Multi-Winner Elections:

Working Toward Proportional Representation



Multi-Winner Elections Deserve More Attention

Look for opportunities to hold multi-winner elections

Denver, Dec 7, 2019

• Eliminate gerrymandering



Increase competitiveness



 Use a voting method that promotes proportional representation



Definitions

Single-Winner Election: governor, ward member, member of Congress

Versus

Multi-Winner Election: 2 or more seats filled in one contest

Example: 2019 Denver

Single Winner

Clerk and Recorder

Vote for one (1)

- Peg Perl
- Paul D. Lopez
- Sarah O. McCarthy

Two Winners

Councilmembers At-Large

Vote for not more than two (2)

- Jesse Lashawn Parris
- Johnny Hayes
- Deborah "Debbie" Ortega
- Tony Pigford
- Lynne Langdon
- Robin Kniech

Appropriate Use

Single-Winner Contests

Appropriate for **unitary** executive offices, such as governor, treasurer, and mayor

Multi-Winner Contests

Appropriate for **multi-member** legislative or executive bodies, such as the US House of Representatives, city council, and school boards



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Eliminate gerrymandering



- Increase competitiveness
- Use a voting method that promotes PR

Conditions for Gerrymandering

Elected multi-member body

• Elections by geographic district where different district boundaries are possible.

Solve Gerrymandering!

Gerrymandering is manipulating the boundaries of an electoral district.

To eliminate gerrymandering, get rid of districts!



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Eliminating all districts may be unreasonable; California has 53 congressional districts.



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Eliminating all districts may be unreasonable; California has 53 congressional districts.



★ Solution: Create multi-member districts (and conduct multi-winner elections). ★

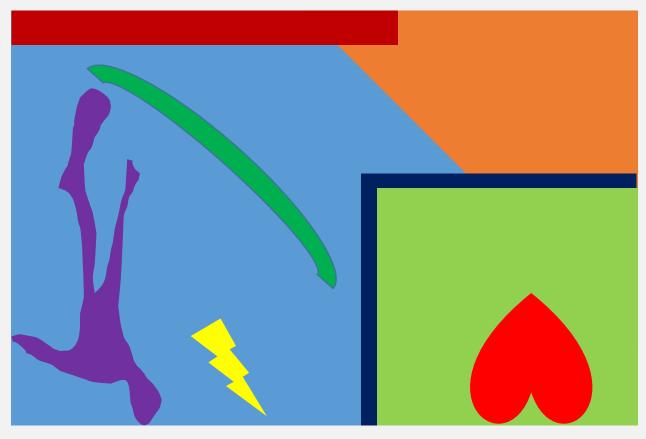
- Cynthia Terrell 2:15 presentation -



Fair Representation Act

- HR 4000 Create multi-member congressional districts, usually 3 to 5 members/district
- Overturn a 1967 law mandating single-member districts

9 Gerrymandered Congressional Districts



Congressional Districts Under FRA

4-member District 5-member **District**

Local Gerrymandering

Blatant gerrymandering less likely but still possible at the local level



Solutions – same as for federal/state

- One at-large district
- Multi-member wards with multiwinner elections

Easier to make changes locally

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Got Competitive Elections?

Multi-Member District: 2 or more members elected from one district

Multi-Winner (MW) Election: 2 or more seats filled in one contest

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Multi-Member District: 2 or more members elected from one district

Multi-Winner (MW) Election: 2 or more seats filled in one contest

Multi-member districts do not always hold multi-winner elections!

Every State is a "Multi-Member" District

Each state elects 2 US senators – in staggered years.

Every State is a "Multi-Member" District

Each state elects 2 US senators – in staggered years.

US Senate elections are not MW and most are not competitive.

Competitiveness Problems in SW Districts

Problem #1 - Many district elections are uncontested, especially in one-party communities. Voters have no voice.

Competitiveness Problems in SW Districts

Problem #1 - Many district elections are uncontested, especially in one-party communities. Voters have no voice.

Problem #2 - Two good candidates vie for one district seat. Only one of the good candidates can win.

MW Elections Increase Competitiveness

#1 Solved - Larger MW districts have a bigger pool of candidates. A candidate doesn't win because of geography.

MW Elections Increase Competitiveness

#1 Solved - Larger MW districts have a bigger pool of candidates. A candidate doesn't win because of geography.

#2 Solved - Two popular candidates from the same neighborhood can run "against" each other and both win.

Competitive Elections > Higher Voter Turnout

- If something is at stake in an election...
- If voters feel like their voice matters...

-- Voters Turn Out!



Multi-Winner Elections Deserve More Attention

Look for opportunities to hold multi-winner elections

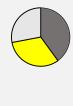
- Eliminate gerrymandering
- Increase competitiveness
- Use a voting method that promotes proportional representation (PR)



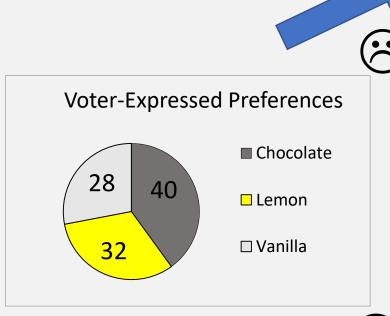
Multi-Winner Elections Deserve More Attention

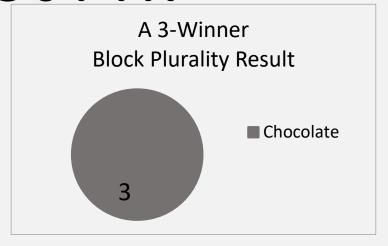
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- Use a voting method that promotes proportional representation (PR)

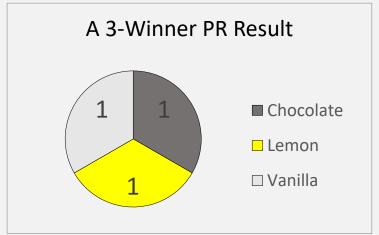


Multi-Winner: PR or Not PR?









What is Proportional Representation?

Proportional representation (PR) is a feature of some voting methods in which one* or more characteristics of an electorate are reflected proportionately in the elected body.

Not a winner-take-all method!

*If only one, it's usually political party affiliation.



Non-Partisan PR

Non-partisan PR elections allow the voters to choose

the characteristics which matter most to them and/or which are the important issues of the campaign:

rural, renters, religion, youth, gender, racial/ethnic, positions on issues (fracking, guns), or, yes, political ideology or geography





Multi-Winner Elections Promote PR Do Not Promote PR

Mixed-Member PR*^
(New Zealand since '96)

Party List PR* (variations)

*Proportional by political party ^Includes some SW contests





UK Parliament Debate

2017 Oct 30







Multi-Winner Elections Promote PR Do Not Promote PR

Block Plurality Voting (Denver, CO example)

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Party List PR* (variations)

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Block Plurality Election

5-winner election with 100 voters Vote for up to 5 candidates

10 candidates: Alphas (A1, A2, A3, A4, A5) Betas (B1, B2, B3, B4, B5)

- 60% of electorate supports a straight Alpha slate
- 40% of electorate supports a straight Beta slate

Each Alpha candidate gets 60 votes and is elected.

Alphas win 100% of the seats.

Not Proportional

Proportional Election

5-winner election with 100 voters.

How to vote varies according to chosen PR voting method.

10 candidates: Alphas (A1, A2, A3, A4, A5) Betas (B1, B2, B3, B4, B5)

- 60% of electorate supports only Alphas
- 40% of electorate supports only Betas

A proportional result is

- 3 Alpha candidates (60% of the winners)
- 2 Beta candidates (40% of the winners)



How to Increase Proportionality

- The more seats to fill, and
- The smaller the threshold needed to win a seat
 - -- The more proportional the elected body!



Examples of Proportionality Limits

Number of seats

 A 3-seat town council cannot represent all 4 "parties" in the electorate.

Threshold

 If winning a seat requires at least 15% of the vote, then a "party" which garners only 3% of the vote doesn't get a seat.





Multi-Winner Elections

Promote PR

Cumulative Voting (TX school districts)

Do Not Promote PR

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Use of Cumulative Voting

Most common PR method in US for governmental elections

Typically resulting from a judicial settlement to allow for more racial or ethnic minority representation

Sometimes Classified as "Semi-Proportional"



Cumulative (Points)
Voting Mechanics

Simple to vote – Same instructions as plurality

- In a 5-winner election, a voter gets 5 votes
- Each candidate is listed 5 times long ballot
 - 1 vote each to 5 different candidates or
 - 5 votes to 1 candidate or
 - Some other distribution of their 5 votes

Simple to tally – top 5 vote-getters win

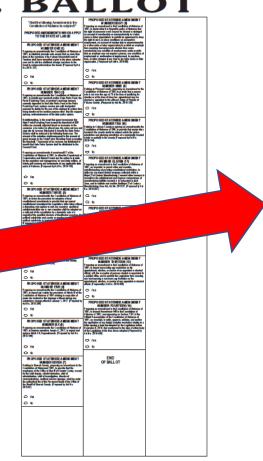


Cumulative Voting

Chilton County, AL, 2016 – Vote for no more than Seven

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Cumulative Voting

Proportional Voting Mechanics

 Each voter has an <u>equal</u> number of votes

 Each voter can distribute the votes unequally to candidates





Multi-Winner Elections

Promote PR

Cumulative Voting (TX school districts)

Do Not Promote PR

Block Plurality Voting (Denver, CO example)

Mixed-Member PR*^
(New Zealand since '96)

Party List PR* (variations)

*Proportional by political party
^Includes some SW contests



MW Ranked Voting Ballot Format

Rank candidates

- 1 for 1st choice, 2 for 2nd choice, etc.
 - Usually prohibited: same ranking to 2 candidates
- 1st choice is always counted

Single-winner ranked voting elections typically allow between 3 and 5 rankings,

but when filling more than 1 seat, voters want more rankings – different kind of long ballot



Elect 6 candidates

Only one vote per candidate. Only one vote per column.

DO NOT USE RED TO MARK BALLOT

MANIKKA L. BOWMAN, 134 Reed Street CANDIDATE FOR RE-ELECTION		12)
FRAN A. CRONIN, 1 Kimball Lane		13
JAKE W. CRUTCHFIELD, 281 River Street	123456789000	12)
EMILY R. DEXTER, 9 Fenno Street CANDIDATE FOR RE-ELECTION	12345678900	12)
ALFRED B. FANTINI, 4 Canal Park CANDIDATE FOR RE-ELECTION	123456789006	12)
ELECHI M. KADETE, 10 Laurel Street	123456789006	9
KATHLEEN M. KELLY, 17 Marie Avenue CANDIDATE FOR RE-ELECTION	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 6	9
LAURANCE V. KIMB ROUGH, 24 Aberdeen Avenue	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 (3
WILLIAM MacARTHUR, 18 Shea Road	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 6	9
PIOTR FLAWIUSZ MITROS, 9 Michael Way	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 6	3
PATRICIA M. NOLAN, 184 Huron Avenue CANDIDATE FOR RE-ELECTION	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 6	3
DAVID J. WEINSTEIN, 45 S. Normandy Avenue	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 (12)
		



Elect 6 candidates

Only one vote per candidate. Only one vote per column.

TO MARK BALLOT

MANIKKA L. BOWMAN, 134 Reed Street CANDIDATE FOR RE-ELECTION	1
FRAN A. CRONIN, 1 Kimball Lane	1
JAKE W. CRUTCHFIELD, 281 River Street	(1)
EMILY R. DEXTER, 9 Fenno Street CANDIDATE FOR RE-ELECTION	(1)
ALFRED B. FANTINI, 4 Canal Park CANDIDATE FOR RE-ELECTION	1
ELECHI M. KADETE, 10 Laurel Street	0
KATHLEEN M. KELLY, 17 Marie Avenue CANDIDATE FOR RE-ELECTION	0
LAURANCE V. KIMBROUGH, 24 Aberdeen Avenue	0
WILLIAM MacARTHUR, 18 Shea Road	
PIOTR FLAWIUSZ MITROS, 9 Michael Way	1
PATRICIA M. NOLAN, 184 Huron Avenue CANDIDATE FOR RE-ELECTION	1
DAVID J. WEINSTEIN, 45 S. Normandy Avenue	(1)
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Elect 6 candidates

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TO MARK BALLOT

MANIKKA L. BOWMAN, 134 Reed Street CANDIDATE FOR RE-ELECTION	1 2
FRAN A. CRONIN, 1 Kimball Lane	1 2
JAKE W. CRUTCHFIELD, 281 River Street	1 2
EMILY R. DEXTER, 9 Fenno Street CANDIDATE FOR RE-ELECTION	1 2
ALFRED B. FANTINI, 4 Canal Park CANDIDATE FOR RE-ELECTION	0
ELECHI M. KADETE, 10 Laurel Street	1 2
KATHLEEN M. KELLY, 17 Marie Avenue CANDIDATE FOR RE-ELECTION	1 2
LAURANCE V. KIMB ROUGH, 24 Aberdeen Avenue	1 2
WILLIAM MacARTHUR, 18 Shea Road	2
PIOTR FLAWIUSZ MITROS, 9 Michael Way	1 2
PATRICIA M. NOLAN, 184 Huron Avenue CANDIDATE FOR RE-ELECTION	1 2
DAVID J. WEINSTEIN, 45 S. Normandy Avenue	1 2
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Elect 6 candidates

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DO NOT USE RED TO MARK BALLOT

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JAKE W. CRUTCHFIELD, 281 River Street	1 2 3
EMILY R. DEXTER, 9 Fenno Street CANDIDATE FOR RE-ELECTION	1 2 3
ALFRED B. FANTINI, 4 Canal Park CANDIDATE FOR RE-ELECTION	1 3
ELECHI M. KADETE, 10 Laurel Street	1 2 3
KATHLEEN M. KELLY, 17 Marie Avenue CANDIDATE FOR RE-ELECTION	1 2 3
LAURANCE V. KIMB ROUGH, 24 Aberdeen Avenue	1 2 3
WILLIAM MacARTHUR, 18 Shea Road	2 3
PIOTR FLAWIUSZ MITROS, 9 Michael Way	1 2 3
PATRICIA M. NOLAN, 184 Huron Avenue CANDIDATE FOR RE-ELECTION	1 2
DAVID J. WEINSTEIN, 45 S. Normandy Avenue	1 2 3



Elect 6 candidates

Only one vote per candidate Only one vote per column.	DO NOT USE RED TO MARK BALLOT
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WILLIAM MacARTHUR, 18 Shea Road	1 2 3 4 6 6 7 8 9 10 11 12
PIOTR FLAWIUSZ MITROS, 9 Michael Way	1 2 3 4 6 7 8 9 10 11 12
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Multi-Winner Elections

Promote PR

Cumulative Voting (TX school districts)

Single Transferable Vote (Cambridge, MA)

Mixed-Member PR*^ (New Zealand since '96)

Party List PR* (variations)

*Proportional by political party
^Includes some SW contests

Do Not Promote PR

Block Plurality Voting (Denver, CO example)



One MW Ranking Method

5-winner election with 100 voters

10 candidates: Alphas (A1, A2, A3, A4, A5) Betas (B1, B2, B3, B4, B5)

- 60% of electorate ranks ballot A1, A2, A3, A4, A5
- 40% of electorate ranks ballot B1, B2, B3, B4, B5

Threshold to win \rightarrow >1/6 of votes = 17 votes



One MW Ranking Method

After Round 1: A1 elected

A1, A2, A3, A4, A5 60 votes

B1, B2, B3, B4, B5 40 votes

A1's election uses up 17 votes out of 60 60 - 17 = 43

43 votes are transferred to A2



One MW Ranking Method

After Round 2: A1, A2 elected

A2, A3, A4, A5 43 votes

B1, B2, B3, B4, B5 40 votes

A2's election uses up 17 more Alpha votes 43 - 17 = 26

26 votes are transferred to A3



One MW Ranking Method

After Round 3: A1, A2, B1 elected

A3, A4, A5 26 votes

B1, B2, B3, B4, B5 40 votes

B1's election uses up 17 Beta votes 40 - 17 = 23

23 votes are transferred to B2



One MW Ranking Method

After Round 4: A1, A2, B1, A3 elected

A3, A4, A5 B2, B3, B4, B5 26 votes

23 votes

A3's election uses up 17 more Alpha votes 26 - 17 = 9

9 votes are transferred to A4



One MW Ranking Method

After Round 5: A1, A2, B1, A3, B2 elected

A4, A5 B2, B3, B4, B5 9 votes

23 votes

-- We have our 5 winners!



One MW Ranking Method

Final Results are **Proportional** to the electorate's voting preferences:

A1, A2, B1, A3, B2 elected

- 3 Alpha winners (60%)
- 2 Beta winners (40%)



One MW Ranking Method

Proportional Voting Mechanics

- Surpassing a threshold guarantees a seat.
- Each voter has only 1 vote but can rank the candidates. When a ballot's vote is for a candidate who is eliminated or is a surplus vote for a winning candidate, the single vote is transferred to the next ranking.





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Block Plurality Voting (Denver, CO example)

Repeated Instant-Runoff Ranked Choice Voting (in 2019 Payson, Utah)





Two Multi-Winner Ranking Methods

Repeated Instant-Runoff Voting (IRV) RCV



&

Single Transferable Vote (STV) RCV



Voter's ballot experience is identical. Tallying is very different.



Both called (MW) RCV?

Promotes PR

Doesn't Promote PR

Single Transferable Vote (since 1941 Cambridge)

Repeated Instant-Runoff Ranked Choice Voting (in 2019 Payson, Utah)







Both called (MW) RCV?

Promotes PR

Doesn't Promote PR

Single Transferable Vote (since 1941 Cambridge)

Repeated Instant-Runoff Ranked Choice Voting (in 2019 Payson, Utah)

SUPER CONFUSING! Let's call them by different names.





Another MW Ranking Method

5-winner election with 100 voters

10 candidates: Alphas (A1, A2, A3, A4, A5) Betas (B1, B2, B3, B4, B5)

- 60% of electorate ranks ballot A1, A2, A3, A4, A5
- 40% of electorate ranks ballot B1, B2, B3, B4, B5

Threshold to win \rightarrow >1/2 of votes = 51 votes



Another MW Ranking Method

After Round 1: A1 elected

A1, A2, A3, A4, A5 60 votes

B1, B2, B3, B4, B5 40 votes

If you voted for a winner, now your ballot counts toward your next highest ranking.

If you voted for A1, in the next round you get to vote for A2.



Another MW Ranking Method

After Round 2: A1, A2 elected

A2, A3, A4, A5 60 votes

B1, B2, B3, B4, B5 40 votes

So far, Alpha voters voted for 2 candidates. Beta voters only voted for B1, a loser.

If you voted for A2, in the next round you get to vote for A3.



Another MW Ranking Method

After Round 3: A1, A2, A3 elected

A3, A4, A5 60 votes

B1, B2, B3, B4, B5 40 votes

Beta voters are stuck voting for B1. We are seeing a repeating scenario.

If you voted for A3, in the next round you get to vote for A4. Guess who wins round 4?



Another MW Ranking Method

After Round 4: A1, A2, A3, A4 elected

A4, A5 60 votes

B1, B2, B3, B4, B5 40 votes

Beta voters will not elect any candidates, despite being 40% of the electorate.

If you voted for A4, in the next round you get to vote for A5.



Another MW Ranking Method

After Round 5: A1, A2, A3, A4, A5 elected

A5 60 votes

B1, B2, B3, B4, B5 40 votes

Clean sweep for Alpha voters!

Alphas win 100% of the seats.

Not Proportional



Block Plurality

Simple to understand

Repeated IRV RCV

Feels more expressive but many voters actually have <u>less</u> of a voice

Block Plurality

Simple to understand

Simple to vote

Repeated IRV RCV

Feels more expressive but many voters actually have <u>less</u> of a voice

Giving 2 candidates a #1 ranking spoils the ballot



Block Plurality

Simple to understand

Simple to vote

All votes are counted

Repeated IRV RCV

Feels more expressive but many voters actually have <u>less</u> of a voice

Giving 2 candidates a #1 ranking spoils the ballot

Number of votes counted on a ballot ranges from 1 to the # of winners



Block Plurality

Strategy: Voting for fewer candidates can help those candidates

Repeated IRV RCV

Strategy: To cast the most votes, vote for very popular candidates. To cast some votes, rank a very unpopular candidate #1 and a popular candidate #2. To cast one repeated ineffective vote, rank a so-so popular candidate #1.



Block Plurality

Strategy: Voting for fewer candidates can help those candidates



Pending court case?

Repeated IRV RCV

Strategy: To cast the most votes, vote for very popular candidates. To cast some votes, rank a very unpopular candidate #1 and a popular candidate #2. To cast one repeated ineffective vote, rank a so-so popular candidate #1.



Another MW Ranking Method

Strong argument to be made that

Repeated IRV RCV is worse than Block Plurality Voting!





Multi-Winner Elections

Promote PR

Cumulative Voting (TX school districts)

Single Transferable Vote (Cambridge, MA)

Mixed-Member PR*^
(New Zealand since '96)

Party List PR* (variations)

*Proportional by political party ^Includes some SW contests

Do Not Promote PR

Block Plurality Voting (Denver, CO example)

Repeated Instant-Runoff Ranked Choice Voting (in 2019 Payson, Utah)

Bucklin Voting (used in >60 cities in early 20th century)





Multi-Winner Elections Deserve More Attention

Look for opportunities to hold multi-winner elections

Denver, Dec 7, 2019

• Eliminate gerrymandering



 Use a voting method that promotes proportional representation (PR)





To Solve Gerrymandering and Have More Competitive Elections ...

Create multi-member districts and conduct multi-winner elections

To have an Elected Multi-Member Body Better Represent the Diversity of the Electorate ...

Use a voting method that promotes proportional representation

For more information lwvbc.org > Teams at Work > Voting Methods

Thank you for your interest!



Empowering Voters Defending Democracy