

PPE Research Seminar Series

Populists and Political Scandals: Kiss of Death or Elixir of Life

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Abstract: Ethno-populists often come to power criticizing the establishment for being plagued by corruption but after assuming office, the ethno-populists themselves frequently become implicated in corruption and other scandals. We use an original scandal-event dataset compiled from traditional media sources from Hungary and Poland spanning the period of 2000 to 2022 and we find little evidence that ethno-populist incumbents have been hurt by the scandals exposing their wrongdoing. Instead, we document a significant, short-term rally effect among their supporters. Media pluralism, robust opposition, and a bad economy diminish this effect. In contrast, scandals implicating the opponents of ethno-populists boost support for these parties.

<http://www.paulaganga.com/>

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