

Self Interest and Public Interest in Western Politics (Comparative European Politics)

Leif Lewin



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Self Interest and Public Interest in Western Politics (Comparative European Politics) Leif Lewin Leif Lewin examines more than two hundred studies of democracy in action from seventeen countries, to address the question of whether Western politics is dominated by self-interest or public interest. - ;Is it selfinterest or public interest that dominates Western politics? This question has been debated in many fields, and through the 1980s a consensus developed, supported by extensive research, that in their political decisions and actions people are largely motivated by self-interest, not by common good.

In this book, combining in a novel way insights from different fields, including rational choice theory, political philosophy, and electoral research, Leif Lewin examines more than two hundred studies of democracy in action from seventeen countries. He looks at the behaviour and attitudes of voters, bureaucrats, and politicians in turn, and challenges the accepted wisdom. In his wide-ranging review of the literature he shows that people are in fact actuated by broader considerations than their own short-sighted interests: that they act politically `in the shadow of the future'; that they find there are overwhelming reasons to try to contribute to the long-term common good.

Professor Lewin shows, in short, that the plausible and prevalent theory that egoism rules simply don't match the facts. - ;Self-interest and public interest; Does the voter vote according to his pocket-book?; Are politicians vote-maximizers?; Are bureaucrats budget-maximizers?; Individual and collective rationality -

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