

North-South obviously involves something more than the structure of the international system. It seems especially important to emphasize this issue at this time, if only because the international system is offering developing countries fewer and more complex alternatives: less aid, more restrictive access to capital and trading markets, a more constraining ideological environment. Dealing with this environment will require much greater domestic policy skills and would of course also diminish the weight of the criticism that problems are primarily due to deficient domestic policy choices.

More attention might also have been devoted by the panel to the changes occurring within the Third World coalition that make unity in the future so problematic. What are the conditions for success of a coalition of the weak? Can they ever be met? Tentative answers might have provided some insight into the question of whether the Third World challenge was merely premature, and thus likely to reemerge again, or whether the challenge was a misguided attempt, reflecting the transitory turbulence of adjusting to the OPEC "shock" and its aftermath, that is unlikely to recur. If the latter, North-South will persist in the decades ahead, but it will likely be a very different kind of North-South relationship. Finally, it might have been useful to speculate about the evolution of the international political economy and its implications for domestic development choices. Put differently, the dialectic between external and internal policy choices is entering a new phase and how to deal with these interacting changes is unclear but crucial. □

## **Area Studies and Theory-Building in Comparative Politics: A Stocktaking**

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I introduced the roundtable by summarizing two interrelated debates that currently mark much of the discourse about the

state of the field of comparative politics. In the more general debate, one position argues that comparative politics is a field in a state of stagnancy. According to this argument, the field would seem to have lost much of the excitement and momentum that marked its heyday in the 1960s and early 1970s. Important methodological and theoretical work has ground to a halt. The other position challenges this interpretation by indicating that comparative politics is now in the position of institutionalizing its contributions and that new and sophisticated methods and approaches continue to be introduced.

Closely intertwined with this debate is one that focuses upon the role of area studies within the field of comparative theory-building. One side of this controversy has argued that area studies are descriptive, monocontextual, and, as such, have seriously inhibited theory-building. The other position states that area studies are an essential ingredient of the theory-building process since it is here where the reservoir of data about politics is in fact found. The panelists at the roundtable were selected on the basis both of their area experience and their sensitivity to methodology and empirical theory-building. They were also chosen to provide a broad geographic expertise with scholars of Europe, Latin America, Africa, Southeast Asia, the Middle East, and the United States serving as panelists. The six discussants collectively represented over 65 research trips to 45 different countries during careers that spanned an average of 25 years.

Gabriel Almond of Stanford University set the tone for the roundtable by presenting a general overview of where comparative political analysis had come during the past few decades. He analyzed the capacity of concepts to travel across areas and the importance of their formulation and reformulation as they encounter different cultural and political contexts. He used as examples what he termed the interest group, patron-client, and political culture-political participation models. Almond argued that much important theoretical work takes place in the "groping and grubbing" that goes on in the early stages of theory-building. In conclusion, he stated that the field of

comparative politics is very much alive today and that it is marked by increasing sophistication and rigor. Professor Almond sharply questioned the position that comparative politics is in a state of malaise.

James Malloy of the University of Pittsburgh discussed the special importance of the field of Latin America within the general field of comparative politics. He indicated that Latin America was perhaps the most productive area in generating concepts and theoretical approaches. In his terms, Latin American scholarship has not only been consuming theory but it has been producing theory as well. As evidence, he used the *dependencia* literature, the role of the state and corporatism, and, most recently, the work being done on regime types and the return to the basic infrastructure of politics. Malloy made the important point that one major reason for this success was the role played by Latin American political scientists themselves who over the years have made critically important contributions both to our understanding of Latin American political processes and to the introduction of new conceptual frameworks and theoretical approaches to the field more generally.

Victor LeVine of Washington University stressed the high hopes that had marked early studies of African political systems. Africanists emphasized studies focusing on the state and state-building. Two decades later, accompanied by the death of optimism surrounding the African political experience, political scientists shifted their emphasis away from the state and toward problems of political crises and conflict. Studies of state-building shifted to the analysis of political disintegration. Today, the field of the comparative politics of Africa is placing more emphasis upon politics at the local level and upon the need to understand "the tree from the roots up." Concern about the processes of "deinstitutionalization" and "departicipation" has slowly moved to one about local politics where the basic building blocks of the political future of Africa seem to be embedded.

James Scott of Yale University began his presentation by calling attention to the increasing need to emphasize problems

and issues that cut across national boundaries. He cited as a case in point the issue of the peasantry in politics. Important problems transcend geographical regions and serve to relate the work of area specialists and comparative theoreticians. Scott argued that an important reason for the advances made by Latin Americanists rested in the existence of a community of discourse in that part of the world. In Southeast Asia, on the other hand, such a community is absent. Eight different major language groups and quite distinct historical experiences have hindered such study. As a result, concepts developed for the analysis of Southeast Asian systems did not travel very well. Scott indicated that the concept "legitimacy" had little relevance in Southeast Asia where the state is usually seen as predatory and the locus for "legalized banditry." Part of the essence of studying comparative politics in Southeast Asia, therefore, requires analysis of society's capacity to resist the will of the state. The repertoire of resistance of the peoples of Southeast Asia to their governments is a rich and subtle one.

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Lee Sigelman of the University of Kentucky reported that an in-depth survey of material produced in journals of comparative politics indicated that much of the same work being done in the 1940s and 1950s is still being done today. Parochialism, for example, is still prevalent in the field. Some excitement seems to have been lost. On the other hand, important new work is being done, and there is little doubt that today's comparative political analysts are much more rigorous and scientifically sophisticated than their

earlier counterparts. The basic problem is that many of the theoreticians have lost the capacity to bring into focus the important fine-grained detail while some area specialists only seem to have the capacity to focus narrowly and myopically upon that detail. The future seems to require the development of approaches which proceed coherently and rigorously with the comparison of limited numbers of political systems. In the process, the American political system must be seen as an important and integral case within the laboratory of study of comparativists.

In the end, the consensus of the participants (and audience) attending this roundtable was that comparative politics is alive and well. Led by those who study Latin America, new concepts and ap-

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proaches are constantly being born. The revolution that marked the field in the 1950s and 1960s has quietly institutionalized itself. An important reason for the relatively negative image of comparative politics in the discipline in recent years rests in the self-criticism engaged in by scholars of comparative politics themselves. This self-criticism is in fact a healthy sign and one that promises continuing breakthroughs and transformations in the field in the years ahead.

Area studies and comparative political analysis are inextricably intertwined with one another. The experiences of nation-states across the world provide the material and substance for analysis. Methodological tools and theoretical approaches must have data to organize and interpret. This is the stuff of the area specialist. Increasingly, the tools of the area specialist and the theoretician are found in the kits of the leading scholars of comparative politics. And these scholars must be in continuing communication with one another across countries, cultures, areas, and methodological approaches. □

## **Internal vs. External Factors in Political Development: An Evaluation of Recent Historical Research**

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Has recent historical research left any role for *domestic* causation in political development? That subversive question was addressed, and answered, rather differently by David Abraham of Princeton University, Gabriel Almond of Stanford University, David Collier of the University of California, Berkeley, and Peter Katzenstein of Cornell University in a Saturday morning roundtable.

The historiography at issue, I suggested at the outset, seemed to fall into three broad categories: (a) the *dependency* debate and its echoes (including world-systems theory and the bureaucratic-authoritarian model); (b) investigations of the rise, form, and strength of the *modern nation-states*, including those by Tilly, North and Thomas, Skocpol, Anderson, and now Rasler and Thompson; and (c) work on the impact of *trade*, which comprises not only the contributions of Keohane, Krasner, Cameron, Gourevitch, and Katzenstein, but of a small army of recent historians of Imperial and Weimar Germany: Wehler, Winkler, Boehme, Feldman, Eley, Maier, and Abraham. Within these literatures, moreover, the question of external influence in five broad areas of development has emerged as crucial: (1) state strength; (2) (geographical) state size; (3) the strength and intransigence of Right; (4) styles of social and political decision; and (5) susceptibility to authoritarianism.

Almond, summarizing the draft of a large review essay that he had circulated well in advance of the session, denied that the new work represented any radical departure. Such earlier historians and social scientists as Seeley, Hintze, Gerschenkson, Hirschman, Rosenau, Eckstein, and Lijphart—not to mention Almond, Flanagan, and Mundt had amply recognized the importance of external factors, often in a clearer and more convincing way (and here Hintze's work deserved par-