



# Politicians and Economic Reform in New Democracies: Argentina and the Philippines in the 1990s

*Kent Eaton*

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"This book makes a significant contribution by synthesizing topics (legislators, party systems, bureaucracies, executive-legislative relations, and public policy) and regions (Latin America and Asia) that are not commonly compared. [It] applies a wide range of methods, from following bills through legislatures to interviewing local actors and collecting local scholarship and archival materials."—Gretchen Casper, Penn State University

"Given the tremendous problems caused by recurrent budget deficits in many developing countries today, the book's focus on fiscal policy is particularly timely. Anyone concerned with the relationship between institutions and policy will benefit from reading this excellent book, as will those concerned more generally with economics and politics in Argentina or the Philippines."—Mark P. Jones, Michigan State University

As economic reform in developing countries has shifted from macroeconomic stabilization to liberalization, opportunities for legislators to influence the process and outcome of reform have increased and their role has become more important. This book focuses attention on differences in institutional structure, in political parties and electoral rules, to show how they create incentives that can explain the varying ways in which legislators respond to policy initiatives from the executive branch.

In Argentina and the Philippines, presidents proposed similar fiscal reforms in the 1990s: expanding tax bases, strengthening tax administration, and redesigning tax revenue-sharing with subnational governments. Drawing on archival research and interviews with policymakers, Kent Eaton follows the path of legislation in these three areas from initial proposal to final law to reveal how it was shaped by the legislators participating in the process. Obstacles to the adoption of reform, he demonstrates, are greater in candidate-centered systems like the Philippines' (where the cultivation of personal reputations is paramount) than in party-centered systems like Argentina's (where loyalty to party leaders is emphasized).

To test his argument further, Eaton looks finally at other kinds of reform ventured in these two countries and at tax reforms attempted in some other countries.

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