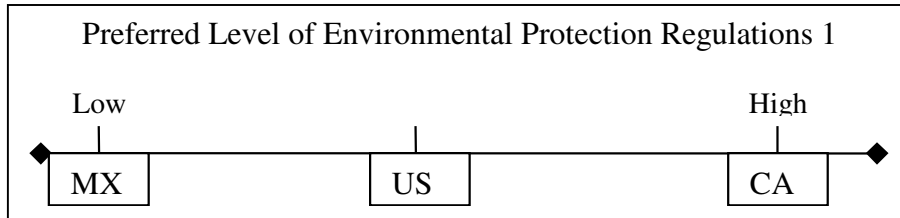


PS 160 Intro to World Politics
The Median Voter Theorem in Action

It's early 1992, and the United States (US), Mexico (MX), and Canada (CA) are wrapping up negotiations on the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).

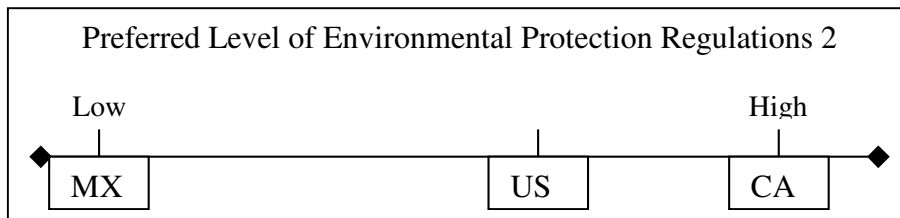
1.



Environmental regulation is costly to business, and may undercut Mexico's comparative advantage in cheap labor. Canadians, on the other hand, care strongly about the environment. Under Republican President George H.W. Bush (the elder one), the United States is less concerned about environmental protection.

Using the median voter theorem, what is the outcome of this international negotiating situation? Which actor's ideal point is selected? Why?

2.

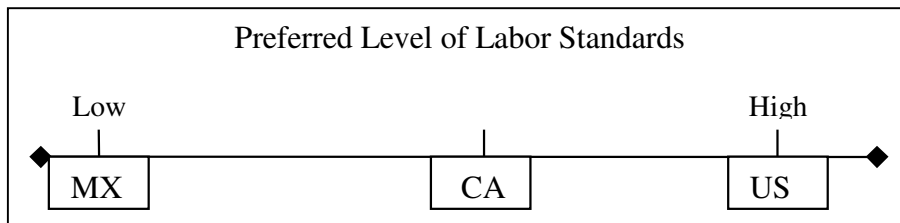


It's now early 1993. The November 1992 US Presidential elections produced a rather unexpected upset of a sitting president, bringing Democrat Bill Clinton to the Oval Office with the support of a left-wing coalition of environmentalists, labor, and feminists.

What happens to the US position on labor standards as a result of the change in leadership?

Using the median voter theorem, which actor's ideal point is selected? What happens to the outcome of this situation, compared to model 1?

3.



Using the median voter theorem, what level of labor standards will be agreed on by the parties?

4. Let's think about this situation again. All the actors in this situation may be individual sovereign states, but they are not equally powerful. Instead, let's assume that states' votes are weighted by their power. In other words, more powerful actors have more 'votes' to cast on a given issue. Look at models 2 and 3 again, but this time allocate 5 votes to Mexico, 10 votes to Canada, and 16 votes to the United States.

What is the median vote here (how many votes are needed to win)?

In model 2, who holds the median (weighted) vote? Is this actor the median voter? What happens to the outcome from question 2?

5. Using the same distribution of votes, look at model 3. Who holds the median (weighted) vote? Is this actor the median voter? What happens to the outcome from question 3?

What does this result suggest about why powerful countries usually get their way in bilateral or even multilateral international negotiations?

Devise a distribution of votes in which the weighted voting outcome – the ideal point of the holder of the median vote – is the same as the ideal point of the median voter.