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## ABSTRACTS

### LEGISLATIVE MALFEASANCE AND POLITICAL ACCOUNTABILITY

By ERIC C. C. CHANG, MIRIAM A. GOLDEN, AND SETH J. HILL

Utilizing a unique data set from the Italian Ministry of Justice reporting the transmission to the Chamber of Deputies of more than the thousand requests for the removal of parliamentary immunity from deputies suspected of criminal wrongdoing, the authors analyze the political careers of members of the Chamber during the first eleven postwar legislatures (1948–94). They find that judicial investigation typically did not discourage deputies from standing for reelection in Italy's large multimember electoral districts. They also show that voters did not punish allegedly malfeasant legislators with loss of office until the last (Eleventh) legislature in the sample. To account for the dramatic change in voter behavior that occurred in the early 1990s, the investigation focuses on the roles of the judiciary and the press. The results are consistent with a theory that a vigilant and free press is a necessary condition for political accountability in democratic settings. An independent judiciary alone is ineffective in ensuring electoral accountability if the public is not informed of political malfeasance.

### THROWING OUT THE BUMS

PROTEST VOTING AND UNORTHODOX PARTIES AFTER COMMUNISM

By GRIGORE POP-ELECHES

The electoral rise of unorthodox parties (uops) in recent East European elections raises some puzzling questions about electoral dynamics in new democracies. Why did the power alternation of the mid-1990s not result in party-system consolidation, as suggested by some earlier studies, but instead give way to a much more chaotic environment in which established mainstream political parties lost considerable ground to new political formations based on personalist and populist appeals? Why did this reversal in Eastern Europe happen during a period of economic recovery, remarkable Western integration progress, and a broad acceptance of electoral democracy as the only game in town? This article suggests that these electoral dynamics can be explained by focusing on the interaction between protest voting and election sequence. While protest voting to punish unpopular incumbents has been a widespread but understudied practice since the collapse of communism, the beneficiaries of these protest votes have changed in recent elections. Whereas in the first two generations of postcommunist elections, disgruntled voters could opt for untried mainstream alternatives, in third-generation elections (defined as elections taking place after at least two different ideological camps have governed in the postcommunist period) voters had fewer untried mainstream alternatives, and therefore opted in greater number for unorthodox parties. This explanation receives strong empirical support from statistical tests using aggregate data from seventy-six parliamentary elections in fourteen East European countries from 1990 to 2006, survey evidence from twelve postcommunist elections from 1996 to 2004, and a survey experiment in Bulgaria in 2008.

### DEFYING THE RESOURCE CURSE

EXPLAINING SUCCESSFUL STATE-OWNED ENTERPRISES IN RENTIER STATES

By STEFFEN HERTOG

The article explains how several Gulf rentier monarchies have managed to create highly profitable and well-managed state-owned enterprises (SOEs), confounding expectations of both general SOE inefficiency and the particularly poor quality of rentier public sectors. It argues that a combination of two factors explains the outcome: the absence of a populist-mobilizational history and substantive regime autonomy in economic policy-making. The author concludes that it is necessary to rethink the commonly accepted generalizations both about rentier states and, arguably, about public sectors in the developing world.

## A RENTIER THEORY OF SUBNATIONAL REGIMES

FISCAL FEDERALISM, DEMOCRACY, AND AUTHORITARIANISM IN THE ARGENTINE PROVINCES

By CARLOS GERVASONI

Levels of subnational democracy vary significantly within countries around the world. Drawing on fiscal theories of the state, the author argues that this variance is often explained by a type of rentierism that is not geographically determined by natural resources but politically created by certain fiscal federalism arrangements. He posits that less democratic regimes are more likely in rentier provinces—those that receive disproportionately large central government transfers and practically forgo local taxation. Intergovernmental revenue-sharing rules that produce large vertical fiscal imbalances and favor the economically smaller districts provide their incumbents with generous “fiscal federalism rents” that allow them to restrict democratic contestation and weaken checks and balances. Statistical evidence from a panel data set of the Argentine provinces strongly confirms this expectation, even after controlling for standard alternative explanations such as level of development. Sensitivity analysis shows that this finding is extremely robust to alternative panel estimators. Qualitative and quantitative evidence suggests that the effect of heavy public spending on the economic autonomy of political actors is the main causal mechanism at work.

## CAPTURED COMMITMENTS

AN ANALYTIC NARRATIVE OF TRANSITIONS WITH TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE

By MONIKA NALEPA

How can outgoing autocrats enforce promises of amnesty once they have left power? Why would incoming opposition parties honor their prior promises of amnesty once they have assumed power and face no independent mechanisms of enforcement? In 1989 autocrats in a number of communist countries offered their respective oppositions free elections in exchange for promises of amnesty. The communists' decision appears irrational given the lack of institutions to enforce these promises of amnesty. What is further puzzling is that the former opposition parties that won elections in many countries actually refrained from implementing transitional justice measures. Their decision to honor their prior agreements to grant amnesty seems as irrational as the autocrats' decisions to place themselves at the mercy of their opponents. Using an analytic narrative approach, the author explains this paradox by modeling pacted transitions not as simple commitment problems but as games of incomplete information where the uninformed party has “skeletons in its closet”—that is, embarrassing information that provides insurance against the commitments being broken. The author identifies the conditions under which autocrats step down even though they can be punished with transitional justice and illustrates the results with case studies from Czechoslovakia, Poland, and Hungary.