

Preface

This book is about strategic coordination – both strategic voting and strategic attempts to regulate entry – in the world's electoral systems. I assume that readers are familiar with the concept of a coordination game. Those who are not, and are not satisfied with the brief description given below, may wish to consult Lewis (1969), Schelling (1978), or other sources.

The basic idea of a coordination game is simple enough and can be conveyed by considering a classic illustrative game, the Battle of the Sexes. In this game, a man and a woman must independently choose whether to attend a prize fight or a ballet performance. The man prefers the prize fight to the ballet, while the woman has opposite preferences. Both, however, are primarily concerned with having each other's company, so that each prefers going to their dispreferred entertainment with their partner to going to their preferred entertainment alone.

Cultural stereotypes aside, this venerable example lays bare the essence of a coordination problem. The players in the game would prefer to coordinate their actions on some one of two (or more) possibilities but they disagree over which of these possibilities ought to be the one on which they coordinate. There is thus an admixture of common and divergent interests, and the possibility of both *successful* coordination (to the relative advantage of one or more of the players over the others) and *failed* coordination (to the disadvantage of all).

Other than a familiarity with the notion of coordination, I make relatively few assumptions about the reader's background. Doubtless those who are already familiar with electoral studies will find parts of the book easier to follow than those not so familiar. But Chapter 3 of the book gives a self-contained introduction to electoral rules and regulations for those who have not previously considered these matters. Doubtless too those who do not know game theory will find the proofs in Appendix B pretty unintelligible. But the text is written with an eye to making the

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logic of the proofs in this and other chapters accessible to those who prefer not to wade through the mathematical notation.

This work has benefited from the generosity and insight of a number of scholars. Tom Palfrey and Roger Myerson provided exceptionally valuable comments on some of the papers upon which the book builds. André Blais, Ray Christensen, Skip Lupia, Bing Powell, and Matthew Shugart – along with several anonymous reviewers – read the whole of an early draft and provided detailed comments that helped greatly to improve the final product. I also received valuable comments from Jamie Druckman, Jenn Kuhn, Mat McCubbins, Iain McLean, Mike Molloy, Scott Morgenstern, David Samuels, Robert Schwartz, Steve Swindle, and Frances Rosenbluth. Too many people for me to recall have helped by providing leads to interesting web sites, confirmation of suspicious facts, or ideas about where to look next – but I should mention at least Kathy Bawn, Arend Lijphart, Shaheen Mozaffar, Andy Reynolds, Ron Rogowski, and Matthew Shugart. Finally, several people with whom I have coauthored will find pieces of their work embodied here and there in the text but I should mention in particular Octavio Amorim Neto, as Chapter 11 is but a slightly reworked version of our published work together.

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