



INDIANA UNIVERSITY BLOOMINGTON OSTROM WORKSHOP

COLLOQUIUM SERIES

Gustavo Torrens

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Director Political Economy Program, Ostrom Workshop

Monday, September 27: 12:00 – 1:00 pm ET

Virtual via Zoom: [Click here for link to Zoom meeting](#)



Who is the Ultimate Boss of Legislators: Voters, Special Interest Groups or Parties?

Politicians have multiple principals. We investigate the weights that politicians put on the revealed preferences of their constituents, special interest groups and party when deciding on legislative proposals. Preferences of constituents, special interest groups and parties are directly observed in our setting and they are positively correlated among each other. The empirical findings suggest that constituent preferences are assigned the lowest weight. Holding constant the preferences of other principals, constituent preferences are assigned a weight of only 10.0%. Party preferences are assigned the highest weight of all principals and special interest groups lie in between. A politician's personal ideology plays no substantial role in legislative decisions. We explore conflict among principals as well as heterogeneity among politicians. Our results cast doubt on the empirical relevance of the median voter model and suggest that more principals need to be considered to explain legislative decisions.

Gustavo Torrens' research centers on understanding how institutions influence economic outcomes, the determinants of institutions and institutional change. He has published in *Journal of International Economics*, *Games and Economic Behavior* and *Public Choice* and received the 2016 Award of the National Academy of Sciences of Argentina. Gustavo received his Ph.D. in Economics from Washington University in St. Louis and he is currently Assistant Professor in the Department of Economics at IU and Director of the Political Economy Program at the Ostrom Workshop.

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Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all Ostrom Workshop presentations will be virtual until further notice. Join instantly using the link above. For questions, contact Allison Sturgeon (sturgeon@iu.edu)