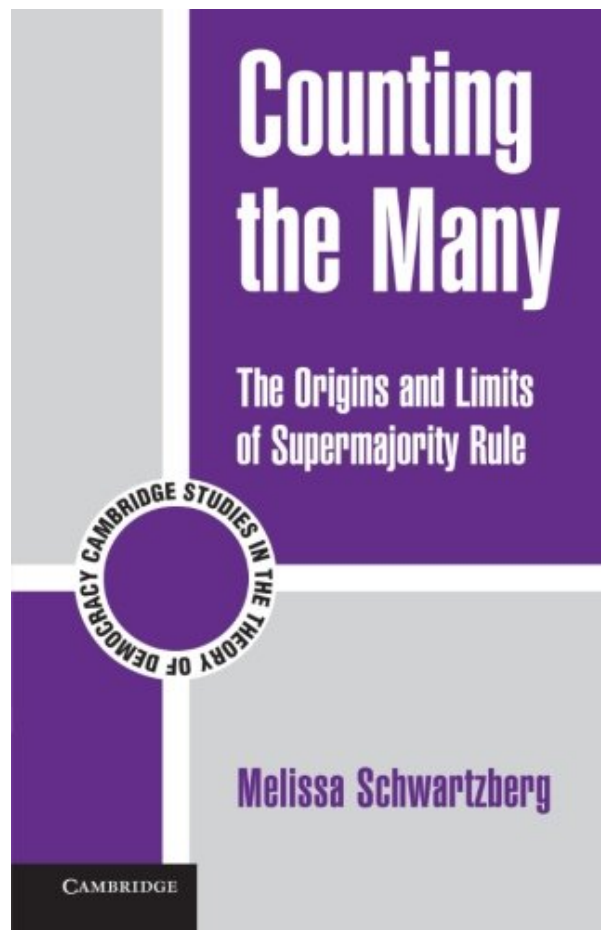
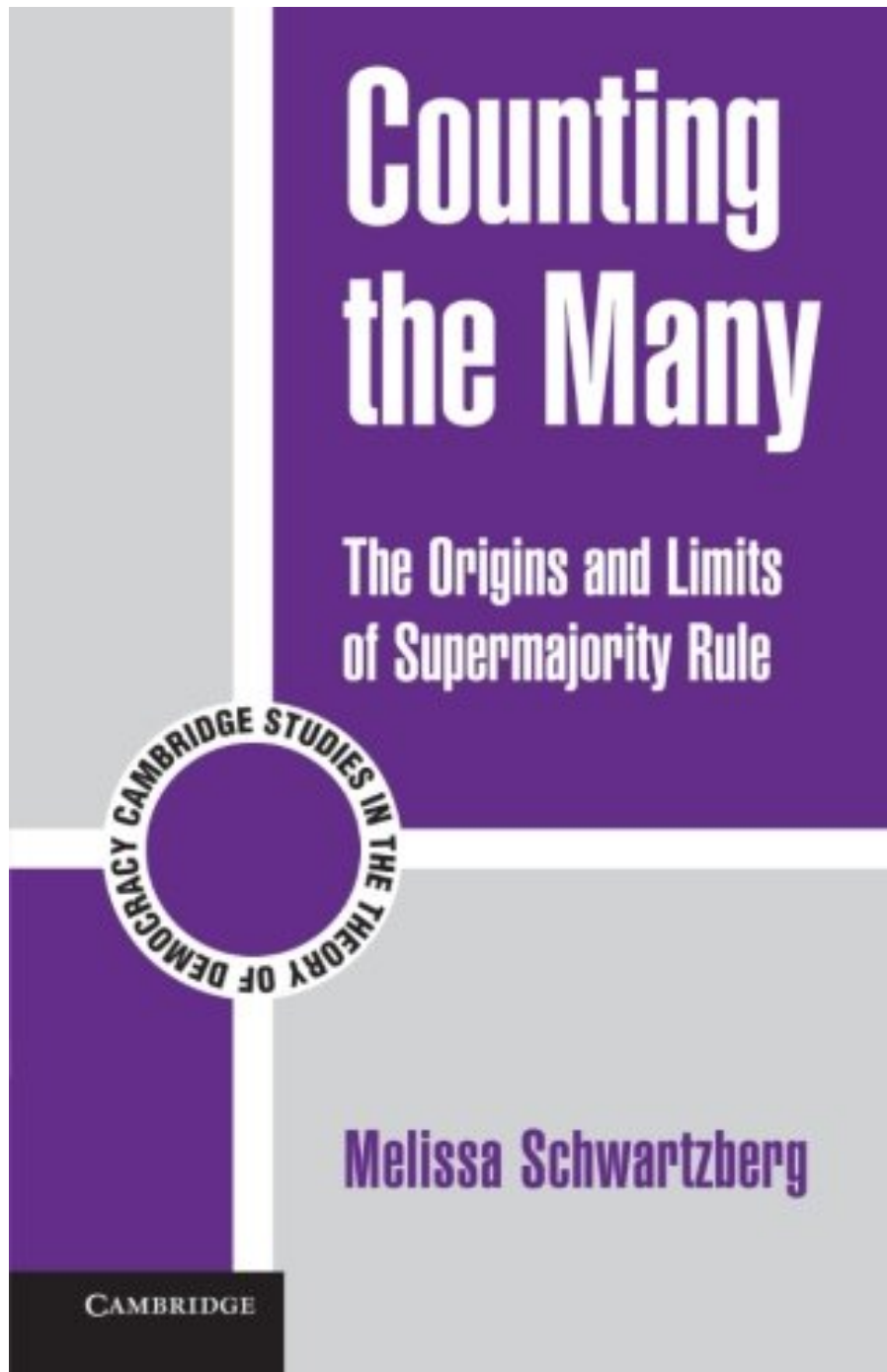


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Review

"As she did in her previous, remarkable book on entrenchment provisions, *Democracy and Legal Change*, Melissa Schwartzberg, in *Counting the Many*, shows us how little we really understand a widespread practice in modern constitutionalism, in this case supermajoritarianism. Combining sharp rational analysis and subtle historical research, Schwartzberg illuminates the origins of vote counting and the decision rules that developed along with it. Normatively, the book is courageous: Schwartzberg demonstrates in no uncertain terms that there is no justification compatible with democratic principles for supermajority requirements. Historically, the book is revelatory in several respects: for instance, Schwartzberg informs us that 'one person, one vote' was originally an aristocratic, not democratic, principle. *Counting the Many* is an excellent book that will enjoy an enormous scholarly and, hopefully, political impact." - John P. McCormick, Professor of Political Science, University of Chicago

About the Author

Melissa Schwartzberg is an Associate Professor of Politics at New York University. She previously taught at George Washington University and Columbia University. She received her AB from Washington University, St Louis in 1996, and her PhD in 2002 from New York University. She is the author of *Democracy and Legal Change* (Cambridge, 2007) and of articles in leading journals including the *American Political Science Review*, the *Journal of the History of Ideas*, the *Journal of Political Philosophy*, and *Political Theory*. She is a 2013 recipient of the Mellon New Directions Fellowship. From 2010 to 2013, she served as the co-president of the Association for Political Theory.

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PDF

Supermajority rules govern many features of our lives in common: from the selection of textbooks for our children's schools to residential covenants, from the policy choices of state and federal legislatures to constitutional amendments. It is usually assumed that these rules are not only normatively unproblematic but necessary to achieve the goals of institutional stability, consensus, and minority protections. In this book, Melissa Schwartzberg challenges the logic underlying the use of supermajority rule as an alternative to majority decision making. She traces the hidden history of supermajority decision making, which originally emerged as an alternative to unanimous rule, and highlights the tensions in the contemporary use of supermajority rules as an alternative to majority rule. Although supermajority rules ostensibly aim to reduce the purported risks associated with majority decision making, they do so at the cost of introducing new liabilities associated with the biased judgments they generate and secure.

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