

# One-Dimensional Spatial Models of Majority Rule

**Single-Peakedness:** The preferences of group members are said to be *single-peaked* if the alternatives under consideration can be represented as points on a line, and each of the utility functions representing preferences over these alternatives has a maximum at some point on the line and slopes away from this maximum on either side.

**Ideal point:** An individual's most-preferred position (i.e., alternative, when represented as points on a line). Also called the "bliss point."

**Median ideal point:** The ideal point such that at least half the group members' ideal points are at or to its left, and at least half the group members' ideal points are at or to its right.

**Condorcet winner:** A policy that defeats *or ties* [note change from Shepsle, p. 57] all others in pairwise majority contests.

**Winset:** The winset of  $y$ , written  $W(y)$ , is the set of points that a majority prefers to  $y$ . (Note: the statement "the winset of  $x$  is empty" is equivalent to the statement " $x$  is a Condorcet winner." Can you see why?)

**Black's Median Voter Theorem:** If members of a group have single-peaked preferences, then the ideal point of the median voter has an empty winset (i.e., is a Condorcet winner).