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## In This Issue

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## In This Issue

When the context changes, the theory may not fit. Different contexts produce different needs at different times. New needs, or old needs more intensely felt, change the weight of other variables, however we may measure them. How often we forget these simple truths. The articles in this issue help us to remember them by testing old theories in new settings – the Cuba, Nigeria, Latvia, France, and Germany of today, plus the contemporary world of international affairs.

Could Weber have ever imagined today's Cuba? If so, would he have arrived at the same interesting conclusions Bert Hoffmann reaches in "Charismatic Authority and Leadership Change: Lessons from Cuba's Post-Fidel Succession"? Perhaps he would have, given how persuasively Hoffmann points out the ways in which leadership succession is taking place in the island state, so long ruled by an indisputably authoritarian and charismatic figure, and is challenging what the master led us to believe. One of his most intriguing arguments: The global context makes a serious difference; as we watch Fidel's charisma being systematically bureaucratized by Raul Castro, the domestic brother, we would be foolish to lose sight of the fact that it is at the same time being carried forward undiluted by Hugo Chavez, the international "son."

Federalism, like charismatic rule, has its own peculiar *raison d'être*. It permits those who feel compelled to come together, for reasons of security and economic prosperity, but who have good reasons why they would actually rather not, to do so more or less compatibly. As such it seems ideal for bringing together multi-ethnic societies such as Nigeria. However, as Emmanuel Aiyede shows us in "The Political Economy of Fiscal Federalism and the Dilemma of Constructing a Developmental State in Nigeria," the protection of ethnic prerogatives *within and by* the structures of federalism serve predation instead of broad development and welfare: "Predatory rule could not have been sustained without a concept of citizenship that fragments society into antagonistic settler and indigene at every level of government." Those who are born within a state are guaranteed privileges denied to those who are not. Only federalism has made this possible.

Aiyede hopes "an alert and effective national civil society" can and will bring the essential reforms. But alas, poor civil society, how much we ask of you, and how little we know what you can really do. Time and again in the pages of this journal we have seen the dominant theories of civil society put to the test and found wanting, all depending on where we conduct the test. In "Which Characteristics of Civil Society Organizations Support What Aspects of Democracy? Evidence from Post-Communist Latvia" Anders Uhlin does it again. His careful analysis

of 500 such organizations leads him not only to a by now familiar conclusion (“sometimes yes, sometimes not so much”) but also to propose we more carefully distinguish between an *advocacy civil society* capable of articulating interests and checking state power and a *recreational civil society* that (perhaps) fosters support for democratic values and increases individual capacity for political participation. Sound a little bit like taking us back where Gabriel Almond began, lo these many years ago? Maybe so.

In “Islam, Jihadism, and Depoliticization in France and Germany”, Anouar Boukhars tells a different story of how changing variables require, if not new theories, then better applications of old ones. New external forces, such as globalization and europeanization, exacerbate the fears of many members of those two nations’ indigenous populations for the preservation of their national identity and culture, as well as their economic well being, and living with large Islamic immigrant populations does not set their hearts at rest. Of course economic forces also drive immigration and resettlement and today’s new settlers may well have similar fears for their own cultural identities. In the past, “assimilation” has been the answer, the positive way to resolve conflicts between indigenous populations and newcomers. But what makes for positive assimilation varies with cultural context. Requiring Muslims to accept greater secularization while maintaining strong police control measures to compel adaptation to European norms isn’t working, says Boukhars, but improving educational opportunities, creating jobs, promoting Muslim involvement in politics and ending state toleration of Islamophobia and discrimination just might. The challenge for Germany and France today is to define “what kinds of values are essential for their countries’ secular model of society and what kinds are negotiable.”

Our final article, “Strategic Anticipation and Adjustment: Ex Ante and Ex Post Information in Explaining Sanctions Outcomes,” by Steve Chan, is different from the others: It poses a yet stronger and more explicit challenge to existing theory, but has little to say regarding changing context. Sometimes, this author seems to suggest, theories are just plain wrong regardless of place and time. It doesn’t make sense to explain the outcomes of economic sanctions, as is commonly done, by relying on “ex ante information that has already been discounted by the interested parties when they decided to initiate or resist economic coercion.” Only information acquired after the sanctions have been in place can explain their results. Even that, however, is of dubious value, because in fact almost all sanctions fail, and the longer they last, the more certain it is that they will fail. Nevertheless, studying sanctions is useful because it is a very good way to grasp the relevant officials’ preferences and intentions in a dispute, and to understand their strategic signaling.

A good note on which to end. Challenge. Go look. Report. We hope you will keep it coming.

Kay Lawson