

SUMMARIES

Towards a new comparative analysis of democracy and federalism: demos constraining and demos enabling federations

by Alfred Stepan

This paper will develop three themes. First, the author shows that the democratization, federalism and nationalism literatures have been developed in relatively mutual isolation and that we can make more meaningful and powerful statements about comparative federalism if we relate the three bodies of literature to each other. Second, Stepan demonstrates that all federal systems constrain the law-making capacity of the democratically elected legislators at the center. However, he argues that it is analytically and politically fruitful to study democratic federal systems as existing along a demos-constraining to demos-enabling continuum. The author also makes a strong case that at all points in the continuum federal institutions can have a great impact on policy. He cannot develop these arguments without directly addressing and confronting the most influential political scientist who has written on federalism, the late William H. Riker. Riker's classic and still influential arguments about federalism stand in fundamental opposition to those advanced in this paper. Once these conceptual and methodological debates about federalism have been addressed, in the third part of the paper, the author constructs and operationalizes the analytic framework of the demos-constraining continuum by evaluating four propositions about federalism, using data from India, Germany, Spain, the United States and Brazil.

The transformation of cleavage politics

by Hanspeter Kriesi

The article discusses the issue of the persistence and change of

the cleavage structures in Western European party systems. The question is addressed by distinguishing the structural, cultural and organizational components of the concept of cleavage.

From the structural point of view, the author hypothesizes that the new middle class is increasingly polarized between managers and socio-cultural specialists, the former holding «right-authoritarian» values and the latter holding «left-libertarian» ones. This hypothesis is discussed in consideration of the fact that career choices may be determined by values, and that also the generational, religious and urban/rural components may have an impact on values. An empirical test, based on votes for the left declared in the Swiss National Election Survey 1995, shows the differences in the patterns of relationship between structure and culture in cantons characterized by different traditions as far as the organizational aspect of the cleavage structure is concerned. Where the traditional cleavages are more enduring, it is less likely that the new cleavages come to the fore of the political arena.

Confronting the three levels of analysis, it emerges that there are some structural basis for the emergence of a new cleavage within the new middle class, but that further conceptualizations and further analyses will be necessary in order to clarify the link between the structural component and the impact of values on left voting.

The Italian transition and business interests associations

by Massimo Ferrante

This essay is concerned with the dynamics that are marking, at the present moment, the system of Italian business interest associations after the political system's transition. As a matter of fact the whole of Italian business interest representation is hardly fragmented and, besides the bonds of different economic sectors, besides the size and the legal status of firms, the most important organisational principle has always been the political identification as, after the second world war, each association joined the catholic or communist social coalition.

Both parties, Dc and Pci, have been ruling the whole of organised interests (with the exception of Confindustria) and the two social coalitions have been developing the same composition and the same framework, – with antithetic ideologies – giving associations identification, peculiar values and, of course, the political management. In the long run, this political structure of social and economic regulation bred a style of policy making, founded on compromises between majority and minority and on consociativism, which produced the well known fiscal crisis of the Italian state.

The current crisis of traditional parties and their ideologies, the disappearance of some of them and the transformation of others, the change of the electoral rules, the parties and associations' growing inability to control the electoral choice of citizens, the compulsory balancing of public accounts, compel the associations to rethink their role and to try to achieve greater self-government skills.

However, this is very difficult as the associations lack ideologies and values of their own and are too small and weak. In the last few years, alliances, federations and small mergers among different associations have taken place at a provincial level. None of this has happened yet at a national level, where most business associations cannot face the power and the institutional legitimisation of the Confindustria (and Cgil-Cisl-Uil).

The politics of secession

by Gaspare Nevola

Secession represents a critical issue in the political sphere as well as a serious conceptual challenge to sociopolitical analysis. With secession is at stake the unity of a political community, typically, in the modern world, the unity of nation-State. This essay holds that secession has fundamentally a *political status*, even though secessionist movements often appeal to a differentiated set of claims or reasons (cultural, historical, economic). But what does it mean to consider secession as a matter of *politics*? Why does secession conflict with nation-State sovereignty? Which kind of explanation is offered by the international literature focused on normative and moral dimensions? Which difficulties characterize such an approach? Acknowledging a «right of secession» implies breaking with democratic principles and practices? Under which conditions political movements are identifiable as legitimate secessionist subjects? In order to deal with such controversial questions, the essay suggests to link socio-structural perspectives with the action perspectives and outlines a framework for analysis based on a theory of coercive conflict that calls for a rethinking of some classical political categories and for their reformulation as conceptual instruments by which political analysis can treat secessionism as an enlightening case of divisive political conflict in democracy. Political fight for «recognition» and «political damaging of the adversary» are in such a context crucial keys to understand characters and dynamics of secessionist conflicts through which members of political communities, their mobilizing and representative organizations, decide «who they are» and «who to obey to» – and deal with political collective membership/identity problems and with political obligation problems. Considerations developed here can contribute to throw

some light on historical and contemporary cases of secessionism, but also on the secessionism proposed by the Italian *Lega*.