

What Is Voting? Marshall Thompson

Do you think voting should be mandatory? What might be the advantages and drawbacks of such a policy? What account of voting do you find most compelling? Does this conviction help explain whether you feel voting should be mandatory or not?

How might we resolve Downs Paradox? That is, how might we explain why there may be a reason for individuals to vote even if their vote will not change the outcome? Is there still reason to make voting mandatory even in situations where the outcome is inevitable?

Why use a majority voting system? What are the drawbacks and advantages? Can you think of instances in your regular life where you use a similar kind of voting procedure to solve disagreements or speed up decision-making? Do you think it is better to vote your personal preference or to vote in what you assume to be the best interests of the group? Is one strategy better in some circumstances than others?

The author ends by suggesting that we should vote according to national interests rather than our personal interests: "Perhaps we would make better decisions if *everyone* voted that way. But most people don't vote that way." Do you agree with this conclusion? In general, do you think it better that we resign ourselves to what we might more easily achieve or push for what is ideal but perhaps unlikely? To what conditions are these two strategies best suited?