

Voting Simply in the Election of Assemblies

by

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Abstract

In many elections, citizens choose among candidates that then constitute assemblies rather than choose among assemblies directly. To understand these candidate-based procedures, we begin with the observation that the voter's preferences over assemblies, not candidates, are fundamental. Moreover, given her preferences over assemblies, a voter might derive a ranking of candidates in many different ways. We justify the common assumption of separable preferences over assemblies by making explicit the relation between separability and sincere voting. To do this, we introduce the notion of simple voting which extends the idea of sincere voting to candidate-based procedures. Intuitively, an individual votes simply when she does not regret the electoral success of candidates for whom she voted. We identify top-separability and separability of assembly preferences as necessary and sufficient conditions for simple voting over candidates and simple ranking of candidates, respectively, to be possible.

KEYWORDS: social choice, sincere voting, representative democracy, committees.

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