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ABSTRACTS

A BIT IS BETTER THAN A LOT

BILATERAL INVESTMENT TREATIES AND PREFERENTIAL TRADE AGREEMENTS

By JENNIFER L. TOBIN and MARC L. BUSCH

The landscape of the global economy is dotted with institutions that regulate investment and trade. In recent years, the number of bilateral investment treaties (BITs) and preferential trade agreements (PTAs), in particular, has grown at a torrid pace; practically every country is a member of at least one—if not many—of these institutions. For all the scholarly attention that these institutions have received, however, there is little research tying BITs and PTAs together. This is surprising, since both aim to increase commerce by making it more predictable. The authors seek to fill this gap in the literature. They argue that a BIT between a developed and a developing country should make it more likely that this pair of states will subsequently form a PTA. That said, the wrinkle in the story is that more is not better in this regard; the authors further argue that a developing country that has many BITs is less likely to conclude a PTA with a wealthy state. The authors test these hypotheses using annual data on pairs of developing and developed countries between 1960 and 2004 and find strong evidence in support of their argument.

DEFEATING DICTATORS

ELECTORAL CHANGE AND STABILITY IN COMPETITIVE AUTHORITARIAN REGIMES

By VALERIE J. BUNCE and SHARON L. WOLCHIK

What explains electoral stability and change in competitive authoritarian regimes? This article addresses the question by comparing eleven elections—six of which led to continuity in authoritarian rule and five of which led to the victory of the opposition—that took place between 1998 and 2008 in competitive authoritarian regimes countries located in the postcommunist region. Using interviews conducted with participants in all of these elections and other types of data and constructing a research design that allowed the authors to match these two sets of elections on a number of important dimensions, they assess two groups of hypotheses—those that highlight institutional, structural, and historical aspects of regime and opposition strength on the eve of these elections and others that highlight characteristics of the elections themselves. The authors conclude that the key difference was whether the opposition adopted a tool kit of novel and sophisticated electoral strategies that made them more popular and effective challengers to the regime.

WHY DO ETHNIC GROUPS REBEL?

NEW DATA AND ANALYSIS

By LARS-ERIK CEDERMAN, ANDREAS WIMMER, and BRIAN MIN

Much of the quantitative literature on civil wars and ethnic conflict ignores the role of the state or treats it as a mere arena for political competition among ethnic groups. Other studies analyze how the state grants or withholds minority rights and faces ethnic protest and rebellion accordingly, while largely overlooking the ethnic power configurations at the state's center. Drawing on a new data set on Ethnic Power Relations (EPR) that identifies all politically relevant ethnic groups and their access to central state power around the world from 1946 through 2005, the authors analyze outbreaks of armed conflict as the result of competing ethnonationalist claims to state power. The findings indicate that representatives of ethnic groups are more likely to initiate conflict with the government (1) the more excluded from state power they are, especially if they have recently lost power, (2) the higher their mobilizational capacity, and (3) the more they have experienced conflict in the past.

AFTER KKV

THE NEW METHODOLOGY OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

By JAMES MAHONEY

This article discusses developments in the field of qualitative methodology since the publication of King, Keohane, and Verba's (KKV's) *Designing Social Inquiry*. Three areas of the new methodology are examined: (1) process tracing and causal-process observations; (2) methods using set theory and logic; and (3) strategies for combining qualitative and quantitative research. In each of these areas, the article argues, the new literature encompasses KKV's helpful insights while avoiding their most obvious missteps. Discussion focuses especially on contrasts between the kind of observations that are used in qualitative versus quantitative research, differences between regression-oriented approaches and those based on set theory and logic, and new approaches for bringing out complementarities between qualitative and quantitative research. The article concludes by discussing research frontiers in the field of qualitative methodology.

STUDYING THE STATE THROUGH STATE FORMATION

By TUONG VU

This article seeks to take stock of the insights offered by the fast-growing literature on comparative state formation, which is treated here as a neglected offshoot of the "bringing the state back in" movement of the 1980s. Unlike previous Eurocentric reviews of this literature, this article includes works that range broadly in time and geography. The author focuses particularly on two areas of interest to political scientists: the causes of bureaucratic centralization and the origins of durable democratic/authoritarian institutions. The author also shows how the literature has reconceptualized the state in response to long-standing criticisms directed at this concept. The concept remains useful in political science despite impressions otherwise.

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