

# FAMILY NETWORKS AND DISTRIBUTIVE POLITICS

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## **Abstract**

We study the distribution of public services by local politicians when political support spreads through social networks. We sketch a model showing that incumbents target goods and services to individuals who would lead to the largest aggregate loss of support if they stopped supporting the incumbent. Those individuals have high betweenness centrality. Using data on 3.6 million households from the Philippines, we show that households with high betweenness centrality receive a greater number of public services from their local government. This result is robust to the inclusion of controls for program eligibility, detailed measure of family wealth and elite status, family ties with politicians, and other measures of centrality. (JEL: D72, P16)

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