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ABSTRACTS

NEOPATRIMONIAL REGIMES AND POLITICAL TRANSITIONS IN AFRICA

By MICHAEL BRATTON and NICOLAS VAN DE WALLE

This article proposes revisions to the theory of political transitions by analyzing patterns of recent popular challenges to neopatrimonial rule in Africa. The approach is explicitly comparative, based on contrasts between Africa and the rest of the world and among regimes within Africa itself. Arguing against the prevalent view that transitions unfold unpredictably according to the contingent interplay of key political actors, the authors contend that the structure of the preexisting regime shapes the dynamics and sometimes even the outcomes of political transitions. They find that in contrast to transitions from corporatist regimes, transitions from neopatrimonial rule are likely to be driven by social protest, marked by struggles over patronage, and backed by emerging middle classes. Following Dahl, the authors compare African regimes on the basis of the degree of formal political participation and competition allowed. They find that regime variants—personal dictatorship, military oligarchy, plebiscitary one-party regime, and competitive one-party regime—are associated with distinctive transition dynamics. Whereas transitions from military oligarchies are typically managed from the top down and are relatively orderly, transitions from plebiscitary systems often occur discordantly through confrontational national conferences. A consolidated democracy is least likely to result from the abrupt collapse of a personal dictatorship and is most likely, though never guaranteed, from a graduated transition from a competitive one-party regime. In general, getting to democracy is problematic from all regimes that lack institutional traditions of political competition.

LEARNING, REALISM, AND ALLIANCES

THE WEIGHT OF THE SHADOW OF THE PAST

By DAN REITER

This article presents and tests a theory of learning in international politics. Drawing primarily from social psychology and organization theory, the learning theory proposes that lessons tend to be drawn only from high-impact events in world politics, such as large wars and economic depressions. Lessons drawn tend to be simple and are oriented around the question of which policies are likely to be successful and which policies are likely to fail. This learning theory is tested on the alliance choices of small powers in the twentieth century. The predictions of two learning hypotheses are compared with those of a leading realist explanation of alliance choices, balance of threat theory. Quantitative analysis of small powers' alliance choices reveals that a small power's experience in the previous world war is a very powerful explanation of its peacetime alliance choices after that war, whereas the level of threat in the international environment has only marginal effects on the small power's alliance choices. Further, these threat effects may be in the opposite direction of that predicted by balance of threat theory.

SMALL STATES IN BIG TROUBLE

STATE REORGANIZATION IN AUSTRALIA, DENMARK, NEW ZEALAND, AND SWEDEN IN THE 1980S

By HERMAN SCHWARTZ

In Australia, Denmark, New Zealand, and Sweden in the 1980s, coalitions of politicians, fiscal bureaucrats, and capital and labor in sectors exposed to international competition allied to transform the largest single nontradable sector in their society: the state, particularly the welfare state. They exposed state personnel and agencies to market pressures and competition to reduce the cost of welfare and other state services. The impetus for change came from rising foreign public and private debt. Rising public debt levels and expensive welfare states interacted to create a tax wedge between employers' wage costs and workers' received wages. This undercut international competitiveness, worsening current account deficits and leading to more foreign debt accumulation. Two factors explain variation in the degree of reorganization in

each country: differences in their electoral and constitutional regimes; and the willingness of left parties to risk splitting their core constituencies. Introduction of market pressures is an effort to go beyond the liberalization of the economy common in industrial countries during the 1980s, and both to institutionalize limits to welfare spending and to change the nature of state-society relations, away from corporatist forms of interest intermediation. In short, not just less state, but a different state.

FINANCIAL INCENTIVES AND CENTRAL BANK AUTHORITY IN INDUSTRIALIZING NATIONS

By SYLVIA MAXFIELD

Institutionalist models of macroeconomic performance in advanced industrial countries focus on central bank independence. In newly industrializing countries, however, the behavioral authority of the central bank is a much more significant predictor of inflation than is legal independence, because laws there are not the source of central bank ability to create or defend macroeconomic stability. Financial structures and the incentives they create for government politicians, private bankers, and industrialists explain cross-national variation in the interest and capacity of central banks in developing countries. The greater public sector deficits are, the weaker and/or more dependent private banks are on state assistance; and the larger the portion of industry finance covered by commercial bank loans or state credits, the less likely it is that there will be an authoritative, conservative central bank. Mexico, Thailand, Brazil, and South Korea are the four country cases considered in depth.

BARRIERS TO COLLECTIVE ACTION

STEELWORKERS AND MUTUAL DEPENDENCE IN THE FORMER SOVIET UNION

By STEPHEN CROWLEY

The author examines the question of why labor in the former Soviet Union has remained so quiet during this tumultuous period. He conducts a most similar case study of coal miners, who have struck and organized militant trade unions, and of steelworkers in the same communities, who have not. To explain the lack of strike activity, the concept of mutual dependence is developed, whereby the enterprise is dependent on workers in a labor-short economy and workers in turn have been dependent on the enterprise for the provision of goods and services in short supply. The provision of a high level of such goods and services through the workplace was found to prevent independent worker activity in steel mills and certain coal mines. Implications are drawn for theories of collective action and the study of the former Soviet Union and its economic and political transformation.