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Abstract:
Politics and economics have become intensely intertwined in the post-communist countries in transition. The collapse of communist regime and the subsequent political liberalization created conditions for the implementation of wide-ranging economic reforms. In turn, the continuation of reforms and the very sustainability of democracy have been threatened by political backlash brought about by adverse effects of the reforms. In this dissertation, I try to analyze theoretically as well as empirically the interaction between economics and politics in the specific conditions of post-communist transition. The main focus lies on two topics of great importance for the transition countries: the political support for reforms, and disintegration of countries. The former is concerned with explaining the causes of dwindling support for economic and political reforms, and the subsequent return of former communists to power in several countries in Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. The latter is motivated by one of the gravest side effects of transition - the break-ups of multi-national countries in Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia. I am concerned with the economic aspects of disintegration, and attempt to identify factors that give rise to incentives for nations to break up.