

ABSTRACT

Coalition voting (CV) is a voting procedure for electing a parliament under a party-list system of proportional representation. As under approval voting (AV), voters can vote for as many parties as they like, but unlike AV, each party does not receive one vote. Instead, each voter has a "party vote," which is divided evenly among all parties of which the voter approves.

These fractional approval votes determine the seat shares of each party in the parliament. In addition, each voter has a "coalition vote," which counts for the set of all parties (and proper subsets) of which the voter approves. Whereas party votes determine which sets of parties have a majority of seats, coalition votes determine which of these majority sets has the greatest approval as a coalition. The majority coalition that has all its parties approved of by the most voters becomes the governing coalition.

In order to have their coalition votes count, voters must vote for enough parties to constitute a majority coalition. By placing a premium on precisely the most approved of majority coalitions, CV also encourages parties, before an election, to reconcile their differences and form coalitions that are likely to have broad appeal. Such coalitions, insofar as they formulate coherent policies, facilitate voter choices, producing a convergence of voter and party/coalition interests.

Theoretical properties of CV are analyzed, and optimal strategies of voters and parties are investigated. CV's most likely empirical effects in faction-ridden multiparty systems, like those of Israel and Italy, are also considered. Although CV is radically different from AV in the way votes are allocated and aggregated, the physical act of voting--for as many alternatives as one likes--is the same, commending CV as a relatively simple and practicable reform to promote consensus in party-list systems.