

SUMMARIES

Lobbying, Exchange and Interests. Reflections on the American Case

by Gigi Graziano

The first part of the essay investigates the extent to which lobbying fits the general idea of social exchange. It is suggested that although there are a number of differences, behaviorally both phenomena have much in common, making theories of exchange a useful tool in the study of lobbying. One important trait exchange and lobbying share is the notion of self-interest as a motivation for action. The question is discussed in the second part. It shows that the political interests of the actors come to be defined through complex processes in which group staff play a key role. Also, the role of government and government action in the genesis of groups is analysed using the case of some associations as an illustration. More descriptive in nature, the third part of the essay turns to the actors, strategies and resources involved in lobbying, in an effort to delineate both the various players and the content of the exchange.

The Geometry of Electoral Space in Italy

by Luca Ricolfi

The subject of this essay is the dimensionality of electoral space in post-war Italy. The analysis rests on ecological data concerning general elections of the years 1953, 1963, 1972, 1983, 1992. The main results are three:

- a*) last elections (1992) show both a trend toward electoral space's simplification and a decreasing importance of left-right dimension;
- b*) geometrical relations between Italian parties in electoral space show three main clusters (status quo, traditional opposition and new opposition);

c) status quo parties are settled mostly in Southern Italy, traditional opposition parties in Central Italy, new opposition parties in Northern Italy.

As the relations between those three clusters cannot be mapped into a line, we can suppose that an analysis at micro level shows the existence of cyclical majorities (Condorcet and Arrows paradoxes). Some empirical evidence and a simulation exercise confirm the plausibility of that conjecture.

Southern Europe Ascendant: Core and Periphery in the European Community

by Robert Leonardi

For the last two decades, growth rates in Southern European countries have exceeded those in most advanced nations. However this kind of process is not easily explained by the current political science and/or economic literature. The essay first looks at the relations within nation-states as analyzed by center-periphery theory; then attention is turned to an empirical consideration of the trend in economic development at the regional and national levels. Changes in the GDP and PPS index scores have been discussed and then related to four independent variables: distance from the core area, levels of industrialization in 1970, unemployment levels, amount of spending through the various European Community's financial instruments. Taken as a whole, the four independent variables provide valuable insights into the possible elements that are associated with variations in the dependent variables. The best predictor of change is distance from the core, while the rate of Community expenditures secures to be increasingly associated with rates of growth.

The final section of the essay is devoted to Italy's Mezzogiorno. Data clearly demonstrate that unless market considerations are reintroduced into production and investment decisions, the area runs the risk of slipping behind resurgent regions in Spain and Portugal. The essay concludes stressing the importance of institutional reforms promoting the participation of local groups and interests in socio-economic decision-making and implementation.

Voters, Candidates and Parties in the New Italian Electoral System

by Roberto D'Alimonte and Alessandro Chiaramonte

The essay examines the new electoral system introduced in Italy for the elections of the House of Deputies and the Senate. The goal is to describe the main features of the system and to identify the range of behavioral choices it offers voters, candidates and parties. The system is a mix between plurality and proportional representation: 75% of the seats, both in the House and the Senate, will be assigned with the former rule and the rest will be allocated proportionally. However, the two electoral formulas are not applied independently of each other, but there are instead a number of linkages between the two levels (particularly for the House). These linkages offer incentives to all actors in the game for calculating their optimal strategies. The paper aims at analyzing these strategic choices and the impact they might have on the structure of competition and the overall effects of the system. The paper focuses particularly on the new system for the House, given its greater complexity. The specific differences between the House and the Senate are treated in a separate section.

Typologies of Public Policy: a Dead-end Road?

by Giliberto Capano

Dating back to Lowi's classic review article (1964), the typological tradition of policy analysis has produced a variety of efforts to classify public policies, attempting, more specifically, to categorize policies in such a way that the relationship between substance and process can be more clearly understood. In this essay, we review the main categorization schemes, discussing their methodological and substantial limitations. Typologies of public policies suffer from two major problems: it is often difficult to identify a particular policy unambiguously as a particular type, and, it often appears that the characteristics of a policy, rather than being inherent in its nature, are socially constructed and subject to manipulation by actors. These limitations hinder the understanding of three ineluctable features of public policy: ambiguity, subjectivity and dynamism. In order to explain these features, classifications and typologies are not sufficient tools, but are only the first step of the scientific enterprise.