

Preface

By titling our book *The Calculus of Consent and Constitutional Design* we have undoubtedly attracted fans of Buchanan and Tullock's work, *The Calculus of Consent: Logical Foundations of Constitutional Democracy*, as well as those who might accuse us of coming from some conservative school before reading our work.

We are neither proponents nor opponents of Buchanan and Tullock's classic book. Instead, we are objective researchers interested in several of the same themes. We titled our book after theirs because their book inspired our research on related subjects. This includes questions such as, how do societies form constitutions in normatively appealing ways, and what is the best k -majority rule for legislative decision making when decision costs are large enough to be an important part of the decision? We also examine the properties of various electoral mechanisms that Buchanan and Tullock did not address in *The Calculus of Consent*.

In cases where some of their assumptions were vague, we have sometimes made assumptions that we found to be reasonable, rather than scouring their works to find the correct meaning. In other cases, we have adopted assumptions of our own. In this sense, we may be accurately accused of deviating from the original book. We can also be accused of deviating because we examine only some of their original themes. *The Calculus of Consent* covered a lot of ground. Formalizing and extending the arguments we missed is worthy of further investigation.

We hope that those who admire *The Calculus of Consent* will find our book to be a careful formalization and extension of some of the foundational parts of Buchanan and Tullock's earlier work. We often arrive at different conclusions, not because we did not like Buchanan and Tullock's original conclusions, but because they were the logical consequences of the models we examined or because we found evidence that drove us in a different direction. Anyone who is serious about a topic will want to expand its teachings and carefully investigate its mechanisms rather than simply reiterate the conclusion that was originally written.

For those who somehow view *The Calculus of Consent* with a tainted eye, we hope they find our book devoid of such taint. In addition to extending a book that had a big impact on political science and to a lesser extent economics, we raise questions about how constitutions are formed and how they ought be formed in a

way that should be useful to any student of constitutional design. Perhaps others will follow our footsteps and try to formalize other classic works.

We are indebted to several people. In particular, Jac Heckelman helped us select voting rules and criteria for our chapter on elections and to find some key studies in that literature. Jie Mi helped clarify some concepts pertaining to conditional probabilities used in our probabilistic arguments. The data on delegate votes from the U.S. Constitutional Convention were gathered with the support of the National Science Foundation, Grant No. SES-0752098, Keith Dougherty and Jac Heckelman investigators. Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the National Science Foundation or the others we have acknowledged.

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