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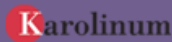
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Formal Models of Elections and Political Bargaining

[Schofield, Norman](#); [Ozdemir, Ugur](#)

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Abstract: The key theoretical idea in this paper is that activist groups contribute resources to their favored parties in response to policy concessions from the parties. These resources are then used by a party to enhance the leader's valence — the electoral perception of the quality of the party leader. The equilibrium result is that parties, in order to maximize vote share, will balance a centripetal electoral force against a centrifugal activist effect. Under proportional electoral rule, there need be no pressure for activist groups to coalesce, leading to multiple political parties. Under plurality rule, however, small parties face the possibility of extinction. An activist group linked to a small party in such a polity has little expectation of influencing government policy. The paper illustrates these ideas by considering recent elections in Turkey, Britain and the United States, as well as a number of European polities.

JEL classification: H10, H11

Keywords: Election, plurality rule, proportional representation, activist groups

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