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Welfare, Voting and the Constitution of a Federal Assembly

Bovens, Luc and Hartmann, Stephan (2006) *Welfare, Voting and the Constitution of a Federal Assembly*. [Preprint]

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Abstract

Equal and proportional representation are two poles of a continuum of models of representation for the assembly of a federation of states. The choice of a model has repercussions on the welfare distribution in the federation. We determine, first by means of Monte Carlo simulations, what welfare distributions result after assemblies that were constituted on the basis of different models of representation have considered a large number of motions. We assess what model of representation is favored by a Rawlsian maximin measure and by the utilitarian measure and present matching analytical results for the utilitarian measure for a slightly idealized case. Our results show that degressive proportionality can be justified as a compromise between maximin and utilitarian considerations. There is little surprise in this result. What is more surprising, however, is that, within certain contexts of evaluation, degressive proportionality can also be justified on strictly utilitarian grounds.

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Item Type: Preprint

Additional Information: The paper will appear in: M.C. Galavotti, R. Scazzieri and P. Suppes (eds.), Reasoning, Rationality and Probability, Stanford: CSLI Publications 2006.

Keywords: Voting theory, expected utility, Rawls, European Union, degressive proportionality

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Last Modified: 07 Oct 2010 11:14

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