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## ABSTRACTS

### FORMAL CONSTITUTIONS IN INFORMAL POLITICS

#### INSTITUTIONS AND DEMOCRATIZATION IN POST-SOVIET EURASIA

By HENRY E. HALE

How do formal constitutions impact the prospects for democratization in hybrid regimes, where corruption is typically high and rule of law weak? It is often assumed either that they set “rules of the game,” having effects by being followed, or that they do not matter, being overwhelmed by informal politics. In fact, a logic of collective action reveals that constitutions do matter, but as much by shaping informal political arrangements as by being obeyed. Presidentialist constitutions, through an information effect and a focal effect, generate expectations of future informal power that encourage clientelistic networks to coordinate law-disregarding practices around a “single pyramid” of power led by the president. The information and focal effects of divided-executive constitutions, by contrast, create expectations that complicate the coordination of clientelistic networks around a single patron, promoting “competing-pyramid” politics. To isolate the impact of formal constitutional design and rule out other causes, a tightly controlled process-tracing paired comparison is employed using Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan during 2005–10, explaining why Ukraine’s Orange Revolution produced a true democratic opening (even if short lived) while Kyrgyzstan’s Tulip Revolution did not.

### HOW STATES RATION FLEXIBILITY

#### TARIFFS, REMEDIES, AND EXCHANGE RATES AS POLICY SUBSTITUTES

By KRZYSZTOF J. PELC

A close look at the commitments of World Trade Organization (WTO) members presents a striking paradox. Most states could raise their duties significantly before falling afoul of their WTO obligations. Moreover, such “binding overhang” varies between countries: some could more than double the amount of trade protection they offer overnight, whereas others are tightly constrained. What accounts for this variation? The author argues that more flexibility is not always better: obtaining it and subsequently using it are both costly. Rather than maximize flexibility, states thus seek an optimal amount. If they have access to policy space through other means, such as currency devaluations and trade remedies, they will exercise restraint in seeking binding overhang. The same supply-side logic holds at the domestic level: governments strategically withhold binding overhang from industries that are able to rely on trade remedies, despite the fact that these tend to have the greatest political clout.

### THE IMPACT OF REGIME TYPE ON HEALTH

#### DOES REDISTRIBUTION EXPLAIN EVERYTHING?

By SIMON WIGLEY and ARZU AKKOYUNLU-WIGLEY

Many scholars claim that democracy improves population health. The prevailing explanation for this is that democratic regimes distribute health-promoting resources more widely than autocratic regimes. The central contention of this article is that democracies also have a significant pro-health effect regardless of public redistributive policies. After establishing the theoretical plausibility of the nondistributive effect, a panel of 153 countries for the years 1972 to 2000 is used to examine the relationship between extent of democratic experience and life expectancy. The authors find that democratic governance continues to have a salutary effect on population health even when controls are introduced for the distribution of health-enhancing resources. Data for fifty autocratic countries for the years 1994 to 2007 are then used to examine whether media freedom—independent of government responsiveness—has a positive impact on life expectancy.

## CHANNELING THE “RESTLESS SPIRIT OF INNOVATION”

ELITE CONCESSIONS AND INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE IN THE BRITISH REFORM ACT  
OF 1832

By BRUCE MORRISON

The long-standing understanding of the British 1832 Reform Act as an elite response to a revolutionary threat has been given renewed prominence in recent work on the political economy of democratization. But earlier episodes of popular revolt in Britain led to elite unity rather than elite concessions. This article argues that the absence of effective elite closure against parliamentary reform in the early 1830s was the result of an extended process of state reform that had the effect of gradually reducing the capacity of the monarchy. This deprived the crown of patronage required for the construction of an antireform coalition, while also mollifying the reformers' fears that mass mobilization would invite repression and with it the recalibration of the constitution in favor of the monarchy. Therefore, while pressure from below was indeed critical to the passage of parliamentary reform, its contribution was mediated by institutional changes that, over time, weakened the sources of resistance to change and rendered reformist elites more amenable to the necessary reliance on the threat of force. This case study thus establishes that change at critical junctures can be subject to the influence of incremental institutional change occurring in relatively settled periods.

## RECONCILIATION AND THE REMAKING OF ANARCHY

By SHIPING TANG

For years, mainstream international relations (IR) theorists have essentially ignored reconciliation as a special—and perhaps the most difficult—form of cooperation building in international politics. This review article seeks to make the study of reconciliation a more visible field for further inquiry in IR, comparative politics, and sociology for both theoretical and practical reasons. After summarizing important themes emerged from the recent literature on reconciliation, the author addresses four issues for understanding interstate reconciliation: the interplay of group emotions and group politics, the interplay of domestic politics and international politics, the institutionalization of memories, and methodological issues. Better understanding of these issues also contributes to broadening the scope of inquiry in IR, comparative politics, and the sociology literature.

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