

## Social Choice in a Representative Democracy

by

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## Abstract

In a representative democracy, citizens stand at two removes from legislation. First, they do not deliberate and vote directly on legislation. Rather they elect assemblies that enact such legislation in their stead. Second, and less commonly remarked, citizens do not vote directly for assemblies. Rather they vote for individual candidates, with the candidates receiving the most votes elected. This paper examines the efficiency properties of these voting systems. We show, first, that in general these procedures are inefficient. Second, we identify a condition on assembly preferences (called  $k$ -blockness) that insures the election of a pareto-optimal assembly. We then prove two negative results. The first theorem shows that inefficiency may recur if all but two of the voters have  $k$ -block preferences. The second theorem shows that whatever neutral restriction is imposed on preferences, an "almost inefficient" assembly may be elected.

KEYWORDS: social choice, voting scheme, sincere voting, committees, representative democracy, separable preferences  
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