
International Organization

Volume 44, Number 2, Spring 1990

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Abstracts

Chain gangs and passed bucks: predicting alliance patterns in multipolarity by Thomas J. Christensen and Jack Snyder

Contemporary balance-of-power theory has become too parsimonious to yield determinate predictions about state alliance strategies in multipolarity. Kenneth Waltz's theory predicts only that multipolarity predisposes states to either of two opposite errors, which this article characterizes as chain-ganging and buck-passing. To predict which of these two policies will prevail, it is necessary to complicate Waltz's theory by adding a variable from Robert Jervis's theory of the security dilemma: the variable of whether offense or defense is perceived to have the advantage. At least under the checkerboard geographical conditions in Europe before World Wars I and II, perceived offensive advantage bred unconditional alliances, whereas perceived defensive advantage bred free riding on the balancing efforts of others.

The international telecommunications regime: the political roots of regimes for high technology by Peter F. Cowhey

The international telecommunications regime provided a multilateral framework that reinforced domestic monopolies and bilateral cartel arrangements in the global market. The regime's epistemic community believed that telecommunications services and equipment were best supplied by national monopolies and that international communications by telephone, telegram, and telex should be jointly provided by monopolists. Strong domestic political incentives reinforced this cognitive framework. When technological innovation triggered a successful political attack on the domestic regulation of telecommunications in a few key countries, the stage was set for a global challenge to the intellectual and political foundations of the regime. Two paths to reform have emerged. Their significance can be assessed by looking at changes in the distribution of benefits from the regime, changes in the manner in which governments delegate power to the regime, and shifts in the epistemic community associated with the regime.

Long waves, technological innovation, and relative decline by William R. Thompson

The popularity of Kondratieff long waves fluctuates according to the economic climate. Periods of slow growth help make long wave explanations more attractive. While their popularity may oscillate, the evidence associated with the existence of long waves continues to be disputed. A review of the pertinent theoretical literature

suggests that one reason for the disagreements about the existence of long waves is that much of the available evidence does not correspond as closely as it might to the theoretical foci. A new data series, one based on leading sector production growth rates from 1760 to 1985, is developed to remedy this lack of correspondence. The appropriate analysis of this series requires that particular attention be paid to the rise and relative decline of the world economy's lead state. The empirical outcome provides a close match to the long wave chronology developed by Joseph Schumpeter, Simon Kuznets, and J. J. Van Duijn. While this approach falls short of bringing closure to many of the theoretical and empirical questions concerning long waves, it does establish a solid empirical foundation for further analyses. The article concludes with some observations on the long wave implications for the relative economic decline of Britain in the nineteenth century and the United States in the twentieth century.