

Saba Devdariani

Contact Information

Harris School of Public Policy
The University of Chicago
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Academic Positions

2021 -
PRESENT

Postdoctoral Researcher
The University of Chicago, Harris School of Public Policy

Education

2016 - 2021

Ph.D., Social Science
California Institute of Technology
Dissertation: *Agency Problems in Political Science*
Committee: Thomas R. Palfrey (chair), Alex V. Hirsch (advisor), Michael Gibilisco, Luciano Pomatto

2016 - 2018

M.S., Social Science
California Institute of Technology

2012 - 2014

M.A., Economics
International School of Economics at TSU (ISET)

2008 - 2012

B.A., Business Administration
Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University (TSU)

Research Interests

Formal Theory, Political Economy, Bureaucracy, American Politics, Experimental Economics

Publications

Devdariani, S. and Hirsch, A.V., 2023. Voter attention and electoral accountability. *Journal of Public Economics*, 224, p.104918.

Butkovich, L., Butkovich, N., Devdariani, S., Plott, C.R. and Seo, H., 2020. Fake News, Information Herds, Cascades, and Economic Knowledge. *Public Finance Review*, 48(6), pp.806-828.

Working Papers

“Formal Requirements on Costly Information” (Job Market Paper)

Abstract: There is empirical evidence that government advisory committees generate biased policy decisions. The literature has primarily focused on assessing the influence of procedural restrictions imposed by government agencies on these advisory committees, assuming that their preferences are biased. Little theoretical research has been done to understand the inner workings of these committees and the origins of bias in their decision-making. In our study, we highlight a flaw in the operating procedures of advisory committees, specifically the allowance for the proposer to determine the amount of public information gathered. This flaw leads to biased decisions, even when the decision-maker is unbiased. We explore the optimal mechanism for procedural requirements within the advisory committee and show how it improves the final policy choice and the overall welfare. We analyze delegated information acquisition with a biased agent who also has private information about the state of the world. The information acquired is public and its

informativeness increases with a costly effort. When the agent decides the effort level, the low type abstains from acquiring any public information, whereas the high type acquires just enough public information to separate itself from the low type. In the optimal mechanism with formal requirements, the principal incentivizes the low-type agent to truthfully reveal her private information by requiring a relatively low amount of costly effort, while the high private report has to be followed by the maximum effort in public signal.

“External Shocks and Anticipatory Pandering”

Abstract: Some external shocks are out of control of elected politicians even if they can still anticipate their occurrence better than the general public. How can politicians use these types of anticipated external shocks to their benefit? How does it change their pandering incentives? And how does a rational voter incorporate these, seemingly irrelevant, external shocks in their voting decision? We build on the political accountability model of Canes-Wrone Herron Shotts, adding the ability to the voter to observe their utility, which is affected by external shock. The shock is observed by the incumbent politician but not the voter. We show that the incumbent's policy choice affects his reelection prospects through a direct channel- a different voting strategy for different policy choice- and indirect channel- policy choice affects voting decision through the voter's utility. A combination of these two channels shapes strategic incentives for the incumbent politician. Our analyses show that for high/low enough magnitude external shocks, a politician's ability to anticipate them eliminates his pandering incentives in equilibrium. For medium negative shocks, pandering could be a "gamble for resurrection," while for medium positive shocks, it acts as an "insurance" to guarantee the reelection. We show that both of these pandering regions emerge in equilibrium. Politician's ability to anticipate external shocks eliminates some unnecessary pandering in equilibrium and for some realizations of the external shock also improves the selection. However, the politician's knowledge of the shock, overall, decreases the voter's welfare in equilibrium.

Work in Progress

“Construction of News Headlines and Political Accountability”

Teaching Experience

Instructor

2021 –
PRESENT

Instructor

The University of Chicago, Harris School of Public Policy

2021, 2022
2021, 2023

- Advanced Microeconomics for Policy Analysis I (PhD)
- Analytical Politics I

2014 -2016

Invited Lecturer

The University of Georgia

- Graduate Industrial Organization
- Undergraduate Microeconomic Theory II
- Undergraduate Microeconomic Theory I

Teaching Assistant

2018 -2021

CALIFORNIA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

- Introduction to Economics, *Professor Antonio Rangel*
- Undergraduate Game Theory, *Professor Omer Tamuz*
- Introduction to Economics, *Professor Charlie Plott*
- A History of Budgetary Politics in the United States, *Professor Roderick Kiewiet*

2012-2014

International School of Economics at TSU

- Graduate Game Theory, Professor Avner Shaked
- Graduate Microeconomic Theory II, Professor Sergei Izmalkov
- Graduate Macroeconomic Theory I, Professor Adam Pellillo
- Graduate Microeconomic Theory I, Professor Florian Biermann
- Calculus, Professor Tornike Kadeishvil

Related Work Experience

2014-2016

Senior Researcher

ISET Policy Institute

Conferences And Trainings

2021, 2022

American Political Science Association annual meeting

2021, 2022

Midwest Political Science Association annual meeting

2014

CERGE-EI

Graduate Teaching Fellows Teaching Principles and Practices for Economics Courses

2014

The Armenian Economic Association Annual Meetings

The Second-Place recipient of the Grigor Artsuni Award for Young Scholars

2009

Iv. Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University (TSU)

The best presentation at the Interuniversity Scientific Conference

Scholarships and Awards

2014

Recipient of a **Certificate of Achievement for Outstanding Teaching Performance**, (ISET)

2012

Recipient of a **Future Leader Scholarship**, International School of Economics at TSU (ISET)

2012

Awarded a **Full State Scholarship**, MA, International School of Economics at TSU (ISET)

2009-2010

Awarded a **President's bi-annual stipend**, Iv. Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University (TSU)

2008

Awarded a **Full State Scholarship**, BA, Iv. Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University (TSU)

References

Alexander Hirsch (e-mail: avhirsch@caltech.edu)

- Professor of Political Science, California Institute of Technology

Ethan Bueno de Mesquita (e-mail: bdm@uchicago.edu)

- The Interim Dean and Sydney Stein Professor at the University of Chicago Harris School of Public Policy, and a Faculty Associate in the University of Chicago Department of Political Science

Michael Gibilisco (e-mail: michael.gibilisco@caltech.edu)

- Assistant Professor of Political Science at the California Institute of Technology