Activity: Political Economy
Econ 308

Brandon Lehr

1 Jail and Voter Participation

a. Suppose that people who receive short jail sentences vote less than people without previous jail sentences. Does this evidence imply that jail sentences reduce voter participation? Explain.

Not necessarily — people who receive jail sentences also tend to be younger or have other factors that may mean they have less frequency in voting.

b. Read the summary of Ariel White's research on the next page. How does she identify the causal effect of short jail sentences on voter participation?

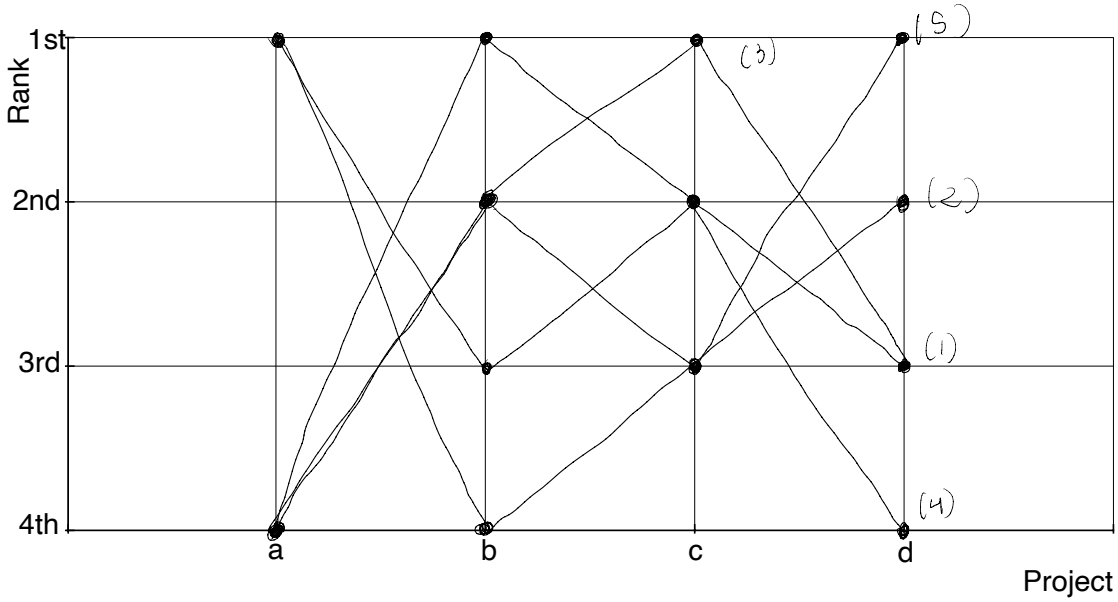
Randomized courtrooms → differences in severity → similar defendants sentenced to different punishments

2 Majority Voting

Consider five people $\{1, 2, 3, 4, 5\}$ with preference rankings over four projects $\{a, b, c, d\}$ as follows:

	1	2	3	4	5
First	b	a	c	a	d
Second	c	d	b	c	b
Third	d	c	d	b	c
Fourth	a	b	a	d	a

a. Draw the preferences by ranking the preferences in the figure below.



b. Who has single-peaked preferences? And who does not?

(1)/(3)

c. Which project will be selected by (pairwise) majority voting? If none is selected, explain why.

c > b > a

(c) > b > d > a

→ C is the project that will be selected

3 Bonus: Plurality Voting and Borda Counts

Consider four people $\{1, 2, 3, 4\}$ with preference rankings over three projects $\{a, b, c\}$ as follows:

	1	2	3	4
First	a	a	b	c
Second	b	b	c	b
Third	c	c	a	a

Assume that voters cast their votes sincerely.

a. Plurality voting is a social decision rule that chooses the option that receives the most votes among the alternatives. Under plurality voting, which project wins?

a

b. The Borda count is a social decision rule in which individuals submit their preference ranking, each rank is assigned a point value (higher points for higher ranks), and the option with the most points is selected. Suppose that 3 points are assigned to the first choice, 2 points to the second choice, and 1 point to the third choice. Which project wins?

a: 6 c: 7

b: 9

c. Now find a Borda point system where a wins.

d. What general lessons have you learned from this exercise?