Political Competition, Partisanship, and Policy Making in Latin American Public Utilities
by Maria Victoria Murillo (Associate Professor of Political Science, Columbia University)

This book studies policymaking in the Latin American electricity and telecommunication sectors. Murillo’s analysis of the Latin American electricity and telecommunications sectors shows that different degrees of electoral competition and the partisan composition of the government were crucial in resolving policymakers’ tension between the interests of voters and the economic incentives generated by international financial markets and private corporations in the context of capital scarcity. Electoral competition by credible challengers dissuaded politicians from adopting policies deemed necessary to attract capital inflows. When electoral competition was low, financial pressures prevailed, but the partisan orientation of reformers shaped the regulatory design of market-friendly reforms. In the post-reform period, moreover, electoral competition and policymakers’ partisanship shaped regulatory redistribution between residential consumers, large users, and privatized providers.

Commentator: Christian Proaño–Acosta, Assistant Professor of Economics, NSSR

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