
Simple alternatives to majority rule

My scheme is intended only for honest men.

Jean-Charles de Borda

Several alternatives to the majority rule have been proposed down through the years. Three of the newest and most complicated of these are presented in Chapter 8. Here we discuss some of the simpler proposals.

These voting procedures are usually not considered a means of revealing preferences on a public good issue, but a means of choosing a candidate for a given office. All issues cannot be chosen simultaneously. Only one of them can be. Although such choices are perhaps most easily envisaged in terms of a list of candidates for a vacant public office, the procedures might be thought of as being applied to a choice from among any set of mutually exclusive alternatives – such as points along the Pareto-possibility frontier.

7.1 The alternative voting procedures defined

Majority rule: Choose the candidate who is ranked first by more than half of the voters.

Majority rule, runoff election: If one of the m candidates receives a majority of first-place votes, this candidate is the winner. If not, a second election is held between the two candidates receiving the most first-place votes on the first ballot. The candidate receiving the most votes on the second ballot is the winner.

Plurality rule: Choose the candidate who is ranked first by the largest number of voters.

Condorcet criterion: Choose the candidate who defeats all others in pairwise elections using majority rule.

The Hare system: Each voter indicates the candidate he ranks *highest* of the m candidates. Remove from the list of candidates the one ranked highest by the fewest voters. Repeat the procedure for the remaining $m - 1$ candidates. Continue until only one candidate remains. Declare this candidate the winner.

The Coombs system: Each voter indicates the candidate he ranks *lowest* of the m candidates. Remove from the list of candidates the one ranked lowest by the most voters. Repeat the procedure for the remaining $m - 1$

