The Determinants of Success of Special Interests in Redistributive Politics (1996)

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Introduction

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- **Voter Perspective:** For a political moderate who is indifferent between the political programs of the parties, differences in distributive policies become decisive in the voting decision

- **Party Perspective:** For a political party, the differential ability to target voters with distributive goods determines what types of voters will be favored to receive goods

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- ▶ Grand or programmatic redistribution is not a factor in the model (e.g., social security programs)
- ▶ In deciding how to distribute benefits, each party seeks to maximize its vote
- ▶ Individuals within each group are heterogeneous in their ideological beliefs, and differ in their willingness to compromise their political preferences for economic benefits

Model Description

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- **$U_i(C_i)$** the utility of a member of group i with consumption C_i
- **K_i** measures how "apolitical" (or greedy) a voter is (also measure political convictions)

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- Group size matters in determining gains and losses with respect to votes per dollar transferred.

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- If parties can effectively distribute transfers to any group than both parties will target groups that are in the center politically.
- If parties can better deliver goods and favors to its core voters, then they will provide these services to core voters in order to avoid leakage (this is known as "machine politics")

Impact

- Cited $1,428$ times
- Foundational model in distributive politics literature. Elaborated on by a range of scholars (e.g., Stokes (2005)).