



(Rethinking)  
Political representation  
and accountability in the  
age of Internet

Enric Plaza  
IIIA-CSIC



# Deliberative Constituencies



# Outline

- Introduction
- Representation and voting systems
- Voting, aggregation and accountability
- New possibilities and new institutions
- Proposal: *Dynamic Constituencies*
- Pros and cons



# Introduction

Representation

Participation

Deliberation

Accountability



# Demos

<b>Direct Democracy</b>	<b>Representative Democracy</b>
<b>Deliberative Democracy</b>	<b>Participatory Democracy</b>



# Direct democracy



<i>Polity</i>	<b>Institutional Context</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
<i>Switzerland</i>	Consensus culture/praxis	Stable
<i>California</i>	Competitive winner-takes-all culture	Disfunctional



# Electoral system

- *An electoral system is the use of particular voting systems to place some group of people in charge of administration of a legal system under pre-existing legal codes*
- *Voting systems are methods (algorithms) for groups of people to select one or more options from many, taking into account the individual preferences of the group members*



# Borda elections

- *A form of Preferential Voting*
  - *Rank preference ballots (ranks all options)*
  - *instant-runoff voting, [Australia](#)*

Rank ballot by oval marks

Instructions: Fill in the first column oval by your first choice, second column oval by your second choice, etc.

1	2	3	
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Joe Smith
<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Henry Ford
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	Jane Doe
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Fred Rubble
<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Mary Hill

Rank ballot by written numbers

Instructions: Write "1" by your first choice, "2" by your second choice, and "3" by your third choice, etc.

<input type="text"/>	Joe Smith
<input type="text" value="1"/>	Henry Ford
<input type="text" value="3"/>	Jane Doe
<input type="text"/>	Fred Rubble
<input type="text" value="2"/>	Mary Hill

Rank ballot by written names

Instructions: List the candidates in the order of your preference.

1. Ford
2. Hill
3. Doe
4. Rubble
5. Smith

Rank ballot by Touch Screen

Your vote so far:

1. Henry Ford
2. Mary Hill

You may vote for a next choice:





# Double trouble

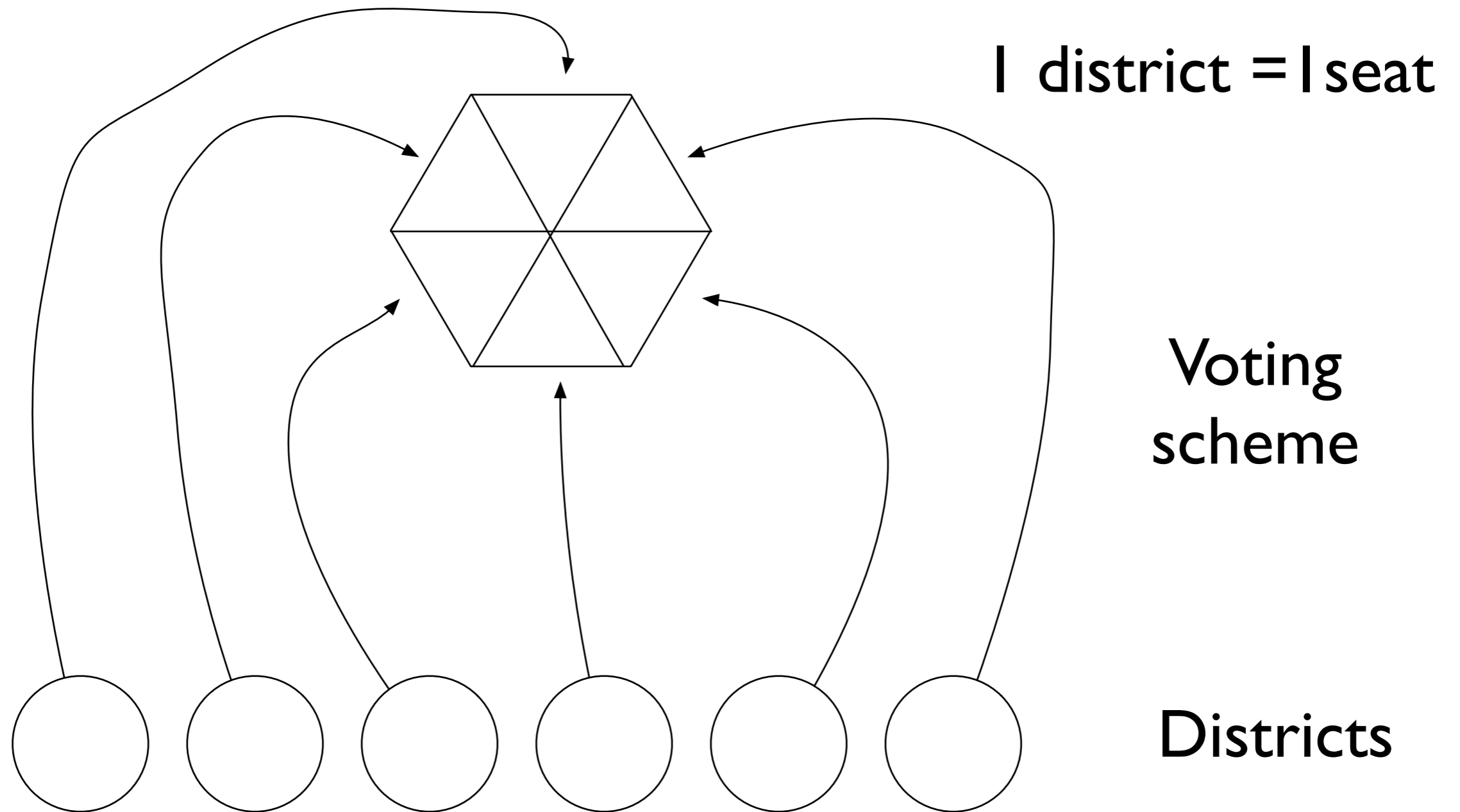
- *There is the voting scheme*
- *Then there are Districts (Constituencies)*
- *Their interaction can greatly modify outcome*

**CLAIM 1: Abolish Districts**

**CLAIM 2: Dynamic Constituencies = Effective Voters**



# Majority vote



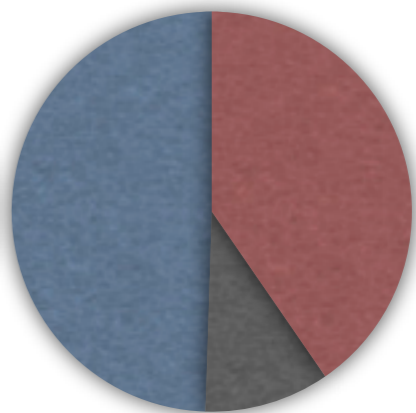
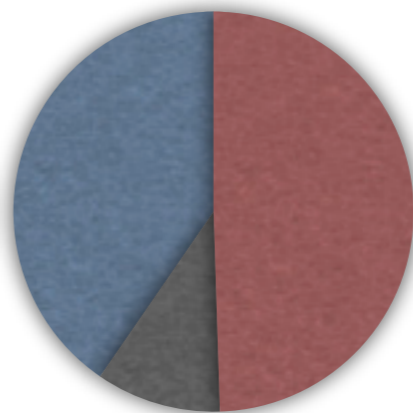
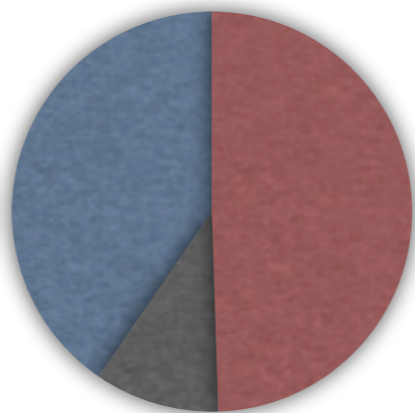
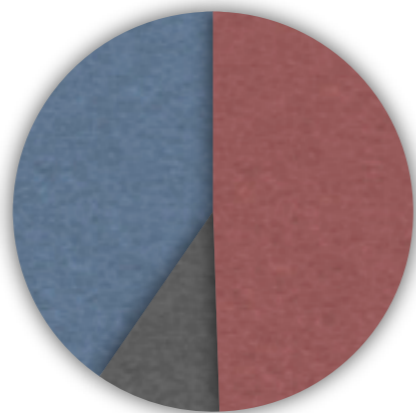
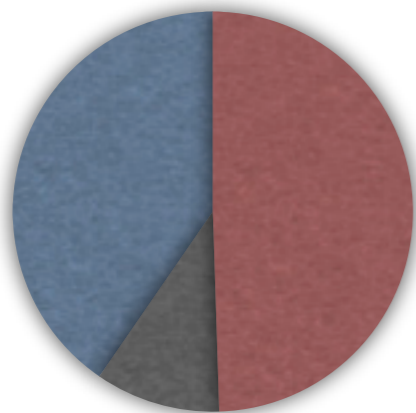
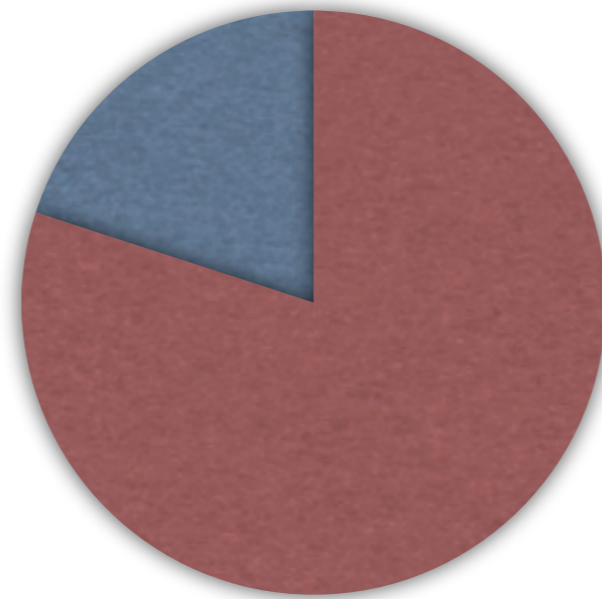


# Majority vote

- Voting schemes applies to districts
  - preference aggregation with known properties
- Overall “aggregation” by district winner does not “represent” population preferences
  - Residual votes are not taken into account
- **Constituency link is clear**



# Majority vote





# Party-list proportionality

1. Good if districts have large number of seats
2. d'Hondt method
  - a) used in Israel (global district), Austria and Poland
3. Sainte-Laguë method
  - a) used in many Scandinavian countries, New Zealand, and the German Federal State Bremen
  - b) better minority representation than d'Hondt



# Party-list proportionality

1. Only if districts have a large number of seats
  - a) Global district (e.g. Israel)
2. No direct link from citizen to MP
  - a) Parties as mediation structure
  - b) More difficult **accountability**



# Dynamic Constituency

Keep constituency  
Keep proportionality

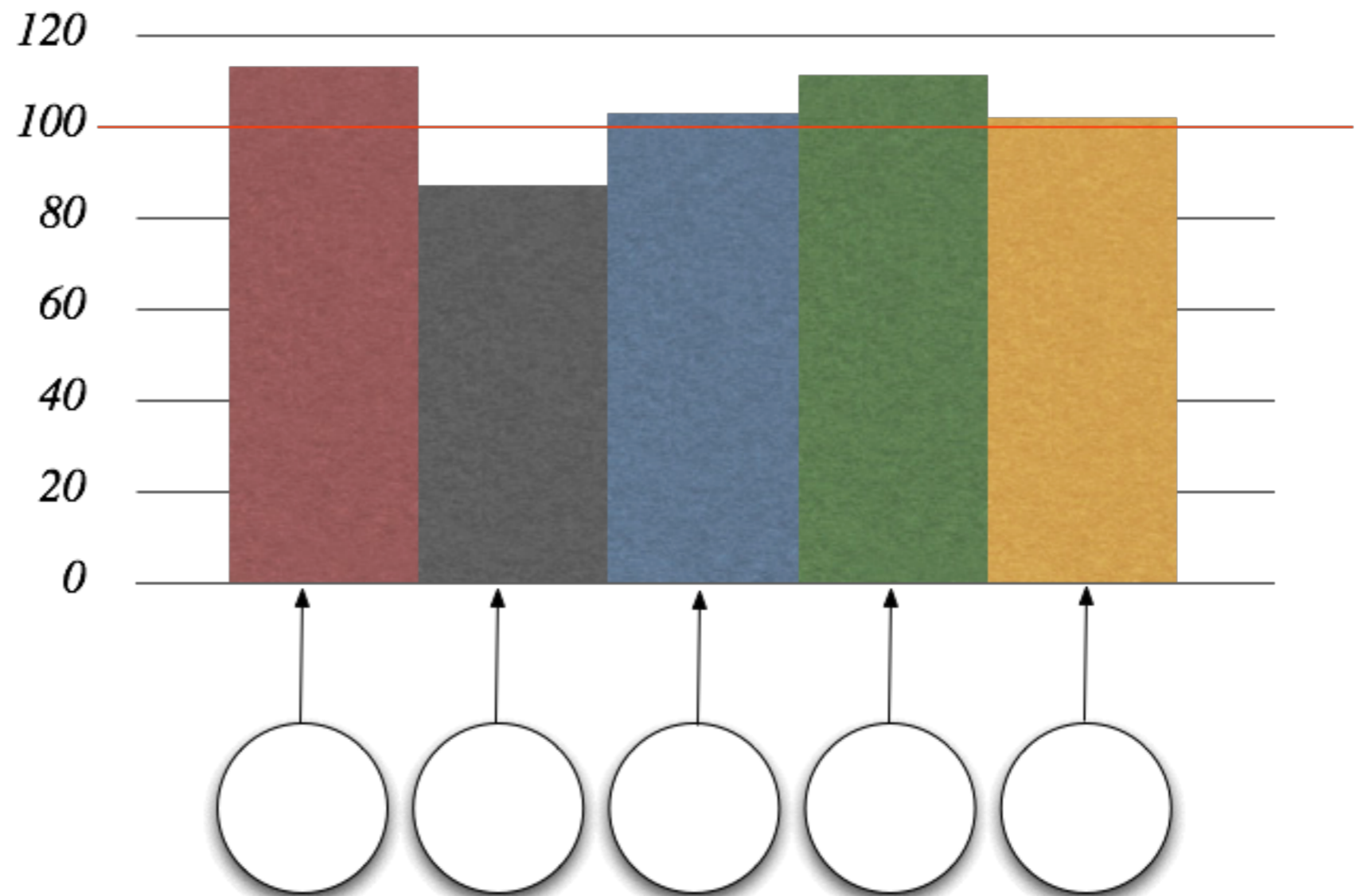
Some consequences are against  
'common wisdom'



# Dynamic Constituency

**Threshold:**

*Votes in thousands*



**Constituencies = Group of voters of candidate/elect**

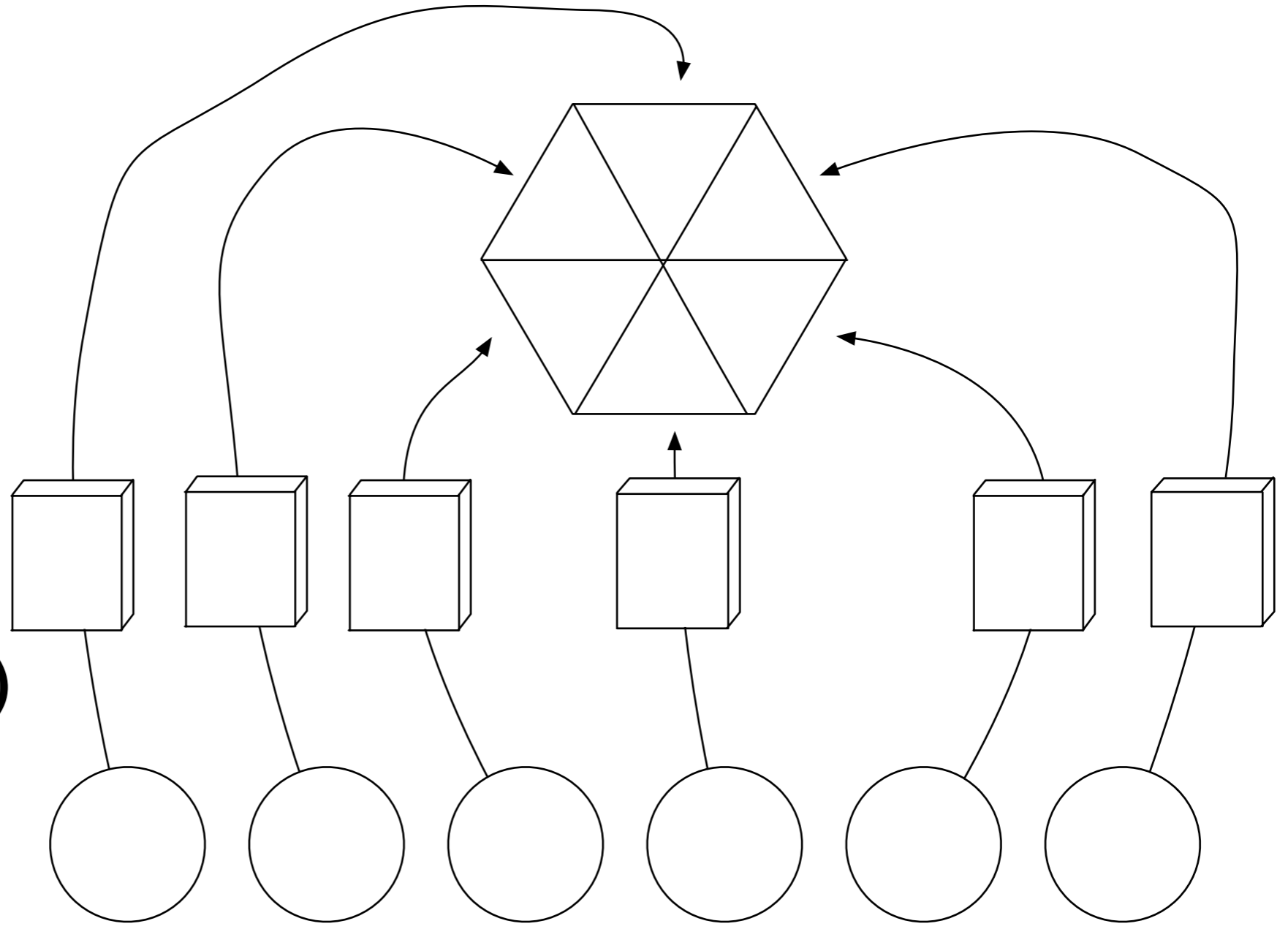




# Dynamic Constituency

Representatives  
Assembly

Deliberative  
online groups  
(citizens  
mini-parliaments)



Constituencies = Group of voters of candidate/elect



# Dynamic Constituency

- Simplifies voting scheme
- Abolishes districts and biases
  - proportional
- Keeps constituency link
  - through digital infrastructure
- Fixed seat number vs. fixed threshold



# Real time balloting

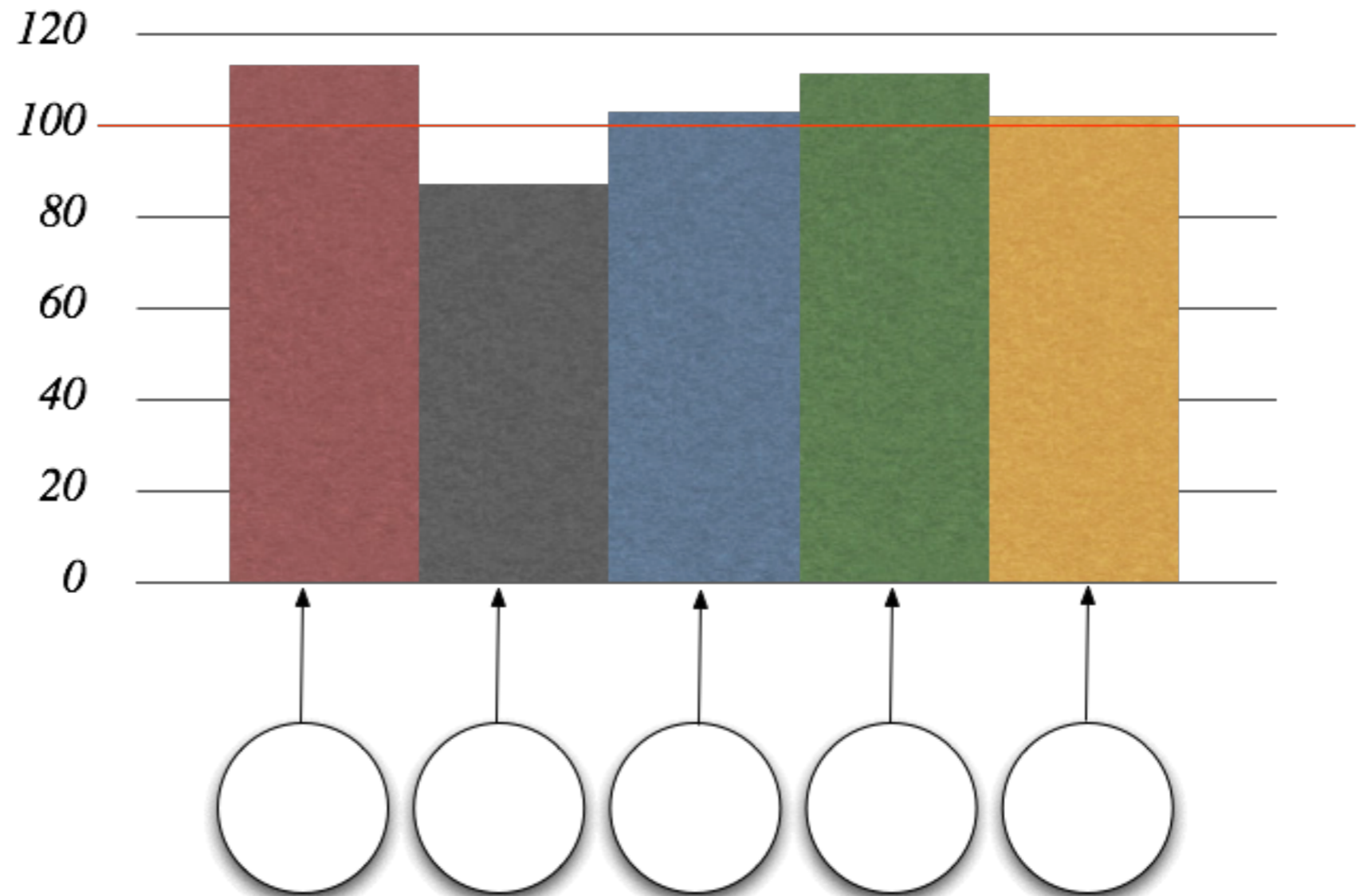
- Like in approval voting, a citizen may decide more than one candidate is good
- If someone I “approve” is likely to be elected I may vote for my second choice
- Real time balloting assures me this decision is correct
  - e.g. current votes in the election insures seat of favorite candidate
- Advantages of Approval Voting



# Real time balloting

**Threshold:**

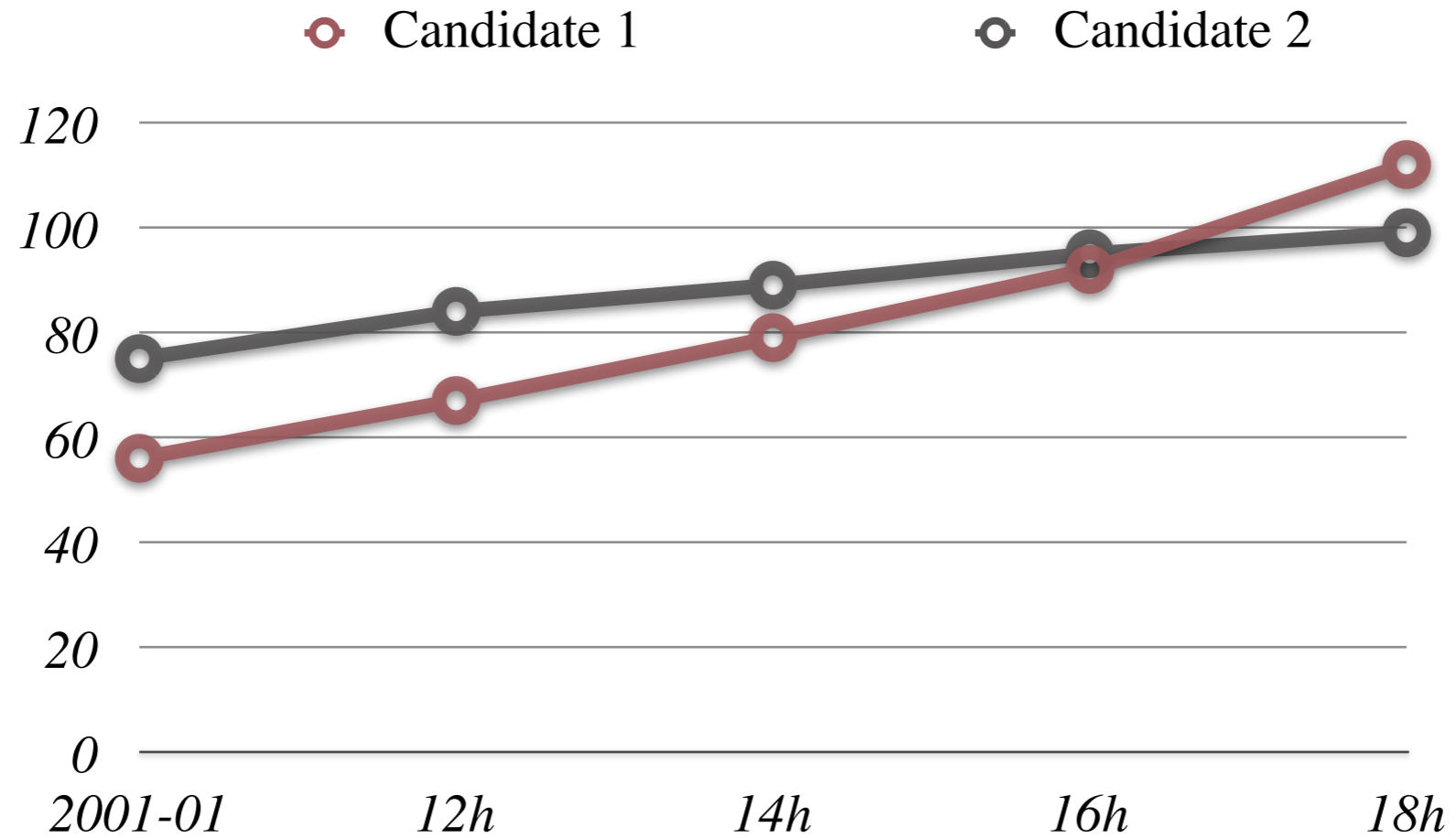
*Votes in thousands*



Preferences: "First one is already elected, I'll vote for the second one"



# Real time balloting



*Feedback may improve motivation for voting*



# Open ended voting

- One week for ‘formal voting’
- All candidates that pass the threshold are elected after that week
- People can **transfer** their vote from non-elected candidates (only) to other candidates closer to the threshold
- All candidates that pass the threshold are elected after ‘formal voting’ week: open-ended process



# Summary

## Dynamic Constituencies

DC as Mini-parliaments: better accountability, participation, deliberation, representation?

New key concept: Threshold

Open-ended selection of elected candidates

Real time visibility of votes per candidate



# Future work

1) Dynamic Constituencies can **criticize** the elected person after a 'period of grace' by removing their support

2) Dynamic Constituencies can **impeach** the elected person after a 'period of grace' by removing their support

Impeachment threshold:

elected person losing 50% of support of his DC could lose her position. Can the people transfer vote to a better candidate? Permanent elections as a good practice?





**Thanks!**  
**Questions?**