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Boekbespreking van: Liberalization and Leninist Legacies

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human individuals through moral deliberation. His moral theory aims to clarify the way in which different moral positions may be subject to rational criticism within a particular society. Both Putnam and Habermas attempt to develop the pragmatistic idea of moral deliberation. The arguments of Dewey – and of his predecessor Peirce – are thoroughly developed into a moral theory in Habermas's work in particular. Habermas accepts the plurality of moral concepts, but argues that a rational foundation of moral discourses remains possible. The validity of norms, Habermas argues, consists in their "rational acceptability": "Only those norms are valid that meet (or could meet) with the approval of all affected in their capacity as *participants in a practical discourse*." (p.150) Habermas thereby refers to his notion of the "ideal speech situation". Not surprisingly, Rorty's moral theory differs significantly from the positions of Dewey, Putnam and Habermas. Rorty's anti-foundationalist programme rests, in the words of Festenstein, "entirely on the 'ethnocentric' recognition that certain political values are acceptable to 'us' solely because of the history 'we' happen to have had." (p.7) Once more, this raises the question of whether Rorty indeed can be considered as a pragmatist in the tradition of Dewey or should be regarded as a sophisticated relativist.

The final theme of pragmatism is the nature of liberalism and democracy. All the writers discussed by Festenstein embrace the liberal-democratic ordering of society. According to Dewey, liberal-democratic politics should rest on a concept of positive freedom, which in its turn rests on the above mentioned assumption that the aim of moral deliberation is self-realization or growth. Freedom, Dewey holds, consists in "participation in shaping the social conditions for individuality" (p.70). Democracy, therefore, is more than just a peaceful way of settling disputes: it strives at the achievement of a genuinely shared common good. Dewey's theory of democracy is taken up by Putnam. According to Putnam, democracy is the "precondition for the application of intelligence to social problems", whereas participation in democratic procedures clarifies our real needs and interests: "We don't know what our needs and interests are and what we are capable of until we engage in politics." (p.179) This claim by Putnam – which is sharply criticized by Festenstein – goes far beyond the merits attributed to democracy by Dewey. A more solid foundation of the pragmatistic concept of democracy is offered by Habermas. Especially in his later work – e.g. in *Faktizität und Geltung* – Habermas considers democracy as the application of his theory of moral discourse to politics. Democratic procedures warrant the validity of legal norms, albeit only temporarily and under specific conditions: "Majority rule justifies the presumption that the fallible majority opinion may be considered a reasonable basis for a common practice until further notice, namely until the minority convinces the majority that their views are correct." (p.163)

Pragmatism and Political Theory is a well-structured, clearly written introduction to some of the major concerns, merits and demerits of pragmatistic political theory. I especially enjoyed reading the first part of the book, where Festenstein critically reconstructs Dewey's political theory and demonstrates that Dewey's conception of

democracy is grounded in his theory of moral deliberation. Regrettably, the two most interesting contemporary representatives of pragmatic thought discussed by Festenstein – Putnam and Habermas – are dealt with in one chapter only. As Festenstein himself also recognizes, this sometimes results in a "rather caricatural sketch" of the complicated theories of these philosophers (p.173). Still, *Pragmatism and Political Philosophy* remains an interesting study which lives up to its own pretensions: to be a non-exhaustive, yet fresh look at a tradition which deserves attention from political theorists.

Wouter G. Werner

Beverly Crawford and Arend Lijphart (eds.), *Liberalization and Leninist Legacies: Comparative Perspectives on Democratic Transitions*. University of California at Berkeley: International and Areas Studies 1997, ISBN 0-87725-196-7

Nine years after the 1989 revolutions in Eastern Europe the scholarly attention to the sources of democratic consolidation and economic development in the region, as well as in other societies undergoing the process of transition from an authoritarian past, is as alive as ever. The articles assembled in this volume – some of which appeared earlier in *Comparative Political Studies* (June 1995) – contribute to these debates by providing an account of how the various legacies of the (communist) past impact on the direction of regime change in Eastern Europe. The focus of the book is on the process of institution building, in the sense of creating both political and economic institutions, and on the structure of constraints and incentives for post-communist elites to build a stable liberal capitalist democracy. In this respect, the volume is rooted in a particular stream of democratization literature, which emphasizes the behaviour of, and relationships among, political and economic elites, and the role of institutions in the process of regime change. The book is not explicitly concerned with the definition or quality of democracy that is emerging in Eastern Europe – a prominent aspect of many recent debates on democratization – nor with isolated components of mass political culture and the social and economic conditions surrounding the demise of communism – characteristics typical of studies working with modernization theory.

The introductory chapter by Crawford and Lijphart outlines two distinct approaches to explaining how post-communist transformations are likely to be shaped: the 'legacies of the past' approach and the 'imperatives of liberalization' approach. These two perspectives are a set of assumptions on the dominant conditions underlying the regime change, which are subsequently employed in each of the six empirical chapters to formulate questions and guide the investigation. The legacies of the past approach assumes that ideological, political, and economic structures inherited from the communist period will produce anti-liberal and anti-capitalist outcomes, rather than a stable democracy and market economy. The peripheral status of Eastern

Europe, the region's long separation from the West, the inefficient socio-economic system, and culture of intolerance, cynicism and public alienation are all expected to provide a fertile ground for populist and authoritarian leaders to subvert attempts for democratic and economic reforms. In other words, the perspective is close to the postulates of the modernization paradigm which argues that there can be no functioning democracy without favourable social, economic and cultural conditions to underpin it, and to those who argue for the uniqueness of transitions in the post-communist world. In contrast, the liberalization approach contends that if new institutions of democracy and market are created in a short space of time, they will provide new (supposedly liberal) incentives for elites, shape new identities and, in the long-term at least, help to militate against the shadows of the past so emphasized by the legacies approach. This perspective is, then, close to the previous studies in democratization which focus on the processes of change itself, which see democratization processes as broadly similar, and only partly constrained by the milieu in which they take place.

The employment of these two ideal-typical perspectives in empirical chapters has been carried out with remarkable consistency, and for this alone, the book deserves credit. Most importantly, however, the conceptual framework and the findings presented within it allow the authors to go some way towards bridging the usual gaps between theory and assumptions pertinent to democratization studies. The careful empirical work in two chapters comparing privatization processes in Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic by Meaney and by Róna-Tas, a chapter by Comisso analyzing the restitution process in Hungary, a chapter by Hanson on post-Soviet Russia, and two cross-regional comparisons – one on electoral rules and executive authority by Shugart and one on the relationship between party systems and institutional design by Geddes – all indicate that neither of the two perspectives individually provides an adequate approach to the study of post-communist regime change. While some communist legacies, such as an incomplete process of nation-building, are politically relevant and are undermining the process of liberalization, others are not, or are offset by positive effects of institutional reforms. Consequently, the editors turn to more sophisticated explanations and argue that “the constraints and incentives that shape current choices arise from the immediate context in which the actors find themselves” (p.31). If political debates are shaped by hegemony of liberal norms, which provide identity to (new) institutions, and if international aid and pressures support liberalization, the direction of regime change is likely to be *positive*. This will depend on the kind of institutions inherited from the communist regime and the geographic and cultural proximity to the West.

The book may disappoint those expecting the wider comparative perspective promised in the title. Most of the chapters are either intra-regional comparisons or single country case studies focused on Eastern Europe. Only the chapters by Geddes and Shugart provide systematic cross-regional comparisons. This does not mean that the hypotheses generated by this collection are not applicable to the context of regime change more generally, but one wonders how these elegantly formulated theoretical

alternatives to the two rather simplistic perspectives will fare in an environment other than post-communist Europe. The hypotheses presented here are, no doubt, a useful starting point for further theorizing on the determinants of regime change, yet they remain primarily formulated for a test within post-communist settings. However, the proposed new approach leads implicitly to a link with the theories of democratization, which highlight and attempt to conceptualize the international environment as a crucial factor affecting both the overall direction of regime changes and the kind of institutional order emerging within new democracies. Comparativists will, therefore, find enough material here to advance their theories, while the regional specialists will appreciate well-informed chapters, presenting often new and innovative evidence.

Petr Kopecký

Hans Daalder (ed.), *Comparative European Politics: The Story of a Profession*, Pinter, London, 1997, ISBN 1-85567-399-1, £ 65.00

With this genuinely fascinating collection of essays, Hans Daalder has compiled a volume of the memories, reflections and insights of a group of senior scholars in comparative European politics which together filter the history and development of a discipline. This is the varied intellectual autobiography of the (comparative) European profession, revealing its strengths rather than its weaknesses, and offering innumerable lessons about how the study of politics can and should be pursued. The lessons are easily found, and they are also often easily imparted, especially since the contributors are the acknowledged masters in the field and each was commissioned to write about his own personal formation and development. And, this is also why it is the strengths rather than the weaknesses which are revealed – it is difficult to imagine any of these scholars struggling to have their latest paper published. This is, in other words, the view from the top, reflecting the very best in the profession rather than the profession as a whole, with its warts and all, and it encapsulates the spirit of comparative political science from an age when the academic frontiers were being stretched rather than that of today, when the parameters have become largely routinized and inevitably less challenging.

Like all good books, *Comparative European Politics* can be read at a number of different levels. The personal stories themselves are often particularly appealing, since they bring to life those people who younger generations of scholars have until now only known through their rather impersonal writing and scientific work. It is also intriguing to see how some of the contributors seem to have relished the prospect of finally writing about themselves rather than about the political world outside, whereas others seem plainly uncomfortable with the idea, and quickly shift to more objective assessments of their formal academic development. Daalder has also inevitably afforded his contributors quite a free rein in this regard, and whereas childhood and upbringing