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ABSTRACTS

KING MAKERS

LOCAL LEADERS AND ETHNIC POLITICS IN AFRICA

By DOMINIKA KOTER

Much of the literature on electoral politics in Africa has focused on one mechanism of electoral mobilization: reliance on shared ethnic identity between politicians and voters. On the contrary, the author argues that politicians pursue two distinct modes of nonprogrammatic electoral mobilization: (1) by *directly* relying on the support of voters from one's own ethnic background, and (2) by *indirectly* working through electoral intermediaries—local leaders who command moral authority, control resources, and can influence the electoral behavior of their dependents. Yet the power of local leaders varies greatly; hence the option to use electoral intermediaries is not available in all settings. The choice of electoral mobilization affects national electoral outcomes: by severing the direct link between politicians and voters, intermediaries reduce a campaign's reliance on shared identity and create cross-ethnic electorates. The evidence for this argument is based on original interviews with political leaders collected during fieldwork in Senegal and Benin during the 2006–7 electoral season, media coverage of elections, and a historical analysis of first mass elections in the 1950s.

CAPITAL AND OPPOSITION IN AFRICA

COALITION BUILDING IN MULTIETHNIC SOCIETIES

By LEONARDO R. ARRIOLA

Under what conditions can opposition politicians with ethnic constituencies form electoral coalitions? In Africa's patronage-based political systems, incumbents form coalitions by using state resources to secure the endorsement of politicians from other ethnic groups. Opposition politicians, however, must rely on private resources to do the same. This article presents a political economy theory to explain how the relative autonomy of business from state-controlled capital influences the formation of multiethnic opposition coalitions. It shows that the opposition is unlikely to coalesce across ethnic cleavages where incumbents use their influence over banking and credit to command the political allegiance of business—the largest potential funder of opposition in poor countries. Liberalizing financial reforms, in freeing business to diversify political contributions without fear of reprisal, enable opposition politicians to access the resources needed to mimic the incumbent's pecuniary coalition-building strategy. A binomial logistic regression analysis of executive elections held across Africa between 1990 and 2005 corroborates the theoretical claim: greater financial autonomy for business—as proxied by the number of commercial banks and the provision of credit to the private sector—significantly increases the likelihood of multiethnic opposition coalitions being formed.

WHEN THE CLAIM HITS

BILATERAL INVESTMENT TREATIES AND BOUNDED RATIONAL LEARNING

By LAUGE N. SKOVGAARD POULSEN and EMMA AISBETT

Using the international investment regime as its point of departure, the article applies notions of bounded rationality to the study of economic diplomacy. Through a multimethod approach, it shows that developing countries often ignored the risks of bilateral investment treaties (BITs) until they themselves became subject to an investment treaty claim. Thus the behavior of developing country governments with regard to the international investment regime is consistent with that routinely observed for individuals in experiments and field studies: they tend to ignore high-impact, low-probability risks if they cannot bring specific “vivid” instances to mind.

THE LEFT AND ORGANIZED LABOR IN LOW-INFLATION TIMES

By MARCO SIMONI

This article presents fresh empirical data showing that policy alignment between center-left governments and trade unions was a sustained feature of European politics between 1974 and 2005. This contradicts expectations of a wide delinkage between the electoral left and labor as a consequence of globalization, deindustrialization, and unionization decline. However, structural economic change has altered the policy field so that sustained policy alignment can no longer be explained by existing theoretical frameworks.

Based on a theoretical argument and a multivariate empirical test, the article contends that policy alignment is likelier to occur if labor plays an important role in economic management at the microlevel and the industry level and if unions are politically cohesive agents thanks to powerful confederation leadership supported by democratic decision-making practices. In making its case, the article bridges the literatures on comparative capitalism and party politics, in order to account for change and continuity in policy-making processes.

SEPARATIST CONFLICT IN THE FORMER SOVIET UNION AND BEYOND

HOW DIFFERENT WAS COMMUNISM?

By BENJAMIN SMITH

Recent research on separatist nationalism has focused on the most common location of new states in the international system—the postcommunist world. While providing the largest number of cases for exploration, the arguably unique features of the Soviet system may have effects that do not easily translate to other parts of the world. This article reviews a recent set of books that highlights this question, focusing on the legacies of Soviet ethnofederalism in catalyzing secession, separatist war, and nation-state crisis. These books share in common a tendency to deemphasize the historical lineages of separatist nationalism and to focus more proximately on institutions. The article builds on the discussion of recent research by engaging two separate cross-national data sets to explore the role of ethnofederal institutions and of historical legacies. It concludes by arguing for a return to historically situated studies of center-minority conflicts and for greater engagement across regional lines of expertise.