

SUMMARIES

The Freezing hypothesis: an evaluation

by Peter Mair

Despite what is now a genuinely voluminous literature dealing with the ramifications of the so-called «freezing hypothesis», there still remains a marked degree of confusion about what precisely was believed by Lipset and Rokkan in their classic 1967 essay to have settled into place by the 1920s. For one group of scholars, focusing on the continuing and often still dominating presence in contemporary competitive politics of many of the traditional party alternatives, much of the evidence suggests that the freezing hypothesis has continued to remain more or less valid through the decades subsequent to the Lipset-Rokkan formulation. For another, focusing on the question of whether contemporary mass politics continues to be grounded among traditional social oppositions, the weight of evidence suggests that the hypothesis is no longer valid. The real problem here, however, is that each of these sets of findings is reasonably correct, and even mutually compatible, in that both of these ostensibly contradictory conclusions rest on what is, in fact, a confused – and confusing – original assertion. This paper briefly reviews each of these approaches, and then goes on to discuss the relevance and meaning of the freezing hypothesis itself. The main suggestion is that, at least at the systemic level, and treating it as simply another way of saying that party systems become institutionalized, the hypothesis might even be taken for granted.

Social movements and globalization

by Donatella della Porta and Hanspeter Kriesi

Over the last decade, social movement research has begun to acknowledge the relevance of the national, regional and local political contexts for collective action and to compare their relative impact on

mobilization and its outcomes across countries. In this article, the authors stress the necessity, given a globalizing world, to analyze social movements within an international context. Starting from the general observation that the various processes of globalization are reflected in the mobilization by social movements, the article focuses on both the consequences of globalization on national social movements as well as the emergence of sovranational actors and protest campaigns. In the first part of the article, the analysis focuses on the effects of the changing global context on the mobilization within the national contexts in terms of cross-national diffusion of social movement repertoires and the effect of the international context on national political opportunities for protest. The second part deals instead with mobilization beyond the nation-state, looking in particular at the interaction between international governmental organizations and transnational social movement organizations. The effects of globalization on the forms of unconventional participation are discussed in the conclusion of the article.

Virtuous clientelism: a way for economic development of the Italian South?

by Simona Piattoni

This article argues that politics is an independent factor of economic development and does not merely act as an intervening variable between structural (economic, social and cultural) variables and development. Political representatives of developing areas have an interest in sustaining economic development if such a commitment promotes their political career. Even where political intermediation is *clientelistic*, it can be in the interest of political patrons to promote economic development – a contention which goes against the conventional wisdom of much of the literature on clientelism. Yet this article argues that a kind of «virtuous clientelism» – «virtuous» because it promotes economic development through the provision of public goods – can indeed exist. The evidence provided shows that this is why some regions of the Italian South have progressed economically while others have stagnated or regressed.

The rare birds. Why party activism in the Italian youth is so poor?

by Ettore Recchi

What are the reasons for the continuous decline of party activism among the young people in Italy? This paper tries to answer the ques-

tion by focusing on the «deviant cases»: the limited number of young Italians who are actively involved in party politics. Some theoretical explanatory models are discussed in the first part of the article and then controlled on the bases of empirical data. Samples of young party activists and non-activists of the same age are compared in order to understand which factors keep young people from participating in political life. Party activism turns out to be influenced by both socialisation and structural factors, which make a likely political career desirable and feasible in the future. Since political involvement depends on an uncommon combination of opportunities and motives, Italian young party activists stand out as *rare birds* within their generation.