

Social Choice in a Representative Democracy

by

Jean-Pierre Benoit  
New York University  
Dept. of Economics  
269 Mercer Street  
New York, NY 10011

and

Lewis A. Kornhauser  
New York University  
School of Law  
40 Washington Square South  
New York, NY 10012

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 show 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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