

Professional Skills III: Management Skills I

Decision-Making Assignment – Reflection Paper

Dr. Roeland Audenaerde PhD

Student Kevin Suleiman – 1500.2489 – 01-01-1995

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Preface

The Parliament of Nirgendwo, consisting of 12 diverse parties which each have their own political preferences, had to determine which percentage of the budget should be utilized on social housing and defense. Therefore, the parliament of Nirgendwo utilized 6 different types of voting procedures on Thursday 18 and Friday 19 February 2016, at The Hague University of Applied Sciences.

Each political party had its own political preference.

1. Revolution Now! - 11 MP's – 100 % to social housing
2. Progressive Nirgendwonians – 10 MP's – 90 % to social housing & 10 % to defense
3. Social Democratic Party – 2 MP's – 80 % to social housing & 20 % to defense
4. Farmers Party – 3 MP's – 70 % to social housing & 30 % to defense
5. Moderate Union – 2 MP's – 60 % to social housing & 40 % to defense
6. Center Party – 1 MP – 50 % to social housing & 50 % to defense
7. Liberal democrats – 4 MP's – 40 % to social housing & 60 % to defense
8. Nirgendwo Forward – 2 MP's - 30 % to social housing & 70 % to defense
9. Conservative Party – 2 MP's – 20 % to social housing & 80 % to defense
10. Moral Majority – 9 MP's – 10 % to social housing & 90 % to defense
11. God, King & Fatherland – 11 MP's – 100 % to defense

There are a total of 57 MP's, which are divided over 12 political parties. From 100 to 60 % for social housing are embodied by 28 MP's. And, from 60 to 100 % for defense are also embodied by 28 MP's. The Center party which is exactly in the middle embodies 1 MP, and thus 1 vote. Therefore, one can assume there is a **fair balance** in the Parliament, and consequently, there is the possibility to make fair shifts to each side, reached by negotiating and compromises.

The focus and main goal of this paper is to illustrate how these voting procedures function in real-life scenarios about complex issues. Moreover, the paper will attempt to illustrate that every voting-procedure is best utilized in a certain environment for a particular issue, and each has its own advantages and downsides.

In addition, a ranking based on justification and experience will be made, in which the best performing voting system will be ranked on the first place, and the least favored on number six.



Defense or Social-Housing in Nirgendwo

Voting on the **basis of unanimity** is the first procedure utilized. Initially, the parliament was very chaotic, and everyone was talking over each other. The chairmen attempted to control the discussions: however, the parties did not seem to be ready to negotiate, and therefore it was hard to reach a viable compromise. There was no unanimity reached, with 18 MP's for social housing and 21 MP's for Defense. The main reason for this result is that the procedure does not allow any compromise or middle ground, and this was illustrated by the parties, by lack of willingness to give up their own interests.

I learned that this unanimity procedure is difficult to utilize in a fragmented political landscape, in which each party strives to defend their own interests, and it's almost impossible to reach a solid compromise.

I rank this system on number 3, since it has proved that it is unworkable for complex affairs. One could argue that on some issues which we universally agree on, such as fighting terrorism, this system could work and in fact, demonstrate solid support. The European council utilizes this system for sensitive matters, because here legitimacy is essential. (Council of European Union, n.d.)

The **simple majority** vote was the second system utilized, and most parties were not dedicated to make compromises for the collective interests of Nirgendwo. This system was more viable because it required a majority of votes, instead of unanimity. A critical moment was when Dr. Audenaerde distributed candy to the MP's. This was a thought-provoking and eye-opening action, because it made me realize that many politicians are vulnerable to corruption.

The outcome of the vote was slightly affected by the bribes that were distributed. However, some MP's broke their promises and didn't support the party which distributed the bribes. One can assume, that normally, politicians who agree to receive bribes, will hold to their promises, as they could be blackmailed. The first round was 50/50, and after the bribes were distributed, the outcome was about the same. In a real-life scenario, the support would significantly shift towards the party who distributed bribes. I learned from this system that most likely, many politicians have been approached with these unlawful requests for support.

This system is ranked number 1, because it is a viable and fair system, especially for issue-voting. One could state that this system is too vulnerable for corruption: however, all voting systems are vulnerable for corruption, since they are utilized by self-interested humans. (Miller, 1999)

The **Qualified Majority** was the third system utilized, which had 3 vital requirements: 50 % + 1 of the votes (min. 18), 70 % of the blue-eyed MP's (min. 3), and 70 % of the black-haired voters (min. 15). Initially there was no agreement reached. In the second vote there was a qualified majority reached, with 28 MP's agreeing, including 3 blue-eyed and 17 black-haired MP's.

This system was more manageable, because one could effectively negotiate with the target group, in order to obtain the minimum support required. However, one of the blue-eyed MP's kept refusing in the first round, and this can be perceived as a major obstacle in this system. I learned that if one keeps refusing, even when offered bribes, the agreement will inevitably fail. However, one could also argue that it is exactly these vital requirements that secure the fairness and legitimacy of an agreement. At the end most people were tired and wanted to go home, and this has significantly affected the negotiating and voting process results, since people were not ready to actively negotiate and make compromises.

This system is utilized in the European Commission, in order to secure judicious judgement over major affairs, which have to be protected by essential and reliable actors. (Council of the European Union, n.d.)

This system is ranked number 6. There is one downside: when the majority agrees on an issue, **but one of the required MP's refuses, an agreement cannot be made**. One can therefore state that one individual may have more power than the vast majority of the parliament.

The **Plurality principle** was the fourth system which was utilized, in which the party which takes the most votes wins. There were 7 electoral districts, each represented by one representative. There were 3 rounds of voting, each with a particular combination of MP's from different parties in one district. Therefore, the outcome highly depends on the combination of MP's within a district, and therefore on coincidence. The first round resulted into 55 % for defense and 45 % social housing.

In the second round the borders were changed, which resulted in a 50/50 outcome. The third vote resulted in 70% defense and 30 % social housing. These 3 diverse outcomes, confirm that the composition of the district is decisive for the outcome.

I learned that when you are in a particular district, in which the opposition has more support, you have to be pragmatic and make compromises. This system is ranked number 5, since the outcomes are dependent on coincidence, as the composition of the districts is decisive. One could state that his system is unfair, because opponents with broad support are excluded when they don't have the majority in a district. (Electology, n.d.)

The fifth system utilized was a **run-off** in one electoral district between the two proposals that received the highest number of votes. The Largest parties were the Red, Yellow, Green and Light Blue party. The 2 proposals which received the highest number of votes were Red and Yellow. Eventually Yellow won the run-off with 17 votes, over 16 votes for Red. The outcomes are close since the composition of parties & MP's is equally distributed, and each party chose for the proposal which is closest to their own interests.

I learned from this system that the largest parties have most chance to win a run-off race. However, the result is dependent on the equal distribution of interests within a parliament. One could also argue that this system is unfair, since small parties which have essential value are excluded from obtaining the majority of votes, and basically have a submissive position and in parliament, and therefore have to make alliances with larger political parties. This may result in conflict of interests.

This system is ranked number 4, because small parties are excluded and cannot fairly compete with the other major parties. However, the proposal which is supported by the majority wins, and this is fair. (Minguo, n.d.)

The sixth system utilized was the **successive elimination** of the party which scored lowest. In the first rounds the smallest Orange party was eliminated. In the second round 5 other parties were eliminated. There were 3 parties left in the third round, in which the Yellow party, the second-largest party, was eliminated. In the last round the Light Blue party, won from the Red party, which was the largest in the beginning.

The parties that were eliminated gave their vote to the party which was closest to their own interests. Therefore, the result of 17 for Light Blue and 16 for Red makes sense, because the MP's were equally distributed over the playing field. However, many MP's were not present at the meeting, and this affected the outcome.

I learned that opposition parties vote strategically in order to ensure their interests. One could therefore state that this system is unfair, because the largest party in parliament can lose from a small party which receives more support from the opposition, because they largely protect their vital interests.

This system is ranked number 2, because the system is transparent and consists of different stages in which parties can vote for their preference. However, one can argue that the system stimulates conflicts of interests, because parties will receive votes from opposition parties, which normally don't support them. (Bretton, Dulta, Jackson, 2002)

Ranking

Number 1: Simple Majority: 50 % + 1 vote

Number 2: Voting by elimination: Successive rounds, in which the lowest scoring proposal is eliminated.

Number 3: Voting on the basis of Unanimity: all need to fully agree.

Number 4: Run-off system

Number 5: Plurality principle

Number 6: Qualified Majority







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