SUMMARIES

Rational choice theory and political science: Why has so little been learnead?

by Donald P. Green and Ian Shapiro

Rational choice theory has expanded rapidly in political science, touching any area of research. Many perceive this growing success as a substantial improvement in the study of politics. In the authors' view, however, the case has yet to be made that rational choice models have advanced the understanding of how politics works in the real world.

The central argument of this article is that the empirical applications of rational choice theory have been marked by a syndrome of methodological defects. A critical review of the literature shows the following typical shortcomings: hypotheses are formulated in unverifiable ways; evidence is selected and tested in a biased fashion; conclusions are drawn without serious attention to competing explanations; anomalies and discordant facts are often either ignored or circumvented by way of post hoc alterations to deductive arguments. Some possible remedies are suggested. A shift from method-driven to problem-driven research and an integration with other theoretical perspectives are particularly salient if this approach is to contribute to political knowledge more effectively.

Multinationalism, pluralism and democracy.

by Juan J. Linz

Few States are nation states and most nations will not attain statehood. The transforming of multinational societies into monochromatic nation states like in the past is not possible within liberal democratic institutions. Most so-called new nations are in reality multinational or at least multicultural States. People not only live intermingled geo-

graphically, families are of mixed background, and what is equally if not more important, have dual identities. Democratic institutions and processes have to recognize these facts. Plebiscitarianism derived from the principle of self-determination often is likely to contribute to destroy this type of pluralism. To what extent pluralism in a democratic State is to be one based on group representation and rights or on the rights of individuals? To what extent will particular institutional solutions lead to conflict between those two principles and approaches in the context of democratic politics? How will the freedom of individuals to choose their identity without imposing inclusive identities be protected? These are both theoretical and practical problems in contemporary democracies and would be democracies. How will multinational democratic States gain sufficient legitimacy to make democratic decision making possible and compatible with national and cultural pluralism? In particular, how will federalism in such societies be made compatible with the rights of minorities within territorial units with «national» majorities in those units? What forms can national and cultural pluralism take in democratic societies and what is the role of democratic institutions and processes in making pluralism and individual freedom compatible? These are some of the questions raised and discussed in the article.

The new mayors: how a political career is changing

by Gianfranco Bettin Lattes and Annick Magnier

The authors present some results from a national inquiry aiming to describe the role and characteristics of the Italian Mayors, comparing two samples, from the old mayors (in charge in 1992) and from the new mayors (elected after the Reform of 1993): recruitment, career, behaviour (time-budget, agenda-setting procedures, network), attitudes relating to the interpretation of the role are some of the variables discussed.

No empirical research about the Italian Mayors has been done, at a national level, since the work of Tarrow in the Seventies. Owing to recent legislative innovations (especially the *legge* 81/1993), mayors become more visible figures in the national political debate, and they are, in principle, in a position to contract more effectively with the parties for the selection of the municipal executives and to improve their capacity of «central decision» in the local arena.

The authors focus on the data concerning the career of Mayor, which allow to investigate current hypotheses about the decline of the political parties as selection and promotion agents.

The *legge* 81/1993 has opened an innovative cycle in the recruit-

ment process of the municipal leaders. A noticeable part of new mayors without political experience contrasts with a previous trend to a lengthening of the career. The area of recruitment, traditionally centered on public bureaucracy, changes with the inrush of new social categories. In the meanwhile, the schemes of career of those who are not *homines novi* do not indicate a transformation in the qualities required nor a noticeable shift of the center of gravity from the party to the elected assemblies.

The data allow also to enlight some clear modifications in the subjective dimensions of the career: forms of ambition, motives of action, and conceptions of political professional activity.

The high level pubblic administration officials: models of recruitment and career

by Rosalba Chiarini

The recruitment and career models of high level public administration officials are the object of the analysis. The focus is limited to three central administrations of the state: the Ministries of Interior, of Industry and of Labour. The characteristics of the socio-organizational identities of high level decision makers are revealed. The hypothesis that ministerial bureaucracy was not an undifferentiated entity was confirmed. In fact this bureaucracy presents differentiation lines within itself, along the dimensions of organizational socialization and sense of belonging to the ministry. Two models of recruitment and career have been identified: the inside and the outside model. This permitted to explain elites differentiation as caused by the influence of the different structural factors of the three Ministries.

The research explored the relation between the characteristics of the administrative institution in the management of public officers and the level of cohesion of the institution itself. It discovered that an organizational cohesion produced by strong structural mechanisms characterizes the Interior Ministry. In contrast, weak mechanisms of recruitment and socialization characterize the elites and the institutional contexts of the Industry and Labour Ministries.