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# ABSTRACTS

## THE SOVEREIGN LIMITS OF GLOBAL CIVIL SOCIETY

A COMPARISON OF NGO PARTICIPATION IN UN WORLD CONFERENCES ON THE ENVIRONMENT, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND WOMEN

By ANN MARIE CLARK, ELISABETH J. FRIEDMAN, and KATHRYN HOCHSTETLER

The increased visibility of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and social movements at the international level invites continuing evaluation of the extent and significance of the role they now play in world politics. While the presence of such new actors is easily demonstrated, international relations scholars have debated their significance. The authors argue that the concept of global civil society sets a more demanding standard for the evaluation of transnational political processes than has been applied in prior accounts of transnational activity. Further, most empirical studies of this activity have focused on a limited number of NGOs within a single issue-area. Using three recent UN world conferences as examples of mutual encounters between state-dominated international politics and global civic politics, the authors develop the concept of global civil society to provide a theoretical foundation for a systematic empirical assessment of transnational relations concerning the environment, human rights, and women at the global level.

## POLITICAL CAPITAL

MEXICAN FINANCIAL POLICY UNDER SALINAS

By TIMOTHY P. KESSLER

Market reform is advocated in developing countries to improve economic efficiency and prevent privileged groups from obtaining rents from the policy-making process. Yet this prescription fails to address the complex political process that governments are likely to confront when moving toward the market. This study shows how political considerations during President Salinas's administration distorted economic reform in Mexico.

During the 1990s Mexican finance policy contradicted the government's declared neoliberal principles. While the banks were reprivatized and deregulated, they were also given a high degree of protection from competition, enabling the new owners to charge excessive interest rates. In addition, the government artificially inflated the value of the currency through exchange-rate intervention. These contradictory policies are best understood as a coherent political response to the electoral vulnerability of the ruling party (PRI) at the end of the 1980s. When viable political opposition threatened the PRI's ability to maintain power, it responded by using financial policies to distribute economic benefits to social groups, particularly business, the middle class, and the poor, whose support was critical for electoral victory.

## WELFARE-STATE RETRENCHMENT REVISITED

ENTITLEMENT CUTS, PUBLIC SECTOR RESTRUCTURING, AND INEGALITARIAN TRENDS IN ADVANCED CAPITALIST SOCIETIES

By RICHARD CLAYTON and JONAS PONTUSSON

In recent years it has become commonplace for comparativists to emphasize the resilience of welfare states in advanced capitalist societies and the failure of neoliberal efforts to dismantle the welfare state. Challenging some tenets of the resilience thesis, this article seeks to broaden the discussion of welfare-state retrenchment. The authors argue that a sharp deceleration of social spending has occurred in most OECD countries since 1980, that welfare states have failed to offset the rise of market-generated inequality and insecurity, and that welfare programs have become less universalistic. They stress the distributive and political consequences of market-oriented reforms of the public sector.

## POLITICAL INSTABILITY AND ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE

EVIDENCE FROM REVOLUTIONARY MEXICO

By STEPHEN HABER and ARMANDO RAZO

What is the relationship between political instability and economic growth? This article examines this question using insights from the new institutional economics applied to a canonical case: revolutionary Mexico. The authors argue that investment and growth during and after the revolution were less affected by political instability than one might predict based on the extant theoretical and empirical literature. They find that while investor expectations, output, and productivity were sensitive to the interdiction of factor and product markets during the years of intense revolutionary violence (1914–17), the periods of political instability before (1910–13) and afterward (1918–34) had relatively minor effects on investor confidence, investments in new plant and equipment, rates of entry and exit by firms, industrial structure, and productivity growth.

## NEOCLASSICAL REALISM AND THEORIES OF FOREIGN POLICY

By GIDEON ROSE

Although international relations theory has been dominated for two decades by debates over theories of international politics, recently there has been a surge of interest in theories of foreign policy. These seek to explain, not the pattern of outcomes of state interactions, but rather the behavior of individual states. The author surveys three prominent theories of foreign policy and shows how the works under review set out a compelling alternative, one that updates and systematizes insights drawn from classical realist thought. Neoclassical realism argues that the scope and ambition of a country's foreign policy is driven first and foremost by the country's relative material power. Yet it contends that the impact of power capabilities on foreign policy is indirect and complex, because systemic pressures must be translated through intervening unit-level variables such as decision-makers' perceptions and state structure. Understanding the links between power and policy thus requires close examination of both the international and the domestic contexts within which foreign policy is formulated and implemented.