

Title: *News vs Novelas: Can entertainment media undermine dictatorship?*

Abstract

The role played by mass media in the rise and maintenance of non-democratic regimes is a phenomenon well documented in the political economy literature. Despite the growing evidence that entertainment media is relevant to shape beliefs and preferences, most studies have focused solely on the role played by news on political outcomes. This paper investigates whether and how political content in entertainment media affects the support for political regimes. We examine the role of Globo TV network and its Soap Operas (*novelas*), during Brazil's military dictatorship in the 1970s. Despite pro-regime news, TV Globo produced blockbuster *novelas* that had significant political content. We investigate whether TV Globo and its *novelas* with dissenting content affected the support for the military dictatorship. We find evidence that the entry of TV Globo in a municipality is associated with a decrease in the vote-share for the authoritarian party, with the effect being greater in localities with more households with TVs. Finally, to understand the mechanism, we coded the content of newscasts and *novelas* and provide suggestive evidence that the effect is driven by the increased use of political content in the *novelas*.