

Access, Agenda Constraint and Informational Lobbying

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Date: 16.12.2015, Venue: P22 @ 2:30 AM

Abstract

We develop a model of informational lobbying in which a policymaker must decide which issues to implement reforms on. On each issue there is an informed interest group that always favours the adoption of reform, and which can lobby the policymaker by offering to provide truthful information about the state of the world. A key feature of our model is that the policymaker faces resource constraints which inhibit his ability to grant access to lobbying interest groups and may also restrict his ability to implement reforms on all issues. We show that while the act of lobbying can signal pro-reform information, it may not do so perfectly. In particular, an interest group may want to lobby the policymaker even when it does not possess pro-reform information in the hope that the policymaker is unable to audit the information provided but still takes the act of lobbying as a signal that the state is pro-reform. We then show that a restriction on the number of issues on which reforms can be implemented can improve the quality of information transmission by making the disciplining role of access more credible. In fact, in some cases imposition of such a restriction leads to a Pareto improvement.

Speaker Profile

Mandar Oak is an Associate Professor in the School of Economics at University of Adelaide, Australia. His areas of research specialization are political economy, development economics and applied game theory. He has published several journal articles in these areas. He has a Masters degree from the Delhi School of Economics and a Ph.D. from Cornell University, Ithaca NY. Previously, he has taught at Williams College in Williamstown, MA. He has been a regular visitor at the Indian Institute of Management, Bangalore, India over the past three years.