

WORLD POLITICS

*A Quarterly Journal of
International Relations*

Volume 48

October 1995–July 1996

UNDER THE EDITORIAL SPONSORSHIP OF
CENTER OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES
PRINCETON UNIVERSITY

PUBLISHED BY THE JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY PRESS

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WORLD POLITICS is indexed by *ABC POL SCI*, *Book Review Index*, *Combined Retrospective Index Sets (CRIS)*, *Combined Retrospective Index to Book Reviews in Scholarly Journals, 1886-1974 (RSJ)*, *PAIS Bulletin*, *Social Science Index*, and *Periodica Islamica*; it is abstracted and indexed in *United States Political Science Documents*, *International Bibliography of Periodical Literature (IBZ)*, *International Bibliography of Book Reviews (IBR)*, and *Current Military and Political Literature*. Abstracts of articles also appear in *Book Review Digest*, *Historical Abstracts*, *International Development Abstracts*, *International Political Science Abstracts*, *Political Science Abstracts*, and *Social Sciences Abstracts*.

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WORLD POLITICS (ISSN 0043-8871). Published quarterly by The Johns Hopkins University Press. Vol. 48, October 1995-July 1996. Second class postage paid at Baltimore, MD, and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to WORLD POLITICS, The Johns Hopkins University Press, Journals Publishing Division, 2715 N. Charles Street, Baltimore, MD 21218-4319. Printed in the United States of America by Princeton Academic Press.

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ABSTRACTS

THE ROLE OF THEORY IN COMPARATIVE POLITICS

A SYMPOSIUM

By ATUL KOHLI, PETER EVANS, PETER J. KATZENSTEIN, ADAM PRZEWORSKI, SUSANNE HOEBER RUDOLPH, JAMES C. SCOTT, and THEDA SKOCPOL

The Center of International Studies at Princeton University organized a symposium during 1993–94 on the role of theory in comparative politics. Presented here is an edited and condensed version of the proceedings. In light of recent challenges posed by both rational choice and post-modern cultural approaches, the symposium helped elucidate the merits of competing theoretical approaches. A group of distinguished scholars presented a variety of views on the subject. In spite of recent intellectual developments, a diverse group of symposium participants adhered to a loosely defined “core,” or to what one participant characterized as the “eclectic center” of comparative politics.

FEDERALISM, CHINESE STYLE

THE POLITICAL BASIS FOR ECONOMIC SUCCESS IN CHINA

By GABRIELLA MONTINOLA, YINGYI QIAN, and BARRY R. WEINGAST

China's remarkable economic success rests on a foundation of political reform providing a considerable degree of credible commitment to markets. This reform reflects a special type of institutionalized decentralization that the authors call “federalism, Chinese style.” This form of decentralization has three consequences. First, it fosters competition, not only in product markets, but also among local governments for labor and foreign capital. This competition, in turn, encourages local government experimentation and learning with new forms of enterprises, regulation, and economic relationships. Second, it provides incentives for local governments to promote local economic prosperity. Finally, it provides a significant amount of protection to local governments and their enterprises from political intrusion by the central government.

NEOLIBERALISM AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF POPULISM IN LATIN AMERICA

THE PERUVIAN CASE

By KENNETH M. ROBERTS

Latin American populism is generally associated with the developmental stage of import substitution industrialization; it is thus widely presumed to have been eclipsed by the debt crisis of the 1980s and the free market reforms of the neoliberal era. However, the leadership of Alberto Fujimori in Peru suggests that new forms of populism may be emerging despite the fiscal constraints of neoliberal austerity. This new variant of populism thrives in a context where economic crisis and social dislocation undermine traditional representative institutions, enabling personalist leaders to establish unmediated relationships with heterogeneous, atomized masses. Political support can be cultivated through populist attacks on entrenched political elites or institutions, along with targeted but highly visible poverty alleviation programs. This new form of populist autocracy complements the efforts of neoliberal technocrats to circumvent the representative institutions that are integral to democratic accountability. The Peruvian case thus demonstrates that populism has been transformed rather than eclipsed during the neoliberal era and that it should be decoupled theoretically from any particular phase or model of economic development.

SECURITY STUDIES AND THE END OF THE COLD WAR

By DAVID A. BALDWIN

The end of the cold war has generated numerous reflections on the nature of the world in its aftermath. The reduced military threat to American security has triggered proposals for expanding the concept of national security to include nonmilitary threats to national well-being. Some go further and call for a fundamental reexamination of the concepts, theories, and assumptions used to analyze security problems. In order to lay the groundwork for such a reexamination, the emergence and evolution of security studies as a subfield of international relations is surveyed, the adequacy of the field for coping with the post-cold war world is assessed, and proposals for the future of security studies are discussed. It is argued that a strong case can be made for reintegration of security studies with the study of international politics and foreign policy.

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