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# ABSTRACTS

## INFORMATION SYSTEMS IN TREATY REGIMES

By XINYUAN DAI

One of the most influential arguments in international relations is that international institutions influence states' behavior by monitoring their compliance with treaties, which in turn facilitates reciprocity. Empirically, however, many treaty organizations are not mandated to monitor compliance. The article develops a parsimonious theoretical framework to address the empirical diversity of monitoring arrangements. By mapping strategic environments onto monitoring arrangements, it accounts for who detects noncompliance and who brings it to light. In particular, two factors—the interest alignment between noncompliance victims and their states and the availability of noncompliance victims as low-cost monitors—largely shape the organizational forms of information systems. This simple theory sheds light on a wide range of substantively important treaty regimes.

## BARGAINING, UNCERTAINTY, AND PROPERTY RIGHTS IN FISHERIES

By FRANK ALCOCK

Garrett Hardin's "tragedy of the commons" metaphor is commonly invoked to account for the unfortunate state of world fisheries. But the world's oceans are no longer a global commons and have not been so for the past two decades. Open-access regimes have persisted within many exclusive economic zones (EEZs) during this time, but coastal states' authority to regulate domestic fisheries has existed for more than a generation. Faced with the prospect of Hardin's tragedy, coastal states have had more than twenty years to devise institutional constraints that would prevent it. This article asserts that the dismal experience with EEZs is in large part attributable to distributive bargaining problems that arose within coastal states in the wake of EEZ extension. Moreover, the article argues that high levels of uncertainty that characterize the early stages of institutional development have exacerbated these problems. Finally, the article demonstrates how the variety of institutional designs and paths of institutional development that are observed in the cases of Iceland, Norway, and Atlantic Canada result from the different configurations of political power and political structure within each case. While the empirical discussion is focused upon property rights and fisheries, the theoretical discussion of bargaining and uncertainty has widespread application across comparative and international politics.

## POLITICAL BIAS IN POLICY CONVERGENCE

PRIVATIZATION CHOICES IN LATIN AMERICA

By M. VICTORIA MURILLO

Since the early 1980s privatization has spread in Latin America under both right-wing rulers and populist presidents. This regional convergence toward privatization seemed to announce the end of partisan policy-making. However, not all governments implement privatization in the same way even in the context of policy convergence. Technocrats propose similar policy options in countries where capital dearth creates pressures for convergence. Yet politicians build the electoral and government coalitions that make these policies possible, and their preferences shape the institutions chosen at implementation. The "bias" introduced by politicians depends on their prior beliefs and constituencies, which shape their institutional preferences. Beliefs about economic nationalism and state intervention influence the selection of regulations at the time of privatization, whereas coalition building with political constituencies shapes the definition of selling conditions in privatized companies. This "political bias," which is contingent on the privatizing government, explains that the regional policy convergence toward privatization did not extend to its implementation. That is, although politicians may be losing influence about whether to privatize, they still have a say in the choice of how to privatize. This article analyzes the impact of this "political bias" by focusing on the choice of regulatory institutions and selling conditions in five cases of privatization of electricity and telecommunications in Latin America.

**BEYOND THE FICTION OF FEDERALISM**

MACROECONOMIC MANAGEMENT IN MULTITIERED SYSTEMS

By JONATHAN RODDEN and ERIK WIBBELS

Recent research on federalism is extremely divided. While some tout the benefits of "market-preserving" federalism, others point to the fragmentation and incoherence of policy in federal states. This research bridges the divide by analyzing the political and fiscal structures that are likely to account for the highly divergent economic experiences of federal systems around the world. To test these propositions, the authors use an original data set to conduct analyses of budget balance and inflation in fifteen federations around the world from 1978 through 1996. The empirical research suggests that the level of fiscal decentralization, the nature of intergovernmental finance, and vertical partisan relations all influence macroeconomic outcomes. The findings have broad implications for the widespread move toward greater decentralization and for the theoretical literatures on federalism and macroeconomics.

**DECIPHERING DISORDER IN AFRICA**

IS IDENTITY THE KEY?

By CRAWFORD YOUNG

At the beginning of the 1990s, a wave of democratization raised new hopes for peace in Africa, but as the decade progressed, violent politics spread and formed two large arcs of conflict that weakened or even collapsed states could not contain. This review article examines five recent books that address the potential impact of identity politics on civil violence in Africa. Two of the authors—Donald Horowitz and Ted Gurr—address these issues in a global comparison, while the other three—Luis Martinez, Stephen Ellis, and Mahmood Mamdani—examine important African instances of protracted internal warfare, in Algeria, Liberia, and Rwanda, respectively. Is identity politics the primary instigator of disorder? What is the impact of a prolonged period of state crisis upon communal relationships? The volumes under review offer useful insights, but large questions remain.