

Implementation Via Vote Delegation

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For some years now, the number of political parties asking for the direct participation of citizens in the decision making process is increasing. Such increase is specially noticeable in Europe, where parties demanding the use of direct democracy instruments such as referendums and popular consultations are appearing in several countries. *Freedom and Direct Democracy* in Czech Republic, *Alternative for Germany* in Germany, *Party of Internet Democracy* in Hungary, *Five Star Movement* in Italy, *Podemos* in Spain, *Direktdemokraterna* in Sweden, and *Something New* in United Kingdom are just some examples. These organizations defend that citizens should be able to decide on each and every one of the issues that comes up for discussion. When decisions about several issues have to be made, these political parties demand that, for each of these issues, it should be carried out what the majority of people desires for such specific issue. For convenience, in this paper we assume that there are no complementarities among issues, so the order in which decisions on different issues are made has no effect on the choice made for each issue.

The matter raised by these political parties could be analyzed under a mechanism design framework. Their stance would be equivalent to have a benevolent planner who should choose, for each single issue, what the majority of people desires. But, given that the planner does not know the preferences of voters, she should find some alternative way to achieve her goal. When there are no

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complementarities among issues, assuming that voters have preferences over policies for each issue seems very natural. Thus, one possibility that the planner has is to organize a referendum on each single issue. However, this option may involve serious problems. One of the most worrying is the low turnout. It might be the case that some people decide not to pronounce on certain issues just because they are not interested on them. In this situation, participation becomes a problem: since not enough people voted to make the decision relevant, it will be biased, not representing therefore the preferences of the majority. Another potential problem is related to the high economic costs that the organization of each referendum entails. Even if the cost of participation was zero for voters due to new technologies, which would allow them to directly vote using their smartphones, there still exist economic costs that need to be incurred when a referendum is organized, as for instance, campaign costs to inform voters about what is going to be voted or costs of designing the digital platform through which voting will take place. An alternative option that the planner has to reach her purpose is to allow voters to delegate the decision making process to a politician who, once in power, will decide on each single issue. We focus on a two political parties context and assume that politicians have preferences not only over policies as voters do, but also over being in office, being possible to have politicians whose motivations are located along the spectrum going from fully policy-motivation to fully office-motivation.

The purpose of this paper is to study whether the two aforementioned procedures to make decisions are equivalent in terms of the developed policies for each of the considered issues. Formally, our research question would be: Are there necessary and sufficient conditions such that bipartisan electoral competition implements what the majority would have chosen issue-by-issue? We approach this question considering two different frameworks depending on the knowledge that the planner may have about preferences of politicians. The reason is that this is not a trivial matter. It is not difficult to realize that the available information about politicians' preferences in the real world is limited. Knowing, not only how each candidate ranks the set of possible actions that can be carried out for the different issues, but also how important to be in office it is for each of them is quite implausible. What is usually known about preferences of candidates is only the position that each of them defends for each of the issues. We are used to that, during electoral campaigns, each candidate confines herself to let voters know what her opinion is about each one of the issues on which a decision must potentially be made. However, they do not give any idea of what they

would do in case of losing the elections, unable to carry out their political options. They do not disclose, for instance, if they are so strongly convinced that a certain political alternative is the one that must be carried out that they would even prefer not to be in office and that such set of policies be implemented to being in office and have to carry out anything else. The first scenario that we consider to try to answer our research question is when the only thing that is known about politicians' preferences are their respective platforms, which is the most usual situation in real life. In this case, we identify necessary and sufficient conditions that involve some restrictions over pairs of politicians' platforms and voters' preference relation. The second scenario that we allow for is when not only platforms of politicians are known but also their whole preferences. Here, necessary and sufficient conditions that we find impose constraints over pairs of voters' preference relation and politicians' preference relation.