Axioms in Voting Theory and Kenneth May's life and theorem

Tim Hua

Slides avaliable on timhua.me/slides.pdf

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Ec 1080: Axiomatic Voting Theory

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 - For example, I will introduce the mathematically defined axiom that represents "treat all voters equally."
- Axioms allow us to compare two different voting rules.
- Axioms are restrictive. Sometimes, only one voting rule fulfills a set of axioms.
- They're fun and neat mathematically.

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Notation

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- N is a finite set of n voters.
- A is a finite set of m alternatives (e.g. candidates in an election).
- Each voter *i* casts a ballot that lists their complete, transitive, and antireflexive preferences \succ_i over A. We denote the m! possible orderings by $\mathcal{L}(A)$.

The source is Moulin 2016 unless otherwise stated

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- We can always discard some of this information when considering a voting rule (e.g., majority voting only considers the first choice)
- A voting profile $P = (\succ_1, \succ_2, ..., \succ_n)$ is the set of all ballots by all voters. We denote the set of all possible ballots by $\mathcal{L}(A)^n$.

Definition

Definition

A social choice function, voting rule, or SCF, is a function $f : \mathcal{L}(A)^n \to 2^A$ that returns some subset of A, the alternatives. If |f(P)| = 1, we say that f is single-valued and write f(P) = a.

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Definition

A social welfare function $g : \mathcal{L}(A)^n \to \mathcal{R}(A)$ returns a ranking over the alternatives.

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Notation and Definitions





5 The Life of Kenneth May

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Different versions of Unanimity

Definition

An SCF *f* is *unanimous* if, whenever there exists an alternative *a* such that for all voters *i* and all alternatives $b \in A \setminus \{a\}$, $a \succ_i b$, then f(P) = a.

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In other words, if *a* is the top choice for every voter, then the social choice function selects it. Before introducing the next axiom, we first define what we mean by Pareto dominated: An alternative *x* is Pareto dominated if there exists some *y* such that $y \succ_i x$ for all voters *i*.

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Definition

An SCF f is Pareto if f(P) never contains a Pareto dominated alternative.

Anonymity

Definition

An SCF f is anonymous if each voter plays the same role. That is, for a given P, if P' is obtained by swapping i and j's ballots (i.e. $\succ'_i = \succ_j$ and $\succ'_j = \succ_i$), then f(P) = f(P'). A voting rule is *dictatorial* if f(P) is the top choice of some voter i.

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Lemma

The U.S. presidential election is not anonymous.

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Profiles Under Anonymity

If every voter is identical, then we can express their preferences using these profile tables:

Number of voters	10	8	3	1
First place	а	b	d	С
Second place	b	а	b	d
Third place	с	С	а	b
Fourth place	d	d	с	а

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Neutrality and Nonimposition

Definition

An SCF f is *neutral* if alternatives are interchangeable. That is, if $f(P) = a_1$, and P' is obtained by swapping a_1 and a_j in every voters' preferences, then $f(P') = a_j$. f is *imposed* if there exists some $a \in A$ such that $f(P) \neq a$ for all $P \in \mathcal{L}(A)^n$.

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Monotonicity

There are many different ways to think about Monotonicity. The general idea is that if the winning candidate gains more/do not lose any support as we move from profile P to P', that candidate should still win.

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Definition (Monotonicity/ Positive Responsiveness)

If $a \in f(P)$, and when some voter *n* for whom *a* is not their top choice changes their preferences such that *a* is their top choice, then under the new preference P', f(P') = a

Unrestricted Domain/ Resolute

Definition

We say that an SCF f has the unrestricted domain quality or is resolute if it is single valued for all $P \in \mathcal{L}(A)^n$.

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Strategyproofness

Definition

When a voter *i* changes their preferences from \succeq_i to \succeq'_i , and the resulting profile changes from *P* to *P'* as a result, we say an SCF *f* is single-voter strategy-proof if $f(P) \succeq_i f(P')$.

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In this case, \succeq_i is thought of as *i*'s sincere preferences. When *i* changes their preferences to \succeq'_i , the voting rule should not pick a candidate that results in a better outcome under the original, sincere preferences by acting on misrepresented information.

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Summary

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- Anonymity: Voters are equal
- Neutrality: Candidates are equal
- Monotonicity: More support = good
- Resolute: Always picks a winner
- Strategyproofness: Can't lie and get a better outcome

Summary

So many axioms!

System +	Mono- tonic	Condorcet winner	Majo- rity •	Condorcet +	Majority loser	Mutual majority	Smith +	ISDA +	LIIA +	Independence of clones	Reversal symmetry	Participation, e	Later- no-harm	Later- no-help	Polynomial time	Resol- vability
Schulze	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Ranked pairs	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Split Cycle	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No
Tideman's Alternative	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Kemeny-Young	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes
Copeland	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No
Nanson	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Black	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Instant-runoff voting	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Smith/IRV	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Borda	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Geller-IRV	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Baldwin	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Bucklin	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Plurality	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Contingent voting	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Coombs ^[3]	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
MiniMax	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Anti-plurality ^[3]	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
Sri Lankan contingent voting	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Supplementary voting	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Dodgson ^[3]	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes

Figure: (Wikipedia contributors 2021)

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Two quick theorems

Theorem (Campbell-Kelly)

If there exists a Condorcet winner—some candidate that beats every other candidate in all pairwise contests—then picking that winner is the unique resolute, anonymous, neutral, and strategyproof SCF (given three or more candidates and an odd number of voters)

Theorem (Gibbard-Satterthwaite)

Any resolute, nonimposed, and strategyproof SCF for three or more alternatives must be a dictatorship.

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May's Theorem

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In the two candidate case, a social choice function is resolute, neutral, anonymous, and positively responsive if and only if it is simple majority rule.

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It's easy to see that simple majority rule is resolute, neutral, anonymous, and positively responsive (again, ignoring ties for now).
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Proof.

It's easy to see that simple majority rule is resolute, neutral, anonymous, and positively responsive (again, ignoring ties for now). We see that anonymity implies that the SCF is dependent only on total number of votes for either candidate. If a voting rule is not simple majority, then there must be some case where *a* gets more votes than *b*, but *b* wins (e.g., *a* gets seven votes and *b* gets six). Now we add votes to *b* until it has exactly as many votes as *a* does in the beginning (e.g., following the previous example, that means *a* get six votes and *b* gets seven).

May's Theorem Proof continued

Proof (continued).

In this case, positive responsiveness states that b still wins after receiving more votes. However, neutrality states that a must win, since this is the exact same condition as before, but a and b swapped places. We see that a non-simple majority rule SCF cannot satisfy all four axioms.

Source : (K. O. May 1952)

Reflections on May's Theorem

• It shows us that we can use axioms to think about voting rules.

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- It shows us that we can use axioms to think about voting rules.
- It verifies that simple majority rule makes sense in the axiomatic framework.
- It provides an argument for why we may want to reduce a multicandidate election down to pairwise contests.

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• His dad fought in WWI, came back and got a master's from Columbia, and taught at Dartmouth and then UC Berkeley in the Political Science department. He taught Earl Warren, who later became Chief Justice.

Source on May's life unless otherwise stated is (Jones, Enros, and Tropp 1984)

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- May was a mathematics major at U.C. Berkeley and "had an interest in the mathematical basis of statistics and the use of statistics as an element in national planning"
- Yep. Kenneth is a communist and joined the communist party in college.
- He also pushed for racial integration at a barbershop that refused to serve Black students.

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- He got married in London in 1938. His dad tried to stop him and his fellowship forbids fellows from marrying, but he did it anyway.
- So he lost his fellowship and went to Paris, where he studied at the University of Sorbonne and took classes at the l'Université Ouvrière (Worker's University) at night.

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l'Université Ouvrière



4. PLANISME ET SOCIALISME

Le développement du système de production capitaliste engendre des crises économiques périodiques. Depuis 1843 éclate, environ tous les dix ans, une de ces crises dont les manifestations ont été résumées en ces termes par Engels :

> Le commerce s'arrête ; les marchés s'encombrent, les produits sont là, aussi abondants qu'invendables ; la monnaie se cache ; le crédit s'évanouti; les fabriques se ferment ; les masses ouvrières manquent de moyens d'existence ; les faillites succèdent aux faitlites, les ventes forcées aux ventes forcées 1.

En 1929, le monde capitaliste est entré dans une crise économique sans précédent aussi bien par sa longueur, par sa profondeur, que par l'étendue des dévastátions qu'elle a provoquées.

Si bien que le problème des crises constitue un des problèmes essentiels de la politique contemporaine. Comment mettre fin aux crises? Que faire pour qu'il n'y ait plus de crises?

A ces questions, le marxisme répond dans les termes suivants : les crises étant nées avec le capitalisme lui-même, les crises étant engendrées par le développement du système capitaliste, le seul moyen d'en finir pour toujours avec les crises, c'est la suppression du système capitaliste lui-même, l'instauration d'une économie socialiste.

D'autres, par contre, prétendent qu'il est possible d'en finir pour toujours avec les crises par d'autres moyens, sans supprimer le capitalisme qui engendre les crises, sans instaurer le socialisme.

1. Friedrich ENCELS : Socialisme utopique et socialisme scientifique, p. 68, au Bureau d'Editions, 1936.

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Reminds me of Abolish/Defund the police



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Source of pictures

The book above is (Fajon 1938). The entire collection below can be found here.



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After Paris

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After Paris

- After spending the winter Paris, May traveled through Italy to the Soviet Union, where he got to meet with people in Moscow universities
- He traveled back to the U.S., and then back to Berkeley to finish his degree.
- Again, he was a part of the Communist party and conducted some official businesses on behalf of the organization

(Professor May Disowns Communist Son; 'Only Honorable Course,' Says Californian 1940)

The New Hork Times

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 1940

Professor May Disowns Communist Son: 'Only Honorable Course,' Says Californian

Special to THE NEW YORK TIMES.

BERKELEY, Calif., Sept. 26- espousal of the cause of commun-Samuel Chester May, veteran Uni- ism.

versity of California professor and a leader in State affairs, "disowned "Any one who has children can unand disinherited" his son, Kenneth, derstand. today because he is an avowed Communist.

assistant at the university, is cam- and communism, so I don't believe paign manager for the Communist any one will question my position. party in Alameda County. He made his views public last night at a meeting of the Berkeley Board of Education, when he appeared to sonal views and the position I hold speak in behalf of a petition for as an executive of the defense permitting the use of Berkeley council." school buildings for Communist meetings.

have been expecting it for a long or Society and the Student Judicial time. The break came privately Council. In competition with stusome time ago, but now it must dents throughout the United States come publicly.

of Kenneth. So decided are my for five months in Russia. views that I have completely dis- Following his return he was made owned and disinherited Kenneth." a teaching assistant in mathematics In addition to his post as head of at the university. His wife, the forthe university's Bureau of Public mer Miss Ruth McGovney, daugh-Administration Professor May is ter of Professor Dudley O. McGov-vice chairman of the State Defense new of the university, is a teacher Council. He went to Sacramento to- in Cakland High School day and after a conference with After the board of education Governor Olson explained his atti- meeting he said:

"It is just one of those things that may happen to any father," he said. "For twenty years I've been fight-

ing communism. I have students The youth, who is a teaching know how I stand on radicalism

"When I became convinced my son had become an irreconcilable Communist I took the only honorable course consistent with my per-

Kenneth May was graduated from the University of California in 1936 after a brilliant campus record. He "I have been dreading this break was a Phi Beta Kappa student and for weeks," said Professor May. "I he won a scholarship under the In-"Every one who knows me knows stitute of World Affairs and studied that my views are contrary to those in Europe for two and a half years,

tude toward his son and asserted "Some one had to take the action he had taken the only honorable I did, and what happens cannot be course in repudiating him "for his helped."

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What a guy

 In response, May said that he believes that "the Communist party is the greatest force for good in the world and that only through Socialism can the people of the United States solve the problem of unemployment, poverty, oppression and war"

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His full statement



Figure: (K. May 1940)

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War with U.S.S.R. June 22, 1941



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Bombing of Pearl Harbor Dec 7, 1941



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May joins the Army

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- Now that the Soviets are allied with the U.S., even the American Communist party is pro-war, and at its urging May thought to enlist in the Army
- He finally got into the army in November 1942, joining the 87th Mountain Infantry.
- His first deployment is at Kiska.

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Aleutian Campaign



Source: (MacGarrigle 2019)

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Sgt. May in the News

Mediterranean Rome Stars And Stripes Newspaper Archives March 3, 1945 Page 1



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May during the War

Sgt. May in the News

Sgt. Ken May's Politics Were Stumbling Block

By. Sgt. JACK FOISIE Staff Correspondent

What makes his Army career so interesting is that back in the days before Pearl Harbor, when Stalin and the Red Army were pool in such member of the Communist parts linthe state of California, His beliefs cost him his job as teaching assistant in mathematics at the University of California, with his disnisal being instigated by his fapublic administration at the same school.

The whole dramatic, unhappy episode made May a local cause celebre. The young educator-his-

May's application for 'various officer candidate schools appear to have ended up in the same blind alley. No one questioned his technical or educational qualifications, his appearance before the boards was always well received, and yet the papers came back unapproved or dight come back at all. Once May served as an assistant squad leader throughout the brief, Japless Kiska campaign, with the rank of Pfc. In fact it was on the direct recommendation of a three-star general that he made his stripes. It, Gen, Ben Lear visited Company Alay. Ite makted May to ppical eroeral to solider tone where he thought MacArthur would land in the Philippies.

May launched into a canny discussion of Pacific strategy in which the general soon joined. After some minutes the one-stripe and the three-star agreed on how the campaign should be won. General Lear went away highly pleased, leaving behind a recommendation that Pfc. May was deserving of at least corporal stripes.

REASON TO WONDER

"I wonder if he would have recommended me if he had known my background" May ruefully mused One specific act of courage attributed to May in the Mount Belvedere fight is that he dashed into a minefield to rescue a man injured in a knocked out bulldozer. May was still smiling as he debunked the feat:

"I was pretty sure the mines were all tellers. (anti-tank explosives which require much pressure to set them off) and so it wasn't as heroic as it looked."

As if for further explanation he added:

"I guess I don't have to tell you how I feel about this war."

What makes this review of May's Army career timely is that the War Department has just relaxed restrictions against Communist party members holding Army commissions.

"Yes," said May scratching his beard, "I would like to be an officer if the opportunity comes along."

Source: (Foisie 1945)

Tim Hua

Ec 1080: Axiomatic Voting Theory

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- He founded *Historia Mathematica* in 1974, a journal still in circulation today.

Summary

- Axioms: Anonymity, Neutrality, Monotonicity, Unrestricted Domain, and Strategyproofness.
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- Senneth May—the patriot, Communist, mathematician, and historian.

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- The Life of Kenneth May



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