

The Majority Family of Electoral Systems



Objectives

- to demonstrate how the family of majority electoral systems works
- to show the variations within the majority family
- to introduce 'two round vote' (TRS) and 'alternative vote' (AV)

Key features

- candidates require a majority of support (*i.e.*, 50% + one)
- encourages higher threshold than plurality systems (*i.e.*, winning candidates have greater level of support)
- non-proportional system
- encourages local representation

Elements of the majority system

- district magnitude is usually one
- formula is majority (50% + one)
- ballot can be categorical or ordinal
 - ordinal ballots are called 'preferential' in Australian Alternative Vote

How to achieve a majority?

1. Vote more than once until a majority is created

- eliminate lowest placed candidate(s) on categorical ballot
- used in Canadian party leadership conventions, French National Assembly Elections (two round system)
- vote is for one choice, so easy to vote

How to achieve a majority?

2. Vote once but indicate several preferences

- votes of lowest placed candidate is transferred to others
- used in Australian House of Representatives (alternative vote)
- voters rank their preferences
 - rank all candidates: compulsory preferential voting
 - rank some candidates: optional preferential voting

Majority system if you vote more than once

	Party A	Party B	Party C	Party D
first round of voting	2000	1500	1000	500
second round of voting	2700	2300		

The 'problem' of constructed majorities? 2002 French presidential election

Candidate	1st round	2nd round
Chirac	5.6 million (19%)	25.5 million (82%)
Le Pen	4.8 million (17%)	5.5 million (18%)
Jospin	4.6 million (16%)	
Bayrou	1.9 million (7%)	
Laguiller	1.6 million (5.7%)	
Chevènement	1.5 million (5.3%)	
ten others	8.5 million (30%)	

**Vote once
but rank
your
candidates
(preferential
voting)**

**BALLOT PAPER
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
VICTORIA
ELECTORAL DIVISION OF WILLS**

***Number the boxes
from 1 to 22
in the order of your choice***

- SAVAGE, Katheryne
INDEPENDENT
- KARDAMITSIS, Bill
AUSTRALIAN LABOR PARTY (ALP)
- KUHNE, Otto Ernest
- PHILLIPS, Richard
- KAPFMAN, Will
INDEPENDENT
- HAWSON, Geraldine
INDEPENDENT
- DELACRETAZ, John
LIBERAL
- POULOS, Patricia
- DROULERS, Julien Paul
INDEPENDENT
- FRENCH, Bill
INDEPENDENT
- POTTER, F. C.
INDEPENDENT
- MURRAY, John
INDEPENDENT
- VASSIS, Chris
INDEPENDENT
- CLEARY, Philip
INDEPENDENT
- FERRARO, Salvatore
INDEPENDENT
- GERMAINE, Stan
THE FEDERAL PARTY OF AUSTRALIA
- WALKER, Angela
AUSTRALIANS AGAINST FURTHER IMMIGRATION
- MACKAY, David
DEMOCRATS
- LEWIS, Bob
INDEPENDENT
- SYKES, Ian Grant
INDEPENDENT
- KYRCU, Kon
INDEPENDENT
- MURGATROYD

***Remember ... number
every box
to make your vote count.***

**Alternative
Vote
Ballot
Paper**

**Vote once --
but rank
your
candidates
(preferential
voting)**


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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
VICTORIA
ELECTORAL DIVISION OF WILLS

**Number the boxes
from 1 to 22
in the order of your choice**

4	SAVAGE, Katheryne <small>INDEPENDENT</small>
21	KARDAMITSIS, Bill <small>AUSTRALIAN LABOR PARTY (ALP)</small>
1	KUHNE, Otto Ernest
10	PHILLIPS, Richard
3	KAPFMAN, Will <small>INDEPENDENT</small>
22	HAWSON, Geraldine <small>INDEPENDENT</small>
16	DELLACRE LAZ, John <small>LIBERAL</small>
19	POULOS, Patricia
2	DROULERS, Julian Paul <small>INDEPENDENT</small>
18	FRENCH, Bill <small>INDEPENDENT</small>
8	POTTER, F. C. <small>INDEPENDENT</small>
13	MURRAY, John <small>INDEPENDENT</small>
12	VASSIS, Chris <small>INDEPENDENT</small>
7	CLEARY, Philip <small>INDEPENDENT</small>
17	FERRARO, Salvatore <small>INDEPENDENT</small>
15	GERMAINE, Stan <small>THE FEDERAL PARTY OF AUSTRALIA</small>
11	WALKER, Angela <small>AUSTRALIANS AGAINST FURTHER IMMIGRATION</small>
5	MACKAY, David <small>DEMOCRATS</small>
20	LEWIS, Bob <small>INDEPENDENT</small>
9	SYKES, Ian Grant <small>INDEPENDENT</small>
14	KYROU, Kon <small>INDEPENDENT</small>
6	MURGATROYD

**Remember ... number
every box
to make your vote count.**

← this voter's first choice

**Alternative
Vote
Ballot
Paper**

Counting ballots under alternative vote

Kuhne	2200 first preference votes
Phillips	2000 first preference votes
Vasis	900 first preference votes
Rawson	500 first preference votes

Rawson is eliminated but his ballots are transferred.

Let's examine Rawson's second preference ballots

Vasis	300 second preference votes	
Phillips	200 second place votes	

The results after Rawson's ballots are transferred

Kuhne	2200 first preference votes	2200 votes
Phillips	2000 first preference votes + 200 second preference votes	2200 votes
Vasis	900 first preference votes + 300 second place votes	1200 votes

Vasis is eliminated but her ballots are transferred.

Let's examine Vasis' ballots

Kuhne	400 next preference votes	
Phillips	800 next preference votes	

The results after Vasis' ballots are transferred

Kuhne	2200 votes + 400 next preference votes	2600 votes
Phillips	2200 votes + 500 next preference votes	2700 votes

Phillips is the winner with more than 50% of the vote

Majority can be achieved two ways

- Alternative Vote: ordinal voting
 - vote once, rank candidates
- Two Round vote: categorical voting
 - vote in more than one round (usually two)

Relating majority systems to principles

• Strengths of majority systems:

- legitimacy: winner has majority support

- fairness of representation:
geographic representation

- voter choice: greater than plurality

Relating majority systems to principles

• Strengths of majority systems:

- effective parties: produces a few, strong parties

- stable and effective government/effective parliament: produces majority governments (single party or two party coalition)

Relating majority systems to principles

• Strengths of majority systems:

- stronger voter participation: if compulsory as in Australia but not system related
- accountability: DM of one allows for local accountability
- simple and practical: simple in TRS because categorical voting

Relating majority systems to principles

• Weaknesses of majority systems:

- legitimacy: majorities manufactured; can produce unpopular run-off election
- fair representation: is not proportional when DM is one
 - no mechanism to encourage under-represented groups

Relating majority systems to principles

- Weaknesses of majority systems:

- voter choice: more complicated ballot structure with compulsory voting (AV) and forced choice on second round (TRS)

Relating majority systems to principles

Weaknesses of majority systems:

- effective parties: limited voice for smaller parties
- stronger voter participation: only if compulsory
- accountability: of local member not party
- simple and practical: complicated ballot (AV); costly and cumbersome (TRS)

Conclusion

- candidates know they have a majority of support
- majority systems are not proportional
- majority systems encourage two party competition
- majority systems produce local representation