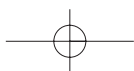
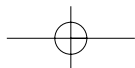
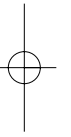
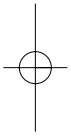
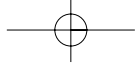
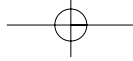


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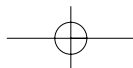
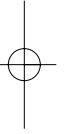
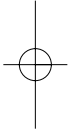


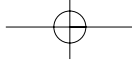


The International IDEA Handbook of Electoral System Design

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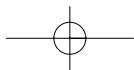
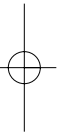
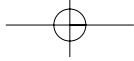
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Abbreviations

AV	Alternative Vote
BV	Block Vote
FPTP	First Past the Post
List PR	List Proportional Representation
MMD	Multi-Member District
MMP	Mixed Member Proportional
MP	Member of Parliament
PB	Party Block vote
PR	Proportional Representation
Semi-PR	Semi-Proportional Representation
SMD	Single-Member District
SNTV	Single Non-Transferable Vote
STV	Single Transferable Vote
TRS	Two-Round System
nde	no direct elections

OVERVIEW

1. The choice of electoral system is one of the most important institutional decisions for any democracy, yet only rarely are electoral systems consciously and deliberately selected. Often the choice is essentially accidental, the result of an unusual combination of circumstances, of a passing trend, or of a quirk of history, with the impact of colonialism and the effects of influential neighbours often especially strong. Yet in almost all cases the choice of a particular electoral system has a profound effect on the future political life of the country concerned, and in most cases electoral systems, once chosen, remain fairly constant as political interests congeal around and respond to the incentives presented by them.

2. If it is rare that electoral systems are deliberately chosen, it is rarer still that they are carefully designed for the particular historical and social conditions of a country. Any new democracy must choose (or inherit) an electoral system to elect its parliament, but such decisions are often affected by one of two circumstances. Either political actors lack basic knowledge and information so that the choices and consequences of different electoral systems are not fully recognized or, conversely, political actors use their knowledge of electoral systems to promote designs which they think will work to their own partisan advantage. In either scenario, the choices that are made may not be the best ones for the long-term political health of the country concerned, and at times they can have disastrous consequences for a country's democratic prospects.

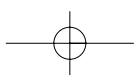
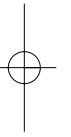
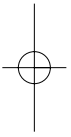
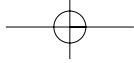
3. The background to a choice of electoral system can thus be as important as the choice itself. We are under no illusions that such decisions are taken in a political vacuum. In fact, the consideration of political advantage is almost always a factor in the choice of electoral systems – sometimes it is the *only* consideration – while the menu of available electoral system choices is often, in reality, a relatively constrained one. It is equally the case, however, that calcu-

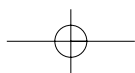
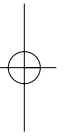
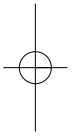
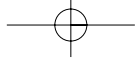
lations of short-term political interest can often obscure the longer-term consequences of a particular electoral system and the interests of the wider political system. Consequently, while recognizing the practical constraints, we attempt to approach the issue of electoral system choices discussed in this handbook in as broad and comprehensive a manner as possible.

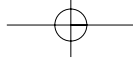
4. This handbook is aimed in particular at political negotiators and constitutional designers in new, fledgling, and transitional democracies. However, as the crafting of political institutions is a critical task not only for new democracies but also for those established democracies seeking to adapt their systems to better reflect new political realities, this handbook also seeks to address the likely concerns of those persons in both emerging and established democracies who may be designing electoral systems. Given this target audience, we have necessarily had to simplify much of the academic literature on the subject, while at the same time attempting to address some of the more complex issues inherent in the area. If we appear to be sometimes overly simplistic and at other times unduly complex, the explanation will usually lie in our attempt to balance these two objectives of clarity and comprehensiveness.

5. While the context in which emerging and established democracies make constitutional choices can vary enormously, their long-term purposes are usually the same: to adopt institutions which are strong enough to promote stable democracy but flexible enough to react to changing circumstances. Both types of democracy have much to learn from the experiences of the other. Institutional design is an evolving process, and this handbook seeks to distil the lessons learnt from the many actual examples of institutional design around the world.

6. Much constitutional design has occurred relatively recently: the world-wide movement towards democratic governance in the 1980s and 1990s stimulated a new urgency in the search for enduring models of appropriate representative government, and a fresh evaluation of electoral systems. This process has been encouraged by the widespread realization that the choice of political institutions can have a significant impact upon the wider political system – for example, it is increasingly being recognized that an electoral system can help to “engineer” co-operation and accommodation in a divided society. Electoral system design is now accepted as being of crucial importance to wider issues of governance, and as probably the most influential of all political institutions.





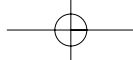


How to Use this Handbook

7. Through providing this detailed analysis of choices and consequences, and showing how electoral systems have worked throughout the democratic world, this handbook aims to achieve two things: to expand knowledge and illuminate political and public discussions; and to give constitutional designers the tools to make an informed choice, and thereby avoid some of the more dysfunctional and destabilizing effects of particular electoral system choices.

8. We begin with a discussion of what electoral systems actually are (and what they are not), and why they are important to a nation's political success and stability. We then, beginning at paragraph 17 below, set out eight criteria which one might use when trying to decide which electoral system is best for any given society; and, having set up this framework, in sections 2 and 3 we describe the different systems and their possible consequences. We have drawn the advantages and disadvantages of each system from historical experience and the writings of scholars in the field.

9. There are hundreds of electoral systems currently in use and many more permutations on each form, but for the sake of simplicity we have categorized electoral systems into three broad families, the plurality-majority, the semi-proportional, and the proportional. Within these we have nine "sub-families": First Past the Post (FPTP), the Block Vote (BV), the Alternative Vote (AV), and the Two-Round System (TRS) are all plurality-majority systems; Parallel systems and the Single Non-Transferable Vote (SNTV) are both semi-proportional systems; and List PR, Mixed Member Proportional (MMP), and the Single Transferable Vote (STV) are all proportional systems (see Figure One on page 18). Every one of the 211 parliamentary electoral systems listed in Annex A can be categorized under one of these nine headings, and this family tree, though rooted in long-established conventions, is the first to take account of all the electoral systems used for parliamentary elections in the world today, regard-

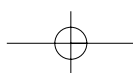


less of wider questions of democracy and legitimacy. We hope it offers a clear and concise guide to the choice among them.

10. After describing the mechanics and consequences of each electoral system, we move on to address "special parliamentary considerations", such as the representation of women and minorities, and communal rolls. The focus of this guide is on electing legislatures such as national assemblies or lower houses of parliaments, but we also discuss electoral system choice for selecting a president, the upper house of parliament in bicameral systems, and local governmental bodies. The final section deals with the important cost and administrative implications of electoral system choice, and we conclude with some advice for electoral system designers, culled from the experience of a number of experts who have helped draft constitutions around the world. The Annexes include a table listing the electoral system particulars of 211 independent states and related territories, a glossary of terms, an explanation of acronyms used, a bibliography of further reading, and examples of electoral system effects.

11. Interspersed throughout the text are 15 country case studies in which we have attempted to root the abstract theory of electoral system design in practical reality. The authors of these case studies, experts on the politics of their assigned country, were asked to address the following questions: What is the electoral system and how did it come into being? How does it work in practice? What aspects of the system work well? On what grounds is it criticized? And, if there was a change at some stage, why was there a change, and does the new system fulfil the requirements expected of it?

12. We do not aim in this handbook to provide all the answers to electoral system design; instead, we hope to provide enough information to allow for an informed choice, and to open windows to a much broader discussion of which electoral systems may work best in a given country. The handbook is not prescriptive to the extent, say, of telling the reader that a society which is 60% Muslim, 40% Christian, and has a three-party system and a history of violent secessionism should have a particular type of electoral system. What it does do is to suggest parameters of the available choices and, in so doing, provide a structure for making an informed decision. Through the examples and case studies, the reader from one country should be able to identify how similar problems and needs have been addressed in other parts of the world. Every country is different, but each nation's uniqueness usually rests on its different concoction of basic, widely-shared socio-political factors. For this reason we recom-



mend that the would-be electoral system designer begins with the criteria for choice (paragraph 17) and tries to prioritize the issues which are particularly important to his or her country; then he or she can move on to the options available and their likely consequences. The quest for the most appropriate electoral system thus involves the act of assessing the available choices against the chosen criteria (always with history, time, and political realities in mind), in order to systematically alight upon an option which will suit the needs of the country concerned.

What Electoral Systems Are

13. At the most basic level, electoral systems translate the votes cast in a general election into seats won by parties and candidates. The key variables are the electoral formula used (i.e., whether the system is majoritarian or proportional, and what mathematical formula is used to calculate the seat allocation) and the district magnitude (not how many voters live in a district, but how many members of parliament that district elects). It must be stressed that although this handbook does not focus on the administrative aspects of elections (such as the distribution of polling places, the nomination of candidates, the registration of voters, who runs the elections and so on), these issues are of critical importance, and the possible advantages of any given electoral system choice will be undermined unless due attention is paid to them. Electoral system design also affects other areas of electoral laws: the choice of electoral system has an influence on the way in which district boundaries are drawn, how voters are registered, the design of ballot papers, how votes are counted, along with numerous other aspects of the electoral process.

The Importance of Electoral Systems

14. Political institutions shape the rules of the game under which democracy is practised, and it is often argued that the easiest political institution to be manipulated, for good or for bad, is the electoral system, because in translating the votes cast in a general election into seats in the legislature, the choice of electoral system can effectively determine who is elected and which party gains power. Even with exactly the same number of votes for parties, one electoral

system might lead to a coalition government while another might allow a single party to assume majority control. The two examples presented in Annex D illustrate how different electoral systems can translate the votes cast into dramatically different results.

15. But a number of other consequences of electoral systems go beyond this primary effect. The type of party system which develops, in particular the number and the relative sizes of political parties in parliament, is heavily influenced by it. So is the internal cohesion and discipline of parties: some systems may encourage factionalism, where different wings of one party are constantly at odds with each other, while another system might encourage parties to speak with one voice and suppress dissent. Electoral systems can also influence the way parties campaign and the way political élites behave, thus helping to determine the broader political climate; they may encourage, or retard, the forging of alliances between parties; and they can provide incentives for parties and groups to be broad-based and accommodating, or to base themselves on narrow appeals to ethnicity or kinship ties. In addition, if an electoral system is not considered "fair" and does not allow the opposition to feel that they have the chance to win next time around, an electoral system may encourage losers to work outside the system, using non-democratic, confrontationalist and even violent tactics. And finally the choice of electoral system will determine the ease or complexity of the act of voting. This is always important, but becomes particularly so in societies where there are a substantial number of inexperienced or illiterate voters (see the Cost and Administration section on page 115).

16. However, it is important to note that a given electoral system will not necessarily work the same way in different countries. Although there are some common experiences in different regions of the world, the effects of a certain electoral system type depends to a large extent upon the socio-political context in which it is used. Electoral system consequences depend upon factors such as how a society is structured in terms of ideological, religious, ethnic, racial, regional, linguistic, or class divisions; whether the country is an established democracy, a transitional democracy, or a new democracy; whether there is an established party system, whether parties are embryonic and unformed, and how many "serious" parties there are; and whether a particular party's supporters are geographically concentrated together, or dispersed over a wide area.

Criteria for Design

17. When designing an electoral system, it is best to start with a list of criteria which sum up what you want to achieve, what you want to avoid and, in a broad sense, what you want your parliament and government to look like. We believe that the criteria which follow cover most areas, but the list is not exhaustive and the reader may add a host of equally valid items. It is also true that some of the criteria we outline overlap and may appear contradictory. This is because they often are, and it is the nature of institutional design that trade-offs have to be made between a number of competing desires and objectives. For example, one may want to provide the opportunity for independent candidates to be elected, and at the same time to encourage the growth of strong political parties. Or the electoral system designer may think it wise to craft a system which gives voters a wide degree of choice between candidates and parties, but this may make for a complicated ballot paper which causes difficulties for less-educated voters. The trick in choosing (or reforming) an electoral system is to prioritize which criteria are most important and then assess which electoral system, or combination of systems, best maximizes these objectives.

Ensuring a Representative Parliament

18. Representation may take at least three forms First, *geographical* representation implies that each region, be it a town or a city, a province or an electoral district, has members of parliament whom they choose and who are ultimately accountable to their area. Second, a parliament should be *functionally* representative of the party-political situation that exists within the country. If half the voters vote for one political party but that party wins no, or hardly any, seats in parliament, then that system cannot be said to adequately represent the will of the people. Through the representation not only of political parties but also of independent MPs, an effective parliament should adequately reflect the ideological divisions within society.

19. Also, there is the question of *descriptive* representation which implies that parliament is, to some degree, a "mirror of the nation" which should look, feel, think, and act in a way which reflects the people as a whole. An adequately descriptive parliament would include both men and women, the young and old, the wealthy and poor, and reflect the different religious affiliations, linguistic communities and ethnic groups within a society.

Making Elections Accessible and Meaningful

20. Elections are all well and good, but they may mean little to people if it is difficult to vote or if, at the end of the day, their vote makes no difference to the way the nation is governed. The "ease of voting" is determined by factors such as how complex the ballot paper is, how easy it is for the voter to get to a polling place, how up to date the electoral roll is, and how confident the voter will be that his or her ballot is secret.

21. Coupled with those concerns is the broader issue of whether an individual's vote makes a difference to the final results. If you know that your preferred candidate has no chance of winning a seat in your particular district, what is the incentive to vote? In some electoral systems the number of "wasted votes" (i.e., those which do not go towards the election of any candidate, as distinct from spoiled or invalid votes, which are ballots excluded from the count) can amount to a substantial proportion of the total national vote.

22. Lastly, the meaningfulness of elections is determined by how powerful the elected parliament actually is. Hollow or choiceless elections in authoritarian systems, where parliaments have little real influence on the formation of governments or on government policy, are far less important than elections which constitute parliaments which actually have the power to determine central elements in people's everyday lives. But even within democratic parliamentary systems, the choice of electoral system can influence the legitimacy of institutions. For example, the Australian Senate between 1919 and 1946 was elected by a highly disproportional electoral system (the Alternative Vote in multi-member districts), which produced lop-sided and unrepresentative results. This tended to undermine the actual legitimacy of the Senate itself in the eyes of both electors and politicians and, some observers argued, also undermined public support for the institutions of federal government in general. After the system was altered to a fairer proportional system (the Single Transferable Vote) in 1948, the Senate began to be perceived as more credible and representative, and thus respect for it and its relative importance in decision-making increased.

Providing Incentives for Conciliation

23. Electoral systems can be seen not only as ways to constitute governing bodies, but also as a tool of conflict management within a society. Some systems, in some circumstances, will encourage parties to make inclusive appe-

als for electoral support outside their own core vote base; for instance, even though a party draws its support primarily from black voters, a particular electoral system may give it the incentive to appeal to white, or other, voters. Thus, the party's policy platform would become less divisive and exclusionary, and more unifying and inclusive. Similar electoral system incentives might make parties less ethnically, regionally, linguistically, or ideologically exclusive. Examples of how differing electoral systems have worked as tools of conflict management are given throughout this handbook.

24. On the other side of the coin, electoral systems can encourage voters to look outside their own group and think of voting for parties who traditionally have represented a different group. Such voting behaviour breeds accommodation and community building. Systems which give the voter more than one vote or allow the voter to order candidates preferentially provide the space for electors to cut across pre-conceived social boundaries. Under the 1989 Jordanian electoral system (see case study on page 53) for example, a Muslim voter could cast two out of their three votes for Islamic candidates while giving an independent Christian their last vote. In the highly ethnically-fragmented nation of Papua New Guinea in the 1960s and 1970s, voters were able to list candidates preferentially on the ballot paper, which allowed for a spectrum of alliances and vote-trading between competing candidates and different communal groups. When the preferential system was abandoned, groups no longer had an electoral incentive to act co-operatively, and their behaviour consequently became more exclusionary.

Facilitating Stable and Efficient Government

25. The prospects for a stable and efficient government are determined by many factors other than the electoral system, but the results a system produces can contribute to stability in a number of important respects. The key questions in this regard are whether people perceive the system to be fair, whether government can efficiently enact legislation and govern, and whether the system avoids discriminating against particular parties or interest groups. The perception of whether results are "fair" or not varies widely from country to country. Twice in Britain (in 1951 and 1974) the party winning the most votes in the country as a whole won fewer seats than their opponents, but this was considered more a quirk of a basically sound system (FPTP – see page 27) than an outright unfairness which should be reversed. Conversely, in Mongolia in 1992 the system (the Block Vote) allowed the ruling Mongolian People's

Revolutionary Party to win 92% of the seats with only 57% of the votes. This was considered by many to be not merely unfair but dangerous to democracy, and the electoral system was consequently changed for the elections of 1996.

26. The question of whether the government of the day can efficiently enact legislation is partly linked to whether they have a working parliamentary majority or not, and this in turn is linked to the electoral system. As a general rule of thumb, plurality-majority electoral systems are more likely to give rise to parliaments where one party can outvote the combined opposition, while Proportional Representation systems are more likely to give rise to coalition governments. Nevertheless, it has to be remembered that PR systems can also give rise to single party majorities, and plurality-majority systems can leave no one party with a working majority. Much depends on the structure of the party system and the nature of the society itself.

27. Finally, the system should, as far as possible, act in an electorally neutral manner towards all parties and candidates; it should not overtly discriminate against any political grouping. The perception that electoral politics is an uneven playing field is a sign that the political order is weak and that instability may not be far around the corner.

Holding the Government and Representatives Accountable

28. Accountability is one of the bedrocks of representative government, as it provides a check on individuals, once elected, betraying the promises they made during the campaign. An accountable political system is one where both the government and the elected members of parliament are responsible to their constituents to the highest degree possible. On the broader canvas, voters must be able to influence the shape of the government, either by altering the coalition of parties in power or by throwing out of office a single party which has failed to deliver. Suitably-designed electoral systems facilitate both of these objectives. Accountability involves far more than the mere holding of regular national elections; it also depends on the degree of geographical accountability (which is largely dependent on the size and territorial nature of districts), as well as the freedom of choice for voters to choose between candidates as opposed to parties. In addition, there may be supplementary methods of accountability which can be utilized: in some American States members of the State legislature can be "recalled" if enough voters in their district demand it. Other jurisdictions make use of "direct democracy" mechanisms such as referendums and initiatives.

Encouraging "Cross-Cutting" Political Parties

29. The weight of evidence from both established and new democracies suggests that longer-term democratic consolidation – i.e. the extent to which a democratic regime is insulated from domestic challenges to the stability of the political order – requires the growth and maintenance of strong and effective parties, and thus the electoral system should encourage this tendency rather than entrench or promote party fragmentation. Similarly, most experts agree that the system should encourage the development of parties which are based on broad political values and ideologies as well as specific policy programmes, rather than narrow ethnic, racial, or regional concerns. As well as lessening the threat of inter-societal conflict, parties which are based on these broad "cross-cutting cleavages" are more likely to reflect national opinion than those based predominantly on sectarian or regional concerns.

Promoting a Parliamentary Opposition

30. Effective governance relies not only upon those "in power" but, almost as much, on those who sit in parliament but are out of government. The electoral system should help ensure the presence of a viable parliamentary opposition grouping which can critically assess legislation, safeguard minority rights, and represent their constituents effectively. Opposition groupings should have enough parliamentary members to be effective, assuming they warrant these members by their performance at the ballot box, and should be able to realistically present an alternative to the current administration. Obviously the strength of parliamentary opposition depends on many factors other than the choice of electoral system, but if the system itself makes parliamentary opposition impotent, democratic governance is inherently weakened. At the same time, the electoral system should hinder the development of a "winner take all" attitude which leaves rulers blind to other views and the needs and desires of opposition voters, and in which both elections and government itself are seen as zero-sum contests.

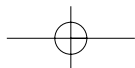
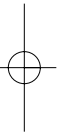
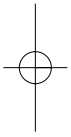
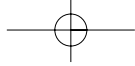
Cost and Administrative Capacity

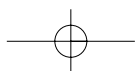
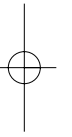
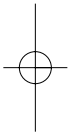
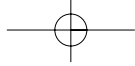
31. Elections do not take place on the pages of academic books but in the real world, and for this reason the choice of any electoral system is, to some degree, dependent on the cost and administrative capacities of the country involved. For example, a poor nation may not be able to afford the multiple elections required under a Two-Round System, or be able to easily administer a com-

plicated preferential vote count. We will address these issues in greater detail in section 6, but it is important to remember that, while cost and administrative issues should always be borne in mind, simplicity in the short term may not always make for cost-effectiveness in the longer run. An electoral system may be cheap and easy to administer, but it may not answer the pressing needs of a nation, and when an electoral system is at odds with a country's needs the results can be disastrous. Alternatively, the "best" electoral system in any given case may at the outset appear a little more expensive to administer and more complex to understand, but in the long run it might help ensure the stability of the state and the positive direction of democratic consolidation.

Conclusions

32. As we noted at the beginning of this section, the criteria we have outlined are at times in conflict with each other or even mutually exclusive. The electoral system designer must therefore go through a careful process of prioritizing which criteria are most important to the particular political context before moving on to assess which system will do the best job. A useful way forward is to first list the things which must be avoided at all costs, such as political catastrophes which could lead to the breakdown of democracy. For example an ethnically-divided state in Central Africa might want above all to avoid excluding minority ethnic groups from representation, in order to promote the legitimacy of the electoral process and avoid the perception that the electoral system was unfair. In contrast, while these issues would remain important, a fledgling democracy in Eastern Europe might have different priorities – perhaps to ensure that a government could efficiently enact legislation without fear of gridlock, or that voters were able to remove discredited leaders if they so wished. How to prioritize among such competing criteria can only be the domain of the domestic actors involved in the constitutional design process.





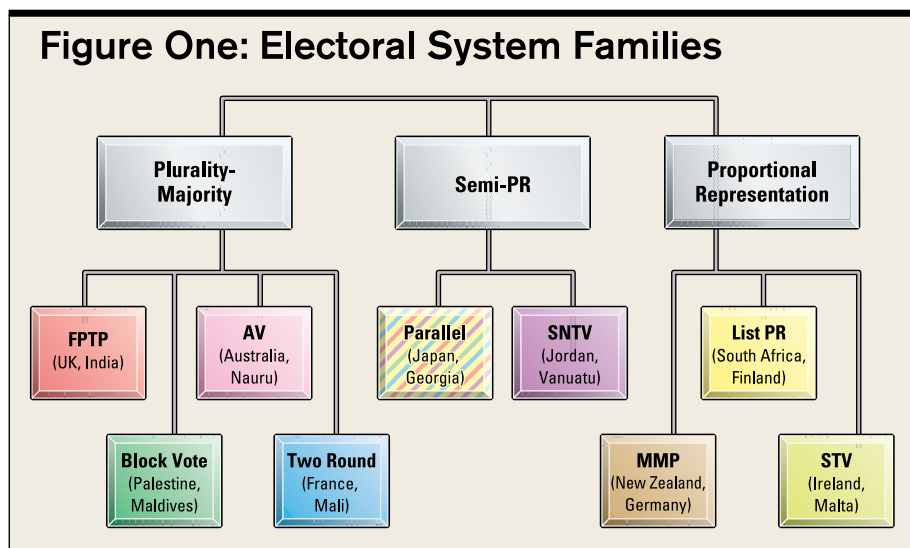
THE WORLD OF ELECTORAL SYSTEMS

33. As noted in paragraph 9 above, there are countless electoral system variations, but essentially they can be split into nine main systems which fall into three broad families. The most common way to look at electoral systems is to group them by how closely they translate national votes won into parliamentary seats won; that is, how proportional they are. To do this, one needs to look at both the vote-seat relationship and the level of wasted votes. For example, South Africa used a classically proportional electoral system for its first democratic elections of 1994, and with 62.65% of the popular vote the African National Congress (ANC) won 63% of the national seats. The electoral system was highly proportional, and the number of wasted votes (i.e., those which were cast for parties who did not win seats in the Assembly) was only 0.8% of the total. In direct contrast the year before, in the neighbouring nation of Lesotho, a classically majoritarian First Past the Post electoral system had resulted in the Basotho Congress Party winning every seat in the 65-member parliament with 75% of the popular vote; there was no parliamentary opposition at all, and the 25% of electors who voted for other parties were completely unrepresented. This result was mirrored in Djibouti's Block Vote election of 1992 when all 65 parliamentary seats were won by the Rassemblement Populaire pour le Progrès with 75% of the vote.

34. However, under some circumstances non-proportional electoral systems (such as FPTP) can accidentally give rise to relatively proportional overall results. This was the case in a third Southern African country, Malawi, in 1994. In that election the leading party, the United Democratic Front won 48% of the seats with 46% of the votes, the Malawian Congress Party won 32% of the seats with 34% of the votes, and the Alliance for Democracy won 20% of the

seats with 19% of the votes. The overall level of proportionality was high, but the clue to the fact that this was not inherently a proportional system, and so cannot be categorized as such, was that the wasted votes still amounted to almost one-quarter of all votes cast.

35. If we take the proportionality principle into account, along with some other considerations such as how many members are elected from each district and how many votes the voter has, we are left with the family structure illustrated in Figure One.



Plurality-Majority Systems

36. The distinguishing features of plurality-majority systems is that they almost always use single-member districts. In a First Past the Post system, sometimes known as a plurality single-member district system, the winner is the candidate with the most votes, but not necessarily an absolute majority of the votes (see paragraphs 47–50). When this system is used in multi-member districts it becomes the Block Vote. Voters have as many votes as there are seats to be filled, and the highest-polling candidates fill the positions regardless of the percentage of the vote they actually achieve (see paragraphs 51–55). Majoritarian systems, such as the Australian Alternative Vote and the French Two-Round System, try to ensure that the winning candidate receives an absolute majority (i.e. over 50%). Each system in essence makes use of voters' second preferences to pro-

duce a majority winner if one does not emerge from the first round of voting (see paragraphs 56–64).

Semi-Proportional Systems

37. The two most commonly used semi-proportional electoral systems are the Single Non-Transferable Vote (SNTV) and Parallel (or mixed) systems. In SNTV systems, each elector has one vote but there are several seats in the district to be filled, and the candidates with the highest number of votes fill these positions. This means that in a four-member district, for example, one would on average need only just over 20% of the vote to be elected. This allows for the election of minority party candidates, and improves overall parliamentary proportionality (see paragraphs 66–69). Parallel systems use both PR lists and plurality-majority (“winner-take-all”) districts but, unlike Mixed Member Proportional (MMP) systems (see paragraph 80 below), under Parallel systems the PR lists do not compensate for any disproportionality within the majoritarian districts. Parallel systems have been widely adopted by new democracies in Africa and the former Soviet Union (see paragraphs 70–72).

Proportional Representation

38. The rationale underpinning all proportional representation (PR) systems is to consciously reduce the disparity between a party’s share of the national vote and its share of the parliamentary seats; if a major party wins 40% of the votes, it should win approximately 40% of the seats, and a minor party with 10% of the votes should also gain 10% of the parliamentary seats. Proportionality is often seen as being best achieved by the use of party lists, where political parties present lists of candidates to the voters on a national or regional basis (see paragraphs 76–79), but it can be achieved just as easily if the proportional component of an MMP system compensates for any disproportionality which comes out of the majoritarian district results (see paragraphs 80–81). But preferential voting can work equally well: the Single Transferable Vote, where voters rank-order candidates in multi-member districts, is another well-established proportional system (see paragraphs 82–85).

39. As Table One (and the map which comes with this book) illustrate, just over half (114, or 54% of the total) of the independent states and semi-autonomous territories of the world which have direct parliamentary elections use plurality-majority systems; another 75 (35%) use PR-type systems, and the remaining 22

(10%) use semi-PR systems, all but two of which are Parallel systems. When classified by population size, the dominance of plurality-majority systems becomes even more pronounced, with parliaments elected by FPTP, Block, AV or TRS methods representing collectively 2.44 billion people (59% of the total). Proportional representation electoral systems are used in countries totalling 1.2 billion inhabitants, and semi-PR systems are used to represent just under half a billion people. In our survey the seven countries which do not have directly-elected national parliaments constitute 1.2 billion people, but China makes up 99% of that figure.

Table One: The World of Electoral Systems (May 1997)

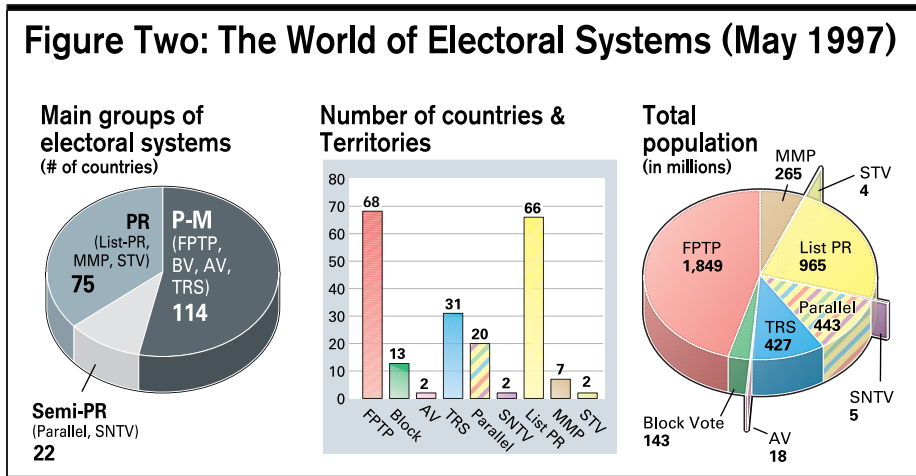
	# of Countries/ Territories		Total Population (millions)		Established Democracies		Total Population (millions)		"Free" Countries/ Territories		"Not Free" Countries/ Territories	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
FPTP	68	32	1,849	45	11	30	1,273	71	35	36	16	35
Block Vote	13	6	143	3	1	3	1	0.1	3	3	5	11
AV	2	1	18	0.4	1	3	18	1	2	2	0	–
TRS	31	15	427	10	1	3	58	3	7	7	11	24
Parallel	20	9	443	11	1	3	126	7	5	5	5	11
SNTV	2	1	5	0.1	0	–	–	–	1	1	0	–
List PR	66	31	965	23	15	42	158	9	39	40	9	20
MMP	7	3	265	6	4	11	162	9	4	4	0	–
STV	2	1	4	0.1	2	6	4	0.2	2	2	0	–
Total:	211		4,119		36		1,800		98		46	

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NB: 36 established democracies as categorized by Arend Lijphart in *Democracies*, 2nd ed. (New Haven, Yale University Press, forthcoming). Lijphart includes all countries considered democratic now, and for the last 20 years, which have a population of at least a quarter of a million people. "Free" and "Not Free" classifications from *Freedom in the World 1995–1996* (New York, Freedom House, 1997).

40. Individually, First Past the Post systems are the most popular, with 68 out of 211 nation-states and related territories giving them 32% of the total, followed by the 66 cases of List PR systems (31%). But when it comes to people, FPTP systems are used in countries which contain almost twice as many people as those in List PR countries. The 1.8 billion figure in Table One is inflated by India (913 million) and the United States (263 million), but FPTP is also used by many tiny Caribbean and Oceanian islands as well. The largest country that uses List PR is Indonesia with 191 million people, but it is predominantly a system used by middle-sized Western European, Latin American and African countries. Next in order are Two-Round Systems (15%) and Parallel systems (9%). So, while TRS systems are used in more countries, Parallel systems are

Figure Two: The World of Electoral Systems (May 1997)



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used by more people. This is largely because Russia (148 million inhabitants) and Japan (125 million) use classical Parallel systems.

41. The Block Vote is used in 13 countries and territories, 6% of the countries included, but its 143 million people only represent 3% of the total. Conversely, Mixed Member Proportional systems are used in only 7 countries, but the collective 265 million people of Germany, Venezuela, New Zealand, Mexico, Italy, Bolivia, and Hungary represent 6% of the total. The Single Transferable Vote, Alternative Vote and Single Non-Transferable Vote systems are the rarest electoral systems in use today, with only two examples of each. The use of AV in Australia and Nauru mean that 18 million people live under AV systems, while Jordan and Vanuatu's SNTV systems represent only 5 million people, and Ireland and Malta's STV systems 4 million.

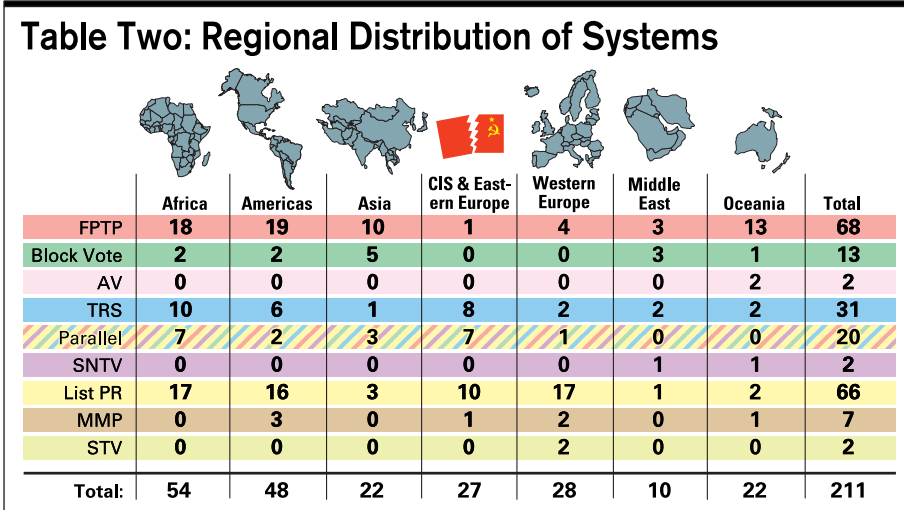
42. If we look at electoral systems in "established democracies" (i.e., those states with a population of more than a quarter of a million which have held continuing free elections for over 20 years)¹, then we find that proportional representation systems are more numerous with 21 (59%) out of the 36 states, but the size of India and the United States still means that 71% of people living in these 36 countries live under FPTP systems. MMP systems are over-represented among established democracies at 11%, and in fact are used by four million more people than the more widespread List PR systems. Since Japan's

¹ Austria, Australia, Bahamas, Barbados, Belgium, Botswana, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, India, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Luxembourg, Malta, Mauritius, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Papua New Guinea, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Trinidad and Tobago, United Kingdom, United States of America, Venezuela.

switch to a Parallel system there are no examples of SNTV in established democracies, while conversely both the world's examples of STV, Ireland and Malta, fall into this category. If we take a slightly broader view, to take in the tide of democratization which has occurred through the 1980s and 1990s, we find that 98 independent states and related territories are ranked as "free", on the basis of political rights and civil liberties, in the 1995–96 Freedom House *Freedom in the World*. Among these countries the distribution of electoral systems bears a close relationship to the overall pattern – proportionately there are slightly more FPTP and List PR systems and around half the number of TRS and Parallel systems, but it is difficult to say that any single electoral system is really any more popular in the "free" world than the world overall. However, among the 46 countries ranked as "not free", there are a disproportionate number of Two-Round and Block Vote Systems, and considerably fewer PR systems. In all, plurality-majority systems make up 70% of the electoral systems of the "not free" world.

43. Across continents, the distribution of electoral systems is more mixed. As Table Two and the attached map show, FPTP systems make up approximately 30–45% of the total in Africa, Asia, the Middle East and the Americas (overwhelmingly North America and the Caribbean). The system is less common in Europe and the former Soviet Union, but relatively dominant in the island states and territories of Oceania. List PR systems are similarly spread throughout Africa, the Americas (Central and South America), and post-communist

Table Two: Regional Distribution of Systems



	Africa	Americas	Asia	CIS & Eastern Europe	Western Europe	Middle East	Oceania	Total
FPTP	18	19	10	1	4	3	13	68
Block Vote	2	2	5	0	0	3	1	13
AV	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
TRS	10	6	1	8	2	2	2	31
Parallel	7	2	3	7	1	0	0	20
SNTV	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2
List PR	17	16	3	10	17	1	2	66
MMP	0	3	0	1	2	0	1	7
STV	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	2
Total:	54	48	22	27	28	10	22	211

© International IDEA

Eastern Europe. However, List PR is more dominant in Western Europe (61%), and together the three PR systems (List PR, MMP and STV) constitute three-quarters of all electoral systems in Western Europe. By contrast, almost a third of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and Eastern Europe use French-type Two-Round Systems, while over a third of all countries which use the Block Vote are found in Asia.

Ballots and Choice

44. Beyond proportionality, there are other ways of thinking about how electoral systems behave. One way is to assess what degree of choice on the ballot paper is given to a voter under each system. This gives us a very different way of illustrating the differences between electoral system types.

45. Ballots may be categorical or ordinal in structure, and they can be centred on candidates, on parties, or allow the voter to express a choice between both candidates and parties. Categorical ballots compel the voter to choose one candidate or party, while ordinal ballots allow the voter to express a more sophisticated range of choice. As Figure Three shows, some electoral systems give an ordinal choice within a candidate-centred ballot. For example, preferential voting systems such as the Alternative Vote and the Single Transferable Vote (see paragraphs 56–59 and 82–85) do this by allowing the voter to rank-order all candidates with numbers. Similarly, the Block Vote (paragraphs 51–52), the Two-Round System (paragraphs 60–64), and some forms of List PR (paragraphs 76–79 and 88) allow the voter to split his or her vote between the candidates of different parties, either via a second round of voting (TRS), having multiple votes to distribute (Block Vote) or via a candidate choice outside the particular PR party list (in “free list” PR systems). Finally, some electoral systems can offer a choice of both an ordinal and a categorical ballot. Since 1984 the STV ballot for the Australian Senate has included a “party ticket” box which, when chosen, means that the ballot is treated as though the voter had numerically listed all candidates in the order that their favoured party had chosen.

46. While ordinal ballots clearly allow voters a greater degree of choice, categorical ballots are more common; indeed, over three-quarters of all the electoral systems analysed in this handbook use them. Straight either/or choices between candidates are found in FPTP, SNTV, and the open List PR systems, while categorical choices between parties are inherent within closed List PR

systems and the Party Block adaptation of the Block Vote system (paragraphs 53–55). Electoral systems in which an elector has more than one vote, such as MMP (paragraphs 80–81) or Parallel systems (paragraphs 70–72), also logically entail the ability to split votes between two parties. In these cases, however, the choice on each separate ballot is clearly a categorical one, although the overall effect of the two ballots is to create an ordinal choice.

Figure Three: Electoral System Ballot Choice

	Candidate	Party	Both
Categorical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● FPTP (Canada) ● SNTV (Jordan) ● List PR-Open (Finland) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Party Block (Singapore) ● List PR-Closed (Namibia) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Parallel (Japan) ● List PR-Open (Denmark) ● MMP (Germany)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ AV (Australia) ● TRS (France) ● Block Vote (Maldives) ● STV (Ireland) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● TRS (Mali) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● TRS (Ukraine) ● List PR-Panachage (Switzerland)
Either			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● STV (Australian Senate)

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NB: Examples in brackets are representative case studies which illustrate how different systems might be categorized together under this logic.

Sonderyffende arts 2. side

Folketingsvalget 1994

A. Socialdemokratiet
Lis Greibe
Bent K. Andersen
Inger Bierbaum
Dorte Dinesen
Steen Jønsen
Poul Ovist Jørgensen
Karsten Meyer Olesen
B. Det Radikale Venstre
Jes P. Asmussen
Arne J. Carstensen
Birthe Clausen
Horst Gronwald
Kaj Smedemark
Niels Erik Tyge
Mikkel Wold
C. Det Konservative Folkeparti
Bente Witt
Bent Høve
Kaj Ikast
Kirsten Lyck
Hans Chr. Madsen
Jens Rønholdt
Jakob Aakjær
D. Centrum-Demokraterne
Jan R. Arntoft
Flemming Hübischmann
Bent Olsen
Carl J. Tender
F. Socialistisk Folkeparti
Jørn Ulrik Larsen
Helge C. Jacobsen
Karin Petersen
Kent Glumac

A Danish open list PR (categorical) ballot paper.



BALLOT PAPER
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WESTERN AUSTRALIA
ELECTORAL DIVISION OF
BRAND

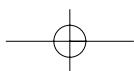
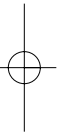
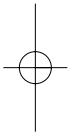
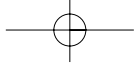
**Number the boxes from 1 to 10
in the order of your choice.**

<input type="checkbox"/>	BEAZLEY, Kim <small>AUSTRALIAN LABOUR PARTY</small>
<input type="checkbox"/>	GENT, Alan <small>INDEPENDENT</small>
<input type="checkbox"/>	McCARTHY, Brian <small>INDEPENDENT</small>
<input type="checkbox"/>	GOODALE, Bob <small>THE GREENS (WA)</small>
<input type="checkbox"/>	McKERCHER, Mal <small>AUSTRALIAN DEMOCRATS</small>
<input type="checkbox"/>	ANDERSON, Leone L. <small>INDEPENDENT</small>
<input type="checkbox"/>	GALLETLY, Clive Philip Arthur <small>INDEPENDENT</small>
<input type="checkbox"/>	REBE, Phil <small>AUSTRALIANS AGAINST FURTHER IMMIGRATION</small>
<input type="checkbox"/>	WALTON, Malcolm <small>NATIONAL PARTY</small>
<input type="checkbox"/>	HEARNE, Penny <small>LIBERAL</small>

**Remember...number every box
to make your vote count**

Australian Electoral Commission **AEC**

An Australian Alternative Vote (ordinal) ballot paper.



THE SYSTEMS AND THEIR CONSEQUENCES

Plurality-Majority Systems

First Past the Post (FPTP)

47. To date, pure First Past the Post systems are found in the United Kingdom and those countries historically influenced by Britain. Along with the United Kingdom, the most analysed cases are Canada, India, New Zealand, and the United States of America, although New Zealand switched to a MMP system of Proportional Representation in 1993. FPTP is also used by a dozen Caribbean nations; in Latin America by Belize and formerly Guyana; by ten Asian states (including Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, and Malaysia); and by many of the small island nations of the South Pacific. In Africa 18 countries, mostly former British colonies, use First Past the Post systems. In total, out of the 211 countries listed in Annex A, 68 – just under one third – use FPTP systems.

48. As noted earlier, in First Past the Post systems the winning candidate is simply the person who wins most votes; in theory he or she could be elected with two votes, if every other candidate only secured a single vote. Alterations to this rule transform the system into the Block Vote, the Two-Round System, or the Single Non-Transferable Vote, and these will be dealt with in more detail below. However, one adaptation which can also be categorized as FPTP was used in Nepal in the early 1990s. There, due to the low level of literacy in much of the electorate, candidates ran under a party symbol rather than as individuals. Voters chose between parties rather than between candidates. Candidates for office were allowed to run in more than one district, if they

wished. Any candidate elected in two or more seats would then have to choose which district they would represent. By-elections were held to fill the vacated seats.

49. *Advantages.* FPTP, like other plurality-majority electoral systems, is defended primarily on the grounds of simplicity and its tendency to produce representatives beholden to defined geographic areas. The most often cited advantages of First Past the Post are that:

a. It provides a clear cut choice for voters between two main parties. The in-built disadvantages faced by third and fragmented minority parties under FPTP in many cases makes the party system gravitate towards a party of the "left" and a party of the "right", alternating in power. Third parties often wither away, and almost never reach a threshold of popular support where their national vote achieves a comparable percentage of parliamentary seats.

b. It gives rise to single party governments. The "seat bonuses" for the largest party common under FPTP (i.e., where one party wins, for example, 45% of the national vote but 55% of the seats) means that coalition governments are the exception rather than the rule. This state of affairs is praised for providing cabinets which are unshackled from the restraints of having to bargain with a minority coalition partner.

c. It gives rise to a coherent parliamentary opposition. In theory, the flip side of a strong single-party government is that the opposition is also given enough seats to perform a critical checking role, and present itself as a realistic alternative to the government of the day.

d. It advantages broadly-based political parties. In severely ethnically or regionally-divided societies, FPTP is praised for encouraging political parties to be "broad churches", encompassing many elements of society, particularly when there are only two major parties and many different societal groups. These parties can then field a diverse array of candidates for election. In FPTP Malaysia, for example, the governing coalition is a broad-based movement, and fields Chinese candidates in Malay areas and vice-versa.

e. It excludes extremist parties from parliamentary representation. Unless an extremist minority party's electoral support is geographically concentrated, it is unlikely to win any seats under FPTP. This contrasts with the situation under

straight PR systems, where a fraction of one per cent of the national vote can ensure parliamentary representation.

f. It retains the link between constituents and their Member of Parliament. Perhaps the most oft-cited advantage of FPTP systems are that they give rise to a parliament of geographical representatives: MPs represent defined areas of cities, towns, or regions rather than just party labels. Many proponents of FPTP argue that true representative accountability depends upon the voters of one area knowing who their own representative is and having the ability to re-elect, or throw him or her out, at election time. Some analysts have argued that this "geographic accountability" is particularly important in agrarian societies and in developing countries.

g. It allows voters to choose between people rather than just between parties. Related to the previous point is the advantage that voters can assess the performance of individual candidates rather than just having to accept a list of candidates presented by a party, as can happen under some List PR electoral systems.

h. It gives a chance for popular independent candidates to be elected. This is particularly important in developing party systems, where politics still revolves more around extended ties of family, clan or kinship and is not based on strong party-political organizations.

i. Finally, FPTP systems are particularly praised for being simple to use and understand. A valid vote requires only one mark beside the name or symbol of one candidate, and the number of candidates on the ballot paper is usually small making the count easy to administer for electoral officials.

50. *Disadvantages.* Conversely, all plurality-majority systems, with FPTP being the chief culprit, have been criticized for:

a. Excluding minority parties from "fair" representation. Here we take the word "fair" to mean that a party which wins approximately 10% of the votes should win approximately 10% of the parliamentary seats. In the 1983 British general election, the Liberal-Social Democratic Party Alliance won 25% of the votes but only 3% of the seats; in the 1981 New Zealand election the Social Credit Party won 21% of the vote but only 2% of the seats, and in the 1989 Botswana general election the Botswana National Front won 27% of the votes

but only 9% of the seats. This is a pattern which is repeated time and time again under FPTP.

b. Excluding minorities from fair representation. As a rule, under FPTP parties put up the most broadly acceptable candidate in a particular district so as to avoid alienating the majority of electors. Thus it is rare, for example, for a black candidate to be given a major party's nomination in a majority white district in Britain or the USA, and there is strong evidence that ethnic and racial minorities across the world are far less likely to be represented in parliaments elected by FPTP. In consequence, if voting behaviour does dovetail with ethnic divisions, then the exclusion from parliamentary representation of ethnic minority group members can be destabilizing for the political system as a whole.

c. Excluding women from parliament. The "most broadly acceptable candidate" syndrome also affects the ability of women to be elected to parliamentary office, because they are often less likely to be selected as candidates by male-dominated party structures. Evidence across the world suggests that women are less likely to be elected to parliament under plurality-majority systems than under PR ones. The Inter-Parliamentary Union's annual study of "Women in Parliament" in 1995 found that on average women made up 11% of the parliamentarians in established democracies using FPTP, but the figure almost doubled to 20% in those countries using some form of Proportional Representation. This pattern has been mirrored in new democracies, especially in Africa (see paragraphs 98–99).

d. Encouraging the development of political parties based on clan, ethnicity, or region. In some situations, FPTP can encourage parties to base their campaigns and policy platforms on hostile conceptions of clan, ethnicity, race, or regionalism. In the Malawi multi-party elections of 1994, a history of colonial rule, missionary activity, and Hastings Banda's "Chewa-ization" of national culture combined to plant the seeds of regional conflict which both dovetailed with, and cut across, pre-conceived ethnic boundaries. The South voted for the United Democratic Front of Bakili Muluzi, the Centre for the Malawi Congress Party of Hastings Banda, and the North for the Alliance for Democracy led by Chakufwa Chihana. There was no incentive for parties to make appeals outside their home region and cultural-political base.

e. Exaggerating "regional fiefdoms" where one party wins all the seats in a

province/district. In some situations, FPTP tends to create regions where one party, through winning a majority of votes in the region, wins all, or nearly all, of the parliamentary seats. This both excludes regional minorities from representation and reinforces the perception the politics is a battleground defined by who you are and where you live rather than what you believe in. This has long been put forward as an argument against FPTP in Canada.

f. Leaving a large number of “wasted votes” which do not go towards the election of any candidate. Related to “regional fiefdoms” above is the prevalence of wasted votes, when minority party supporters begin to feel that they have no realistic hope of ever electing a candidate of their choice. This can be a particular danger in nascent democracies, where alienation from the political system increases the likelihood that extremists will be able to mobilize anti-system movements.

g. Being unresponsive to changes in public opinion. A pattern of geographically-concentrated electoral support in a country means that one party can maintain exclusive executive control in the face of a substantial drop in popular support. In some democracies under FPTP, a fall from 60% to 40% of a party’s popular vote nationally, may represent a fall from 80% to 60% in the number of seats held, which does not affect its overall dominant position. Unless seats are highly competitive, the system can be insensitive to swings in public opinion.

h. Finally, FPTP systems can be open to the manipulation of electoral boundaries. Any system which uses single-member districts is susceptible to boundary manipulation, for example unfair gerrymandering or malapportionment of district boundaries. This was particularly apparent in the Kenyan elections of 1993 when huge disparities between the sizes of electoral districts – the largest had 23 times the number of voters as the smallest – contributed to the ruling Kenyan African National Union party’s winning a large parliamentary majority with only 30% of the popular vote.



INDIA: First Past the Post on a Grand Scale

Mahesh Rangarajan and Vijay Patidar

India remains by far the largest democracy in the world, with almost 600 million voters. India's parliamentary government and First Past the Post (FPTP) electoral system is a legacy of British colonialism, which ended in 1947. The British introduced self-government to India in stages, but it was not until the end of colonial rule and the adoption of the Indian Constitution in 1950 by a Constituent Assembly that universal suffrage was achieved. The Constituent Assembly, which comprised a number of eminent jurists, lawyers, constitutional experts and political thinkers and laboured for almost three years, debated the issue of which electoral system should be adopted at great length before finally choosing a FPTP electoral system. Various systems of proportional representation were considered and attracted many advocates, given India's extremely diverse and multi-ethnic society, but FPTP was chosen mainly to avoid fragmented legislatures and to help the formation of stable governments – stability being a major consideration in a developing country with widespread poverty and illiteracy.

The Indian Constitution provides that all adult citizens who are 18 years or more of age, and who are not otherwise debarred from voting, can exercise their right to the franchise. Voters elect a 544-member Lok Sabha, or lower house, from single-member constituencies, and each of India's 25 states have adopted a similar system. By contrast, the upper house of parliament, the Rajya Sabha or Council of States, as well as the corresponding upper houses of the states, are indirectly-elected by members of the state legislative assemblies. There is also a (non-executive) President and Vice-President elected by the members of parliament and state legislative assemblies.

General elections are held once every five years, but the President may dissolve the Lok Sabha on the advice of the Prime Minister before its term is over, as in 1971, or if he or she is convinced that no stable government can be formed, as in 1991. The Prime Minister holds office for as long as he or she can command a majority in the Lok Sabha. All the successive Congress party Governments which ruled India continuously until 1977 served a full term in office. Since 1977, governments have been less stable, and a number of Prime Ministers have had to resign as a result of party splits or no-confidence votes before completing their full term.

While the electoral process is widely regarded as free and fair, and the Electoral Commission is highly independent and has wide powers, serious problems remain. This is especially the case in certain pockets of rural northern India where landed elites do not allow the rural poor to vote; polling stations are regularly captured by

hired gangs; voters are influenced by offers of free transport, and candidate spending limits are widely flouted. Sectarian appeals at election time can, and have, fuelled violence: Hindus make up 85% of the population, but India also has over 120 million Muslims, and the fragmenting of the party system has been characterized by a rise in popularity for extremist parties.



The major effect of the electoral system, at least until 1977, was to guarantee majority governments based on a minority of voter support. The FPTP electoral system resulted in the ruling Congress party securing stable majorities in the Lok Sabha, usually against a fragmented opposition. But since 1977, when the opposition parties combined to form coalitions and started putting up common candidates against the Congress candidates (as was the case in the 1977 and 1989 general elections), the Congress majorities have vanished. Moreover, the nature of the system meant that small changes in vote share often had a dramatic impact upon the shape of the resulting parliament. For example, the Congress party's share of parliamentary seats fell dramatically with only a slight decrease in votes, as can be seen in the table below.

The overall results of elections to the Lok Sabha have never been proportional. Because the candidate who obtains the most votes, but not necessarily a majority of votes polled, is declared elected, support can often be divided by setting candidates of the same caste, religion, or region against each other. But despite the divided

Congress Party Performance in Indian General Elections

Year of General Elections	Percentage of total votes polled by the Congress	Percentage decrease in votes polled	Number of seats obtained	Percentage decrease in seats
1971 (won)	43.7	—	352	—
1977 (lost)	34.52	35.39%	154	56.25%
1980 (won)	42.7	—	353	—
1984 (won)	48.10	—	405	—
1989 (lost)	39.53	19.49%	197	51.36%
1991 (won)	36.50	-	232	—
1996 (lost)	28.80	21.10%	140	39.66%

5-MUMBAI SOUTH CENTRAL I.P./96-Genl.
 Electoral Roll Part No.
 Serial No. of Elector
Nº 0811199
 Signature /
 Thumb Impression.

अतिशुभाई Azizbhai عزیز شہزاد		नाक गोविंदा सुब्राय Naique Govinda Subrai نایقہ گویندا سوبرای	
Nº 0811199 5-MUMBAI SOUTH CENTRAL I.P./96-Genl.			
अन्सारी महम्मदशम जरीवाल Ansari Mohammad Shamim Zariwala انیساری محمد شامیم زاریوالا		महेंद्र महाशिव सलवे Mahendra Sudashiv Salve महेंद्र महाशिव सलवे	
चन्द्र किशोर गुप्ता Chandra Kishor Gupta چندر کیشور گپتا		मोहन विष्णु रावले Mohan Vishnu Rawale موہن ویشنو راولے	
डॉ. जम्कानवाला इशक अबेदीन Dr. Jankhanwala Ishaq Abedin ڈاکٹر جمخانوالا ایشاق ابدین		रणजित भोविक Ranjit Bhowmick رنجیت بھویک	
तेंदुलकर भुषण सुरेश Tendulkar Bhushan Surush تینڈولکار بھوشن سورش		डॉ. शापुरजी सी. सुरती Dr. Shapoorjee C. Surty ڈاکٹر شاپورजी सी. सुरती	
डॉ. दत्ता सामंत Dr. Datta Samant डॉ. दत्ता सामंत		साहिवाल जोष अब्बास Sahiwala Zueb Abbas سہیلوالا ذوب عباس	

An Indian First Past the Post ballot paper.

nature of India's multi-ethnic democracy, the electoral system has retained a considerable degree of support, due in part to the practice of reserving seats for socially underprivileged groups. The Indian Constitution reserves 22% of all seats for historically disadvantaged groups known as Scheduled Castes (79 reserved seats) and Scheduled Tribes (41 reserved seats). In these constituencies, only a member of the Scheduled Castes or Tribes may contest the polls, although all electors have voting rights. This has ensured that their parliamentary representation is in line with their proportion of the population. A constitutional amendment which seeks to reserve 33% of seats for women representatives is currently being considered.

The depth of popular support for the integrity of the electoral system became evident in 1977. When the election of the incumbent Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi, was set aside by a court after Congress had won a two-thirds legislative majority in 1971, she responded by setting aside fundamental constitutional rights for two years (1975–1977), an authoritarian interlude in India's otherwise continuous history of competitive democracy. In the 1977 elections, her government lost power through a fair poll, signaling the unwillingness of India's voters to accept undemocratic practices. But the elections of 1977 also ushered in a new era of instability in Indian politics. Since 1977, the Congress Party has been able to complete terms in office only under Indira Gandhi (1980–1984), Rajiv Gandhi (1984–1989) and PV Narasimha Rao (1991–1996).

The strength of the electoral system has not been mirrored by the emergence of a viable non-Congress alternative at the national level. The non-Congress opposition parties, except the Communists, won government in 1977 by uniting into a composite entity, the Janata party. It split within two years. In December 1989, a successor party, the Janata Dal, came to power, supported by the Communist parties and the Hindu revivalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP); this government lasted ten months. At the Indian General Elections of 1996, no party was able to form a stable government. The BJP won 161 seats and the Congress won 140.

Two unprecedented things happened as a result of these elections. First, the main opposition party, the BJP, a right-wing, pro-Hindu political party, was asked by the President of India to form a government for the first time. But most of the other political parties, with the avowed objective of preventing BJP from coming to power, combined together so that the BJP could not muster even a bare majority on the floor of the Lok Sabha, and subsequently a coalition of 13 parties, with diametrically opposing ideologies, under the banner of United Front, formed the Government. In other words, neither the largest nor the second-largest party could form a government. The FPTP general elections of 1996, under the very same electoral system that had brought stability until 1977, thus ushered in an era of political instability and uncertainty.

Block Vote (BV)

51. The Block Vote is simply the use of First Past the Post voting in multi-member districts. Each elector is given as many votes as there are seats to be filled, and they are usually free to vote for individual candidates regardless of party affiliation. In most Block Vote systems they may use as many, or as few, votes as they wish. As of June 1997 the Palestinian Authority, Bermuda, Fiji, Laos, the US Virgin Islands, Thailand, the Maldives, Kuwait, the Philippines and Mauritius all use Block Vote electoral systems. The system was also used in Jordan in 1989 and in Mongolia in 1992, but was changed in both countries as a result of unease with the results it produced. A few seats in the British House of Commons, in particular the University seats, were elected by the Block Vote up until 1945.

52. The Block Vote is often applauded for retaining the voter's ability to vote for individual candidates and allowing for reasonably-sized geographical districts, while at the same time stressing the role of parties and strengthening those parties which demonstrate most coherence and organizational ability. However, when voters cast all their votes for the candidates of a single party, which is often the case, the system tends to exaggerate all the disadvantages of FPTP, in particular its disproportionality. In Mauritius in 1982 and 1995, for example, the former opposition won every seat in the legislature with only 64% and 65% of the vote respectively. This created severe difficulties for the effective functioning of a parliamentary system based on concepts of government and opposition. The Philippines is moving away from the Block Vote to a List PR system for similar reasons.

Party Block Vote (PB)

53. For the election of a number of their MPs (all in the cases of Djibouti and Lebanon, and almost all in the cases of Singapore, Tunisia, Ecuador and Senegal), six countries use an electoral system which falls somewhere in between FPTP and the Block Vote as described above. We shall refer to this as the Party Block Vote. As in FPTP, voters usually have a single vote but unlike FPTP there are multi-member districts and voters choose between party lists of candidates rather than individuals. The party which wins most votes takes all the seats in the district, and its entire list of candidates is duly elected. As in FPTP, there is no requirement to win an absolute majority of the votes.

54. In some countries, the Party Block is used to ensure balanced ethnic representation, as it enables parties to present ethnically-diverse lists of candidates for election. In Lebanon, for example, each party list must be comprised of a mix of candidates from different ethnic groups. In Singapore, there are a range of single-member and multi-member districts. While MPs for the single-member seats are elected by FPTP, most MPs are elected from multi-member districts known as Group Representation Constituencies, which each return between three and six members from a single list of party or individual candidates. Of the candidates on each party or group list, at least one must be a member of the Malay, Indian or some other minority community. Voters choose between these various lists of candidates with a single vote. While each elector votes only once, in most districts he or she is effectively choosing all members with one vote. Singapore also uses "best loser" seats for opposition candidates in some circumstances – as does Ecuador where, if the party which takes second-place wins half the votes of the first party, it is rewarded with a seat.

55. The advantages of the Party Block Vote are that it is simple to use, encourages strong parties and allows for parties to put up mixed slates of candidates in order to facilitate minority representation. However, a critical flaw of the Party Block is the production of "super-majoritarian" results, where one party can win almost all of the seats with a simple majority of the votes. In the Singaporean elections of 1991, for example, a 61% vote for the ruling People's Action Party gave it 95% of all seats in parliament.

The Alternative Vote (AV)

56. The Alternative Vote (AV) is a relatively unusual electoral system, which today is used only in Australia and, in a modified form, in Nauru. It was also used for general elections in Papua New Guinea between 1964 and 1975 (see the Papua New Guinea case study on page 40), and in 1996 was recommended as the new electoral system for Fiji. It is thus a good example of the regional diffusion of electoral systems discussed earlier: the past, present and likely future usage of AV has all occurred within the Oceania region.

57. Like elections under a First Past the Post system, AV elections are usually held in single-member districts. However, AV gives voters considerably more options than FPTP when marking their ballot. Rather than simply indicating their favoured candidate, under AV electors rank the candidates in the order of

their choice, by marking a "1" for their favourite candidate, "2" for their second-choice, "3" for their third choice, and so on. The system thus enables voters to express their preferences between candidates, rather than simply their first choice. For this reason, it is often known as "preferential voting" in the countries which use it. AV also differs from First Past the Post in the way votes are counted. Like FPTP or Two-Round Systems, a candidate who has won an absolute majority of votes (50% plus one) is immediately elected. However, if no candidate has an absolute majority, under AV the candidate with the lowest number of first preferences is "eliminated" from the count, and his or her ballots are examined for their second preferences. These are then assigned to the remaining candidates in the order as marked on the ballot. This process is repeated until one candidate has an absolute majority, and is declared duly elected. For this reason, AV is usually classified as a majoritarian system, as a candidate requires an absolute majority, and not just a plurality, of all votes cast to secure a seat.

58. One advantage of transferring ballots is that it enables the votes of several aligned candidates to accumulate, so that diverse but related interests can be combined to win representation. AV also enables supporters of candidates who have little hope of being elected to influence, via their second and later preferences, the election of a major candidate. For this reason, it is sometimes argued that AV is the best system for dealing with elections in deeply divided societies, as it can compel candidates to seek not only the votes of their own supporters but also the "second preferences" of others. To attract these preferences, candidates must make broadly-based, centrist appeals to all interests, and not focus on narrower sectarian or extremist issues. The experience of AV in the relatively stable social environment of Australia has also tended to support these arguments: the major parties, for example, typically try to strike bargains with minor parties for the second preferences of their supporters prior to an election – a process known as "preference swapping". Furthermore, because of the majority support requirement, AV increases the consent given to elected members, and thus can enhance their perceived legitimacy.

59. Nevertheless, AV does have a number of disadvantages. First, it requires a reasonable degree of literacy and numeracy to be used effectively, and because it operates in single-member districts it can often produce results that are disproportional when compared to PR systems. Secondly, it is doubtful if AV would promote accommodatory behaviour in deeply divided societies where ethnic groups are concentrated in particular geographic regions and, as the ear-

lier discussion of its use in the Australian Senate from 1919–1946 noted, it has been found that AV does not work well when applied to larger, multi-member districts either. (The one exception to this statement is Nauru, which uses a modified version of AV, mostly in two-member districts. Under the Nauruan system, there are no eliminations and preferences are simply counted as “fractional votes”; a first preference is worth one, a second preference is worth half, a third preference is worth a third and so on. If no candidate has an absolute majority of first preferences, these lower-order preferences are tallied and the candidate(s) with the highest total(s) wins the seat.) On the other hand, the experience of AV in Papua New Guinea and in Australia suggests that it does encourage moderate centrist politics, enables diverse interests to be aggregated, and that in the right type of social setting it can provide significant incentives for accomodatory and co-operative politics.



PAPUA NEW GUINEA: Electoral Incentives for Inter-Ethnic Accommodation

Ben Reilly

The South Pacific country of Papua New Guinea (PNG) has utilised two different electoral systems – the Alternative Vote (AV) from 1964–1975, when it was an Australian territory, and First Past the Post (FPTP) from 1975 onwards, when it attained independence. Its experience is interesting for a number of reasons. First, Papua New Guinea is one of the few developing countries with an unbroken record of continuous competitive elections and numerous peaceful changes of government. Second, the change from one election system to another resulted in a series of unexpected consequences which illustrate the different effects apparently similar electoral systems can have.

Papua New Guinea inherited the AV system from Australia, and used it for three elections in 1964, 1968 and 1972. But, unlike Australia, PNG is a highly ethnically-fragmented state, and its experience of the three elections held under AV rules lends support to the claims that AV can promote inter-ethnic accommodation and moderation in deeply divided societies. This was because of the preferential nature of AV, under which voters express not just their first choice of candidate, but also their second and later choices. Because of the clan-based nature of PNG society, under AV most voters invariably gave their first preference to their own clan or “home” candidate. But, in many seats, this was not enough for any single candidate to gain a majority of votes; they needed the second preferences of other groups as well. In order to do this, candidates had to sell themselves as a good “second-best” choice to other clan groups – which meant, in general, someone who would be attentive to the interests of all groups, not just their own. It also meant that those candidates who formed alliances and co-operated with each other would often be more successful than candidates who attempted to win the seat from their own voter base alone. This gave many candidates an incentive to act in an accommodative manner to other clans. The mechanics of the system also ensured that the winning candidate would have the support of an absolute majority of voters. In a substantial number of cases, the winning candidate was not the one who had the biggest “bloc” of supporters, but rather the one who could successfully build support across several groups.

Thinking that First Past the Post would be simpler system which would have similar effects to AV, Papua New Guinea changed to a FPTP electoral system at independence in 1975. However, the different incentives provided by the new FPTP system led to quite different results than were expected. Because candidates no longer needed an absolute majority of votes cast in order to be successful, but just more



A Papua New Guinea First Past the Post ballot paper. The smaller photographs depict party leaders.

than any other group, the candidate from the largest clan would often win the seat outright. There was no incentive to co-operate with anyone else. Electoral violence increased, because it was in some candidates' interests to stop opponents' supporters from voting, rather than to campaign for their second preferences as they had under AV. Also, because there are so many clans all trying to win the seat, candidates learned that they could be successful with very limited support. At the 1992 elections, almost half the PNG parliament was elected with less than 20% of the vote – one successful candidate gained only 6.3%. It is now common for candidates to be encouraged to stand in order to "split" a dominant clan's voter base. This has led to a number of observers and politicians to call for the reintroduction of AV.

The Papua New Guinea case illustrates just how dependent much of the accepted wisdom regarding electoral systems is on the structure of the society concerned. Despite having a FPTP electoral system, PNG has a very fluid party system, based on individuals rather than ideologies, and all governments so far have been weak coalitions, which have changed on the floor of parliament as well as at elections. The single-member system of representation has resulted in high levels of turnover of politicians from one election to the next, and in a strong sense of accountability on the part of most local members to their electorate. However, under the AV system this sense of accountability tended to be spread across a number of groups, whereas under FPTP a member's clan base is sometimes his or her sole focus.

Two-Round Systems (TRS)

60. The final type of plurality-majority system used for parliamentary elections is the Two-Round System (TRS), also known as the run-off or double-ballot system. Each name indicates the central feature of the system: that it is not one election but takes place in two rounds, often a week or a fortnight apart. The first round is conducted in the same way as a normal FPTP election. If a candidate receives an absolute majority of the vote, then he or she is elected outright, with no need for a second ballot. If, however, no candidate received an absolute majority, then a second round of voting is conducted, and the winner of this round is declared elected.

61. The details of how the second round is conducted vary in practice from state to state. The most common method, as used in the Ukraine, is for the second round of voting to be a straight "run-off" contest between the two highest vote-winners from the first round; this is called a majority-runoff system (see Ukraine case study on page 48). It produces a result that is truly majoritarian, in that one of the two candidates will necessarily achieve an absolute majority of votes and be declared the winner. A variant on this procedure is used for legislative elections in France, the country most often associated with the Two-Round System. For these elections, any candidate who has received the votes of over 12.5% of the registered electorate in the first round can stand in the second round. Whoever wins the highest numbers of votes in the second round is then declared elected, regardless of whether they have won an absolute majority or not. Unlike straight majority-runoff, this system is not truly majoritarian, as there may be up to five or six candidates contesting the second round of elections. We therefore refer to it as a majority-plurality variant of the Two-Round System.

62. Two-Round Systems are used to elect over 30 national parliaments and are an even more common method for electing presidents. Alongside France, many of the other independent nations which use TRS are territorial dependencies of the French Republic, or have been historically influenced in some way by the French. In francophone Sub-Saharan Africa, the system is used by the Central African Republic, Mali, Togo, Chad, Gabon, Mauritania, and the Congo, and in North Africa by Egypt. Cuba, Haiti, Iran, Kiribati and the Comoros Islands also use Two-Round Systems for their legislative elections, as do the post-Soviet bloc states of Belarus, Kyrgyzstan, Macedonia, Moldova, Tajikistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan. Unsurprisingly, in Western Europe, France is joined by Monaco in using TRS. Albania and Lithuania run TRS elections

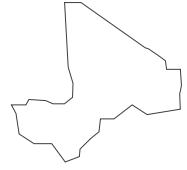
alongside List PR elections as part of their Parallel systems, while Hungary uses TRS to decide the results of the majoritarian district electoral component of its Mixed Member Proportional PR system.

63. It is perhaps surprising that Two-Round Systems are the third most popular among the 211 country cases analysed in this handbook, as the system places considerable pressure on the electoral administration by having to run a second election a short while after the first, thus significantly increasing the cost of the overall election process and the time-period between the holding of an election and the declaration of a result; this can lead to instability and uncertainty. The Two-Round System also places an additional burden on the voter, and sometimes there is a sharp drop-off in turnout between the first round and the second. In addition, the TRS shares many of the disadvantages of a FPTP system, without its countervailing simplicity. Research has shown that the Two-Round System in France produces the most disproportional results of any Western democracy.

64. The system does, however, have a number of advantages. First and foremost, it allows voters to have a second choice for their chosen candidate, or even to change their minds on their favoured choice between the first and the second rounds. It thus shares some features in common with preferential systems like the Alternative Vote, in which voters are asked to rank-order candidates, while also enabling voters to make a completely fresh choice in the second round if they so desire. Secondly, it encourages diverse interests to coalesce behind the successful candidates from the first round in the lead-up to the second round of voting, thus encouraging bargains and trade-offs between parties and candidates. It also enables the parties and the electorate to react to changes in the political landscape that occur between the first and the second rounds of voting. In addition, TRS systems lessen the problems of "vote splitting", the common situation under FPTP elections where two similar parties "split" their combined vote between them, thus allowing a less popular candidate to win the seat. Finally, because electors do not have to rank-order candidates with numbers to express their second choice, TRS may be better suited to countries with widespread illiteracy than systems which use preferential numbering like the Alternative Vote or the Single Transferable Vote.

MALI: A Two-Round System in Africa

Shaheen Mozaffar



The former French colony of Mali in West Africa made a successful transition to multi-party politics in 1991, after three decades of authoritarian rule. Principal among the new democratic institutions established at the time was a 129-seat National Assembly, with 116 seats elected by the domestic electorate and 13 by Malians residing overseas. The 116 domestic seats are allocated on the basis of population (one seat per 60,000 people) among 55 constituencies (*circonscriptions*) corresponding to the country's 49 administrative divisions (*cercles*) and the six communes in Bamako, the capital. Because of population disparities, the district magnitudes range from one to six seats per constituency.

While independent candidates are permitted, political parties are required to submit closed-party lists with the same number of candidates as available seats. Voters exercise their choice through categorical ballots, so they can vote for only one independent or party list of candidates. A Two-Round majority-runoff system is used whereby, in the absence of an independent candidate or party list winning an absolute majority in the first round, only the top two finishers in the first round compete in the second round, with the winner decided by an absolute majority. In the case of the multi-member districts, the two highest party lists from the first round compete in the second, with the winning list gaining every seat in the district. A similar Two-Round majority formula is used in the presidential election. A proportional representation formula based on the largest remainder (the Hare quota – see Glossary) is used in municipal elections.

As in most of francophone Africa, the new democratic institutions in Mali were debated and selected in a broadly-based National Conference, which included three representatives of each of the officially-registered political parties. The electoral system that emerged out of this process was a compromise aimed both at preserving the political power of the five major parties while creating electoral opportunities for numerous smaller ones, and at balancing the contradictory imperatives of securing broad political representation and producing stable governing majorities. Thus the initial proposal for using the Two-Round System (TRS) in single-member districts was rejected, in order to diminish the influence of local notables and strengthen party control over candidates. Also rejected was a proposal from smaller parties for a PR system, because of its anticipated potential for political instability. However, the adoption of the PR formula for municipal elections accommodated the smaller parties, most of which lacked national support and were regionally or locally based.

Conversely, it was thought that a Two-Round majority-runoff system for legislative elections would encourage coalitions in the second round between smaller and larger parties. The adoption of the Two-Round majority-runoff formula for presidential elections reflects the consensus in most African countries that the head of the state must be supported by a majority of the electorate.

The new Malian electoral system produced a relatively fair and competitive electoral process in 1992. The first round was contested by 23 officially registered parties, including three with national political bases, Alliance pour la démocratie au Mali (ADEMA), Congrès national d'Initiative démocratique (CNID), and Union soudanaise-Rassemblement démocratique africain (USRDA), and two with a limited national base but with the potential of becoming national parties, Rassemblement pour la démocratie et le progrès (RDP) and Parti progressiste soudanaise (PSP). The rest had regional and local bases and no prospect of entering the national government without forming a coalition with the other five. The competitiveness of the system was illustrated by the fact that only 11 out of 44 constituencies were decided in the first round, with 15 seats won by the five parties. Of the 10 contending parties in the second round, six had led in at least one constituency, but the leading party list was defeated in seven of the 44 constituencies. Indeed, each of the five major parties lost second-round district elections after leading in the first round.

Combined with the entry of large numbers of small parties with limited electoral support, a phenomenon that is typical of new democracies established after an extended period of authoritarian rule, Mali's new system produced the expected political impact on vote-seat disproportionality and multi-partism. Thus, the Two-Round majority formula produced a high level of disproportionality (between seats and votes), a moderate degree of electoral multi-partism (3.3 effective electoral parties), and a moderately low legislative multi-partism (2.2 effective legislative parties).

The Malian electoral system has effectively balanced representation and governance, but at the same time fostered a viable parliamentary opposition. The use of closed party lists in multi-member districts, moreover, has encouraged ethnic and regional alliances among otherwise socially fragmented and politically weak groups. However, several problems remain. First, the very use of party lists weakens the constituency linkages of elected representatives. Confronted with strong pressures for constituency work, many MPs have informally divided up their constituencies into individual bailiwicks for that purpose. Second, the National Assembly possesses only a limited capacity to check executive authority, since institutionally its powers remain weak relative to the strong executive presidency. And finally, this problem is compounded by the disproportionately large percentage (66%) of seats won by ADEMA, the incumbent ruling party, due in part to the electoral formula and in part to population disparities among the constituencies, and especially in rural constituencies.

These problems prompted opposition demands for electoral reform. This led to political negotiations between the opposition parties and ADEMA which produced agreements on three issues prior to the April 1997 legislative elections: the use of PR formulae for allocating some National Assembly seats (which was subsequently declared unconstitutional by the judiciary), a 27% increase in the size of the National Assembly from 116 to 147, with a reduction in single-member and a corresponding increase in multi-member constituencies, potentially giving the opposition parties a degree of electoral advantage, and the creation of a broadly representative Electoral Commission. However, the hurriedly-created Commission was unprepared to take on the complex task of election management. The ensuing logistical and administrative problems provoked opposition demands for the annulment of the 1997 legislative elections, to which ADEMA agreed, even though early returns confirmed predictions about its victory.

The fact that these changes in the electoral system were negotiated attests to the success of Mali's new democracy in managing political conflicts peacefully. It also indicates that the choice and reform of new democratic institutions are not pre-determined, but are negotiated outcomes of which future political consequences are often obscure. To what extent the recent reforms of Mali's electoral system will have the desired effect when they are implemented remains to be seen.



UKRAINE: The Perils of Majoritarianism in a New Democracy

Sarah Birch

Ukraine's first elections as an independent state were held under a majoritarian Two-Round System (TRS). The collapse of the Soviet system in the early 1990s had precipitated the creation of numerous new parties seeking to establish their democratic credentials and lead Ukraine through economic and political reform. But geographical variations in Ukraine's economic and ethnic structure, coupled with a history of territorial division, led to the formation of different parties in different parts of the country. The result was a situation in which there were many small parties with support bases defined either along regional and ethnic lines, or along those of economic wealth. When Ukraine held parliamentary elections in 1994, most of the parties were ill-organized and had only a vague idea of how many supporters they had. One reason for this is that, although Ukrainians on the whole valued democratic politics, there was also a strong popular aversion to organized political activism, given the country's experience of one-party rule under communism.

The weakness of the parties at the outset of multi-party competition meant that electoral institutions were especially important in shaping the young party system. According to the electoral law that governed the 1994 contest, one deputy was elected from each constituency, and a run-off was held between the two candidates who received the highest number of votes if no candidate gained an absolute majority in the first round. Many commentators at the time saw the Two-Round System as an ideal means of limiting the number of parties in parliament while at the same time giving small parties a greater chance of being elected than they would have under a First Past the Post system (FPTP). Another perceived advantage of the system was that it would encourage the formation of tactical agreements between like-minded parties in the second round, to maximize the overall representation of their combined interests.

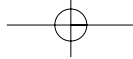
But the results of the elections demonstrated a number of flaws in this reasoning. Firstly, the geographical heterogeneity of partisan support led to the election of many deputies with narrow regional concerns, often associated with the interests of a specific ethnic group or economic sector. When the parliament assembled, it contained deputies from no fewer than 14 parties, a far larger number than that envisaged by the proponents of the majoritarian electoral law. Moreover, the tendency of majoritarian systems to exaggerate the seat share of large parties meant that although the re-vamped Communists gained only 13% of the vote, they won 23% of the seats and were thus considerably over-represented relative to their true electoral support. This

"seat bonus" effect did not operate for the smaller newly-formed parties, who mostly received fewer seats than their popular vote may have indicated. Secondly, the elections did little to consolidate the party system; most parties were reluctant to strike second-round deals amongst themselves, because they over-estimated their electoral strength and believed that they would perform best on their own. And thirdly, the preservation of single-member districts allowed many local officials and well-known local figures to win seats without having to associate themselves with an organized party. As a consequence, half of the deputies elected were independents. The large number of parties in parliament and the relatively small proportion of party-affiliated deputies generated a considerable amount of fluidity in the structure of parliamentary factions. This has led to unpredictable outcomes. It has weakened democratic accountability, and it has lowered the parliament's esteem in the eyes of many voters.

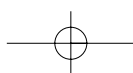
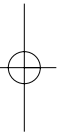
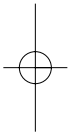
A further problem with the Ukrainian electoral law is that it included two stipulations not found in most laws of this type: electoral participation had to exceed 50% for the election in a given constituency to be declared valid, and the winning candidate had to receive an absolute majority of the vote. These requirements meant that deputies were not elected at all in about a quarter of the constituencies; low turnout caused many elections to be declared invalid, and in many more cases neither of the candidates in the run-off election won over 50% of the vote, since many people voted against both candidates as a form of protest. The process of filling the empty seats carried on for over two years, generating considerable popular disaffection. Moreover, fluctuating numbers in the legislature added to the unpredictability of results, and several regions of the country were left severely under-represented for much of this period.

Following the 1994 elections, there was a general consensus that it would be desirable to move toward a more proportional electoral system so as to reduce the number of independent deputies, stabilise the party system, and promote more predictable legislative behaviour. The new electoral law which will govern the elections of 1998 is a semi-proportional parallel system, by which half the deputies will be elected by FPTP in single-member districts, and half from national party lists, with a 3% threshold for representation. These changes are likely to increase the efficacy of the electoral process, generate a more structured parliament, and help consolidate the party system.

The most important conclusion to be drawn from the Ukrainian case is that, although proportional systems can often cause a proliferation of parliamentary parties in developed democracies, majoritarian laws also allow a large number of parties to enter parliament when parties are weakly entrenched and geographically distinct, which is the case in many new democracies. Furthermore, majoritarian systems do



little to help consolidate new party systems, because lack of widespread party identification encourages the election of independent candidates who can blur the balance of party strength in parliament and destabilize the legislative process. Finally, majoritarian systems give a distinct advantage to those parties that do have established organizational and support bases, and these are in many cases the heirs of authoritarian rulers.



Semi-PR Systems

65. Semi-PR systems are those which translate votes cast into seats won in a way that falls somewhere in between the proportionality of PR systems and the majoritarianism of plurality-majority systems. There are two main types of semi-PR systems: the Single Non-Transferable Vote, and Parallel systems.

The Single Non-Transferable Vote (SNTV)

66. Under the Single Non-Transferable Vote, each elector has one vote but there are multiple seats in each district to be filled. Those candidates with the highest vote totals fill these positions. This means that in, for example, a four-member district, one would need just over 20% of the vote to ensure election. Conversely, a large party with 75% of the vote spread equally among three candidates is likely to take three of the four seats. As of 1997, SNTV is used for parliamentary elections in Jordan and Vanuatu, and for 125 out of 161 seats in the Taiwanese parliament, but its most well known application was for Japanese lower-house elections from 1948–1993.

67. The most important difference between SNTV and the plurality-majority systems described earlier is that SNTV is better able to facilitate minority party representation. The larger the district magnitude (the number of seats in the constituency), the more proportional the system becomes. In Jordan, SNTV has enabled a number of popular non-party pro-monarchist candidates to be elected, which is deemed to be an advantage within that embryonic party system. But at the same time the system encourages parties to become highly organized and to instruct their voters to allocate their votes to candidates in a way which maximizes a party's likely seat-winning potential. While SNTV gives voters a choice among a party's list of candidates, it is also argued that the system fragments the party system less than pure PR systems do. Over 45 years of SNTV experience, Japan demonstrated quite a robust "one party dominant" system. Finally, the system is praised for being easy to use and easy to count.

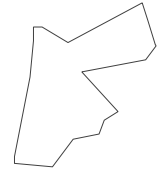
68. On the negative side SNTV, as a semi-PR system, is still not able to guarantee that the overall parliamentary results will be proportional. Small parties with say around 10% support, whose votes are widely dispersed, may not win any seats, and larger parties can receive a substantial "seat bonus" which propels a national plurality of the vote into an absolute parliamentary majority. In 1980 the Japanese Liberal Democrats won 55% of the seats with only 48% of

the votes. As noted earlier, the proportionality of the system can be increased by incrementally increasing the number of seats to be filled within multi-member districts, but this weakens the voter-MP relationship which is so prized by those who advocate defined geographical districts. Multi-member districts of nine members in Jordan, and seven members in Vanuatu, are at the very top end of manageable SNTV constituencies.

69. As SNTV gives voters only one vote, the system contains few incentives for political parties to appeal to a broad spectrum of voters in an accommodatory manner. As long as they have a reasonable core vote, they can win seats without needing to appeal to "outsiders". Furthermore, the fact that multiple candidates of the same party are competing for the same votes means that internal party fragmentation and discord can be accentuated, and that "clientelistic" politics, where politicians offer subtle electoral bribes to groups of defined voters, is exaggerated. Finally, SNTV requires parties to consider complex strategic considerations of both nominations and vote management; putting up too many candidates can be as unproductive as putting up too few, and the need for a party to discipline its voters into spreading their votes equally across all a party's candidates is paramount.

JORDAN: Electoral System Design in the Arab World

Andrew Reynolds and Jørgen Elklit



The electoral system issue has become the focus of one of the most heated and controversial debates in Jordan since multi-party politics was re-introduced by King Hussein. The November 1989 general election was conducted in an environment where political parties were banned, as had been the case since the early 1960s, but Muslim Brotherhood and pro-monarchist independents were easy to identify. For these elections, the first competitive ones for nearly thirty years, Jordan used the Block Vote electoral system, which the British had utilised in the territory in the immediate post-war period, to elect their 80-member legislature. Out of these seats, eight were reserved for Christians and another three for Circassians or Chechens.

The country was divided into 20 constituencies, returning from two to nine MPs each, but the disparity in size between constituencies returning the same number of MPs was considerable. For example, both the Fifth District of Al-Assima and the constituency of Maan returned five members to the House of Deputies, but the Al-Assima district had over twice as many registered voters.

With the Block Vote system, voters had as many votes as there were seats to be filled within the district, but not all voters made use of all their votes. There was widespread belief that in the 1989 elections voters cast one or two votes for candidates with whom they had family or kinship ties, and then cast subsequent ballots for members of the Muslim Brotherhood, the pre-eminent Islamic political movement. Although the non-party political nature of these elections makes political analysis rather speculative, the University of Jordan has estimated that Muslim Brotherhood candidates won approximately 30% of the seats with less than 20% of the votes, independent Islamics won 16% of the seats, again with far fewer votes, while pro-monarchist candidates won nearly 60% of the total vote but only filled 40% of seats. These results led King Hussein to believe that the Block Vote gave advantages to Muslim Brotherhood candidates, the most organized and coherent political movement in the embryonic party system, over pro-monarchist independents.

It was for this reason that a new electoral system was introduced by Royal decree for the 1993 general elections; but at the same time Hussein lifted the ban on political parties, and this led to the emergence of a formal Islamic Action Front Party. Believing (probably correctly) that most Jordanian voters felt loyalty to family and kin first and to political ideology second, Hussein decided to maintain the multi-member districts but change the law to one where voters could only choose one candidate in

their district. Thus, in a somewhat accidental manner, Jordan adopted the Single Non-Transferable Vote (SNTV). In the Jordanian context SNTV is called "one man, one vote", even though this terminology in other countries is primarily used to indicate the fundamental principle of equality between voters rather than a particular electoral system.

In 1993, participation increased slightly from the previous election, but it remained below 50% of the voting-age population. The decrease in the number of votes given to individuals forced all electors to consider what was their most important allegiance, political or otherwise. However, what was notable about the Jordanian House of Representatives elected in 1993 was that it contained a much more balanced and representative mix of party representatives and independents than had been previously the case. The Islamic Action Front won 20% of the seats with around 17% of the votes, Independent pro-monarchists won 60% of the seats with 58% of the votes, and smaller groupings of independent Islamists, Leftist, Nationalist, and Fateh Movement candidates won a handful of seats with a handful of votes. These results fit in well with the general expectation that SNTV should be much better than the Block Vote in providing a parliament which is relatively proportional to the vote distribution overall – a picture seen in other countries which use or have used SNTV, such as Japan from 1948 to 1995, and Taiwan.

Nevertheless, the reduction in choice given to voters, combined with the running of a considerable number of Islamic Action Front candidates, led to frustration in a number of quarters over the electoral law changes. During the run-up to the 1997 elections there have been calls to return to the 1989 system of the Block Vote or to adopt a new proportional or mixed electoral system. To date, such pleas have been brushed aside by King Hussein and his cabinet, and thus it is likely that Jordan will remain one of only two current examples of an SNTV system (along with Vanuatu) until the end of the century.

Parallel Systems

70. Parallel (or mixed) systems use both PR lists and “winner-take-all” districts but, unlike MMP systems (see paragraph 80), the PR lists do not compensate for any disproportionality within the majoritarian districts. Parallel systems are currently used in 20 countries and are a feature of electoral system design in the 1990s – perhaps because, on the face of it, they appear to combine the benefits of PR lists with single-member district representation. The Cameroon, Croatia, Guatemala, Guinea, Japan, South Korea, Niger, Russia, the Seychelles, and Somalia use FPTP single-member districts alongside a List PR component, while Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Lithuania use the Two-Round System for the single-member district component of their system. Andorra uses the Block Vote to elect half its MPs, while Tunisia, Ecuador, and Senegal use the Party Block to elect a number of their deputies. Taiwan is unusual in using SNTV, a Semi-PR system, alongside a PR system component.

71. The balance between the number of proportional seats and the number of plurality-majority seats varies greatly (see Table Three). Only in Andorra and Russia is there a 50/50 split. At one extreme, 88% of Tunisia’s parliamentari-

Table Three: Parallel Systems (1997)

	# of PR seats	# of Plurality-Majority Seats	Plurality-Majority System	Total # of seats
Albania	25 (18%)	115 (82%)	TRS	140
Andorra	14 (50%)	14 (50%)	Block	28
Armenia	40 (21%)	150 (79%)	FPTP	190
Azerbaijan	25 (20%)	100 (80%)	TRS	125
Cameroon	159 (88%)	21 (12%)	FPTP	180
Croatia	92 (72%)	35 (28%)	FPTP	127
Ecuador	12 (16%)	65 (84%)	Party Block	77
Georgia	150 (64%)	84 (36%)	TRS	234
Guatemala	16 (20%)	64 (80%)	FPTP	80
Guinea	76 (67%)	38 (33%)	FPTP	114
Japan	200 (40%)	300 (60%)	FPTP	500
Korea (South)	62 (21%)	237 (79%)	FPTP	299
Lithuania	70 (50%)	71 (50%)	TRS	141
Niger	75 (90%)	8 (10%)	FPTP	83
Russia	225 (50%)	225 (50%)	FPTP	450
Senegal	70 (58%)	50 (42%)	Party Block	120
Seychelles	11 (33%)	22 (67%)	FPTP	33
Somalia	113 (92%)	10 (8%)	FPTP	123
Taiwan	36 (22%)	125 (78%)	SNTV	161
Tunisia	19 (12%)	144 (88%)	Party Block	163

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ans are elected by the Party Block, with only 19 members coming from PR lists. At the opposite end, 113 of Somalia's seats are proportionally elected and only 10 are based on First Past the Post districts. However, in most cases the balance is much closer. For example, Japan elects 60% of MPs from single-member districts, with the rest coming from PR lists.

72. In terms of "disproportionality", Parallel systems give results which fall somewhere between straight plurality-majority and PR systems, but in most cases they do give the voter both a district choice and a party choice on the national level, because they require two ballots. A second advantage is that, when there are enough PR seats, small minority parties who have been unsuccessful in the plurality-majority elections can still be rewarded for their votes by winning seats in the proportional allocation. Lastly, this hybrid system should, in theory, fragment the party system less than a pure PR electoral system. But one downside of this increased menu of options is that two classes of MPs can be created, one group with districts to look after who are beholden to their local electorate, and a second group chosen from the party lists, without formal constituency ties, who are primarily beholden to their party leaders. Combined with that, the fact that Parallel systems fail to guarantee overall proportionality means that some parties may still be shut out of representation despite winning substantial numbers of votes. Parallel systems are also relatively complex, and can leave voters confused as to the nature and operation of the electoral system.

RUSSIA: An Evolving Parallel System

Wilma Rule and Nadezhda Shvedova



The legislative electoral system, which was first decreed by President Boris Yeltsin in September/October 1993, along with the presidential election system, were included within the first post-Soviet Russian constitution, which was narrowly ratified by the voters in December 1993. The Federal Assembly, the legislature of the Russian governmental system, is bicameral. The Duma (the popular assembly) is elected every four years. The Federation Council (the Upper House) consists of one executive and one legislative representative chosen from each of the 89 regions of Russia according to the laws of each region.

The Russian electoral system can be characterized as a classic example of a parallel electoral system. Both party-list Proportional Representation (PR) and First Past the Post (FPTP) voting are used for choosing deputies in the Duma, but there is no adjustment of the party-list representatives to reflect disparities in the overall seat-vote share, as there is in Germany and New Zealand. The total number of deputies is 450, with exactly half selected by PR and half chosen in single-member plurality constituencies. The PR system operates in effect as one constituency, since the votes for political parties are tallied across the entire country. Nevertheless, parties compete regionally on closed lists, in accord with the June 1995 law adopted by the Federal Assembly. A nominee for a national party list of 12 members may also seek election from an FPTP single-member district in the region. Consequently, this can result in another seat for a political party which wins on the PR ballot. Upon achieving the threshold of at least 5% of the PR votes, seats are distributed according to the largest remainder formula. In theory, this is supposed to benefit smaller parties, but it does not appear to have had that effect in Russia.

In the 1995 parliamentary elections, only four political parties crossed the 5% threshold which would make them eligible to be allocated seats from the PR lists. These parties garnered only 50.5% of the popular vote and received double the number of seats which would have been distributed had it been a strictly proportional system. Women of Russia, one of the 18 parties which failed to gain party list seats, was a slim 2.3% lower in votes than the Yobloco Party, which obtained, by contrast, 31 party list seats. Anomalies also occurred in the single-member constituencies, some of which were won with percentage votes as low as 20% when several of the 43 parties competed. Consequently the proportion of wasted votes was very high in the 1995 parliamentary elections.

ИЗБИРАТЕЛЬНЫЙ БЮЛЛЕТЕНЬ
для выборов
Президента Российской Федерации
 16 июня 1996 года

РАЗЪЯСНЕНИЕ ПОРЯДКА ЗАПОЛНЕНИЯ ИЗБИРАТЕЛЬНОГО БЮЛЛЕТЕНЯ

Поставьте галочку или крестик в квадрате справа от фамилии полного имени кандидата на должность Президента Российской Федерации, за которого Вы голосуете, либо в квадрате, расположенном справа от строки "Против всех кандидатов".

БРЫЦАЛОВ Владимир Алексеевич	23 ноября 1946 года рождения. Государственная Дума Федерального Собрания Российской Федерации, депутат. Проживает в посёлке Савьиново Балашихинского района Московской области. Состоит в Общероссийской общественной организации "Русская социалистическая партия".	<input type="checkbox"/>
ВЛАСОВ Юрий Петрович	5 декабря 1935 года рождения. Писатель. Проживает в городе Москве. Состоит в неформальной общественной организации "Народная националистическая партия".	<input type="checkbox"/>
ГОРБАЧЁВ Михаил Сергеевич	2 марта 1931 года рождения. Международный фонд социально-активистских и политологических исследований, президент. Проживает в городе Москве.	<input type="checkbox"/>
ЕЛЬЦИН Борис Николаевич	1 февраля 1931 года рождения. Президент Российской Федерации. Проживает в городе Москве.	<input type="checkbox"/>
ЖИРИНОВСКИЙ Владимир Валентинович	25 апреля 1946 года рождения. Государственная Дума Федерального Собрания Российской Федерации, депутат, руководитель фракции "Либерально-демократическая партия России". Проживает в городе Москве. Выдвигает избирательным объединением "Либерально-демократическая партия России (ЛДПР)". Состоит в Либерально-демократической партии России (ЛДПР).	<input type="checkbox"/>
ЗЮГАНОВ Геннадий Андреевич	26 июня 1944 года рождения. Государственная Дума Федерального Собрания Российской Федерации, депутат, руководитель фракции "Коммунистическая партия Российской Федерации". Проживает в городе Москве.	<input type="checkbox"/>
ЛЕБЕДЬ Александр Иванович	20 апреля 1950 года рождения. Государственная Дума Федерального Собрания Российской Федерации, депутат. Проживает в городе Москве.	<input type="checkbox"/>
ТУЛЕЕВ Азам-Гельды Молдагалыевич	13 мая 1944 года рождения. Законодательное Собрание Кемеровской области, председатель. Проживает в городе Кемерово.	<input type="checkbox"/>
ФЁДОРОВ Святослав Николаевич	8 августа 1927 года рождения. Государственная Дума Федерального Собрания Российской Федерации, депутат. Проживает в городе Москве. Состоит в Партии самоуправления трудящихся.	<input type="checkbox"/>
ШАККУМ Мартин Лицианович	21 сентября 1951 года рождения. Международный фонд экономических и социальных реформ, первый вице-президент. Проживает в городе Красногорске Московской области.	<input type="checkbox"/>
ЯВЛИНСКИЙ Григорий Алексеевич	10 апреля 1932 года рождения. Государственная Дума Федерального Собрания Российской Федерации, депутат, руководитель фракции "ЯБЛОКО". Проживает в городе Москве. Выдвигает избирательным объединением "ЯБЛОКО". Состоит в объединении "ЯБЛОКО".	<input type="checkbox"/>
Против всех кандидатов		<input type="checkbox"/>

A Russian presidential (Two-Round System) ballot paper.

The development of Russia's new electoral system was characterized by compromises among parliamentarians, the Russian president, and the legacy of past practice. At first Boris Yeltsin decreed that one-third of the Duma would be elected by party-list PR, and the remainder elected from single-member districts as in the former Soviet Union. However, a number of pro-democracy groups in the previous parliament favoured List PR, seeing an advantage for their mostly Moscow-based organizations. After apparently being persuaded that well-organized communist parties would benefit from single-member districts, Yeltsin adopted an evenly-split plurality-PR system in October 1993. At the same time there was substantial agreement on the method of electing the President and the Federation Council, but in 1995 the election of Federation Council members was decentralised so that elections would be held according to each region's electoral laws.

The 5% threshold, intended to inhibit the proliferation of parties, has not worked in Russia and has led to gross disproportionality in the second Duma, elected in 1995. A number of groups have suggested the complete removal of the threshold, as in Iceland, or a smaller minimum percentage, such as the 0.67% threshold in the Netherlands, or the 4% in Sweden. Another change would be a move to a fully compensatory MMP system, as is used in Germany. The seats distributed to parties would then reflect the people's PR vote within each region, thus enhancing overall proportionality and strengthening the political party system as a whole.

Candidates for the presidency in 1991 were required to obtain 100,000 signatures, with only 7% from the same region, for nomination. In 1995, this number was increased to 1 million signatures. The presidential system specifies that if no candidate wins an absolute majority in the first election round, a second is held between the two leading contenders, and the winner is required to win 50% or more votes for election. Four years is the term of office, and there is a two-term limitation.

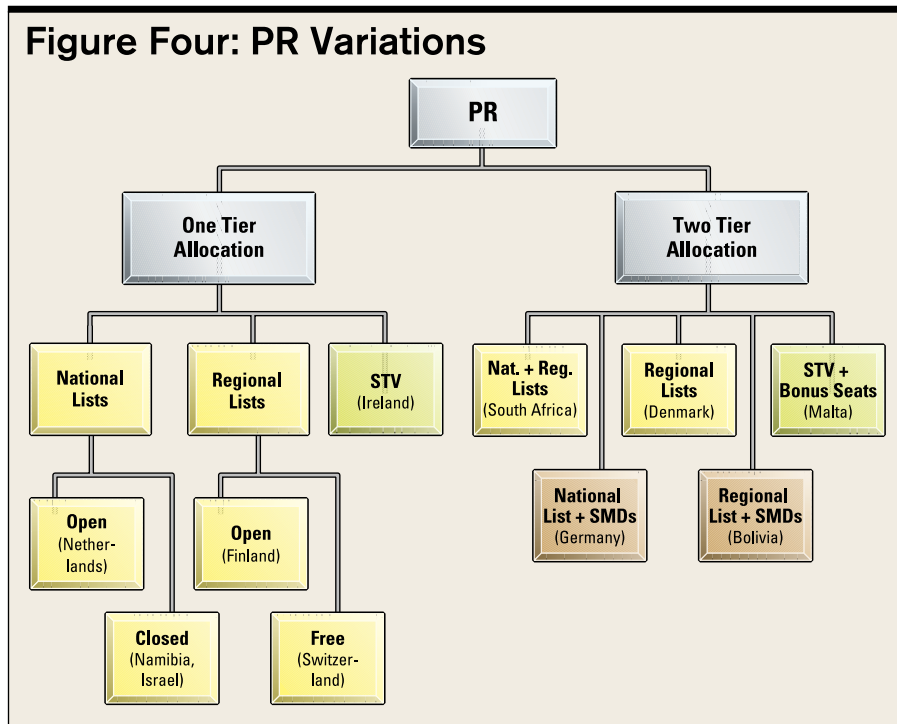
Presidential elections are held in different years from parliamentary elections. One problem with the two-round absolute majority presidential election procedure is that it discourages the formation of party coalitions, unlike one-round plurality elections in which parties tend to form in two blocs. Holding the presidential election at the same time as the Duma's would further reduce party-splintering and ensure greater accountability by the president and Duma.

Proportional Representation Systems

73. Proportional Representation (PR) systems are a common choice in many new democracies. Over 20 established democracies, and just under half of all "free" democracies, use some variant of PR (see Table One on page 20). PR systems are dominant in Latin America and Western Europe, and make up a third of all the systems in Africa. It is worth repeating that the rationale underpinning all PR systems is to consciously translate a party's share of the national votes into a corresponding proportion of parliamentary seats. While seats are often allocated within regionally-based multi-member districts, in a number of countries (e.g. Germany, Namibia, Israel, Netherlands, Denmark, South Africa, and New Zealand) the parliamentary seat distribution is effectively determined by the overall national vote.

74. The formula used to calculate the allocation of seats after the votes have been counted can have a marginal effect on PR electoral outcomes. Formulae can be either by "highest average" or "largest remainder" methods (see glossary – Annex B). However, of more importance to overall PR results are district magnitudes (see paragraphs 93–96) and the threshold for representation (paragraphs 86–87). The greater the number of representatives to be elected from a district, and the lower the required threshold for representation in the legislature, the more proportional the electoral system will be, and the greater chance small minority parties will have of gaining representation. In Israel, the threshold is 1.5%, while in Germany it is 5%. In the Seychelles a 10% threshold is imposed for the 23 PR seats. In South Africa in 1994, there was no legal threshold for representation and the African Christian Democratic Party won 2 seats, out of 400, with only 0.45% of the national vote. Other important choices involve the drawing of district boundaries; the way parties constitute their PR lists; the complexity of the ballot paper (e.g. the range of choice given to the voter – between parties, or between candidates and parties); arrangements for formal or informal "vote-pooling"; and the scope for agreements between parties, such as that provided by systems which use *apparentement* (paragraph 88).

75. A slightly different way to the simple division in Figure Four of looking at the range of choice within PR systems is to differentiate systems by whether they use one or two "tiers" to allocate seats, and by whether the lists are open, closed, or free (*panachage*). Countries that allocate seats only on one tier may do it by using national lists, as in Namibia and the Netherlands, or entirely by regional lists, as in Finland and Switzerland. STV has almost always been used



as a one-tier system (as in Ireland – see case study on page 85). Two-tier allocations may entail both national and regional lists, as in South Africa, regional lists only as in Denmark, a national PR list and a single-member district component as in Germany and New Zealand, or regional lists and a single-member district component as in Bolivia. Malta created a two-tier system out of its STV system in the mid-1980s by providing for some extra compensatory seats to be awarded to a party if it wins a majority of the votes but fewer seats than its rivals.

List PR

76. Most of the 75 PR systems we have identified in this handbook use some form of List PR; only nine examples use MMP or STV methods. In its most simple form, List PR involves each party presenting a list of candidates to the electorate, voters vote for a party, and parties receive seats in proportion to their overall share of the national vote. Winning candidates are taken from the lists in order of their position on the lists.

77. *Advantages.* In many respects, the strongest arguments for PR derive from the way in which the system avoids the anomalous results of plurality-majority systems and facilitates a more representative legislature (see paragraphs 18–19). As a number of the developing-world examples in this book show, for many new democracies, particularly those which face deep societal divisions, the inclusion of all significant groups in the parliament can be a near-essential condition for democratic consolidation. Failing to ensure that both minorities and majorities have a stake in these nascent political systems can have catastrophic consequences (see South Africa case study on page 67).

78. PR systems in general are praised because of the way in which they:

a. Faithfully translate votes cast into seats won, and thus avoid some of the more destabilising and “unfair” results thrown up by plurality-majority electoral systems. “Seat bonuses” for the larger parties are reduced and small parties can gain access to parliament without polling huge amounts of votes.

b. Give rise to very few wasted votes. As discussed earlier, when thresholds are low, almost all votes cast within PR elections go towards electing a candidate of choice. This increases the voters’ perception that it is worth making the trip to the polling booth at election time, as they can be more confident that their vote will make a difference to electoral outcomes, however small.

c. Facilitate minority parties’ access to representation. Unless the threshold is unduly high, or the district magnitude is unusually low, then any political party with even a few per cent electoral support should gain representation in the legislature. This fulfils the principle of inclusion, which can be crucial to stability in divided societies and has benefits for decision-making in all democracies.

d. Encourage parties to present inclusive and socially diverse lists of candidates. The incentive under List PR systems is to maximize your national vote, regardless of where those votes might come from. Every vote, even from an area where you are electorally weak, goes towards filling another quota and thus gaining another seat. While this point should not be overemphasised, the experience of South Africa suggests that List PR gives the political space which allows parties to put up multi-racial, and multi-ethnic, lists of candidates.

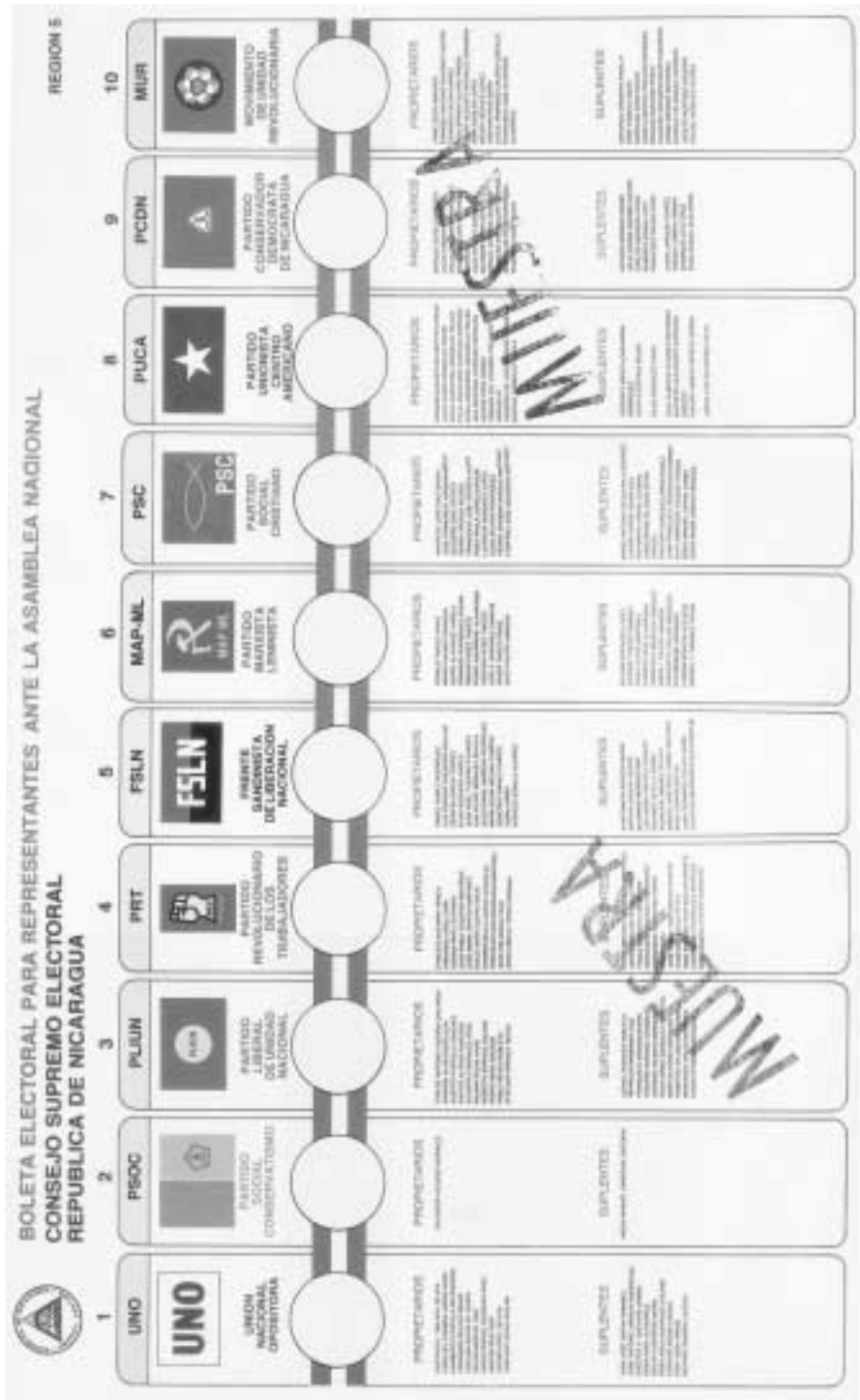
e. Make it more likely that the representatives of minority cultures/groups are elected. When, as is often the case, voting behaviour dovetails with a soci-

ety's cultural or social divisions, then List PR electoral systems can help ensure that parliament includes members of both majority and minority groups. This is because parties can be encouraged by the system to craft balanced candidate lists, which appeal to a whole spectrum of voters' interests. For example, the South African National Assembly elected in 1994 was 52% black (11% Zulu, the rest of Xhosa, Sotho, Venda, Tswana, Pedi, Swazi, Shangaan, and Ndebele extraction), 32% white (one-third English, two-thirds Afrikaans), 7% Coloured and 8% Indian. And the Namibian parliament is similarly diverse, with representatives from the Ovambo, Damara, Herero, Nama, Baster, and white (English and German speaking) communities.

f. Make it more likely that women are elected. PR electoral systems are often seen as more friendly to the election of women than plurality-majority systems. In essence, parties are able to use the lists to promote the advancement of women politicians, and allow the space for voters to elect women candidates without limiting their ability to vote with a mind on other concerns. As noted earlier, in single-member districts most parties are encouraged to put up a "most broadly acceptable" candidate, and that person is seldom a woman. While much of the evidence for a link between PR and women's representation comes from Western democracies, there is some preliminary evidence to suggest that a similar pattern is being followed in new democracies, such as those in Africa (South Africa, Mozambique), and in Central and South America (Argentina, Brazil, and Costa Rica).

g. Restrict the growth of "regional fiefdoms". Because PR systems reward minority parties with a minority of the seats, they are less likely to lead to situations where a single party holds all the seats in a given province or district.

h. Lead to more efficient government. It has been argued, in relation to established democracies, that governments elected by PR methods are more effective than those elected by FPTP. The Western European experience suggests that parliamentary-PR systems score better with regard to governmental longevity, voter participation and economic performance. The rationale behind this claim is that regular switches in government between two ideologically polarized parties, as can happen in FPTP systems, makes long-term economic planning more difficult, while broad PR coalition governments help engender a stability and coherence in decision-making which allows for national development.



A Nicaraguan closed list PR ballot paper.

i. Make power-sharing between parties and interest groups more visible. In many new democracies, power-sharing between the numerical majority of the population who hold political power and a small minority who hold economic power is an unavoidable reality. Where the numerical majority dominates parliament, negotiations between different power blocks are less visible, less transparent, and less accountable. It has been argued, in particular in Africa, that PR, by including all interests in parliament, offers a better hope that decisions are taken in the public eye, and by a more inclusive cross-section of the society.

79. *Disadvantages.* Most of the criticisms of PR are based around two broad themes: the tendency of PR systems to give rise to coalition governments with their attendant disadvantages; and the failure of some PR systems to provide a strong geographical linkage between an MP and his or her electorate. The most cited arguments against using PR are that it leads to:

a. Coalition governments, which in turn lead to legislative gridlock and the subsequent inability to carry out coherent policies at a time of most pressing need. There are particularly high risks during an immediate post-transition period, when new governments have huge expectations resting upon their shoulders. Quick and coherent decision-making can be impeded by coalition cabinets and governments of national unity which are split by factions.

b. A destabilising fragmentation of the party system. PR reflects and facilitates a fragmentation of the party system. It is possible that such polarized pluralism can allow tiny minority parties to hold larger parties to ransom in coalition negotiations. In this respect, the inclusiveness of PR is cited as a drawback of the system. In Israel, for example, extremist religious parties are often crucial to government formation, while Italy has endured fifty years of unstable shifting coalition governments.

c. A platform for extremist parties. In a related argument, PR systems are often criticized for giving a parliamentary stage to extremist parties of the left or the right. It has been argued that the collapse of Weimar Germany was in part due to the way in which the PR electoral system gave a toe-hold to extremist groups.

d. Governing coalitions which have insufficient common ground – in terms of either their policies or their supporter base. These “coalitions of convenience” are sometimes contrasted with stronger “coalitions of commitment” produced by other systems (e.g. the Alternative Vote), in which parties tend to be

reciprocally dependent on the votes of supporters of other parties for their election.

e. The inability to throw a party out of power. Under a PR system, it may be very difficult to remove a reasonably-sized party from power. When governments are usually coalitions, it is true that some political parties are ever-present in government, despite weak electoral performances from time to time. In the Netherlands the Christian Democratic Appeal (CDA) remained the leading partner in government for 17 years despite a declining vote share.

f. A weakening of the link between MPs and their constituents. When simple List PR is used, and seats are allocated in one huge national constituency as in Namibia or Israel, the system is often criticized for destroying the link between voters and their member of parliament. Voters have no ability to determine the identity of the persons who will represent them, and no identifiable representative for their town, district, or village; nor do they have the ability to easily reject an individual if they feel he or she has behaved poorly in office. This factor has been particularly criticized in relation to some rural-based developing countries, where voters' identification with their region of residence is sometimes considerably stronger than their identification with any political party.

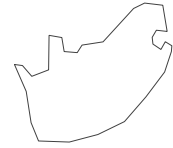
g. On a related point, national closed-list PR is criticized for leaving too much power entrenched within party headquarters and wielded by senior party leadership. A candidate's position on the party list, and therefore his or her likelihood of success, is dependent on currying favour with party bosses, whose relationship with the electorate is of secondary importance.

h. Furthermore, the use of a PR system presumes some kind of recognized party structure, since voters are expected to vote for parties rather than individuals or groups of individuals. This makes List PR particularly difficult to implement in those societies which do not have parties, or have very embryonic and loose party structures.

i. Lastly, PR systems often have a barrier to surmount because they are still unfamiliar systems to many countries with English or French colonial histories, and because some variants are seen as being too complex for voters to understand or for the electoral administration to implement.

SOUTH AFRICA: Electoral System Design and Conflict Management in Africa

Andrew Reynolds



The National Assembly parliamentary and provincial elections held in South Africa in 1994 marked the high point of a period of tumultuous change from authoritarian rule to multi-party democracy in Southern Africa as a whole. At midnight on 27 April 1994 the last, and perhaps most despised, colonial flag was lowered in Africa, heralding the end of 300 years of colonialism and four decades of apartheid. These first multi-party democratic elections opened the stage to those political movements which had been driven underground by the Pretoria regime's policy of racial divide and rule. Nelson Mandela's African National Congress (ANC) was poised on the threshold of power; the Pan-Africanist Congress of Azania (PAC) was challenging it within the same community, while Mangosotho Buthelezi's Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) hoped to build on their hegemony in the north of the Province of KwaZulu-Natal. These new parties joined De Klerk's National Party (NP), the liberal Democratic Party (DP), and the new Freedom Front (FF) – a descendent of the "white right" parties of the old constitutional dispensation – in battling for the votes of 35 million newly-enfranchised people.

Elections were conducted under a form of national List Proportional Representation, with half the National Assembly (200 members) being chosen from nine provincial lists and the other half being elected from a single national list. In effect, the country used one nationwide constituency (with of 400 members) for the conversion of votes into seats, and no threshold for representation was imposed.

The Droop quota (see glossary – Annex B) was used to apportion seats, and surplus seats were awarded by an adaptation of the largest-remainder method. Early drafts of the electoral law put the threshold for parliamentary representation at 5% of the national vote but, in a concession to the smaller parties, the African National Congress and the National Party agreed in early 1994 to drop any "mandatory" threshold. However, only those parties with 20 or more MPs, 5% of the Assembly, were guaranteed portfolios in the first government's cabinet of national unity.

The fact that the "Mandela liberation-movement juggernaut" would have won the National Assembly elections under almost any electoral system cannot deny the importance of South Africa's choice of a List PR system for these first elections. Many observers claimed that a PR system, as an integral part of other power-sharing mechanisms in the new constitution, was crucial to creating the atmosphere of inclusiveness and reconciliation which has so far encouraged the decline of the worst































BALLOT PAPER

SAMPLE ONLY

Place your mark on the party you choose:
 Etsi merkkiäni osalle mielestäni olevasta listasta.
 Tässä listassa on kaikki mahdolliset ehdokkaat.
 Etsi mielestäni oikeita henkilöitä ja äänestäkää.
 Käytä hyväksesi jos haluat äänestää useita.
 Tässä listassa kaikki ehdokkaat on esillä.

Place a mark (sign) on the party you choose:
 Etsi merkkiäni osalle mielestäni olevasta listasta.
 Etsi mielestäni oikeita henkilöitä ja äänestäkää.
 Käytä hyväksesi jos haluat äänestää useita.
 Tässä listassa kaikki ehdokkaat on esillä.

PAN AFRICANIST CONGRESS OF AZANIA		PAC		
SPORTS ORGANISATION FOR COLLECTIVE CONTRIBUTIONS AND EQUAL RIGHTS		SOCCER		
THE KEEP IT STRAIGHT AND SIMPLE PARTY		KISS		
VEYHEDISFRONT - FREEDOM FRONT		VF		
WOMEN'S RIGHTS PEACE PARTY		WRPP		
WORKERS' LIST PARTY		WLP		
XINQHO PROGRESSIVE PARTY		XPP		
AFRICA MUSLIM PARTY		AMP		
AFRICAN CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY		ACDP		
AFRICAN DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT		ADM		
AFRICAN MODERATES CONGRESS PARTY		AMCP		
AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS		ANC		
DEMOCRATIC PARTY - DEMOKRATIESSE PARTY		DP		
IBIHWANQWETLA PARTY OF SOUTH AFRICA		IPLA		
FEDERAL PARTY		FP		
LUSO - SOUTH AFRICAN PARTY		LUSAP		
MINORITY FRONT		MF		
NATIONAL PARTY - NASIONALE PARTY		NP		

Presented by the Voter Education Programme of the Independent Electoral Commission.

A South African closed list PR ballot paper.

political violence, and made post-apartheid South Africa a beacon of hope and stability to the rest of troubled Africa.

Nevertheless, in 1990, upon Nelson Mandela's release from prison, there was no particular reason to believe that South Africa would adopt PR. The "whites-only" parliament had always been elected by a First Past the Post system, while the ANC, now in a powerful bargaining position, expected to be clearly advantaged if FPTP were maintained. As only five districts, out of over 700 in South Africa, had white majorities, due to the vagaries of FPTP voting the ANC, with 50% to 60% of the popular vote, expected they would easily win 70% or 80% of the parliamentary seats. But the ANC did not opt for this course because they realised that the disparities of a "winner-take-all" electoral system would be fundamentally destabilizing in the long run for minority and majority interests. List PR also avoided the politically-charged controversy of having to draw constituency boundaries and, furthermore, it fitted in with the executive power-sharing ethos which both the ANC and Nationalists saw as a key tenet of the interim constitution. Today, all major political parties support the use of PR, although there are differences over which specific variant to use.

It is probable that even with their geographic pockets of electoral support the Freedom Front (nine seats in the National Assembly), Democratic Party (seven seats), Pan-Africanist Congress (five seats) and African Christian Democratic Party (two seats) would have failed to win a single parliamentary seat if the elections had been held under a single-member district FPTP electoral system. While these parties together only represent 6% of the new Assembly, their importance inside the structures of government far outweigh their numerical strength.

A reading of the detailed results reveals, somewhat surprisingly, that List PR may not have particularly advantaged the mid-sized National Party (NP) and the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) over and above the number of seats they would have expected to win under a FPTP system. This was primarily due to the "national referendum" nature of the campaign, which led to a two-party battle between the old and the new; the ANC versus the IFP in the KwaZulu-Natal province, and the ANC versus the NP in the rest of the country. Furthermore, the ethnically homogeneous nature of constituencies and the strong geographical concentrations of support in South Africa meant that the NP and IFP would have won only slightly fewer seats under a constituency system. However, FPTP would in all likelihood have given the ANC a small "seat bonus", increasing their share of parliament beyond their share of the popular vote (which was 62%) and beyond the two-thirds majority needed to draft the new constitution without reference to other parties.

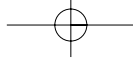
The practice of having one ballot for the National Assembly and one for the provincial parliament also proved to be an important innovation in the electoral system design. Up until a few months before the election, the ANC were still insisting on a

single ballot which would be counted for both the national and provincial elections. This was quite clearly a manoeuvre to advantage the larger, nationally-based parties and was only changed through the pressure of an alliance of business leaders, the Democratic Party, and international advisers. The eventual results did show that large numbers of voters had split their national and provincial ballots between two parties, and it appears as though the major beneficiaries of the double ballot were the small Democratic Party and the Freedom Front. Both parties polled more than 200,000 votes in the provincial elections, over and above their national result, which went a long way to explain the 490,000 drop between the NP's national and provincial totals.

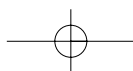
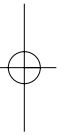
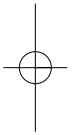
The choice of electoral system also had an impact upon the composition of parliament along the lines of ethnicity and gender. The South African National Assembly, invested in May 1994, contained over 80 former members of the whites-only parliament, but that was where the similarities between the old and the new ended. In direct contrast to South Africa's troubled history, black sat with white, communist with conservative, Zulu with Xhosa, and Muslim with Christian. To a significant extent the diversity of the new National Assembly was a product of the use of List PR. The national, and unalterable, candidate lists allowed parties to present ethnically heterogeneous groups of candidates which, it was hoped, would have cross-cutting appeal. The resulting National Assembly was 52% black (including Xhosa, Zulu, Sotho, Venda, Tswana, Pedi, Swazi, Shangaan, and Ndebele speaking), 32% white (English and Afrikaans speaking), 8% Indian, and 7% coloured. This compared to an electorate which was estimated to be 73% black, 15% white, 9% coloured, and 3% Indian. Women made up 25% of the total parliamentary membership. There was a widespread belief in South Africa that if FPTP had been used there would have been far fewer women, Indians and whites, with more black and male MPs.

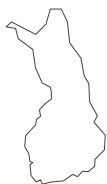
Finally, we would have expected more polarized forms of representation under FPTP, with whites (of different parties) representing majority white constituencies, Xhosas representing Xhosas, Zulus representing Zulus, etc. While there are problems with constituency accountability and remoteness under the present South African List PR system, it has meant that citizens have a variety of MPs to approach when the need arises.

Nevertheless, there is a continuing debate in South Africa about how to increase democratic accountability and the representativeness of the members of parliament. It was widely accepted that the first non-racial election was more of a referendum about which parties should draw up the new constitution. But subsequent elections will be about constituting a representative parliament, and many political actors agree that the electoral system needs to be altered to take this into account. Without greatly increasing the difficulty of the ballot, voters can be allowed to choose



between candidates as well as parties, without the PR character of parliament being affected in any way. One option is to elect MPs in smaller multi-member constituencies in order to maintain some sort of geographical tie between electors and their representatives. At the moment the regional lists represent areas so large that any form of local advocacy is entirely lost. A second option is to adopt the MMP system, where half the members are selected in single-member districts while the other half come from compensatory PR lists. Finally, and as a consequence of the administrative chaos that characterized the April 1994 elections, voter rolls are also being called for, to enable the authorities to delimit constituencies properly and ensure that large numbers of voters cannot be moved across boundaries to manipulate election results.





FINLAND: Candidate Choice and Party Proportionality

Jan Sundberg

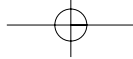
The Finnish electoral system was introduced in 1906. Elections were held the following year, which were the first free proportional elections for both men and women. In 1917 Finland became independent from Russia, and the founding Constitution of the new Republic was put into force in 1919; later a variant of parliamentarism known as semi-presidentialism was developed. Since 1906, all women and men have been eligible to vote and to be nominated in elections. The age of eligibility has been successively lowered from 24 in 1906 to 21 in 1944, to 20 in 1969 and to 18 in 1972. One distinctive feature of Finnish elections is the exceptionally high numbers of ballots cast in absentia by post. At the 1995 election, 43.4% of the valid votes were so cast.

The Finnish parliament consists of 200 MPs elected from 15 districts. In all districts, except on the Swedish-speaking Åland Islands, the allocation of seats to parties (including electoral alliances) is proportional to the votes following a d'Hondt system of party list Proportional Representation (PR). Before 1954, voters had to choose between candidate lists (a list included a maximum of two candidates and one deputy); but later changes to the system mean that it is now possible to vote for one individual candidate only. This change transformed the Finnish electoral system into a rare type of list system, which obliges voting for individual candidates.

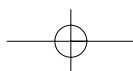
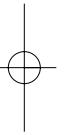
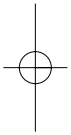
The election of candidates from the party list is not predetermined, but depends entirely on the number of individual votes cast for each candidate. The voter picks the allotted number of his or her candidate (the list of candidates, each with their identifying number, is hanging in front of the voter) and writes it down on the ballot. As a result, the election is not exclusively a competition between parties; it is also a competition between single candidates on the party list. Neither is the electorate given the option to vote for a party *per se*; but only for individual candidates nominated, but not ranked by a party or a non-party list.

While the Åland Islands district elects a single member, the other 14 districts are all multi-member. The district magnitude is determined by the population size, which favours the constituencies in the rural north and east. Proportionality is still high in overall parliamentary results, although variation between constituencies in this respect is large. In general, urbanised constituencies are more proportional, and more rural areas produce more disproportional results.

As the d'Hondt formula of allocating seats favours large parties, in Finland small parties usually take the opportunity of joining an electoral alliance with one or more



parties. Electoral alliances are made at the district level, which means that one party can join different alliances in all 14 districts; the alliances therefore have varying degrees of success. In addition, according to the electoral law of 1969, a candidate can only be nominated in one constituency. Before that a candidate could be nominated in all districts, the optimal electoral strategy for a charismatic small-party leader. Most small parties join electoral alliances, and without this option proportionality between votes and seats would, to some degree, be weakened. However, plans are under way to reduce the number of districts before the next parliamentary election in 1999.



Mixed Member Proportional (MMP)

80. Mixed Member Proportional (MMP) systems, as used in Germany, New Zealand, Bolivia, Italy, Mexico, Venezuela, and Hungary, attempt to combine the positive attributes of both majoritarian and PR electoral systems. A proportion of the parliament (roughly half in the cases of Germany, Bolivia, and Venezuela) is elected by plurality-majority methods, usually from single-member districts, while the remainder is constituted by PR lists. This structure might on the surface appear similar to that of the Parallel systems described earlier; but the crucial distinction is that under MMP the list PR seats compensate for any disproportionality produced by the district seat results. For example, if one party wins 10% of the national votes but no district seats, then they would be awarded enough seats from the PR lists to bring their representation up to approximately 10% of the parliament. In all but one of the seven countries which use MMP, district seats are elected using FPTP, while Hungary uses the Two-Round system previously described. Italy's method is considerably more complicated, with one-quarter of the parliamentary seats being reserved to compensate for wasted votes in the single-member districts. In Venezuela there are 102 FPTP seats, 87 National List PR seats and 15 extra compensatory PR seats. In Mexico 200 List PR seats compensate for the usually high imbalances in the results of the 300 FPTP seats, but an extra provision states that no single party can win more than 315 parliamentary seats, and if they receive less than 60% of the vote the maximum becomes 300 seats.

Table Four: MMP systems (1997)

	# of PR seats	# of Plurality-Majority Seats	Plurality-Majority System	Total # of seats
Bolivia	62 (48%)	68 (52%)	FPTP	130
Germany	328 (50%)	328 (50%)	FPTP	656
Hungary	210 (54%)	176 (46%)	TRS	386
Italy	155 (25%)	475 (75%)	FPTP	630
Mexico	200 (40%)	300 (60%)	FPTP	500
New Zealand	55 (42%)	65 (58%)	FPTP	120
Venezuela	102 (50%)	102 (50%)	FPTP	204

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81. While MMP retains the proportionality benefits of PR systems, it also ensures that voters have geographical representation. They also have the luxury of two votes, one for the party and one for their local MP. However, one problem is that the vote for their local MP is far less important than the party vote in determining the overall allocation of parliamentary seats, and this is not always

understood by voters. Furthermore, and akin to the difficulties mentioned earlier regarding Parallel systems, MMP can create two classes of MPs. It should also be remembered that in translating votes into seats, MMP can be as proportional an electoral system as pure List PR, and is therefore bedevilled with all the previously-cited advantages and disadvantages of PR. However, one reason why MMP is sometimes seen as less preferable than straight List PR is that it can give rise to what are called "strategic voting" anomalies. In New Zealand in 1996, in the constituency of Wellington Central, some National Party strategists urged voters not to vote for the National Party candidate, because they had calculated that under MMP his election would not give the National Party another seat in parliament but simply replace another MP from their party list. It was therefore better for the National Party to see a candidate elected from another party, providing he was in sympathy with the National Party's ideas and ideology, than for votes to be "wasted" in support of their own candidate.



GERMANY: The Original Mixed Member Proportional System

Michael Krennerich

After the use of the absolute-majority Two Round System (TRS) in the German Empire, and the use of a pure proportional representation system in the Weimar Republic, a new electoral system was established by the Parliamentary Council in 1949. The system was created by the Basic Law of the Federal Republic of Germany (i.e. the West German Constitution). It was thus a result of inter-party bargaining between democratic forces in West Germany. Like the Basic Law, it was originally considered to be provisional, but has remained essentially unchanged since 1949.

The German electoral system is classified as a personalised proportional system (*Personalisierte Verhältniswahl*) or, as it is known in New Zealand and this handbook, as a Mixed Member Proportional (MMP) system. Its essence is the way in which it combines a personal vote in single-member districts with the principle of proportional representation.

Currently, the German parliament (*Bundestag*) has 656 seats, not including possible surplus seats (see below). Each voter has two votes. The first vote (*Erststimme*) is a personal vote, given to a particular (party) candidate in one of the 328 single-member constituencies. The second vote (*Zweitstimme*) is a party vote, given to a party list at the federal state level (*Landesliste*). Candidates are allowed to compete in single-member districts as well as simultaneously for the party list. The candidates who achieve a plurality in the single-member districts are elected (*Direktmandate*). However, the second vote determines how many representatives will be sent from each party to the Bundestag.

On the national level, all the second (*Zweitstimme*) votes for the parties are totalled. Only parties obtaining more than 5% of the votes at the national level or, alternatively, having three members elected directly in the single-member constituencies, are considered in the national allocation of list PR seats. The number of representatives from each party that has passed the legal threshold is calculated according to the Hare formula (see glossary – Annex B). Seats are then allocated within the 16 federal states (*Länder*).

The number of seats won directly by a party in the single-member districts of a particular federal state are then subtracted from the total number of seats allocated to that party's list. The remaining seats are assigned to the closed party list. Should a party win more *Direktmandate* seats in a particular federal state than the number of seats allocated to it by the second votes, these surplus seats (*Überhangmandate*) are

kept by that party. In such a case, the total number of seats in the Bundestag temporarily increases.

The German system is not, as sometimes supposed, a mixed system, but a PR system. It differs from pure proportional representation only in that the 5% threshold at national level excludes very small parties from parliamentary representation, and thanks to proportional representation a relatively wide range of social and political forces are represented in Parliament. Furthermore, the electoral system is to some extent open to social and political changes. In spite of the threshold, new political parties supported by a substantial part of the electorate have access to Parliament. Besides the Christian Democratic Union/Christian Social Union (CDU/CSU), Social Democratic Party (SPD) and Free Democratic Party (FDP), which have been in the *Bundestag* since 1949, a new Green Party (GRÜNE) gained seats in 1983 and 1987. After falling below the threshold in 1990, the Greens, in a coalition with Alliance '90, were able to return to Parliament in 1994. After German unification, even small East German parties gained parliamentary seats. In the all-German elections of 1990, the East German Alliance '90/Greens and the Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS) cleared the 5% threshold which was applied, separately in the territory of former East Germany and former West Germany, for that one election. Four years later, the PDS took advantage of the "alternative clause" by winning four of the required three *Direktmandate* seats.

The personal vote for a candidate in single-member constituencies aims to ensure a close relationship between voters and their representatives. In practice, however, the advantage of these districts should not be overestimated. In Germany, elections in the single-member districts are mainly based on party preferences and not on the personality of the candidates. The initial hopes that MMP would guarantee a close voter-representative relationship have consequently only partly materialized, despite efforts by representatives to establish strong links with their constituencies. Nevertheless, this constituency element within a PR system does at least help to bridge the gap between voters and representatives which is normally widened by ordinary closed-list PR systems.

Furthermore, the two-vote system enables voters to split their votes strategically between existing or possible coalition partners. In fact, vote-splitting is common among the supporters of smaller parties. Since candidates of smaller parties have little chance of winning a single-member district, their supporters frequently give their first vote to a constituency candidate from the larger coalition party. Similarly, supporters of bigger parties may "lend" their second vote to a minor party within the coalition, in order to ensure that it will pass the legal threshold. Thus, vote-splitting is strategically used by voters to support the coalition partner of "their" party or, at least, to indicate their coalition preferences.

By producing highly proportional outcomes, the electoral system makes manufactured majorities, where one party wins an absolute majority of the parliamentary seats on a minority of the popular votes, very unlikely. In fact, over the last five decades in Germany, manufactured majorities have never occurred. Majority governments have usually been coalition governments, and any change of government has resulted from changes in the configuration of the coalition. German coalition governments are usually stable and regarded as legitimate by the electorate, and, because of a coalition's built-in incentives to co-operate, many Germans prefer a coalition government to a single-party government. The main checking function is fulfilled by an opposition which is fairly represented. It is important to note that the relationship between government and opposition in German politics is more consensual and co-operative than conflictual or hostile. This, however, is a result of history and political culture rather than of the electoral system *per se*.

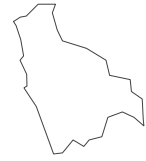
To date, the MMP system has not shown any great drawbacks in Germany. It has lasted long enough to have a high level of institutionalized legitimacy; the basic principles of single-member districts and list PR representation have been left unaltered since 1949. However, some minor changes of the electoral system have taken place. Chief among these was the switch to two separate votes in 1953, before then the voter had only a single vote to apply to both district and national PR allocation.

Nevertheless, several attempts to reform the electoral system substantially have been made since 1949, and most intensely in the 1960s, when opponents of the PR system demanded the introduction of a FPTP system. This was partly due to political manoeuvrings to enhance the position of the stronger parties, and partly based on a theoretical school of thought which favoured the British model; but all attempts were unsuccessful. More recently, the electoral system has been criticized for producing too many surplus seats without compensating the disadvantaged parties in Parliament.

BOLIVIA:

Electoral Reform in Latin America

René Antonio Mayorga



Bolivia's democratic experience has been characterized by the search for ways to solve the basic problem of Latin American presidential regimes, which have regularly slipped into stalemates between executives and legislatures led by minority governments. Most presidential systems in Latin America pose the fundamental problem that they are embedded in multi-party systems with proportional representation; this has been defined as the "difficult equation of presidentialism", and has been a permanent source of political conflicts which has adversely affected the chances of democratic consolidation.

In Bolivia the problem has been partly solved through a basic institutional shift from "presidentialism" with minority governments to a "parliamentarized presidentialism" based on majority governments. This distinctive system of government is a "mestizo child", with both parliamentary and presidentialist features. It is presidentialist because the president serves for a fixed term and, even though chosen by Congress, does not depend on its continuing confidence. But it is "parliamentarised" because the president is chosen by the legislature on the basis of post-electoral bargaining, so ensuring majority legislative support and the compatibility of executive and legislative powers. The mainspring of the system is a dynamic common in parliamentary regimes: the politics of coalition.

Like parties everywhere, Bolivian parties strive to maximize their respective vote shares, but they do not expect popular balloting to be the last stage of arbitration. Rather, they focus on post-electoral bargaining, and it is this that will determine who actually ends up in the congressional majority and with the executive power. The dominant pattern has been that of co-ordinated congressional and government coalitions, which has enhanced both the stability of the executive authority and the compatibility of executive and legislative powers.

Since the resumption of "free and fair" elections in 1979, the Bolivian party system, which evolved from a highly fragmented one to a moderate multi-party system of six effective parties, has proved unable to produce a single predominant party, or even alternating majorities. Thus, Article 90 of the Constitution, the guiding principle for the electoral system, has defined the normal method for choosing the president. It makes no explicit provision for political pacts, but it is its requirement that presidents be chosen by Congress when no single candidate wins a majority of the popular vote that has created broad scope for bargaining and coalition-building among political parties.

One key dimension of Bolivian "parliamentarised presidentialism" is the List PR electoral system. In fact, throughout the 1980s and early 1990s the electoral system helped reinforce the patterns of inter-party competition and coalition-building, but the system also had many shortcomings and was prone to fraud and manipulation. One of the crucial issues of democratic stability and legitimacy has been the establishment of coherent rules of the game. The Bolivian electoral reforms in 1986, 1991 and 1994 were characterized by short-term calculations and contingent reactions to political pressures, and not by research or deliberate political engineering. Moreover, party leaderships lacked experience and were unable to develop a coherent reform strategy. The result was that the elections in 1985, 1989 and 1993 were all held under different PR formulas. The D'Hondt formula, introduced in 1956, was replaced in 1986 by a so-called double quotient of participation and allocation of seats which hindered the access of small parties to Congress. In 1989 a further change established the Sainte-Laguë formula for the presidential and parliamentary elections in 1993, which encouraged, in turn, the representation of very small parties.

Nevertheless, the first wave of weighty changes had paradoxically less to do with the change of the prevailing PR system than with the establishment of an autonomous Electoral Court, the adoption of on-site vote validation of ballots at polling places, and the abolition of mechanisms that made it possible for regional electoral courts to distort results. However, the constitutional reform of August 1994 introduced a second wave of changes, and brought about the most major shift in the PR system so far by introducing, with some modifications, the Mixed Member Proportional (MMP) electoral system of Germany and New Zealand. At first this revision led to the "contradictory" adoption of parallel First Past the Post (FPTP) and PR systems – basically, a mixed PR system in terms of voting criteria but not in terms of outcomes.

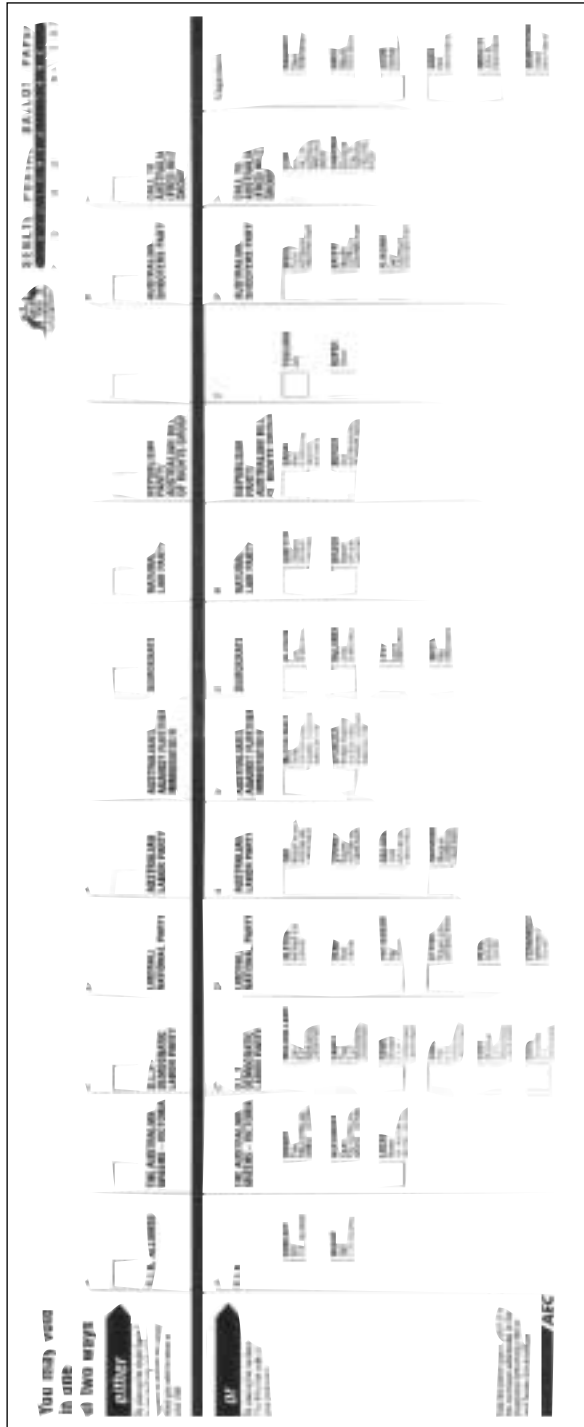
Thus in August 1996, Congress had to pass a new law concerning the application of Article 60 of the Constitution in order to remove some obvious defects. It re-established the D'Hondt formula of PR and created a 3% threshold for seats in the Chamber of Deputies. Henceforth, 68 deputies out of a constitutionally-fixed number of 130 will be chosen by First Past the Post voting in single-member districts, while the remainder will be chosen by party list voting according to proportional representation, in nine regional multi-member districts. Unlike Germany and Venezuela, there is no provision for additional seats. Seats are allocated directly to candidates winning in single-member districts, even if a party wins in only one district and obtains no PR seats. As in Germany, the overall distribution of seats, however, will be decided by applying the PR formula in a compensatory fashion, with a 3% threshold for representation at the national level. If a party wins 10 seats through the overall List

PR voting, and five seats in single-member districts, it is ultimately entitled to 10 parliamentary seats.

The most striking phenomenon in the Bolivian experience of electoral reform has been the use of democratic procedures and mechanisms. Reforms were discussed in multi-party commissions and reaching multi-party consensus was a *sine qua non* condition for congressional approval. No referendum was called because the Bolivian Constitution does not allow this mechanism of legitimization. From 1989 through 1992, inter-party debate unfolded around two key proposals, which were, in turn, rejected. The Acción Democrática Nacionalista and the Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria advocated plurality for presidential elections, so that the Congress would only have confirmed the candidate winning the plurality of votes; meanwhile, the Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario (MNR) proposed the French-style Two-Round (majority-runoff) System (TRS). Both proposals started from the premise that the congressional election of presidents through party bargaining did not respect the people's will, and decisions were taken behind closed doors; people voted, but did not choose the president.

A consensus was finally reached based on the MNR's proposal to adopt an MMP system for the legislature and, furthermore, to reduce the number of presidential candidates able to obtain a plurality of votes at the parliamentary election from three to two, and to establish a five-year mandate for the president, the vice-president, and members of parliament. The real shift to MMP-style PR stemmed from discontent with vote manipulation in the 1989 general election, but the specific causes of the reforms were three-fold: the concern about a process of de-legitimization of party representation because closed party lists weakened the links between MPs and voters, the disillusionment of citizens with a lack of political responsiveness and accountability of governing parties, and finally a desire to reduce the growing alienation between parties and society by fostering constituency representation.

In the presidential and parliamentary elections of June 1997, these electoral changes may well reduce the number of parties, as a strong trend towards pre-electoral alliances prevails already. They are also expected to enhance coalition-building as the prerequisite of forming a government. Although voters are inclined to see "constituency MPs" as more representative and accountable, it is likely that, because of the presidential aspect, the "constituency vote" will not predominate over the party vote. But deputies from single-member districts might bolster localist and corporatist politics, and weaken the linkages between party leadership and parliamentary representatives. This may have deleterious consequences for party discipline in Congress.



An Australian Senate Single Transferable Vote ballot paper.

The Single Transferable Vote (STV)

82. The Single Transferable Vote (STV) has long been advocated by political scientists as one of the most attractive electoral systems, but its use for national parliamentary elections has been limited to a few cases – Ireland since 1921, Malta since 1947, and once in Estonia in 1990. It is also used in Australia for elections to the Tasmanian House of Assembly, the Australian Capital Territory Legislative Assembly, and the federal Senate; and in Northern Irish local elections. The core principles of the system were independently invented in the nineteenth century by Thomas Hare in Britain and Carl Andræ in Denmark. STV uses multi-member districts, with voters ranking candidates in order of preference on the ballot paper in the same manner as the Alternative Vote. In most cases this preference marking is optional, and voters are not required to rank-order all candidates; if they wish they can mark only one. After the total number of first-preference votes are tallied, the count then begins by establishing the “quota” of votes required for the election of a single candidate. The quota is calculated by the simple formula:

$$\text{Quota} = \frac{\text{votes}}{\text{seats} + 1} + 1$$

83. The first stage of the count is to ascertain the total number of first-preference votes for each candidate. Any candidate who has more first preferences than the quota is immediately elected. If no-one has achieved the quota, the candidate with the lowest number of first preferences is eliminated, with his or her second preferences being redistributed to the candidates left in the race. At the same time, the surplus votes of elected candidates (i.e., those votes above the quota) are redistributed according to the second preferences on the ballot papers. For fairness, all the candidate's ballot papers are redistributed, but each at a fractional percentage of one vote, so that the total redistributed vote equals the candidate's surplus (except in the Republic of Ireland, which uses a weighted sample). If a candidate had 100 votes, for example, and their surplus was 10 votes, then each ballot paper would be redistributed at the value of 1/10th of a vote. This process continues until all seats for the constituency are filled.

84. As a mechanism for choosing representatives, STV is perhaps the most sophisticated of all electoral systems, allowing for choice between parties and between candidates within parties. The final results also retain a fair degree of proportionality, and the fact that in most actual examples of STV the multi-member districts are relatively small means that an important geographical link between voter and representative is retained. Furthermore, voters can influence

the composition of post-election coalitions, as has been the case in Ireland, and the system provides incentives for inter-party accommodation through the reciprocal exchange of preferences. STV also provides a better chance for the election of popular independent candidates than List PR, because voters are choosing between candidates rather than between parties (although a party-list option can be added to an STV election; this is done for the Australian Senate).

85. However, the system is often criticized on the grounds that preference voting is unfamiliar in many societies, and demands, at the very least, a degree of literacy and numeracy. The intricacies of an STV count are themselves quite complex, which is also seen as being a drawback. STV also carries the disadvantages of all parliaments elected by PR methods, such as under certain circumstances increasing the power of small minority parties. Moreover, at times the system, unlike straight List PR, can provide pressures for political parties to fragment internally, because at election-time members of the same party are effectively competing against each other, as well as against the opposition, for votes. Many of these criticisms have, however, proved to be little trouble in practice. STV elections in Ireland, Malta and Tasmania have all tended to produce relatively stable, legitimate governments comprised of one or two main parties.

IRELAND: The Archetypal Single Transferable Vote System

Michael Gallagher



Ever since independence in 1922, the Republic of Ireland has used proportional representation by means of the Single Transferable Vote (STV). When the new Irish state came to adopt an electoral system, the indigenous political elite favoured some version of Proportional Representation (PR) because they believed it intrinsically fair, while the departing British also preferred it to First Past the Post (FPTP) so as to protect the representation of Protestants, who constituted about 5% of the population. The STV electoral system was specified in the current (1937) Constitution, and consequently cannot be amended without a referendum. Members of parliament are elected from districts returning either three, four or five representatives.

The system has consistently delivered a high degree of proportionality, and all parties, large and small, have been accurately represented in relation to their size, with the larger parties only slightly over-represented. For example, Fianna Fáil, the largest party at every election for over 60 years, has won on average 45% of the votes at post-war elections, and 48% of the seats, while the third party, Labour, has won an average of 12% of the votes and 11% of the seats.

As in most other countries, members of parliament are predominantly professional people, with very few working-class MPs. Women are also under-represented, although the figure as of early 1997, 14%, was the highest in the history of the state. The Republic of Ireland cannot be said to be ethnically divided, so the question of representation of ethnic groups does not arise. Moreover, contrary to initial expectations, Protestants have not sought separate political representation but have voted for the mainstream parties.

Voting is straightforward: electors merely indicate their favoured candidate by writing "1" beside that candidate's name on the ballot paper, and can go on to indicate their second, third, etc., choices in the same way. About two-thirds of voters see their first choice candidate elected, and on average around 20% of votes are wasted in the sense of not contributing to the final result.

The house of parliament elected by the people by means of STV, the Dáil, is of critical importance in Ireland's parliamentary system. To gain office, a government needs the support of a majority of members of the Dáil, and a government can be ejected from office if it fails to maintain that support.

Ireland has not experienced problems in the area of stable and effective governments. For many years, single-party government by the largest party, Fianna Fáil, was the norm, interrupted only occasionally by coalitions formed by the other two main

parties. More recently, a decline in Fianna Fáil's strength and the emergence of a number of smaller parties has led to coalition governments becoming the norm. Since 1989 each of the largest five parties, i.e. every party winning more than 2% of the votes at elections, has spent at least two years in government; and governments, once formed, tend to be reasonably durable, lasting on average for about three years. The Dáil's procedures are based on the Westminster model, which enables governments to enact their legislation with little real chance for the opposition to influence legislation.


In terms of accountability, it is relatively easy to throw governments out; at every election from 1973 to 1997 the outgoing government did not manage to be re-elected. Voters do have local representatives: the ratio of members of parliament to population is high (about one for every 20,000 people) and district magnitude is small (at most five representatives for each constituency), so members of parliament are usually well known to their constituents and are active representatives in their area. There is no provision for recall of elected members.

One criticism aimed at STV is that it helps promote intra-party fragmentation, but the Irish parties tend to be relatively cohesive despite the electoral competition among candidates of the same party. In Parliament, it is very rare for party representatives to break ranks from the party line on any issue. The political culture of Ireland is strongly influenced by that of Britain, and the "winner-take-all" attitude that characterizes Westminster-based governmental systems remains strong in Ireland, despite the PR electoral system.

The absence of ethnic cleavages, or any other deep divisions, in Irish society means that the incentives for parties to reach out beyond their own group cannot be tested. It is worth noting, though, that in Northern Ireland, which has deep divisions along ethnic, national and religious dimensions between Protestants and Catholics, and which also uses STV for many elections, most of the main parties draw support entirely from one or other of the two communities and do not see any incentive to try to win support from the other community. Indeed, parties aiming to draw support from both communities generally fare poorly.

The STV electoral system is supported because it is seen as fair, since it delivers proportional representation, and because of the power it gives voters to choose their parliamentary representatives by ranking all candidates in order of their choice, both between parties and within parties. Although most voters vote along party lines, it is not necessary to do so, and a significant number of voters vote along geographical lines; that is, they give their highest preferences to those candidates, regardless of party, from their own local area. Two referendums have been held, both instigated by the then-governing Fianna Fáil party, to replace STV with the British FPTP system. On both occasions the electorate voted to keep STV; the margin of victory was narrow in 1959, but wide in 1968.

Nevertheless, STV is criticised because of the intense competition that it generates between candidates, especially candidates of the same party. More members of parliament of Fianna Fáil, the largest party, are defeated by other Fianna Fáil candidates than by candidates of other parties. Thus a number of members of parliament argue that STV compels them to spend too much time responding to individual and community grievances from their constituents, which is necessary for electoral survival, and prevents them from spending enough time on national political and parliamentary matters, to the detriment of the national interest. It is also argued that an electoral system that weakens the close link between members of parliament and their constituents, and thus removes the electoral incentive to respond to demands for constituency work, might attract higher calibre people into politics.



PR-Related Issues

The Threshold

86. All electoral systems have *thresholds* of representation: that is, the minimum level of support which a party needs to gain representation, either legally imposed (formal), or merely mathematically de-facto (effective). In some cases, these thresholds are a by-product of other features of the electoral system, such as the number of seats to be filled and the number of parties or candidates contesting the election, and are thus categorized as "effective" thresholds. In other cases, however, these thresholds are written into the electoral law which defines the PR system, and are therefore "formal". In Germany, New Zealand and Russia, for example, there is a 5% threshold: parties which fail to secure 5% of the vote are ineligible to be awarded seats from the PR lists. This provision had its origins in the German desire to limit the election of extremist groups, and is designed to stop very small parties from gaining representation. However, in both Germany and New Zealand there exist "back-door" routes for a party to be entitled to seats from the lists; in the case of New Zealand a party must win at least one constituency seat, and in the case of Germany three seats, to by-pass the threshold requirements. In Russia in 1995 there were no "back-door" routes, and almost half of the party-list votes were wasted.

87. Elsewhere, legal thresholds range from 0.67% in the Netherlands to 10% in the Seychelles. Parties which gain less than this percentage of the vote are excluded from the count. In all of these cases the existence of a formal threshold tends to increase the overall level of disproportionality, because votes for those parties who would otherwise have gained representation are wasted. In Poland in 1993, even with a comparatively low threshold of 5%, over 34% of the votes were cast for parties which did not surmount it. But in most other cases thresholds have a limited effect on overall outcomes, and some electoral experts therefore see them as unnecessary and often arbitrary complications to electoral rules, which in most cases are best avoided.

Apparentement

88. High effective thresholds can serve to discriminate against small parties – indeed, in some cases this is their express purpose. But in many cases an in-built discrimination against smaller parties is seen as undesirable, particularly in those cases where several small parties with similar support bases "split" their combined votes and consequently fall beneath the threshold, when one aligned

grouping would have gained enough combined votes to have won some seats in the legislature. To get around this problem, many countries which use list PR systems also allow small parties to group together for electoral purposes, thus forming a "cartel" or *apparentement* to contest the election. This means that the parties themselves remain as separate entities, and are listed separately on the ballot paper, but that votes gained by each party are counted as if they belonged to the entire cartel, thus increasing the chances that their combined vote total will be above the threshold and hence that they may be able to gain additional representation. This device is a feature of a number of List PR systems in continental Europe, in Latin America (where they are called *Lema*), and in Israel.

Open, Closed and Free Lists

89. There are a number of important variations in ways of voting between the various List PR systems. One of the most important is whether lists are *open*, *closed*, or *free* in terms of the ability of electors to vote for a preferred candidate as well as for a party.

90. The majority of List PR systems in the world are *closed*, meaning that the order of candidates elected by that list is fixed by the party itself, and voters are not able to express a preference for a particular candidate. The List PR system instituted for the first democratic South African elections in 1994 was a good example of a closed list. The ballot paper contained the party names and symbols, and a photograph of the party leader, but no names of individual candidates. Voters simply chose the party they preferred; the individual candidate elected as a result was pre-determined by the parties themselves. This meant that parties could include some candidates (perhaps members of minority ethnic and linguistic groups, or women) who might have had difficulty getting elected otherwise. However, the negative aspect of closed lists is that voters have no say in determining who the representative of their party will be. Closed lists are also extremely unresponsive to changes in events. In East Germany's pre-unification elections of 1990, the top-ranked candidate of one party was exposed as a secret-police informer only four days before the election, and immediately expelled from the party; but because lists were closed, electors had no choice but to vote for him if they wanted to support his former party.

91. Many of the List PR systems used in continental Europe therefore use *open* lists, in which voters can indicate not just their favoured party, but their favou-

red candidate within that party. In most of these systems the vote for a candidate as well as a party is optional and, because most voters plump for parties rather than candidates, the candidate-choice option of the ballot paper often has little effect. But in some cases (Finland is one) this choice becomes highly important, because people *must* vote for candidates, and the order in which candidates are elected is determined by the number of individual votes they receive. While this gives voters much greater freedom over their choice of candidate, it also has some less desirable side-effects. Because candidates from within the same party are effectively competing with each other for votes, this form of open list can lead to intra-party conflict and fragmentation. It also means that the potential benefits to the party of having lists which feature a diverse slate of candidates can be overturned. In open-list PR elections in Sri Lanka, for example, the attempts of major Sinhalese parties to include minority Tamil candidates in winnable positions on their party lists have been quashed because many voters deliberately voted for lower-placed Sinhalese candidates instead.

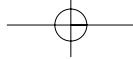
92. Some other devices are used in a small number of jurisdictions to add additional flexibility to open-list systems. In Luxembourg and Switzerland, electors have as many votes as there are seats to be filled, and can distribute them to candidates either within a single party list or across several party lists as they see fit. The capacity to vote for more than one candidate across different party lists (known as *panachage*), or to cast more than one vote for a single highly-favoured candidate (known as *cumulation*), both provide an additional measure of control to the voter and are categorized here as *free* list systems.

District Magnitude

93. There is near-universal agreement among electoral specialists that the crucial determinant of an electoral system's ability to translate votes cast into seats won proportionally is the district magnitude; i.e., the number of members to be elected in each electoral district. Under a single-member system such as FPTP, AV or the Two-Round System, there is a district magnitude of one; voters are electing a single representative. Under a multi-member system, by contrast, there will by definition be more than one member elected in each district. Under any proportional system, the number of members to be chosen in each district determines, to a significant extent, how proportional the election results will be.

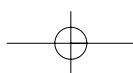
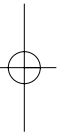
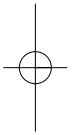
94. The systems which achieve the greatest degree of proportionality will utilise very large districts, because such districts are able to ensure that even very small parties are represented in the legislature. For example, a district in which there are only three members to be elected means that a party must gain at least 25% +1 of the vote to be assured of winning a seat. A party which has the support of only 10% of the electorate would not win a seat, and the votes of this party's supporters could therefore be said to have been wasted. In a nine-seat district, by contrast, 10% +1 of the vote would guarantee that a party wins at least one seat. This means not only that the results are more proportional, but that there is also more chance that small parties will be able to be elected. The problem is that as districts grow larger – both in terms of the number of seats and often, as a consequence, in their geographic size as well – so the linkage between an elected member and his or her constituency grows weaker. This can have serious consequences in societies where local factors play a strong role in politics, or where voters expect their member to maintain strong links with the electorate and act as their “delegate” in the legislature.

95. Because of this, there has been a lively debate about the best level of district size. Most scholars agree, as a general principle, that district magnitudes of somewhere between three and seven seats per district tend to work quite well, and there is also general agreement that odd numbers like three, five and seven work better in practice than even numbers, particularly in a two-party system. But this is only a rough guide, and there are many situations where a higher number may be both desirable and necessary to ensure satisfactory representation and proportionality. In many countries, the electoral districts follow pre-existing administrative divisions, perhaps state or provincial boundaries, which means that there may be a wide variation in their size. Numbers at the high and low ends of the spectrum tend to deliver more extreme results. At one end of the spectrum, a whole country can form one electoral district, which normally means that the quota for election is extremely low and even very small parties can gain election. In the Netherlands, for example, the whole country forms one district of 150 members, which means that election results are extremely proportional, but also means that parties with extremely small vote shares, even less than 1%, can gain representation, and that the link between an elected member and a geographic area is extremely weak. At the other end of the spectrum, PR systems can be applied to situations in which there is a district magnitude of only two. A system of List PR is applied to two-member districts in Chile, for example, and as the Chilean case study (see page 93) indicates, this delivers results which are quite disproportional, even though a proportional



formula is used, because only two parties can gain representation in each district. This has tended to undermine the benefits of PR in terms of representation and legitimacy.

96. Both of these polarized examples serve to underline the crucial importance of district magnitude in any system of proportional representation. It is arguably the single most important institutional choice when designing a PR electoral system, and is also of crucial importance for a number of non-PR systems as well. The Single Non-Transferable Vote, for example, delivers semi-proportional results despite its lack of a proportional electoral formula, precisely because it is used in multi-member districts. Similarly, the Single Transferable Vote when applied to single-member districts becomes the Alternative Vote, which retains some of the advantages of STV but not its proportionality. In majoritarian systems, as district magnitude increases, proportionality is likely to decrease. To sum up, when designing an electoral system, the district magnitude is in many ways the key factor in determining how the system will operate in practice, the extent of the link between voters and elected members, and the overall proportionality of election results.



CHILE: Latin American Proportionality or Majoritarianism?

John Carey

The Chilean Congress is bicameral, comprised of a Chamber of Deputies as the lower house, whose members serve four-year terms, and a Senate as the upper house, whose members serve for eight years. The 120 seats in the lower house are directly elected using an open-list PR system, but an usual and distinguishing feature of the Chilean system is that all seats are elected from two-member districts, which makes it more difficult for small parties to gain representation on their own.

Parties, or coalitions of parties, present a list of two candidates, and voters indicate a preference for one candidate within one of the lists. The votes of both candidates on each list are totalled first, then the two seats are allocated. The first seat is awarded to the most popular candidate from the list with the most votes; then that list's vote total is divided by two. If this number is still higher than any other list's total of votes, the second candidate gets the second seat. Otherwise, the second seat goes to the candidate with the most personal votes from the second-placed coalition's list.

This two-member PR system was designed in 1989 by the outgoing military regime of General Augusto Pinochet. The stated goal was to encourage broad cross-partisan coalitions and discourage the representation of small parties, particularly the Communists, who had thrived under Chile's more permissive PR system, which utilised larger multi-member districts, up to 1973. On this count, the system appears to be working. Parties can win representation in Congress only if they are part of one of the two largest lists in a given district. Those parties on the radical left that have been unwilling or unwelcome to enter the centre-left *Concertación* coalition have been virtually disenfranchised, winning no seats and watching their vote share drop from 11% to 6% in the two elections since redemocratization.

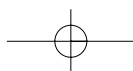
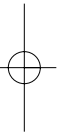
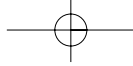
The incentive that this electoral system gives to form coalitions has carried over from the electoral arena to government, and is so formidable that Chile's traditional multi-party system now performs very much like a two-party system. Although parties remain organizationally distinct and candidates bear party labels on ballots, these labels have effectively been superseded by coalition labels. Coalition leaders negotiate candidate nominations jointly and can impose discipline across all members of the coalition. The result is that the Chilean Congress has come to be organized around two major coalitions which are more stable than was previously the case in Chile's fluid multi-party system.

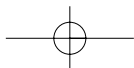
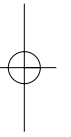
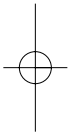
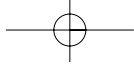
A second important effect of the system is that, given the distribution of electoral



support in Chile, elections systematically over-represent the coalition of the right, the Unión Para Progreso (UPP). The system ensures that in every district, the top two coalition lists will win equal representation unless the top list more than doubles the vote total of the second-placed list. This too is the result of a conscious choice by system designers. Based on the results of a 1988 plebiscite as well as previous elections, the military regime knew its supporters were a minority in almost every region of the country, but that its support was consistently in the range of 30% to 40%, whereas the *Concertación* had majority support and intended to sustain their coalition. The Chilean electoral system is unique in its tendency to over-represent second-place finishers; and indeed in both the 1989 and 1993 elections the UPP has won a 6% to 7% greater share of seats than its proportional share of the vote.

The *Concertación* has expressed a desire to increase the number of deputies elected from each district, thus making the system more proportional. However, all changes have been steadfastly opposed by the UPP and the appointed senators who, together, hold a majority in the Senate. As the system enters its third electoral cycle in 1997, the electoral interests of all parties that have succeeded under these rules may progressively undermine support for radical reform.





SPECIAL PARLIAMENTARY CONSIDERATIONS

97. There are many ways to enhance the representation of women, minorities and communal groups. These include multi-member PR or semi-PR election systems which use reasonably large district magnitudes of seven or more members, thus encouraging parties to nominate women and minorities to increase their electoral chances. A very low threshold, or the elimination of a threshold entirely, in PR systems can also facilitate the representation of hitherto under-represented or unrepresented groups. A few List PR countries require that women make up a proportion of the nominated candidates. As the examples below illustrate, in plurality or majority systems, seats can be set aside in parliament for minority and communal groups.

Representation of Women

98. There are a number of different ways for ensuring that women are represented in parliament. First, there are statutory quotas where women must make up at least a minimum proportion of the elected representatives. This happens in a handful of cases: Italy, where women must make up 50% of the PR ballot, Argentina (30%), and Brazil (20%), and it has also been proposed for the Indian Lok Sabha. Such quotas are usually perceived as a transitional mechanism to lay the foundation for a broader acceptance of women's representation. Secondly, the electoral law can require parties to field a certain number of women candidates; this is the case in the PR systems of Belgium and Namibia, while in Argentina there is the extra proviso that women must be placed in "winnable" positions and not just at the bottom of a party's list, while in Nepal 5% of the single-member district candidates must be women. Thirdly, political parties may adopt their own informal quotas for women as parliamentary can-

didates. This is the most common mechanism used to promote the participation of women in political life, and has been used with varying degrees of success all over the world: by the ANC in South Africa, the PJ and the UCR in Argentina, CONDEPA in Bolivia, the PRD in Mexico, the labour parties in Australia and the United Kingdom, and throughout Scandinavia. The use of women-only candidate short-lists by the Labour Party at the 1997 United Kingdom elections almost doubled the number of female MPs, from 60 to 119.

99. Reserved seats have also been set aside for women in Taiwan and other countries. Again, as with all reserved seats, these mechanisms help guarantee women make it into elected positions of office, but some women have argued that quotas end up being a way to appease, and ultimately sideline, women. Being elected to a legislature does not necessarily mean being given substantive decision-making power, and in some countries women parliamentarians, particularly those elected from reserved or special seats, are marginalized from real decision-making responsibility.

Representation of Minorities

100. Reserved seats are also one way of ensuring the representation of specific minority groups in parliament. Parliamentary seats are reserved for identifiable ethnic or religious minorities in countries as diverse as Jordan (Christians and Circassians), India (scheduled tribes and castes), Pakistan (non-Muslim minorities), New Zealand (Maori), Colombia ("black communities"), Croatia (Hungarian, Italian, Czech, Slovak, Ruthenian, Ukrainian, German and Austrian minorities), Slovenia (Hungarians and Italians), Taiwan (the aboriginal community), Western Samoa (non-indigenous minorities), Niger (Taurag), and the Palestinian Authority (Christians and Samaritans). Representatives from these reserved seats are usually elected in much the same manner as other members of parliament, but are sometimes elected only by members of the particular minority community designated in the electoral law. While it is often deemed to be a normative good to represent small communities of interest, it has been argued that it is a better strategy to design structures which give rise to a representative parliament naturally, rather than through legal obligation. Quota seats may breed resentment on the behalf of majority populations and shore up mistrust between various cultural groups.

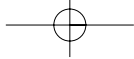
101. Instead of formally reserved seats, regions can be over-represented to facilitate the increased representation of minority groups. In essence this is the case

in the United Kingdom, where Scotland and Wales have more MPs in the British House of Commons than they would be entitled to if population size alone were the only criteria. The same is true in the mountainous regions of Nepal. Another possibility is the "best loser" system used in Mauritius, in which some of the highest-polling losing candidates from a particular ethnic group are awarded parliamentary seats in order to balance overall ethnic representation. Electoral boundaries can also be manipulated to serve this purpose. The Voting Rights Act in the United States has in the past allowed the government to draw weird and wonderful districts with the sole purpose of creating majority Black, Latino, or Asian-American districts; this might be called "affirmative gerrymandering". However, the manipulation of any electoral system to protect minority representation is rarely uncontroversial.

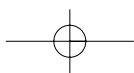
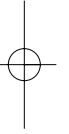
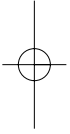
Communal Representation

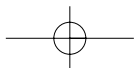
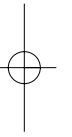
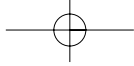
102. A number of ethnically-heterogeneous societies have taken the concept of reserved seats to its logical extension. Seats are not only divided on a communal basis, but the entire system of parliamentary representation is similarly based on communal considerations. This usually means that each defined community has its own electoral roll, and elects only members of its "own group" to Parliament. In some cases, however, such as Fiji from 1970-1987, electors could vote not only for their own communal candidates but for some "national" candidates as well.

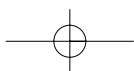
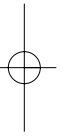
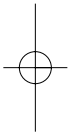
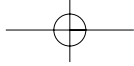
103. Most communal-roll arrangements were abandoned after it became clear that communal electorates, while guaranteeing group representation, often had the perverse effect of undermining the path of accommodation between different groups, since there were no incentives for political intermixing between communities. The issue of how to define a member of a particular group, and how to distribute electorates fairly between them, was also strewn with pitfalls. In India, for example, the separate electorates which had existed under colonial rule – for Muslims, Christians, Sikhs and others – were abolished at independence, although some reserved seats remain in order to represent scheduled tribes and castes. Similar communal-roll systems used at various times in Pakistan, Cyprus and Zimbabwe have also been abandoned. Despite a controversial history of use, Fiji continues to elect its parliament from separate communal rolls for indigenous Fijian, Indian and "general" electors.



104. The one predominant example of a communal-roll system left among contemporary democracies is the optional separate roll for Maori voters in New Zealand. Maori electors can choose to be on either the national electoral roll or a specific Maori roll, which elects five Maori MPs to Parliament. The results of New Zealand's first PR elections in 1996 could, however, be said to have weakened the rationale for the communal system: twice as many Maori MPs were elected from the general rolls as from the specific Maori roll. Fiji is also moving away from its communal roll system to more open electoral competition in order to try to encourage the development of a multi-ethnic political system.







PRESIDENTIAL, UPPER HOUSE, AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS

Electing a President

First Past the Post

105. The most straight forward way of electing a president is to simply award the office to the candidate who wins most votes. This is the case for presidential elections in Mexico, Kenya, the Philippines, Zambia, South Korea, Malawi, Iceland, and Zimbabwe. Clearly, such a system is simple, cheap and efficient but in a strongly competitive multi-candidate race it leaves open the possibility that the president will be elected with so few votes that the vast majority of the electorate voted against him or her. This was the case in Venezuela in 1993, when Rafael Caldera won the presidency with 30.5% of the popular vote. Similarly, at his May 1992 election, the Philippines' President, Fidel Ramos, was elected from a seven-candidate field with only 24% of the popular vote. FPTP presidential elections can also exacerbate the problems of winner-take-all politics in a divided society. In Angola in 1992 the UNITA leader, Jonas Savimbi, lost a straight plurality winner-take-all presidential election to Jose dos Santos of the MPLA by 49% to 40%, and immediately re-started the civil war as he had little incentive to play the democratic opposition game.

Two-Round Systems

106. As in parliamentary elections, one way to avoid candidates being elected with only a small proportion of the popular vote is to hold a second ballot if no one candidate wins a majority on the first round. This can either be between the top two candidates (majority-runoff), or between more than two candidates (majority-plurality), as we have described earlier in the Two-Round System

section (see paragraph 64). France, most Latin American countries, and a number of states in Francophone Africa like Mali and the Ivory Coast use Two-Round Systems to elect their presidents; indeed, many more countries who elect presidents use this system than use FPTP. Elsewhere in Africa the system is used by Sierra Leone, Namibia, Mozambique, Madagascar, the Congo and the Central African Republic; in Europe it is used by Finland, Austria, Bulgaria, Portugal, Poland, Russia, and the Ukraine.

107. There are, however, a number of adaptations to straight majority-runoff and majority-plurality rules. In Costa Rica a candidate can win on the first round with only 40% of the vote; conversely, in Sierra Leone a second round is only avoided if one candidate gets 55% in the first. In Argentina, a successful candidate must poll 45%, or 40% plus more than a 10%-lead over the second-placed candidate. Uruguay's presidential election formula, used until the adoption of a straight TRS system in 1996, escapes any previously-outlined categorization. Individual political parties who exist, for electoral purposes, within coalitions (or *lema*) with other parties can present their own candidate in the presidential election. Voters choose between individual candidates and then all the candidate votes of a lema are added together. The highest polling lema wins the seat and the highest polling candidate within that *lema* fills the seat.

Maximization of Consent

108. Two-Round System presidential elections are deemed to be useful for maximizing the consent given to what is often the most powerful office in government; in particular, they tend to avoid the pitfall of a president wielding vast influence on the back of a minority of the voters. A number of countries also have minimum turnout rates for their presidential elections, typically set at a minimum turnout of 50%, as in Russia and many of the former Soviet republics; this is an additional mechanism for ensuring majority support. The utility of such provisions is illustrated by the election in 1996 of two presidents, from very different countries, who both came to power with the support of only one-fifth of the eligible voting-age population: President Clinton of the United States was elected with only 23% support, and President Chiluba of Zambia with 20%. Neither of these results would have been possible under the TRS or majority-turnout requirements of other jurisdictions. However, as with all Two-Round Systems, presidential elections held under TRS rules maximize the cost and resources needed to run elections, and the turnout drop-off between the first and second rounds of voting can often be severe and damaging.

109. The experience of TRS has been particularly problematic in Latin America. Apart from those countries where parties could create winning pre-electoral alliances so that presidential candidates could be elected in the first round (such as Brazil in 1994 and Chile in 1989 and 1994), TRS has led in many cases to minority governments and reduced governability. The system has deepened the polarization of multi-party systems and accentuated problems of legislative gridlock. For example, in the 1990 elections in Peru, Alberto Fujimori obtained in the second round 56% of the votes, but his party won only 14 of 60 seats in the Senate, and 33 seats of 180 in the Chamber of Deputies. In Brazil in 1989, Fernando Collor de Melo was elected in the second round with just under half of the votes, but his party won, in non-concurrent parliamentary elections, only 3 of 75 Senate seats and only 40 of 503 seats in the Chamber of Deputies. In Ecuador minority governments have been a constant outcome since the TRS was introduced for presidential elections in 1978.

Preferential Voting

110. One way of getting around the disadvantages of the Two-Round System is to merge the first and second round into one election. There are several ways of doing this. The most straightforward adaptation is the preferential system used for presidential elections in Sri Lanka (see the Sri Lankan case study on page 107). There, voters are asked to mark not only their first choice candidate, but also (if they wish) their second or third choices by placing the numbers "1", "2" and "3" next to the names of the candidates, in the same manner as the Alternative Vote and the Single Transferable Vote described earlier. If a candidate gains an absolute majority of first preference votes, he or she is immediately declared elected. However, if no candidate gains an absolute majority, all candidates other than the top two are eliminated and their second or third choice votes are passed on to one or the other of the two leading candidates, according to the preference ordering marked. Whoever achieves the highest number of votes at the end of this process is declared elected. This system thus achieves in one election what the Two-Round System achieves in two, with significant cost savings and greater administrative efficiency.

111. The disadvantages of the Sri Lankan system include the literacy requirements common to all preferential voting systems, and also the fact that voters are effectively required to guess who the top two candidates will be in order to make full use of their vote. This is not a disadvantage of the Alternative Vote, which is used to elect the Irish President. The procedure for marking the

ballot is virtually identical to the Sri Lankan case, with the exception that Irish voters can mark as many preferences as they wish, and are not restricted to three as is the case in Sri Lanka. But the way the votes are counted is quite different. Instead of simultaneously eliminating all but the top two candidates, under the Alternative Vote the lowest-placed candidate is eliminated and his or her votes transferred according to their next preference. This process is repeated until one candidate has an overall majority, or until all preferences have been counted. Unlike the Sri Lankan case, under Irish AV a lower-placed candidate who picks up lots of preference votes can still overtake higher-placed candidates and ultimately win the seat. The most recent example of a president winning through the transfer of preferences in this manner was the 1990 election of Mary Robinson to the Irish Presidency.

112. Despite these differences, both systems have the same core aim: to make sure that whoever wins the election will have the support of the majority of the electorate. The use of preference votes to express a second choice means that a second round of voting is not required, and this results in significant cost savings as well as benefits in administrative, logistics and security terms.

SRI LANKA: Changes to Accommodate Diversity

Ben Reilly



Like other former British colonies, Sri Lanka inherited a Westminster model of parliamentary government, with universal suffrage established in 1931 and full general elections in 1947, but over time found that First Past the Post (FPTP) elections were incapable of representing minority interests. In 1978, the decision was taken to transform Sri Lankan government from a parliamentary system into a French-style executive presidency, and a Select Committee was appointed to consider the necessary wide-ranging constitutional changes.

Sri Lanka is a nation with a long history of bitter ethnic conflict between the majority Sinhalese and minority Tamil communities. It was for this reason that the constitutional drafters were very conscious of the need to ensure that the new office of executive president would be filled by a national figure representative of all groups in society, and capable of encouraging consensual politics between those groups. The new president would have to represent all groups in Sri Lankan society and be seen as a figure capable of moderating between opposing interests. These objectives focussed attention on the method of election to the new office, and particularly on the means by which ethnic minorities could be included in the selection process.







While the method of election for such a figure would be crucial to the fate of the office, and would require at least a majority of voters supporting the successful candidate, only once in 50 years had any political party secured a majority of the vote at a national election; indeed, most governments had been elected with considerably less than that. The party system in Sri Lanka was fragmented between two dominant Sinhalese parties and a number of small minority parties.

Because much of the 1978 constitution had its philosophic origins in the French Fifth Republic model of a strong executive presidency combined with an elected legislature, the initial plans provided for a Two-Round System (TRS) of presidential elections. However, the extra cost and security issues associated with holding two separate elections within a two-week period was seen as being a major defect, particularly since Sri Lanka was in the midst of a violent civil war at the time.

These considerations prompted an innovative solution to the problem: to combine the initial and run-off rounds of voting into one election via the expression of preferences. Under this system, which continues to be used, if no candidate has a majority of first preferences, *all* candidates other than the two leaders are eliminated, and the second preferences distributed to one or the other of the top two to ensure a majority winner; voters can number up to three preferences, which will then be

distributed to one or the other of the top two candidates in the event of no candidate having an absolute majority. The system thus achieves in one election what a Two-Round System achieves in two.

In addition to ensuring that the president would be elected, whether outright or via preferences, by an absolute majority of all voters, the system has the additional feature of encouraging candidates to look beyond their own party or ethnic group for second-preference support from other groups. Sri Lanka has now conducted three national presidential elections under the supplementary vote system, in 1982, 1988, and 1994. Contrary to expectations, at each of these elections the winning candidate has achieved an absolute majority in the first round, and thus no preferences have been counted. The possibility that preferences may one day decide the result, however, does appear to have influenced the campaign strategies of Sri Lankan parties, and there is considerably more attention paid to minority groups in election campaigning for presidential elections than was formerly the case.

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A Sri Lankan presidential preferential vote ballot paper.

Distribution Requirements

113. One way of trying to ensure that a president has the support of a broad cross-section of the electorate is to introduce a distribution requirement, which acts as another hurdle to be cleared before a candidate can be declared duly elected. In Nigeria in 1993, presidential candidates had to not only win a plurality of the vote but also had to secure at least one-third of the votes in at least two-thirds of the 31 provinces. In Kenya, to be elected president a candidate had to receive at least 25% of the vote in at least five out of the eight provinces – even so, in 1992 a divided opposition allowed Daniel Arap Moi to become President with only 35% of the vote.

114. Distribution requirements do have the benefit of encouraging presidential candidates to make appeals outside their own regional or ethnic base, and if appropriately applied can work very well. But too stringent requirements can result in no one candidate being elected, creating a vacuum of power which is fraught with the dangers of instability. And if no single candidate fulfils all the requirements at the first time of asking, none is likely to do so in a re-run.

Electing an Upper House

115. Not all parliaments, of course, consist only of one chamber; many parliaments, particularly in larger countries, are bicameral, that is, composed of two chambers. Although there are wide variations between the various types of second chamber (also often known as an “upper house” or a “senate”), two generalizations about them can be made. Second chambers are generally less powerful than lower houses; only occasionally are the two houses equally powerful. This is because second chambers often act as houses of review, rather than as houses of government. Because of this, second chambers are often smaller in size than the first chamber. Furthermore, second chambers are often designed to encompass different types of representation or different interest groups than are represented in the first chamber.

116. The most common use of second chambers is in federal systems to represent the constituent units of the federation. For example, States in the USA and Australia, Länder in Germany, and Provinces in South Africa are all separately represented in an upper house. Typically, this involves a weighting in favour of the smaller states or provinces, as there tends to be an assumption of equa









188 **BALLOT PAPER** No. 000000

ELECTORAL COMMISSION OF KENYA

PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION, 1992

for the **NORTH MUGIRANGO BORABU** Constituency

COUNTERFOIL
No. 000000

Candidate's Name	Party Symbol	Voter's Mark
GEORGE ANYONA MOSETI		
DR. ANDERSON CHIBULE WA TSUMA		
DAVID MUKARU NG'ANG'A		
AJUMA OGINGA ODIRA		
KENNETH STANLEY NJINDO MATIBA		
DANIEL TOROTICH ARAP MOI		
MWAI KIBAKI		
JOHN HARON MWAU		

INSTRUCTIONS TO VOTER

1. Mark the paper by placing the mark X in the right-hand column above opposite the name of the candidate you wish to elect.
2. Do NOT place a mark opposite more than one candidate.
3. Make no other mark opposite more than one candidate.
4. Fold the paper through the centre, from left to right, so as to conceal your vote.

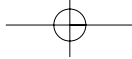
A Kenyan presidential First Past the Post ballot paper.

lity of representation. Another common type of alternative representation is the deliberate use of the second chamber to represent particular ethnic, linguistic, religious or cultural groups. A second chamber may also deliberately contain representatives of civil society. In Malawi, for instance, the constitution provides for 32 of the 80 senators to be chosen by elected senators from a list of candidates nominated by social "interest groups". These groups are identified as women's organizations, the disabled, health and education groups, business and farming sectors, trade unions, eminent members of society, and religious leaders. The much-maligned British House of Lords is occasionally defended on the grounds that it contains individuals with specific policy expertise, who can check the government legislation drawn up by generalist politicians.

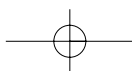
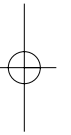
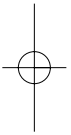
117. Because of these variations, many second chambers are either partly elected, indirectly elected or unelected. Of those that are elected, most jurisdictions have chosen to reflect the different roles of the two houses by using a different electoral system for their upper house to that which they use for their lower house. In Australia, for example, the lower house is elected by a majoritarian system (AV), while the upper house, which represents the various states, is elected using a proportional system (STV). This has meant that minority interests who would normally be unable to win election to the lower house still have a chance of gaining election, in the context of state representation, in the upper house.

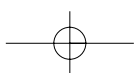
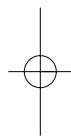
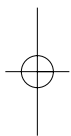
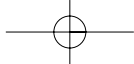
Electing Local Government

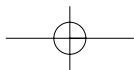
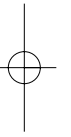
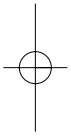
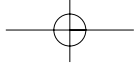
118. Any of the electoral systems outlined above can be used at the local or municipal government level, but often there are a number of special considerations borne out of the particular role that local government plays in a political system. First, because local government is more about the "nuts and bolts" issues of everyday life, geographical representation is often given primacy; single-member districts can be used to give every neighbourhood a say in local affairs. Because these districts are so small, they are usually highly homogeneous, which is sometimes seen to be a good thing, but if diversity within a local government district is what is called for, the "spokes of a wheel" principle of districting can be applied. Here, district boundaries are not circles drawn around identifiable neighbourhoods but are segments of a circle centring on the city centre and ending in the suburbs. This means that one district includes both the urban and the suburban voters, and makes for a mix of economic class and ethnicity.



119. In contrast, some countries which use PR systems for local government see defined municipalities as the perfect way to have one single-list PR district which can proportionally reflect all the different political opinions in the municipality. However, one consideration peculiar to the requirements for a local government electoral system is that specific space needs to be made for independents and the representatives of local associations who are not driven by party-political ideology. It is also true that the choice of a local election system may be made as a function, or part of, a compromise involving the system for a national parliament. For example, in some newly democratizing countries such as the Congo and Mali, tradition and the French influence have resulted in a Two-Round System for the national parliament, while a desire to be inclusive and more fully reflect regional and ethnic loyalties resulted in the choice of PR for municipal elections.





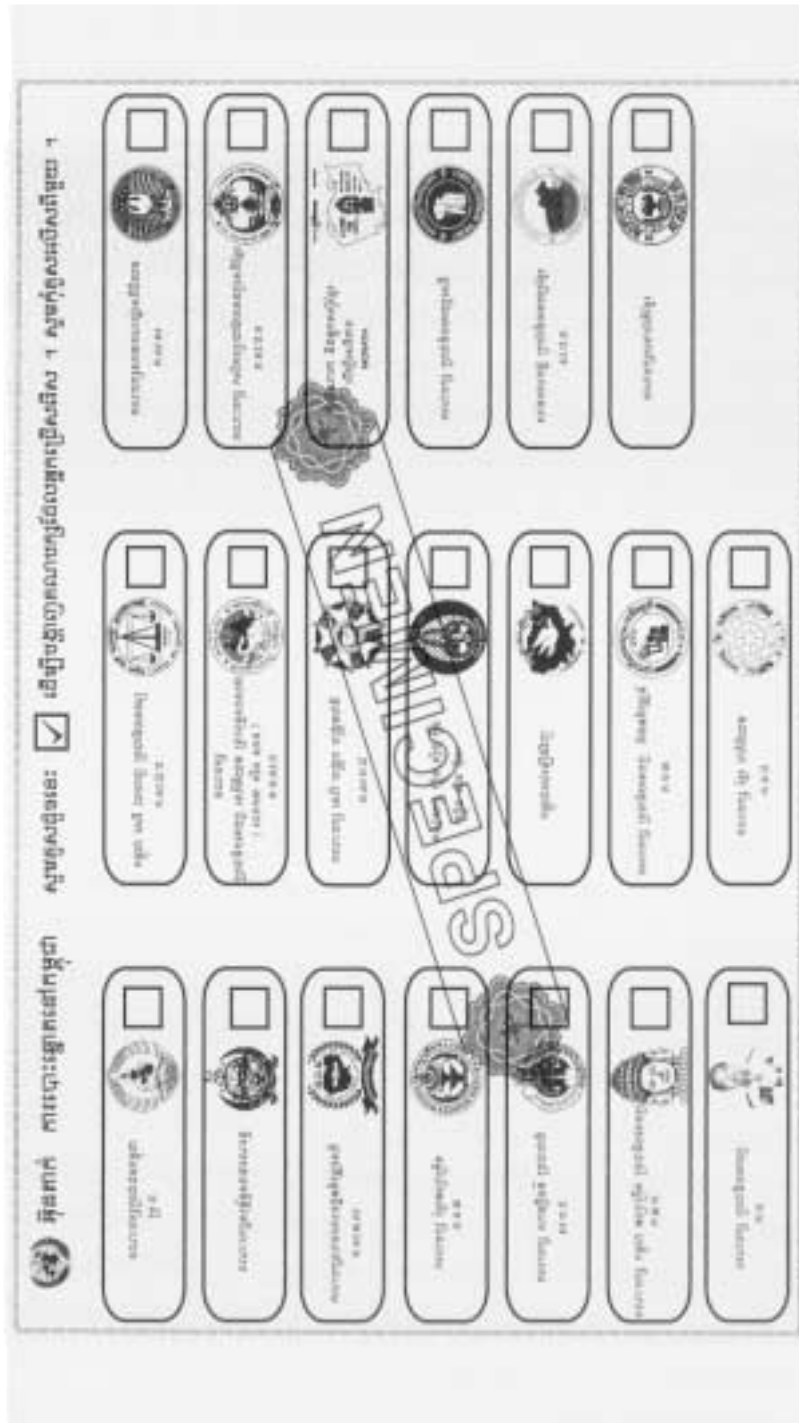


COST AND ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS¹

120. The choice of electoral system has a wide range of administrative consequences, and is ultimately dependent on a nation's logistical capacity to hold elections as well as the amount of money which they are able to spend. While we fully appreciate the constraints such issues have on electoral system choice, we reiterate here the point we made earlier: simply choosing the most straightforward and least expensive system may well be a false economy in the long run, as a dysfunctional electoral system can have a negative impact on a nation's entire political system and its democratic stability. That being said, the choice of electoral system will affect a wide range of administrative issues set out in the following paragraphs.

121. *The Drawing of Electoral Boundaries.* Any single-member district system requires the time-consuming and expensive process of drawing boundaries for relatively small constituencies which are dependent upon issues of population size, cohesiveness, "community of interest" and contiguity. Furthermore, this is rarely a one-off task, as boundaries have to be regularly adjusted to take population changes into account. FPTP, AV, and TRS systems provide the most administrative headaches on this score. The Block Vote, SNTV, Parallel, MMP and STV systems also require electorates to be demarcated, but are somewhat easier to manage because they use multi-member districts, which tend to be fewer and larger. At the other end of the scale, List PR systems are often the cheapest and easiest to administer because they either use one single national

¹ For a more comprehensive discussion of the cost and administration implications of electoral systems and election management, we refer you to the CD-Rom encyclopedia on elections, jointly prepared by International IDEA, the International Foundation for Election Systems (IFES) and the United Nations, available September 1998.



A Cambodian closed list PR ballot paper.

constituency, which means that no boundaries need be drawn at all, or they use very large multi-member districts which dovetail with pre-existing state or provincial boundaries. Transitional elections in Sierra Leone in 1996 had to be conducted under a national List PR system, partly because the country's civil war and the consequent displacement of citizens meant that, even had they wanted to, the electoral authorities did not have the population data necessary to draw smaller single-member districts.

122. *The Registration of Voters.* Voter registration is the most complex, controversial and often least successful part of electoral administration: this was demonstrated by the 1996 Zambian elections, where less than half the voting-age population was registered, despite the efforts of a high-profile registration campaign conducted by a private company. Any system which utilises single-member districts usually requires that all voters must be registered within the boundaries of the district. This means that Parallel and MMP systems join FPTP, AV, and TRS as the most expensive and administratively time-consuming systems in terms of voter registration. The fewer, multi-member districts of the Block Vote, SNTV and STV make the process a little easier, while again large-district List PR systems are the least complicated. The simplicity of regional List PR in this context was a contributing factor in its adoption at Cambodia's UN-sponsored transitional elections in 1993 and at South Africa's first democratic elections in 1994. It should be emphasised, however, that variations in electoral systems have only a minor impact on the often extremely high cost of voter registration.

123. *The Design of Ballot Papers.* Ballot papers should be as friendly as possible to all voters, to maximize participation and reduce spoilt or "invalid" votes. This often entails the use of symbols for parties and candidates, photographs, and colours; a number of interesting ballot paper examples are illustrated in this handbook. FPTP and AV ballot papers are often easiest to print and, in most cases, have a relatively small number of names. TRS ballots are similarly easy, but in many cases new ballots have to be printed for a second round of voting, thus effectively doubling the production cost. Similarly, Parallel and MMP systems usually require the printing of at least two ballots, even though they are both for a single election. SNTV, Block Vote, and STV ballots are slightly more complex than FPTP ones because they will have more candidates, and therefore more symbols and photographs (if these are used). Lastly, List PR ballot papers can span the continuum of complexity. They can be very simple, as in a closed list system, or quite complex (as in a free list system such as Switzerland's).

124. *Voter Education.* Clearly the nature of, and need for, voter education will vary dramatically from society to society, but when it comes to educating voters on how to fill out their ballots, there are identifiable differences between each system. The principles behind voting under preferential systems such as AV or STV are quite complex if they are being used for the first time, and voter education needs to address this issue, particularly if there are compulsory numbering requirements, as is the case in Australia. The same is true of MMP systems: after over 50 years of using MMP, many Germans are still under the misapprehension that both their votes are equal, when the reality is that the second "national PR" vote is the overriding determinant of party strength in parliament (see paragraph 81). By contrast, the principles behind categorical, single-vote systems such as FPTP or SNTV are very easy to understand. The remaining six systems in Table Five fall somewhere in between these two extremes.

125. *The Number and Timing of Elections.* FPTP, AV, Block, SNTV, List PR and STV electoral systems all generally require just one election on one day. However, Parallel and MMP systems essentially mix two (or more) very different electoral systems together, and so have logistical implications for the training of election officials and the way in which people vote. Two-Round Systems are perhaps the most costly and difficult to administer, because they often require the whole electoral process to be re-run a week or a fortnight after the first try.

126. *The Count.* FPTP, SNTV and simple closed-list PR systems are easiest to count, as only one vote total figure for each party or candidate is required to work out the results. The Block Vote requires the polling officials to count a number of votes on a single ballot paper, and Parallel and MMP systems nearly always require the counting of two ballot papers. AV and STV, as preferential systems requiring numbers to be marked on the ballot, are more complex to count, particularly in the case of STV, which requires continual re-calculations of surplus transfer values and the like.

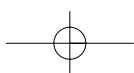
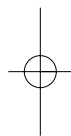
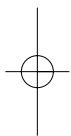
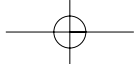
Table Five: Potential Cost & Administration Implications of Nine Electoral Systems

	Boundaries			Registration			Ballots			Education			Number			The Count			TOTAL		
	L	M	H	L	M	H	L	M	H	L	M	H	L	M	H	L	M	H	L	M	H
List PR	☺			☺				☺				☺				☺			4	2	0
FPTP			☹			☹	☺			☺			☺			☺			4	0	2
SNTV		☺			☺			☺			☺					☺			2	4	0
Block		☺			☺			☺			☺					☺			1	5	0
AV			☹			☹	☺				☹		☺			☺			2	1	3
STV		☺			☺			☺				☹		☺				☹	1	3	2
Parallel		☺				☹		☺			☺			☺				☹	0	4	2
MMP		☺				☹		☺			☺			☺				☹	0	3	3
TRS			☹			☹			☺			☺			☹			☺	0	2	4

© International IDEA.

KEY: L = Low impact on cost and administration resources, M = medium impact, H = High impact.

127. The stresses which any electoral system places on a country's administrative capacity will be determined primarily by history, context, experience and resources, but in the abstract Table Five does offer some clues to the potential costs of various systems. If one gives an equal weight to each of the six factors examined in the table (which, it must be said, is unlikely to be the case), then a cursory glance at the totals for each system shows that List PR systems, especially national closed-list systems, are the cheapest to run and require fewest administrative resources. Next come FPTP and SNTV systems, followed by the Block Vote, AV, STV, Parallel systems and MMP. By our reckoning, the system which is most likely to put pressure on any county's administrative capacity is the Two-Round System.



ADVICE FOR ELECTORAL SYSTEM DESIGNERS

128. One of the clearest conclusions to be gleaned from the comparative study of electoral systems is simply the range and utility of the options available. Too often, constitutional drafters simply choose the electoral system they know best – and often, in new democracies, this is the system of the former colonial power if there was one – rather than investigating the most appropriate alternatives. The major purpose of this handbook is to provide some of the knowledge for *informed* decisions to be made. This does not mean we would necessarily advocate wholesale changes to existing electoral systems; in fact, the comparative experience of electoral reform to date suggests that moderate reforms, building on those parts of an existing system which work well, is often a better option than jumping to a completely new and unfamiliar system.

129. There is much to be learned from the experience of others. For example, a country with an FPTP system which wished to move to something more proportional while retaining the geographic link to constituents may wish to consider the experience of New Zealand, which adopted an MMP system in 1993. A similar country which wanted to keep single-member districts but encourage inter-group accommodation and compromise should look at the experience of AV in the Oceania region. Any deeply-divided country wishing to make the transition to democracy would be well advised to consider the case of South Africa's 1994 List-PR elections, and the multi-ethnic power-sharing government elected as a result. Lastly, a country which simply wished to reduce the cost and instability created by a Two-Round System should examine the Sri Lankan or Irish preferential vote option. In all of these cases, the change from one electoral system to another has had a clear impact upon the politics of that country.



130. If we were asked to recommend some guidelines for electoral system designers, the following would all be our advice.

Keep It Simple

131. Effective and sustainable electoral system designs are more likely to be those which can be easily understood by the voter and the politician. Too much complexity can lead to misunderstandings, unintended consequences, and voter mistrust of the results.

Don't be Afraid to Innovate

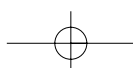
132. Many of the successful electoral systems used in the world today themselves represent innovative approaches to specific problems, and have been proved to work well. There is much to learn from the experience of others.

Pay Attention to Contextual and Temporal Factors

133. Electoral systems do not work in a vacuum. Their success depends upon a happy marriage of political institutions and cultural traditions. The first point of departure for any would-be electoral system designer should be to ask: what is the political and social context that I am working within? The second question might be: am I designing a permanent system or one which needs to get us through a transitional period?

Do Not Underestimate the Electorate

134. While simplicity is important, it is equally dangerous to underestimate the ability of voters to comprehend and successfully use a wide variety of different electoral systems. Complex preferential systems, for example, have been used successfully in developing countries in the Asia-Pacific region (e.g. Papua New Guinea and Sri Lanka), while the experience of many recent elections in new democracies has underlined the important distinction between "functional" literacy and "political" literacy. Even in very poor countries, voters often have, and wish to express, relatively sophisticated orderings of political preferences and choices.



Err on the Side of Inclusion

135. Wherever possible, whether in divided or relatively homogenous societies, the electoral system should produce a parliament which errs on the side of including all significant interests. Regardless of whether minorities are based on ideological, ethnic, racial, linguistic, regional or religious identities, the exclusion of significant shades of opinion from parliaments, particularly in the developing world, has often been catastrophically counter-productive.

Process is a Key Factor in Choice

136. The way in which a particular electoral system is chosen is also extremely important in ensuring its overall legitimacy. A process in which most or all groups are included, including the electorate at large, is likely to result in significantly broader acceptance of the end result than a decision perceived as being motivated by partisan self-interest alone. Although partisan considerations are unavoidable when discussing the choice of electoral systems, broad cross-party and public support for any institution is crucial to it being accepted and respected. The reform of the New Zealand electoral system from FPTP to MMP, for example, was preceded by a series of public plebiscites which served to legitimize the final outcome. By contrast, the French Socialist Government's decision in 1986 to switch from their existing Two-Round System to PR was widely perceived as being motivated by partisan reasons, and was quickly reversed as soon the government lost power in 1988.

Build Legitimacy and Acceptance Among All Key Actors

137. All groupings which wish to play a part in the democratic process should feel that the electoral system to be used is "fair" and gives them the same chance as anyone else to be electorally successful. The paramount aim should be that those who "lose" the election cannot translate their disappointment into a rejection of the system itself, nor use the electoral system as a excuse to destabilize the path of democratic consolidation. In 1990 in Nicaragua, the Sandinistas lost control of the government but they accepted the defeat, in part because they accepted the fairness of the electoral system. And like South Africa, Sierra Leone and Mozambique were able to end their bloody civil wars through institutional arrangements which were broadly acceptable to all sides.

Try to Maximize Voter Influence

138. Voters should feel that elections provide them with a measure of influence over governments and government policy. Choice can be maximized in a number of different ways. Voters may be able to choose between parties, between candidates of different parties, and between candidates of the same party. They might also be able to vote differently when it comes to presidential, upper house, lower house, regional, and local government elections. They should also feel confident that their vote has a genuine impact upon government formation, and not just upon the composition of the parliament alone.

But Balance That Against Encouraging Coherent Political Parties

139. But the desire to maximize voter influence should be balanced against the need to encourage coherent and viable political parties. Maximum voter choice on the ballot paper may produce such a fragmented parliament that nobody ends up with the result they were hoping for. There is widespread agreement among political scientists that broadly-based, coherent political parties are among the most important factors in the promotion of effective and sustainable democracy.

Long-Term Stability and Short-Term Advantage Are Not Always Mutually Compatible

140. When political actors negotiate over a new electoral system they often push proposals which they believe will advantage their party in the coming elections. However, this can often be an unwise strategy, particularly in developing nations, as one party's short-term success or dominance may lead to long-term political breakdown and social unrest. For example, in negotiations prior to the transitional 1994 election, South Africa's African National Congress (ANC) could have reasonably argued for the retention of the existing FPTP electoral system, which would probably have given them, as by far the largest party, a seat bonus over and above their share of the national vote. That they argued for a form of proportional representation, and thus won fewer seats than they could have under FPTP, was a testament to the fact that they saw long-term stability as more desirable than short-term electoral gratification.

141. Similarly, electoral systems need to be responsive enough to react effectively to changing political circumstances and the growth of new political movements. Even in established democracies, support for the major parties is rarely

stable, while politics in new democracies is almost always highly dynamic, and this means that a party which benefits from the electoral arrangements at one election may not necessarily benefit at the next.

Don't Think of the Electoral System as a Panacea for All Ills

142. While it is true that if one wants to change the nature of political competition the electoral system may be the most effective instrument to do so, electoral systems can never be the panacea for the political ills of a country. The overall effects of other variables, particularly a nation's political culture, usually have a much greater impact upon democratic prospects than institutional factors such as electoral systems. Moreover, the positive effects of a well-crafted electoral system can be all too easily submerged by an inappropriate constitutional dispensation, the domestic dominance of forces of discord, or the weight of external threats to the sovereignty of the state.

But Conversely Don't Underestimate its Influence

143. But, while accepting that throughout the world the social constraints on democracy are considerable, such constraints still leave room for conscious political strategies which may further or hamper successful democratization. Electoral systems are not a panacea, but they are central to the structuring of stability in any polity. Deft electoral system engineering may not prevent or eradicate deep enmities, but appropriate institutions can nudge the political system in the direction of reduced conflict and greater governmental accountability. In other words, while most of the changes that can be achieved by tailoring electoral systems are necessarily at the margins, it is often these marginal impacts that make the difference between democracy being consolidated or being undermined.

Be Mindful of the Electorate's Willingness to Embrace Change

144. Electoral system change might seem like a good idea to political insiders who understand the flaws of the existing system, but unless proposals for reform are presented in an appropriate way the public may well reject tinkering with the system, perceiving reform to be nothing more than a case of politicians altering the rules for their own benefit. Most damaging are situations when the change is seen to be a blatant manoeuvre for political gain (as was the case in France in 1986, in Chile in 1989 and in Jordan in 1993), or when the system alters so frequently that the voters do not quite know where they are (as some people have argued is the case in Bolivia).

Avoid Being a Slave to Past Systems

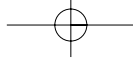
145. Nevertheless, all too often electoral systems inappropriate to a new democracy's needs have been inherited or carried over from colonial times without any thought as to how they will work within the new political realities. Almost all the former British colonies in Asia, Africa and the Pacific, for example, adopted FPTP systems. In many of these new democracies, particularly those facing ethnic divisions, this system proved utterly inappropriate to their needs. It has been similarly argued that many of the former French colonies in West Africa who retained the use of the francophone TRS system (such as Mali in 1992) suffered damaging polarization as a result. Similarly, many post-communist regimes continue to utilize mandatory turnout or majority requirements inherited from the Soviet era (see the Ukraine case study on page 48). One of the fascinating things about the map which comes with this handbook is that in many ways it mirrors a colonial map of a hundred years ago, with many former British colonies using FPTP, those nations under French influence using Two-Round systems, and the former Belgian and Dutch colonies often opting for a version of the List-PR systems used in continental Europe.

Assess the Likely Impact of Any New System on Societal Conflict

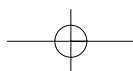
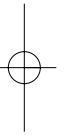
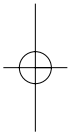
146. As we noted at the very start of this handbook, electoral systems can be seen not only as mechanisms for choosing parliaments and presidents, but also as a tool of conflict management within a society. Some systems, in some circumstances, will encourage parties to make inclusive appeals for support outside their own core support base. Unfortunately, it is more often the case in the world today that the presence of inappropriate electoral systems serve actually to exacerbate negative tendencies which already exist; for example, by encouraging parties to see elections as "zero-sum" contests and thus to act in a hostile and exclusionary manner to anyone outside their home group. When designing any political institution, the bottom line is that even if it does not help to reduce tensions within society, it should, at the very least, not make matters worse.

Try and Imagine Unusual or Unlikely Contingencies

147. Too often, electoral systems are designed to avoid the mistakes of the past, especially the immediate past. Care should be taken in doing so not to overreact and create a system that goes too far in terms of correcting previous problems. Furthermore, electoral system designers would do well to pose themsel-



ves some unusual questions to avoid embarrassment in the long run: What if nobody wins under the system proposed? Is it possible that one party could win all the seats? What if you have to award more seats than you have places in the legislature? What do you do if candidates tie? Might the system mean that, in some districts, it is better for a party supporter not to vote for their preferred party or candidate?



OFFICIAL MARK 00000

YOU HAVE 2 VOTES

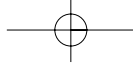
PARTY VOTE

ELECTORATE VOTE

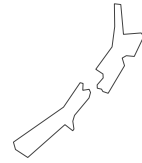
<p>Explanation This vote decides the share of seats which each of the parties listed below will have in Parliament. Vote by putting a tick in the circle immediately after the party you choose.</p> <p>Vote for only one party</p>	<p>Explanation This vote decides the candidate who will be elected Member of Parliament for the TAUPO ELECTORATE. Vote by putting a tick in the circle immediately before the candidate you choose.</p> <p>Vote for only one candidate</p>																																																																																																																														
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First Directions
 1. If you spoil this ballot paper, return it to the officer who issued it and apply for a new ballot paper.
 2. After voting, fold this ballot paper so that its contents cannot be seen and place it in the ballot box.
 3. You must not take this ballot paper out of the polling booth.

A New Zealand Mixed Member Proportional ballot paper.



NEW ZEALAND: A Long-Established Westminster Democracy Switches to PR



Nigel Roberts

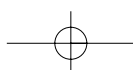
New Zealand recently changed its electoral system. In 1993, the country voted to discard the First Past the Post (FPTP) voting system it had used for over a century in favour of proportional representation. Two things stand out from this move.

In the first place, some 20 years ago, it was thought highly unlikely that New Zealand, of all countries, would change its electoral system. Second, the change can be regarded as a good example of how to move from one voting system to another. It was done only after a great deal of research, debate, and public consultation. Most experts on electoral reform would agree that major electoral reforms should not be undertaken lightly, and the move to PR in New Zealand was certainly not undertaken lightly.

New Zealand has long been accorded something of a special status among the world's democracies as one of the "purest" examples of the Westminster model of government, a model of virtually unrestrained executive authority with an electoral system which in some ways was "more British than Britain". For many years it produced quintessential Westminster parliaments, with single-party governments and a relatively stable party system. Nevertheless, public disquiet about the effects of FPTP surfaced in New Zealand after the 1978 and the 1981 parliamentary elections. On both occasions, the opposition Labour Party won more votes throughout the country as a whole than the incumbent National Party government, but in both elections the National Party won a majority of seats in Parliament and thus stayed in power. Furthermore, in both 1978 and 1981, the then third party in New Zealand politics, Social Credit, won a fairly large share of the popular vote – 16% in 1978, and more than 20% in 1981, but – not unusual for FPTP systems – it won very few seats in the New Zealand Parliament, one and two seats respectively, in a House of Representatives of more than 90 members.

When it gained office in 1984, the Labour Party established a Royal Commission on the Electoral System to consider "whether all or a specified number or proportion of Members of Parliament should be elected under an alternative system ... such as proportional representation or preferential voting".

The Royal Commission on the Electoral System sat for most of 1985 and 1986 before releasing a long and detailed report in which it defined 10 criteria for testing both FPTP and other voting systems. These were: fairness between political parties, effective representation of minority and special interest groups, effective Maori representation (the Maori being New Zealand's indigenous ethnic minority), political integ-



ration, effective representation of constituents, effective voter participation, effective government, effective parliament, effective parties, and legitimacy. At the same time, however, the Royal Commission stressed that "no voting system can fully meet the ideal standards set by the criteria", and pointed out that the criteria were not all of equal weight.

The Royal Commission proposed that New Zealand adopt a system of proportional representation similar to that used in Germany; the Mixed Member Proportional system, or MMP. Electors have two votes, one for a political party, and one for a local candidate elected by FPTP in single-member districts. As in Germany, but contrary to the situation in Japan and Russia, the party vote is paramount in the New Zealand system, because the party vote determines the overall number of seats parties are entitled to in Parliament. For example, if a political party wins 25% of the party votes in an election, it will qualify for 30 (25%) of the 120 seats in Parliament. If the party has already won 23 local district (or constituency) seats, then its complement of seats in the House of Representatives is topped up by giving it seven additional seats, and those seven seats will be allocated to the first seven eligible people on the party's rank-ordered list of nominated candidates. Likewise, a party with 25% of the party votes but only two district MPs will be awarded an additional 28 seats from its party-list to bring its total number of seats in Parliament up to 30 as well.

In view of the fact that New Zealand had used an FPTP voting system for more than 100 years, the Royal Commission on the Electoral System rejected the Single Transferable Vote (STV) system of proportional representation, both because MMP "retains single-member constituencies" and because the results of an MMP election were "likely to be more closely proportional" than those under STV. The Commission also recommended that a referendum should be held on the adoption of the MMP system, and despite the fact that a select committee of the New Zealand Parliament disagreed with the Royal Commission's recommendations, political pressure eventually led to two referendums on electoral reform.

The first referendum, held in September 1992, was not binding, but an indicative plebiscite. However, voters so overwhelmingly favoured both changing the electoral system and MMP that a second – and binding – poll was held 14 months later. The second referendum was a straight choice between the FPTP and the MMP electoral systems, and MMP won 53.9% of the referendum votes.

To ensure that the official publicity campaigns for the electoral reform referendums were conducted with "political impartiality, ... balance and neutrality", the Minister of Justice went so far as to appoint an independent Electoral Referendum Panel, at arm's length from politicians and public servants, in both 1992 and 1993. On each occasion, the panel was headed by the country's Chief Ombudsman and had a substantial budget for the task of informing voters about the mechanics – and, in

effect, the advantages and the disadvantages – of the different options under consideration in each of the referendums.

New Zealand's last FPTP election was held on 6 November 1993, on the same day as the referendum in which voters adopted MMP as the country's new electoral system. Just under three years later, New Zealand held its first MMP election, on 12 October 1996. The results of the 1996 election demonstrate that MMP has lived up to many of the expectations of the Royal Commission which recommended it.

Six parties are represented in the new Parliament, each in close accord with the share of the votes it won throughout the country as a whole; the system is highly proportional. There are now 15 Maori in the House of Representatives, and Maori are represented in the New Zealand Parliament in rough proportion to their numbers in the population as a whole. The same is true of Pacific Islanders, and the country's first PR election also saw the election of the country's first Asian MP. In addition, the overall proportion of women in Parliament rose from 21% in 1993 to 29% in 1996.

There is also clear evidence that voters grasped how to use the new voting system in their own best interests. A pre-election survey found that 38% of electors intended to differentiate between their party and their local constituency or district votes; by way of comparison, only about 15% of German voters split their tickets. Furthermore, voter turnout in New Zealand was even higher in 1996 than it had been in either 1990 or 1993.

In 1986, the Report of the Royal Commission on the Electoral System had stressed that an "electoral system should allow Governments ... to meet their responsibilities. Governments should have the ability to act decisively when that is appropriate, and there should be reasonable continuity and stability both within and between Governments". Time alone will tell whether New Zealand's new electoral system fulfils the demands of this criterion. There was some criticism that it took two months after the 1996 general election for a new government to be sworn in. The new government is a coalition of two parties – National and New Zealand First – that control a bare majority (61 seats) in the 120-member House of Representatives. Nevertheless, New Zealand voters would not have been too surprised by this. For example, the 1992 Electoral Referendum Panel pointed out that under MMP "minor parties are likely to be represented in Parliament", and that as a result "coalitions or agreements between parties may be needed to form governments". The following year the Electoral Referendum Panel reiterated that "coalition governments are more likely under MMP. This is because the MMP system results in a Parliament that reflects each party's share of the nationwide party vote. Having several parties in Parliament makes it more likely that there will be no one party with a majority of seats in Parliament." This is precisely what happened in New Zealand in 1996.

