

CS-234

Technologies for
Democratic society

Fall 2022

Week 9

Randomness in social self-organization

Precedents - general

- Dividing larger population into smaller "workgroups"
 - reduce size of each group to manageable size
 - parallelism, divide and conquer
 - diversity of opinion / perspective
 - representative, unbiased sample of whole pop.

Precedents for randomness in democratic processes

- Elections: tie-breaking rule
- Athens: magisterial positions - selected by random lottery
 - terms of 1 year
 - downside: not most qualified people
 - too short to accomplish much
- Venice: Doge selection - for life

- More recent precedents

- Census processes: get good representative + detailed information

- Opinion polling

bad: not always representative

may not be accurate / trustworthy

publication can affect opinions

questions must be specialized, limited depth

Fundamental tension: representation vs expertise, depth

- Trial by jury

- Deliberative polling

- Citizens' assemblies, "mini-publics"