

“Disguising as Democrats: The Origins and Outcomes of Partially Independent EMBs in Autocracies ”

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Why do some autocrats tie their own hands by establishing partially autonomous election management bodies (EMBs)? This study explores the origins and outcomes of partially independent EMBs in authoritarian regimes. We argue that autocrats who lack control over local agents and regional machinery introduce partially independent EMBs to credibly commit to not employ blatant electoral fraud. Although empowering the third party constraints autocrats' scope of electoral manipulation, autonomous EMBs effectively preempt both internal and external threats rooted in the dictator's use of blatant electoral fraud. We also suggest that partially independent EMBs prepare for "soft-landing" democratic transitions where authoritarian successor parties retain power in newly established democracies. Cross-national statistical analysis of 128 autocratic countries (1946-2019) demonstrates that locally weak autocrats tend to increase the autonomy of EMBs. We also find that such autocrats and authoritarian parties are less likely to face coups and post-electoral protests and are more likely to maintain power even after democratic transitions.

Registration: <https://ucsd.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJYpf--przMjEt2MWnRXGoes5SApFP92hkYl>

****Registration is Required ****

PIPC Online Speaker Series

April 14th, 6pm (PST)

April 14th, 7pm (MT)

April 15th, 11am (Australia, Canberra)

April 15th, 10am (JST)

April 15th, 9am (China, Hong Kong, Singapore, Taiwan)