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ABSTRACTS

AGAINST THE ODDS

RETRENCHMENT IN AGRICULTURE IN FRANCE AND THE UNITED STATES

By WILLIAM D. COLEMAN, MICHAEL M. ATKINSON, and ÉRIC MONTPETIT

This article extends recent work on a comparative theory of retrenchment in social policy by asking whether the politics of retrenchment travels well across policy areas, with policy feedback remaining a crucial variable for explaining government success or failure. The article analyzes policy change in agriculture in the United States and France, a natural choice for an extension of retrenchment theory because agricultural policy resembles social policy in some respects but also provides telling points of contrast. The article finds that the call for new theories focusing on retrenchment is justified: the politics of agricultural retrenchment differs from that of expansion, and success at retrenchment varies by program.

The analysis shows, as well, that retrenchment has been significant both in the U.S. and in France and the European Union. Variations in policy feedback help explain why these policy changes occurred. Moreover, the France-U.S. comparison highlights how systemic institutional factors shape the politics of retrenchment. Finally, focusing on agriculture, a policy sector in which international developments have a greater direct importance than they do in social policy, the article identifies an additional systemic retrenchment strategy: constraining domestic programs through international agreements.

DOMESTIC INSTITUTIONS AND INTERNATIONAL REGULATORY COOPERATION

COMPARATIVE RESPONSES TO THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

By KAL RAUSTIALA

In 1992 governments negotiated a multilateral treaty regime to manage biological diversity. Unlike the United Kingdom, the United States rejected this treaty. Yet both nations were equally at risk from biodiversity loss and equally likely to benefit from its protection. This empirical puzzle is used to explore state choice in regulatory cooperation. Epistemic community analysis helps to explain the onset of negotiations and the contours of debates over regime norms and rules. But state choices, and the regime itself, primarily reflected the regulatory politics of biodiversity management. The international commitments on biodiversity, ostensibly alike for the U.K. and the U.S., had to be implemented through their domestic regulatory structures; the result was a distinct set of domestic ramifications. Electoral incentives and especially domestic institutions influenced both industry and governmental assessments by shaping expectations about the impact of the regime in operation. As states increasingly seek to regulate internationally, domestic institutions and anticipated implementation will play ever greater roles in explaining state choice and, because powerful states are equally influenced by these dynamics, in explaining international outcomes.

HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS, UMBRELLA CONCEPTS, AND EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS

By JAMES M. MCCORMICK and NEIL J. MITCHELL

In this research note, the authors seek to demonstrate conceptually and empirically that the unidimensional treatment of human rights violations, which is the standard approach found in the literature, confounds two important underlying components of the concept. They argue that the disaggregation of umbrella concepts like human rights violations is an important step in the research process and that it offers significant theoretical and empirical benefits. The specific implications of this conceptual argument for the measurement of human rights violations are drawn out through an empirical analysis of the standard composite scale in terms of its two underlying components. Future research needs to recognize the distortions and information loss produced by unidimensional treatment of the concept and the benefits of disaggregating human rights violations into its important components.

BRINGING IN THE NEW WORLD ORDER

LIBERALISM, LEGITIMACY, AND THE UNITED NATIONS

By MICHAEL N. BARNETT

The end of the cold war and the attendant security vacuum unleashed a flurry of intellectual activity and international commissions that reflected on the world that was being left behind and the world that should be created in its place. The reports under review are among the best and most influential of the lot. This article focuses on three issues raised by these reports. First, the portrait of the new international order offered by these reports is a liberal international order. Second, the concept of legitimacy appears in various guises, and the UN is considered the site for the legitimization of a particular order. Few international orders are ever founded or sustained by force alone, something well understood by the policymakers who drafted these reports and wisely heeded by international relations theorists who attempt to understand their actions and the international orders that they construct and sustain. Third, these reports envision the UN as an agent of normative integration. As such, it contributes to the development and maintenance of a liberal international order by increasing the number of actors who identify with and uphold its values.

INTERNAL WAR

CAUSES AND CURES

By STEVEN R. DAVID

Since the end of the cold war internal conflicts have received unprecedented attention. Of special interest has been the effort of neorealists to employ an approach traditionally used to explain interstate conflict to make internal war understandable. While neorealism has been useful in explaining the behavior of groups in anarchic conditions, it is inadequate in explaining internal wars occurring in states that retain a strong government and that stem from motives other than power and security. Neorealism also does little to explain how anarchy is created in the first place and what can be done to restore central control. Another approach offers "bad leaders" as a proximate cause of internal war. There is much to this explanation, but more work needs to be done in understanding just what makes leaders "bad" and whether leaders have the latitude to be "good." Finally, the diverse nature of internal wars has frustrated efforts to develop an overall means of settling them. At a point in which armed conflict has become almost exclusively an internal affair, useful generalizations for causes and cures remain elusive.