Electoral Engineering

Voting Rules and Political Behavior

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The chapter breaks down the predominant ethnic majority and minority populations in the countries under comparison and tests the central propositions about the effects of electoral systems on differences in minority–majority support for the political system.

Chapter 10 analyzes the impact of constituency service. Rational-choice institutionalism suggests that elected representatives are more likely to be responsive and accountable to electors, offering particularistic benefits to cultivate a personal vote, where they are elected directly using candidate-ballots. One classic argument for First-Past-the-Post is that single-member territorial districts allow citizens to hold individual representatives, not just parties, to account for their actions (or inactions). It is argued that this provides an incentive for constituency service, maintains the representative's independence from the party leadership, and ensures that representatives serve the needs and concerns of all their local constituents, not just party stalwarts. Candidates can also be expected to emphasize personalistic appeals under preference-ballots. These are used in multimember constituencies where candidates compete with others within their own party for votes, exemplified by the Single Transferable Vote in Ireland, the Single Non-Transferable Vote used for two-thirds of the districts in Taiwan, and the use of open-list PR where voters can prioritize candidates within each party, such as in Belgium, Peru, and Denmark.[77] By contrast, party labels and programmatic benefits are likely to be given greater emphasis in campaigns where there are party-ballots, such as in Israel or Portugal, because all candidates on the party ticket sink or swim together. This chapter examines whether there is good evidence supporting the claim that citizens living under candidate-ballot and preference-ballot systems generally know more about parliamentary candidates and have more contact with elected representatives – and can, therefore, hold them to account more effectively – than those living under party-ballot systems.

Finally, Chapter 11 recapitulates the theoretical arguments and summarizes the major findings documented throughout the book. The conclusion considers the implications for understanding the impact of electoral rules on voting choices and political representation, the lessons for the process of electoral engineering, and the consequences for the democratization process worldwide.

2

Classifying Electoral Systems

Before we can examine the impact of rules on voting behavior and political representation, I first need to outline a typology of the main families of electoral systems and classify their subtypes. The most important institutions influencing electoral rules can be divided into three nested components, ranging from the most diffuse to the most specific levels.

- The *constitutional structure* represents the broadest institutional context, denoted, most importantly, by whether the executive is presidential or parliamentary, whether the national legislature is bicameral or unicameral, and whether power is centralized in unitary government or more widely dispersed through federal arrangements.
- The *electoral system* concerns multiple aspects of electoral law, and the most basic features involve the *ballot structure*, determining how voters can express their choices, the *electoral threshold*, or the minimum votes needed by a party to secure representation, the *electoral formula*, determining how votes are counted to allocate seats, and the *district magnitude*, referring to the number of seats per district. Electoral systems are categorized in this study into three primary families: majoritarian, combined, and proportional, each with many subsidiary types.
- Last, *electoral procedures* concern more detailed rules, codes of conduct, and official guidelines, including practical and technical issues that can also prove important to the outcome, such as the distribution of polling places, rules governing the nomination procedure for candidates, the qualifications for citizenship, facilities for voter registration and for casting a ballot, the design of the ballot paper, procedures for scrutiny of the election results, the use of compulsory voting, the process of boundary revisions, and regulations governing campaign finance and election broadcasting.

The constitutional structure is important obviously because it sets the institutional context for many aspects of political behavior, but systematic comparison of all these features is also well beyond the scope of this

limited study.[1] I focus instead upon classifying electoral systems used in all independent nation-states around the globe, to examine their distribution worldwide. In subsequent chapters I consider specific electoral procedures and legal rules in more detail, such as the use of statutory gender quotas on women's representation or the impact of voting facilities on turnout. The way that electoral rules work is illustrated by examples from the countries under comparison in the CSES study. Electoral systems can be compared at every level of office – presidential, parliamentary, supranational and subnational – but to compare like with like, I focus here on national elections, including systems used for parliamentary elections for the lower house and for presidential contests.

The Classification of Electoral Systems

Ever since the seminal work of Maurice Duverger (1954) and Douglas Rae (1967), a flourishing literature has classified the main types of electoral systems and sought to analyze their consequences.[2] Any classification needs to strike a difficult balance, being detailed enough to reflect subtle and nuanced differences between systems, which can be almost infinitely varied, while also being sufficiently parsimonious and clear so as to distinguish the major types that are actually used around the globe. Worldwide, excluding dependent territories, we can compare the electoral systems for the lower house of parliament in 191 independent nation-states. Of these nations, seven authoritarian regimes currently lack a working, directly elected parliament, including Saudi Arabia, Brunei, and Libya. Electoral systems in the remaining countries are classified into three major families (see Figure 2.1), each including a number of subcategories: *majoritarian* formulae (including First-Past-the-Post, Second Ballot, the Bloc Vote, Single Non-Transferable Vote, and the Alternative Vote systems);[3] *combined* systems (incorporating both majoritarian and proportional formulae); and *proportional* formulae (including the Party Lists system as well as the Single Transferable Vote system).

The comparison in Figure 2.1 shows that in elections to the lower house, about half of all countries worldwide use majoritarian formulae, whereas one-third use proportional formulae and the remainder employ combined systems. As discussed earlier, electoral systems vary according to a number of key dimensions; the most important concern the electoral formula, ballot structure, effective threshold, district magnitude, malapportionment, assembly size, and the use of open/closed lists. Within the family of proportional systems, for example, in Israel the combination of a single national constituency and a low minimum vote threshold allows the election of far more parties than in Poland, which has a 7% threshold and small electoral districts. Moreover, electoral laws and administrative procedures, broadly defined, regulate campaigns in numerous ways beyond the basic electoral formulae, from the administration of voting facilities to the provision of

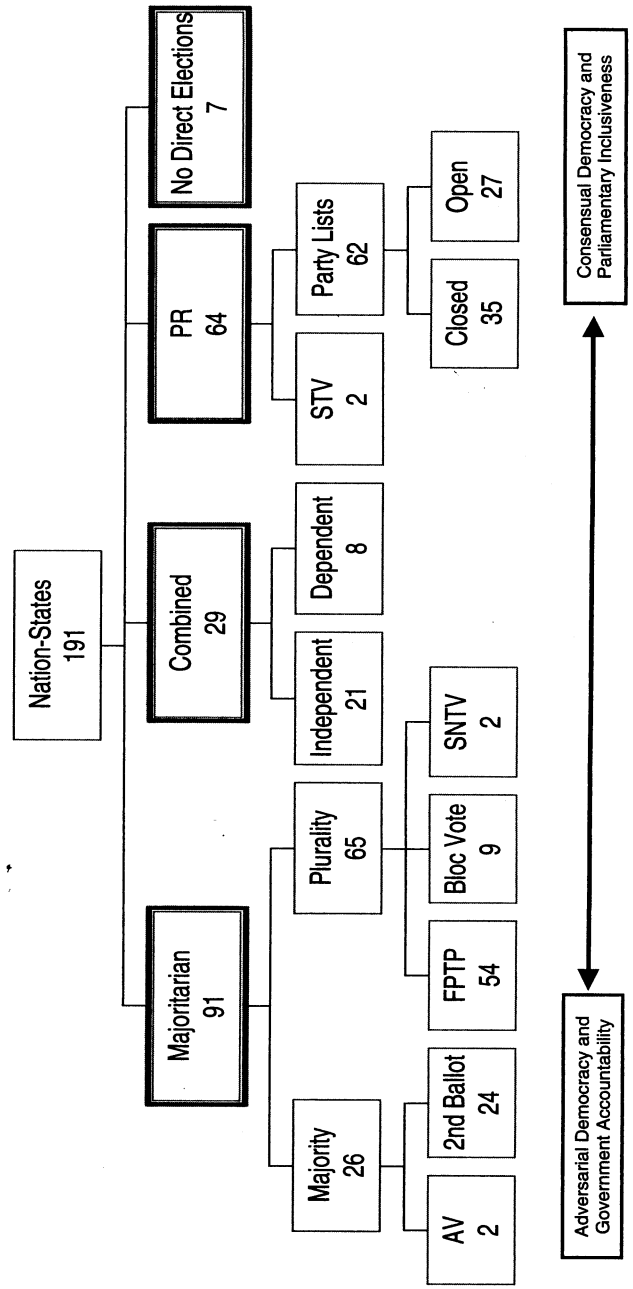

FIGURE 2.1. Electoral systems used worldwide for the lower house of parliament, 1997. *Notes:* FPTP = First-Past-the-Post; 2nd Ballot; Bloc Vote; AV = Alternative Vote; SNTV = Single Non-Transferable Vote; STV = Single Transferable Vote. Systems were classified in May 1997 based on Appendix A in Andrew Reynolds and Ben Reilly, Eds. *The International IDEA Handbook of Electoral System Design.* Stockholm: International IDEA. For more details see http://www.aceproject.org/.

political broadcasts, the rules of campaign funding, the drawing of constituency boundaries, the citizenship qualifications for the franchise, and the legal requirements for candidate nomination.

Majoritarian Formulae

Worldwide, in total, 91 out of 191 countries use majoritarian formulae in national election to the lower house of parliament. The aim of majoritarian electoral systems is to create a "natural" or a "manufactured" majority, that is, to produce an effective one-party government with a working parliamentary majority while simultaneously penalizing minor parties, especially those with spatially dispersed support. In "winner-takes-all" elections, the leading party boosts its legislative base, while the trailing parties get meager rewards. The design aims to concentrate legislative power in the hands of a single-party government, not to generate parliamentary representation of all minority views. This category of electoral systems can be subdivided into those where the winner needs to achieve a simple plurality of votes or those where they need to gain an absolute majority of votes (50%+).

Plurality Elections

The system of First-Past-the-Post or single-member plurality elections is used for election to the lower chamber in fifty-four countries worldwide, including the United Kingdom, Canada, India, the United States, and many Commonwealth states. This is the oldest electoral system, dating back at least to the twelfth century, and it is also the simplest. Plurality electoral systems can also use multimember constituencies; for example, some dual-member seats persisted in Britain until 1948. As discussed later, the Bloc Vote continues to be employed in nine nations, such as Bermuda and Laos, using multimember districts with plurality thresholds. But today First-Past-the-Post elections for the lower house at Westminster are all based on single-member districts with candidate-ballots. The basic system of how FPTP works in parliamentary general elections is widely familiar: countries are divided into territorial single-member constituencies; voters within each constituency cast a single ballot (marked by an "X") for one candidate (see Figure 2.2); the candidate with the largest share of the vote in each seat is elected; and, in turn, the party with the largest number of parliamentary seats forms the government. Under First-Past-the-Post candidates usually do not need to pass a minimum threshold of votes to be elected,[4] nor do they require an absolute majority of votes to be elected. Instead, all they need is a simple plurality, that is, one more vote than their closest rivals. Hence, in seats where the vote splits almost equally three ways, the winning candidate may have only 35% of the vote, while the other contestants fail with 34% and 32%, respectively. Although two-thirds of all voters supported other candidates, the plurality of votes is decisive.

VOTE FOR ONE CANDIDATE ONLY

1	**COTTIER** Barbara Elizabeth Cottier, 11 Twines Close, Sparkford, Yeovil, Somerset. BA22 7JW Conservative Party Candidate	
2	**GRAHAM** Leona Alice-Mae Graham, The Coach House, Hornblotton House, Hornblotton, Nr. Shepton Mallet, Somerset. BA4 6SB Green Party	
3	**MAYER** Theodor Mayer, Forty Acres Farm, Soth Barrow, Yeovil, Somerset. BA22 7LE Independent	
4	**WINCHILSEA** Shirley Winchilsea, South Cadbury House, Nr. Yeovil, Somerset. BA22 7HA Liberal Democrat	

FIGURE 2.2. An example of the First-Past-the-Post (FPTP) ballot in the U.K. general election

Under this system, the party share of parliamentary seats, not their share of the popular vote, counts for the formation of government. Government may also be elected without a plurality of votes, so long as it has a parliamentary majority. In 1951, for instance, the British Conservative Party was returned to power with a 16-seat majority in parliament based on 48.0% of the popular vote, although Labour won slightly more (48.8%) of the vote. In February 1974 the reverse pattern occurred: the Conservatives gained a slightly higher share of the national vote, but Labour won more seats and formed the government. Another example is the 2000 U.S. presidential contest, where, across the whole country, out of more than 100 million votes

cast, the result gave Gore a lead of 357,852 in the popular vote, or 0.4%, but Bush beat Gore by 271 to 267 votes in the Electoral College. Moreover, under FPTP, governments are commonly returned without a *majority* of votes. No governing party in the United Kingdom has won as much as half the popular vote since 1935. For instance, in 1983 Mrs. Thatcher was returned with a landslide of seats, producing a substantial parliamentary majority of 144, yet with the support of less than a third of the total electorate (30.8%).

One of the best-known features of winner-takes-all elections is that they create high thresholds for minor parties with support that is spatially dispersed across many constituencies. In single-member seats, if the candidates standing for the minor parties frequently place second, third, or fourth, then even though these parties may obtain substantial support across the whole country, nevertheless, they will fail to win a share of seats that in any way reflects their share of the national vote. This characteristic is the basis of Maurice Duverger's well-known assertion that the "simple-majority single ballot system favors the two party system" whereas "both the simple-majority system with second ballot and proportional representation favor multi-partyism."[5] As discussed fully in the next chapter, the accuracy of these claims has attracted much debate in the literature.[6] One important qualification to these generalizations is the recognition that FPTP is based on territorial constituencies, and the geographical distribution of votes is critical to the outcome for minor parties and for minority social groups.[7] Green parties, for example, which usually have shallow support spread evenly across multiple constituencies, do far less well under FPTP than do nationalist parties with support concentrated in a few areas. Hence, for example, in the 1993 Canadian elections the Progressive Conservatives won 16.1% of the vote but suffered a chronic meltdown that reduced their parliamentary representation to only 2 MPs. In contrast, the Bloc Québécois, concentrated in one region, won 18.1% of the vote but returned a solid phalanx of fifty-four MPs. In the same election, the New Democratic Party won even fewer votes (6.6%), but they emerged with nine MPs, far more than the Progressive Conservatives.[8] In a similar way, in the United States, ethnic groups with concentrated support, such as African-American or Latino voters in inner-city urban areas, can get more representatives into the U.S. Congress than do groups such as Korean-Americans, who are widely dispersed across multiple legislative districts.[9]

Malapportionment (producing constituencies containing differently sized electorates) and gerrymandering (the intentional drawing of electoral boundaries for partisan advantage) can both exacerbate partisan biases in constituency boundaries, but electoral geography is also a large part of the cause. Single-member constituencies usually contain roughly equal numbers of the electorate; for example, the United States is divided into 435 congressional districts, each including roughly equal populations, with one House representative per district. Boundaries are reviewed at periodic intervals, based

on the census, to equalize the electorate. Yet the number of electors per constituency can vary substantially within nations, where boundary commissions take account of "natural" communities, where census information is incomplete or flawed, or where periodic boundary reviews fail to keep up with periods of rapid migration. There are also substantial differences cross-nationally: India, for example, has 545 representatives for a population of 898 million, so that each MP serves about 1.6 million people. By contrast, Ireland has 166 members in the Dial for a population of 3.5 million, or one seat per 21,000 people. The geographic size of constituencies also varies a great deal within countries, from small, densely packed inner-city seats to sprawling and more remote rural areas.

The way that FPTP systems work in practice can be understood most clearly with illustrations from the elections compared in the CSES surveys, including the 1997 British general election, the 1997 Canadian election, and the 1996 United States presidential and congressional elections.[10] Although all Anglo-American democracies, important differences in how these systems operate include variations in the number of parties contesting elections, the size of the legislatures, the number of electors per district, the dominant types of social cleavages in the electorate, the geographic distribution of voters, the regulations governing campaign finance and party election broadcasts, and the maximum number of years between elections.

The system of FPTP used for Westminster elections to the British House of Commons generally produces a manufactured "winner's bonus," exaggerating the proportion of seats won by the party in first place compared with their proportion of votes. For proponents of plurality elections, this bias is a virtue because it can guarantee a decisive outcome at Westminster, and a workable parliamentary majority, even in a close contest in the electorate.[11] One simple and intuitive way to capture the size of the winner's bonus produced by any electoral system is to divide the proportion of votes into the proportion of seats. A ratio of 1:1 would suggest no bias at all. But in contrast, the size of the bias in the winner's bonus at Westminster has fluctuated over time but has also gradually risen since the 1950s until the 1997 election, when the winner's bonus was the second highest ever recorded in the postwar era (only surpassed by the 2001 election). This phenomenon is the product of three factors: the geographical spread of party support in Britain, the effects of anti-Conservative tactical voting, and disparities in the size of constituency electorates.[12] The 1997 British general election witnessed one of the most dramatic results in British postwar history, where eighteen years of Conservative government under Margaret Thatcher and then John Major were replaced by the Labour landslide of seats under the prime ministerial leadership of Tony Blair. The United Kingdom is divided into 659 single-member parliamentary constituencies where voters cast a single ballot and MPs are elected on a simple plurality of votes. At Westminster, the party share of parliamentary seats, not their share of the popular vote, counts

for the formation of the government. Under FPTP, British governments are commonly elected with less than a majority of votes; in 1997 Tony Blair was returned with almost two-thirds of the House of Commons, and a massive parliamentary majority of 179 out of 659 seats, based on 43.3% of the U.K. vote. As the party in first place, Labour enjoyed a seats-to-votes ratio of 1.47 whereas in contrast, with 30.7% of the vote, the Conservatives gained only 25% of all seats, producing a seats-to-votes ratio of 0.81.

The U.S. system is also based on FPTP in single-member districts for multiple offices including congressional races for the House and Senate, and the system of the Electoral College used for presidential contests. The ballot paper presents the voter with more complex choices than in Britain due to multi-level elections, as shown by Figure 2.3, as well as due to the use of referenda and initiatives in many states and the sheer frequency of primary, congressional, and presidential elections. The winner's bonus under majoritarian systems is also exemplified by the outcome of the 1996 U.S. presidential election pitting the incumbent, President Bill Clinton, against the Republican nominee, Senator Bob Dole; in this contest President Clinton was returned with 70.4% of the Electoral College vote, mainly by winning the largest states, but this substantial lead was based on only 50.1% of the popular vote across the whole country. In 1996 the congressional results for the 435-seat House of Representatives was highly proportional, however, because FPTP leads to proportional results in two-party systems when the vote totals of the two parties are fairly close. Roughly in accordance with the "cube" law, disproportionality increases as the vote totals diverge.

The 1997 Canadian federal election saw at least a partial consolidation of the multiparty system that had developed so dramatically with the emergence of two new parties, the Bloc Québécois and Reform, during the 1993 contest. The result of the 1997 Canadian election saw the return of the Liberals under the leadership of Jean Chrétien, although with a sharply reduced majority of only four seats and with 38% of the popular vote.[13] The Bloc Québécois lost its status as the official opposition, dropping from fifty-four to forty-four seats after a sharp decline in support. By contrast, the Reform party moved into second place in the House of Commons, with sixty seats, although with its strongest base in the West. Both the Progressive Conservatives and the New Democratic Party improved their positions after their disastrous results in 1993. The level of proportionality in the Canadian system was similar to that found in the British general election, with the Liberal Party and the Bloc Québécois enjoying the highest votes-to-seats bonus, and both countries had far lower proportionality than the United States. The existence of a multiparty system within plurality elections could be expected to lead to stronger calls for electoral reform by moving toward a proportional or combined formula, but the regional basis of party competition allows minor parties to be elected to parliament despite the hurdles created by the Canadian electoral system.[14]

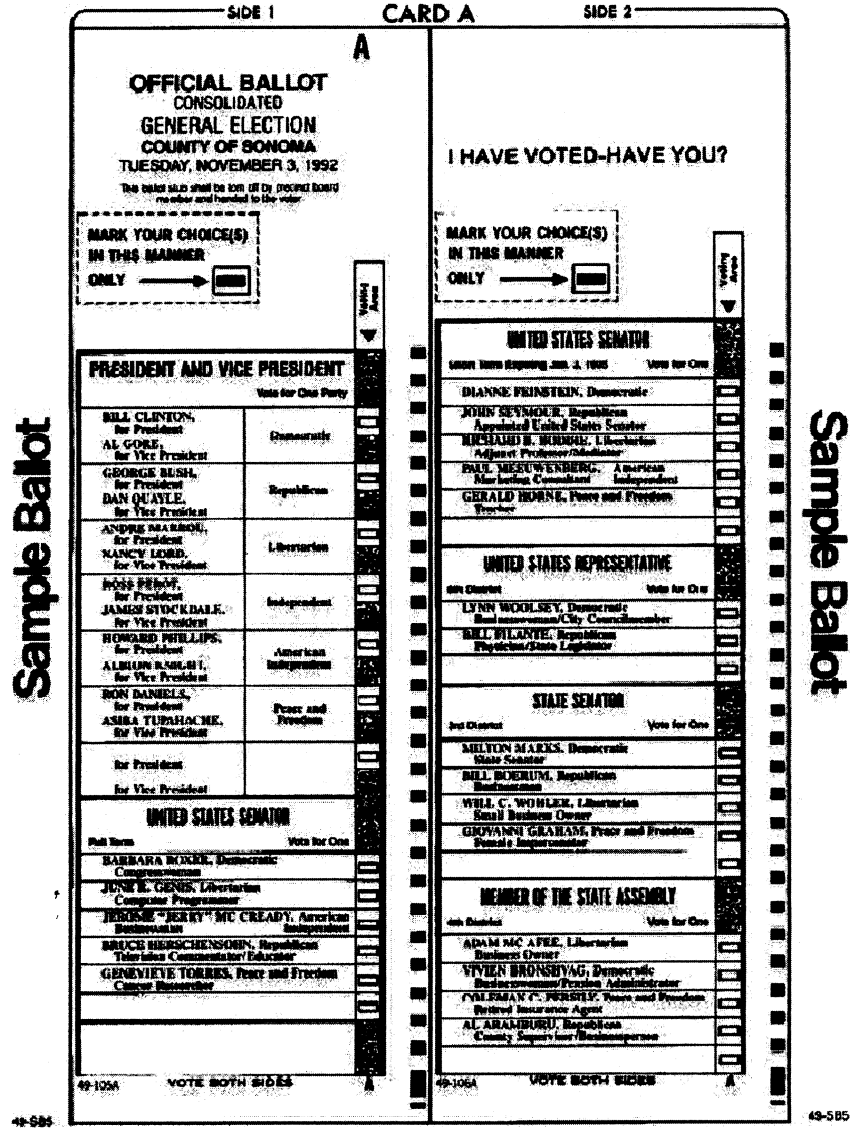

FIGURE 2.3. An example of First-Past-the-Post (FPTP) ballot with multiple offices for the U.S. General Election: Sonoma County, California

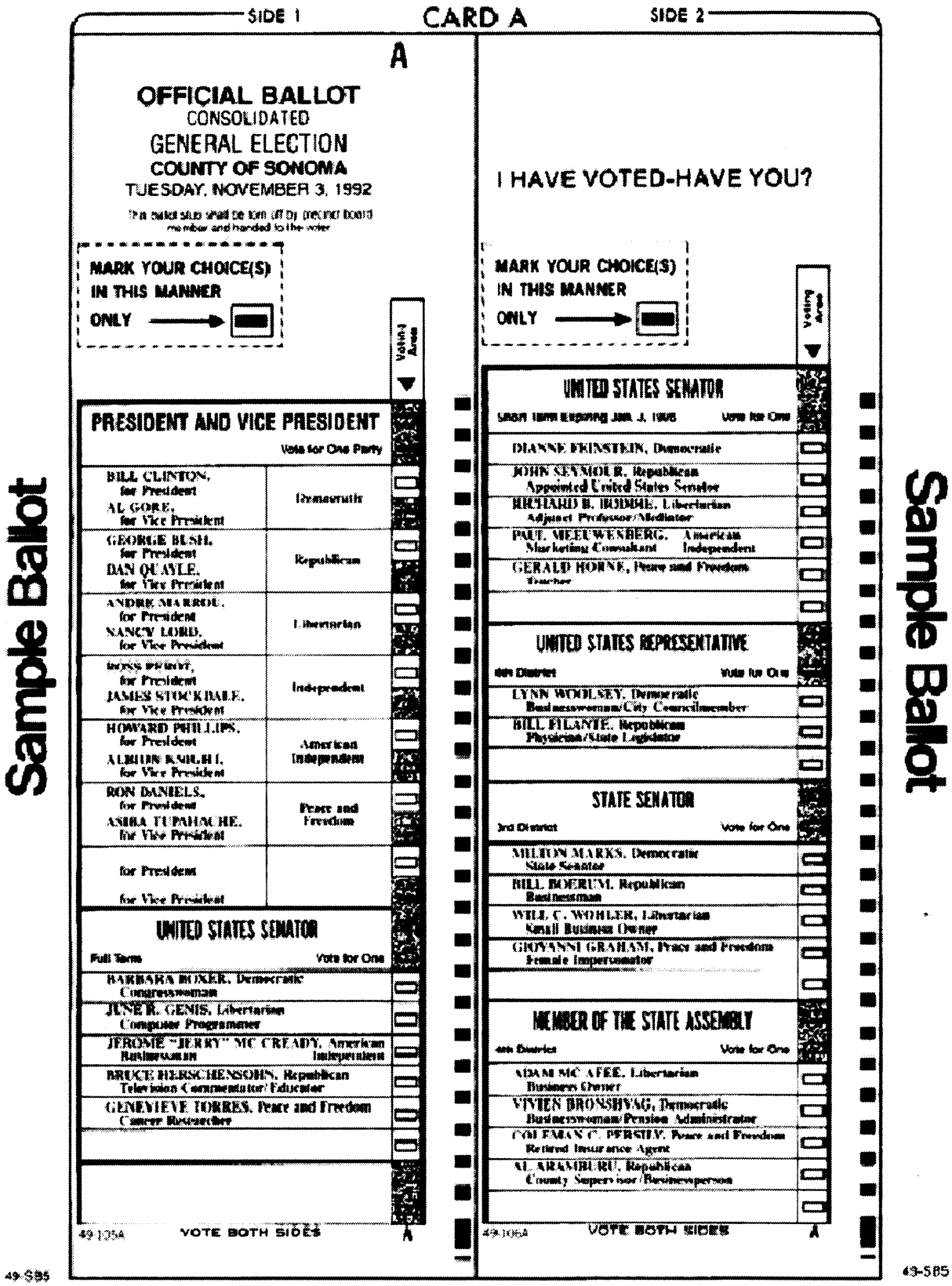

FIGURE 2.3. An example of First-Past-the-Post (FPTP) ballot with multiple offices for the U.S. General Election: Sonoma County, California

The Single Non-Transferable Vote, the Cumulative Vote, the Limited Vote, and the Bloc Vote

Many other variants on the majoritarian formula are available. From 1948 to 1993, Japanese voters used the Single Non-Transferable Vote for the lower house of the Diet, where each citizen casts a single vote in small multimember districts. Multiple candidates from the same party compete with each other for support within each district. Those candidates with the highest vote totals (a simple plurality) are elected. Under these rules, parties need to consider how many candidates to nominate strategically in each district, and how to make sure that their supporters spread their votes across all their candidates. The system has been classified as "semi-proportional" (Reynolds and Reilly), or even "proportional" (Sartori), but it seems preferable to regard this as a variation of the majoritarian family because candidates need a simple plurality of votes in their districts to be elected, and there is no quota or requirement for proportionality across districts. The system continues to be employed for parliamentary elections in Jordan and Vanuatu, as well as for two-thirds of the legislators in the Taiwanese elections under comparison (see the "Combined Systems" section in this chapter).[15] Other alternatives that fall within the majoritarian category, although not employed at national level for the lower house, include the Cumulative Vote, where citizens are given as many votes as representatives and where votes can be cumulated on a single candidate (used in dual-member seats in nineteenth-century Britain, where voters could "plump" both votes for one candidate, and in the state of Illinois in the United States until 1980). The Limited Vote system is similar, but citizens are given fewer votes than the number of members to be elected (used in elections to the Spanish Senate). The Bloc Vote system is similar to FPTP but with multimember 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. The candidates winning a simple plurality of votes in each constituency win office. This system has been used for national parliamentary elections in nine countries, including Laos, Thailand, and Mauritius. Such contests allow citizens to prioritize particular candidates within parties, as well as maintain the link between representatives and local communities. On the other hand, where electors cast all their votes for a single party rather than distinguishing among candidates for different parties, this can exaggerate the disproportionality of the results and give an overwhelming parliamentary majority to the leading party.

Second Ballot Elections

Other systems use alternative mechanisms to ensure that the winning candidate gets an overall majority of votes. Second Ballot systems (also known as runoff elections) are used in two-dozen nations worldwide for election to the lower house. In these, any candidate obtaining an absolute majority of votes (50% or more) in the first round is declared elected. If no candidate

reaches a majority in this stage of the process, a second round of elections is held between the two candidates with the highest share of the vote. The traditional way that this process is understood is that the first vote is regarded as largely expressive or sincere (voting with the heart), whereas the second is regarded as the more decisive ballot between the major contenders, where strategic considerations and alliances among left and right party blocs come into stronger play (voting "with the head"). In the countries under comparison, the Second Ballot system was employed for two-thirds of the seats in the Lithuanian combined system, as well as in seven of the presidential elections. Runoff elections are most common in presidential elections, but they are also used for elections to the lower house in France, in eleven ex-French colonies (including Chad, Haiti, Mali, and Gabon), in seven authoritarian ex-Soviet Eastern European states (such as Belarus, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan), and in some unreconstructed Communist states (Cuba and North Korea), as well as in the U.S. state of Louisiana. This system can be seen as encouraging centrist party competition, as well as bolstering the legitimacy of the eventual winner by ensuring that they receive the support of at least half the public. On the other hand, the rules harshly penalize minor parties, and the need for citizens to go to the polls on at least two occasions in rapid succession can induce voter fatigue, thereby depressing turnout. This phenomenon was exemplified by the May–June 2002 French elections where voters were called to the polls four times following nonconcurrent presidential and parliamentary elections.

Alternative Vote

The Alternative Vote, used in elections to the Australian House of Representatives and in Ireland for presidential elections and by-elections, is also majoritarian. This system, or "preferential voting" as it is commonly known in Australia, was introduced for Australian federal elections in 1919 and is now employed in all states except Tasmania, which uses STV.[16] Australia is divided into 148 single-member constituencies. Instead of a simple "X" on the ballot paper, voters rank their preferences among candidate (1,2,3 . . .) (see Figure 2.4). To win, candidates need an absolute majority of votes. Where no one candidate wins more than 50% after first preferences are counted, then the candidate with the least votes is eliminated, and his or her votes are redistributed among the other candidates. The process continues until an absolute majority is secured. In the 1996 Australian federal elections under comparison, for example, the victory of the conservative Liberal–National coalition ended the longest period of Labour Party government in Australia's history. The contest saw an extremely close call on the first preferences, with the Australian Labour Party (ALP) and the Liberal Party receiving identical shares of the vote (38.7%). In the final preferences, however, the ALP won 46.4% compared with 53.6% for non-ALP candidates. As a result, the Liberal–National government won ninety-three seats, and a substantial

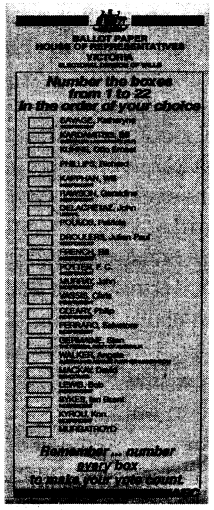

FIGURE 2.4. An example of the Alternative Vote ballot for the Australian House of Representatives

majority, while Labour won only forty-nine.[17] This process worked as intended by translating an extremely close result in the first preference vote into a decisive majority of parliamentary seats for the leading party elected to government. This process systematically discriminates against those parties and candidates at the bottom of the poll to promote single-party government for the winner. The Alternative Vote functions similarly in many ways as the Second Ballot system, with the important distinction being that there is no opportunity for citizens to re-vote or for parties to create new alliances, in the light of the outcome of the first preference ballots. The balloting and counting process is also more efficient, avoiding repeated trips to the polling station and possible reductions in turnout due to voter fatigue.

Proportional Representation Formulae

Adversarial democracies and majoritarian electoral systems emphasize popular control by the party in government. By contrast, consensus democracies and PR electoral systems focus on the inclusion of all voices, emphasizing the need for bargaining and compromise within parliament, government, and the policymaking process. The basic principle of PR is that parliamentary seats are allocated according to the proportion of votes cast for each party. The main variations concern the use of open or closed lists of candidates, the formula for translating votes into seats, the level of the electoral threshold, and the size of the district magnitude. The Party Lists system exemplifies the proportional formula but the Single Transferable Vote system should also be included in this category because it allocates seats based on quotas.

Party Lists Systems

Proportional electoral systems based on party lists in multimember constituencies are widespread throughout Western Europe. Worldwide, 62 out of 191 countries use party list PR (see Figure 2.1). Party lists may be open as in Norway, Finland, the Netherlands, and Italy, in which case voters can express preferences for particular candidates within the list. Or they may be closed, as in Israel, Portugal, Spain, and Germany, in which case voters can only select which party to support, and each party decides the ranking of their candidates on the list. The rank order of candidates on the party list determines who is elected to parliament. In Israel, all the country is one constituency divided into 120 seats; but, often, lists are regional, as in the Czech Republic, where 200 total members are elected from eight regional lists. Proportional Party Lists systems are used in fifteen of the countries under comparison in the CSES dataset.[18] A typical party list ballot paper from South Africa is illustrated in Figure 2.5.

The electoral formula for the lower-house legislative elections varies among proportional systems (see Table 2.1). Votes can be allocated to seats based on the *highest averages* method. This requires the number of votes for each party to be divided successively by a series of divisors, and seats are allocated to parties that secure the highest resulting quotient, up to the total number of seats available. The most widely used is the *d'Hondt* formula, using divisors (such as 1,2,3, etc.), employed in Poland, Romania, Spain, and Israel. The "pure" *Sainte-Laguë* method, used in New Zealand, divides the votes with odd numbers (1,3,5,7, etc.). The "modified" *Sainte-Laguë* method replaces the first divisor by 1.4 but is otherwise identical to the pure version. An alternative is the *largest remainder* method, which uses a minimum quota, which can be calculated in a number of ways. In the simplest, the *Hare* quota, used in Denmark and Costa Rica, and, for the list constituencies in Taiwan, Ukraine, and Lithuania, the total number of valid votes in each constituency is divided by the total number of seats to be allocated. The *Droop* quota, used in South Africa, the Czech Republic, and Greece, raises the divisor by the number of seats plus one, producing a slightly less proportional result.

Other important differences in countries under comparison within the PR category include the formal threshold that parties must pass to qualify for seats. It should be noted that the formal threshold set by statute or specified in constitutional requirements is distinct from the effective vote threshold, which is the actual minimum share of the vote that leads to gaining at least one seat. The formal threshold ranges from the lowest level of 0.67% of the national vote, used in the Netherlands, to up to 7% of the vote, used in Poland. Worldwide, one of the highest vote thresholds is in Turkey, with a 10% hurdle, whereas there is no formal threshold in some countries such as South Africa, where less than 0.25% of the national vote is necessary for election. The formal threshold can have an important impact upon

TABLE 2.1. *Electoral Systems for the Lower House of Parliament, Selected Elections under Comparison, 1996–2002*

Type of Districts	Year of Election	Electoral System	Party List	Formula	Formal Vote Threshhold (%)	Total No. of MPs	No. of SMD MPs	No. of List MPs	Total No. of Districts for Lists	Voting Age Population (VAP)	Average VAP per Member	Mean District Mag. List Seats	Prop.	ENPP	Max. Years between Elections
Majoritarian															
Australia	1996	AV	None	Majority	None	148	148	0	0	13,547,900	91,500	1	84	2.61	3
Canada	1997	FPTP	None	Plurality	None	301	301	0	0	23,088,800	78,300	1	83	2.98	5
UK	1997	FPTP	None	Plurality	None	659	659	0	0	45,093,500	68,400	1	80	2.11	5
USA	1996	FPTP	None	Plurality	None	435	435	0	0	196,511,000	436,700	1	94	1.99	2
Combined-Independent															
Japan	1996	FPTP+PR	Closed	d'Hondt		500	300	200	11	96,672,700	193,400	18	86	2.93	4
Korea, Rep.	2000	FPTP+PR	Closed	LR-Hare	5	299	253	46	1	34,364,700	114,900	46	84	2.36	4
Russia	1999	FPTP+PR	Closed	LR-Hare	5	450	225	225	1	109,212,000	242,700	225	89	5.40	4
Taiwan	1996	SNTV+PR	Closed	LR-Hare	5	334	234/27	100	2	14,340,600	42,900	50	95	2.46	4
Ukraine	1998	FPTP+PR	Closed	LR-Hare	4	450	225	225	1	38,939,100	86,500	225	86	5.98	5
Combined-Dependent															
Germany	1998	FPTP+PR	Closed	LR-Hare	5	656	328	328	1	65,942,100	100,000	328	94	3.30	4
Hungary	1998	2nd Ballot+PR	Closed	d'Hondt	5	386	176	210	20	7,742,900	20,000	8	86	3.45	4
New Zealand	1996	FPTP+PR	Closed	St.-Laguë	5	120	65	55	1	2,571,800	21,400	55	96	3.78	3
Mexico	1997	FPTP+PR	Closed	LR-Hare	2	500	300	200	5	55,406,900	110,800	40	92	2.86	3
Thailand	2001	FPTP+PR	Closed	d'Hondt	5	500	400	100	1	42,663,000	85,000	100	88	2.92	4
Proportional															
Belgium	1999	PR Lists	Open	d'Hondt	0	150	0	150	20	8,000,000	53,300	8	96	9.05	4
Czech Republic	1996	PR Lists	Open	LR-Droop	5	200	0	200	8	7,859,200	39,300	25	89	4.15	4
Denmark	1998	PR Lists	Open	LR-Hare	2	179	0	179	17	4,129,000	23,000	8	98	4.92	4
Iceland	1999	PR Lists	Closed	LR-Hare		63	0	63	9	196,604	3,120	6	98	3.45	4
Israel	1996	PR Lists	Closed	d'Hondt	1.5	120	0	120	1	3,684,900	30,700	120	96	5.63	5
Netherlands	1998	PR Lists	Closed	d'Hondt	0.67	150	0	150	1	11,996,400	80,000	150	95	4.81	4
Norway	1997	PR Lists	Closed	St.-Laguë	4	165	0	165	19	3,360,100	20,000	9	95	4.36	4
Peru	2000	PR Lists	Open	d'Hondt	0	120	0	120	1	15,187,000	127,000	120	98	3.81	4
Poland	1997	PR Lists	Open	d'Hondt	7	460	0	460	52	27,901,700	60,700	9	82	2.95	4
Portugal	2002	PR Lists	Closed	d'Hondt		230	0	230	22	8,882,561	38,619	10	93	2.61	4
Romania	1996	PR Lists	Closed	d'Hondt	3	343	0	343	42	16,737,300	48,800	8	82	3.37	4
Slovenia	1996	PR Lists	Open	LR-Hare	3	90	0	90	8	1,543,000	17,000	11	84	5.52	4
Spain	1996	PR Lists	Closed	d'Hondt	3	350	0	350	52	31,013,030	88,600	7	93	2.73	4
Sweden	1998	PR Lists	Open	St.-Laguë	4	349	0	349	29	6,915,000	19,800	11	97	4.29	4
Switzerland	1999	PR Lists	Panachage	d'Hondt	0	200	0	200	26	5,736,300	28,700	8	93	5.08	4

Notes: PR, Proportional Representation; FPTP, First-Past-the-Post; AV, Alternative Vote; SMD, Single-member Districts; List, Party List; ENPP, Effective Number of Parliamentary Parties; Prop., Proportionality. ENPP is calculated following the method of Laakso and Taagepera (1979). The Index of Proportionality is calculated as the difference between a party's share of the vote and its share of the total seats in parliament, summed, divided by two, and subtracted from 100. Theoretically, it can range from 0 to 100. This is a standardized version of the Loosemore-Hanby Index. For details see Rose, Munro, and Mackie (1998). The formal vote threshold is the minimum share of the vote (in the district or nation) required by law to qualify for a seat, and this is distinct from the informal threshold or the actual minimum share of the vote required to win a seat. Note that the classification distinguishes between combined dependent systems, where the outcome depends upon the proportion of votes cast in the party lists, and independent combined systems used in Japan, Russia, and Korea, where the single-member districts and party lists operate in parallel. It should be noted that Belgium subsequently introduced a 5% formal vote threshold for the May 2003 general elections.

Sources: Voting Age Population: IDEA Voter Turnout from 1945 to 1997. Available online at www.idea.int; Successive volumes of *Electoral Studies*; Richard Rose, Neil Munro, and Tom Mackie. 1998. *Elections in Central and Eastern Europe Since 1990.* Strathclyde, U.K.: Center for the Study of Public Policy; Richard Rose. Ed. *International Encyclopedia of Elections.* Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Press 2000; http://www.aceproject.org/; Lawrence LeDuc, Richard G. Niemi, and Pippa Norris. Eds. 2002. *Comparing Democracies 2: New Challenges in the Study of Elections and Voting.* London: Sage; Table 1.2; CSES Macro-Level Dataset.

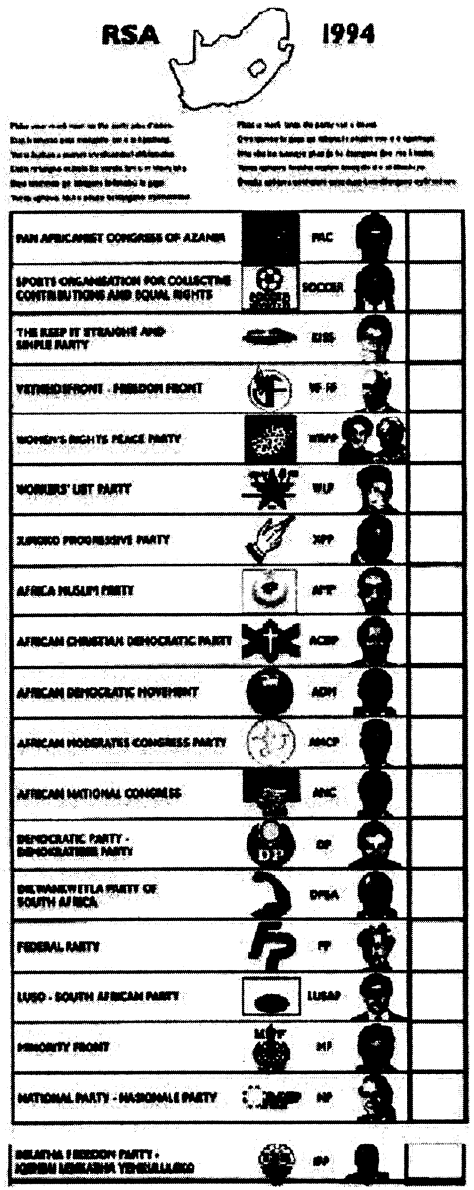

FIGURE 2.5. An example of a Party List ballot for the South African Parliament

proportionality and the opportunities for minor parties. District magnitude, or the mean number of seats per constituency, also varies substantially. In Israel, for example, all 120 members of the Knesset run in one nationwide constituency. By contrast, in Spain, the 350 members are elected in fifty list districts, each district electing 7 members on average. Generally, under PR systems, the larger the district magnitude the more proportional the outcome, and the lower the hurdles facing smaller parties.

Single Transferable Vote

The other alternative system in the proportional category is the STV, currently employed in legislative elections in Ireland, Malta, and for the Australian Senate.[19] The system can be classified as proportional because of the use of the quota for election. Under this system, each country is divided into multimember constituencies that each have about four or five representatives. Parties put forward as many candidates as they think could win in each constituency. Voters rank their preferences among candidates in an ordinal fashion (1st, 2nd, 3rd, . . .). The total number of votes is counted, and then the number of seats divides this vote total in the constituency to produce a quota. To be elected, candidates must reach the minimum quota. When the first preferences are counted, if no candidates reach the quota, then the candidate with the least votes is eliminated, and his or her votes are redistributed according to second preferences. This process continues until all seats are filled. Proponents argue that by allowing citizens to identify a rank order for their preferences within parties, or by ballot-splitting their votes across different parties, STV provides greater freedom of choice than do other systems.[20] Moreover, by retaining proportionality, these rules also generate a fair outcome in terms of the votes-to-seats ratio.

Combined Systems

An increasing number of countries, including Italy, New Zealand, and Russia, use combined systems, employing different electoral formulae in the same contest, although with a variety of alternative designs. In this regard, we follow Massicotte and Blais in classifying combined systems (otherwise known as mixed, hybrid, or side-by-side systems) according to their mechanics, not by their outcome.[21] If we followed the latter strategy, such as defining or labeling electoral systems based on their levels of proportionality, then this approach could create circular arguments. There is an important distinction within this category, which is overlooked in some discussions, between *combined-dependent* systems, where both parts are interrelated, and *combined-independent* systems, where two electoral formulae operate in parallel toward each other.

Combined-Dependent Systems

Combined-dependent systems, exemplified by the German and New Zealand parliamentary elections, include both single-member and party-list constituencies, but the distribution of seats is proportional to the share of the vote cast in the party list. As a result, the outcome of combined-dependent systems is closer to the proportional than the majoritarian end of the spectrum, although the logic of voter choice in these systems means that they still remain different from pure PR. The best-known application is in Germany, where electors can each cast two votes (see Figure 2.6). Half the members of the Bundestag (328) are elected in single-member constituencies based on a simple plurality of votes. The remaining MPs are elected from closed party lists in each region (Land). Parties that receive less than a specified minimum threshold of list votes (5%) are not be entitled to any seats. The total number of seats that a party receives in Germany is based on the *Niemeyer* method, which ensures that seats are proportional to second votes cast for party lists. Smaller parties that received, say, 10% of the list vote, but that did not win any single-member seats outright, are topped up until they have 10% of all the seats in parliament. It is possible for a party to be allocated "surplus" seats when it wins more district seats in the single-member district vote than it is entitled to under the result of the list vote.

New Zealand is also classified as a combined-dependent system because the outcome is proportional to the party-list share of the vote. The Mixed Member Proportion (MMP) system (as it is known in New Zealand) gives each elector two votes, one for the district candidate in single-member seats and one for the party list.[22] As in Germany, the list PR seats compensate for any disproportionality produced by the single-member districts. In total, 65 of the 120 members of the House of Representatives are elected in single-member constituencies based on a simple plurality of votes in single-member districts. The remainder is elected from closed national party lists. Parties receiving less than 5% of list votes fall below the minimal threshold to qualify for any seats. All other parties are allocated seats based on the Sainte-Laguë method, which ensures that the total allocation of seats is highly proportional to the share of votes cast for party lists. Smaller parties that received, say, 10% of the list vote but that did not win any single-member seats outright are topped up until they have 10% of all the seats in the House of Representatives. The 1996 New Zealand election saw the entry of six parties into parliament and produced a National–New Zealand First coalition government.

Combined-Independent Systems

Other electoral systems under comparison can be classified as combined-independent systems, following the Massicotte and Blais distinction, with two electoral systems used in parallel, exemplified by the Ukraine and Taiwan.[23] In these systems, the votes are counted separately in both types

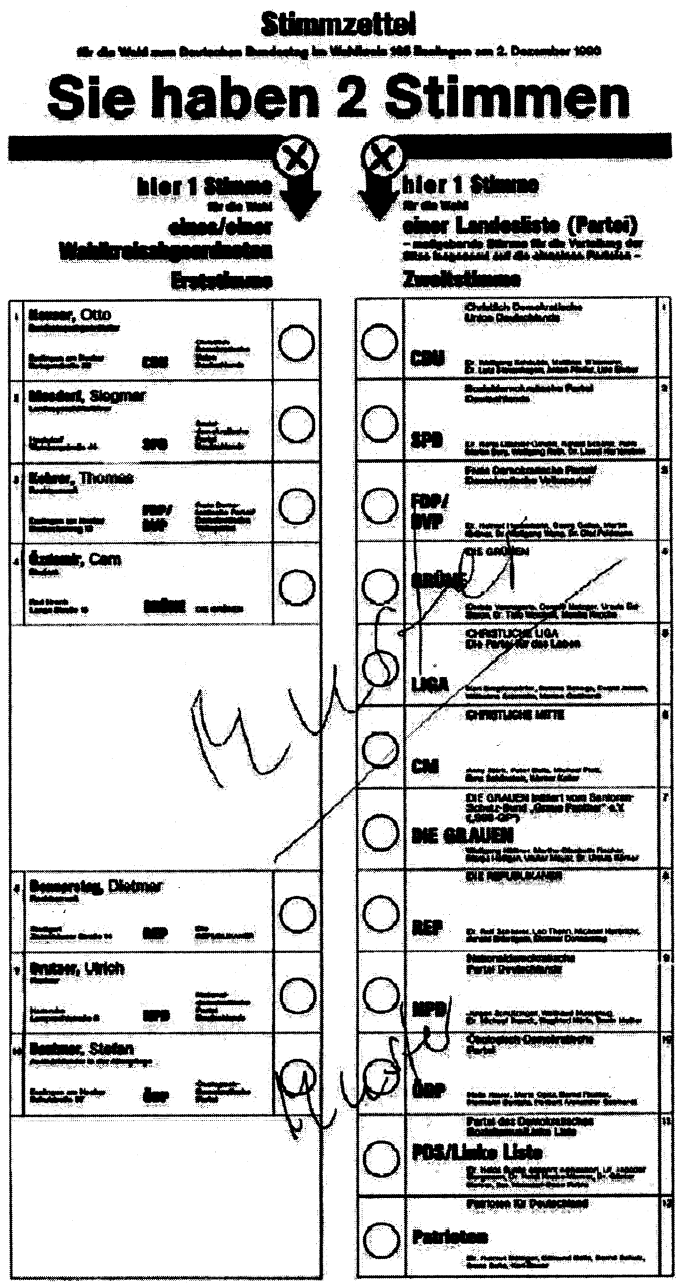

FIGURE 2.6. An example of a Combined or Mixed-Member ballot used for the German Bundestag

of seat so that the share of the vote cast for each party on the party lists is unrelated to the distribution of seats in the single-member districts. As a result, combined-independent systems are closer to the majoritarian than to the proportional end of the spectrum.

The March 1996 elections to the National Assembly in Taiwan exemplify this system. The Taiwanese National Assembly is composed of 334 seats, of which 234 are filled by the single non-transferable vote. Voters cast a single vote in one of fifty-eight multimember districts, each having 5 to 10 seats. The votes of all candidates belonging to the same party in all districts are aggregated into party votes, and the list PR seats are allocated among those parties meeting the 5% threshold. There are 80 PR list seats on a nationwide constituency and 20 PR list seats reserved for the overseas Chinese community. Taiwan has a three-party system, with the Nationalist Party (KMT) being dominant since 1945; the Democratic Progressive Party, founded in 1986, providing the main opposition; and the New Party, founded in 1993, having the smallest support. The major cleavage in Taiwanese party politics is the issue of national identity, dividing those who identify themselves as mainlanders who favor re-unification with China and those native Taiwanese who favor independence. The New Party is commonly considered most pro-unification and the Democratic Progressive Party the most pro-independence.[24]

The Ukrainian elections also illustrate how combined-independent systems work. The March 29, 1998 parliamentary contests were the second elections held since Ukrainian independence. Ukrainian voters could each cast two ballots. Half the deputies were elected by First-Past-the-Post in single-member districts, and others were elected from nationwide party lists, with a 4% threshold. Unlike the system in New Zealand and Germany, the two systems operated separately so that many smaller parties were elected from the single-member districts. The 1998 elections were contested by thirty parties and party blocs, although only ten of these groups could be said to have a clear programmatic profile and organizational base.[25] The Ukrainian result produced both an extremely fragmented and unstable party system: eight parties were elected via party lists and seventeen won seats via the single-member districts, along with 116 Independents. The election produced the highest Effective Number of Parliamentary Parties (ENPP) (5.98) in the countries under comparison, and it also generated fairly disproportional votes-to-seats ratios that benefited the larger parties. Ethnicity was reflected in the appeal of particular parties, including the Russophile Social Liberal Union, the Party of Regional Revival, and the Soyuz (Union) Party, and also in the way that ethnic Russians were twice as likely to support the Communist Party as were ethnic Ukrainians.[26]

For the comparison of the consequences of electoral systems, such as the link between different types of formula and patterns of party competition or electoral turnout, in this study I compare the broadest range of countries

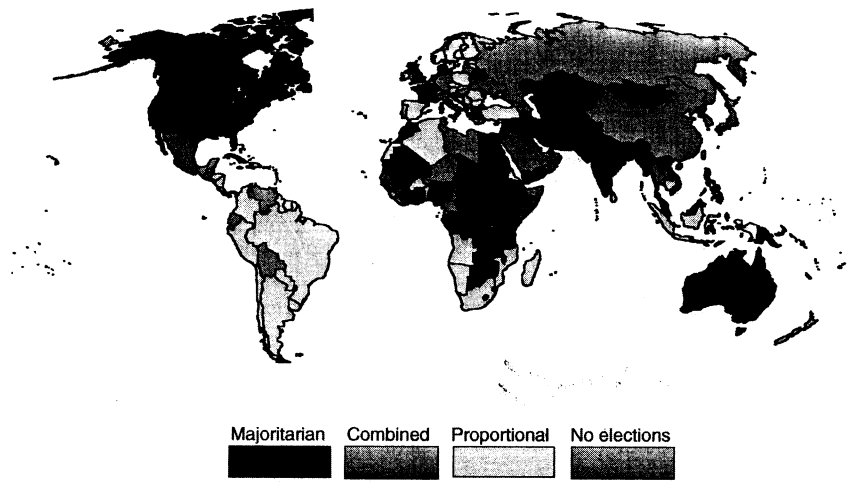

FIGURE 2.7. The world of electoral systems, 1997

worldwide that is possible from available sources of international data. For the survey analysis, however, I compare a more limited range of legislative and presidential elections. For parliamentary elections for the lower house, in the countries under comparison in Module I of the CSES dataset, fifteen elections were held from 1996 to 2002 using proportional electoral systems. Ten nations held parliamentary elections using combined electoral systems, including independent and dependent subtypes. Last, four countries held parliamentary elections for the lower house under majoritarian rules. There are also many important differences in electoral systems within each category, summarized in Table 2.1, for example, in the ballot structure of FPTP in the United Kingdom and the Alternative Vote in Australia, in the proportion of members elected in single-member and proportional districts in combined systems, as well as in the level of electoral thresholds facing minor parties.

The distribution of electoral systems around the world, illustrated in Table 2.2 and in Figure 2.7, confirms the regional patterns and the residual legacy stamped upon constitutions by their colonial histories. Three-quarters of the former British colonies continue to use a majoritarian electoral system today, as do two-thirds of the ex-French colonies. By contrast, three-quarters of the former Portuguese colonies, two-thirds of the ex-Spanish colonies, and all the former Dutch colonies use proportional electoral systems today. The post-Communist states freed from rule by the Soviet Union divided almost evenly among the three major electoral families, although slightly more countries (37%) have adopted proportional systems. Although Eastern Europe leans toward majoritarian arrangements, Central Europe adopted more proportional systems.

TABLE 2.2. *Type of Electoral System in Use by Past Colonial History (by percentage)*

	Britain	France	Portugal	Spain	The Netherlands	Belgium	Soviet Union	Other	None	All
Majoritarian										
FPTP	62.7	10.7				66.7	3.7	42.9	26.3	29.3
Second Ballot	5.1	39.3		4.8			25.9		10.5	13.0
Bloc Vote	6.8	10.7		4.8				7.1		4.9
Alternative Vote	3.4									1.1
Single Non-Transferable Vote	1.7	3.6								1.1
Combined										
Combined-Independent	3.4	14.3	14.3	14.3			29.6	14.3	5.3	11.4
Combined-Dependent	1.7			14.3			3.7		15.8	4.3
Proportional										
Party List PR	11.9	21.4	85.7	61.9	100.0	33.3	37.0	35.7	42.1	33.7
Single Transferable Vote	3.4									1.1
TOTAL NUMBER OF STATES	59	28	7	21	4	3	27	16	19	184

Note: The percentage of each colonial group using different types of electoral systems. Countries were classified by electoral system using the typology and sources in Figure 2.1 and by their predominant colonial history from the *CIA World Fact Book, 2002*. Available online at www.cia.org. The comparison covers 191 nation-states worldwide, excluding the seven states without direct elections during this period.

Presidential Electoral Systems

The countries under comparison in Module I of the CSES dataset also allow comparison of ten presidential elections (illustrated in Table 2.3), all held under majoritarian or plurality rules.[27] The simple plurality FPTP was used in Mexico and Taiwan. The Second Ballot "majority-runoff" system (also known as the double ballot) is used worldwide in fifteen of the twenty-five countries with direct presidential elections, including in Austria, Colombia, Finland, France, Belarus, and Russia, and in seven of the nations under comparison in the CSES dataset. In these elections, if no candidate gets at least 50% of the vote in the first round, then the top two candidates face each other in a second round to insure a majority of votes for the leading candidate. This system is exemplified by the 1996 Russian presidential election, where seventy-eight candidates registered to run for election, of which seventeen qualified for nomination. In the first round, Boris Yeltsin won 35.3% of the vote, with Gennadii Zyuganov, the Communist candidate, close behind with 32% and Alexander Lebed third, with 14.5% of the vote. After the other candidates dropped out, and Lebed swung his supporters behind Yeltsin, the final result of the second election was a decisive 53.8% of the vote for Yeltsin against 40.3% for Zyuganov.[28] Runoff elections aim to consolidate support behind the major contenders and to encourage broad cross-party coalition building in the final stages of the campaign.

The United States uses the unique device of the Electoral College. The president is not decided directly by popular vote, instead popular votes are collected within each state and, since 1964, the District of Columbia. Each state casts all of its electoral votes for the candidate receiving a plurality of votes within each state (the unit rule). Each state is allowed as many electoral votes as it has senators and representatives in Congress. This means that even sparsely populated states such as Alaska have at least three electoral votes. Nevertheless, the most populous states each cast by far the greatest number of electoral votes, and, therefore, presidential contenders devote most attention and strategic resources (spending, political ads, and visits) during the campaign to states such as New York, California, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Florida, Illinois, Michigan, and Texas, especially when polls suggest that the race is close in these areas. The importance of these rules is exemplified by the outcome of the 2000 election, where Republican George W. Bush won a 271–266 majority in the electoral college despite the fact that his opponent, Al Gore, won about half a million more popular votes. The results called attention to the need to alter the Electoral College, which has not experienced major reform since 1804, despite the fact that critics have regarded the system as archaic, outmoded, and essentially flawed.[29] Other important variations among the presidential electoral systems under comparison include length of time in office (ranging from four to six years) and whether presidential elections are held in conjunction

TABLE 2.3. *Direct Elections for President/Prime Minister, Selected Elections under Comparison, 1996–2001*

	Type	Year of Election	Electoral System	In Conjunction with Legislative Elections	Voting Age Population (VAP)	Vote/VAP	Max. Years between Elections
Belarus	Majoritarian	2001	2nd Ballot	Yes	7,585,000	81.3	5
Chile	Majoritarian	1999	2nd Ballot	No	10,066,000	72.8	6
Israel (i)	Majoritarian	1996	2nd Ballot	Yes	3,995,000	84.5	4
Lithuania	Majoritarian	1997	2nd Ballot	No	2,740,000	70.7	5
Mexico	Plurality	2000	FPTP	Yes	62,685,000	60.0	6
Peru	Majoritarian	2000	2nd Ballot	Yes	15,430,000	78.6	5
Romania	Majoritarian	1996	2nd Ballot	Yes	16,737,000	78.1	4
Russia	Majoritarian	2000	2nd Ballot	No	109,037,000	68.8	5
Taiwan	Plurality	1996	FPTP	Yes	14,154,000	76.9	4
USA	Majoritarian	1996	Electoral College	Yes	196,511,000	49.3	4

Note: (i) In Israel, direct elections for the prime minister, not the president.
Sources: See Table 2.1.

TABLE 2.4. *The Parliamentary and Presidential Elections under Comparison*

	Presidential Vote		Lower House of Parliament			
					Party List	
	1st	2nd	District Vote	Party List Vote	Candidate Preferential Vote
Australia	X		✓	X	X
Belarus	✓	✓	X	X	X
Belgium	X		X	✓	✓
Canada	X		✓	X	X
Chile	✓	✓	X	X	X
Czech Republic	X		X	✓	X
Denmark	X		X	✓	✓
Germany	X		✓	✓	✓
Hungary	X		✓	✓	X
Iceland	X		X	✓	
Israel (i)	✓	✓	X	✓	X
Japan	X		✓	✓	X
Korea, Rep. of	X		✓	✓	X
Lithuania	✓	✓	X	✓	X
Mexico	✓		X	✓	X
Netherlands	X		X	✓	X
New Zealand	X		✓	✓	X
Norway	X		X	✓	X
Peru	✓	✓	X	✓	X
Poland	X		X	✓	✓
Portugal	X		X	✓	✓
Romania	✓	✓	X	✓	X
Russia	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
Slovenia	X		X	✓	X
Spain	X		X	✓	X
Sweden	X		X	✓	✓
Switzerland	X		X	✓	✓
Taiwan	✓		✓	✓	X
Thailand	X		✓	✓	X
UK	X		✓	X	X
Ukraine	X		✓	✓	X
USA	✓		✓	X	X

Note: This does not count other electoral options on the ballot, such as for local, regional, state-level, upper house/senate, European, or other elected office, or any referenda issues.
(i) Note Israel includes direct elections for the prime minister, not president.
X = Not applicable in the election under comparison.
✓ = Applicable.

with legislative contests (which could be expected to strengthen the party coattails of presidential candidates and, therefore, create stronger legislative–executive links) or whether they are held separately, which reinforces the separation of powers.

The consequences of different arrangements also generate different electoral decisions by citizens, including how often they are called to the ballot box and what choices they face. Table 2.4 illustrates the major variations in the countries and national elections under comparison. The least demands are in parliamentary democracies such as Australia and Britain where citizens only cast one ballot at national level, although there are many other types of contest such as Australian state and local elections, and British elections to the European parliament, as well as to the Scottish Parliament and Welsh Assembly and to local government. By contrast, at national level Russian citizens are called to the polls twice for the second ballot presidential elections, as well as to cast two votes for the Duma. The other nations present different demands upon citizens ranging between these extremes. Obviously, greater options for voting provide citizens with more opportunity for political expression, for example, with split-ticket voting between levels, but at the same time, frequent demands from successive elections at multiple levels of office carry the danger of voter fatigue.

Conclusion: The Consequences of Electoral Systems

Often the choice of electoral system seems mechanistic, abstract, and highly technical, with constitutional engineering designed to bring about certain objectives. But the issue of how the electoral system should function reflects essentially contested normative concepts of representative government. For advocates of adversarial democracy, the most important considerations for electoral systems are that the votes cast in elections (not the subsequent process of coalition building) should determine the party or parties in government. The government should be empowered to implement its program during its full term of office, without depending upon the support of minority parties. The government should remain accountable for its actions to parliament, and ultimately to the public. And, at periodic intervals, the electorate should be allowed to judge the government's record, evaluate prospective policy platforms offered by the opposition parties, and cast their votes accordingly. Minor parties in third or fourth place are discriminated against by majoritarian elections for the sake of governability. From this perspective, proportional elections are ineffective because they can produce indecisive outcomes, unstable regimes, disproportionate power for minor parties in "kingmaker" roles, and a lack of clear-cut accountability and transparency in decision-making.

By contrast, proponents of consensual democracy argue that majoritarian systems place too much faith in the winning party, especially in plural societies divided by ethnic conflict, with too few constraints on government during its term of office. For the vision of consensual democracy, the electoral system should promote a process of conciliation, consultation, and coalition-building within parliaments. Parties above a minimum threshold should be included in the legislature in rough proportion to their level of electoral support. The party or parties in government should craft policies based on a consensus among their coalition partners. Moreover, the composition of parliament should reflect the main divisions in society and the electorate, so that all citizens have spokespersons articulating their interests, perspectives, and concerns in national debates. In this view, majoritarian systems over-reward the winner, producing "an elected dictatorship" where a government based on a plurality can steamroller its policies and implement its programs, without the need for consultation and compromise with other parties in parliament or other groups in society. The unfairness and disproportionate results of plurality electoral systems, outside of two-party contests, means that some voices in the electorate are systematically excluded from public debate.

We can conclude, agnostically, that there is no single best electoral system: the central arguments between adversarial and consensual democratic theorists represent irresolvable value conflicts. For societies that are divided by deep-rooted ethnic or religious conflict, such as Rwanda, Bosnia, or Israel, proportional electoral systems may prove more inclusive, as Lijphart argues. But, as others warn, PR elections may also reinforce, rather than ameliorate, such cleavages.[30] For states that are highly centralized, such as Britain or New Zealand, majoritarian systems can insulate the government from the need for broader consultation and for democratic checks and balances. In constitutional design it appears that, despite the widespread appeal of the rhetoric of "electoral engineering" for optimal decision-making, in practice there are no easy choices. A wide range of alternative rules can potentially influence the impact of these electoral systems on both patterns of voting behavior and political representation. The mechanical effects of electoral rules are easier to predict than the psychological ones, and, in both cases, many effects are highly contingent because they are embedded within many other institutional, political, cultural, and social contexts. In the next chapters I discuss the normative debates about electoral systems in more detail and then consider some of the most important consequences of electoral rules for voting behavior, including party competition, the strength of social cleavages and partisan identification, and patterns of electoral turnout.

3

Evaluating Electoral Systems

In recent decades, debate about electoral engineering has moved from margin to mainstream on the policy agenda in many nations. Political discussions about electoral reform have revolved largely around the practical options, the sometimes bewildering combination of trade-off choices, and the consequences of particular reforms to the status quo within each state. Underlying these pragmatic arguments are contested normative visions about the basic principles of representative government.[1] The most fundamental debate raises questions about the ultimate ends as well as means of elections.[2] The general consensus in the literature emphasizes that no "perfect" bespoke electoral system fits every society. Instead, arrangements have to be tailored to different contexts, and choices require trade-offs among competing public goods.[3] The most common argument today revolves around the pros and cons claimed for majoritarian, combined, and proportional types of electoral systems, for example, which is best for maximizing electoral participation or for containing ethnic conflict. Major questions underlying these empirical claims concern what forms of representative democracy are more desirable, and what functions electoral systems *should* perform. Some studies of electoral systems fail to deal explicitly with the normative assumptions, preferring to focus exclusively upon the factual claims. Others present lengthy shopping lists of the alternative values that electoral systems are supposed to meet, emphasizing the desirability of, say, the inclusion of women, the management of ethnic conflict, or the importance of governability, agnostically letting readers pick and choose whatever values they regard as most important.[4] A comprehensive list has the advantages of identifying all the possible claims that people can and often do make about electoral systems. Many practical arguments about reform are conducted at this level. But from this procedure it remains unclear why we should prioritize one value over another or how values are logically connected to form part of a broader framework. What reasonable person could not want, say, both social inclusiveness in parliamentary representation and also effective governance, in a

win-win situation, even if these values may conflict or contradict each other in practice.

A preferable strategy seeks to locate the normative values underlying the choice of electoral systems within coherent theories of representative democracy.[5] In one of the most familiar frameworks of ideal types used in comparative politics, Lijphart contrasts *consensus* (or consociational) democracies based upon proportional representation electoral systems with *majoritarian* (or Westminster) democracies based upon majoritarian and plurality electoral systems.[6] Consensus democracies are defined as those aiming at power sharing among multiple political actors to maximize deliberation, bargaining, and compromise. Majoritarian political systems are envisaged as those concentrating power in the hands of the largest parliamentary party to maximize governability. This dichotomy represents an important typology, commonly used in the comparative literature. Yet the term majoritarian can become confusing when used to refer simultaneously to the type of democracy as well as to the type of electoral system that bear these names. The term Westminster democracy is equally inadequate, referring as it does to a form of parliamentary government exported from the United Kingdom to many Commonwealth nations decades ago, yet a system that can find few recognizable exemplars today, even in its original home.[7] The term is also potentially misleading given that the Westminster House of Commons uses FPTP, a plurality not a simple-majority electoral system, whereas the House of Lords currently remains an unelected body, an anomaly in the modern democratic world. The traditional terminology also seems to weight the deck by disingenuously framing the choice as one between either consensual ("a kinder, gentler") democracy or effective majoritarian government, rather than understanding the central choice as between competing visions of the best form of representative democracy.

In a recent comprehensive study, G. Bingham Powell, Jr., proposes that the alternative ideal types can be conceptualized as *majoritarian* or *proportional* visions of democracy. Yet this strategy extends the term proportional, which originally referred to the PR type of electoral formula, to many other aspects of the basic political system or constitution that are conceptually distinct from the type of proportional formula per se, such as the distribution of power within the legislature. Moreover, Powell does not classify some systems with PR electoral formulae as proportional democracies (such as Greece, which is classified as majoritarian, or Ireland, which is classified as mixed). As a result, it seems best to maintain a clear conceptual distinction to avoid any confusing slippage between proportional representation electoral formulae per se and any notion of a "proportional" democracy.[8] Matthew Soberg Shugart and John M. Carey, focusing upon two dimensions of political systems, develop another alternative typology used to understand presidentialism. The authors distinguish between *efficient* political systems designed to maximize government accountability, disciplined programmatic

parties, and identifiable policy mandates and *inefficient* systems that maximize the provision of particularistic local concerns and personal votes. They also distinguish the *representative* dimension, with systems reflecting either local or group interests. Although the central typology is useful, the term efficiency, originally drawn from Walter Bagehot's *The English Constitution*, seems potentially misleading because efficiency is conventionally understood to concern the most appropriate means to an end, rather than any specific end goal per se. Hence, there can be an efficient or inefficient delivery of particularistic pork and patronage.[9]

For all these reasons, I will draw upon an older conceptualization suggested by the noted constitutional expert, Samuel Finer.[10] In this study the central normative debate about the fundamental ideals that electoral systems should meet is conceptualized as one between either *adversarial* or *consensual* visions of representative democracy. This distinction captures the central features of the argument more closely than many of the current alternatives in the literature. (See Table 3.1 and Figure 3.1.)

The Arguments For and Against Adversarial Democracy

Advocates of adversarial democracy believe that democratic political systems should promote government accountability, transparency, and responsiveness, through the generation of single-party executives, responsible programmatic parties, and vigorous parliamentary opposition. Electoral systems designed to give the leading party the majority of parliamentary seats, through the use of majoritarian and plurality electoral formulae, are an essential, although not sufficient, component of adversarial democracy by connecting voters' preferences directly to a representative in parliament and, indirectly, to the party that enters government. The purported virtues of these electoral systems, advocates claim, are that they maximize democratic accountability, strengthen citizen–member linkages, facilitate governability, generate decisive electoral outcomes, and encourage political responsiveness.

Democratic Accountability

Proponents of adversarial democracy envisage elections primarily as a critical link in the chain designed to insure that parties in government remain collectively accountable to parliament (on a day-to-day basis) and to the electorate (at regular intervals). This vision suggests that electoral systems that systematically reduce the multiple contenders for office to the leading parties that win power both simplifies electoral choices and clarifies responsibility for government decisions. In this ideal, the "In" and the "Out" parties compete for popular support by presenting alternative programmatic platforms, leadership teams, and candidates for elected office. In the words of Walter Lippmann: "*To support the Ins when things are going well; to support the Outs when things seem to be going badly, this, in spite of all that has been said about*

TABLE 3.1. *The Ideal Functions of Electoral Institutions*

	Adversarial Democracy	Consensual Democracy
Ideal Function of the Political System	Should promote government accountability, transparency of decision-making, and responsible parties through single-party executives, effective opposition parties, vigorous parliamentary debate, and decisive elections.	Should promote consensual decision-making, bargaining, and compromise among multiple parliamentary parties, each with a stake in power, and dispersed decision-making processes.
Ideal Function of the Electoral System	Should maximize electoral decisiveness by directly linking the votes cast to the parties and members elected to parliament, thereby providing an indirect link from voters to the party in government; should winnow the number of electoral parties and candidates that enter parliament and ensure that the leading party gains a workable parliamentary majority.	Should maximize electoral choice among multiple parties, fairly translate vote shares into seat shares, and be socially inclusive in parliamentary representation.
Ideal Function of Opposition Parties	Should provide adversarial scrutiny of government policy proposals and actions.	Should be part of the consultation process and act as an important check on the power of the largest party.
Ideal Function of Citizens	Should be able to evaluate the performance of the governing party and the prospective policies offered by alternative electoral parties in opposition.	Should be able to evaluate the performance and policies of parties that are empowered to negotiate, bargain, and compromise on behalf of their supporters.
Ideal Function of Elected Representatives	Should act as community spokespersons reflecting local concerns and representing all local constituents in parliament.	Should deliberate, negotiate, and bargain as spokespersons on behalf of their party supporters.
Potential Dangers	May lead to "elective dictatorship" characterized by entrenched power for predominant majority populations, disregard for minority rights, and lack of effective checks and balances.	May lead to problems of governance associated with extreme multiparty fragmentation, unstable governments, lack of accountability for the government and for elected representatives, and indecisive election results.

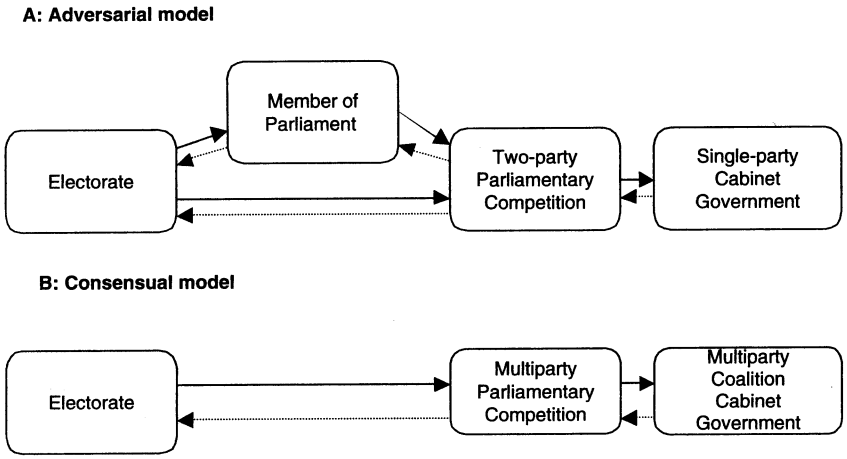

FIGURE 3.1. Models of representative democracy

Tweedledum and Tweedledee, is the essence of popular government."[11] By facilitating a veto on governing incumbents, elections function as instruments of democratic control. At the end of its tenure in office, the single party in government remains collectively accountable for its legislative record and policy performance, and, if the "trains do not run on time" or if there is evidence of corruption, malfeasance, or incompetence, then the electorate can punish the incumbent administration, if they so wish. In comparison, where PR electoral systems generate multiparty parliaments and coalition governments, it is believed that this process makes it more difficult for voters to assign blame or praise for the government's performance and to reward or punish parties accordingly, even if the public becomes deeply dissatisfied with those in power.[12] Proponents argue that under majoritarian and plurality electoral systems, the party with the largest share of parliamentary seats usually forms the government, so that there is a direct link between the votes cast and the outcome for government. Where PR produces multiparty parliaments, the process of coalition building after the result, not the election per se, determines the allocation of cabinet portfolios and government policies. For proponents of adversarial political systems, representative democracy is preserved by the ability of the electorate to reward or punish parties when asked to judge their performance and promises, by rigorous scrutiny of government actions, and by vigorous debate between government and opposition parties.

The closest analogy to adversarial democracy is the legal arguments propounded by public defenders and prosecutors, with the judge (constitutional courts) ensuring fair play, the news media functioning as official recorders, and the electorate serving as the ultimate jury. In the courts, the function of the defender and prosecutor is to argue the pros and cons of each case to the best of their abilities, within the boundaries of legal ethics, irrespective

of their personal beliefs about the guilt or innocence of their clients because through the battle of courtroom debate it is believed that justice will be done. In this conception, drawing upon the classical liberal theory of John Stuart Mill, adversarial parliamentary debate reveals flaws in any political argument, weaknesses in policy proposals, and mistakes or errors by government ministers, and, as such, it is to be valued more than a false consensus that could potentially stifle debate, hide certain failings from the public eye, and exclude the full range of alternative proposals from consideration. Parliament ideally functions in this view as the nation's forum for debate, where the government proposes and the opposition's duty, like the public prosecutor, is to oppose in principle.

Strong Voter-Member Accountability

At the local level, advocates argue that the link between citizens and their member of parliament elected in geographically based single-member districts provides local communities with a voice in the nation's affairs as well as makes elected members directly responsive to constituency concerns. Due to single-member districts and candidate-ballots, elected members are believed to remain individually accountable to their local party organization on a day-to-day basis and to all their local constituents at regular intervals. Members are thought to have stronger electoral incentives to provide constituency service, and, thereby, to build a personal vote, in single-member districts using candidate-ballots.[13] In this context it is believed that members will prioritize local constituency service with individual casework, sorting out such problems as housing or welfare benefits, as well as listening to community concerns and raising these matters in parliamentary debates. The independence and autonomy of MPs from the central party leadership is further strengthened where local party members and activists determine the recruitment, nomination, and selection process for parliamentary candidates in their constituency.[14] By contrast, members are thought to be more accountable to party leaders under electoral systems with party-ballots, especially in large multimember constituencies with closed party lists and nomination procedures controlled by the central party.[15] Such a system is believed to promote parliamentary discipline within programmatic and cohesive legislative parties because the leadership has the power to sanction rebels by refusing their renomination.

Governability

Majoritarian and plurality electoral systems used in legislative contests have strong reductive effects designed to generate single-party executives and to limit the degree of party fragmentation in parliaments. What they thereby lose in fairness to minor parties, proponents argue, they gain in governing capacity, as the single party in cabinet government is thereby empowered to implement its programmatic manifesto promises during its term of office, if

a majority of parliamentary seats are held and the support of cohesive and disciplined parliamentary backbenchers is maintained. By systematically exaggerating the seat lead for the winning party with the largest share of votes, these electoral systems generate either a "natural" or a "manufactured" majority, producing a decisive outcome in seats. This process, thereby, legitimates the governing authority of the winner, even in relatively close contests in the share of the popular vote. Single-party governments, with an overall parliamentary majority, can enact whatever policies they feel are necessary during their terms of office, making difficult or unpopular decisions they believe are in the country's long-term interests, while knowing that they face the judgment of the electorate when their terms end and the potential sanction of losing power.

Given the concentration of executive power in the hands of a single party, the main check on the cabinet during its term of office is a vote of confidence in parliament. Governments capable of surviving such a vote, which in practice usually means carrying their own backbenchers with them, often face few other effective curbs on power, beyond the courts. For advocates, this system has certain decisive advantages: providing government with the authority to legislate and the capacity to implement its policies, especially radical proposals; to respond decisively and in a timely fashion to contingent events and sudden emergencies; to overcome parliamentary stalemate on controversial and divisive issues; and to make difficult decisions that may generate short-term unpopularity, if they believe that these policies are in the country's long-term interests. Majoritarian systems remove the need for closed-door postelection negotiations and policy compromises with other parties or for frequent coalition changes between elections.[16] There is a single democratic chain of accountability within each nation stretching from citizens to particular members of parliament, from parliamentarians to cabinet ministers, and from ministers to civil servants implementing policies. Proponents believe that, in this regard, the provision of accountable single-party government is more important than the inclusion of all parties in strict proportion to their share of the vote. Indeed, the way that majoritarian and plurality electoral systems usually penalize minor and fringe parties can be regarded as a virtue, if this process prevents extremists on the far right or far left from acquiring representative legitimacy, thereby avoiding a fragmented parliament full of "fads and faddists."

Decisive Elections

Majoritarian and plurality electoral systems function as a substantial hurdle that systematically reduces the multiple number of parties and candidates contending for elected office so that, although electoral competition remains open as almost anyone can usually stand (with some minor legal regulations for matters such as citizenship and age requirements), only the leading contenders win parliamentary seats and governing power. Where electoral

systems succeed in fulfilling this function, proponents argue, they thereby have the capacity to generate decisive outcomes where voters' preferences determine directly the selection of members of parliament and the overall distribution of parliamentary seats among parties. In turn, the majority of seats awarded to the largest party leads to the formation of single-party cabinet governments. Majoritarian electoral systems thereby maintain a direct and transparent link between the share of the votes cast and the single party in government.

Responsiveness to the Electorate

Proponents claim that government and opposition parties, and also individual elected members, must remain "responsive" to public concerns. In adversarial democracies, the governing party is entrusted with considerable powers during its term in office, with few checks and balances, but, nevertheless, it is thought that politicians remain sensitive to public opinion because those governing are aware that even a small swing in the popular vote in a competitive and balanced two-party system is sufficient to bring the opposition into office. This system can be envisaged as a pulley-and-weights mechanism where a modest pull on the electoral rope can produce a disproportionate displacement of weight. Proponents believe that these characteristics mean that under majoritarian systems governments are granted considerable power during their tenures in office, yet this power is shackled with ultimate accountability to the electorate. Moreover, individual members are thought to remain responsive to their particular community, representing local interests and articulating diverse constituency concerns in national legislative debates, which may be a particularly important function in large and heterogeneous societies.

Critiques

Critics suggest that adversarial democracy suffers from certain well-known dangers. In particular, adversarial democracy involves a zero-sum game between the Ins and the Outs. If one party is returned to government repeatedly over successive elections, with a majority or even just a plurality of votes, the opposition has limited powers of checks and balances. Where communities are divided into multiple cleavages, especially between enduring majority and minority populations, and where these social divisions and ethnic cleavages are reflected in party politics, then the balanced rotation between government and opposition implied in the adversarial model may be absent. Predominant parties can exercise undue power and trample over the interests of minority groups. Exacerbating adversarial debate may work in stable democracies and homogeneous societies, but in deeply divided plural societies and transitional democracies, critics suggest, where there is minimal agreement about the rules of the game as well as about basic policy issues, this can be a recipe for disaster. The potential dangers, it is argued, are

"elective dictatorship," disregard for minority rights, administrative corruption arising from insufficient checks and balances, unfairness to minor parties, and public disillusionment if citizens feel that governments are unresponsive to their needs and if fragmented opposition parties mean that elections are unable to insure a regular rotation of parties in power.

Arguments For and Against Consensual Democracy

To guard against these dangers, critics present many alternative visions of how representative democracy should function and what institutions are necessary as the structural foundations for these normative ideals. These arguments can also be discussed and framed in many ways, including as Madisonian, deliberative, or consociational models of democracy.[17] In this study I focus upon the arguments developed by Lijphart in favor of consensus democracy as the most systematic comparative treatment of the subject. The vision of consensual representative democracy emphasizes that political institutions should promote consensual decision-making, bargaining, and compromise among multiple parliamentary parties, each with a stake in power, and dispersed decision-making processes. Proponents of consensual democracy suggest that proportional electoral systems facilitate deliberative and collaborative governance, reduce the barriers to minority parties, maximize voting turnout, and ensure that parliaments faithfully mirror the social and political diversity in society, all of which can be regarded as essential, but not sufficient, conditions for checking and balancing the power of predominant majorities.

Facilitate Deliberative and Collaborative Governance

For those who favor consensual democracy, the primary function of elections is to allow citizens to choose spokespersons to discuss, negotiate, and bargain on their behalf. Representation is less geographical than social. Far from concentrating collective responsibility in the hands of the single-party government, it is believed that the process of governance should be dispersed as widely as possible among elected representatives who are empowered to deliberate, bargain, and achieve compromise acceptable to all actors, with many institutional checks and balances, including multiple political parties in parliament, to ensure that plural interests are heard in a consensual decision-making process. The vision of democracy underlying this perspective is essentially more deliberative and collaborative than adversarial.

Reduce the Barriers to Minor Parties

Advocates of consensual democracy emphasize the need for electoral systems to give fair and just representation so that the distribution of parliamentary seats reflects the share of the popular vote won by all parties. This process is thought to provide Madisonian checks to single-party government and

majority predominance. For many critics, the traditional moral case against majoritarian electoral systems is based on the way this system systematically penalizes the share of seats awarded to minor parties who achieve a significant share of the vote but with support dispersed thinly across many districts, exemplified by the Canadian Progressive Conservatives in 1993, the Alliance Party in New Zealand in 1993, or the British Liberal Democrats in 1983. All electoral systems winnow out the field of candidates and parties that enter office, by translating votes into seats. In theory, pure PR systems have little reductive impact, as the seat share received by each party reflects its vote share. In practice, no PR system is wholly proportional in outcome, even with minimum vote thresholds, large district magnitudes, and proportional formulas. But PR electoral systems are designed to allocate seats more closely to the share of the vote received by each party than are majoritarian and plurality electoral systems, which prioritize different objectives. By facilitating the election of more minor parties, PR systems also broaden electoral choice, providing voters with a wider range of alternatives. By contrast, by discouraging some minor parties from standing, voters face fewer party choices, although also simpler options, under majoritarian electoral systems.

Maximize Electoral Participation

Under majoritarian and plurality electoral systems, supporters of minor and fringe parties, with geographic support dispersed widely but thinly across the country, may feel that casting their votes will make no difference to who wins in their constituencies, still less to the overall composition of government and the policy agenda. The "wasted votes" argument is strongest in safe seats in single-member districts where the incumbent candidate or party is unlikely to be defeated. In contrast, proportional elections with low vote thresholds and large district magnitudes, such as the Party Lists system used in the Netherlands, increase the opportunities for minor parties to enter parliament even with a relatively modest share of the vote and dispersed support, and, therefore, increase the incentives for their supporters to cast a vote. Because fewer votes are wasted in a PR system, it is believed that proportional representation systems should therefore generate higher electoral turnout than majoritarian or plurality electoral systems.[18]

Ensure Parliamentary Diversity

Proponents of consensus democracy also emphasize the importance of social inclusion, so that all voices and multiple interests are brought to the policymaking process, and, in this regard, they emphasize the need for diversity in the composition of parliaments. It is well established that certain social groups are over-represented in elected office, with parliamentary elites commonly drawn from predominant ethnic groups, men, and those of

higher occupational status. Although there are substantial variations worldwide, overall, women constitute only one-sixth (14.4%) of national legislators worldwide, with women usually lagging furthest behind in national parliaments using majoritarian electoral systems.[19] Reformers have considered various strategies designed to widen opportunities for women and minorities, including legally binding candidate quotas, dual-member constituencies designated by minority group or gender, and affirmative action for candidacies and official positions within party organizations. Some of these mechanisms can be used in single-member districts, for example, in the mid-nineties the British Labour party adopted all-women shortlists for nomination in half its target seats. But advocates argue that affirmative action can be implemented most easily when applied to balancing the social composition of party lists, for example, by designating every other position on the candidate list for women.[20] These mechanisms, proponents suggest, can also increase the number of regional, linguistic, ethnic, or religious minorities in parliament, although their effects depend upon the spatial concentration of each group. Socially diverse representation can be regarded as intrinsically valuable for consensus democracy, by improving the range of voices and experience brought to policy discussions, and also because the entry of minority representatives into public office can increase a sense of democratic legitimacy and develop leadership capacity.[21] Proponents argue that it is important to maximize the number of "winners" in elections, particularly in divided or heterogeneous societies, so that separate communities can peacefully coexist within the common borders of a single nation-state.[22]

Critiques

Against these arguments, most critics of PR emphasize certain well-known themes, arguing that these electoral systems are prone to generate indecisive electoral results and weak, ineffective, and unstable governing coalitions where it is difficult for voters to assign clear responsibility; create institutional checks and balances characterized by policy stalemate, administrative paralysis, and legislative gridlock; foster cautious, slow, and incremental decision-making and limit the ability of policymakers to respond in timely and coherent fashion to a sudden crisis; encourage the legitimation of extremist parties on the far right and left; reduce the accountability of elected members to local parties and constituents; and weaken the inability of the electorate to throw out some "king making" parties that are semipermanent members of coalition governments.

The alternative visions of democracy have often fuelled attempts to reform the electoral system to achieve either greater government accountability through majoritarian systems or wider parliamentary diversity through proportional systems. Underlying the normative debate are certain important empirical claims about the consequences of electoral rules for voting

behavior and for political representation. We, therefore, need to go on to examine systematic evidence to see how far the normative claims are supported by comparative evidence. Do PR systems generate more opportunities for minor parties but also the dangers of excessive party fragmentation? Do majoritarian systems produce decisive outcomes where the leading party is empowered to govern alone for the duration of their term in office but also exclude minor parties from fair representation? It is to these issues that I now turn.