

TOPIC 8: ELECTIONS

PART I: Introduction and overview

Elections define democracy. They are also one of the best ways to educate both politicians and people about democracy.

Obviously good governance is much more than elections. However, free elections have been found to be the fairest way citizens can choose or change leaders who have power over them.

'Free and fair' elections can be judged on four outcomes of them. These are:

- Choice
- Accountability
- Dialogue
- Legitimacy

Four of the prime reasons for elections are therefore:

- to provide competition among candidates to decide members of parliament to provide a way of later [holding these representatives of the people \(Members of Parliament or 'MP's\) to account.](#)
- to set up a dialogue between voters and parties (and between the state and society) so as to define needs and refine good ideas
- to give to office holders authority and legitimacy. That is, if they win elections on merit they will be recognised by all as the best persons available for the job.

Competitive elections give authority

By winning competitive elections office holders therefore enjoy an authority that enables them to carry out duties confidently and effectively.

On the contrary, in [authoritarian regimes](#) where rulers are above the law, competition is limited. By manipulating campaigns these regimes give the illusion of choice (for outsiders in particular), and the reality of power (for their own people).

In these regimes ruling parties manipulate election outcomes by control of:

- the media
- the electoral system
- the resources of government

Egypt before the Arab Spring, and many newly independent African countries since the 1960s, have provided typical examples. In Egypt's case widespread disaffection resulted from President Mubarak's government manipulation of 'contests' which gave only the appearance of a strong multi-party system.

From 1976 numerous parties competed unsuccessfully for seats in Egypt's Peoples' Assembly until millions of people rebelled in widespread protests in 2013.

Africa's 'Big Man' Political culture

In [competitive authoritarian regimes](#) there can be as many rewards for voting for a dominant leader as there are threats made by these regimes against competing parties and leaders. [Dominant leaders in Africa's 'Big Man' presidential culture were a feature of post-colonial independence.](#)

These leaders rely on being already well known. This is not only because they are able to dominate the media but also because of their often legitimate achievements.

Other ways these regimes dominate elections, without always rigging them, are:

- by calling in credits for handouts given to their election districts – as well as others given out while in office
- by putting off credible opponents (because of regime control of media and government resources, the odds against opponents seem hopeless.¹)
- by numerous ‘clients’ of their patrons seeking to gain favours, post- election, through helping with the election campaign, and its results
- by permitting some opposition victories – but not enough to affect the overall result
- by banning independent politicians from standing – or the unequal applying of rules to do with registration of parties or leaders, which restrict their exposure

Franchise: who has – and should have – the right to vote

In the 1960s and 1970s most democracies worldwide extended the franchise, or right to vote, to 18 years-olds.²

In many democracies the only persons excluded from this right are convicted criminals. However, some countries, including Canada and Israel, have argued that ‘if you are locked up you don’t have to be locked out.’ Another reason put forward to justify inclusion of criminals in the franchise is that societies can separate ‘contempt for the act from respect for right(s)’³ and still be just.

Voting rights for non-residents?

Today many people around the world live, work and pay taxes – often for many years – within other countries. Strong arguments have been made that residents should have some say in conditions that affect them. Forty countries now allow some form of non-citizen rights, including the right to vote and dual citizenship.

Purpose of elections: a summary

Elections bring together most of the virtues of democracy. The order of importance of these virtues or values – for people and politicians – will depend on the level of education of those involved. And the level of development of the particular democracy involved. Emerging democracies may have different priorities from this list:

1. the choosing of leaders
2. the creation of ideas (for use in policy platforms)
3. the estimation of public opinion
4. the education of voters

Elections have been described as the most important event in the political lives of candidates and Members of Parliaments (MPs).⁴ This is because they educate politicians in the policy-making process while providing citizens with opportunities to give their feedback about policies.

Electoral Systems – important things to know

An electoral system has three important aspects:

- The structure of the ballot – how many candidates per party are listed
- The [electoral formula](#) – how votes are converted into seats in parliament – including the [kind of majority](#) used to award winning seats

- [Districting](#) – how a country’s territory and people are divided into electorates – also called constituencies or electoral districts. [\[See glossary for districting and ‘boundary delimiting’ terms.\]](#)

Test of effectiveness of electoral systems

The test of whether an electoral system is effective is whether it delivers both acceptance and stability. If a balance of power is reached, an electoral system can be said to be successful.

In other words: if winners do not try to change the system to their own advantage, and losers do not blame the rules for their defeat, a system is judged to be effective.

Electoral formula

The system used to convert votes into representative ‘seats’ is called the electoral formula. It works out how many MPs are obtained by the winning party or parties that form the ruling party/coalition or government.

Of five options, [there are two basic types of electoral formulas or systems](#):

- proportional systems – using proportional representation – PR;
- winner-takes-all or First-Past-the-Post systems (FPP or FPTP)

How seats are distributed when votes are counted

Proportional representation (PR) is the calculation method by which seats are allocated to parties, according to their share of the total nationwide vote.

Bottom-lines or thresholds are set beforehand. For example, a party must win more than five percent of the total vote to get any seats in parliament.

Non-PR systems are where voting is not rewarded in proportion to the share of the vote. In these systems, the winner within each electorate district ‘takes all’ by gaining the most number of votes and therefore winning a seat in parliament as an MP. There are [advantages and disadvantages to all the systems](#) depending on such things as:

- citizens’ education levels
- the country’s development
- the history of conflict and
- the types of divisions within the country.

PART II: VOTING SYSTEMS AND THEIR DEVELOPMENT

Move away from two-party to proportional systems

In the 19th and 20th centuries the most common reform of electoral systems was the change from majority or plurality systems to proportional ones.⁵ A majority of democratic countries in the last century have now opted for proportional systems.⁶ In Africa the situation is mixed depending on colonial heritage, level of development and dominant party influence, amongst other factors.⁷

The first wave of demand for proportional systems was in the first quarter of the 20th century. In response to demands for universal suffrage – where every adult has the right to vote – both conservative and liberal parties opted for [proportional systems](#).

Socialist parties also opted for this because for minority parties like them, it removed the bias of majoritarian systems. In these systems major parties, usually just two of them, took all the seats despite significant proportions voting for minor parties.

Second Wave of reform

In the late 20th century reformers pushed for proportional systems so as to include a wider range of a country's minority voices in assemblies. This was termed the 'third wave of democracy'.⁸

For parties representing minority groups, these proportional systems ensured at least some representation. As the coalitions these systems produced were some protection against dominance by single ruling parties, they became popular with countries wanting support or 'buy-in' from all social groups. For some countries, however, two-party systems are still seen to be more stable.⁹

Thresholds and smaller district magnitudes reduce discord

By setting percentage thresholds that parties needed to be above, as well as creating smaller [district magnitudes](#),¹⁰ countries reduced previous fragmenting and discord. At the same time these measures excluded from ruling power any of the small anti-system parties. It did not ban them outright, however.

These proportional systems also produce a higher turnout than plurality or FPTP systems (IDEA, 2006)¹¹

Electoral campaigns and party loyalty

If the function of elections is to promote:

- choice
- accountability
- dialogue
- legitimacy

then election campaigns are not only for choosing leaders but also an intense education lesson in democracy for a country as a whole.

Significantly, studies have found big conversions from one party to another are unusual. Party loyalties go deep. It follows that one of the major function of elections, at least in dominant two-party systems, is to "record the decisions of individuals rather than create them."¹²

Campaign strategies

It has also been found that few voters switch parties from one election to another. These findings mean that campaign strategies, rather than trying to change deep-seated loyalties, usually focus on:

- mobilising existing supporters
- winning over new voters

Therefore, effective campaign strategies target:

- first time electors
- previous abstainers (those not voting in the last election or elections)
- previous defectors (those who changed parties in last election or elections)
- supporters of minor parties
- 'undecided' voters

Campaigns can still be decisive

Campaigns can still be decisive in changing minds and hearts, however. Short term campaigns have been found to have limited effects on second-time voters but can still tip the balance in favour of well-prepared candidates.

Research has also revealed that when campaign resources are relatively the same ensured usually by laws on advertising and laws limiting television coverage – the effects of these resources tend to cancel out. Under these conditions, results depend almost entirely on the quality of candidates and their ideas.

Campaigns as a national education lesson in politics

As stated, even when campaigns do not change a result, they are always a national political seminar. They enlighten voters about parties, about candidates and about policies. Most candidates report that in campaigning they are uniquely educated about their electorates – either by the expression of public opinion, research, or direct encounters on the campaign trail.¹³

These effects hold, irrespective of the impact of the campaign on levels of party support.

Campaign issues

Parties tend to focus on issues in which they have a natural advantage. But they cannot entirely control the agenda of a campaign. In the cut and thrust of exchanges about issues, political reputations can still be made. More importantly, policies are proposed, examined, refined – and often rejected.

[A good campaign](#) moves forward agendas for action. And if run well, a campaign not only educates voters and politicians but also provides voters with a vision 'to new expectations about what politics should yield over the coming years.'¹⁴

PART III: VOTING SYSTEMS AND OTHER ELEMENTS OF DEMOCRACY

Democracies are not all the same

Democracies can vary according to the:

- [types of electoral systems](#) they have
- the type of elections they have

For example, a basic distinction between a [presidential](#) and a [parliamentary system](#) is that in a presidential one the president is directly elected by the people whereas the prime minister is elected as a member of the legislature. That is, the prime minister becomes head of government because s/he is leader of his or her party – or of a coalition of parties which together form a majority of possible seats.

Electing Presidents

In democracies most presidents are elected. There are three different systems:

- Presidential (USA)
- Semi-presidential (France)
- Parliamentary, with a presidential figurehead (Ireland, Somalia)

Most presidents are directly elected, usually by a two-round system. The main choice is between [plurality and majority methods](#).

Delegate systems – a level of discretion or an outdated form?

However, some voting systems for presidents feature indirect voting. For instance, the US votes through a college by delegates themselves previously elected by a wider body. Versions of this are also used for elections of Upper Houses or House of Elders.

By the mid 1990s, most presidents were directly elected by majority systems. These systems are increasing as more countries dispense with both indirect elections and plurality. (Note: A plurality contest is one in which candidates with the most votes win on the first and only round, often with an unacceptably small share of the vote. For example, in 1992 the Philippines' Fidel Ramos won with just 24 percent of the votes.) This matches the trend to direct elections in parliamentary elections.¹⁵

Election of public officials

Legislators (MPs in federal or national parliaments) are mostly elected directly, both on the regional and national levels. While lower houses are more likely to be directly elected there is a variety of techniques for upper houses to ensure a mix of wisdom and competence.

Direct presidential elections encourage broad participation

It is becoming more common for presidents to be elected from a ballot involving all citizens. This is because most countries believe it is more important for unity to confirm majority backing for a single president than for every single MP.

Distribution requirements made by these countries also encourages presidential candidates to broaden their support. For example, Indonesia requires a first round victory of at least 20 percent of votes in a majority of provinces. Such thresholds and provisions can be especially valuable in regionally divided societies. And can be further guaranteed by recording them in constitutions.

Majority elections

Most majority elections for presidency feature run-off voting between the top two candidates. A saying from the French experience that 'French voters choose in the first count, and decide in the second' emphasises the advantages of 'a second look'. Most often the winning candidate leads in both rounds. Not always, however – in Latin America between 1979 and 1992 the leading candidate in one third of the run-offs lost in round two.

Direct vs indirect elections

One third of presidential elections are still not by direct election. This is understandable in the case of transition governments and where there are strong regional and tribal divisions. A president who wins broad support on his/her record is regarded to be a greater force for unity – and if necessary, for change.

In many ways indirect or electoral college elections, set up in part to act as a buffer against the whims of the people, presupposes the people to be a problem. This may be either because they lack the critical thinking that comes from education or because they are victims of manipulated information.

Other features that safeguard democratic values

Three other features of presidential elections are worth considering in terms of democratic values and a balance of power. They are:

- The length of term
- The possibility of re-election
- The link with other elections.

Length of term

Presidents are typically elected for terms of between four and seven years, five being average. Generally, it is easier for a president to adopt a longer view when free from the burden of re-election.

At four years, the US presidency is increasingly seen as too short, given the extraordinary time demands of re-election in that country. The French presidency at seven years was regarded as too long and was recently reduced to five. This also allows for better timing with an elected assembly legislature.

Restricting re-elections of leaders

The possibility of re-election is another consideration, especially where domination by a personality or single party has become a problem. Some countries reduce the number of terms to two for this reason (Mexico has made it one).

In 2016, fitting an African stereotype, Chad's President Deby was returned for a fifth term after a twenty-six-year rule. The opposition withdrew from the electoral commission the week before, citing doubts the vote would be credible.

There are also problems with re-electable presidents not being directly accountable to the people in the last year(s) of their final term. Presidents in this instance, with no real legislative influence, may resist 'lame duck' labels by becoming instead 'high eagles'. A final term, in this perspective, can give the opportunity to present wider and longer views – or promote needed system reform beyond partisan considerations.

Timing of elections can matter

Timing also matters. If assembly elections are held at the same time as presidential ones, a president is more likely to come from the largest party in the legislature. This strong alignment makes passing legislation easier.

Weak alignment is one explanation for difficulties that recent US presidents have faced passing legislation in an opposite-party Congress. In this situation necessary compromises are instead seen more as partisan defeats to be avoided at all costs.

It was out of concern for the problems involved in lack of alignment that France reduced its presidential term to five years.

Further Reading

Part IV is further reading on the meaning of mandates won by governments at elections. Also included are some of the other checks and balances available to citizens in democracies – as well as a chart on the different electoral systems used worldwide.

To keep the lessons user-friendly it is available here as a hypertext.

[PART IV: Elections in responsive democracies](#)

1 Bratton, M. (1998) 'Second Elections in Africa', *Journal of Democracy* (9) 51-66: 'In a "Big Man Culture" it is unclear whether the re-election of an incumbent constitutes the extension of a leader's legitimacy or the resignation of the electorate to his inevitable dominance.'

2 Austria, Brazil and Scotland have now made their franchise at age 16.

3 Manza J. & Uggen, C. (2008) *Locked Out: Felon Disenfranchisement and American Democracy* (New York: Oxford University Press.) *Whatever the rights and wrongs of such exclusion policies, the social consequences in the US is that one in seven Afro-Americans cannot vote.*

4 "No part of the education of a politician is more indispensable than the fighting of elections." (Winston Churchill)

5 Colomer, J. (2004b) 'The Strategy and History of Electoral System Choice', in *Handbook of Electoral System Choice*, ed. J. Colomer (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan) pp. 3-80.

6 <http://www.proportional-representation.org/>

7 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Table_of_voting_systems_by_country

8 Huntington, S. (1991) *The Third Wave of Democratisation in the Late Twentieth Century* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press).

9 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Table_of_voting_systems_by_country

10 There is a complex formula for establishing district magnitudes or the number of voters per district.

11 IDEA (International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance) (2006) *Engaging the Electorate: Initiatives to Promote Voter Turnout From Around the World*, <http://www.idea.int>, accessed 13 June 2006.

12 Butler, D (1989) *British General Elections since 1945* (Oxford: Blackwell.)

13 Schmidt-Beck, R. and Farrell, D. (2002) 'Do Political Campaigns Matter? Yes, but It Depends', in *Do Political Campaigns Matter? Campaign Effects in Elections and Referendums*, ed. D. Farrell and R. Schmidt-Beck (London: Routledge) pp. 183-93.

14 Hague, R., Harrop, M. (2013). *Comparative government and politics: An introduction. 9th edn*, Basingstoke: Macmillan. p. 116)

15 Negretto, G. (2008) 'Political Parties and Institutional Design: Explaining Constitutional Choice in Latin America', *British Journal of Political Science* (39) 117-39.

Representative democracy permits different levels of involvement

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A system which pays its Members of Parliament to represent a manageable number of citizens (60, 000 is a typical number but it can be more than 100,000) can thereby allow all its other citizens to choose their level of involvement in politics.

In other words, a political life is available for those who want it. Meanwhile, those busy with other interests can just vote at elections – and in between times can monitor how well the government is doing.

Therefore representative democracy can be seen also as a valuable division of labour in a specialised world – while still allowing all citizens to accept their responsibilities towards government and each other.

When necessary this may involve joining interest groups, making submissions, taking part in initiatives, recalls, referendums, protests or other forms of political activism.

[Schudson, M. (1988) The Good Citizen: A History of American Civic Life (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press).]

A modern classification of governments

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	Characteristics	Examples
Liberal democracy	<p>Representative and limited government operating with reference to law. This provides an accepted framework for political competition.</p> <p>Regular elections based on near universal suffrage are judged 'free and fair.' Individual rights, including freedom of expression and association, are respected.</p>	<p>Affluent Western countries such as Australia, Canada, France and Germany. India is an example of a predominantly liberal democracy in what is still mainly a poor country.</p>
Competitive authoritarian (hybrid regime)	<p>Leaders in these countries are elected with no or minimal falsification of the vote count. A level playing field for all candidates is prevented, however, by rulers exploiting their position.</p> <p>To keep potential opponents off- balance, rulers interfere with the rule of law, with the media and with the market. Individual rights are poorly entrenched and the judiciary is weak</p>	<p>Many post-military states in Africa and Latin America (eg Venezuela). Several Asian states (e.g. Malaysia). Some post-communist states (e.g. Russia)</p>
Authoritarian regime	<p>These are countries where rulers stand above the law and are free from effective popular accountability. The media are controlled or intimidated enough not to expose all information. Political participation is usually limited and discouraged.</p> <p>However, the rulers' power is often constrained by the need for tacit alliances with other power-holders such as landowners, the military and religious leaders.</p> <p>In the totalitarian states of last century participation was compulsory but controlled. Governments sought total control of society. They justified this by ideologies seeking to transform both society and human nature itself. These regimes placed heavy reliance on party members, the secret police and other informers as agents of social control.</p> <p>Totalitarian states are often treated as a separate category from authoritarian regimes</p>	<p>Military governments, ruling monarchies and personal dictators.</p> <p>Note: authoritarian rule is the most common form of rule in history.</p> <p>Communist and fascist regimes subscribed to totalitarian thinking but the model was rarely fully implemented, except for a time in the Soviet Union. More recently, Iran after the Islamic revolution of 1979 showed some totalitarian characteristic. North Korea is a further example.</p>

African political regimes: 1989 (and since – to 2015)

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TABLE 1. *African political regimes in 1989.*

REGIME TYPE			
AUTHORITARIAN REGIMES		PLURALIST REGIMES	
MILITARY REGIMES	ONE-PARTY REGIMES	INCLUSIVE MULTIPARTISM	RACIAL OLIGARCHIES
Burkina Faso, Burundi, Chad, Ghana, Guinea, Lesotho, Liberia, Mauritania, Nigeria, Sudan, Uganda	Angola, Benin, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Comoros, Congo, Djibuti, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Guinea-Bissau, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Niger, Rwanda, São Tomé, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Swaziland, Tanzania, Togo, Zaire, Zambia	Botswana, Senegal, Mauritius, The Gambia, Zimbabwe	South Africa
N = 11	N = 29	N = 5	N = 1

Source: Adapted from Bratton – van de Walle (1997:77)

From 1989 – 2015: 27 African countries still ruled by authoritarian regimes or ‘nominal democracies’ in 2015

<http://www.theguardian.com/global-development-professionals-network/ng-interactive/2015/feb/25/democracy-africa-maps-data-visualisation>

FORMULA FOR SIZE OF ELECTORATES

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Question: Is there a formula for the number of Members of Parliament?

Countries vastly differ in their ratios of MPs to citizens in parliament. For example, the lower house of Japan's House of Representatives has 480 MPs, whereas the United Kingdom's House of Commons has 650. So:

- Is there a universal formula that assists countries when deciding how many MPs should be in parliament?
- Why do countries with large populations have more MPs than countries with smaller populations?
- Is there any literature explaining how countries decide on the number of MPs?



Answers: Summary of Responses

There is no universal formula for assigning the number of MPs in a parliament

Practitioners' Network (PN) members generally agreed that there is no universal formula determining the number of MPs in a parliament. Furthermore, several members argued that a single criterion cannot apply across the board.

This is due to the political sensitivity of every country's delimitation process – as well as the variety of stakeholders involved – often with competing interests.

One PN member from Burundi noted that factors that affect number of MPs in a given country include:

- the historical background of a parliament
- the size of the country
- population size, geography
- number of administrative units or districts
- the number of registered voters all

In addition, a member from arrangement prioritizes:

- the diversity of political parties
- the interests of marginalized communities and
- local government representation.

Several PN members also cautioned that governments can influence the number of MPs in an arrangement favourable to them prior to a general election. One member from Madagascar noted that between the governments of 2004 and 2007 the number of MPs varied between 121 and 150, for a population of 7-8 million voters.

However, safeguards can be implemented against this, as another member suggested citing the case of Kenya. The Kenyan Constitution stipulates that no boundary review process can affect any election within 12 months of it, and all changes only take effect in the next election.

Countries Establish their own Constitutional Arrangements for the Number of MPs

Several members suggested that countries often establish the number of MPs based on a

Constitutionally decreed formula. PN members noted this to be the case in the United States, Australia, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Kenya.

For example, as one electoral expert from Senegal noted, the Senegalese electoral law gives administrative units or departments ('departements') with a population less than 150,000 residents no more than 2 assembly seats. The maximum number of seats for a department is 7, and a minimum is 1.

Another PN member from Tunisia noted that in each of the country's 24 governorates there is approximately 1 MP per every 60,000 inhabitants. This ratio is used also in New Zealand and many countries with parliamentary democracies.

Literature

One PN member from the United States suggested visiting the Cube Root rule, which recommends assembly size be near the cubed root of an entire population. The same member additionally suggested reading Matthew Shugart's blog for examples of its application <http://fruitsandvotes.wordpress.com/2005/08/29/reapportionment-a-better-way/>

However, another respondent cautioned that this formula rarely governed most countries' decision-making processes on assembly size. The same member also suggested that the Cube Root rule was originally proposed by Rein Taagepera in an article in 1973.

External Resources

Taagepera, Rein. 1973. "Seats and Votes: A Generalization of the Cube Law of Elections." *Social Science Research* 2:257-275. 29 Theil, H. 1969. "The Cube Law Revisited."

- [Royal Commission on the Electoral System \(New Zealand\)](#)
- [Australian Constitution](#)
- [Matthew Shugart: Reapportionment–A better way?](#)

Contributions

David Jandura, June 24. 2013

A good method is the cubed root rule, which would have an assembly size be near the cubed root of the total population. I would recommend reading Matthew Shugart's blog for some examples.
<http://fruitsandvotes.com/?cat=164>

Bernard Grofman, June 24. 2013

The cube root law referenced above was first proposed by Rein Taagepera in an article around 1972. Taagepera offers a justification for it in terms of communication channels, but it is not as if those who choose assembly size are deliberately following some mathematical formula.

Elijah James, June 24. 2013

The larger number of MPs for smaller populations is a reality for my country and the total number of MPs have grown over the years arbitrarily based on the obscured perspectives or more so interest of the political parties and their reps responsible for establishing the amount of seats prior to a general election...

Ideally I believe that the number of seats which in turn delivers the amount of MPs should be based on "national" geographical spaces (parishes, districts, counties etc not villages or anything smaller) in countries and not on the amount of people living or based in areas in the country... Reason being has to do with the role and functions of MPs in Parliament, which are to be legislators acting like a board of directors looking at the big picture for the country...

Much like a lawyer that can represent 1 person or a group... As such you tend to find a lot more larger countries that have more political maturity have adapted as such versus smaller countries with political party members wanting seats and as such create way to many to accomodate their counterparts

David Jandura, June 24. 2013

You're correct of course, I didn't mean to imply that's how decisions were actually made.

Laurie McGrath, June 25. 2013

The number of members of a parliament may be prescribed in the country's Constitution. This is the case in both Australia and the United States.

In Australia, the Constitution in s.7 sets down the number of Senators that can be elected to the parliament and it allows for the parliament to increase the number if it wishes.

Parliament has increased the Senate size over the last 100 years from 36 to 76, 12 for each state and 2 for each of the territories. Any further increase would require well-reasoned argument as the Australian electorate is quick to react to any attempt to expand parliamentary numbers.

The number of Senators determines the number of MP's in the House of Representatives, the parliamentary chamber in which Government is formed. Under s.24 of the Constitution the number of MP's cannot exceed twice the number of Senators (152) and it currently has 150 MP's. So to increase its number requires an increase in the number of Senators.

Australia's Constitution can be accessed at: http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/cth/consol_act/coaca430/

Mirimo Mulongo, June 25. 2013

Translate En République Démocratique du Congo, c'est la constitution adoptée au référendum qui a fixé à 500 le nombre de députés qui composent l'Assemblée nationale pour plus de 32 millions d'électeurs. Chaque pays suivant un certain nombre des critères détermine la composition de l'Assemblée nationale.

Bucumi Julius, June 25. 2013

The determination of the number of MPs in first over all a political decision of each country.

To take decision the decision makers are inspired by a certain number of facts such as the historical background of the Parliament, the size of the country and the all population, the geographical aspects, the number of voter on the roll, the economic situation, the will of more approaching the population (proximity), the will of solving conflict by giving jobs to potential people to disturb the leaders, etc.

Such facts are discussed and analysed before determination of number of the MPs. The most known or taken as sine qua non is the number of the population at whole or number of voters in some countries. They have to know how many citizens each MP is representing to see if he/she is able to meet them and transmit their problems for solution in Parliament or somewhere else.

In Burundi, the Constitution stipulates a minimum of 100 MPs for a population of about 8,5 million. To this number, is added 3 MPs non-elected by co-opted from the Batwa minority ethnic and other 3 co-opted persons for gender balance to make the total of 106 MPs.

For the Senate, the law stipulates of 2 Senators by each Province or constituency which are

17. To this is added the former chiefs of states and we have 4. To this is added 3 MPs non- elected by co-opted from the Batwa minority ethnic to make the total of 41.

Therefore, to determinate the number of MPs varies from one country to another for the variable elements cited above.

Julius BUCUMI - Inspector of Justice, Burundi

Robert Marsh, June 27. 2013

For a detailed discussion of the theory underpinning the cube root "law" see Taagapera and Shugart, Seats and Votes (c.1986, I think).

The question of the appropriate number of seats was considered in some detail in New Zealand by the Royal Commission on the Electoral System. Their report can be found here: <http://www.elections.org.nz/voting-system/mmp-voting-system/report-royal-commission-electoral-system-1986>

Abdiwahidi Hussein, June 27. 2013

The number of seats(MPs) with respect to the population of the country is mostly stipulated in the country's constitution. Kenya for example, the number of the constituencies is fixed at 290 while counties are 47.

However, the actual boundaries of each constituency shall be such that the number of inhabitants in the constituency is, as nearly as possible, equal to the population quota, but the number of inhabitants of a constituency may be greater or lesser than the population quota by taking account of realities such as:

- (a) geographical features and urban centres;
- (b) community of interest, historical, economic and cultural ties; and

(c) means of communication.

The constitution also requires that in reviewing constituency and ward boundaries consultation with all interested parties is done with a view to progressively work towards ensuring that the number of inhabitants in each constituency and ward is, as nearly as possible, equal to the population quota. The population quota is the country's population divided by the Maximum Number of constituencies as stipulated by the constitution i.e. say 40 million divided by 290.

In the Kenyan case any boundaries review completed within 12 months to the general election cannot take effect for that election but will take effect on the subsequent election. This helps to curb possible opportunistic manipulation of the process by those in political power.

Whereas it is theoretically possible to envision a formula for determining the number of seats versus the population of the country/voters, it is practically impossible to have same criteria apply across the board because of the sensitivity of the delimitation process as a seriously political process that requires consultation, give and take and balancing of various competing interests. The historical, political, social economic, legal, geographical and the contextual realities/factors have more weight and relevance than a formula parse.

Equally important is the independence and the confidence that public/citizens or voters and political leaders have on the body entrusted with the determining the boundaries and seats if any. The need for a clear dispute resolution mechanism inbuilt into the delimitation process is also important in order to ensure compliance with legal requirements and ensure all those aggrieved have a way to access review and expeditious dispute resolution mechanism.

Hedi Trabelsi, August 24. 2013

The republic of Tunisia is a small country in north Africa. Its total area is 163,610.00 sq km (slightly larger than the state of Georgia in US). Its population in 2010 was almost

10 531 300. Tunisia has been divided into 27 constituencies at the time of the last Constituent Assembly – parliament- elections ran in October 23th, 2011. 21 Constituencies of them are already administrative departments taken on as they are. Three great administrative departments are divided each into two constituencies.

In our country, the formula for the number of parliament members -for every constituency - was:

- (a) One (1) seat per 60000 habitants**
- (b) Add a seat if the remainder of the division of the population by 60000 is great than 30000 habitants**
- (c) Add a seat if population is between 270000 and 500000 habitants**
- (d) Add 2 seats if population is less than 270000 habitants**
- (e) Maximum is 10 seats**

Condition D is favourable for more political influence to west departments into the country which were used to be marginalized and depopulated by rural exodus to east departments at the time of dictatorship in Tunisia before 2011. In addition, West departments have started Tunisian revolution against dictatorship's regime whose president ran away in 14th January 2011.

The total number of parliament members was 217: 199 in country + 18 out country

Just remark: $217 \times 217 \times 217 = 10\,218\,313$

Stina Larserud, March 03. 2014

Please find an attempted overview of legislature sizes around the world - comparing the actual ones to the cube root rule. Some interesting things to note are that only about two dozen countries fall within +/-10% of this rule and only about three dozen countries fall within +/-20%. And China, Cuba and the Democratic Republic of Korea are interesting cases all on one end of the spectrum...

Attachments

[Legislature-sizes-cube-root-of-population.xlsx \(26.7 kB\)](#)

The Electoral Knowledge Network – ACE Retrieved June 24, 2013

<http://aceproject.org/electoral-advice/archive/questions/replies/760379812>

Types of majorities

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MAJORITIES: A majority is defined as 'the most,' usually more than 50 percent. But in the development of democracy, varying degrees of majority rule have been decided on – from unanimity to plurality.

Some guarantee a higher degree of support than others, needed for such widespread 'buy-in' as approval for change of a constitution (75 percent, for example) or decision to impeach a president (66 percent, for example).

Degrees of democracy: from unanimity to plurality

Unanimity: All need to agree, assent or at least acquiesce (agree to go along with) - as in 'a unanimous decision was made by the committee.'

Plurality: The largest number of votes but not necessarily a majority.

Majority (simple majority): More than half of those who actually voted

Absolute majority: More than half of those entitled to vote

Concurrent majority: More than one majority required: for example, most voters and most provinces

Qualified majority: More than a simple majority: typically, two-thirds

Weighted majority: A majority after adjusting votes for differences in voting power for example, shareholders may have one vote per share

Districting – making electorates as equal as possible

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Political context of delimiting (ensuring electorates are equal in numbers)

Single-member districts provide voters with strong electorate (constituency) representation. Voters have a single, easily identifiable district representative to whom they can appeal for electorate service. Voters also have a single district representative whom they can hold accountable for protecting interests of constituents.

Advantages of single-member districts:

The delimitation of single-member districts has several advantages. The three most often cited are:

- Simplicity
- stability
- strong links between elected representatives and their constituents.

Each of these advantages may be important ones, depending on the social and political context in which the districts are adopted.

Also, elections held in single-member districts tend to be quite easy for voters to understand, especially when combined with plurality or majority voting rules. This simplicity may be a significant advantage for countries with high illiteracy rates.

Single-member districts promote stability by facilitating strong, single party government. This is because single-member districts tend to produce election outcomes in which the majority party is over-represented.

This may be an important advantage in countries that have reason to fear or have actually experienced a proliferation of small extremist parties or coalition governments that have frequently fallen.

Efficacy, turnout and legitimacy

This may have a positive effect on voters' feelings of political efficacy, which may, in turn, increase voter turnout. Political efficacy and turnout are both important ingredients for system legitimacy.

For newly emerging democracies the advantage of legitimacy – that is, most voters accepting the right of the winning party to govern – may be important.

Disadvantages of single-member districts especially in divided societies

Single-member districts have one very serious drawback: they tend to over-represent the majority political party at the expense of the other political parties. Countries that delimit single-member districts must be willing and able to accept disproportional election outcomes.

Although it is possible to devise a fair and non-partisan redistricting process, it is not possible to guarantee an unbiased election outcome with single-member districts unless there are provisions for a second, party vote (as is the case with a mixed electoral system).

Disproportional election results may be difficult to accept in a country with many political parties representing widely disparate interests. The results will be virtually impossible to accept if deep cleavages exist in the society.

For example, if there is a relatively large, politically cohesive ethnic, racial, or religious minority group that has consistently been denied what it perceives as fair representation, elections could lead to conflict, possibly even violence and instability.

Historical context to delimiting and development away from it

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, representation in parliament was based on communities, not on the number of individuals or voters.

‘Electorates’, or constituencies, varied greatly in population. For example, In England, regardless of its size, each county, borough, and university, had two representatives in the House of Commons.

The representatives of the House of Commons, and all legislatures throughout Europe, reflected the view that communities or distinct categories of society should be represented, not individuals or voters. Example of these categories were the clergy and the nobility, also known as the ‘high born’ or aristocracy.

Calls for all section of society to be represented

Beginning in the late eighteenth century, citizens began to demand a broadening of their franchise (those entitled to vote). They wanted those representing them in parliament to be more fairly chosen. That is, they wanted MPs to come from all sections of the community, not just landowners or those privilege by birth.

Single-member districts for the election of legislators were embraced by this movement as a means of achieving greater democracy. These citizens believed not only would single-member districts ensure more equal representation in society but also they would produce a more representative legislature. The urban, working class, and other traditionally under-represented groups, could thereby win seats in parliament.

Single-member districts were also adopted in the eighteenth century in the British colonies that later became the United States. Many European countries gradually followed suit during the nineteenth century,

Having more than one MP per district avoids need for delimiting

Today, the norm in Europe is multimember districts that correspond to administrative divisions and therefore do not require periodic delimitation. Equality of population is achieved by varying the numbers of legislators elected from a district, rather than redrawing district lines or boundaries.

Instead, administrative divisions such as states, provinces, or counties can be used to elect representatives.

How the shift away from single-member electorate happened historically

Historically, the trend towards single-member districts in Europe ebbed with the advent of proportional representation in the late nineteenth century. Between 1899, when Belgium adopted proportional representation, and 1921, when Norway moved to proportional representation, most of the continental European countries adopted one form of proportional representation or another.

European countries that continued to use communities for the election of representatives rather than specially delimited electoral districts were the less progressive countries, such as Portugal or the Balkan states.

Of the more modern European countries, only Switzerland and Belgium used multi-member districts throughout the nineteenth century. Since 1919, the year Switzerland adopted proportional representation, representatives have been elected from multimember districts that correspond to canton boundaries.

In 1850, 49 electoral districts, or constituencies, were created after the 1848 decision to base representation on population. Prior to 1848, each Swiss canton sent a single representative to the federal assembly.

In 1899 Belgium used its nine historic provinces as boundaries for its multimember districts. But it recognised the principle of equal representation by varying the number of representatives assigned to each province. When

proportional representation was adopted in Belgium, multimember districts based on provincial boundaries were retained.

In 1849 Denmark adopted single-member districts for elections to its lower chamber. A newly-unified Italy chose single-member districts to elect representatives to the national legislature in 1861 with North German Confederation following in 1867 and imperial Germany, in 1871.

Development of single-member districts

France has used single-member districts intermittently since 1875, Britain since 1885, and the Netherlands began them in 1887. In 1905 Norway became one of the last European countries to adopt single-member districts.

Countries that have adopted proportional representation systems are able to use multi-member districts to make their electorates equal. Therefore they no longer have to periodically redraw district boundaries. Instead, administrative divisions such as states, provinces, or counties can be used to elect representatives.

Equality of population is achieved by varying the numbers of legislators elected from a district, rather than redrawing district lines.

Today, the norm in Europe is multimember districts that correspond to administrative divisions and do not require periodic delimitation.

Social and Political Context

The delimitation of single-member districts has several advantages. The three most often cited are simplicity, stability and strong links between elected representatives and their constituents. Each of these advantages may be important ones, depending on the social and political context in which the districts are adopted.

Elections held in single-member districts tend to be quite easy for voters to understand, especially in conjunction with plurality or majority voting rules. Simplicity may be a significant advantage for countries with high illiteracy rates.

Single-member districts promote stability by facilitating strong, single party government. This is because single-member districts tend to produce election outcomes in which the majority party is over-represented. This may be an important advantage in countries that have reason to fear or have actually experienced a proliferation of small extremist parties or coalition governments that have frequently fallen.

Single-member districts provide voters with strong constituency representation. Voters have a single, easily identifiable district representative to whom they can appeal for constituency service. Voters also have a single district representative whom they can hold accountable for protecting constituency interests.

This may have a positive effect on voters' feelings of political efficacy, which may, in turn, increase voter turnout. Political efficacy and turnout are both important ingredients for system legitimacy, which may be important to newly emerging democracies.

Single-member districts have one very serious drawback: they tend to over-represent the majority political party at the expense of the other political parties. Countries that delimit single-member districts must be willing and able to accept disproportional election outcomes. Although it is possible to devise a fair and non-partisan redistricting process, it is not possible to guarantee an unbiased election outcome with single-member districts unless there are provisions for a second, party vote (as is the case with a mixed electoral system).

Disproportional election results may be difficult to accept in a country with many political parties representing widely disparate interests. The results will be virtually impossible to accept if deep cleavages exist in the society.

For example, if there is a relatively large, politically cohesive ethnic, racial, or religious minority group that has consistently been denied what it perceives as fair representation, elections could lead to conflict, possibly even violence and instability.

Taking the Politics Out of Redistricting – and ‘gerrymandering’

Traditionally, legislatures have been responsible for drawing their own districts. Electoral abuses such as malapportioned districts (districts that vary substantially in population) or “gerrymandered” districts (districts intentionally drawn to advantage one political party or group at the expense of the others) were not uncommon.

These abuses led a number of countries to adopt reforms designed to remove ‘politics’ from the redistricting process. In these countries, non-partisan commissions draw district boundaries following a set of neutral redistricting criteria.

The public is encouraged to participate through a public inquiry process. And the legislature is permitted only a limited role, if any role at all, in the redistricting process.

Redistricting, in hands of independent assessors, provides public trust

These reforms have been adopted by many Commonwealth countries, where the reforms appear to have been quite successful. Redistricting is rarely viewed as “partisan,” even when the outcome of an election clearly favours one party at the expense of the other parties. Despite their success in the countries that have adopted them, reforms of the redistricting process have not been embraced everywhere. For example, legislatures still draw congressional districts in most states in the United States.

Political self-interest cannot be controlled?

In the United States, the political system and political institutions were designed on the premise of competing factions, with special interests and parochial concerns vying for limited resources within the legislature. As a result, Americans tend to assume that “politics” and the pursuit of political self-interest are inevitable.

Reforms of the redistricting process are unlikely to be adopted in the near future because many Americans believe it is as impossible to divorce politics from the redistricting process as it is to divorce politics from the legislative process in general.

Only countries that are less pluralistic, more politically ideological, and more public-regarding accept the proposition that politics can be removed from the redistricting process. Furthermore, strong party organisations and centralised legislative authority are needed to enforce sanctions against legislators who attempt to influence the redistricting process.

While these conditions appear to be met in most Commonwealth countries, they are not present everywhere.

But countries that adopt independent boundary commissions and neutral redistricting criteria can only prevent partisan interests from controlling the process; these countries cannot alleviate disproportional election outcomes.

Outcomes of single-member systems usually fail fairness test

If political fairness is defined by outcome, rather than by process – and specifically by a proportional outcome for political parties and/or minority groups – then single-member systems will fail the fairness test more often than not, no matter who draws the districts.

Countries that value proportionality over all else – perhaps because of the need to ensure equitable representation to deeply divided groups within the society – are wise to choose some form of proportional representation, which may or may not include provisions for single-member districts.

If stability in the form of strong, single party government is more important, however, delimiting single-member districts is a good choice.

Administrative and Cost Considerations

Delimiting electoral districts can be a complex, expensive, and time-consuming process. Countries that choose to delimit electoral districts must be prepared to administer what may be a very complicated procedure and must be willing to spend the necessary funds to complete the process. Administering the process will be complicated. Information from a wide variety of sources must be collected, verified, and synthesised.

Districts must be drawn, and then must be evaluated – procedures that could involve political party and other stakeholders input. And after a final set of districts is adopted, they must be implemented.

This usually requires changes to voter registration lists, and voter notification of new district assignments. In addition, election officials may have to redraw voting areas and relocate polling places. Ultimately, implementation may require a great deal of co-ordination with local and regional governments as well as election officials at the local, regional, and federal levels.

Delimitation is an ongoing process

Of course, the redistricting process in the United States is quite decentralised, and the amount of money each state spends varies considerably: some states spend well over US\$1 million to draw congressional districts, and millions more to defend these districts if challenged in court; other states, however, spend far less.

Regardless of the actual amount spent, countries must recognize that delimitation is rarely a one-time event and must be prepared to devote the time and resources necessary to redraw electoral districts periodically.

This discussion draws heavily from an article written by Michael Steed entitled "The Constituency" which appeared in Representatives of the People? Parliamentarians and Constituencies in Western Democracies, edited by Vernon Bogdanor and published by Gower Publishing in 1985.

Definitions for districting or boundary delimiting terms

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Boundary Delimitation - the science of electorate sizing (to ensure all citizens are equally represented and fairly represented)

Glossary:

Boundary Delimitation: (or districting) the process of drawing electoral districts or voting area boundaries.

District Magnitude: the number of legislative seats assigned to a district.

Redistricting: the periodic delimitation of electoral districts or voting areas for representation purposes.

Electoral District: geographic unit that defines legislative representation (conversion of votes) according to type of electoral system being used.

Voting Areas: (also called polling areas, districts or election precincts) administrative units where all voters within the circumscribed geographic territory are assigned to the same polling place.

Gerrymandering: manipulating the electoral boundaries so as to give undue influence to some party or class; districting or redistricting in a discriminatory manner.

Malapportionment: electoral districts that vary greatly in population

Geographic Information Systems (GIS): technology that is used to view and analyze data from a geographic perspective. This data may exist as maps, 3D virtual models, tables, and/or lists.

Community of Interest: generally thought of as a group of individuals united by shared interests or values.

Boundary Authority: specially designated commission or group that divides a country or region into districts for the election of representatives.

Reapportionment: periodic redrawing of geographic boundaries of electoral districts from which legislative representatives are elected; a primary purpose of early census enumeration

<https://aceproject.org/ace-en/topics/bd/onePage>

PART IV: ELECTIONS IN RESPONSIVE DEMOCRACIES

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Elections give mandates to governments – and send messages to them

The message of a campaign (victory or defeat) is constructed after the result. This means there is always an emphasis on the positive attributes or policies of the winning party or parties. Also, on the lessons to be learned from defeats.

Positive interpretations about elections are presented in terms of a mandate. This is the word used for the power given to elected officials to carry out the policies they were elected on. It is often also used to sum up the collective judgement delivered up by an election. However, political scientists note many of the claims often made in the name of an election mandate are exaggerated.

Meaning of elections: false logic when interpreting results

In practice, the full meaning of elections is open to interpretations. Often mandates claimed by a victorious party are often broader than policies promised pre-election.

The logic of treating voters as accomplices backing wide-ranging actions is therefore:

- i. Proposal X was part of our policy platform;
- ii. You voted us in; therefore
- iii. We have a mandate to carry out X.

However, just because a candidate belonging to a certain party wins does not necessarily mean s/he won because of everything that party stands for. The false logic here is:

- i. Y is a conservative;
- ii. Y wins; therefore
- iii. Y must have won because he was conservative.

Other elections: referendums, initiatives, and recalls

Along with election of public officials, democracy has three other elections: referendums, initiatives and recalls. These finer (or at least additional) instruments, available in more responsive democracies, act as checks on power or guidance for it.

These types of election act more like a direct democracy than a representative one.

Referendums

Referendums are growing in frequency. They are usually employed for constitutional, policy and moral issues and may be mandatory or optional referendums. That is, they may be binding on government or consultative. If they are consultative, they are the like opinion voting.

Referendums give to those in authority an indication of the way people think though governments are not legally bound to act on them. In this way, referendums can educate both the government and voters, a key function in any democracy. Their weakness is they can reduce complex issues to black or white answers.

A plebiscite is the name given to a ballot to consult public opinion in a non-binding way. Though not binding, plebiscites can be useful to give an indication to leaders about public opinion. (Note: small group random sampling applied to the whole population is much cheaper, quicker and accurate to a known 'statistical error'.)

Referendums permit the public to make direct decisions about policy. They have a safety-valve or blockage-clearing function, especially in coalition governments when certain decisions are difficult – or beyond the usual compromises.

Disadvantages of referendums

The disadvantages of referendums are:

- they can be easily manipulated (the question may have more complexity than the wording of a single question can contain)
- they be used too often, resulting in low turnouts and therefore dubious mandates
- there is no way to ensure consistency
- it is not always clear if the result of them should be considered decisive
- government can choose issues of more benefit to them
- their results can be ignored
- wealthy companies can wage advertising campaigns on issues in which they stand to gain
- zealous minorities can seek reform in which others are not interested

Initiatives

Initiatives are votes on a policy called by the people. The initiative proposes an issue for a nation-wide vote and its organizers have to collect a certain number of signatures from the public. The government is then obliged to organise a vote.

For example, in Switzerland 100, 000 electors can propose a new law at canton (gobol/region) level, or an amendment to the constitution at federal level.

Referendum initiatives are a legal opportunity in 37 countries, mostly in Europe or Latin America.

Agenda initiatives

Agenda initiatives also require a certain number of signatures but are petitions to the legislature requiring them to discuss a particular topic. These have been found to be useful for minorities wanting to take their concerns to lawmakers to discuss.

After WWI this mechanism was introduced to several countries' constitutions. Examples are Austria and Spain. Since 1989 other states such as Poland and Thailand have also introduced it (IDEA, 2008).¹ In Britain at least 100, 000 signatures are required – as long as at least one member of parliament will speak in support of it.

Recalls

Recalls are a form of no-confidence vote that removes an elected official during his/her normal tenure. Initiated by a petition signed by a minimum proportion of votes cast for that office (typically about 25 percent), the recall is a political device unlike the legal impeachment.

A recall seeks to remove corrupt or incompetent officials before their time is up, for the common good. Available in Venezuela for all officials, even the president, it requires the initiative of 20 percent of the relevant election.²

¹ IDEA (International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance) (2008) *Direct Democracy*, <http://www.idea.int>, accessed 17 April, 2009

² *If the security and integrity of internet voting could be guaranteed, both the initiative and the recall could be used more frequently in the future for those wanting more responsive, direct democracies.*

Different electoral systems

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PLURALITY AND MAJORITY SYSTEMS

Single-member plurality: first-past-the-post system

Procedure: The candidate securing most votes (not necessarily a majority) is elected on the first and only ballot within each single-member district

Examples: Bangladesh, Canada, India, UK, USA.

Two round system

Procedure: If no candidate wins a majority on the first ballot, the leading candidates (usually the top two) face a second, run-off election.

Examples: Iran, Mali, Vietnam.

Absolute majority: alternative vote (AV) or preferential voting system

Procedure: Voters rank candidates. If no candidate wins a majority of first preferences, the bottom candidate is eliminated and his or her votes are redistributed by second preferences.

This process continues until a candidate has a majority of votes.

Examples: Australia, Papua New Guinea.

PROPORTIONAL SYSTEMS

List system

Procedure: Votes are cast for a party's list of candidates, though in some countries the elector can also express support for individual candidates on the list.

Examples: Brazil, Czech Republic, Israel, Netherlands.

Single transferable vote (STV) system

Procedure: Voters rank candidates in order of preference. Any successful candidate needs a set number of votes – the quota.

All candidates who exceed this quota on first preferences are elected. Their surplus votes are then distributed according to second preferences. When no candidate has reached this quota, the bottom candidate is eliminated and these votes are transferred up the list.

This process continues until the quotas are reached and all seats are filled.

Examples Ireland, Malta.

Mixed member proportional (MMP)

Procedure: Electors usually have two votes. One is for the district election (which typically uses the plurality method), and the other is for a PR contest (usually for a party list). The two tiers are linked so as to deliver a proportional outcome overall. The 'party vote' determines the number of seats to be won by each party.

Elected candidates are drawn, first, from the party's winners in the district contests, topped up as required for proportionality by candidates from the party list.

Examples: Germany, New Zealand.

PARALLEL SYSTEM

Mixed member majoritarian (MMM)

Procedure: As for MMP, except that the two tiers are separate, with no mechanism to achieve a proportional result overall.

Examples: Japan, Thailand.

FIVE ELECTORAL SYSTEM OPTIONS: ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES		
	Advantages	Disadvantages
List Proportional Representation (List PR)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proportionality • Inclusiveness • Minority Representation • Few Wasted Votes • Easier for Women Representatives to be elected • No (or less) need to draw boundaries • No need to hold by-elections • Facilitates absentee voting • Restricts growth of single party regions • Higher voter turnout likely 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weak geographical representation • Accountability issues • Weaker legislative support for president more likely in presidential systems • Coalition or minority governments more likely in parliamentary systems • Much power given to political parties • Can lead to inclusion of extreme parties in the legislature • Inability to throw a party out of power
First Past the Post (FPP or FPTP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong geographic representation • Makes accountability easier to enforce • Is simple to understand • Offers voters a clear choice • Encourages a coherent opposition • Excludes extremist parties • Allows voters to choose between candidates • Strong legislative support for president more likely in presidential systems • Majority government more likely in parliamentary systems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excludes minority parties • Excludes minorities • Excludes women • Many wasted votes • Often need for by-elections • Requires boundary delimitation(s) • May lead to gerrymandering • Difficult to arrange absentee voting
Two Round System (TRS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gives voters a second chance to make a choice • Less vote-splitting than many other majority/plurality systems • Simple to understand • Strong geographic representation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires boundary delimitation(s) • Requires a costly and often administratively challenging 2nd round • Often need for by-elections • Long time period between election and declaration of results • Disproportionality • May fragment party systems • May be destabilising for deeply divided societies
Parallel System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusiveness • Geographical Representation • Accountability • Few wasted votes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complicated system • Requires boundary delimitation(s) • Often need for by-elections

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May be easier to agree on than other alternatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can create two classes of representatives • Strategic voting • More difficult to arrange absentee voting than with List PR • Does not guarantee overall proportionality
Mixed Member Proportional (MMP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proportionality • Inclusiveness • Geographical representation • Accountability • Few wasted votes • May be easier to agree on than other alternatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complicated system • Requires boundary delimitation(s) • Often need for by-elections • Can create two classes of representatives • Strategic voting • More difficult to arrange absentee voting than with List PR

[Proportional Representation \(PR\)](#)

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The rationale underpinning all PR systems is to consciously reduce the disparity between a party's share of the national vote and its share of the parliamentary seats; if a major party wins 40 per cent of the votes, it should win approximately 40 per cent of the seats, and a minor party with 10 per cent of the votes should also gain 10 per cent of the legislative seats. This congruity between a party's share of the vote and its share of the seats provides an incentive for all parties to support and participate in the system.

PR requires the use of electoral districts with more than one member: it is not possible to divide a single seat elected on a single occasion proportionally. There are two major types of PR system—List PR and Single Transferable Vote (STV). Proportionality is often seen as being best achieved by the use of party lists, where political parties present lists of candidates to the voters on a national or regional basis, but preferential voting can work equally well: the Single Transferable Vote, where voters rank-order candidates in multi-member districts, is another well-established proportional system.

There are many important issues which can have a major impact on how a PR system works in practice. The greater the number of representatives to be elected from a district, the more proportional the electoral system will be. PR systems also differ in the range of choice given to the voter—whether the voter can choose between political parties, individual candidates, or both.

[Advantages of PR systems](#)

In many respects, the strongest arguments for PR derive from the way in which the system avoids the anomalous results of [plurality/majority systems](#) and is better able to produce a representative legislature. For many new democracies, particularly those which face deep societal divisions, the inclusion of all significant groups in the legislature can be a near-essential condition for democratic consolidation. Failing to ensure that both minorities and majorities have a stake in developing political systems can have catastrophic consequences, such as seeking power through illegal means.

PR systems in general are praised for the way in which they:

- Faithfully translate votes cast into seats won, and thus avoid some of the more destabilizing and 'unfair' results thrown up by plurality/majority electoral systems. 'Seat bonuses' for the larger parties are minimized, and small parties can have their voice heard in the legislature.
- Encourage or require the formation of political parties or groups of like-minded candidates to put forward lists. This may clarify policy, ideology, or leadership differences within society, especially when, as in Timor-Leste at independence, there is no established party system.
- Give rise to very few wasted votes. When thresholds are low, almost all votes cast in PR elections go towards electing a candidate of choice. See [Voluntary Party Candidate](#) Quotas to read who may determine the selection process in political parties. This increases the voters' perception that it is worth making the trip to the polling booth at election time, as they can be more confident that their vote will make a difference to the election outcome, however small.
- Facilitate minority parties' access to representation. Unless the threshold is unduly high, or the district magnitude is unusually low, then any political party with even a small percentage of the vote can gain representation in the legislature. This fulfils the principle of inclusion, which can be crucial to stability in divided societies and has benefits for decision making in established democracies, such as achieving a more balanced representation of minorities in decision-making bodies and providing role models of minorities as elected representatives.

- Encourage parties to campaign beyond the districts in which they are strong or where the results are expected to be close. The incentive under PR systems is to maximize the overall vote regardless of where those votes might come from. Every vote, even from areas where a party is electorally weak, goes towards gaining another seat.
- Restrict the growth of 'regional fiefdoms'. Because PR systems reward minority parties with a minority of the seats, they are less likely to lead to situations where a single party holds all the seats in a given province or district. This can be particularly important to minorities in a province which may not have significant regional concentrations or alternative points of access to power.
- Lead to greater continuity and stability of policy. The West European experience suggests that parliamentary PR systems score better with regard to governmental longevity, voter participation, and economic performance. The rationale behind this claim is that regular switches in government between two ideologically polarized parties, as can happen in FPTP systems, makes long-term economic planning more difficult, while broad PR coalition governments help engender a stability and coherence in decision making which allow for national development.
- Make power-sharing between parties and interest groups more visible. In many new democracies, power-sharing between the numerical majority of the population who hold political power and a small minority who hold economic power is an unavoidable reality. Where the numerical majority dominates the legislature and a minority sees its interests expressed in the control of the economic sphere, negotiations between different power blocks are less visible, less transparent, and less accountable (e.g. in Zimbabwe during its first 20 years of independence). It has been argued that PR, by including all interests in the legislature, offers a better hope that decisions will be taken in the public eye and by a more inclusive cross-section of the society.

Disadvantages of PR systems

Most of the criticisms of PR in general are based around the tendency of PR systems to give rise to coalition governments and a fragmented party system. The arguments most often cited against PR are that it leads to:

- Coalition governments, which in turn lead to legislative gridlock and consequent inability to carry out coherent policies. There are particularly high risks during an immediate post-conflict transition period, when popular expectations of new governments are high. Quick and coherent decision making can be impeded by coalition cabinets and governments of national unity which are split by factions.
- A destabilizing fragmentation of the party system. PR can reflect and facilitate a fragmentation of the party system. It is possible that extreme pluralism can allow tiny minority parties to hold larger parties to ransom in coalition negotiations. In this respect, the inclusiveness of PR is cited as a drawback of the system. In Israel, for example, extremist religious parties are often crucial to the formation of a government, while Italy endured many years of unstable shifting coalition governments. Democratizing countries are often fearful that PR will allow personality-based and ethnic-cleavage parties to proliferate in their undeveloped party systems.
- A platform for extremist parties. In a related argument, PR systems are often criticized for giving a space in the legislature to extremist parties of the left or the right. It has been argued that the collapse of Weimar Germany was in part due to the way in which its PR electoral system gave a toehold to extremist groups of the extreme left and right.
- Governing coalitions which have insufficient common ground in terms of either their policies or their support base. These coalitions of convenience are sometimes contrasted with coalitions of commitment produced by other systems (e.g. through the use of AV), in which parties tend to be reciprocally dependent on the votes of supporters of other parties for their election, and the coalition may thus be stronger.

- Small parties getting a disproportionately large amount of power. Large parties may be forced to form coalitions with much smaller parties, giving a party that has the support of only a small percentage of the votes the power to veto any proposal that comes from the larger parties.
- The inability of the voter to enforce accountability by throwing a party out of power or a particular candidate out of office. Under a PR system, it may be very difficult to remove a reasonably-sized centre party from power. When governments are usually coalitions, some political parties are ever present in government, despite weak electoral performances from time to time. The Free Democratic Party (FDP) in Germany was a member of the governing coalition for all but eight of the 50 years from 1949 to 1998, although it never gained more than 12 per cent of the vote.
- Difficulties either for voters to understand or for the electoral administration to implement the sometimes complex rules of the system. Some PR systems are considered to be more difficult than non-PR systems and may require more voter education and training of poll workers to work successfully.

List PR

In its most simple form, List PR involves each party presenting a list of candidates to the electorate in each multi member electoral district. Voters vote for a party, and parties receive seats in proportion to their overall share of the vote in the electoral district. Winning candidates are taken from the lists in order of their position on the lists.

The choice of List PR does not in itself completely specify the electoral system: more details must be determined. The system used to calculate the allocation of seats after the votes have been counted can be either a Highest Average or a Largest Remainder Method. The formula chosen has a small but sometimes critical effect on the outcomes of elections under PR. In Cambodia in 1998, a change in the formula a few weeks before polling day turned out to have the effect of giving the largest party 64 seats, instead of 59, in a 121-seat National Assembly. The change had not been well publicized, and it was with difficulty that the opposition accepted the results. This example clearly demonstrates the importance for electoral system designers of apparently minor details.



Cambodian closed List PR ballot paper

There are several other important issues that need to be considered in defining precisely how a List PR system will work. A formal threshold may be required for representation in the legislature: a high threshold (for example 10 per cent, as used by Turkey) is likely to exclude smaller parties, while a low threshold (for example 2 per cent, as used by Israel) may promote their representation. In South Africa, there is no formal threshold, and in 2004

the African Christian Democratic Party won six seats out of 400 with only 1.6 per cent of the national vote. List PR systems also differ depending on whether and how the voter can choose between candidates as well as parties, that is, whether lists are closed, open or free (panachage). This choice has implications for the complexity of the ballot paper.

Other choices include arrangements for formal or informal 'vote pooling'; the scope for agreements between parties, such as that provided by systems which use apparentement; and the definition of district boundaries.

Advantages and disadvantages of List PR

Advantages of List PR

- In addition to the advantages attached to PR systems generally, List PR makes it more likely that the representatives of minority cultures/groups will be elected. When, as is often the case, voting behaviour dovetails with a society's cultural or social divisions, then List PR electoral systems can help to ensure that the legislature includes members of both majority and minority groups. This is because parties can be encouraged by the system to craft balanced candidate lists which appeal to a whole spectrum of voters' interests. The experience of a number of new democracies (e.g. South Africa, and Indonesia) suggests that List PR gives the political space which allows parties to put up multiracial, and multi-ethnic, lists of candidates. The South African National Assembly elected in 1994 was 52 per cent black (11 per cent Zulu, the rest being of Xhosa, Sotho, Venda, Tswana, Pedi, Swazi, Shangaan and Ndebele extraction), 32 per cent white (one-third English-speaking, two-thirds Afrikaans-speaking), 7 per cent Coloured and 8 per cent Indian. The Namibian Parliament is similarly diverse, with representatives from the Ovambo, Damara, Herero, Nama, Baster and white (English and German-speaking) communities.
- List PR makes it more likely that women will be elected. PR electoral systems are almost always more friendly to the election of women than plurality/majority systems. In essence, parties are able to use the lists to promote the advancement of women politicians and allow voters the space to elect women candidates while still basing their choice on other policy concerns than gender. As noted above, in single-member districts, most parties are encouraged to put up a 'most broadly acceptable' candidate, and that person is seldom a woman. In all regions of the world, PR systems do better than FPTP systems in the number of women elected, and 15 of the top 20 nations when it comes to the representation of women use List PR. In 2013, the number of women representatives in legislatures elected by List PR systems was 6.3 percentage points higher than the average of 21.8 per cent for all legislatures, while that for legislatures elected by FPTP was 2.8 percentage points lower.

Disadvantages of List PR

In addition to the general issues already identified relating to PR systems, the following additional disadvantages may be considered:

- Weak links between elected legislators and their constituents. When List PR is used, and particularly when seats are allocated in one single national district, as in Namibia or Israel, the system is criticized for destroying the link between voters and their representatives. Where lists are closed, voters have no opportunity to determine the identity of the persons who will represent them and no identifiable representative for their town, district or village, nor can they easily reject an individual representative if they feel that he or she has performed poorly in office or is not the kind of person they would want representing them – e.g., warlords in countries such as Bosnia or Afghanistan. Moreover, in some developing countries where the society is mainly rural, voters' identification with their region of residence is sometimes considerably stronger than their identification with any political party or grouping. This criticism, however,

may relate more to the distinction between systems in which voters vote for parties and systems in which they vote for candidates.

- Excessive entrenchment of power within party headquarters and in the hands of senior party leaderships—especially in closed-list systems. A candidate's position on the party list, and therefore his or her likelihood of success, is dependent on currying favour with party bosses, while their relationship with the electorate is of secondary importance. In an unusual twist to the List PR system, in Guyana parties publish their list of candidates not ranked but simply ordered alphabetically. This allows party leaders even more scope to reward loyalty and punish independence because seats are only allocated to individuals once the result of the vote is known.
- The need for some kind of recognized party or political groupings to exist. This makes List PR particularly difficult to implement in those societies which do not have parties or have very embryonic and loose party structures, for example, many of the island countries of the Pacific. While technically possible to allow independent candidates to run under various forms of PR, it is difficult and introduces a number of additional complications, particularly as relates to wasted votes.

The Single Transferable Vote (STV)

STV has long been advocated by political scientists as one of the most attractive electoral systems, but its use for legislative elections has been limited to a few cases—the Republic of Ireland since 1921, Malta since 1947, and once in Estonia in 1990. It is also used for elections to the Australian Federal Senate and in several Australian states, and for European and local elections in Northern Ireland. It has been adopted for local elections in Scotland and in some authorities in New Zealand. It was also chosen as the recommendation of the British Columbia Citizens' Assembly.

The core principles of the system were independently invented in the 19th century by Thomas Hare in Britain and Carl Andræ in Denmark. STV uses multi-member districts, and voters rank candidates in order of preference on the ballot paper in the same manner as under the Alternative Vote system. In most cases, this preference marking is optional, and voters are not required to rank-order all candidates; if they wish, they can mark only one.

After the total number of first-preference votes are tallied, the count then begins by establishing the quota of votes required for the election of a single candidate. The quota used is normally the Droop quota, calculated by the simple formula:

$$\text{Quota} = (\text{votes} / (\text{seats} + 1)) + 1$$

The result is determined through a series of counts. At the first count, the total number of first-preference votes for each candidate is ascertained. Any candidate who has a number of first preferences greater than or equal to the quota is immediately elected.

In second and subsequent counts, the surplus votes of elected candidates (i.e. those votes above the quota) are redistributed according to the second preferences on the ballot papers. For fairness, all the candidate's ballot papers can be redistributed, but each at a fractional percentage of one vote, so that the total redistributed vote equals the candidate's surplus (the Republic of Ireland uses a weighted sample instead of distributing fractions). If a candidate had 100 votes, for example, and their surplus was five votes, then each ballot paper would be redistributed according to its second preference at the value of 1/20th of a vote. After any count, if no candidate has a surplus of votes over the quota, the candidate with the lowest total of votes is eliminated. His or her votes are then redistributed in the next count to the candidates left in the race according to the second and then lower preferences shown. The process of successive counts, after each of which surplus votes are redistributed or a candidate is eliminated, continues until either all the seats for the electoral district are filled by candidates who have received the

quota, or the number of candidates left in the count is only one more than the number of seats to be filled, in which case all remaining candidates bar one are elected without receiving a full quota.

Advantages and disadvantages of STV

Advantages of STV

The advantages claimed for PR generally apply to STV systems. In addition, as a mechanism for choosing representatives, STV is perhaps the most sophisticated of all electoral systems, allowing for choice between parties and between candidates within parties. The final results retain a fair degree of proportionality, and the fact that in most actual examples of STV the multi-member districts are relatively small means that a geographical link between voter and representative is retained. Furthermore, voters can influence the composition of post-election coalitions, as has been the case in the Republic of Ireland, and the system provides incentives for interparty accommodation through the reciprocal exchange of preferences between parties.

STV also provides a better chance for the election of popular independent candidates than List PR, because voters are choosing between candidates rather than between parties (although a party-list option can be added to an STV election; this is done for the Australian Senate).

Disadvantages of STV

The disadvantages claimed for PR generally also apply to STV systems. In addition:

- STV is sometimes criticized on the grounds that preference voting is unfamiliar in many societies, and demands, at the very least, a degree of literacy and numeracy.
- The intricacies of an STV count are quite complex. This has been cited as one of the reasons why Estonia decided to abandon the system after its first election. STV requires continual recalculations of surplus transfer values and the like. Because of this, votes under STV need to be counted at counting centres instead of directly at the polling place. Where election integrity is a salient issue, counting in the actual polling places may be necessary to ensure legitimacy of the vote, and there will be a need to choose the electoral system accordingly.
- STV, unlike Closed List PR, can at times produce pressures for political parties to fragment internally because members of the same party are effectively competing against each other, as well as against the opposition, for votes. This could serve to promote 'clientelistic' politics where politicians offer electoral bribes to groups of defined voters.
- STV can lead to a party with a plurality of votes nonetheless winning fewer seats than its rivals. Malta amended its system in the mid-1980s by providing for some extra compensatory seats to be awarded to a party in the event of this happening. Many of these criticisms have, however, proved to be little trouble in practice. STV elections in the Republic of Ireland and Malta have tended to produce relatively stable, legitimate governments comprising one or two main parties.

Proportional representation related issues

Proportional Representation electoral systems require to a larger extent than other systems that the designer also considers a number of issues in addition to the choice of electoral system type. These issues will affect the results of the elections both mechanically and through psychological effects by changing the incentives for voters and political parties alike. Often, these effects will appear to be minor, and this may very well be true in practice. However, even minor differences in results can sometimes have serious implications on the setup of the legislature and the formation of government, and – perhaps most importantly – the perception of the legitimacy of the elections and

the results. Also, even though many of these choices are likely to only affect the outcome slightly, some – like the choice of electoral district magnitude – will have considerable implications on the translation of votes into seats, and are thus likely to become a highly political issue. Therefore, a designer is advised to consider all these issues well in advance of an election and to be aware of the likely administrative as well as political implications the different options will have.

District Magnitude

There is near-universal agreement among electoral specialists that the crucial determinant of an electoral system's ability to translate votes cast into seats won proportionally is the district magnitude, which is the number of members to be elected in each electoral district.

Under a system such as FPTP, AV, or the Two-Round System, there is a district magnitude of one; voters are electing a single representative. By contrast, all PR systems, some plurality/majority systems such as Block Vote and PBV, and some other systems such as Limited Vote and SNTV, require electoral districts which elect more than one member. Under any proportional system, the number of members to be chosen in each district determines, to a significant extent, how proportional the election results will be.

The systems which achieve the greatest degree of proportionality will use very large districts, because such districts are able to ensure that even very small parties are represented in the legislature. In smaller districts, the effective threshold is higher. For example, in a district in which there are only three members to be elected, a party must gain at least 25 per cent +1 of the vote to be assured of winning a seat. A party which has the support of only 10 per cent of the electorate would be unlikely to win a seat, and the votes of this party's supporters could therefore be said to have been wasted. In a nine-seat district, by contrast, 10 per cent +1 of the vote would guarantee that a party wins at least one seat. The problem is that as districts are made larger—both in terms of the number of seats and often, as a consequence, in terms of their geographic size as well—so the linkage between an elected member and his or her constituency grows weaker.

This can have serious consequences in societies where local factors play a strong role in politics or where voters expect their member to maintain strong links with the electorate and act as their 'delegate' in the legislature.

Because of this, there has been a lively debate about the best district magnitude. Most scholars agree, as a general principle, that district magnitudes of between three and seven seats tend to work quite well, and it has been suggested that odd numbers such as three, five and seven work better in practice than even numbers, particularly in a two-party system. However, this is only a rough guide, and there are many situations in which a higher number may be both desirable and necessary to ensure satisfactory representation and proportionality. In many countries, the electoral districts follow pre-existing administrative divisions, perhaps state or provincial boundaries, which means that there may be wide variations in their size. However, this approach both eliminates the need to draw additional boundaries for elections and may make it possible to relate electoral districts to existing identified and accepted communities.

Numbers at the high and low ends of the spectrum tend to deliver more extreme results. At one end of the spectrum, a whole country can form one electoral district, which normally means that the number of votes needed for election is extremely low and even very small parties can gain election. In Israel, for example, the whole country forms one district of 120 members, which means that election results are highly proportional, but also means that parties with only small shares of the vote can gain representation and that the link between an elected member and any geographical area is extremely weak.

At the other end of the spectrum, PR systems can be applied to situations in which there is a district magnitude of only two. For example, a system of List PR is applied to two-member districts in Chile. This delivers results which are

quite disproportional, because no more than two parties can win representation in each district. This has tended to undermine the benefits of PR in terms of representation and legitimacy.

These examples, from the opposite ends of the spectrum, both serve to underline the crucial importance of district magnitude in any PR electoral system. It is arguably the single most important institutional choice when designing a PR system, and is also of crucial importance for a number of non-PR systems as well. The Single Non-Transferable Vote, for example tends to deliver moderately proportional results despite not being in essence a proportional formula, precisely because it is used in multi-member districts. Similarly, the Single Transferable Vote when applied to single-member districts becomes the Alternative Vote, which retains some of the advantages of STV but not its proportionality. In Party Block Vote and Block Vote systems, as district magnitude increases, proportionality is likely to decrease. To sum up, when designing an electoral system, district magnitude is in many ways the key factor in determining how the system will operate in practice, the strength of the link between voters and elected members, and the overall proportionality of election results.

On a related note, the party magnitude (the average number of successful candidates from the same party in the same electoral district) is an important factor in determining who will be elected. If only one candidate from a party is elected in a district, that candidate may well be male and a member of the majority ethnic or social groups in the district. If two or more are elected, balanced tickets may have more effect, making it likely that more women and more candidates from minorities will be successful. Larger districts (seven or more seats in size) and a relatively small number of parties will increase the party magnitude.

[The Threshold](#)

All electoral systems have thresholds of representation: that is, the minimum level of support which a party needs to gain representation. Thresholds can be legally imposed (formal thresholds) or exist as a mathematical property of the electoral system (effective or natural thresholds).

Formal thresholds are written into the constitutional or legal provisions which define the PR system. In the mixed systems of Germany, New Zealand, and Russia, for example, there is a 5 per cent threshold in the PR section: parties which fail to secure 5 per cent of the vote nationwide are ineligible to be awarded seats from the PR lists. This concept had its origins in the desire to limit the election of extremist groups in Germany, and is designed to stop very small parties from gaining representation.

However, in both Germany and New Zealand there exist 'back-door' routes for a party to be entitled to seats from the lists; in the case of New Zealand, a party must win at least one constituency seat, and in the case of Germany three seats, to bypass the threshold requirements. In Russia in 1995, there were no back-door routes, and almost half of the party-list votes were wasted. Elsewhere, legal thresholds range from 0.67 per cent in the Netherlands to 10 per cent in Turkey. Parties which gain less than this percentage of the vote are excluded from the count. A striking example of this was the 2002 Turkish election, in which so many parties failed to clear the 10 per cent threshold that 46 per cent of all votes were wasted. In all these cases, the existence of a formal threshold tends to increase the overall level of disproportionality, because votes for those parties which would otherwise have gained representation are wasted. In Poland in 1993, even with a comparatively low threshold of 5 per cent for parties and 8 per cent for coalitions, over 34 per cent of the votes were cast for parties and coalitions which did not surmount it.

An effective, hidden, or natural threshold is created as a mathematical by-product of features of electoral systems, of which district magnitude is the most important. For example, in a district with four seats under a PR system, just as any candidate with more than 20 per cent of the vote will be elected, any candidate with less than about 10 per cent (the exact figure will vary depending on the configuration of parties, candidates, and votes) is unlikely to be elected.

[Open, Closed and Free Lists](#)

While the List PR system is based on the principle that parties or political groupings present candidates, it is possible to give voters a degree of choice within List PR between the candidates nominated as well as between the parties. There are essentially three options that can be chosen—open, closed, and free lists.

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

Many List PR systems in Western Europe use open lists, in which voters can indicate not just their favoured party but their favoured candidate within that party. In most of these systems, the vote for a candidate as well as a party is optional and, because most voters mark their ballots for parties only rather than candidates, the candidate-choice option of the ballot paper often has limited effect. However, in Sweden, over 25 per cent of the voters regularly choose a candidate as well as a party, and a number of individuals are elected who would not be if the list were closed.

In Brazil and Finland, voters must vote for candidates: the number of seats received by each party is determined by the total number of votes gained by its candidates, and the order in which the party's candidates are elected to these seats is determined by the number of individual votes they receive. While this gives voters much greater freedom over their choice of candidate, it also has some less desirable side effects. Because candidates from within the same party are effectively competing with each other for votes, this form of open list can lead to internal party conflict and fragmentation. It also means that the potential benefits to the party of having lists which feature a diverse slate of candidates can be overturned. In open-list PR elections in Sri Lanka, for example, the attempts of major Sinhalese parties to include minority Tamil candidates in winnable positions on their party lists have been rendered ineffective because many voters deliberately voted for lower-placed Sinhalese candidates instead. In Kosovo, a switch from closed to open lists actually enhanced the presence of more extremist candidates. On the same note, open lists have sometimes proved to be disadvantageous for the representation of women in highly patriarchal societies, although in Poland voters have shown themselves willing to use open list to elect more women than would have resulted from the nominations made by the parties if closed lists had been used.

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

[Apparentement \(cartel\)](#)

High effective thresholds can serve to discriminate against small parties— indeed, in some cases this is their express purpose. But in many cases, an inbuilt discrimination against smaller parties is seen as undesirable, particularly where several small parties with similar support bases 'split' their combined votes and consequently fall below the threshold, when one aligned grouping would have gained enough combined votes to win some seats in the

legislature. To get around this problem, some countries which use List PR systems also allow small parties to group together for electoral purposes, thus forming a cartel—or apparentement or stembusaccoord—to contest the election. This means that the parties themselves remain as separate entities, and are listed separately on the ballot paper, but that the votes gained by each are counted as if they belonged to the entire cartel, thus increasing the chances that the combined vote total will be above the threshold and hence that they may be able to gain additional representation. This device is a feature of a number of List PR systems in continental Europe, in Latin America (where the umbrella parties are called lema) and in Israel. They are nevertheless a rarity within PR systems in Africa and Asia, and were abolished in Indonesia in 1999 after some small parties discovered that, although their cartel gained representation overall, they as parties actually lost seats. Nowadays, the coalition system has become an important way to contest elections in Indonesia due to the new electoral rules since only a political party or coalition of political parties that wins 25% of the votes or gets at least 20% of the seats in the legislature can nominate candidates for president.

Independent Candidates and PR systems

A common misconception is that independent candidates cannot run under proportional systems. This is not true, although most elections under List PR systems, will be carried out exclusively with candidates who belong to a political party. Under STV however, the very system is candidate centred and independent candidates are very common in elections in for example the Republic of Ireland.

Many times, an independent candidate will simply be treated as a one person party, presenting a list with only one name on it and will gain the seat if he or she receives enough votes in the election.

Mixed Systems

Mixed electoral systems attempt to combine the positive attributes of both plurality/majority (or other) and PR electoral systems. In a mixed system, there are two electoral systems using different formulae running alongside each other. The votes are cast by the same voters and contribute to the election of representatives under both systems. One of those systems is a plurality/majority system (or occasionally an 'other' system), usually a single-member district system, and the other a List PR system.

There are two forms of mixed system. When the results of the two types of election are linked, with seat allocations at the PR level being dependent on what happens in the plurality/majority (or other) district seats and compensating for any disproportionality that arises there, the system is called a Mixed Member Proportional (MMP) system. Where the two sets of elections are detached and distinct and are not dependent on each other for seat allocations, the system is called a Parallel system. While an MMP system generally results in proportional outcomes, a Parallel system is likely to give results the proportionality of which falls somewhere between that of a plurality/majority and that of a PR system.

Parallel and MMP systems have been widely adopted by new democracies in Africa and the former Soviet Union.

Mixed Member Proportional (MMP)

Under MMP systems, the PR seats are awarded to compensate for any disproportionality produced by the district seat results. For example, if one party wins 10 per cent of the vote nationally but no district seats, then it will be awarded enough seats from the PR lists to bring its representation up to 10 per cent of the seats in the legislature. Voters may get two separate choices, as in Germany and New Zealand. Alternatively, voters may make only one choice, with the party totals being derived from the totals for the individual district candidates.

The proportion of seats allocated according to the two elements of the system vary from country to country. Lesotho's post-conflict electoral system, adopted in 2002, contains 80 FPTP seats and 40 compensatory ones while Germany elects 299 candidates under each system.

Although MMP is designed to produce proportional results, it is possible that the disproportionality in the single-member district results is so great that the list seats cannot fully compensate for it. This is more likely when the PR electoral districts are defined not at national level but at regional or provincial level. A party can then win more plurality/majority seats in a region or province than its party vote in the region would entitle it to. To deal with this, proportionality can be closely approached if the size of the legislature is slightly increased: the extra seats are called overhang mandates or *Überhangsmandaten*. This has occurred in most elections in Germany and is also possible in New Zealand. In Lesotho, by contrast, the size of the legislature is fixed, and the results of the first MMP election in 2002 were not fully proportional.

Advantages and Disadvantages of MMP

While MMP retains the proportionality benefits of PR systems, it also ensures that elected representatives are linked to geographical districts. However, where voters have two votes—one for the party and one for their local representative—it is not always understood that the vote for the local representative is less important than the party vote in determining the overall allocation of seats in the legislature. Furthermore, MMP can create two classes of legislators—one group primarily responsible and beholden to a constituency, and another from the national party list without geographical ties and beholden to the party. This may have implications for the cohesiveness of groups of elected party representatives.

In translating votes into seats, MMP can be as proportional an electoral system as pure List PR, and therefore shares many of the previously cited advantages and disadvantages of PR. However, one reason why MMP is sometimes seen as less preferable than straight List PR is that it can give rise to what are called 'strategic voting' anomalies. In New Zealand in 1996, in the constituency of Wellington Central, some National Party strategists urged voters not to vote for the National Party candidate because they had calculated that under MMP his election would not give the National Party another seat but simply replace an MP who would be elected from their party list. It was therefore better for the National Party to see a candidate elected from another party, providing that candidate was in sympathy with the National Party's ideas and ideology, than for votes to be 'wasted' in support of their own candidate.

Parallel Systems

Parallel systems also use both PR and plurality/majority components, but unlike MMP systems, the PR component of a parallel system does not compensate for any disproportionality within the plurality/majority districts. (It is also possible for the non-PR component of a Parallel system to come from the family of 'other' systems, as in Taiwan which uses SNTV.)

In a Parallel system, as in MMP, each voter may receive either one ballot paper which is used to cast a vote both for a candidate and for his or her party, as is done in South Korea (the Republic of Korea), or two separate ballot papers, one for the plurality/majority seat and one for the PR seats, as is done for example in Japan, Lithuania, and Thailand. Parallel systems have been a product of electoral system design over the last decade and a half—perhaps because they appear to combine the benefits of PR lists with those of plurality/majority (or other) representation.

Advantages and disadvantages of Parallel systems

Advantages of Parallel Systems

In terms of disproportionality, Parallel systems usually give results which fall somewhere between pure plurality/majority and pure PR systems. One advantage is that, when there are enough PR seats, small minority parties which have been unsuccessful in the plurality/majority elections can still be rewarded for their votes by winning seats in the proportional allocation. In addition, a Parallel system should, in theory, fragment the party system less than a pure PR electoral system.

Disadvantages of Parallel Systems

As with MMP, it is likely that two classes of representatives will be created. Also, Parallel systems do not guarantee overall proportionality, and some parties may still be shut out of representation despite winning substantial numbers of votes. Parallel systems are also relatively complex and can leave voters confused as to the nature and operation of the electoral system.

District magnitudes

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DISTRICT MAGNITUDES

District magnitude is the main decider of an electoral system's ability to translate votes cast into seats won proportionally.

District magnitude is therefore the number of representatives elected from a given district to the same legislative body. For example, a [single-member district](#) has one representative, while a multi-member district has more than one.

Voting systems that seek [proportional representation](#) (such as the [single transferable vote](#)) inherently require multi-member districts, and the larger the district magnitude the more proportional a system will tend to be (and the greater the number of distinct parties or choices that can be represented.)

Delimiting electorate boundaries also has a big impact on political parties, candidates, and campaigning. An authority independent of government set up to calculate these aspects is obviously an important first step., And if elections are to be accepted as credible and legitimate it is obviously important that such a body be seen to be independent.

There is an established and careful science for the calculation of how many citizens per electorate, usually based on a mix of census figures and geographical area in which people live. Past experience has shown both these have been able to be manipulated so democratic countries set up strict regulations and protocols to ensure electorates¹ are equivalent.

In countries where is a nomadic population and there are regions or gobollada where citizens belong to the same clan, especially in the rural areas, voting on clan or tribal lines may be a reality at first. But studies show this 'loyalty' shifts over time to loyalty to policies, especially in urban areas and with increased education.

US DISTRICT MAGNITUDES – or HOW MANY VOTERS PER ELECTORATE IN THE UNITED STATES

On average a state is awarded one electoral vote for every 565,166 people. However, Wyoming has three electoral votes and only 532,668 citizens (as of 2008 estimates). As a result, each of Wyoming's three electoral votes corresponds to 177,556 people.

This means these citizens have 3.18 times as much clout in the Electoral College as an average American, or 318 percent. (That 'clout' or influence is exercised in the two-step system for electing North America's president. Each state has delegates that vote in a convention for their party's nomination for the final run-off or second vote between just two contenders. The total number of votes needed over all states is 1237 for a republican candidate and 2383 for a democrat.)

2008 National Average of voters per elector 565,166;

2004 National Average of voters per elector; 545,828

**For reconciliation of these differences, see hypertext articles on the formula for calculation and the problems with it using censuses and geographical area only.*

1 Or 'constituency' or 'electoral district' – all these words are used for the geographical area involved. The word 'gerrymandering' was coined from direct experience of corrupt boundary-setting in regions where supporters of the ruling party lived so as to give unfair advantage to them. (see Glossary of districting terms) It has become a negative word for the corrupt lack of independence and objectivity needed for a local candidate.

Somali School of Government

Good campaigns: a model computerised system for better efficiency

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[The Kenya Election Database](#)

RACE TO KENYA ELECTIONS 2017:

OVERVIEW OF THE KENYA ELECTION CAMPAIGN MANAGEMENT SYSTEM VER 1.0

On Tuesday, 8 August, 2017 the Kenyan elections will be held. It will be Kenya's eleventh General Election since independence in 1963, and the second under the new constitution.

The Kenya Election Campaign Management System version 1.0, (KECMS) designed and developed by Systex Solutions of Nairobi, is the first and so far only Election Campaign Management software that has been specifically designed to handle Kenya Election campaigns by various aspirants from Presidential to Ward elections (County Assembly Members-MCA).

The software has been integrated with the Kenya Election Database version 2.0, also developed by Systex Solutions and the only Election Data Analysis and Strategic Election Planning software in the Kenya market (visit Kenya Election Database website at www.kenyaelectiondatabase.co.ke).

In Kenya there are usually two types of election campaigns, the "jua kali" type, where the aspirant simply announces he or she intends to stand for a particular seat then goes on to print posters and hold campaign rallies, hoping to win. The other is the Strategic Election Planning (SEP) type, a well-coordinated and polished campaign using demographic data and ground-based social media networks. US President Barack Obama used such a system in both the 2008 and 2012 elections, the latter one pulling a surprise win over the Republican candidate Mitt Romney. The recent Kericho Jubilee Alliance Party senatorial nomination is another example of SEP, where a young, relative unknown candidate pulled a surprise win over veteran politicians.

The KECMCS version 1.0 combines an Election Data Analysis and Strategic Election Planning software and an Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) software into a single application, the first time this has been done for Kenya Election campaigning. The software will guarantee an aspirant full control over his election campaign from resources to finance, as seen in the modules:

ELECTION CAMPAIGN

- i. Aspirant Details
- ii. Campaign Events
- iii. Campaign Trips
- iv. Facility Booking
- v. Campaign Committee
- vi. Campaign Committee Members
- vii. Campaign Departments
- viii. Voter Cells
- ix. Voter Cell Members
- x. Campaign Correspondence
- xi. Campaign Correspondence-SMS/WhatsApp/Facebook
- xii. Campaign Advertisement
- xiii. Election Laws (Electoral Act, Regulations & Political Parties Act)
- xiv. 2017 Elections Operation Timelines

CAMPAIGN STAFF

- i. Campaign Staff Details
- ii. Campaign Staff Duty Roster
- iii. Campaign Staff Attendance
- iv. Campaign Staff Payroll
- v. Election Agents
- vi. Election Agents Attendance
- vii. Election Agents Allowance
- viii. Campaign Volunteers
- ix. Campaign Volunteer Allowance

CAMPAIGN FINANCE

- i. Campaign Bank Accounts
- ii. Campaign Budget
- iii. Campaign Budget Item Details
- iv. Campaign Budget Item Control
- v. Cash Book Transactions
- vi. Campaign Donors
- vii. Campaign Donations

CAMPAIGN LOGISTICS

CAMPAIGN TRANSPORT

- i. Campaign Vehicles
- ii. Campaign Transport Request
- iii. Campaign Vehicle Movement
- iv. Campaign Vehicle Service
- v. Transport Hire Booking

CAMPAIGN SUPPLIES

- i. Supplier Details
- ii. Store Items
- iii. Store Category
- iv. Store Purchase Order
- v. Store Requisition
- vi. Store Item Issues

CAMPAIGN SECRETARIAT

- i. Campaign Office
- ii. Campaign Office Rent
- iii. Campaign Office Rent Payments
- iv. Campaign Asset Type
- v. Campaign Asset Type Data
- vi. Campaign Asset Inventory
- vii. Campaign Asset Details
- viii. Campaign Asset Maintenance Details
- ix. Campaign Asset Maintenance History

The KECMS has 232 reports including correspondence with the aspirant's letterhead and photo hence no need to use MS-Word or print letterheads. Letters and memos can be sent via E-mail and SMS/WhatsApp and also Facebook postings can be sent to staff, Election agents, volunteers and voter cell members from the software.

The KECMS is integrated with Kenya Election Database, which is a record of the ten General Elections and two Referendums held since independence in 1963 representing an aggregate of 107 million registered voters and 142 million valid votes cast in national elections and 15 million in the Referendums. The Database is a collection of well researched and detailed analysis of all parliamentary elections since 1969, presidential elections since 1992, by-elections since 1993 and results of both 2005 and 2010 Referendums. It also has full results of the 2013 General Elections in respect of Presidential, Parliamentary, Senatorial, Gubernatorial and Women Representative elections. It is updated with results of all national by-elections since the 2013 General Elections. The Database has full results of 4,300 constituency and county elections covering 22,000 candidate results and is the only single source of full General Election results available in the market (Even the IEBC does not have historic election data).

The Database also includes details of all 210 old constituencies and the 290 new constituencies, created in 2012, including history, administrative area covered, population, land area, maps etc; details of the 1,450 county assembly wards; details of 180 political parties including the 60 officially registered parties, and their symbols; 2009 population census for all 8 old provinces, 47 counties, 158 districts, 635 divisions, 2,724 locations, 7,150 sub-locations; and 215 urban centers. The Database has the results of both the 1999 and 2009 Census, hence can also be used for social, marketing and consumer research. It also has 2015 and 2017 population projection for each Region (Province), County, Sub-County (District), Division, Location and Sub-location and also for each Constituency and Ward. The Database has details of registered voters from 1969 to December, 2012 and analysis of population vis-à-vis registered voters. The user can update latest voter registration figures by Polling Station, Ward, Constituency, County and Regions as the IEBC embarks on voter registration from February, 2016.

The Database has details of all candidates who have ever stood in any General Election since 1969, including gender and status, i.e. incumbent, former winner, previous candidate or newcomer. The Database has over 650 reports some of which are unique to this Database, e.g. Constituency notes, Political party notes, Kenya election history, women candidates, etc. The database is the most comprehensive analysis of Kenya General Elections and contains more reports (650) than the IEBC website.

If you are an aspirant, campaign manager, political party official, etc then this software will give you a head start on other aspirants. You will also receive an e-booklet on "Strategic Election Planning" (SEP) which is only available to those who purchase this software.

Professional Campaign Managers can use the software to run several campaigns at the same time and for different elective posts and also use it for subsequent By-Elections.

The KECMS runs on Microsoft Access platform and can be downloaded from a Dropbox link after purchase. It is a fully menu-driven, point and click software and is user friendly and uses the DIU (Download, Install and Use) concept. No user license is required and a User Manual is provided. A demo version can also be downloaded that shows how a fictitious aspirant uses the software. Your PC or Laptop must have MS Access version 2002 or later versions already installed. It comes zipped hence must be unzipped and installed on your hard-drive. It is about 900 MB in size. The software costs only Kshs 14,700/= but if you wish to purchase the Kenya Election Database separately then it costs only Kshs 2,000/=.

E-mail: systexsolutions@yahoo.com Or call: 0722751753

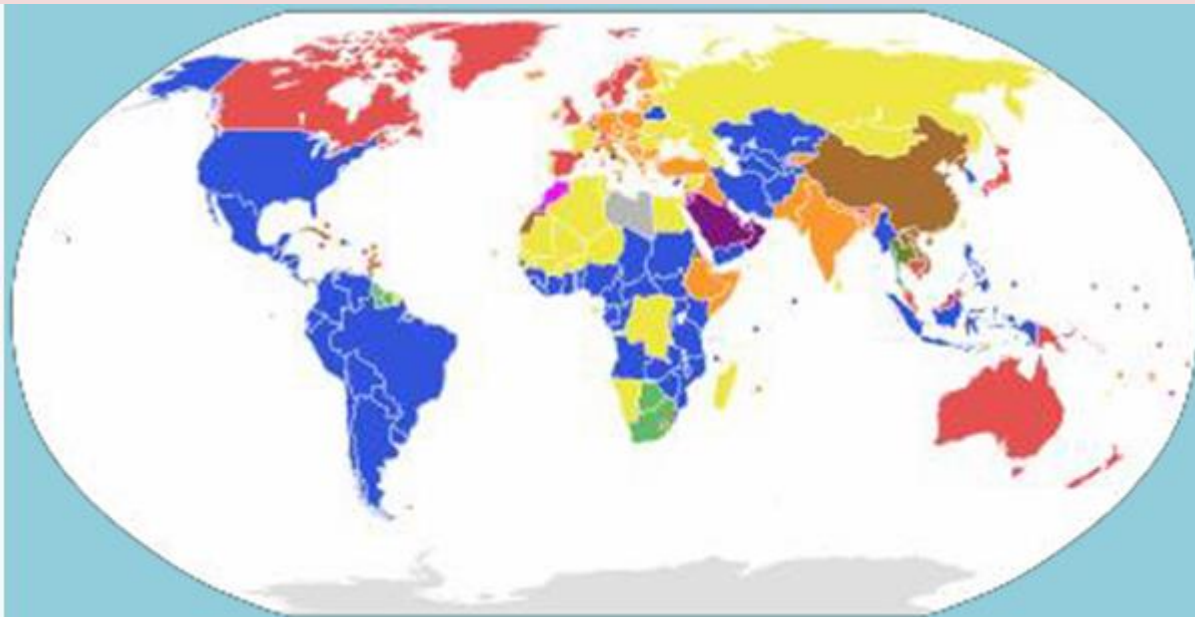
To download the free demo version then send request for Dropbox link to the above email address with subject "Request for KECMS Demo". © 2016 SYSTEX SOLUTIONS P O BOX 2523-00200 CITY SQ NAIROBI <http://kenyaelectiondatabase.co.ke/>

Types of presidential systems

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Differences between presidential & semi-presidential systems



- (BLUE) Presidential republics with a full [presidential system](#).
- (YELLOW) Presidential republics with a **semi-presidential system**.
- (GREEN) [Parliamentary republics](#) with an executive president chosen by the [parliament](#)
- (ORANGE) Parliamentary republics with a ceremonial president, where the [prime minister](#) is the executive.
- (RED) [Constitutional monarchies](#) where executive power is vested in a prime minister.
- (PINK) Constitutional monarchies, which have a separate [head of government](#) but where royalty hold political power.
- (PURPLE) [Absolute monarchies](#)
- (GREEN) [Military dictatorships](#)
- (BROWN) [One-party states](#)

A **semi-presidential system** is a [system of government](#) in which a [president](#) exists along with a [prime minister](#) and a cabinet, with the latter two being responsible to the legislature of a [state](#).

A semi-presidential system (Tunisia, Syria, France, Djibouti, Namibia) differs from a [parliamentary republic](#) (Somalia, South Africa, Pakistan, Italy, Ethiopia) in that it has a popularly elected [head of state](#), who is more than a purely ceremonial [figurehead](#), and from the [presidential system](#) in that the [cabinet](#), although named by the president, is [responsible](#) to the [legislature](#), which may force the cabinet to resign through a [motion of no confidence](#).

While the German [Weimar Republic](#) (1919–1933) exemplified an early semi-presidential system, the term "semi-presidential" originated in a 1978 work by political scientist [Maurice Duverger](#) to describe the [French Fifth Republic](#) (established in 1958), which Duverger dubbed a *régime semi-présidentiel*.^[1]

Subtypes

There are two separate subtypes of semi-presidentialism: premier-presidentialism and president-parliamentarism.

Under the **premier-presidential** system, the prime minister and cabinet are exclusively accountable to parliament. The president chooses the prime minister and cabinet, but only the parliament may remove them from office with a *vote of no confidence*. The president does *not* have the right to dismiss the prime minister or the cabinet. However, in some cases, the president can circumvent this limitation by exercising the discretionary power of dissolving the assembly, which forces the prime minister and cabinet to step down. This subtype is used in [Burkina Faso](#), [Georgia](#) (since 2013), [France](#),^[2] [Lithuania](#), [Madagascar](#), [Mali](#), [Mongolia](#), [Niger](#), [Poland](#), [Portugal](#), [Romania](#), [Senegal](#) and [Ukraine](#) (since 2014; previously, between 2006 and 2010).^{[3][4]}

Under the **president-parliamentary** system, the prime minister and cabinet are dually accountable to the president and the assembly majority. The president chooses the prime minister and the cabinet but must have the support of the parliament majority for his choice. In order to remove a prime minister or the whole cabinet from power, the president can dismiss them or the assembly can remove them by a *vote of no confidence*. This form of semi-presidentialism is much closer to pure presidentialism and is used in [Armenia](#), [Georgia](#) between 2004 and 2013, [Mozambique](#), [Namibia](#), [Russia](#), [Sri Lanka](#), [Taiwan](#) and [Ukraine](#) between 1996 and 2005, and again from 2010 to 2014. It was used in [Germany](#) during the *Weimarer Republik* ([Weimar Republic](#)), as the constitutional regime between 1919 and 1933 is called unofficially.^{[3][4]}

Division of powers

The powers that are divided between president and prime minister can vary greatly between countries.

In [France](#), for example, in case of [cohabitation](#) when the president and the prime minister come from opposing parties, the president takes care of [foreign policy](#) and [defence policy](#) (these are generally called *les prérogatives présidentielles* (the presidential prerogatives)) and the prime minister of [domestic policy](#) and [economic policy](#).^[5] In this case, the division of responsibilities between the [prime minister](#) and the [president](#) is not explicitly stated in the constitution, but has evolved as a [political convention](#) based on the constitutional principle that the prime minister is appointed (with the subsequent approval of a parliament majority) and dismissed by the president.^[2] On the other hand, whenever the president is from the same party as the prime minister who leads the *conseil de gouvernement* (cabinet), he often (if not usually) exercises *de facto* control over **all** fields of policy via the prime minister. It is up to the president to decide, how much "autonomy" he leaves to "his" prime minister to act on his own.

In [Finland](#), by contrast, the assignment of responsibility for foreign policy was explicitly stated in the pre-2000 [constitution](#): "foreign policy is led by the president in cooperation with the cabinet".

Cohabitation

Semi-presidential systems may sometimes experience periods in which the President and the Prime Minister are from differing political parties. This is called "[cohabitation](#)", a term which originated in France when the situation first arose in the 1980s. Cohabitation can create an effective system of [checks and balances](#) or a period of bitter and tense stonewalling, depending on the attitudes of the two [leaders](#), the ideologies of their parties, or the demands of their constituencies.

In most cases, cohabitation results from a system in which the two executives are not elected at the same time or for the same term. For example, in 1981, France elected both a [Socialist](#) president and legislature, which yielded a Socialist premier. But whereas the president's term of office was for seven years, the [National Assembly](#) only served for five. When, in the 1986 legislative election, the French people elected a right-centre Assembly, Socialist President [Mitterrand](#) was forced into cohabitation with rightist premier [Jacques Chirac](#).

However, in 2000, amendments to the French Constitution reduced the length of the French President's term from seven to five years. This has significantly lowered the chances of cohabitation occurring, as parliamentary and presidential elections may now be conducted within a shorter span of each other.

Republics with a semi-presidential system of government

Republics with a semi-presidential system of government

-  [Algeria](#)
-  [Armenia](#)
-  [Azerbaijan](#)^[6]
-  [Burkina Faso](#)
-  [Cape Verde](#) (Cabo Verde)^[7]
-  [Côte d'Ivoire](#)
-  [Democratic Republic of the Congo](#) (Congo-Kinshasa)
-  [Djibouti](#)
-  [East Timor](#) (Timor-Leste)^[7]
-  [Egypt](#)
-  [France](#)
-  [Georgia](#)
-  [Guinea-Bissau](#)
-  [Haiti](#)
-  [Madagascar](#)
-  [Mali](#)
-  [Mauritania](#)
-  [Mongolia](#)
-  [Namibia](#)^[8]
-  [Niger](#)
-  [Portugal](#)
-  [Romania](#)
-  [Russia](#)
-  [São Tomé and Príncipe](#)^[7]
-  [Senegal](#)
-  [Sri Lanka](#)
-  [Syria](#)
-  [Republic of China \(Taiwan\)](#)
-  [Tunisia](#)
-  [Ukraine](#)

See also

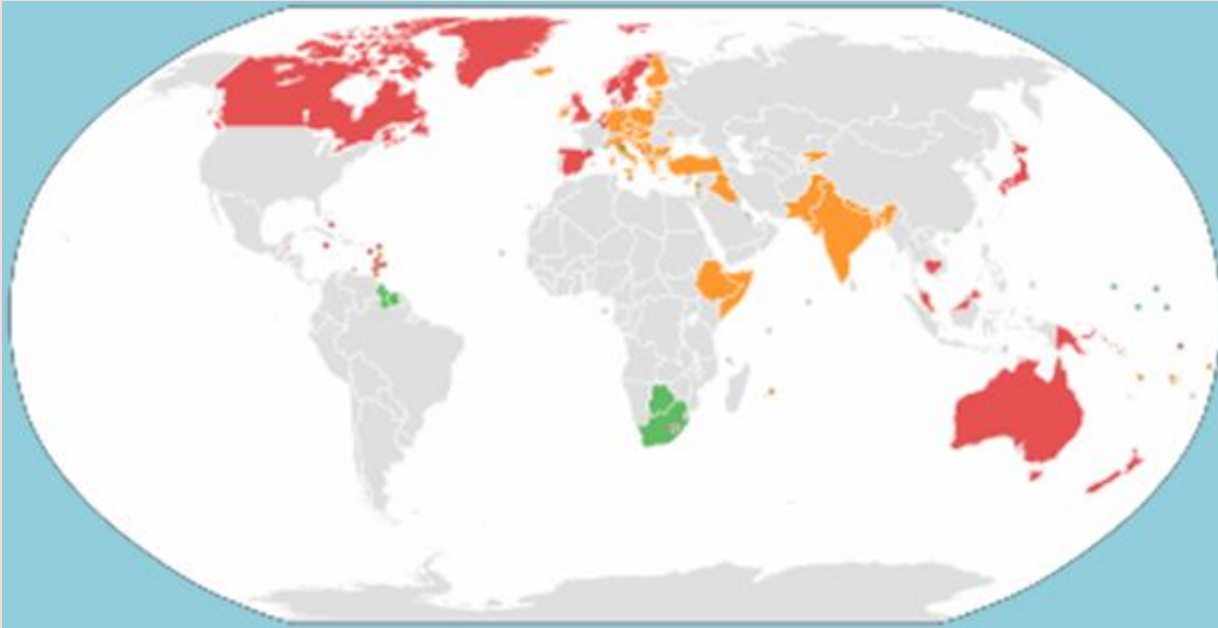
- [List of countries by system of government](#)
- [Parliamentary system](#)
- [Presidential system](#)

Parliamentary republics – different types

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Parliamentary republics



Map of different governmental systems

- (RED) [Constitutional monarchies](#) in which authority is vested in a parliament.
- (ORANGE) **Parliamentary republics** where parliaments are effectively supreme over a separate head of state.
- (GREEN) **Parliamentary republics** with an executive presidency chosen by parliament.

A **parliamentary republic** (or **parliamentary constitutional republic**) is a type of [republic](#) that operates under a [parliamentary system](#) of government where the [executive branch](#) (the government) derives its legitimacy from and is accountable to the [legislature](#) (the parliament).

There are a number of variations of parliamentary republics. Most have a clear differentiation between the [head of government](#) and the [head of state](#), with the head of government holding real power, much like [constitutional monarchies](#). Some have fused the roles of head of state and head of government, much like [presidential systems](#), but with a dependency upon parliamentary power.

For the first case mentioned above, in particular, the form of executive-branch arrangement is distinct from most other parliamentary and [semi-presidential republics](#) that separate the head of state (usually designated as the "[president](#)") from the head of government (usually designated as "[prime minister](#)", "[premier](#)" or "[chancellor](#)") and subject the latter to the confidence of parliament and a flexible tenure in office while the head of state lacks either dependency, and investing either office with the majority of executive power.

Powers

[Mary McAleese, President of Ireland \(1997–2011\)](#) and [Aleksander Kwaśniewski, President of Poland \(1995–2005\)](#). Both were [heads of state](#) of parliamentary republics.

In contrast to republics operating under either the [presidential system](#) or the [semi-presidential system](#), the [head of state](#) usually does not have broad executive powers as an [executive president](#) would, because many of those powers have been granted to a [head of government](#) (usually called a [prime minister](#)).



However, in a parliamentary republic with a head of state whose tenure is dependent on parliament, the head of government and head of state may form one office (as in Botswana,

the Marshall Islands, Nauru, South Africa and Suriname), but the president is still selected in much the same way as the prime minister is in most Westminster systems. This usually means that they are the leader of the largest party or coalition of parties in parliament.

In some instances, the president may legally have executive powers granted to them to undertake the day-to-day running of government (as in Austria) but by convention they either do not use these powers or they use them only to give effect to the advice of the parliament or head of government. Some parliamentary republics could therefore be seen as following the semi-presidential system but operating under a parliamentary system.

Historical development

Typically, parliamentary republics are states that were previously [constitutional monarchies](#) with a parliamentary system, with the position of head of state hitherto a monarch.^[1]

Following the defeat of [Napoleon III](#) in the [Franco-Prussian War](#), France once again became a republic – the [French Third Republic](#) – in 1870. The President of the Third Republic had significantly less executive powers than the those of the previous two republics had. The Third Republic lasted until the [invasion of France by Nazi Germany](#) in 1940. Following the end of the war, the [French Fourth Republic](#) was constituted along similar lines in 1946. The Fourth Republic saw an era of great economic growth in France and the rebuilding of the nation's social institutions and industry after the war, and played an important part in the development of the process of European integration, which changed the continent permanently. Some attempts were made to strengthen the executive branch of government to prevent the unstable situation that had existed before the war, but the instability remained and the Fourth Republic saw frequent changes in government - there were 20 governments in ten years. Additionally, the government proved unable to make effective decisions regarding decolonization. As a result, the Fourth Republic collapsed and what some critics considered to be a de facto coup d'état, subsequently legitimized by a referendum on 5 October 1958, led to the establishment of the [French Fifth Republic](#) in 1959.

[Chile](#) became the first parliamentary republic in [South America](#) following a civil war in 1891. However, following a coup in 1925 this system was replaced by a [Presidential one](#).^[original research?]

Commonwealth of Nations

Since the [London Declaration](#) of 29 April 1949 (just weeks after [Ireland](#) declared itself a republic, and excluded itself from the Commonwealth) republics have been admitted as members of the Commonwealth of Nations. A

number of these republics kept the [Westminster](#) Parliamentary system inherited during their British colonial rule.

In the case of many [republics in the Commonwealth of Nations](#), it was common for the Sovereign, formerly represented by a [Governor-General](#), to be replaced by an elected non-executive head of state. This was the case in with [South Africa](#) (which left the Commonwealth soon after becoming a republic), [Malta](#), [Trinidad and Tobago](#), [India](#) and [Vanuatu](#). In many of these examples, the last Governor-General became the first president. Such was the case with [Sri Lanka](#) and [Pakistan](#).







Others became parliamentary republics upon gaining independence.







Somali School of Government










List of modern parliamentary republics






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Main article: [List of countries by system of government § Parliamentary republics](#)

Country	Formerly	Parliamentary republic adopted	Head of state elected by	Cameral structure
Albania	One-party state	1991	Parliament, by majority	Unicameral
Austria	One-party state (as part of Nazi Germany , see Anschluss)	1945	Directly, by second-round system	Bicameral
 Bangladesh	Presidential republic	1991 ^[note 1]	Parliament	Unicameral
 Bosnia and Herzegovina	One-party state (Part of Yugoslavia)	1991	Directly, by second-round system	Bicameral
Botswana	British protectorate (Bechuanaland Protectorate)	1966	Parliament, by majority	Unicameral
 Bulgaria	One-party state	1989	Directly, by second-round system	Unicameral
 Croatia	Semi-presidential republic	2000	Directly, by second-round system	Unicameral
Czech Republic	One-party state (Part of Czechoslovakia)	1993	Directly, by second-round system (since 2013; previously Parliament, by majority)	Bicameral
 Dominica	Associated state of the United Kingdom	1978	Parliament, by majority	Unicameral
Estonia	One-party state (Part of Soviet Union)	1991 ^[note 2]	Parliament, by two-thirds majority	Unicameral
 Ethiopia	One-party state	1991	Parliament, by two-thirds majority	Bicameral


Country	Formerly	Parliamentary republic adopted	Head of state elected by	Cameral structure
 Fiji	Military junta	2014	Parliament, by majority	Unicameral
 Finland	Semi-presidential republic	2000 ^[note 3]	Directly, by second-round system	Unicameral
 Germany	One-party state	1949 ^[note 4]	Federal assembly (Parliament and state delegates), by absolute majority	Bicameral
Greece	Military junta; Constitutional monarchy	1975	Parliament, by majority	Unicameral
 Guyana	Constitutional monarchy (Commonwealth realm)	1970 ^[note 5]	Parliament, by majority	Unicameral
 Hungary	One-party state	1990	Parliament, by absolute majority	Unicameral
Iceland	Formerly part of Denmark; Constitutional monarchy	1944	Directly, by majority vote	Unicameral
India	Constitutional monarchy (British Dominion)	1950	Parliament and state legislators, by single transferable vote	Bicameral
Iraq	One-party state	2005	Parliament, by two-thirds majority	Unicameral ^[2]
 Ireland	Constitutional monarchy (British Dominion)	1949 ^[note 6]	Directly, by single transferable vote	Bicameral
Israel	Protectorate (Part of British Mandate of Palestine)	1948	Parliament, by majority	Unicameral
Italy	Constitutional monarchy	1946	Parliament, by two-thirds majority	Bicameral








Country	Formerly	Parliamentary republic adopted	Head of state elected by	Cameral structure
 Kiribati	Protectorate	1979	Parliament, by majority	Unicameral
 Kyrgyzstan	Presidential republic	2010	Directly, by second-round system	Unicameral
 Latvia	One-party state (Part of Soviet Union)	1991 ^[note 7]	Parliament	Unicameral
Lebanon	Protectorate (French mandate of Lebanon)	1941	Parliament	Unicameral
 Macedonia	One-party state (Part of the Yugoslavia)	1991	Directly, by second-round system	Unicameral
Malta	Constitutional monarchy (Commonwealth realm)	1974	Parliament, by majority	Unicameral
 Marshall Islands	UN Trust Territory (Part of Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands)	1979	Parliament	Bicameral
Mauritius	Constitutional monarchy (Commonwealth realm)	1992	Parliament, by majority	Unicameral
 Federated States of Micronesia	UN Trust Territory (Part of Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands)	1986	Parliament, by majority	Unicameral
 Moldova	Semi-presidential republic	2001	Parliament, by three-fifths majority	Unicameral
 Montenegro	One-party state (Part of Yugoslavia , and after Serbia and Montenegro)	1992	Directly, by second-round system	Unicameral
 Nauru	Australian Trust Territory	1968	Parliament	Unicameral







Country	Formerly	Parliamentary republic adopted	Head of state elected by	Cameral structure
 Nepal	Constitutional monarchy	2015 ^[note 8]	Parliament and state legislators	Unicameral
Pakistan	Presidential and semi-presidential republic	2010 ^{[3][4]}	Parliament and state legislators, by single transferable vote	Bicameral
 Poland	One-party state	1990	Directly, by second-round system	Bicameral
 Samoa	Constitutional monarchy	2007	Parliament	Unicameral
San Marino	Roman Empire	301	Parliament	Unicameral
Serbia	One-party state (Part of Yugoslavia)	1991	Directly, by second-round system	Unicameral
Singapore	Constitutional monarchy (Part of Malaysia)	1965	Directly	Unicameral
Slovakia	One-party state (Part of Czechoslovakia)	1993	Parliament (before 1999) Directly, by second-round system (since 1999)	Unicameral
 Slovenia	One-party state (Part of Yugoslavia)	1991	Directly, by second-round system	Bicameral
Somalia	One-party state	2012 ^[note 9]	Parliament	Bicameral
South Africa	Constitutional monarchy (Commonwealth realm)	1961	Parliament, by majority	Bicameral
Suriname	Military Dictatorship	1987	Parliament, by majority	Unicameral
 Trinidad and Tobago	Constitutional monarchy	1976	Parliament	Bicameral

Country	Formerly	Parliamentary republic adopted	Head of state elected by	Cameral structure
Tobago	(Commonwealth realm)			
Turkey	One-party state	1946	Directly (since 2007, previously by parliament)	Unicameral
 Vanuatu	British-French condominium (New Hebrides)	1980	Parliament and regional council presidents, by majority	Unicameral

List of former parliamentary republics

Country	Year became a parliamentary republic	Year status changed	Changed to	Status changed due to
Brazil	1961	1963	Presidential system	Referendum
 Burma	1948	1962	Military Junta	1962 Burmese coup d'état
Chile <small>(original research?)</small>	1891	1925	Presidential system	Referendum
French Third Republic	1870	1940	Presidential system	World War II German Occupation
French Fourth Republic	1946	1958	Semi-presidential system	Political instability
Hungary	1946	1949	One-party state	Creation of the People's Republic of Hungary
Indonesia	1945	1959	Presidential system	Constitutional amendment
Second Republic of South Korea	1960	1961	Presidential system	May 16 coup

Country	Year became a parliamentary republic	Year status changed	Changed to	Status changed due to
 <u>Lithuanian First Republic</u>	1920	1926	<u>One-party state</u>	<u>1926 Lithuanian coup d'état</u> ^[note 10]
 <u>Nigeria</u>	1963	1979	<u>Presidential system</u>	Constitutional amendment
<u>Pakistan</u>	1956	1958	<u>Military Dictatorship</u>	<u>1958 Pakistani coup d'état</u>
	1973	1978		<u>1977 Pakistani coup d'état</u>
	1988	1999		<u>1999 Pakistani coup d'état</u>
 <u>Second Polish Republic</u>	1918	1939	<u>One-party state</u>	<u>Invasion of Poland</u>
<u>Portuguese First Republic</u>	<u>1911</u>	1926	<u>Military Dictatorship</u> (which led in 1933 to the <i>Estado Novo</i> <u>One-party state</u>)	<u>May 28 coup</u>
 <u>First Philippine Republic</u> (<u>Malolos Republic</u>)	1899	1901	<u>Military Dictatorship</u> (De facto <u>USA Colony</u>)	Capture and Surrender of <u>Emilio Aguinaldo</u> to the American forces
 <u>Fourth Philippine Republic</u>	1978	1987	<u>Presidential system</u>	Ratification of the 1987 Constitution
<u>Republic of the Congo</u>	1960	1965	<u>Military Dictatorship</u> (De facto <u>One-party state</u>)	1965 Congolese coup d'état
 <u>Russia</u>	1991 ^[note 11]	<u>1993</u>	<u>Semi-presidential system</u>	Referendum ^[note 12]
 <u>Rhodesia</u>	<u>1970</u>	<u>1979</u>	<u>Parliamentary</u>	Creation of <u>Zimbabwe</u>

Country	Year became a parliamentary republic	Year status changed	Changed to	Status changed due to
			<u>system</u>	<u>Rhodesia</u>
 <u>Spanish Republic</u>	<u>1931</u>	<u>1939</u>	<u>Fascist Dictatorship</u>	Loss of <u>Spanish Civil War</u>
 <u>Sri Lanka</u>	1972	1978	<u>Semi-presidential system</u>	Constitutional amendment
 <u>Syrian Republic</u>	1930	1958	<u>One-party state</u>	Creation of the <u>United Arab Republic</u>
 <u>Syrian Arab Republic</u>	1961	1963	<u>One-party state</u>	<u>1963 Syrian coup d'état</u>
<u>Uganda</u>	1963	1966	<u>One-party state</u>	Suspension of the constitution
 <u>Zimbabwe Rhodesia</u>	<u>1979</u>	<u>1979</u>	<u>Parliamentary system</u>	Creation of <u>Southern Rhodesia</u>
 <u>Zimbabwe</u>	1980	1987	<u>Presidential system</u>	Constitutional amendment

See also

- [Parliamentary system](#)
- [Constitutional republic](#)
- [Republicanism](#)
- [List of countries by system of government](#)

Notes

- Was previously a parliamentary republic between 1971 and 1975.*
- Estonia was previously a parliamentary republic between 1919 and 1934 when the government was overthrown by a coup d'état. In 1938 Estonia adopted a presidential system and in June 1940 was occupied and annexed by the Soviet Union.*
- Formerly a semi-presidential republic, it is now a parliamentary republic according to David Arter, First Chair of Politics at Aberdeen University. In his "Scandinavian Politics Today" (Manchester University Press, revised 2008), he quotes Jaakko Nousiainen in "From semi-presidentialism to parliamentary government" (Scandinavian Political Studies 24 (2) pp. 95–109) as follows: "There are hardly any grounds for the epithet 'semi-presidential'." Arter's own conclusions are only slightly more nuanced: "The adoption of a new constitution on 1 March 2000 meant that Finland was no longer a case of semi-presidential government other than in the minimalist sense of a situation where a popularly elected fixed-term president exists alongside a prime minister and cabinet who are responsible to parliament (Elgie 2004: 317)". According to the Finnish Constitution, the president has no possibility to rule the government without the ministerial approval, and does not have the power to dissolve the parliament under his or her own desire. Finland is actually represented by its prime minister, and not by its president, in the Council of the Heads of State and Government of the European Union. The 2012 constitution reduced the powers of the president even further.*
- In the case of the former West German states, including former West Berlin, the previous one-party state is Nazi Germany, but in the case of the New Länder and former East Berlin it is East Germany. Please note that German reunification took place on 3 October 1990, when the five re-established states of the German Democratic Republic (East Germany) joined the Federal Republic of Germany, and Berlin was united into a single city-state. Therefore, this date applies to today's Federal Republic of Germany as a whole, although the area of former East Germany was no part of that parliamentary republic until 1990.*
- In 1980, it changed from a ceremonial to an executive head of state, who is also the combined head of government.*

- vi. *Irish head of state from 1936 to 1949.*
- vii. *Latvia was previously a parliamentary republic between 1921 and 1934 when the then prime minister Kārlis Ulmanis took power in a coup d'état. In June 1940 Latvia was occupied and annexed by the Soviet Union.*
- viii. *Had a transitional government between 2008 and 2015.*
- ix. *Had a transitional government between 1991 and 2012.*
- x. *In June 1940, Lithuania was occupied and annexed by the Soviet Union.*
- xi. *Post of President of Russia is created, and development of separation of powers is started, some of Supreme Soviet's executive powers is transferred to new post. Before that, Russia was a Soviet republic.*
- xii. *Preceded by crisis and armed dissolving of the Supreme Soviet of Russia, then-parliament of the Russian Federation.*

Somali School of Government