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Doctoral Studies:

PhD Economics, University College London, 2009 to present.
Thesis title: "Political Parties, Special Interest Groups, and Political Outcomes".
Expected date of completion: Summer 2015.

References:

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Professor Antonio Cabrales
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Research Interests:

Political Economics, Applied Game Theory

Previous Education:

MSc Economics, University of Warwick, distinction, 2009.
Visiting research student on full scholarship, Jesus College, Oxford, 2007/08.
Diploma in Economics, University of Trier, 2007.

Teaching Experience:

Teaching Assistant, Department of Economics, University of Trier

2005/06 Introductory Economics

Teaching Assistant, Department of Economics, University College London

2010/11 Microeconomics (MSc Economic Policy), Advanced Microeconomics (MSc Economics)

2011/12 Advanced Microeconomics (MSc Economics)

2012/13 Public Economics (MSc Economics)

Award for Best Teaching Assistant on an MSc Optional Module

2013/14 Microeconomics (MSc Economics), Health Economics (MSc Economics)

Research Experience and Professional Activities:

Research Assistant to Aureo de Paula on "Identification and estimation of preference distributions when voters are ideological"

Referee for Economic Journal, referee for Annual Meeting Verein für Socialpolitik 2014

Presentations:

2014 Department of Economics, Stockholm University; Meeting of the Society for Social Choice And Welfare, Boston; Conference of the Royal Economic Society, Manchester;

2013 Conference of the Singapore Review of Economics, Singapore; RIPED, University of the Thai Chamber of Commerce;

2011 Department of Economics, Mannheim University; Department of Economics, Autonomous University of Barcelona;

Personal:

Languages: German (native), English (fluent), Spanish (intermediate), Thai (basic)

Citizenship: German

Working Papers:

"How Political Parties Shape Electoral Competition" - Job Market Paper

While national elections in established democracies are typically competitive, it is not uncommon that elections in a region are monopolized by one party. What is more, these monopolies are often held by national parties with a broad ideological appeal. Why is there no entry of regional parties better able to cater to the tastes of regional voters? This paper develops a model of party formation that provides an answer to this question. In the model, voters vote both for regional governments as well as the national government. For politicians, being elected regionally serves as a stepping stone towards running for the national election. Thus, career concerns are a driving factor: Being a member of a national party gives regional politicians a chance of advancing to the national stage. If politicians value these career opportunities sufficiently strongly, entry of regional parties does not occur. The model then predicts a unique equilibrium, in which a centre-left and a centre-right party form. If, on the other hand, success at the regional level matters relatively more to politicians, parties tend to have a more narrow ideological profile and their number may exceed two. Beyond explaining the existence of regional monopolies, the model is also able to match the empirical pattern of varying degrees of competition across regions and strongly competitive national elections. In addition, it makes empirical predictions regarding the sorting of politicians into parties across different regions.

“Competing Candidates, Competing Interest Groups, and the Efficacy of Political Threats”

Interest groups seem to achieve large policy favours for small sums of campaign contributions. This has long puzzled observers. I provide an explanation of this so called “Tullock paradox” that is robust to competition among opposing interests. In the model, I allow interest groups to specify their donations as very general functions of policies and donations by other groups. This allows potential donors to influence the policy choice of an incumbent through threats of contributions to the campaign of a challenger. It is therefore possible that the incumbent chooses policies that favour a particular interest group even if this group has not made any actual donations. When lobbies face a small amount of uncertainty about the policy that the incumbent will choose, I am able to provide a clear characterisation of equilibrium. Policies are always skewed in favour of the group with deeper pockets. This group may also use actual donations on top of threats in order to increase its influence over policies. The weaker lobby, on the other hand, does not promise any money for any policy the incumbent may implement. Outcomes nevertheless differ from the case with only one interest group as the weaker group can become active if the stronger group tries to exert even more pressure.

“Who Emerges from Smoke-Filled Rooms? Political Parties and Candidate Selection”

This paper presents a model of candidate selection through political parties where politicians differ in terms of their quality and their favored policies. The central assumption is that political parties are better informed about their potential candidates than voters are. Questions of interest include whether voters can gain information about candidates by observing the party's choice and to what extent parties select the candidates preferred by the median voter. The results depend crucially on how competitive the race is. Under strong competition, nominating a politically more extreme politician is a signal of high quality. Sufficient competition also induces parties to act in the interest of the median voter most of the time, even when parties attach very little intrinsic value to quality. As ideological alignment between the median voter and a party reduces the degree of competition that this party faces, the median voter can be better off when parties are polarized.