Politics Transformed? Electoral Strategies under Ranked Choice Voting

Peter BUISSERET

Abstract :
We analyze a model of multi-candidate elections under plurality rule versus ranked choice voting (RCV). Candidates choose platforms either to target their core supporters, or instead to appeal to undecided voters. We present two main results. First, RCV intensifies candidates' incentives to target their core supporters rather than pursue a broad policy appeal. Second, we unearth circumstances in which RCV increases the probability that a Condorcet loser wins the election. Our findings contradict widely-held contentions about RCV's benefits, relative to plurality rule elections.