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THE INTERNATIONAL STUDENT FESTIVAL IN TRONDHEIM

The ISFiT World Parliament Experiment Report

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1. Introduction

International Student Festival in Trondheim (ISFiT) has been arranged every second year since 1990. Each festival has a new topic with international relevance, and in 2007 the theme was “Global Boundaries”. More than 450 students from all around the world come to Trondheim for ten days to participate in political and social discussions, as well as numerous cultural and thematic events. Each participant is part of one workshop, altogether there are 16 of them, all with a different topic related to the main theme of the festival. ISFiT is a politically neutral arena where people can meet and exchange opinions and ideas freely.

February 22nd, an entire day of ISFiT 2007, all the participants of the festival took part in the debates and voting of a simulated World Parliament. This experiment was based on the writings of George Monbiot, and was an attempt not only to test the validity of the idea of a World Parliament, but also provide the current debate on global governance with valuable insight. It is important to note that ISFiT is a neutral arena for political debate, and is thus not promoting this or any other theory, but rather facilitating an experiment to shed light on strengths and weaknesses of this one particular proposal. The ideas of George Monbiot are rather radical, but in testing a more radical idea, attention may be called to a larger number of potential problematic aspects with a global democracy.

In *The Age of Consent* (2004), Monbiot presents the problem of a global democratic deficit. The world is now to a large extent controlled by non-democratic actors such as multinational corporations, institutions and financial bodies. The power of these non-democratic actors should, in Monbiot’s opinion, be transferred to a more democratic body; a world parliament based on the principle of one person, one vote. A prerequisite for this World Parliament to work is a global mentality amongst the individuals of the world; all have to deliberate what is best for the world as a whole, not only their own particular nation or ethnic group. This is necessary to avoid a tyranny of the majority, where large ethnic or national groups (for instance China and India) could dominate the World Parliament, with the result of millions of people living as oppressed minorities (Monbiot 2004). These points have been criticised and debated, but never truly tested due to its complexity and scope. As in all social sciences, an experiment is difficult, but if conducted in a fairly representative manner, it may at least produce valuable insight and provide the current debates with real life examples. ISFiT, with nearly 500 participants from over 100 different countries from all corners of the world, provides an arena where it is possible to go through with such an experiment. During the

ISFiT 2007 World Parliament Experiment, the participants constituted “the world”, and were divided into constituencies who each chose one representative to “the World Parliament”. In organising the World Parliament Experiment, ISFiT 2007 made a historic first; both with regards to the number of participants and the geographic spread it is_ the largest World Parliament Experiment to this day.

2. The outline of the day

In order to pull this off, the organizing committee of the experiment needed a lot of assistance and help from other groups within ISFiT. The first functionaries arrived at the Student Society in Trondheim, where the experiment was to take place, at 6.00 to start the preparations. There were nearly 100 functionaries involved, and from 6.00 until 8.30, they all arrived, were briefed on their role, and started preparing. At 8.30, the participants started gathering in the Grand Hall where the parliamentary sessions were to take place. To make sure everyone had the same basic knowledge of the idea behind the World Parliament in general and the experiment in particular, information booklets had been handed out 3 days ahead of the experiment. In addition to this we organized the schedule so that the day started with an information session lead by the chairmen, Åge Halvorsen and Harris Utne, who were acclaimed just a few minutes into the session. In general, the day was conducted in as democratic a fashion as possible, thus the chairmen, the rules and the editorial committee were all elected or at least approved of by the participants.

The information session included an introduction to World Parliament theory by Andrew Strauss, followed by an introduction to the conflict in Sudan, which was the chosen topic of discussion, by Benaiah Yongo-Bure. Andreas Vogt gave an introduction on interventions. These short lectures were all thought to give the participants a better background on the topic of discussion, and to prepare them for the day. After this there was a vote over the rules of procedure. Two sets were prepared, and in addition there was a third choice of the participants making their own rules. The chairmen felt it necessary, due to time restrictions, to recommend set A of rules, a set which allowed for less participation by the participants in the Grand Hall, and thus was expected to save us some time. Set A was chosen, and the chairmen went through the plan for the day, explaining what the participants were to do next. They had already been geographically divided into 16 constituencies based on their region of origin, and were told to follow their respective facilitators to the constituencies which were situated all around the Student Society. Each constituency had two facilitators, who were from the

thematic section in ISFiT, one of these led the discussion if needed, and one took the minutes. In addition each constituency had one work shop contact, to take care of the more practical issues. In the first session, they were recommended to discuss the Sudan conflict with focus on the Darfur region, choose a representative and find a common view on intervention in Sudan that the representative were to defend in the Grand Hall debates. Whilst in their constituencies, the groups had the possibility of consulting the expert panel, consisting of the Sudan expert, and the intervention expert.

After approximately one hour in the constituencies, the participants returned to the Grand Hall to listen to the representatives' debate. The debate was vivid and a number of alternative solutions were mentioned. It seemed that a majority of the representatives felt something needed to be done, but the way in which the problems could be best solved, was a matter of discussion. Some felt that the African Union (AU) should be in charge of an intervention, others pointed to the advantages an external actor such as the United Nations (UN) represents. This claim was questioned however, as the UN may simply become another part in the conflict. As a politically neutral actor, NGOs were proposed as a possible solution to the issue of who should intervene. After approximately one hour of debate, the participants and their representatives returned to their respective constituencies to debate and come up with specific proposals for resolutions and amendments. The proposals were sent through a web page set up by the IT section in ISFiT, to the editorial committee, who joined together similar proposals, put opposing ones up against one another and decided on the order in which they were to be voted upon. This committee consisted of 4 ISFiT organizers chosen specifically for their political experience, neutrality, professionalism and English abilities.

Back in the Grand Hall, the chairmen presented the proposals. There were two new proposed resolutions (from the two African constituencies), seven proposed changes and twelve proposed amendments. The second round of debate intensified the conflicting lines from the first round, but this time the focus was to a larger degree on the plan of the intervention; long term versus short term expectations. Many were concerned that one can not expect long term development if there is no force who has the power to make changes happen, and therefore advocated an international intervention. An external mediator or crisis group was proposed, but there was some disagreement as to who should constitute that group, and who had the right to decide this. Again, the debate was closed with debates concerning who should intervene – the representative of Northern Africa was very surprised to hear the trust people

had in the UN, and stated that the people of Africa themselves should solve their own conflict through the AU.

After this second round of debate in the Grand Hall was closed, the representatives voted over each proposed resolution and amendment, and when the final resolution with amendments was ready, they had a final vote by secret ballot to verify if they truly wanted this resolution. The reason this was done by secret ballot, and not by the raise of hands as had been done up until then, is that the participants in the Grand Hall were to vote over the same resolution, and we did not want them to be coloured by their representatives vote – or vice versa. The double vote was made in order to compare the two results; was it possible for the representatives to actually reach the opinion of “the world citizenry”? According to the ISFiT WPE voting, it could indeed. The representatives vote ended in favour of the resolution by 12 to 4, and the participants in the Grand Hall also voted for the resolution with a clear majority. The resolution (appendix 1) was passed, and the World Parliament Experiment was declared to be finished. The next point on the agenda was the evaluation of the experiment, and a discussion on the idea of a World Parliament, but due to lack of time, this part unfortunately had to be cut down to a bare minimum. Only two participants and one representative got to comment on the experiment. The representative was from Northern Africa, and was very critical of a World Parliament, as he considered it to be nothing more than a replica of the UN.

After the participants’ comments, Rasmus Tenbergen commented on the experiment, as did Andrew Strauss. Strauss pointed to a number of questions to take into consideration in the future such as the representativity, the constituencies, and the fact that the regions affected by the decision were not heard. For further comments from Andrew Strauss and the other observers, please see the third appendix.

3. The time issue

As stated above, time is a problematic issue in doing an experiment of such a grand scale as this. Time was essential, and we realized that too little time had been set aside for this in order to do this in the best way. At the same time it was not doable for us to set aside more time at this festival, since all the sections were already pressed on time. In the following section we highlight some of the issues that we had to deal with.

The time issue was really problematic. We spent a lot of time discussing how to deal with it in the best possible way. There were a large number of aspects that were to be included in the schedule of the day, and the time frame was from 9 am until 4.30 pm. This was a substantial amount of time sat aside for one single “event” like this, in comparison with other such in the festival programme. Though with the extensive schedule we had, the number of aspects that were required resulted in a situation where the limited amount of time became problematic. This factor became evident when we started drafting the plan of the day. Aspects we had seen as necessary and natural had to be scrutinized in order to see if they were absolutely required or if it was possible to cut them from the programme. In this we lost some scheduled points, though mostly we just ended up having to set aside an unsatisfactory amount of time for the different points on the agenda. (For an insight in the schedule of the day, see appendix number two).

The result of this time issue was a rather rigid time schedule for the day, where the plan was put down in precise time slots with little or no flexibility in order to manage to finish off at the required hour. This had negative and a somewhat restraining effect on the discussions, both in the constituencies and in the grand hall debates. Some aspects of the day (if not most in some respect) ended up being somewhat rushed. (Here it is important to note that in addition to this being an issue of limited time at our hands, it was also a point of discussion prior to the festival that the grand hall debates should not be too lengthy in order for the plenum not to get bored and restless during the discussions). Intentionally we sat aside more time for the discussions in the constituencies than for the discussions in the grand hall with the representatives. We knew we needed to focus on the one or the other, and we found that the discussions in the constituencies were the most important ones, so that the chosen representative knew what his or her constituency wanted him or her to do and what their position was. The last discussion in the grand hall before the voting sequence should have been shortened in order to give time to the third part, which consisted of the discussions over the World Parliament. This third and last section was too abbreviated.

A rather important issue in saving time during the experiment was the problem of moving over 400 persons around the same building without it taking up valuable discussion time. Thanks to a specifies system of transfers, the actual logistics of the event went quite smoothly. The main challenge was the moving of the different constituencies from the Grand Hall to the

different locations inside the Student Society and back again. With a detailed plan for directions and order of leaving there were no delays because of transportation.

4. Participation

All the participants of ISFIT 2007 had been invited to participate in the World Parliament Experiment. There are some uncertainties about how many who actually participated in this experiment. During the sessions in the constituencies we had no control over how many people left. So we use the numbers from the votings in the Grand Hall session to see how many people participate and how many who left during the experiment.

We can see from the first grand hall session that 365 persons voted over which set of rules they wanted. 281 voted for set A, while 84 voted for set B. In the second Grand Hall session and the voting for or against the resolution 183 who voted. 158 persons voted for the resolution, while 25 voted against.

During the day a total of 182 persons left the experiment. The reasons why all these people left are unclear. We got some response later from some of those who had left during the day. Some felt they had too little influence over the debate since only the representatives could speak, some did not know enough about the topic or did not care about the topic, some felt they had been put in the wrong constituency, while others left for reasons unrelated to the experiment.

The number of persons leaving in the middle of the experiment was a major problem for the experiment. And as pointed out by Andrew Strauss, that nearly half left during the experiment gave a result that was not as democratic as one would hope in a World Parliament.

5. The distribution of voters and the practical aspects of organizing the constituencies

The participants were distributed into the various constituencies before the actual event, and were informed of which region they adhered to the day prior to the event. The creation of the different constituencies was a considerable challenge for the World Parliament Experiment. ISFiT was already organized into 16 different workshops with diverse topics. The workshops were constituted by participants that had applied for these workshops, so one might say that they shared an interest in each subject with their fellow workshop-participant. One of Monbiot's main arguments is that each voter will vote as a world citizen, and that national

differences will have little consequence. Each voter will decide by his or her conviction based on their mindset, rather than by national interests. This made us consider if we should keep these workshops for the WPE-event as well. The main focus for the organizing committee was being as true to the theory as possible without making it impossible to organize. This aspect made one of the most important things to test the functioning of the regional constituencies with different nationalities. We therefore concluded to omit the workshops and create regional constituencies, based on geographical and cultural contiguity. We thought that one major challenge for the World Parliament theory was the creation of these different districts. George Monbiot narrates an organization of 600 constituencies, with populations of 10 million in each. However, he does not give any directions as to how these dividing lines are laid down. We saw several potential conflicts with this aspect, and wanted to illustrate them as best we could in the Experiment.

Having already chosen regional constituencies instead of workshops, the organizing committee identified two different approaches: We calculated that we would have around 450-500 participants for the Experiment. This made it necessary to identify what we wanted to focus on, being pressed for time for the event. We could choose between many or few constituencies, where many constituencies would have a manageable size for each constituency and few constituencies would give room for ample discussion time for the representatives and consequently a rather large constituency. This would in turn give either a focus on the discussions in the constituencies or the debates in the Grand Hall. While fewer constituencies would give a broader discussion in the Grand Hall which could have been more visible to observers – we in the organizing committee concluded that it was the discussions in the constituencies that would be more thorough and in-depth, and thus were much more important to the spirit of this undertaking. Having originally divided the ISFiT-participants into 18 different regions, the actual number on the day of the event was 16 regions. The regions Scandinavia and Equatorial Africa had to be joined together with others because of many participants not showing up at the start of the festival. They would simply have been too small to be included.

One aspect of the organization of the constituencies is the one of political bias. World Parliament is mainly a Western idea, and ISFiT being a festival in Trondheim, Norway with mainly Norwegian functionaries makes us quite easily vulnerable to criticism on grounds of political bias.

The 16 different regions that were used during WPE at ISFiT 2007 were:

- Northern Africa
- Southern Africa
- Oceania
- Eastern Asia
- South Eastern Asia
- Central Asia
- South Eastern Europe
- North Eastern Europe
- Southern Europe
- Central Europe
- Middle Europe
- Western Europe
- Balkan
- North America
- South America
- Middle East

The organizing committee has received criticism, being accused of Eurocentrism. This is due to the fact that out of 16 constituencies, 7 of them were European. The organizing committee wish to stress the fact that this organization was for the experiment taking place at ISFiT 2007, and is not meant as an organization of the world. ISFiT 2007 was dominated by a rather large share of participants from Europe, mainly Eastern Europeans. From the 480 people that were supposed to come, about 250 of these were Europeans. The organizing committee had a choice of either keeping the European constituencies few and incredibly large, or having more European constituencies than natural in order for the discussions to go smoothly. We chose the latter. In adhering with the theory of the experiment, we looked upon the ISFiT participants as the world – where the approximate one person one vote system should be implemented. The fact that Europeans put together had more votes than other regions demonstrated the situation one would have with nations such as India and China in a real World Parliament. It is to be noted that the organizing committee recognizes how this might be seen as Eurocentrism on our behalf.

Another criticism that we were anticipating was the distribution of countries into each constituency. This is a matter that the observers also have raised in their evaluations. Why were the Philippines included into Eastern Asia instead of Oceania, or why were Bulgaria and Romania not included in the Balkan constituency? The distribution was influenced by two factors. The first one was where we meant each country belonged. The other one was how to keep the 16 constituencies fairly equal in size. Whereas we did not see it necessary for regions to be completely equal in size, we saw it as essential that they were somewhat the same size, to keep true to the original theory. There were some regions that were 39 voters, whereas Northern Africa was initially 16 people. This represents the largest deviation, but on average the regions were somewhat the same size. Regarding why Bulgaria and Romania were not in the Balkan region,¹ this was partly due to the large number of participants from that region, and partly because of the Norwegian perceptions of what constitutes the Balkans. This raises the issue of who is actually going to divide countries into regions, and what kind of world view these have. This also plays a great part in determining what names the different regions should have. We asked a participant what he would call the countries Moldova, Bulgaria and Romania by a common nominator, but he did not have a term for the “region”.

As anticipated, many participants were displeased with their region and wanted to switch. In many cases they wanted to change to a region that *did not* exist. One participant from Ethiopia who was placed in the Northern African constituency wanted to change to Eastern Africa (which was a constituency that did not exist). This was probably due to the fact that they did not know the different regions that we had created. Others wondered about why we included them in that region. An example was a Bulgarian who did not understand why he was not in the Balkan constituency. It is the organizing committee’s impression that when being informed of our reasoning most of the participants were content with being in their regions, and we also allowed participants to change groups if there had been a misunderstanding.

To sum up, we can say that the issue of creating different regions and the distribution of the world’s countries into these regions, is an incredible challenge. Where do you draw the dividing line between neighbouring countries, or even within a large country? Which region does one country belong to? We experienced that many participants placed high value on their

¹ The organizer later learned that the actual term Balkan comes from a mountain range that passes through both Romania and Bulgaria and into the other countries from that region.

country's regional belonging. It should also be noted that in a real World Parliament, the borders between constituencies may not necessarily coincide with national borders.

6. The process and the planning

We find it important to include a section on the process and the planning of the event in order to provide some information on the working progress of this project. We have divided the working process up to the start of the festival into three sections; the period before Christmas, January and the Test run, and Pre- festival. The following section provides a short summary of the process.

6.1. The period before Christmas

We ,the organizing committee of the world parliament experiment at ISFiT, were formed as a group around mid September. The group consisted of three members of the Board of Meetings, and the four group leaders and one workshop contact, from the Workshop 5, "Global Governance", in the Thematic section of ISFiT. It was a special project to kick off taken that many of us were rather confused as to what this actually was about, and what needed to be done in order to get where we were in fact going. In the period before Christmas there might have been wee moments of panic, as we began to comprehend the extent of the experiment. The size of the project grew, and we had to figure out quite large aspects of political organization from "scratch". In November the German scholar Dr. Rasmus Tenbergen visited us here in Trondheim, and gave us valuable help and information about the notion of a World Parliament. Steadily throughout the period before Christmas our work took shape, and we figured out answers to an increasing amount of issues that needed resolving. The plan of the experiment was sketched out, ground rules were written, the topic of discussion decided on, different tasks and responsibilities were divided and the work with getting chairmen and experts began.

6.2. January and the test-run

Upon our return to Trondheim after Christmas, the level of intensity grew. After discussions with Dr. Tenbergen in November, we had decided on having a test run mid- January. We wanted to do this to test our proposed plan for the World Parliament Experiment, in order to find flaws and problems prior to the real event. On the 17th of January, we had our test run in the Grand Hall with the thematic section of ISFiT as participants. We had approximately 50 participants, and close to 20 functionaries. The test run was a great success, where we learned

a lot about the problematic points in our schedule for the real day. We got very valuable input both from observing the event, and through evaluation forms filled in by the participants, the functionaries, and the panel of observers (which consisted of the President of ISFiT, Martin Svarva, the head of the UN connection office in Trondheim, Anders Gynnild, and Professor of Political Science at NTNU, Torbjørn Knutsen). Through these different reports we learned which things worked well and which had to be dealt with and changed prior to the festival. An evaluation rapport was written up based on these different reports.

6.3. Pre-festival

In the period between the test run and the start of the festival the workload intensified even more, though that was anticipated since the start of the festival grew closer. The only issue was that all of us also had other commitments to our other groups – the workshop group leaders to their planning of the workshop, and us on the Board of Meetings to the scheduled meetings we were responsible or co-responsible for. This made this period more hectic than we would have wanted, which in turn will have effected the results (both the WPE and the other commitments we had). It became very evident that the World Parliament Experiment organizing team should have been a subgroup of its own, without other obligations in addition to the project. Many practical aspects such as the required posters, printing of massive amounts of papers etc. had to be left to the last minute, which again made the process even more hectic.

The process of arranging this World Parliament Experiment at ISFiT 2007 was a long and time consuming experience. We spent a lot of time and energy on this, and worked really hard to make it happen. It was somewhat frustrating in the way that it had not been done before in a scale like this, so we had to figure out many of the aspects, and the procedures from scratch. Overall it was interesting, and we all became very enthusiastic about it.

Points of criticism regarding the working process and progress of this experiment should also be included here. We clearly see that a clearer overview at an earlier stage of the work that needed to be done would have helped us in the process. This was however difficult since we did not have that much information we would use in order to obtain this clear picture of what lay ahead. Also, the project grew into a quite extensive such, and the team of organizers should not have had other obligations in ISFiT in addition to working with this.

7. Resolutions and the choice of topic

7.1. Choice of topic: Intervention

When we first sent out information about the World Parliament Experiment to the participants, we asked them to e-mail us suggestions about topics. Some of the suggestions we received were fair trade, small arms and its threat to developing countries, the creation of a peace organisation and intervention in Sudan.

We too thought about many different topics before we settled on intervention. Because intervention alone might seem a bit far fetched and abstract, we wanted to make it more concrete by choosing a problem that is real and current. After talking with various scholars and experts, both advocates of a World Parliament and political scientist, we concluded that we wanted to use Sudan and intervention for our experiment. Sudan is both a current issue and one that people does not normally have a preset opinion of (in contrast to i.e. Iraq and the American intervention there). Other topics we talked about were environment, water, peace, and pollution. We concluded however that these problems would be too “easy” to agree on and therefore may not shed light on the challenges of a World Parliament. An additional asset with using Sudan and the Darfur region as our topic of discussion, was the already existing expertise on the conflict in the Dialogue groups of ISFiT. This group focuses on different conflict regions each festival, and at ISFiT 2007, the Sudan, the horn of Africa, and the Great Lakes region was their chosen areas. This provided us with helpful information and contacts in planning the experiment.

7.2. Resolutions

As already mentioned, we had a test-run of the World Parliament Experiment with functionaries from ISFiT. One of the things we learned more about and improved was the resolutions. To save time in formulating a resolution during the WPE, we found it the best solution to make two suggested resolutions to which the representatives could amend. At first we only provided simple suggested resolutions stating “Yes, we want international forces to intervene in Sudan” or “No, we do not international forces want to intervene in Sudan”. We found that we would get too many amendments, and decided that the resolutions should be more specific. They needed to specify what we meant with intervention, who should intervene and who should finance such an operation. We also chose to present some pros and cons to each proposed resolution in an attempt to jumpstart the debates in the constituencies. In specifying the resolutions, the number of amendments would decrease, and the editing

committee's job would lessen (another way for us to save time). We talked to various scholars (amongst them Andreas Vogt and Torbjørn Knutsen) to decide what the resolutions should contain, and the proposed resolutions of the World Parliament Experiment were much more specified than those of the testrun.

8. Panel and expert panel

In order to make this experiment as academically valuable as possible, we found it absolutely necessary to involve a number of experts in both the planning of the experiment and the actual event. We chose to invite four persons to be part of a panel of observers. These were to observe the experiment, both in the Grand Hall and in the constituencies, and then evaluate the experiment. Their comments are in appendix three. The panel of observers consisted of Ms Nina Dessau, Mr Jan Art Scholte, Mr Andrew Strauss and Mr Raj Shekar Chandola. Mr Strauss, professor of international law at Widener University School of Law, and Mr Chandola, head of World Unity & Peace Education Department (WUPED) at City Montessori School in India were invited specifically for the WPE based on their knowledge and experience on the issue. We asked Mr Strauss to open the experiment with a 30 minutes speech about the basic principles of World Parliament, and Mr Chandola to be an observer throughout the whole experiment. However, we believed the evaluation of the experiment would gain from two outside professionals. Accordingly, since Ms Nina Dessau and Mr Jan Art Scholte were already invited to ISFiT for other meetings, we asked them to be part of the panel.

In addition to the panel of observers, the complexity of the case of discussion required us to turn to expertise on both Sudan and interventions. Dr Benaiah Yongo-Bure, assistant professor at Kettering University, was invited as an expert on Sudan in order to help the representatives get a constructive debate on this topic. Upon request he also provided us with a two pages written introduction to the history of the conflict in Sudan for the information booklet handed out to the participants three days in advance of the experiment. In addition we invited Mr Andreas Vogt from the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs to give an introduction on the various aspects the participants should have in mind concerning the question of international intervention in general. It was positive to have two experts to introduce the issues of Sudan and intervention. Moreover Mr Vogt had just been in Sudan and was hence updated on the situation. They were both available throughout the whole experiment to answer questions from the participants regarding Sudan and international

interventions. Unfortunately, due to lack of time for the experiment, Dr Yongo-Bure and Mr Vogt could not come with some concluding remarks after the voting on how the results could have affected the situation in Sudan. Instead we chose to give preference to Mr Strauss to sum up the views of the panel on the experiment.

The day before the experiment we had a meeting with the panel and the expert panel in order to go through, coordinate and make sure everybody knew their role for the experiment.

9. Summary with the organizers' critique of the World Parliament Experiment

The World Parliament Experiment was as the name indicates – an experiment. Like any simulation it is impossible to make it completely true to life. Because of that lack of reality the constituencies and especially the representatives were not influenced and manipulated by external factors like lobbies, governments and so on, like they would have been in real life.

The geographical division of the participants did not reflect the world's population. Europeans made up 7 out of 16 constituencies, which meant that other regions were under-represented (Africa for instance had only 2 constituencies). We were aware of this dilemma and did think about proportioning the participants better, but that would have led to some constituencies with a large number of participants and some constituencies with only 2-3 participants, so we ended up with rejecting this idea. However, the thoughts and logistics behind the division of the participants should have been clarified by the chairmen, at the beginning to a larger extent. Some critics may claim that forced combinations against cultural, historical and political affiliation affected the dynamics of some groups, but on the other hand would not this be the case in a real World Parliament were you are supposed to think like a world citizen?

As mentioned above, only two constituencies represented Africa. The outcome of the debate on whether or not to intervene in Sudan turned out to be the opposite of what the two African representatives voted in favour for. This is an important fact that should be taken into consideration in a broader discussion of a World Parliament design.

One of the one of the requirements for becoming an ISFiT participant is that one has a fair level of English. It was thus a natural choice for us to use English as the language medium. However, it was evident that representatives struggling with their English had a harder time

than the others and did not have that much of an impact. There were also some representatives who were probably elected because of their English skills.

The idea of a World Parliament being one of a more democratic world, required us to allow for the participants themselves to decide on the rules of procedure. Due to limited time, we prepared two sets of rules over which the participants could vote. However, it turned out that set B (which allowed for more participation from the Grand Hall participants) was too time consuming, so for practical reasons the chairmen recommended set A. Many found that a bit provocative and unprofessional, and stated that we could have just as well prepared the rules we wanted and instead explained that unfortunately, we cannot vote over the rules.

Many people left before we had the final vote were to be cast. We were anticipating this because we knew that with so many participants it is difficult to keep everybody's attention throughout a whole day. Still, it would have been interesting to know the result of the plenum vote with the people with less interest in the topic and WPE still present.

11. Conclusions

Despite certain debated issues, such as the overruling of the affected parties and the division of constituencies, we in the organizing team considers the WPE to have been a success. From the very beginning, we expected reactions to issues of political importance, but that would have been the case regardless of how we chose to organize this event. Our goal was to make sure the practical arrangements were the best they could be, if they were, all the potential criticism would be political, and thus contribute to the current debate on global governance. One of our major tradeoffs between political and practical arrangements concerned the limited amount of time at our disposal. Ideally, if it had been up to the WPE group, we would have had the experiment over two days. We did not have enough time to discuss the World Parliament Experiment itself and many participants were eager to comment on the World Parliament and to evaluate the experiment. Unfortunately however, we were running late and did not get the opportunity to discuss World Parliament Experiment thoroughly. Time was also an important issue in our planning process, and therefore obviously affected the outcome of the actual event. All of us who were part of the WPE organizing committee had commitments to other groups in ISFiT where the workload was already quite heavy. When we agreed on joining the WPE project, it was not given that it turned out to be as important as it actually became for ISFiT 2007. We started from scratch and as the project

grew, time was something we had very little of. Due to this, the organization of the experiment could have been done differently, but all the same, our overall evaluation of the experiment and the process leading up to it, is positive. Not only have we learnt a lot, but the feedback from scholars, observers and not least the participants has given us the impression that this event was an important and interesting one, which all those involved has gained from.

Bibliography

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Appendix 1: The final resolution

Resolution passed by the participants of the ISFiT 2007 World Parliament Experiment

The participants of the ISFiT World Parliament Experiment

Having considered the current situation in Darfur,

Recommends that UN in collaboration with African Union peacekeeping forces are placed in the conflict regions,

Stressing the responsibility of the UN to finance such an operation,

Expecting all UN member countries to contribute substantially with personnel and equipment, military and civilian, to ensure sustainable peace building by economic development

We also recommend the conflicting parties to hold further peace negotiations and reach a consensus on selecting a neutral party to mediate the negotiations.

The intervention shall be mandated by chapter VII of the UN charter, and aim to contribute to reconciliation and social development in Sudan and to develop and support education.

A phased intervention in collaboration with the African Union should be developed with a proper exit strategy in place before the intervention begins.

Control the weapon transport over South-eastern Europe.

Appendix 2: The schedule for the WPE day

What	When	Time
Come to order	09.00	5
Introduction and practical aspects	09.05	10
Introduction to WPE	09.15	20
Presentation of Ground Rules	09.35	10
Vote over Ground Rules	09.45	15
Presentation of proposed resolutions	10.00	5
Presentation of the Topic of discussion: Sudan	10.05	20
Presentation of the Topic of discussion: Interventions	10.25	20
Appell by Sudanese Dialogue Participant	10.45	10
Introduction to discussions in constituencies	10.55	10
“Pause” – Moving in to constituencies	11.05	15
Discussions in constituencies	11.20	50
“Pause” – Moving in to Grand Hall	12.10	10

Introduction to debate with rules	12.20	10
Debate with representatives	12.30	40
“Pause” – Moving in to constituencies	13.10	10
Discussions in constituencies	13.20	30
Break with lunch in constituencies	13.50	40
“Pause” – Moving in to Grand Hall	14.30	10
Debate with representatives	14.40	20
Vote over resolutions – Plenum and representatives?	15.00	15
Finishing words	15.25	2
Introduction to WPE talk	15.27	8
Comments by the participants	15.35	25
Comment from Tenbergen	16.00	5
Comment from panel representative	16.05	15
Concluding words from the organizing team	16.20	10
Finish	16.30	

Appendix 3: The observers' evaluations

THE WORLD PARLIAMENT EXPERIMENT AT ISFiT 2007

Personal Reflections by Professor Jan Aart Scholte
Centre for the Study of Globalisation and Regionalisation
University of Warwick

1. First of all profuse congratulations are due to the ISFiT team who pulled off this extremely innovative, interesting, complex, instructive and fun exercise. It really was a most impressive world first. Hopefully it will set an inspirational example for others. Certainly experts on this subject can take from the Trondheim experiment many ideas concerning the structure and procedure of a world parliament.
2. In addition to the amazing logistical achievement it was striking how positively the participants contributed to the experiment. They quickly became fluent on the topic of conflict and intervention in Darfur and offered a number of sharp insights and suggestive proposals. From this experiment it would seem that world parliamentarians who are not constrained by government positions and diplomatic niceties can make intellectual and political breakthroughs that are less available through intergovernmental organisations.
3. Of course, like any simulation this exercise could not be completely true to life. For example, the experiment sealed the world parliament in a black box, disconnected from any environmental influences. In contrast, an actual world parliament would be densely connected with other actors and surrounding social structures. Yet in the ISFiT scenario governments, constituents, mass media, lobbies, patrons and the like were absent. The parliamentarians only interacted with each other.
4. Similarly, the simulation isolated the resolution at hand from other issues. In 'real life', politicians are juggling multiple policy questions, and their position on one matter will be influenced by their aims in respect of others. Parliamentarians would normally be doing deals with one another, perhaps lending support to a particular version of the Darfur resolution in exchange for favours from others on other matters.
5. In general, behaviour in this world parliament was probably too clean. The ISFiT parliamentarians did not resort to manipulations, subterfuges, tactical manoeuvres, etc. Nor did they have the archetypal politician's obsession with re-election. It was in some respects heartening to see such highly normative conduct, but I suspect that this would not be true to life in an actual world parliament.
6. The simulated world parliament also did not reflect the geographical distribution of the world's population. Rather, the experiment reflected participation in ISFiT IX, which while global in scope was disproportionately European (and Central and East European in particular). Europeans made up 7 of the 16 constituencies and 207 of the 428 participants.

Would a different constellation of constituencies have generated a different process and a different outcome?

7. The boundaries and names of several constituencies were somewhat mercurial. What was the difference between 'Central Europe' and 'Middle Europe'? The distinction between 'South East Europe' and 'Balkans' came down to separating Bulgarians and Romanians from former Yugoslavs. Ukraine in 'North East Europe'? Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Pakistan in South East Asia, while members of ASEAN like Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore are moved 3,000 kilometres east to Oceania, and the Philippines is removed to East Asia? It got a bit postmodern! Beyond pedantic quibbles over names, though, I wonder whether certain forced combinations that ran against actual cultural, historical and political affiliations affected the dynamics of some groups.
8. Then there was that disturbingly fascinating outcome on the resolution. In effect thirteen Asian, American and European constituencies (with the Middle East abstaining) told two African constituencies that Darfur should be sorted out by a United Nations intervention that – against the express African wishes – excluded the African Union. The democratically elected representative of the country concerned was overruled and silenced. Resigned to his utter disempowerment after losing the main vote, he opted out of all the subsequent amendment votes. The speakers and the other representatives, busily discussing the last details of the resolution, were seemingly oblivious to the complete removal from the debate of the representative with the most at stake. In this respect this world parliament behaved not unlike the Bretton Woods institutions, where two overextended representatives of the whole of Africa hold a minute share of the vote and basically stand by while the rest of the world decides their fate. The rest of the world apparently has no qualms in doing so. This scenario in the ISFiT experiment raises some pretty fundamental questions of world parliament design. If one is not careful, a world parliament in the twenty-first century might not behave very differently than the Congress of Berlin in 1884-5.
9. Indeed, was the rather neo-colonial outcome of the ISFiT experiment partly a result of the construction of the exercise? Like most other proposals for world parliaments, the ISFiT mechanism was of unilateral western design, in this case by students from Norway in consultation with an expert from Germany. This is in no way to question the bona fides of the persons involved, who on the contrary were unambiguously driven by the deepest of democratic consciences. However, the point remains that this parliament was presented as a *fait accompli* by westerners to the rest of the world – as indeed almost all global governance (with a few exceptions like the Organisation of the Islamic Conference) has been. An alternative approach to the experiment would be to establish the structure and procedures of the world parliament through intercultural negotiation by an intercontinental team comprised of participants from all regions. This would mean the relinquishment of some control by the west, but surely that is what meaningful global democracy will require?
10. Relatedly, it would have been interesting and perhaps instructive to ask the participants in anonymous evaluations how well the process resonated with their various political cultures. Did the world parliament as designed at ISFiT work for everyone as a mechanism of voice – and perhaps for some better than for others?
11. One might also reflect on the consequences for power relations within the world parliament of using English as the language medium. Some constituency representatives

were probably elected in part on account of their greater English fluency. Where a representative struggled with English it was harder for her/him to have an impact. In particular, during the first plenary debate the representative for the affected region (Northern Africa) was unable to put his case as effectively as he no doubt would have wished owing to language difficulties.

12. Another question of social hierarchies that perhaps wants more explicit attention in future experiments of this kind is gender. True to real life politics, this world parliament exercise was male-dominated: two male speakers; three male experts defining the issues; a male monopoly on the panel only broken with the late addition of a woman; a 62.5%-37.5% male majority among constituency representatives. Meanwhile the support staff who made the whole exercise possible were predominantly female. Radical feminists who argue that modern 'democracy' is a patriarchal ruse would have had a field day in this respect. But then Sigrun Marie Moss was the hidden sovereign!
13. Finally there might be a minor critical point regarding the opening vote on procedures. This step was presumably taken on the principle that the parliament should decide its own ways of working, so that participants would feel that they 'owned' the process and therefore regarded it as legitimate. However, heavy hints from the chair suggested that 'There Is No Alternative' to Option A. Option C (that the meeting should decide its own rules), while mentioned in the background paperwork, was quietly 'overlooked' in the oral presentation of choices. This engineering got the experiment off to a less than transparent start. It might have been better just to impose the procedures 'for the purpose of the exercise' and get on with it.

In sum, this experiment was great and extremely interesting. Not only did the ISFiT initiative provide the participants with a very special experience, but the student coordinators pulled off an exercise that even most senior professional researchers would not dream of attempting. Again, it was a privilege to witness this unique day.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Jan Bentzen', written in a cursive style.

MEMORANDUM

To: ISFit Board

From: Andrew Strauss

Re: Evaluation of the ISFit 2007 World Parliament Experiment

Date: March 17, 2007

I very much enjoyed the World Parliament Experiment. The tremendous effort and goodwill involved was inspiring. My specific comments are as follows:

1. What exactly the World Parliament Experiment simulated was unclear. Were the constituencies the ultimate voters who elected the members of the World Parliament or were they other members of the World Parliament? I think, given the dynamics of the process, it would probably be most realistic to consider them regional caucuses comprised of other members of the World Parliament whose views those elected had some obligation to represent. This raises the further question of who exactly the representatives were appearing before and why. Here, I think it would make sense to have them representing their caucuses on a particular committee of the World Parliament, for example the "Committee on Human Rights" or the "Committee on Africa." Specifically identifying this relationship would help give some parameters to the exploration of the extent to which representatives are as a matter of politics and ethics free to deviate from the views of those who elected them. Also, if the participants were given knowledge of the specific context in which they were operating, they could more realistically reflect the dynamics of the interactions between representatives and their electors. This would help make the behavioral information about a global parliament that could be distilled from the Experiment more realistic and helpful.

If, in fact, the constituencies are to be considered regional caucuses this raises interesting questions: Would such caucuses emerge within the World Parliament? If they emerged, what weight would they carry in the Parliament? To my knowledge region has not been a relevant grouping within the European Parliament, but that may be due to the relative homogeneity of that parliament. Another perhaps more relevant potential grouping would be by political parties. If the Experiment is to be repeated, the organizers might want to think about organizing the constituencies by parties with brief descriptions of their ideologies and base constituencies.

2. Given the nature of the simulation there were two ways in particular that the dynamics of a real parliament were not accurately represented. A) In a real parliament, the members must take into account external pressure groups, including their constituents, especially if they want to get reelected. Perhaps, if the experiment is to be repeated, representatives could be given individual scripts explaining the external pressures that they are under. B) In a real parliament delegates would have ongoing relationships with other delegates and a lot of decisions (and horse trading) would be made informally and out of the public view. A more elaborate future

parliament might go on for several days and allow the delegates a chance to meet outside of formal settings. If there had been more time to get to know each other and talk outside of the proceedings, it might well have been possible to reach some sort of compromise formulation that would have brought the North African representative on board with the final result.

3. I did not understand why the representatives voted for the final resolution by secret ballot. As elected officials, consistent with democratic practices, I would think their voting should be open and transparent, and they should be accountable to their constituents. (In fact, having the electorate rather than their representatives vote publicly reverses the normal rule that it is the agents who are accountable to their principals.)

4. My sense was that the Experiment did accurately and interestingly represent certain dynamics of a global parliament. I thought that differing cultural perspectives and sensitivities were at many points represented in a way that was obviously authentic to people's actual feelings/experiences and reflective of the attitudes that delegates would have in a real global parliament. I also think that the content and style of discussion seemed very realistic and quite hopeful of the role that a global parliament could play. It was clear that despite their global diversity delegates were able to carry on a common conversation. This is encouraging of the ability of such a parliament to bridge differences and facilitate the building of common understandings. I felt that the Parliament also created a certain true-to-life sense of international solidarity among the participants—a globally diverse group of people who despite differences found commonality in their joint efforts to solve collective problems.

MEMORANDUM

To: Hans Holand, Sigrun Moss and ISFIT World Parliament Experiment organizing team

From: Rasmus Tenbergen

Date: 2007-03-18

Subject: Comments and Notes on ISFIT World Parliament Experiment 2007

1. General remarks: what a great event!

Congratulations! This was indeed a great event. I do not want to repeat but support what the other observers already said. All too often, people are either enthusiastic or able, you were both and it was a pleasure to work with you. I teach project management at the university and I think that is it fair to say that this project can be seen as a case study for a successful project including definition of objectives, milestones, reality testing, management of resources, timing, celebration, documentation, evaluation, and follow-up. The pure fact that this experiment worked is already a great success because it creates so much interesting data to analyze. Therefore, in my comments let me focus not on the many aspects that went well, but on possibilities to develop this great project further, not because it had so many problems, but because it offers so many opportunities.

2. Possible improvements: trust yourselves and others even more!

If you organize a pop concert there is a high likelihood that everybody will like it, but if you organize a World Parliament Experiment it is clear that there are problems, this lies in the very nature of the experiment, it makes it interesting. There is no social progress without tension, because there are different options. For example, the problem that the Africans were unhappy about being outvoted on the Sudan question: what is the underlying rationale here? One (ISFIT participant) person, one vote? ISFIT participants representing their country/region according to their population? Others?

The argument that seemed to satisfy the African representatives the most in my debriefing with them was: what if you were a real World Parliamentarian elected based one person, one vote from the people of Sudan, that would have made your case much stronger and made it extremely difficult for a World Parliament to outvote you. What is the consequence of this? Many possible improvements were proposed: more time (that would be great) etc., but

there will always be strategic trade-offs, that is again what makes it so interesting, for example the question that we discussed so long in the preparation: regional representation vs. free choice (in theory the Monbiot model vs. my model, but in ISFIT I was in favor of Monbiot because the regional representation was so impressive). In my comment I would like to focus on what I think is the most important question in this regard and the one that offers the most opportunities for improvement: Should the participants of an ISFIT World Parliament Experiment have the right to change anything (including procedures, agenda, facilitators etc.) at any time?

This is an important trade-off between inclusiveness and efficiency and it is very understandable that you were a bit cautious here and went for the risk-averse approach. I tried to advocate for the opposite before the event and I think that several comments from the participants showed that the democratic inclusiveness was very important to them. I think there is another very important reason why they should have this right, it has something to do with the spirit of a World Parliament: this is the institution that could give world citizens the sense of ownership that it is up to them to influence world politics, they need a mechanism they do not possess at the moment (the World Parliament), so in a World Parliament Experiment we should give them the same feeling, this is the most attractive aspect of the whole thing!

If the organizers give a recommendation (for example on rules), it is quite likely that the participants will follow (see the decision between set A and B in our experiment) and if not, it is their choice and they will be less inclined to blame the organizers for disadvantages of their decision. If this aspect is underestimated the World Parliament Experiment becomes a bit too similar to a Model UN event, which is also a good and interesting project but a lot less fascinating than the tremendous potential of the ISFIT World Parliament Experiment. When we prepared the ISFIT World Parliament Experiment in 2006 I saw it as one of my main jobs to give you the confidence that you can actually make this ambitious project successful and indeed you proved that you could. Therefore, I would encourage you to trust yourselves and others (ISFIT participants and world citizens) even more: they are able to deal with the general responsibility to make the decisions in such an experiment and you are able to manage the interesting tensions (in a productive sense) that might be the result. Imagine, what an interesting analysis this would be if the whole World Parliament Experiment totally reflected the view of the ISFIT participants!

By the way: what is your decision-making process inside the ISFIT organizing team? Consensus, decisions taken high or low in the ISFIT hierarchy? I tried to find out, but did not insist, do you want to make this transparent to the outside world?

Another aspect that goes in a similar direction: In general, it was very good that we were even able to deal openly with “conflicting” interests (yours: organize an interesting event for your participants while keeping ISFIT neutrality, mine: promote a World Parliament) with a small exception that I hope and think is not so important, because we knew that the interests were more than 90% similar and less than 10% “conflicting” in that sense. But I think that we must be even less careful if we respect each others interest. I think it is ok (and hopefully even interesting) for ISFIT participants to have people who are very enthusiastic about the idea of a World Parliament in ISFIT, if they make it very clear that it is their personal conviction, not ISFIT policy. So, I think this was a very good win-win arrangement that I helped you in the organization and you gave me an opportunity to campaign for a World Parliament without compromising your reputation of an ideology-free organization.

Conclusion: ISFIT 2007 World Parliament Experiment – a historic event?

It was mentioned several times before, during and after the ISFIT World Parliament Experiment day that this was “historic” and indeed I agree. But what does this really mean? If a “real” World Parliament is an assembly elected by the (majority) of the world population based on one person, one vote, it seems meaningful to say that a successful “provisional” World Parliament needs many world citizens (here: several 100) who elect provisional members of a World Parliament from many countries (here: over 100) who meet if possible in person (here: yes). If that is the definition, it seems fair to say that the ISFIT 2007 World Parliament Experiment was one of the most, if not the most successful provisional World Parliament so far.

In that sense the ISFIT 2007 World Parliament Experiment was already historic, but I believe that the opportunities are even greater, if the organizers of the next ISFIT 2009 decided to continue the experiment (similar to the peace prize and dialogue group). As a singular event, the ISFIT 2007 World Parliament Experiment was already great, but if you see it not as an end but as a start of a development, an institutionalized tradition, there are unlimited opportunities to actually make history. Imagine an ongoing process with a ISFIT World Parliament Experiment every two years that improves based on the lessons learned from the previous one, interacts with other experiments online and in real life – I believe that this could

greatly influence attempts to reform international institutions in a very constructive way and could give ISFIT in general an importance that goes way beyond the very good reputation that it already has for its many good aspects. In short, the best (and realistic) case is: a successful institutionalized ISFIT World Parliament Experiment gives an example how the world should be governed through a World Parliament (or if that is the result of the experiment: through an even better institution) and makes it possible that such a solution is implemented in real life. That would be truly historic! I think you already did the most difficult part: the start and I congratulate you again how successful you were, now it is your chance to do the next step: a World Parliament is possible, if you create it in ISFIT 2009...

Thank you again for the privilege to work with you, best wishes,

Rasmus Tenbergen

The ISFiT 2007 World Parliament Experiment

The whole festival was a very marvelous experience for me. Bringing together about 450 students, from all over the world, and involving them in discussing various issues, ranging from national and regional dialogues to world peace, is really educational in many aspects.

For me, the World Parliament Experiment was the climax of all the experiences of the festival. The functionaries, at all levels, did a wonderful organizational work for the experiment to run smoothly and be concluded within such a short time. The participants and their representatives were really smart. They grasped the case in 20 minutes' presentation with minimum need for more information during the retreats. The regional representatives discussed as real experts in world fora. Such well-informed constituencies, not marred with national "interests", are better disposed to arriving at less self-centered decisions on world issues. The need for a regional consensus/agreement, during the retreats, reduces the preponderant influences of major veto-wielding powers from blocking a more international consensus on an issue. Hence, the amendments and the final resolutions reflect open regional compromises that have undergone rigorous challenges, unlike narrow national interests.

However, regional interests and sympathies can not be ruled out. For example, in this experiment, the African and Middle East regions seemed to differ with the other regions. The African regions emphasized the role of the African Union in resolving the Darfur case, while the Middle East region stressed Sudan's sovereignty. However, given the gravity of the Darfur situation, it became difficult for either viewpoint to gain support.

Benaiah Yongo-Bure