Abstract

We provide a model of interrogations with two-sided asymmetric information. The suspect knows his status as guilty or innocent and the likely strength of the law enforcer’s evidence, which is informative about the suspect’s status and may also disprove lies. We compare prosecution errors in the equilibrium of the one-shot interrogation and in the optimal mechanism under full commitment. We describe a “back and forth” interrogation with disclosure of the evidence and discretionary forgiveness of lies that implements the optimum in equilibrium without any commitment.

Keywords: lie, evidence, questioning, confession, law, prosecution, disclosure, persuasion, two-sided asymmetric information

JEL classifications: D82, D83, C72, K40