

Rules to Select Rules Matter:

An Experimental Analysis of Voting Rule Selection

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Abstract

What factors influence the choice of electoral systems? A laboratory experiment is used to test a model designed to explain electoral systems change (Benoit 2004). In the experiment, subjects select a voting rule for their group of three to be used in elections that determines their earnings. We compare subjects' choices, and negotiation processes in a computerized chat, between two treatments, majority and unanimity, that vary the rule to select the electoral rule. Our data provide experimental support for the model's predictions. Different choices of voting methods are observed under majority and unanimity. Under majority, more variance in the selected methods is observed, whereas under unanimity, agreement is mainly made over the Borda count.

