

How Does *Kompromat* Affect Politics? A Model of Transparency Regimes

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March 20, 2020

Abstract

Why are transparency regimes so rare? Even if one side might have something to hide, why would their opponents not push for transparency? To analyze transitional justice, we build a model where both the incumbent (who decides whether to implement a transparency regime) and voters know that the opposition politician may be compromised and that a strategic blackmailer may release the *kompromat*. In equilibrium, the incumbent strategically opts for a non-transparency regime that would keep skeletons in the closet: it is easier to run against a maybe-tainted opponent. We corroborate our results with data from the Global Transitional Justice Dataset.

Keywords: transitional justice, transparency regime, blackmail, signaling.