



Luciana Dar

DOCTORAL CANDIDATE

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, LOS ANGELES

"The Political Dynamics of Higher Education Spending: Ideology and Political Polarization in the State of California"

MONDAY,

JANUARY 21

2:00 – 3:00 P.M.

Tribute Room (1322)

School Of Education

The scholarly literature provides conflicting evidence of the direction and relevance of the relationship between political ideology and public higher education spending decisions. This may be the result of the lack of clear ideological positions in higher education policy in comparison to areas such as welfare or taxation. One explanation for this lies in the multidimensional character of higher education, as both a provider of public and private goods and its diverse sources of economic support. Using spatial models of political competition, this paper proposes a theoretically driven argument regarding how the dynamics of political competition affect higher education policy and spending choices by governments. This is followed with an exploration of competing hypotheses on the effects of political ideology on higher education spending decisions and a test of these hypotheses using data from the state of California from 1976 to 2005. The results support the argument that the growing polarization of ideological preferences in American politics can explain, in part, current trends in public support for higher education, for which priorities have shifted to other policy areas and there is a more private-based model of higher education finance.

Biographical Sketch:

Luciana is a doctoral candidate in Political Science at the University of California, Los Angeles, (degree expected June 2008) with research and teaching interests in higher education politics, policy, and finance. She is a Research Associate with the Empirical Research Group at the UCLA School of Law, working on higher education finance issues. She has also worked as a research assistant at the Higher Education Research Institute.