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Abstracts

Exploring the “myth” of hegemonic stability

by Isabelle Grunberg

There is a growing discrepancy between the popularity of the hegemonic stability theory and the amount of material pointing to the theory's shortcomings, both analytic and empirical. This article begins with a discussion of the theory's major weaknesses and then offers an analysis of the theory's discourse. Using methods of structural analogy and the study of imagery, the investigation proceeds from the most superficial to the most deep-seated and universal imagery found in the theory's discourse. It argues that the idea of hegemonic stability and the notion of the benevolent hegemon have their roots in powerful and interrelated myths, including myths of the golden age, the Savior, and the death of the sun. It also argues that the ability of these myths to sway human emotions has interfered with the process of theory-building and scientific investigation, of which intuition is a vital component. It concludes that the continuing popularity of the hegemonic stability theory is based on the timeless appeal of the myths that it incorporates.

Global prohibition regimes: the evolution of norms in international society

by Ethan A. Nadelmann

The dynamics by which norms emerge and spread in international society have been the subject of strikingly little study. This article focuses on norms that prohibit, both in international law and in the domestic criminal laws of states, the involvement of state and nonstate actors in activities such as piracy, slavery, counterfeiting, drug trafficking, the hijacking of aircraft, and the killing of endangered animal species. It analyzes the manner in which these norms have evolved into and been institutionalized by global prohibition regimes and argues that there are two principal inducements to the formation and promotion of such regimes. The first is the inadequacy of unilateral and bilateral law enforcement measures in the face of criminal activities that transcend national borders. The second is the role of moral and emotional factors related to neither political nor economic advantage but instead involving religious beliefs, humanitarian sentiments, fears, prejudices, paternalism, faith in universalism, the individual conscience, and the compulsion to proselytize. The ultimate success or failure of an international regime in effectively suppressing a particular activity depends, however, not only on the degree of commitment to its norms or the extent of resources devoted to carrying out its goals but also on the vulnerability of the activity to its enforcement measures.

Taxation and the political economy of the tariff

by John Mark Hansen

Traditional accounts of U.S. tariff policy emphasize trade strategies and interest group politics. This article makes a departure. It opens with an observation: up until World War I, the tariff was the largest single source of federal government revenues. It then explores the significance of tariffs as taxes, theoretically and empirically.

In its first part, the article develops a theory of taxation politics and applies it to the tariff. In its second part, it submits the theory to an empirical test, modeling changes in U.S. tariff rates from 1829 to 1940. The politics of tariff revision, it argues, followed from two characteristics of the tariff as tax: from the extent of the treasury's dependence upon it and from the distributive pattern of its burdens and benefits. Taken together, the article concludes, revenue dependence and distributive incidence account for several diverse aspects of American tariff policy, including the structure of its coalitions, the shifts in its objectives, and the timing of its innovations.

How Japan affects the international system

by Henrik Schmiegelow and Michèle Schmiegelow

To cope with more than incremental change in the international system, the neorealist concept of structure and the neoliberal concept of process must be complemented by a third analytically distinguished element: the concept of action. All three concepts can be used on the systemic level of analysis of international relations theory. Their obvious differentiation is the degree of systemic consolidation, with structure at the highest, action at the lowest, and process at unstable intermediate degrees. Without analyzing prevailing models of action of important units of the international system, it is impossible to predict the possible range of outcomes of processes and structural changes in the international system.

This article offers Japan's "strategic pragmatism" as a model of action. The model, representing a functional cut across contending economic doctrines, combines relative fiscal conservatism with "progressive" provision of credit, dynamic capitalism with public policy activism, and critical rationalism with philosophical pragmatism. Japan's strategic pragmatism has not only enabled its government and enterprises to cope with uncertainty and change in their domestic and international environment but has also increased global welfare and changed the balance of strategic components of power in the international system. The spread of this model of action both within and beyond Japan's control points to a paradigm change in economic and international relations theory—that is, to the most pervasive form of systemic consolidation.

Middle power leadership and coalition building: Australia, the Cairns Group, and the Uruguay Round of trade negotiations

by Richard A. Higgott and Andrew Fenton Cooper

Perhaps the key question of debate among neorealist scholars of international political economy concerns the manner in which cooperation may or may not be secured in the global economic order "after hegemony," a question posed by Robert Keohane. A second broad question of interest to scholars of international politics concerns the manner in which weaker states attempt to influence stronger ones. A conflation of these two questions could cause scholars and practitioners alike to pay closer at-

tention than they have in the past to coalitions of the weak as vehicles for cooperation and regime building in the global political economy.

This article offers a case study of one recent exercise in coalition building as an attempt to foster cooperation in a “nonhegemonic” environment. Specifically, it examines the role of the Cairns Group of Fair Trading Nations in its attempts to foster reform in global agricultural trade within the current Uruguay Round of trade negotiations. The Cairns Group is shown to be an atypical, single-issue driven, transregional coalition. Led by Australia, the Group’s actions represent an interesting exercise in “middle power” politics in a global economic order whose decision-making processes are increasingly more fragmented and complex and whose major actors need coaxing toward processes of cooperative economic management.