Vote-Counting Methods: How the Civil War Might Have Been Avoided

by Russ Goodman, Central College Professor of Mathematics

Russ Goodman

In this talk, we will briefly look at the voting dynamics of recent presidential elections before learning of a handful of less common vote-counting methods and where they are used in modern society. We will also hear about what it means for the result of an election to be "fair." Following this, we discuss and generalize one particular vote-counting method, the Borda Count Method, and use it to analyze the 1860 presidential election to attempt to answer the following question: was Abraham Lincoln becoming president the "will of the people"?

Dr. Russ Goodman is Professor of Mathematics at Central College, where he has taught since 2002. His teaching focuses on sports analytics, integral calculus, and abstract algebra. Russ is also an assistant coach with the Central College women's soccer team, primarily working with the goalkeepers. In his free time, he enjoys his beautiful wife and two daughters, working to run 1000 miles per year, doing origami, watching soccer, and enjoying all kinds of music except for country music.

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