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Voting Systems: An Outcome Analysis

Many aspects of voting systems have been examined. Plurality Method, the most commonly used voting system, has been shown to produce outcomes that are disputable and do not necessarily satisfy the voters' choice. Plurality Method is primarily used because it is both easily understood by the public and easy to tabulate. There are other systems whose outcomes may offer more satisfaction to voters. Four systems were chosen for experimentation: Plurality Method (the status quo), Borda Count, Instant Runoff, and Sequential Pairs. A simulated election was held using four soft drink preferences as candidates. Each voter's choices were recorded on a single ballot and choices were run through each of the selected voting systems. Results were tabulated and the voting subjects were provided with the results. Voters were then given a survey to rank their satisfaction with the outcomes for each system. An average of satisfaction ratings was calculated, with Instant Runoff receiving the highest satisfaction. Results for the three alternative systems were also compared with Plurality Method using a Spearman's rank correlation coefficient.