

# Selfishness, Fairness and Voting for Redistribution

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## Abstract

This paper presents an experiment in which subjects vote on redistribution from a rich minority to a poor majority. Although we observe that the majority of subjects exhibit social preferences, the outcome of the voting is as if subjects were materially self interested. This finding is robust with respect to a wide range of changes in the size of the electorate. Furthermore it is robust to a change in the voting rule from direct democratic to representative voting. It is also robust to whether the distribution of endowments is determined by luck or by individual performance. Overall, we identify a class of democratic redistribution choices in which social preferences do not matter.

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