

On the Optimization of Legislative Periods - Similarities to the Optimization of Rotation Periods

Robert Kaiser^{a*}, Matthias Bösch^b, Martin Moog^b

First, the models known from forestry and forest economics for optimizing rotation periods (Faustmann formula) and for deciding whether a forest stand has reached maturity (Pressler's 'indicator percent') are discussed briefly. Then, some analogies are drawn between these two decision tools on the one hand and determining office terms lengths as well as scheduling new elections on the other hand. It will become clear that the relations known from the Faustmann formula could also be relevant for timing legislative periods, at least from the viewpoint of interest groups involved in the political process. However, much less parallels can be found between the harvesting dates of forest stands and the triggering of new elections. Particularly due to differing objective functions and constraints, it is not possible to analogously apply Pressler's indicator percent to politics.

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^a*Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität, Geschwister-Scholl-Institut für Politische Wissenschaft, Oettingenstr. 67, D-80538 München*

^b*Technische Universität München, Institute of Forest Economics, Am Hochanger 13, D-85354 Freising*

Corresponding author. Tel.: +49 89 2180 9076; fax: +49 89 2180 9072.

E-mail address: robert.kaiser@lrz.uni-muenchen.de

