# Baron and Ferejohn Bargaining over an Endogenous Fund

Andrzej Baranski (NYU Abu Dhabi) April 7, 2022

Prepared for Experimental Economics at OSU

## Introduction

#### On the origin of the fund to distribute

In Baron and Ferejohn (1989) and most bargaining models, the **pie** to divide is assumed to have *fallen from heaven*.

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The exogenous fund is not a suitable assumption:

- 1. What is the effect of an endogenous pie on bargaining strategies?
- 2. What is the effect on productions of ex-post redistribution via bargaining?

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• Ex-post- Ex-ante bargaining

Baranski, Andrzej, and Caleb Cox. "Communication in Multilateral Bargaining with Joint Production." (Working Paper).

• Communication

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# **Experimental Design**

Subjects are placed in a group of 5 and will play a  $\ensuremath{\textbf{game}}$  that has two stages:

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- Each sub. endowed with 50 tokens in a private account
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- Total Fund = 2  $\times$  Sum of contributions
- Contributions are simultaneous and independently decided
- 2. Baron and Ferejohn (1989) closed rule bargaining.

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- A subject earns 50-Contribution+Share.

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- Subjects are undergraduate students (Maastricht University, Netherlands)

### **Theoretical Benchmarks**

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By backward induction:

- $\bullet\,$  The expected payoff is prior to any one being selected as proposer is Fund/5
- Cost of contribution (=1) is greater the expected return (=2/5)
- No one should invest in equilibrium

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Other bargaining strategies would sustain full efficiency too (MWC with higher contributors). No requirement of other-regarding preferences!

# Results









#### **Conclusion 1**

Bargaining to divide a jointly created surplus leads to an increase in contributions compared to an exogenously imposed equal split.

#### Endogenous Fund

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#### **Conclusion 2**

Bargaining to divide a jointly created surplus leads to a more inclusive sharing of the common fund.

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Are higher contributors receiving their fair share? (Fair=Proportional)



#### **Conclusion 3**

Equitable sharing fosters a virtuous cycle of rising contributions.

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- 6. All else remains constant

# The timing of bargaining: Does it matter? (cont'd)



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### **Conclusion 4**

Ex-ante bargaining leads to an unravelling of contributions, similar to the pattern observed in linear public goods games.

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Focusing on ex-post bargaining, we can think of important aspects to vary.

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- 3. Students from Virginia Commonwealth University





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### **Coded Categories**

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- Lying detection: when a member suspects that someone is misrepresenting her contribution

Excluding all empty chat screens (5%) and irrelevant messages (2%)

Unobservable Observable

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Proposer	17.9	31.6
Voter	24.6	47.1

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Proposer	2.2	3.1
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Communication is mainly used to foster **equitable or equal** sharing. Calls for proportionality are more common when investments are observable. Excluding all empty chat screens (5%) and irrelevant messages (2%) If at least one coders marks the category (results robust to agreement)

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- .58\*\*\* correlation coefficient between investments and report

### Key Takeaways

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- 4. Ex ante bargaining (ownership shares) leads to low contributions

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Questions or comments? a.baranski@nyu.edu

# The Determinants of Multilateral Bargaining: A Comprehensive Analysis of Baron and Ferejohn Majoritarian Bargaining Experiments

Andrzej Baranski (NYUAD) and Rebecca Morton (NYU and NYUAD) April 7, 2022

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- Their model has been extended to study:
  - Distributive and Ideological dimension (Jackson and Moselle, 2002)
  - Public good provision (Volden and Wiseman, 2007)
  - Dynamic public spending and taxation in which policy decisions (Battaglini and Coate, 2007)
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- 20+ experimental investigations up to 2018

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1 unit of wealth to divide among  $n \pmod{2}$  players. Utility function u(x) = x.

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#### Asymmetric Game

One can consider different recognition probabilities, voting weights, and discount factors (See Eraslan (2002)).

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- 2. Let  $n \ge 5$  and  $\delta > \frac{n+2}{2(n-1)}$ . Then any allocation can be sustained as an SPE. (See Baron and Ferejohn 1989)

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**Folk-theorem** for multi-stage bargaining: requires coordinating on complicated punishment strategies.

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- 1. Minimum winning coalition: The proposer forms a coalition with  $\frac{n-1}{2}$  voters (chosen at random) by offering them the discounted continuation value of the game:  $\delta/n$
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# **Results from Meta-Analysis**

Collected raw data from all experiments up to 2018:

- 1. All treatments with symmetric predictions
- 2. No computer players
- 3. Exogenous surplus to distribute
- 4. Only majority voting
- 5. Analysis focuses on games 1-10, round-1 proposals
- 6. For details, see article

	No	No Communication		Comm	unication
Group size:	3	5	7	3	5
$\delta = 0.5$	0.50 [0.83] (0.006)		0.26 [0.78] (0.010)		
$\delta = 0.67$	0.56 [0.78] (0.014)				
$\delta = 0.8$		0.42 [0.68] (0.009)			0.56 [0.68] (0.009)
$\delta = 0.9$	0.54 [0.7] (0.010)				
$\delta = 0.95$	0.49 [0.68] (0.012)				
$\delta = 1$	0.52 [0.67] (0.004)	0.40 [0.60] (0.008)		0.61 [0.67] (0.010)	
All δ	0.52 (0.003)	0.41 (0.006)	0.26 (0.010)	0.61 (0.010)	0.56 (0.009)

#### Table 2: Mean Proposer Share [SSPE Prediction]

Only round 1 proposals in games 6-10. Standard errors of the mean in parentheses. SSPE predicted share in brackets next to the mean observed value.

### Proposer Power (with experience, no communication)



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The proposer's share grows with experience. But as we will see, this is due to the increase in MWCs

### Proposer Power (with experience, communication)



### Proposer Power (with experience, communication)



Pre-proposal communication increases the proposer's share: (1) competition between voter for a spot in the MWC (2) proposer's actively seek the *cheapest* voter

## Minimum Winning Coalitions (with experience, no communication)



# Minimum Winning Coalitions (with experience, no communication)



MWCs grow with experience, but are far from universal. Close to 30% are All-way splits in 3&5-player games.

## Minimum Winning Coalitions (with experience, communication)



# Minimum Winning Coalitions (with experience, communication)



MWCs are more common when pre-proposal communication is allowed.

### **Delay in Agreement**



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Contrary to SSPE: (1) more costly rejection  $\longrightarrow$  less delay (2) higher group size  $\longrightarrow$  more delay

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Evaluating whether subjects abide or not by stationary strategies is complicated because:

- 1. Delay is rather uncommon (15-20%)
- 2. Individual studies yield only a handful of round 2 or beyond groups
- 3. No statistical power to derive meaningful conclusions, but the meta-analysis overcomes these difficulties

• Take all round 2 proposals (round 3 and beyond is a very small sample)

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- Identify the previous proposer
- In expectation: what share of the pie is offered in R2 to R1 failed proposers vs non-proposers?
- Likelihood of inclusion in a coalition?
- In groups of 5, rejection can occur with 2 votes in favor. Do people also punish those who supported the proposer?

We compute the mean share offered to a R1 proposer / R1 non-proposer (including her own proposal if any).

Table 3: Empirical Continuation Values as Proportion of Total Fund

Groups of 3 Groups of 5

Round 1 Proposer

Round 1 Non-Proposer

Std. err. in parentheses are clustered at study level.

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	Groups of 3	Groups of 5
Round 1 Proposer	0.28 (0.010)	0.16 (0.008)

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Evidence that subjects punish the previous proposer. But this measure may underestimate punishment because it includes self-allocated share.

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#### **Empirical Continuation Value**

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Figure 1: Shares offered in Round 2 by Subjects that did not Propose in Round 1 (by recipient and group size)



#### **Empirical Continuation Value**

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#### Even stronger evidence of punishment.

Key distinction between groups of 3 and 5 in how a rejection may have occurred.

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- Groups of 3: all non-proposers voted against
- Groups of 5: a proposal may fail and one member may have supported it. Does she reciprocate?

# Do supporters of failed proposals reciprocate positively? (cont'd)

**Figure 2:** Shares offered in Round 2 by Subjects that did not Propose in Round 1 for Groups of 5, by Voting Decision



# Do supporters of failed proposals reciprocate positively? (cont'd)

**Figure 2:** Shares offered in Round 2 by Subjects that did not Propose in Round 1 for Groups of 5, by Voting Decision



Failed proposers are doomed: punished by everyone.

#### **Concluding Remarks**

• Very mild proposer power. Increases with experience due to increase in MWCs, **but not within MWCs**.

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- Play is not stationary!
- Anticipation of retaliation may deter proposers from attempting to keep a large share

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### Majoritarian Bargaining over Budgetary Divisions and Policy

Andrzej Baranski (NYUAD) (based on joint work with Nicholas Haas (Aarhus University), and Rebecca Morton) April 7, 2022

April 7, 2022

Prepared for Experimental Economics at OSU

### Introduction

What do legislatures do?

• Budget allocations

- Budget allocations
- Funding localized projects

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These issues can be broadly categorized as:

- 1. Distributive: fixed sum of divisible resources to split
- 2. Ideological: non-divisible choices

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These issues can be broadly categorized as:

- 1. **Distributive**: fixed sum of divisible resources to split Divergent interests
- 2. **Ideological**: non-divisible choices may have partially aligned interests

Key question in Political Economy: what is the the interplay between **distributive** and **ideological** choices in collective decision-making?
1. **Theoretically:** assume a particular utility function which captures the trade-offs policy vs pork, bargaining protocol, equilibrium derivation

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- 1. **Theoretically:** assume a particular utility function which captures the trade-offs policy vs pork, bargaining protocol, equilibrium derivation
- 2. **Empirically:** identify legislators preferences based on voting patterns (PoliSci studies (Evans, 2004; Lazarus, 2018))
- 3. Laboratory experiments: Induce preferences over both dimensions (compensate with \$ in both dimensions) see Christiansen, Georganas and Kagel (2014, AEJ Micro)

# Motivation

1. Broad Goal: extend our understanding of how people make choices involving trade-offs between ideological preferences and money

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- Ideally, we want our experiment to explain naturally-occurring behavior in the lab as it occurs outside the lab
- 4. External validity: Decisions in the lab have consequences *in the real world*

#### Framework

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1. How are **bargaining outcomes** affected by the interplay between ideological policy choices and sharing of divisible goods?

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- 2. Can bargaining behavior be **predicted** by behaviorally elicited preferences?
- 3. How does the **ideological composition** of a group affect the agreements it can reach? (Majority versus minority)

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  - Treatment 1: Policy and Budget Full Information
  - Treatment 2: Budget Only Full Information
  - Treatment 3: Policy Only Full Information
  - Treatment 4: Budget Only No Information

# **Related Literature**

## Related Literature: Multilateral Strategic Bargaining Theory

- 1. Budgetary Division: Predict proposer power and minimal winning coalitions
  - Baron and Ferejohn (BF) (1989 APSR): Indefinitely repeated divide-the-dollar game with random proposer selection.

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  - Extensions: Merlo and Wilson (1995 Ecta), Eraslan (2002 JET), Yildirim (2007 JET)
- 2. Multi-dimensional Bargaining Space: Players forgo benefits in one dimension to reap them in another
  - Banks and Duggan (2000 APSR): Extend BF and allow for policy choice in a bicameral system
  - Jackson and Moselle (JET 2002): Extend BF to One-dimensional policy & budget division
  - Volden and Wiseman (2007 APSR): Bargaining in Legislatures over Particularistic and Collective Goods

### **Experimental Literature**

- 1. **Divide the dollar:** Meta-analysis (Baranski and Morton 2021 Exp Econ)
  - Proposer power is moderate, well below predictions
  - Minimum Winning Coalitions are modal but not universal (68% in groups of 3)

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  - Proposer power is moderate, well below predictions
  - Minimum Winning Coalitions are modal but not universal (68% in groups of 3)
- 2. Divide-the-dollar and Policy: Christiansen, Georganas, and Kagel (2014 AEJ Micro) test Jackson and Moselle (2002)
  - Induced preferences over location of a facility in the policy line
  - Find evidence for private goods facilitating compromise and increase the likelihood of proposals passing

Typical approach of measuring ideology using stated beliefs may not capture underlying population preferences (Quarfoot et al. 2017)

 Low stakes → higher risks of satisficing, providing a socially desirable answer, "guessing" on issues about which one is not knowledgeable (Krosnick, 1988; Haas and Morton 2018)

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 Donation method designed to raise stakes, and evidence indicates it reduces social desirability bias

Typical approach of measuring ideology using stated beliefs may not capture underlying population preferences (Quarfoot et al. 2017)

 Low stakes → higher risks of satisficing, providing a socially desirable answer, "guessing" on issues about which one is not knowledgeable (Krosnick, 1988; Haas and Morton 2018)

### We use a validated behavioral, revealed preference measure introduced by Haas and Morton (2018)

- Donation method designed to raise stakes, and evidence indicates it reduces social desirability bias
- We extend method in particular by measuring both preference strength and direction, further raising stakes

# **Theoretical Model**
A one-round version of Jackson and Moselle (2002)

• Committee of three players:  $i \in \{1, 2, 3\}$ 

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• 
$$u_i(x, Y^j | \hat{Y}_i) = \begin{cases} x & \text{if } Y^j = \hat{Y}_i \\ x - MAA_i^{j \to j'} & \text{if } Y^j \neq \hat{Y}_i \end{cases}$$
 where x is money

For two-dimensional bargaining space with common knowledge of preferences

• Proposal stage: Each player submits a proposal consisting of a vector of transfers and a policy choice

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Bargaining space and information varies by treatment.

## **Theoretical Predictions**

We focus on majority-minority groups: 2 players share a peak preferences.

• Intuition for optimal proposal: combination of policy and budget shares that maximize own utility subject to the voting constraint

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- Marjority rule: At least one other member must be weakly better off compared to the *outside option*
- Voting: A player at or above her continuation value votes in favor

#### Consider Voter 1 with peak at L



#### Consider Voter 2 with peak at L, stronger prefs than Voter 1 $% \left( {{{\rm{T}}_{{\rm{T}}}}_{{\rm{T}}}} \right)$



### **Example: Minority Proposer**

#### Consider a proposer with peak at ${\sf M}$



#### Consider the status quo at L, where the majority are



#### The proposer will choose her preferred policy M



Will transfer  $t^*$  to voter 1, the cheapest voter. The money paid is less than the disutility of L.



What if the proposer has weaker preferences? She leaves the policy at L and transfers  $t^* = 0$ .



### **Example: Minority Proposer**



Minority players compromise depending on their preferences relative to the majority players.

#### Now consider when then Status Quo is the Minority Player's peak.



### Status Quo Advantage

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#### Now consider when then Status Quo is the Minority Player's peak.



A player whose peak preference is the status keeps all the budget and choose their own policy.

Now consider when the proposer is part of the ideological majority.



If status quo is the Middle: Bring policy to L and obtain voter 2's approval.



If status quo is the Right: Bring policy to L and obtain voter 2's approval. Voter 1's approval depends on her prefs



If status quo is Left: Keep it there.





Majority players keep all the budget and choose their own policy.
	Status Quo		
	Own Policy	Other	
In Majority	keep \$10, own policy	keep \$10, own policy	
In Minority	keep \$10, own policy	Depends on Relative MAAs	

# **Experimental Design**

**Identifying the ideal policy for each subject:** we operationalize the ideological spectrum with political interest groups

• Subjects are shown the names and official descriptions of three interest groups for a given topic and asked to make a \$1 donation

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- Exercise repeated for each of four topics, with one choice per subject implemented at random

	Ideological Location of Interest Group			
Торіс	Ideologically Democrat	Ideologically	Ideologically	
	(Left)	Independent (Middle)	Republican (Right)	
Taxes	Citizens for Tax Justice	The Tax Foundation	Americans for Tax Reform	
Welfare	Center for American Progress	Child Welfare League of America	Heritage Foundation	
Immigration	American Immigration	The Migration	Negative Population	
	Council	Policy Institute	Growth	
Guns	Coalition to Stop Gun	The American Security	National Rifle	
	Violence	Project	Association	

**Identifying preference strength:** How much money are subjects willing to sacrifice in order to defend their ideal policy?

• Subjects were shown their preferred group on a topic & asked for the MAA between \$0 and \$5 to be given to them so that they would be okay with the experimenter donating \$100 to each of the alternative interest groups.

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- Otherwise subject received \$0 and donation made to preferred group.
- One person's decision per session counted for payment

Subjects knew another stage of the experiment followed, but were not aware of what it was about.

#### **Peak Preferences in our Sample**



#### Attitudinal Strength of Preferences in our Sample



Figure 1: CDF of MAA for Subjects with Peak in the Middle

## **Treatment 1: Budget and Policy Bargaining Game**

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# Results of Policy and Budget Treatment

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Kolmogorov-Smirnov test indicates distribution functions are not equal (p < 0.001).

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10% of people have a threshold of 10 for non-preferred

In the Policy and Budget Treatment (Treatment 1), players are willing to accept a smaller share of the budget when the policy is their preferred one and demand a larger share for alternative policies.



about 30% have a threshold of 0 for both preferred and non-preferred

#### Hypothesis 2.a

Majority members never compromise on policy (always choose preferred policy).

## Hypothesis 2: Majority Advantage

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Majority members choose own policy 75% of the time.

#### Hypothesis 2b

Majority Members share more with other majority members than with minority members.
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Significantly smaller transfers to minority members (1.8 vs 2.6)

Minorities compromise when it is relatively cheap to do so.

	Policy Proposal	
	Own Policy	Majority Policy
Should Choose Own Policy	0.27	0.56
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Table 1: Policy Choice and (Acceptance Rate)

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- 2. Rational anticipation of the larger odds of acceptance can explain this behavior

Members whose peak preference is the status quo are (1) more likely to choose their own policy and (2) keep a large share of the budget

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- 3. Minorities are unlikely to propose own policy even when they should
- 4. The status quo advantage is only present in policy proposals not in the budget division

# **Results of Other Treatments**

Overall, the distribution of voting thresholds in Treatment 1 are skewed to the left and significantly lower on average compared to the voting thresholds in Budget Only Treatments (Treatments 2 and 4).

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Voting thresholds significantly higher in Budget only TRTs Jump at \$3 indicates subjects mostly willing to accept shares resulting from equal split.

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72% of the time minorities choose own policy (compared to 28% in Policy and Budget) Majorities are almost always approved (save 1 instance), minorities are approved only 50% when proposing own policy

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15% of approved proposals are 1 way splits in TRT1, only 3% in Budget Only TRTs Interestingly, 2-way splits represent only 20% in budget only TRTs and 13% in Policy and Budget

Do induced ideological preferences produce the same bargaining outcomes as elicited *real* preferences?

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- Same treatment with a neutral frame (Your earnings from location 1 are...)
- Subjects played in same order and matching groups as TRT1 sessions
### Hypothesis 8a. Voting Thresholds

There are no differences in voting thresholds between Policy and Budget Trt with Elicited and Induced preferences.

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No difference in VT for preferred policy, but significantly higher for Non-preferred policy

Voting threshold as positively correlated with elicited and induced MAAs.

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Elicited and Induced prefs correlate positively with voting thresholds (same coefficient)

Voting threshold as positively correlated with elicited and induced MAAs.



Elicited and Induced prefs correlate positively with voting thresholds (same coefficient) The intercept is higher for induced preferences (as expected from previous result)

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- Behavior under Artificial ideology and real ideology moves in the same directions -i Validates standard laboratory approach but...
- 6. Artificial ideology leads to more aggressive demands by players when proposed policy is not their preferred one. Why? (open question)

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- 3. Voters cannot condition response on identity of the proposer. Will this matter?
- 4. Key aspect of the real world missing: Communication

Comments or Questions?

Comments or Questions? Thank You.