

Perspectives



COMPARATIVE POLITICS

- 199 **Rawi Abdelal**, *National Purpose in the World Economy: Post-Soviet States in Comparative Perspective*.
Review by Juliet Johnson
- 200 **Barry Ames**, *The Deadlock of Democracy in Brazil: Interests, Identities, and Institutions in Comparative Politics*.
Review by Wendy Hunter
- 201 **Zoltan Barany and Robert G. Moser, eds.** *Russian Politics: Challenges of Democratization*.
Review by Peter Rutland
- 202 **John L. Campbell and Ove K. Pedersen, eds.** *The Rise of Neoliberalism and Institutional Analysis*.
Review by Colin Crouch
- 203 **Mounira M. Charrad**, *States and Women's Rights: The Making of Postcolonial Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco*.
Review by Shiva Balaghi
- 204 **Mary A. Clark**, *Gradual Economic Reform in Latin America: The Costa Rican Experience*.
Review by Alfred G. Cuzán
- 205 **Josep M. Colomer**, *Political Institutions: Democracy and Social Choice*.
Review by John M. Carey
- 206 **Maria Green Cowles, James Caporaso, and Thomas Risse, eds.** *Transforming Europe: Europeanization and Domestic Change*.
Christoph Knill, *The Europeanisation of National Administrations: Patterns of Institutional Change and Persistence*.
Review by Michael Baun
- 207 **Marcus Franda**, *Launching into Cyberspace: Internet Development and Politics in Five World Regions*.
Review by Jason Paul Abbott
- 208 **William W. Grimes**, *Unmaking the Japanese Miracle: Macroeconomic Politics 1985–2000*.
Review by Ronald Dore
- 209 **Liesbet Hooghe**, *The European Commission and the Integration of Europe: Images of Governance*.
Review by Jon Pierre
- 210 **Simon Hug**, *Altering Party Systems: Strategic Behavior and the Emergence of New Political Parties in Western Democracies*.
Review by Amie Kreppel
- 211 **Wade Jacoby**, *Imitation and Politics: Redesigning Modern Germany*.
Review by Helga A. Welsh
Christoph Knill, *The Europeanisation of National Administrations: Patterns of Institutional Change and Persistence*.
See Maria Green Cowles et al., above.
- 211 **Janos Kornai, Stephan Haggard, and Robert R. Kaufman, eds.** *Reforming the State: Fiscal and Welfare Reform in Post-Socialist Countries*.
Review by Randall Newnham
- 212 **Paulette Kurzer**, *Markets and Moral Regulation: Cultural Change in the European Union*.
Review by Imelda Maher
- 213 **Henry Laurence**, *Money Rules: The New Politics of Finance in Britain and Japan*.
Review by Jonathan Aronson
- 214 **Robert Leach and Janie Percy-Smith**, *Local Governance in Britain*.
Review by R. A. W. Rhodes
- 215 **José Magone**, *Iberian Trade Unionism: Democratization under the Impact of the European Union*.
Review by Katrina Burgess
- 216 **Gerassimos Moschonas**, *In the Name of Social Democracy: The Great Transformation from 1945 to the Present*.
Review by Sheri Berman
- 217 **Simona Piattoni, ed.** *Clientelism, Interests, and Democratic Representation: The European Experience in Historical and Comparative Perspective*.
Review by Sebastián Royo
- 218 **Shinder Purewal**, *Sikh Ethnonationalism and the Political Economy of Punjab*.
Review by Mike Enskat
- 219 **Shelley Rigger**, *From Opposition to Power: Taiwan's Democratic Progressive Party*.
Review by Andrew J. Nathan
- 219 **Melina Selverston-Scher**, *Ethnopolitics in Ecuador: Indigenous Rights and the Strengthening of Democracy*.
Review by Shannan L. Mattiace
- 220 **Michael Peter Smith**, *Transnational Urbanism: Locating Globalization*.
Review by Jefferey M. Sellers
- 221 **Susan C. Stokes**, *Mandates and Democracies: Neoliberalism by Surprise in Latin America*.
Susan C. Stokes, ed. *Public Support for Market Reforms in New Democracies*.
Review by Kurt Weyland
- 223 **Rotimi T. Suberu**, *Federalism and Ethnic Conflict in Nigeria*.
Review by Julius O. Ihonvbere

parameters for women's rights. Thus, *States and Women's Rights* makes important contributions to the larger body of literature that examines the question of gender and power in the colonial-nationalist struggle. In some ways, however, she may be limited by the conceptual framework of her study. She equates women's rights with family law, thus seeing agency and power only when they are deployed in the struggle to control and define the structure of the family through the state's legal system. In this narrative, the triumph of Islamic law inevitably means a defeat for women's rights. A greater engagement with recent studies, such as the work of Ziba Mir-Hosseini, that examine Islamic law as a somewhat more porous system in which both theory and praxis are contested and in which women find room for maneuverability would have enriched Charrad's discussion. And anthropological analyses of women's agencies in tribal societies, such as the work of Lila Abu Lughod, would suggest that the posited rigidity of a patrilineal system may indeed leave space for women's voice and agency in ways that are not readily apparent in studies focused on the state.

Still, Charrad's important analysis should be of great interest to scholars of gender studies, nationalism, and state formation. The book offers a multilayered and complex analysis that shows the importance of such factors as gender relations and tribalism in the process of state building throughout the Maghrib; its conclusions are all the more compelling because of its comparative and historical perspectives.

Gradual Economic Reform in Latin America: The Costa Rican

Experience. By Mary A. Clark. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001. 198p. \$59.50 cloth, \$19.95 paper.

— Alfred G. Cuzán, *The University of West Florida*

The central proposition advanced in this book is that incremental reform along neoliberal lines works. In Costa Rica, a slow-paced program of macroeconomic stabilization, fiscal cutbacks, economic deregulation, tax incentives for exporters, cessation of agricultural subsidies, and selected privatizations yielded "generally positive results" (p. 105). The economy recovered rapidly from the 1980s crisis and poverty rates fell back to precrisis levels, while the country's democratic stability was never in danger.

Mary Clark chose to study Costa Rica's neoliberal reforms for several reasons. It is Latin America's oldest welfare-state democracy, historically a favorite of international donors

and lenders. But, more recently, the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank "find Costa Rica to be one of the most difficult Latin American countries in which to work" (p. 1). In the 1980s, the country's import-substitution model having been exhausted and the state's venture as an industrialist having turned out to be a costly mistake, the economy was "in desperate straits" (p. 44). In the throes of a "balance of payments crisis, rising inflation, and pressure on the *colón*," Costa Rica was among the first to default on its international debts. In 1982, "the economy was in a nose-dive, hitting rock bottom in the same year" (p. 45). Yet the country's decentralized governmental structure affords multiple veto points to well-organized interests, making it impossible to administer the "shock therapy" favored by many international economists.

Nevertheless, Clark claims that the very slowness of the country's policy process is a plus. Although acknowledging the opportunity costs of procrastination and the danger of succumbing to reform fatigue, she concludes that slow-paced reforms, compromise among contending interests, and compensation for losers, if "slow, messy, and expensive" (p. 138), constitute a more viable political combination than shock therapy.

Costa Rican gradualism worked best with what are called easy or "first-stage" reforms. These included reducing tariffs, granting tax exemptions to exporters of nontraditional products and the tourist industry, doing away with agricultural subsidies, allowing private banks to compete with state banks, and dismantling an inefficient, corrupt, and unpopular public industrial corporation. These measures were easy to implement because either they were amenable to execution by presidential decree or, although they created losers, the reforms spawned a host of new enterprises that soaked up rural unemployment and organized themselves politically, lobbying for the preservation and extension of neoliberal policies. Even at this stage, however, it took leadership, funding, and technical assistance from abroad to get the policy ball rolling in the "right" direction.

But when it came to more difficult "second-stage reforms," gradualism made only minimal progress. State monopolies and social services bureaucracies have not been able to keep up with demand or technology, and hence are a drag on the economy. But their performance has not been altogether bad. Enjoying a certain amount of public support, they are able to fend off encroachments on their turf with tactics ranging from managerial foot dragging to strikes and even violence (as in the case of a

stevedore union in the Caribbean port of Limón). The most that reformers have been able to accomplish at the second stage is the promotion of "slow demonopolization" or "creeping privatization," wherein private firms gain small footholds and niches, which, Clark projects, will in time result in their being "awarded equal status with public entities," as happened with the banks (p. 101).

This book is well written and, when it comes to describing neoliberal policies and explaining why reformers were stalled at the second stage, persuasive. Where it falls short is in evaluating the content of second-stage neoliberal policies and, what is the other side of the coin, the performance of Costa Rican state agencies in the fields of energy, telecommunications, casualty insurance, ports and other public works, and health-related services.

Clark avers that "by the 1990s, second-stage reforms could no longer be avoided [*sic*]" (p. 68), which implies an objective problematic condition requiring an urgent remedy. This was true even in the case of the national health-care system, "clearly the crown jewel of Costa Rica's welfare state" (p. 88). It is overcentralized and bureaucratic, riddled with inefficiencies, and hobbled by obsolete managerial and accounting systems, and it treats patients in a highly impersonal, assembly-line fashion. Understandably, "the middle and upper classes" are "using disposable income to purchase better quality clinical consultations, lab tests, and out-patient procedures from private sources" (p. 95).

Yet those who would benefit the most from private suppliers, "especially the young and the poor who rely disproportionately on state services," are "disperse," "divided by class, geography, and other factors," and relatively satisfied with the system's performance (perhaps, although Clark does not say so, for lack of experience with alternatives, because of low expectations, or because, the service being nominally "free," beggars can't be choosers). Facing a situation in which opponents to reform are well informed and organized but potential beneficiaries are mired in "collective action problems," politicians "run great risks" if they attempt to do more than tinker with the system (pp. 101–2).

Nevertheless, Clark is rather philosophical about the failure to overhaul the welfare state or break up state monopolies or quasi-monopolies. In her concluding comments, she observes that along with their counterparts in Brazil and Uruguay, Costa Rican reformers "may not be traveling to the same destination as those pursuing rapid and deep liberalization; perhaps they have a better one in mind," a "third way

or 'middle road' to reform, acknowledging the shortfalls in old statist models but seeking greater responsibility for the public sector than pure neoliberalism allows" (p. 146).

What the specifics of this elusive alternative to neoliberalism may be Clark leaves unsaid. This reader, at least, was left with the impression that she has yet to decide whether or not the current state of Costa Rica's medical system, public utilities, and infrastructure cry out for market solutions. If they do not, then the reformers' lack of success in these areas has been a blessing in disguise. But if they do, then gradualism, and the political structures that give rise to it, will have to be reconsidered.

Political Institutions: Democracy and Social Choice. By Josep M. Colomer. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001. 266p. \$45.00.

— John M. Carey, *Washington University in St. Louis*

Josep M. Colomer's new book is a happy marriage of social choice theory with comparative politics. The book serves simultaneously as a primer to social choice and its empirical applications, as a theory of the evolution of political institutions, and as a normative argument in favor of inclusive, complex, and nonmajoritarian decision rules in democracies. On all these counts, *Political Institutions* is well worth reading, and including on syllabi.

Colomer states the normative argument at the outset: "[D]emocratic regimes organized in simple institutional frameworks foster the concentration of power . . . [and] satisfaction of relatively small groups. . . . In contrast, pluralistic institutions produce multiple winners, inducing multiparty cooperation . . . and consensual policies that can satisfy large groups' interests on a great number of issues" (p. 2). The subsequent strategy of the book is as follows. Colomer reviews the fundamental social choice results relating to elections and voting, focusing on the potential for unstable and indeterminate outcomes under simple majority rule. Then he outlines a conceptual framework for the application of theory to the analysis of how real-world political institutions operate and how they develop. The central questions, addressed in sequential chapters, are "Who can vote?"; "How are votes counted?"; and "What is voted for?"

On the first question, Colomer pairs a discussion of the implications of simple versus complex electorates with an historical review of debates over the extension of suffrage. On the second, he outlines the rationales and implications of single-winner versus multiple-

winner, and majority versus supermajority decision rules, then illustrates with discussions of electoral systems and rules of legislative procedure in various contexts. On the third, he offers a theory of constitutional design that hinges on whether power is concentrated or divided—either among institutions at the national level (horizontally) or between national and subnational units (vertically). He illustrates with discussions of how authority is distributed in various regimes, and how this distribution either facilitates or impedes the translation of voter preferences into representation and public policy. Each of these chapters is organized around some basic theoretical claims, explained in nontechnical language, then followed with extensive empirical application and discussion. In the conclusion, Colomer provides a brief overview of the establishment of democracies worldwide since the late nineteenth century, arguing that trends in both regime survival and in constitutional design indicate that pluralistic, consensus-encouraging institutions will flourish, while those that encourage concentration of power fade.

The normative case for consensus democracy is familiar from the work of Arend Lijphart, most recently in *Patterns of Democracy* (1999), and although Colomer's evolutionary argument for its prevalence is suggestive, this is not the central contribution of *Political Institutions*. The book has a number of strengths. One is the author's knack for supplying historical material that illustrates the relevance of social choice theory to the study of political institutions. In this sense, Colomer's book follows in the tradition of William H. Riker's *Liberalism Against Populism* (1982), although *Political Institutions* is empirically richer, and much more accessible to a nontechnical audience.

A second, and related, contribution is Colomer's use of social choice theory to provide an historically and philosophically coherent account of the development of rules for making collective decisions in political institutions, democratic or otherwise. For example, Colomer associates unanimity rules with the premise that decision procedures should aim to discover a single will—for example, divine providence—that governs collective choice. Moves to relax the unanimity requirement, then, are motivated either by a philosophical shift toward identifying the social good with the aggregation of individual preferences, or by the unwillingness to endure the bargaining costs associated with unanimity requirements, or some combination of these. Colomer's account of how rules for electing Roman Catholic popes developed through the Middle

Ages is excellent in this regard. His discussions of the development of suffrage and voting rules in medieval European city states, the colonies of the Americas and their successor republics, and nineteenth- and twentieth-century European states are similarly absorbing and on point.

No review consisting only of praise can be credible, of course, and so I will offer a few criticisms, purely in the interest of promoting this book. One is that the author's various arguments in favor of consensual institutions amount to arguments for supermajority, or concurrent majority, requirements for decision-making. Yet one of the author's points in the initial theoretical primer is that the desirability of more inclusive decision rules depends on how distasteful is the current policy. That is, unless the status quo is universally abhorred, requirements for greater inclusiveness can "allow mediocrity to endure" (p. 73). This point is underplayed throughout much of the book in discussions of the moderating influence of consensual rules on policy outcomes.

A second limitation is the lack of systematic tests of many claims regarding the relationships between rules, policy outputs, and social satisfaction. One example: Colomer posits a chain of reasoning by which the existence of a greater number of elected offices means that fewer policy issues will correspond to each office, such that election results associated with each will be more stable and predictable, thus producing greater social utility (p. 142). Another example: Control by one party over the national government and most subnational governments promotes the centralization of power in the national government (p. 151). These hypotheses, as with many others throughout the book, are derived from basic theoretical principles clearly and plausibly. Nevertheless, they are *big* claims, to which one can imagine reasonable counterhypotheses. Those who place greater emphasis than Colomer on the costs of bargaining among institutions, for example, would likely be skeptical that there is a straightforward correspondence between the multiplication of offices and the ability of institutions to satisfy their constituents.

Colomer does not elaborate alternative hypotheses nor, for the most part, test his own systematically, relying instead on illustrative empirical examples. He does this so well, however, with such a keen sense for how the basic intuitions from social choice theory map onto real-world politics, that *Political Institutions* should become a staple of reading lists on positive political theory and comparative politics.