Foreign Policy* is worth reading, but could have been better.

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Mei Li Vos, International Cooperation Between Politics and Practice: How Dutch Cooperation Changed Remarkably Little After a Diplomatic Rupture. Amsterdam: Het Spinhuis, 2001, ISBN 9-05589-201-7, Euro 29.50.

Much of the literature on foreign aid and development cooperation focuses on donor motivation or on the consequences for the recipient state. Mei Li Vos's dissertation charts a welcome alternative course: she investigates the implementation of

development cooperation and, more specifically, the change – or lack thereof – in the relationship between the Netherlands and Indonesia after the latter's government cancelled all projects conducted with the former in March 1992. Vos's research approximates what Alexander George has termed process tracing, except that the latter was interested in the *decision-making* process while Vos is interested primarily in *implementation*. Such close investigation of policy implementation is common in other sub-fields of political science, but has been done only rarely in foreign aid policy. This makes Vos's dissertation an innovative and worthwhile project.

The research is centred on a comparative case study design. Building on Putnam's work on two-level games and borrowing from the literature on policy networks, Vos utilizes Laurence Lynn's three level game metaphor, which focuses on the political, policy management and implementation games (pp. 32-35). The first two levels are the common focus of the study of foreign policy, while the last is rarely represented. The book's case studies are designed to provide a structured, focused comparison of thirteen aid projects in three different policy areas: cultural, industrial/technical and legal cooperation. Interestingly, Vos references Clifford Geertz's concept of 'thick description' (p. 47) in her explanation of her methodology, but never refers to either Arend Lijphart's or Alexander George's work on the case study method in comparative and foreign policy research, respectively.

In each of the case studies, Vos's quest is to determine whether or not the diplomatic rupture of 1992 resulted in a change in the project – i.e., whether it was ended, reformulated, or whether it continued unaffected. In addition, she seeks to determine the relative importance of, and interactions between, decision-making in each of the three games. Of course, the expectation is that the diplomatic rupture will have had a significant impact. Vos's subtitle indicates her conclusion that there has in fact been little change. Her most intriguing conclusions do not pertain to the (lack of) policy change, but to the relative importance of each of the three policy games.

It seems that Vos cannot always decide whether there was or was not significant change: in the conclusion to the first case study, concerning the Department of Dutch Language and Culture at the University of Indonesia in Jakarta, she writes that "the decision of 1992 altered the objectives of the department in a subtle way" (p. 94), suggesting that only minor and insignificant change took place. However, in the preceding paragraphs Vos describes how the department changed from one dominated by Dutch senior personnel, who controlled the structure of the curriculum, to one which is now a "completely Indonesian affair", with a curriculum that better suits the needs of its Indonesian student body (p. 93). That seems a rather substantial change: while the department continued to provide courses for those who wished to learn the Dutch language, the nature of those courses and the learning objectives which guided them had changed markedly. Vos eventually recognizes this in her conclusions (p. 236). At the very least, the interpretation in the case study and the concluding chapters should have been reconciled better.

The three games metaphor helps Vos make some noteworthy observations. In her conclusions, she points out that the continuation of projects can be largely explained by determining whether "a project was still meaningful to players in the implementation game" (p. 227). These individuals were generally the most effective lobbyists for their projects. She adds that these individuals generally were effective because of their ties to policy networks (p. 231) and also that these same policy networks were often responsible for the initiation of the project as well (p. 234). In other words, Vos's look inside the implementation process raises the question of the relative significance of the three games and is an implicit critique of the prevalent focus on decision-making (the political and policy management games in her terminology).

In fact, Vos demonstrates that the political game is a poor predictor of whether or not a project would be continued after the diplomatic rupture between the Netherlands and Indonesia in 1992. The implementation game, on the other hand, provides important insights: whenever players at this level lobbied for the continuation of the project, it was continued in every case. Vos discusses the interactions between the three games in terms of policy networks and demonstrates the importance of the implementers in initiating policy, in policy change, and in policy continuation. She also recommends a greater research focus on the implementation game.

In her conclusion, Vos criticizes Putnam's two-level game metaphor, because his domestic game is an "imprecise entity" (p. 254) and does not allow for sufficient attention to policy implementation. While that may be so, her critique might have been more nuanced: her study concerns development cooperation between two states engaged in a post-colonial relationship. This entails some baggage, but also a domestic constituency, i.e., the domestic game is likely to involve more actors, especially non-governmental ones. In addition, development cooperation is a foreign policy issue area that many would characterize as 'low politics,' whereas the focus of Putnam (and his associates) has tended more towards security issues or 'high politics'. While this distinction is flawed, it is also useful: it recognizes that different issue areas may be characterized by different political incentives and, therefore, that different sets of actors may be significant in the policy-making process. Perhaps the relative importance of the implementation game is contingent upon the type of policy? Vos fails to recognize that policy-making regarding development cooperation may proceed differently from policy-making regarding, for example, defence policies. This does not diminish the value of her observations, but indicates that she might have qualified her conclusions a little better.

Notwithstanding the interesting question and subject matter, *International Cooperation Between Politics and Practice* is unlikely to reach the wider audience the author was probably hoping for when she decided to write in English. The language is often awkward. Confusion between 'from' and 'of' (p. 74), 'perspectives' and 'prospects' (p. 91), and switching between British and American spelling conventions

are just some of the problems that are easier to pinpoint. Frequently, the sentence structure only makes sense if one translates the words back into Dutch. Added to these problems is sloppy editing, resulting in a book that is quite difficult to read. This is a shame, because the question is interesting, the case studies are based on a substantial amount of original research, and the critique of the games approach deserves a wider audience.

Marijke Breuning

Edward C. Page, *Governing by Numbers. Delegated Legislation and Everyday Policy-Making*. Oxford/Portland: Hart Publishing, 2001, ISBN 1-84113-207-1, £ 22.50.

The bulk of policy analyses presented these days concentrate on policy networks and negotiated decision-making. The specific perspective of these studies results in a specific image of public governance: decisions are taken outside parliament, or any other representative body for that matter, during negotiations between all kinds of stakeholders. Naturally, this gives rise to questions concerning the legitimacy and economy of this practice. As this is the predominant kind of study in public administration, one is becoming a little suspicious. Are we not simply finding what we planned to look for in the first place? Is the broadly shared network perspective not in fact blocking our view on governmental reality?

In his latest study Edward C. Page hardly mentions networks. He actually ignores the abundant literature in this field. His attention, nevertheless, focuses on the way rules and regulations are formed outside parliament as well as on the part non-governmental actors play in the process. His approach provides us with an original and quite different image of the process of reaching authoritative decisions.

Rather than zooming in on a specific policy field or set of actors, Page focuses on delegated legislation. In the United Kingdom, as elsewhere, the acts passed in parliament show a growing number of regulation frameworks that need further specification. The power of legislation is delegated to the executive: the national government. This increase in delegation implies a shift in governance. And yet, the public administration literature has neglected this type of shift so far and focuses instead on the shifts to the European Union, to courts, to local authorities or to the private sector.

Page concentrates on the 'statutory instruments', as secondary legislation in the UK is called. Statutory instruments are drafted in the shade of *high politics*. That means their development is a matter of everyday politics, which does not involve the mobilization of party support. What is the impact of this type of drafting legislation on participants and on their strategies? Does it bias the result?

Page employs different methods in order to shed some light on this matter. He starts out by looking at the long list of statutory instruments that have been drafted over a