

SUMMARIES

Globalization as Old News

by Marco Cesa

Current debates on globalization and the alleged transformation of the nature of international relations are strongly reminiscent of much of what had been argued some three decades ago, as scholars discussed interdependence theory in terms of growing commercial and financial integration, the emergence of new transnational and transgovernmental actors, the technical complexities of the international agenda, the eclipse of the state, the decline of security goals and the rise of welfare goals as the highest priorities of societies, the importance of international institutions, the ambiguities of power and the irrelevance of force. All this pointed at the obsolescence of the realist paradigm, and in turn triggered a set of realist replies. Even the lively exchange on the impact of globalization on developing countries is old news, indebted as it is to a strikingly similar discussion on dependency theory involving liberal, marxist, and eventually realist scholars.

A realist-informed assessment of several factual claims made by the globalists suggests that the repercussions of globalization on international relations have been grossly exaggerated. The state's economic sovereignty may well be challenged; yet states are far from impotent in dealing with markets and still perform a number of functions that can hardly be ignored; multinational corporations and other transnational actors may well play a key role in international affairs; yet they must come to terms with states in many important ways; globalization may well put a premium on devising common strategies for common problems; yet no issue seems so global as to prevent states from looking at it from a national perspective. Above all, globalization may well pull and haul all states; yet some states – the more powerful in general, the United States in particular – are less constrained than others. As a result, those who present globalization as the beginning of a new era for international relations are neither theoretically original nor empirically convincing.

The MPs of Forza Italia: a group supporting a leadership?

by Orazio Lanza e Gianni Piazza

This article analyses the composition of the parliamentary groups of Forza Italia in both branches of the Italian parliament comparing the 1994, 1996, and 2001 data. By so doing it attempts to contribute to a better knowledge of political movement of «Forza Italia», the party founded by the prime minister Berlusconi. After describing the social and political characteristics of the parliamentarian élite, the criteria utilized for the recruitment of the parliamentarians and their places of origin, the article analyses the nature of Forza Italia and the changes the new party brought into the Italian political system. In the end, it raises the question of its suitability to support its leader in order not to repeat the failure of 1994 and questions whether Forza Italia will be able to lead the Italian transition to completion within the mould of a majoritarian democracy.

Italy's Regional Party Systems from the First to the Second Republic

by Martino Mazzoleni

In 1970, a new institutional arena for inter-party competition was introduced in Italy with the creation of fifteen regions. This paper aims at developing the topic of territorial differentiation of the Italian party system. It highlights facets and features of regional party arenas through a comparison between these arenas and the national system. Five systemic properties are taken into account: fragmentation, concentration, competitiveness, net volatility, regionalism of voting behaviour. The various indexes measuring these dimensions have been computed from both regional and national election results. It appears that a general non-differentiation between local and national arenas has occurred, with a few relevant exceptions.

In a second stage, it is investigated whether these properties, and the pattern of regional voting, have undergone any significant change during the transition from the so-called 'first' to the 'second' Italian Republic. Some distinctive cases and, overall, four clusters of local party systems can be identified and some hypotheses concerning the reasons for the emergence of the various patterns are offered. Notably, a 'personal factor' in several Southern regions may be regarded as relevant.

The Birth and Institutionalisation of a New Discipline: The Case of International Political Economy (Ipe)

by Antonio Cobalti

This article traces the formation of a new discipline – International Political Economy (Ipe) – both in terms of concepts and theoretical debates, and of the social process of its institutionalisation, as shown by journals, textbooks, course offerings, and Internet websites. The article is divided into three parts. In the first, some well-known definitions of Ipe are presented, and different types of theory are illustrated. Special attention is given to the definition of Robert Gilpin because of the importance of his work and the evolution of his thinking about Ipe. In the second, the thirty-year life of IPE is analysed to identify the most important events leading to the creation of a new field of social research: the organization of conferences in the early seventies; the publication of important books written by unorthodox economists like Kindleberger and Hirschman, and theoretical debates. The work of R.W. Cox, which is related to the «Gramscian turn» in International Relations, is a particular focus of attention. Finally, the consequences of the «Fourth Debate» on Positivism in International Relations are considered in terms of the connection of Ipe with constructivism, historical sociology and the «cultural turn» in the social sciences. The third part shows how the debate on Ipe has moved from being fully internal to (American) Political Science, to include general concerns about the social sciences at the beginning of the XXI century. An extensive bibliography follows.

The Westminster Model

by Gianfranco Pasquino

Analysing several recent books on British politics following the 2001 general elections, the author identifies and evaluates the main features of the Westminster model. Characterised by the pre-eminence of the Prime minister, the model entails a close relationship between the Premier and his/her parliamentary majority. It is based on the cohesion and the discipline of the parliamentary group and the expectations of the MPs to be promoted to ministerial office. Often met, these expectations help the MPs to perform several important tasks: above all, the task of scrutinising the activities of the government; and, second, though not least, the task of keeping a working and satisfactory connection with their constituencies. Though the role

of the British Prime minister has been significantly changed by Tony Blair's spinning and search for visibility outside the parliamentary arena, the Westminster model retains its most important, defining feature. In the words written by Walter Bagehot about a century and a half ago, the efficient secret of the British constitution is the fusion of the Executive and the Legislative. This fusion continues to allow the British Prime ministers, no matter their personality, if they so desire, to govern effectively.