

Between Regimes: Assessing International Calls for Transitional Groups

During times of political crisis or stalemate in a country, various actors echo a common refrain calling for the installation of transitional political arrangements. These calls typically focus on the importance of democratic transition and inclusiveness, with the assumption that inclusive transitional arrangements increase the probability of successful democratization. The goal of this project is to investigate this assumption in two ways. The mentee will, first, utilize simple web scraping to examine the trajectory of such calls over time and, second, conduct basic analysis in the statistical program R to assess how these calls influence the creation of transitional arrangements.



Katherine E. Michel
Ph.D. candidate, Political Science

Katherine E. Michel is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Political Science. She studies comparative politics, focusing specifically on regime transitions, institutional design, and methodology. Her dissertation explores countries' transitional periods, the interregnum between regimes when "transitional groups" — unelected, interim transitional bodies with the goal of organizing elections and transferring power to popularly legitimate regimes — sometimes facilitate the process of institutional design. Building on her newly-collected dataset of nearly 200 potential regime transitions between 1989 and 2010, her dissertation investigates where transitional groups exist, how they vary across cases, and how transitional group composition — particularly, whether inclusive or exclusive — affects democratization prospects. In addition to her research, Katherine thoroughly enjoys teaching and mentoring undergraduate students, as evidenced through her selection as an Outstanding Graduate Student Instructor and participation in the Undergraduate Research Apprentice Program. Through the SMART program, she hopes to further improve her mentoring techniques by effectively modeling various ways in which to conduct political science research; using her project as a jumping-off point to discuss her mentee's research agenda; and listening and responding to, and learning from, her mentee. For more information, visit Katherine's website at <https://www.ocf.berkeley.edu/~kemichel/>.



Tara Sivaskandan
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Tara Sivaskandan is a rising Junior pursuing an undergraduate degree with a major in Political Science and a minor in Public Policy. Born in Iowa to Indian-American parents, she spent twelve years of her childhood in Asia. She believes that this exposure to different people, places, and cultures made her globally aware and fostered her interest in comparative politics. She joined this research project because of its emphasis on comparative politics and statistical programming, two fields that she is passionate about and has studied extensively. Through her work this summer, she hopes to learn about the practical application of statistical programming and the fundamental principles of comparative politics. Moreover, she wants to gain experience with web scraping and text analysis techniques. By the end of the SMART program, she hopes to have greatly broadened her knowledge of politics, economy, and society in a comparative framework. Overall, she looks forward to gaining an accurate impression of graduate school and learning what dissertation research entails.

UC Berkeley's Student Mentoring And Research Team (SMART) is a paid professional development program that engages doctoral students in creating mentored research opportunities conducted with selected undergraduate student mentees during a ten-week period over the summer. Both participants receive compensation and training throughout their participation. SMART broadens the professional development of doctoral students and fosters research skills and paths to advanced studies for undergraduates.

Expenses associated with each team total \$10,000,000 (\$5K graduate stipend/ \$3.5K undergrad stipend/\$1.5K research and conference costs). As a donor-supported program of the Graduate Division, the majority of teams are underwritten through a combination of donor funds paired with matching support courtesy of the Graduate Division.

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