

Julian Michel

C.V. (October 2024)

General Information

Address: Buschingstr. 41, 81677 Munich Phone: (+49) 1525-137-3146
Email: julianmichel@ucla.edu Website: julianmichel.net

Academic Employment

10/24 – Postdoctoral Fellow in Political Economy, LMU Munich

Education

2017 – 2024 Ph.D., Political Science, UCLA
 Specializations: Comparative Politics, Quantitative Methods

2015 – 2017 M.A., Political Science & Economics, Heidelberg U. (*GPA=4.0*)

2014 – 2015 Visiting Graduate Student, Yale, Ph.D.-level coursework

2011 – 2014 B.A., Political Science, Heidelberg University (*GPA=4.0*)

Dissertation: The Subnational Roots of Democratic Stability

Summary: My dissertation investigates why some democracies are more vulnerable than others to democratic backsliding led by elected leaders. Whereas democracies used to die in coups, they are now much more likely to be weakened by democratically elected leaders themselves. What explains variation in such executive aggrandizement? The conventional view sees central executives as constrained by strong oppositions utilizing horizontal checks and balances. I argue that this ignores the vital role played by opposition access to subnational tiers of government. The vast majority of democracies—more than 89% of country-years since 1990—have elected governors and/ or mayors. Opposition parties use such office, and the access to state resources and political visibility it provides, to: (a) become more electorally competitive, (b) incentivize office-seeking MPs to exert more legislative constraints, and (c) ultimately reduce opportunities for elected leaders to aggrandize. Analyzing newly assembled data on gubernatorial and mayoral elections in Latin America since 1990, and using a regression discontinuity design for causal leverage, I find that subnational opposition incumbency increases the local opposition vote in national lower house elections by 17 p.p. Additionally, I collected data on subnational election outcomes in 84 of 106 politically decentralized democracies after 1990. Panel analyses reveal that opposition parties, even in unitary democracies, better preserve horizontal checks on the national executive the more subnational office they won. Overall, in stark contrast to subnational government as “laboratories against democracy” in the U.S. in recent years (Levitsky and Ziblatt 2018; Grumbach 2022), this research shows how oppositions since 1990 have better preserved national democracy when they exerted more subnational control.

Publications

1. *How Authoritarian Regimes Decide Who Emigrates: Evidence from East Germany* (Michel, Miller, and Peters 2023). *International Organization*, 77(3), 527-563 ([link](#)).
 - Winner of APSA Michael Wallerstein Best Article Award

Research Projects

1. *The Subnational Roots of Democratic Stability*
 - Dissertation; Job Market Paper ([link](#)); book project.
 - Winner of APSA Deil S. Wright Best Paper Award
2. *Participation, Legitimacy and Fiscal Capacity in Weak States* (with K. Grieco, W. Prichard, N. Meriggi, and A. B. Kamara). Working paper ([link](#), [PAP](#)).
3. *When Voice Gets the Opportunity to Exit: Evidence from Hong Kong* (with Maggie Peters). Working paper ([link](#), [PAP](#)).
4. *Restraining the Huddled Masses: Emigration and Authoritarian Control* (with M. Peters and M. Miller; book project; co-author on select chapters).
5. *Enhancing Political Accountability During Covid-19: A Field Experiment on the Legitimacy of Government in Freetown, Sierra Leone* (with Wilson Prichard, Niccoló Meriggi, and Kevin Grieco). Data collected ([PAP](#)).
6. *Does Taxation Cause Demands for Accountability Under Democracy?* (with Wilson Prichard, Niccoló Meriggi, and Kevin Grieco). Data collected.
7. *Signaling Weberianness: Procedural Fairness and Tax Compliance in Sierra Leone* (with W. Prichard, N. Meriggi, A. B. Kamara, and K. Grieco). Data collected ([PAP](#)).
8. *Do Populist Appeals Affect Candidate Choice? Evidence from a Survey Experiment in Bolivia*. Preliminary results presented at APSA 2022.

Policy Papers

1. *ICTD Policy Brief 19: Simplifying Property Tax Administration in Africa* ([link](#)) (with K. Grieco and others, November 2019).

Datasets

1. *Subnational Elections Database* ([link](#))
 - Share of highest subnational offices obtained by party in 84 of 106 democracies (1990-2021)
 - For Latin America: Candidates, results & subn. electoral system design for highest subn. executive races in 371 states and 18 countries (1990-2021)

Other Research Experience (Selected)

01/17 – 04/17	RA at the <i>Bertelsmann Transformation Index</i>
02/16 – 11/16	RA for Dr. Kuehn, Trinn, and Wencker, Heidelberg University
05/15 – 09/15	RA for Prof. Kate Baldwin, Yale University (full-time)
10/12 – 08/13	RA for Dr. Schieder and Dr. Haidvogl, Heidelberg University

Awards & Grants

06/24	Michael Wallerstein Award for Best Article in Political Economy, APSA
06/24	Deil S. Wright Award for Best Paper in Federalism and Intergovernmental Relations, APSA
09/23	UCLA Collegium of University Teaching Fellowship (only 17 Ph.D. students selected university-wide)
06/22	IGCC Dissertation Fellowship (\$25,000)
06/22	Travel grants: EUI Conference, Politics of Europe (\$1,200), APSA 2022 (\$150), Democracy & Autocracy section (\$250)
06/20	UCLA Burkle Center for IR Grant for a Project on Protest and Emigration in Hong Kong (with M. Peters) (\$7,500)
11/19	ICTD Grant for a Project on State Capacity in Freetown, Sierra Leone (with W. Prichard, N. Meriggi, and K. Grieco) (£200,000)
06/19 – 11/22	Political Psychology Fellowships, UCLA (\$5,690 in total)
04/19 & 04/20	GSRM Awards, UCLA (\$12,000 in total)
03/19	IGC Grant for Project on State Capacity in Freetown, Sierra Leone (with K. Grieco and D. Holliday) (£20,000)
09/18 & 09/19 & 09/20	Ernst A. Marum Fellowships, Center for European and Russian Studies, UCLA (\$39,000 in total)
09/17	Graduate Dean Scholar Fellowship, UCLA (\$14,500)
08/14 – 04/15	Fellowship for studying at Yale, German Ministry of Education & Heidelberg University
08/14	Heidelberg Alumni Prize for best B.A. in Pol. Science in 2014
09/11 – 07/17	Full fellowship by the Friedrich-Ebert-Foundation

Conference Presentations & Invited Talks

APSA	2020, 2021, 2022, 2023 (chair & discussant)
Other Presentations	2024: University of Notre Dame, MPSA, SHU 2023: MPSA, UCLA, Columbia University, UC Riverside 2022: EUI, University of Bern

Teaching Experience (see [here](#) for evaluations)

09/22 – 06/24	Instructor of Record, "Teaching Political Science" (Syllabus) (Ph.D.-level; 8.75/9; Median: 9/9; N=29)
01/24 – 03/24	Instructor of Record, "Protest and Democracy" (Syllabus) (8/9; Median: 8/9; N=4)
06/23 – 09/23 & 08/22 – 09/22	Instructor of Record, "Pol. Econ. of Development" (Syllabus) (8.48/9; Median: 9/9; N=33)
08/22 – 09/22	Instructor of Record, "Democratic Erosion" (Syllabus) (9/9; Median: 9/9; N=9)
04/22 – 06/22	TA, "Pol. Institutions and Econ. Development", Prof. Cruz (8.8/9; Median: 9/9; N=20)
10/21 – 12/21 & 10/20 – 12/20	TA, "The Political Economy of Climate Change", Prof. Ross (8.54/9; Median: 9/9; N=39)
04/21 – 06/21 & 04/20 – 06/20	TA, "Political Economy of Development", Prof. Michael Ross (8.72/9; Median: 9/9; N=53)
01/21 – 03/21	TA, "World Politics", Prof. Eric Min (8.58/9; Median: 9/9; N=36)
04/19 – 06/19	TA, "Globalization, Governance & Conflict", Prof. M. Peters (7.5/9; Median: 8/9; N=52)
01/20 – 03/20 & 01/19 – 03/19	TA, "Roots of Democracy", Prof. Daniel Treisman (8.5/9; Median: 9/9; N=74)
10/18 – 12/18	TA, "Politics of Migration", Prof. Maggie Peters (7.64/9; Median: 8/9; N=51)
04/16 – 02/17 & 10/13 – 07/14	TA, "Introduction to Comparative Politics", Prof. A. Croissant (8.3/9; Median: 9/9; N=96)
04/13 – 07/14	TA, "Introduction to Political Theory", Prof. Michael Haus (8.45/9; Median: 9/9; N=73)

Departmental Service

09/22 – 06/24	Teaching Consultant, Dept. of Political Science, UCLA
09/19 – 06/24	Mentor for First-Year Ph.D. Students, UCLA
09/19 – 06/20	Organizer, Comparative Politics Working Group (COMPASS)
09/18 – 06/19	Organizer, "Pieces of the Craft" Workshop Series, UCLA

Skills

Languages	German (native), English (fluent), Spanish (intermediate), French (basic)
Software	R, Stata, NVivo, MAXQDA, ODK

References

Barbara Geddes (co-chair)
Professor
Department of Political Science
UCLA
geddes@ucla.edu

Daniel Treisman (co-chair)
Professor
Department of Political Science
UCLA
treisman@polisci.ucla.edu

Cesi Cruz
Professor
Department of Political Science
University of Michigan
cesi.cruz@gmail.com

Maggie Peters
Professor
Department of Political Science
UCLA
mepeters@ucla.edu

Wilson Prichard
Associate Professor
Department of Political Science
University of Toronto
wilson.prichard@utoronto.ca