



Runaway State-Building: Patronage Politics and Democratic Development

Conor O'Dwyer

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Here, Conor O'Dwyer introduces the phenomenon of runaway state-building as a consequence of patronage politics in underdeveloped, noncompetitive party systems. Analyzing the cases of three newly democratized nations in Eastern Europe—Poland, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia—O'Dwyer argues that competition among political parties constrains patronage-led state expansion.

O'Dwyer uses democratization as a starting point, examining its effects on other aspects of political development. Focusing on the link between electoral competition and state-building, he is able to draw parallels between the problems faced by these three nations and broader historical and contemporary problems of patronage politics—such as urban machines in nineteenth-century America and the Philippines after Marcos.

This timely study provides political scientists and political reformers with insights into points in the democratization process where appropriate intervention can minimize runaway state-building and cultivate efficient bureaucracy within a robust and competitive democratic system.

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