

Politics for Profit

Businesspeople run for and win elected office around the world, with roughly one-third of members of parliament and numerous heads of state coming directly from the private sector. Yet we know little about why these politicians choose to leave the private sector and what they actually do while in government. In *Politics for Profit*, David Szakonyi brings to bear sweeping quantitative and qualitative evidence from Putin-era Russia to shed light on why businesspeople contest elections and what the consequences are for their firms and for society when they win. The book develops an original theory of businessperson candidacy as a type of corporate political activity undertaken in response to both economic competition and weak political parties. Szakonyi's evidence then shows that businesspeople help their firms reap huge gains in revenue and profitability while prioritizing investments in public infrastructure over human capital. The book concludes by evaluating policies for combating political corruption.

David Szakonyi is Assistant Professor of Political Science at George Washington University and Research Fellow at the Higher School of Economics in Moscow, Russia. His research focuses on political economy, autocracy, and corruption. His dissertation received the APSA Gabriel A. Almond Award for the Best Dissertation in Comparative Politics and the Robert C. Tucker/Stephen F. Cohen Dissertation Prize.

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Politics for Profit

Business, Elections, and Policymaking in Russia

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For
Mary Catherine

Contents

<i>List of Figures</i>	<i>page</i> viii
<i>List of Tables</i>	ix
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	xi
Introduction	I
1 A Theory of Businessperson Candidacy	30
2 Identifying Businesspeople Who Run for Office	79
3 Economic Competition, Weak Parties, and Businessperson Candidacy	101
4 Choosing Ballots, Parties, and Delegates	136
5 Firm-Level Returns from Businessperson Candidacy	180
6 Businesspeople as Policymakers	210
7 Conclusion and Policy Recommendations	241
Appendix	259
<i>Bibliography</i>	292
<i>Index</i>	323

Figures

2.1	Businessperson candidates across regions	<i>page</i> 91
2.2	Businessperson candidates over time	92
2.3	Businessperson versus professional candidates	93
2.4	Sectoral distribution of candidate firms	98
3.1	Sectoral competition in Russia	103
3.2	Candidacy broken down by sector: Random effects	119
4.1	Ballot choice affiliation by sector	153
4.2	Party affiliation by sector	168
4.3	Competition splits firms between parties	171
5.1	Percentage of SMDP elections decided by less than 10 Percent	188
5.2	Balance statistics	192
5.3	Firm-level returns: RDD plots	194
6.1	Municipal outcomes: RDD plots	230

Tables

I.1	Businesspeople dominate national legislatures	<i>page</i> 4
2.1	Comparing candidate and non-candidate firms	97
3.1	Main analysis	113
3.2	Regional analysis: Firm registration data	121
3.3	Evidence from Russian firm survey	126
4.1	Ballot choice: Summary statistics	149
4.2	Ballot choice: Empirical models	150
4.3	Party choice: Summary statistics	164
4.4	Party choice	165
4.5	Delegate choice: Summary statistics	176
4.6	Board members as businessperson candidates	177
5.1	Political connections and firm revenue	195
5.2	Political connections and firm profitability	197
5.3	Mechanisms	200
5.4	Institutional heterogeneity	204
5.5	Economic heterogeneity	206
5.6	Convocational heterogeneity	207
6.1	Candidate summary statistics	222
6.2	Adopting pro-business policies	231
6.3	Improving government efficiency	234
6.4	Region level: Budget size, deficit, and operational expenditures	238
B1	Descriptive statistics: Firm registration data	265
B2	Descriptive statistics: Correlations	266
B3	Descriptive statistics: Firm survey	266
C1	Determinants of businessperson candidacy: Firm registration data extensions	268

C2	Determinants of businessperson candidacy: Candidate level	270
D1	Party choice, PR, and SMDP candidates	273
E1	Institutional residualized heterogeneity	276
F1	Regional and municipal expenditures by line item (2015)	278
F2	Municipality level: Budget size and dependency	279
F3	Municipality level: All budget subcategories	280
F4	Municipality level: Procurement	281
F5	Region level: Economic infrastructure broken down	282
F6	Region level: Social infrastructure broken down	285
F7	Region level: Other economic outcomes	286
F8	Life in transition survey: General policy preferences of businesspeople	289
F9	Life in transition survey: Preferences for government spending	290

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