

Consensus Voting

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Abstract

If the human race cannot agree on a form of collective decision-making, it may not survive. So far, the UN Conference of the Parties COPs have considered only two methodologies: (a) (simple or weighted) majority voting; and (b) a purely verbal procedure it calls ‘consensus’... but this allows one or more parties to exercise a veto – the very opposite of consensus. Not yet has the UN considered multi-option or, better still, preferential voting; not yet have the parties acknowledged that a consensus opinion can be identified with a preferential points system of voting, and what’s more, its degree of consensus can be measured. Accordingly, this paper first looks at the obvious inadequacies of any form of binary voting; next, it compares binary voting with some of the other methodologies which could be used; and finally, it describes the preferential points system in some detail – the Modified Borda Count MBC – and suggests this procedure could be used at the forthcoming COP28 conference in Dubai, if not indeed in national parliaments and the UN Security Council.

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