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Boekbespreking van: Modernization and Postmodernization

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Citation

Deth, J. van. (1998). Boekbespreking van: Modernization and Postmodernization. *Acta Politica*, 33: 1998(1), 98-101. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/3450591>

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Note: To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).

of pivot parties “can be seen as the result of the working of institutions that characterise West European politics” (p.111) is once more reductionist. Take again Weimar Germany. What would have happened there if its West European institutional framework had brought about a pivot party? It did not, however, and the same is true for the Third and Fourth French Republics, for example. Van Kersbergen exemplifies the specific role of Christian democratic pivot parties and informs about the ‘social capitalist’ governments that have been created under the leadership of these parties in Germany, Italy and the Netherlands. Social capitalism means the attempt to reconcile capital and labour within the framework of state intervention, and a paternalist but generous system of social security based on the patriarchal family. It remains a question, however, whether Italy with its clientelism should be clustered with Germany and the Netherlands. Finally, Roozendaal’s piece on coalition formation is perhaps a somewhat strange element in a book about consensus politics. Yet any coalition is an expression of at least the consensus to look for consensus. The conclusion (p.159) that a strong centre party facilitates coalition formation is, however, rather meagre.

To conclude, as a whole the book lacks substantial reflection of its key concepts, is rather unfocused, analytically confused and, relative to its pretension to deal with problem-solving and institutional designs, of low informational value. Taken separately, the piece on consensualism could be of interest for adherents of Lijphart’s *Democracies*, and the four contributions on corporatism and centre politics are worth reading.

U. Becker

Ronald Inglehart, *Modernization and Postmodernization. Cultural, Economic, and Political Change in 43 Societies*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1997

There are not many scholarly books on the market which discuss political, economic, and social developments in more than 40 countries ranging from Nigeria to Denmark and from Hungary to Chile; which pay attention to such divergent phenomena as the German Green party, the success of ‘Asian tigers’, or the disadvantages of single parenthood; and which refer to the work of authors as different as Weber, Marx, Hellevik, Habermas, Lipset, Freud, Swan, Nieuwbeerta, and Deridda – to mention only a few examples. The case becomes even more remarkable if a book of this enormous scope appears to be based on extensive empirical social research. After being exposed, however, to all this information as well as to footnotes commenting on the Heisenberg principle, the reader’s amazement slowly changes to uneasiness: Isn’t this all a bit too much?

In his latest book Ronald Inglehart addresses a long list of questions related to cultural changes and to the preconditions for democracy. In his first book on these changes (*The Silent Revolution*, 1977) he developed his well-known theory that enduring

levels of economic prosperity and social security in Western countries after the Second World War stimulated a change in political priorities among the new generations from so-called “materialist” to “postmaterialist values”. This change, in turn, resulted in the wave of political unrest at the end of the 1960s, the rise of “New Social Movements” and Green parties, a decline of support for traditional authorities and institutions, and a reinterpretation of societal conflict lines. Inglehart’s second book (*Culture Shift*, 1990) mainly consisted of an elaboration of his interpretations as well as the presentation of an impressive amount of empirical evidence taken from cross-national and longitudinal research in a large number of countries. The nasty question of intergenerational value change obtained specific attention in a book written in co-operation with Paul Abramson (*Value Change in Global Perspective*, 1995). Further to these books Inglehart has published more than 100 articles in the three decades that he has been working in the field of cultural change. Almost on his own he initiated the renaissance of the cultural approach in empirical comparative research and quite a few people earn a nice living by copying his instruments and criticizing his work.

In *Modernization and Postmodernization* the idea of a shift towards post-materialism is used as a starting point for several empirical and theoretical expansions. Empirically, the analyses are mainly based on the so-called World Value Surveys; a unique project of comparable large scale interviews carried out among the populations of 43 countries in the early 1990s. This dataset includes a partial replication of information collected in 22 countries about a decade earlier. Theoretically, the central concept of postmaterialism is replaced by ‘postmodernization’. A postmodern society is “characterized by the decline of hierarchical institutions and rigid social norms, and by the expansion of the realm of individual choice and mass participation.” (p.30) In order to use this concept Inglehart presents a lengthy discussion of the ways in which social scientists have related culture, institutions, and economic development to each other. He pleads for a revised and much more sophisticated variant of ‘modernization theory’, rejecting the biases of linear change, determinism, ethnocentrism and democracy implied in existing approaches. In Inglehart’s view, every country in the world will gradually but inevitably shift its emphasis from ‘survival values’ towards ‘well-being values’, and from ‘traditional authority’ towards ‘secular-rational authority’. The combined movement in these directions establishes the spread of postmodernism, which is explained in exactly the same way as the shift towards postmaterialism was explained: enduring economic and social security cause a process of intergenerational value change.

It is not easy to summarize the major line of reasoning or even the major topics of this book. Broadly speaking, the first part addresses the discussions already mentioned about the relevance and importance of cultural factors. A second part of the book does not – as one might expect – develop the concept of postmodernization in a systematic way, but is restricted to the old debate on the structure and meaning of the materialist-postmaterialist indices in various settings. Since postmaterialism is

considered to be an 'example', 'aspect', 'component', or 'case' of postmodernization only, this extensive elaboration does not fit very well into a book that argues for a much broader scope. Although interesting in itself, not much is gained by this lengthy presentation of well-known arguments that have been the subject of a virtually endless list of other publications.

As a third, and probably the most interesting part of the book, the chapters on the preconditions for democracy should be identified. In an admirably systematic way Inglehart distinguishes between causes and conditions for a certain level of democracy on the one hand, and for the *stability* of this type of political systems on the other. Furthermore, he compares the relative impact of economic factors and social structure with those of cultural and social determinants. It is especially in these comparative analyses that the advantages of his extraordinary dataset become evident, allowing the specification of complicated models and the introduction of additional information about the countries considered. The difficult question on the relationship between economic, social, and political developments can be answered by pointing to the fact that specific cultural patterns emerge under conditions of economic development, and that these specific factors are very supportive of democracy. As Inglehart summarizes his major findings: "economic development leads to cultural changes that make mass publics more likely to *want* democracy and more skilful at *getting it*" (p.330; italics in original).

The fourth and last part of the book (apart from a concluding chapter) contains an overview of the cultural changes between the early 1980s and 1990s among the populations of the more than twenty countries questioned on both occasions. An extremely wide range of topics – from political participation to abortion, and from a belief in hell to national pride – is touched upon here. Dealing with such a diverse range of themes for so many different countries unavoidably results in very sketchy analyses and rough descriptions. And, although the general impression is clearly in line with the predicted postmodern shift, and Inglehart frankly admits the problems caused by a number of deviating cases, the reader is left alone with his request for further information in the middle of a pile of information of unprecedented dimensions.

By undertaking the task of disentangling the relationship between economic, cultural, social, and political developments Inglehart has presented himself an almost impossible assignment which can only be dealt with satisfactorily within a mature systematic framework. On this point reading *Modernization and Postmodernization* leads to the feeling of uneasiness indicated. The general outline of the book is not clear and several chapters can be characterized as contributions to some poorly edited volume rather than well-planned steps in a monograph. Besides, the first half of the book in particular contains many repetitions of the arguments or even identical parts of the text (e.g. parts of pages 33 and 132, and of 46 and 134 are simply copied). Conceptual weaknesses of the book start with the lack of a clear demarcation between postmaterialism and postmodernization at both the conceptual and the operational level. As postmaterialism is considered to be just one 'aspect' of a much broader

process of social change, how can we use empirical information on postmaterialism as the main source of corroboration of theses on postmodernization? Only a much stronger emphasis on falsification could justify the use of empirical information here. Finally, the very restricted way factors at the micro and macro level are employed should be mentioned. Inglehart restrains from any use other than direct (causal) relationships between aggregated micro-data and other types of macro-data. Contextual analysis – with macro-factors introduced as conditional variables – is a much more promising research strategy here for the simple reason that theorizing in this field mainly relies on these type of models instead of the direct relationships discussed by Inglehart.

Any scholarly book with an exceptionally wide scope will be an easy target for experts and grumblers alike. Inglehart's erudition, intellectual competence, and courage to publish a book like this should be praised and his fascinating conclusions about the impact of cultural factors on social and economic development, as well as on the preconditions of democracy, deserve extensive attention and discussion. Besides, *Modernization and Postmodernization* will be an excellent textbook for use at upper-graduate level courses in comparative politics. But, at the same time it is clear that in this new book experts will hardly find anything that has not been published before (although the empirical information is unique and extraordinary), and that many readers will be irritated by the repetitions of arguments and by the lack of discrimination between major and relevant information on the one hand and inessentials on the other. Often less can be more.

Jan van Deth

H.M. Narud, *Voters, Parties and Governments: Electoral Competition, Policy Distances and Government Formation in Multi-Party Systems*, report 96: 7, Institutt for Samfunnsforskning, Oslo, 1996, ISBN 82-7763-058-1 ISSN 0333-3671

The title of Hanne Marthe Narud's thesis, *Voters, parties and governments*, perfectly fits this varied collection of previously published articles. The subjects covered are the behaviour of voters, the activities of parties, and the formation and termination of governmental coalitions. Its main theme, presented in the first chapter, is the complex relationship between voters and parties. In order to win seats, parties have to adopt an electorally attractive policy position. However, the party's policy position not only affects the number of votes won in the election, but also directly influences its bargaining power after the elections, since the policy position adopted influences the chances of entering a coalition. Moreover, entering a governmental coalition influences the electoral support in the next period. Parties therefore have to weigh different consequences of their behaviour. Starting from these general ideas, Narud presents