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How do Majoritarian Electoral Systems work in democratic countries? A comparative analysis of their variants in UK, France and Australia.

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Introduction.

All across the globe, elections are among the central subjects to the study of political science, as they are a crucial point for politicians, the media and for citizens. Electoral systems, which are defined as the rules translating voters' preferences into election results, lead to important political outcomes including policy choices, party systems and the diversity of public officials.
Research on electoral systems has been conceived for decades as the best example of knowledge's accumulation in political science (Riker 1982). However, the field of inquiry has not been static, because of the development of new elections rules, new democratic systems' establishment, and the discovery of new theoretical and empirical regularities which characterize the field over decades.
This set of electoral rules results almost natural to several communities when they have to select a collective decision-making's procedure based on votes, mostly because it permits the community's representation. Therefore, these traditional electoral rules produce and conduct a fair representation, even though a very common question is whether elections are a necessary condition of political representation, as almost no one believes that election is a sufficient condition (Sartori 1995).
Representing means acting in the interests of the represented ones in a way that is sensitive towards them (Pitkin 1972). The representative must act independently, his actions must involve discretion and judgement, and he must be the only one to act. At the same time, the represented must be capable of acting independently and judiciously too, and not be considered simply as someone to take care of. However, even though there could be a conflict between the representative and the represented on what needs to be done, this conflict does not normally have to arise. Indeed, the representative should act in a way that avoids the conflict or, if this occurs, an explanation is required. He must not constantly disagree with the will of those represented without a good reason in terms of their interest, so without a good explanation of why their will is not in accordance with their interests.
Going back to whether it could be possible to have representation without elections, it is often thought to be so. If we refer, for instance, to existential or sociological representation, that is to say to the pure and simple existence of a similarity, then it is clear that this type of representation does not require election. If representation is simply defined as a state of "coincidence of opinion", any selection method is fine. In this case, what matters is not the procedure that can best guarantee the coincidence of opinion and behaviour between representative and represented, but that this coincidence exists. However, political representation is concerned precisely with how to secure it. The creation's method of the representative acquires a decisive importance and becomes the typical concern of the theory of political representation. There can be no representation, except the existential one, if the representatives are not given the opportunity to express and protect themselves, otherwise the represented would be at the mercy of their so-called or presumed representatives. But, since political representation is ultimately only protected by an electoral safeguard, in this case there can be no representation without election.

The purpose of this study is to focus the attention on one of the most common and widespread categories of electoral systems, the majoritarian ones, in which candidates and parties win if they

receive more votes than the others, and to analyse them in detail to understand how they work in democratic countries. However, to succeed in this, it is also necessary to consider its several variants, or rather, its three major variants adopted the most today: the plurality system, the two-rounds system, and the alternative vote.

The thesis develops in three chapters. As concerns the first chapter, I strongly believe that before proceeding with the discussions on majoritarian electoral systems, it is proper to introduce the sphere of all electoral systems by dealing with their origins, the categories to which each electoral system is assigned, and their principal dimensions (district magnitude, number of votes cast, ballot structure, the choice of candidates within parties, the levels of seat allocation and the limitations on proportionality).
Subsequently, a paragraph will also be dedicated to the relationship between elections and democracy to understand how they improve and increase the level of citizens' inclusion in representatives and parties' determinations.

In the second chapter the attention will be focused on the central topic of the study, thus on the majoritarian systems' discussion. The chapter is subdivided in four groups. In the first, the second and the third, the three major variants of majoritarian systems are presented by initially drawing some considerations on how they are defined, how they work, and their principal advantages, as well as their disadvantages, and finally dealing with the effects and the consequences brought by the plurality system, the two-round system and the alternative vote. Instead, in the last section, some majoritarian systems' evaluations will be discussed, mainly presenting their merits and demerits.

In the third and last chapter, these majoritarian systems will be put in contexts, in the sense that they will be explored in relation to three democratic countries which have adopted them for many years, and which still continue to be a distinctive sign today: the United Kingdom for the plurality system, France for the two-round system, and Australia for the alternative vote. The structure of the chapter will be the same for each country presented: a first paragraph on the origin of that specific system in the country, a second paragraph on how the system works there, and a final paragraph showing how these variants have applied to the latest elections in UK, France, and Australia.

Finally, a conclusion follows highlighting the purpose of the thesis and a brief recap of all the discussions presented. Moreover, some final considerations will be proposed as well to present some final arguments on the topic.

Chapter 1 – A Detailed Overview on Electoral Systems.

Electoral systems are generally conceived as the set of rules which are concerned with all the important legal aspects of elections, from the distinction between active electorates access to TV and passive ones, and from the presentation of lists and candidates through rules to the regulation of campaigning. However, this definition is more appropriate for identifying election laws, rather than electoral systems. Electoral laws include all the important provisions which regulate the electoral process.

As research has underlined recently, there are significant differences today regarding the one or more of the rules that regulate democratic elections around the world (Massicotte et al. 2004). In order to conduct such study, the six dimensions which have been chosen are the following: the right to vote, the right to be a candidate, the electoral register, the agency in charge of the election, the procedure for votes casting, and the procedure adopted to declare the winners and the losers. Even though all these topics are fundamental for regulating the natural course of an election, it is on the last two dimensions that the study of electoral systems focuses. Indeed, how people vote and who wins or loses are the two crucial questions around which the literature has been developing over the last three decades. Every electoral system is produced from different circumstances, like the political history of the country, the need of mediation in deep social divisions and the representation of all the minorities, of the will/ability of the dominating elite to modify the rules to its own advantage, etc.
Therefore, strictly speaking, the electoral system can be defined as the *set of laws which regulate the transformation of preferences into votes and of the votes into seats*[1]. This definition highlights the coexistence of two elements in the course of political representation: the possibility the ballot paper gives the elector to express his preferences and the consequences of these choices in terms of assignment of the offices voted for. Electoral systems play a fundamental role in connecting the citizens' preferences to the governmental policy choices, political actors choose them, and they provide to those actors some political consequences. The available seats may be either representative offices (parliamentary), or monocratic ones (head of state or of government). With the exception of the smallest-scale societies, government is representative government, where people do not govern themselves directly but rather delegate the task of political decision making to a smaller set of public officials. In democratic societies the election of these representatives takes place, and how this happens is of principal interest. However, sceptical readers might wonder whether it really matters so much which electoral system a country adopts, as well ordinary citizens too might wonder whether they need to know much about electoral systems. The answer to these questions is that electoral systems matter: they make a big difference to the shape of the party system, to the nature of government (coalition or single party), to the kind of choices facing voters at elections, to the ability of parliamentarians, to the degree to which a parliament involves people from any type of background, to the level of democracy and cohesion of all political parties, and also to the quality of government, and hence to the quality of life of the citizens ruled by that government.

1.1 Electoral systems and representation.

The simplest and most common classification of electoral systems is as majoritarian or proportional systems. The two are based on different ideas of representation (McLean 1991; Sartori 1994). More

[1] For similar definitions see Rae 1971; Blais 1988.

specifically, the classic difference is between plurality systems (also referred to as single member plurality, SMP) on the one hand, and proportional systems (PR) on the other. With reference to the former, the voter appoints as his delegate a representative whose link to the territory is strengthened by being elected in a single-seat constituency, and he does that through a vote conceived as a mandate. For this reason, the logic of the system expects the assignation of the seat to the most voted candidate. On the contrary, with PR, the main aim is to give representation by proportion of the votes received.

The two conceptions of representation were debated in Great Britain during the second half of the nineteenth century. The renowned philosopher John Stuart Mill was a strong supporter of the PR, as he considered it the best system to counter the excessive personalization of politics, while on the other hand, the constitutionalist Walter Bagehot strongly believed the opposite, as he considered the plurality system an essential component of the Westminster model[2]. However, it is also important to remember that during the twentieth century the majoritarian principle underwent a relevant change. At the beginning, it was based on the selection of the most voted representatives inside territorial communities or corporations (Reeve and Ware 1992) but later, over the last century, through the development of mass politics, the majoritarian principle came to be seen as an instrument of appointing a government (Chiaramonte 2005).

Theories of representation make a distinction between government composition and government decisions[3], where the latter is looked by advocates of SMP, and the analysis is based on the relationship that exists between the various representatives of the citizens and their constituents. Here, a representative can act both as an agent and trustee of the constituency, using his/her own kind of judgement to govern and determine which interests to pursue in parliament (McLean 1991; Sartori 1994). The expression “personal representatives” generally covers both executors and administrators who, on many occasions, have been described as the personal representatives of a deceased’s estate (United Asian Bank v Personal representatives of Roshammah 1994). This is so because both parties play the same role in the deceased estate’s administration and owed duties to the estate beneficiaries (Hayton and Mitchell 2005; Penner 2006). Indeed, they deal with all assets of the deceased, real and personal, to which the deceased is entitled for an interest not ceasing on his death (Sladen and Sherring 1996). In the case of Malaysia, the appointment of the personal representative is governed by Probate and Administration Act 1959 (Halim and Mohd Noor 2013). He may proceed with the duties for the administration of the deceased’s estate once the letter of representation is granted to him either in common form or solemn form. Moreover, personal representative has duties to sustain the rights and beneficial interests of beneficiaries in the deceased estate by collecting, transmitting, converting, paying debts and liabilities, and finally distributing the remainder to the legal beneficiaries. Certain powers are granted to personal representatives in carrying out all those duties, including the power to dispose of property, power to enter into a contract, to assent and conveyance, to appropriate, to appoint trustees to minor’s property, and to postpone distribution. With regards to trustee, a person becomes such when he or she has property or rights which he or she holds or is bound to exercise because of the behalf and the will of another or others, or for the accomplishment of some particular purposes. Hence, the trustee is said to hold property or rights in trust for the others.

[2] For this debate see: Hart 1992; Fischella 2003.

[3] For this concept see Pitkin 1967; Przeworski et al. 1999; Farrell 2001.

A massive supporter of the "trustee model of representation" was the famous politician and philosopher Edmund Burke who, in his "Speech to the Electors of Bristol" of 1774, argued:

> *"Parliament is not a congress of ambassadors from different and hostile interests; which interests each must maintain, as an agent and advocate, against other agents and advocates; but parliament is a deliberative assembly of one nation, with one interest, that of the whole; where, not local purposes, not local prejudices ought to guide, but general good, resulting from the general reason of the whole. You choose a member indeed; bit when you have chosen him, he is not a member of Bristol, but he is a member of parliament."*

In this speech, Burke advocated the defence of the principles of representative democracy against the idea, which he considered distorted, according to which the elected should act exclusively in defence of the interests of their constituents. Therefore, he strongly invited all parliamentarians not to adopt local interests and prejudices, but the common good, and he opposed to any form of "authoritative instruction" as the legislative activity must be a matter of judgement and reason, and not of inclination.

In order to understand better what Burke really wanted to say, some of the literature on his theory of representation could be useful. In Pitkin's "The Concept of Representation" (pp. 168-189), she stated that Burke's theory centres on Parliament. According to Pitkin's view of Burke, the role of representatives in Parliament is to discover and apply what is best for the nation, so government is not a question of will, but mainly of reason and wisdom, and only from legislative discussion in any situation the correct policy can emerge (Conniff 2018). Thus, representation is conceived by Burke as a special occurrence of a general theory of trusteeship. To say that government is a trust is to say that it must be conducted in governed interests, but it is not to say that the government is to be popularly controlled. In Pitkin's view, Burke does not believe that trustees are controlled by the people or accountable to them, as they usually use their own judgment to decide what is in the interest of the constituents and enact it regardless of citizens' opinion. Pitkin's interpretation of Burke's theory is based on the concept of objective interest. She claims (p. 168) that political representation is the representation of interest for him, and interests have an objective and unattached reality. She accepts such view, not only on the national level, but also on the district level, meaning that the representative is chosen not for people, but for interests. Since interests are represented, instead of people, each district or group of people is not forced to choose a member of Parliament. It is sufficient that their interest is represented, even if this is done by a representative chosen from some other geographical location. This constitutes the theory of virtual representation, where a district is represented as long as some members of Parliament protect its interests. However, even virtual representation must have some basis in the actual, in the sense that an interest must have somebody to protect it. It is not fundamental that a specific interest represents every area that shares it, but some must otherwise the interest's grievances will not be aired. Finally, people and rules must be tied by some kind of sympathy, but this bond can only be maintained if at least some of the rulers are directly elected (p. 173). Yet, the voters should not try to control the representatives through instructions, not even in these cases of actual representation, and they should be removed only for situations of corruption or lack of ability (p. 180).

The accountability-mandate and sanction-selection theories deal with representation from the voter's perspective, where the latter is able to either punish or reward governments by judging them on their past actions. Moreover, voters can also choose to cast their ballot to give the government a mandate for a specific action (Powell 2000).

Regarding PR, its advocates tend to overlap government composition over government decisions because, through the so-called "mirror" or "microcosm" theories of representation, government should look like a miniature of the society it aims to represent. In synthesis, it can be claimed that with majoritarian systems it is the aim of governing which prevails, while with the proportional ones it is the aim of representing.

The development of democracy, in the twentieth century, was often accompanied by an easing of the threshold of access to power. In Stein Rokkan's analysis of the four-step democratization process (1970), this issue was linked to the third and fourth threshold. The former, the access to representation, eased the access of minorities to representation in the legislature together with the transition from majoritarian to proportional representation procedures. Later, this process also implied the fourth threshold, the access to the executive power, through the introduction of cabinet responsibility to parliamentary majorities.
During that period, important theories of democracy were developed on electoral systems as essential components of different models of democracy (Pasquino 2007). The majoritarian system was a pillar of the Schumpeterian conception of democracy. Schumpeter was critical about PR as he argued that if acceptance of leadership is the true function of the electorate's vote, then the concept of proportional representation collapses because its premises are no longer binding (Pereira 2000). However, against his concept of democracy, the Austrian-American jurist, Hans Kelsen, supported PR which he considered the fundamental concept of parliamentary democracy.
After the historical experiences of Weimar Germany and pre-Mussolini Italy, proportional representation was seen as a responsible in the collapse of democracies, especially in Hermens' analysis (1941). It was only after the work of Duverger, in the late 1950s, that the debate on electoral systems started to be developed on more empirical bases.

1.2 The origins of electoral systems.

In recent years, huge developments were made regarding the literature on the origins and transformation of electoral systems. In his studies, Joseph M. Colomer analyses the history of electoral system choice by presenting what he calls the "micro-mega rule" according to which the *large prefers the small and the small prefers the large*, meaning that a few large parties tend to prefer small assemblies, small district magnitudes and rules based on small quotas of votes allocating seats, while multiple small parties tend to prefer large assemblies, large quotas and large district magnitudes (2004). He also identified four basic principles that have structured the choice of electoral systems in collective decision: unanimity, lottery, majority, and proportionality (see also Manin 1997). Rather than focusing on the first two principles, it is fundamental to mark the evolution of the last two to understand electoral systems: the principle of majority and the principle of proportionality.

The majority principle was originally considered through multi-member districts in the shapes of cumulative, blocked and limited ballots, as well as the single non-transferable vote that still exists today in some countries, which we will discuss later. Majority rule, in which seats are allocated only

to candidates who reach the absolute majority, was applied in both France and Australia around the same time in the late nineteenth century as a variant of the plurality rule. Indeed, these two countries are conceived as the biggest democracies where the two-round system and the alternative vote are still applied today.
The proportionality principle was implemented in the contemporary world as a means of seats distribution among the states of USA. In the eighteenth century, political figures such as Alexander Hamilton, Thomas Jefferson and Daniel Webster introduced some of the methods that were later rediscovered by many European countries in the second half of the nineteenth century. The principle of proportionality was accepted as a fairer system of representation especially in the countries that perform a high level of social, cultural and linguistic heterogeneity (Baldini and Pappalardo 2008).
Party-list proportional representation was first established to elect European legislatures in the early twentieth century. The first country to implement it in 1899 was Belgium, then Finland in 1906 and Sweden in 1907. Finally, by 1950, most continental European countries used PR list-systems. According to the famous analysis of Boix (1999), the shift from majoritarian to PR rules was linked to the attempt to face the rise of the socialist party at the turn of the century.
Today, varieties of proportional systems have been adopted in many advanced democratic countries, even though many others constitute an exception, like the former British colonies which still use plurality, the countries involved in a transition toward democracy using varieties of the majoritarian system, and the high number of countries employing mixed systems. Electoral system's change therefore tends to move toward more inclusive formulae rather than away from them, and as Colomer explains, the majority of these changes were given by the rise of non-democratic regimes or by the need to slow down party system fragmentation as a factor of political instability. Limiting the analysis to the contemporary advanced democracies, one can observe that 14 out of 19 changes were made in the expected direction of change towards more proportional rules.

However, while the distinction between majoritarian and proportional systems is useful to capture the essence of the two big families of electoral systems, it does not lack of some limitations. Indeed, it does not satisfy the basic criteria for a correct classification involving exhaustiveness (according to which each known system should be capable of being placed within a family), and exclusiveness (in which each system should belong to only one family). These limitations have become clearer in the last 20 years, during which electoral systems have been subjected to several changes, even radical ones, that have led to their exclusion in one of the above families.
New Zealand, Italy and Japan are living proof of the cases where reform has been towards the so-defined "mixed" systems, which combine characteristics typical of both majoritarian and proportional systems.

1.3 Dimensions of variation in electoral systems.

The main task of this section is to fully outline the main dimensions on which electoral systems differ. However, to achieve this aim, it is preferable to firstly introduce the broad categories into which electoral systems fall. As Harry Eckstein wrote over half a century ago:

> *"It is the easiest thing in the world to get inextricably tangled among the complexities of electoral systems"* (Harry Eckstein 1963, 249).

The following Table 1.1 presents the list of categories to which each electoral system is assigned, even though in some cases there is considerable variation within these.
The first category includes those systems in which all single-seat districts[4] (SSDs) are assigned seats, also known as single-member districts (SMDs). Since these systems have a lot in common in terms of the effects they have, it makes sense to conceive them as a single broad category even though a single seat can be allocated in several ways.

Table 1.1 Categories of electoral system.

Broad Category	Specific Types	Country Examples
Single - seat constituency systems	Single-member plurality (also known as first past the post or FPTP) Alternative vote (AV) Two-round system (TR)	Canada, India, United Kingdom, United States. Australia France
Mixed-member systems	Mixed-member proportional Mixed-member majoritarian	Germany, New Zealand Hungary, Japan, Russia, Thailand
Closed-list systems	-	Israel, South Africa, Spain
Preferential list systems	Open list Flexible list	Chile, Denmark, Finland Austria, Belgium, Netherlands
PR-STV	-	Ireland, Malta

Source: Gallagher and Mitchell 2018, 25.

The second category, that of mixed member systems (Shugart and Wattenberg 2003a), is composed by some members of parliament (MPs) elected by a plurality or majority formula (usually from SSDs), and others elected by PR.
Moving on, list systems are founded on the idea of parties presenting lists of candidates within each multi-seat constituency. Conventionally, list systems are divided into two types: those using closed lists, and those using preferential lists. In the former case, the voter cannot express a choice for individual candidates on the list, while in the latter case the voter is allowed to do so.
Finally, under PR-single transferable vote (STV), voters are able to rank order all candidates within each multi-seat constituency.

Having further clarified the categorization of the electoral systems, it is now time to look at their principal dimensions: the district magnitude, the number of votes cast, the ballot structure, the choice of candidate within parties, the levels of seat allocation and the limitations on proportionality (Herron, Pekkanen, and Shugart 2018).

[4] The terms “district” and “constituency” are interchangeable, and they are used in different countries of the English-speaking world.

1.3.1 District magnitude.

District Magnitude, which constitutes the number of seats per constituency, is the first dimension. Measuring average district magnitude is pretty simple in countries where all constituencies have the same size: single-seat constituency systems such as Canada, France, Australia, India, the United Kingdom and the United States, or in Malta and Chile prior to 2017, where the constituencies are multi-member and of uniform size.

In the case of single-member districts (SMD), the fundamental variable which is seen as a factor playing a crucial role in the overall effect of the electoral system is the way the territory is divided up. This issue developed because of the advent of the suffrage's extension at the beginning of the twentieth century, which brought the need to eliminate differences in terms of the "costs of seats", so of the number of electors represented by the elected member. This need wants to respect a criterion of demographic equality within a narrow range, which limits the number of electors per constituency. Regarding multi-member districts, they are very different. Each district assigns more than one seat, so the subdivision of the territory is facilitated by the pre-existence of administrative subdivisions. Therefore, appointment is very important for its effects on the electoral system, both in majoritarian and proportional systems. This is mainly the case of countries where those who are in charge of this operation are aware of territorial concentrations of electors of their own party[5]. Indeed, there is often the tendency to draw up constituencies or districts without respecting the criterion of territorial homogeneity, but rather with the objective of including faithful electors who will be decisive in winning the seat.
Many countries today experience some kind of malapportionment, meaning that they have districts with significantly unequal voters-to-representatives ratios. Spain, Canada and France are just some of the 30 states with the highest ratio of malapportionment (Samuels and Snyder 2001), even though this practice is more widespread in non-democratic countries. However, today the phenomenon tends to appear less often because of the creation of independent electoral commissions in the UK and in some states of the US but remains widespread.

Returning to the district magnitude, an average value can easily be worked out in many countries. For example, in Spain, 350 MPs are returned from fifty-two constituencies, so the average district magnitude equals 6.7 by calculating the number of MPs divided to the number of constituencies. At the same way in Ireland, where there are forty constituencies and 158 MPs, the district magnitude is 3,95. However in Ireland, where all constituencies return either 3, 4 or 5 MPs, would it make any difference if its 158 MPs were instead returned from 38 two-seats constituencies and two 41 seat constituencies? The answer to this question for Taagepera and Shugart (1989) is that it would not make a difference and nor does change the "seat product" (magnitude times assembly size), which is the dominant institutional factor in shaping the "effective" number of parties according to the two authors (2017). Despite this, small parties can expect to do better if there are few really large constituencies. Several studies on the consequences of this "magnitude variation", as the ones conducted by Monroe and Rose, conclude that because district magnitude in urban areas is usually larger that in rural areas, the realized effect is to disadvantage large parties with a predominantly urban base (Monroe and Rose 2002).

[5] For further information see also the study by Monroe and Rose (2002), which shows the urban/rural disparity in district magnitude.

District magnitude is also an important aspect in PR systems since the distribution of seats is decided at constituency level in nearly all of them. Here, the higher the number of seats at stake, the greater the proportionality of the system. However, not all PR systems actually operate a division of the territory into constituencies. A clear example is Netherlands which has a single-national constituency where all the 150 seats are awarded, and this makes the Dutch system one of the most proportional in its outcomes. Instead, other countries like Spain or Ireland where the district magnitude is very low, the overall proportionality tends to be strongly suppressed, even without considering the effects of the specific threshold. Moreover, it is important to highlight that many PR systems do allocate seats at more than one level[6], and this event is defined as "multiple tiers" allocation. This operation has two aims. In the first place, that of distributing the leftover seats not assigned at a constituency level: this is a purely "technical" device with no objective of rewarding the most voted parties, by favouring in this way the smaller ones. Secondly, this secondary allocation can take place with the aim of rewarding the parties which have the best chance of forming a government, excluding instead the ones that from the higher territorial levels reach a low percentage of votes. So, the presence of more levels might be given by party interests, as well as by the combination of different formulae as occurs in the mixed systems.[7]
However, this first introduction on seats allocation linked to the concept of district magnitude will be analysed more deeply in its own section 1.3.5 "Levels of Seat Allocation".

1.3.2 Number of votes cast.

The second dimension of variation in electoral systems is represented by the number of votes cast. Usually, people have just one vote to cast and, throughout history, the struggle for universal suffrage aimed to abolish any type of discrimination based on census, class or other factors. The principle of "one person one vote" is the hallmark of a democratic system which gives each voter a single, personal and secret vote. Yet, it can encounter some variations. This happens because giving people more than one vote does not violate democratic principles if it still provides everyone with the same number of votes. Therefore, in some cases and in some countries, when voters go to the polling station on election day, they are given a ballot paper that requires them, in order to represent their local single-seat constituency, to select a candidate by casting one vote and, at the same way, to cast another one for a party in the contest for nationally awarded seats. This usually is an option which characterises most mixed-member systems, including those of Germany, Hungary, Japan, New Zealand and Russia, while mostly in majoritarian systems there is usually no choice of candidates within parties. A selection both across and within party lines is allowed by AV, which represents an exception. On the other hand, in PR systems, there are various possibilities. Indeed, according to Carey and Shugart (1995), four different subtypes of proportional representation preference list (PRPL) systems can be identified:

1. Open-list formula with multiple voters, where voters can express preferences for some candidates, even though lists are still composed by party leaders. Here, candidates of a given party can run as a bloc because voters are allowed multiple votes (p. 426). An example of this can be identified in Italy prior to the 1993 reforms (Passarelli 2017, 2018).

[6] By definition, in single-member constituency systems there is only one level of seat allocation.

[7] It is important to note that in multi-tier systems the average district magnitude's calculation is more complicated. There are different opinions on which constitutes the best measure to adopt.

2. Open-list formula with a single vote, in which voters express a single vote below the party level, either for an individual candidate or a factional list. Candidates or lists stand alone for the quest of a single vote by each voter. (p. 427). Some examples for this system are Brazil, Chile and Poland.
3. Open-list formula with open endorsement and multiple votes, in which party leaders do not have the ability to select candidates (p. 427). There are no examples for such a system.
4. Similarly, open list-formula with open endorsement, but just a single vote. This is an open list system in which voters cast a single vote below the party level while party leaders do not control endorsements (Carey and Shugart 1995). Its examples include Finland and Brazil.

Broadly speaking, in both majority and proportional context, there is more than one system which allows voters to cast a "preference vote", that is a vote for their favourite candidate(s). However, voters' decisions are influential only under few systems. As an example, the single non-transferable vote, single transferable vote, and PLPR list systems all allow preference votes to be casted by voters, but they do so through some mechanisms. These mechanisms have different consequences for voter's power and intraparty dynamics, and particularly in PLPR systems, candidates' votes are collected by party, while in the other two systems they are not.[8]

Representation with preferential voting (PLPR) grants voters the possibility to choose their party, as well as their parliamentary representatives. However, even though they have an opportunity to indicate their preferences, this does not mean they will actually matter in determining the electoral outcomes. In the first place, this is important because there are flexible list systems in which this opportunity can be realized by voters if few conditions are satisfied. Secondly because, even in open-list systems which allows voter's behaviour to decide who will be elected, the party elite's choice in the available slate of candidates can affect other challengers' realistic chances, producing an effect that limits, even before voters reach the polls, their options. Moreover, voter's power in PLPR systems varies considerably between different cases and systems which depends on the number of votes that may be cast, the presence of threshold, the ballot and the compulsoriness.

The main characteristic of preferential voting systems is their capacity to increase voter's power to affect the representatives' choice, unlike in other electoral systems. Further, both authors and politicians, claim that preferential voting should increase MPs' accountability. Hence, it seems that preferential voting is conceived as a system in which MPs are directly chosen by voters. This does not imply that voters determine who is elected, and it is useful to refer to Pedersen's distinction between preferential voting used effectively as a way of testing the accountability assumption and preferential voting not used effectively. Again, voter's ability to affect MPs' election and their accountability is mainly based on measuring the power of voters over candidates through indicating their choice.

1.3.3 Ballot structure.

The distinction between ballot papers belonging to the so-termed "categorical" or "nominal" ballots, under which voters must cast a vote for one and only one party, and those belonging instead to the "ordinal" ballots, where the voter can rank order the parties or candidates, was introduced for the first time by Douglas Rae (1971). The electoral systems' behavioural influence can be divided into three main categories of affected actors: parties, candidates and voters. It can happen that a system may

[8] When collected, votes count for the party too, they affect the distribution of seats among both parties and candidates.

only require the elector to vote for a party list, where the particular candidates are elected by being determined by their order on the list; on the other hand, it can also offer within the party list, or even across party lists, degrees of choice of candidate (Bogdanor 1983). Additional elements, also in PLPR, such as district magnitude, can affect voter's behaviour, and in a similar way parties' internal organization can shape candidate's behaviour both before and after the elections. Therefore, the measurement of variations between electoral systems is an essential source of knowledge in the field of electoral systems.

The distinction between categorical and ordinal systems is explained by Douglas Rae in the following way: "categorical systems channel each parcel of electoral strength into the grasp of a single party, while ordinal balloting may disperse each parcel of electoral strength among a number of competing parties" (Rae 1971, 18). Ballot structures allow the voter to "divide" his vote between two or more parties but not to do any rank ordering, so Rae's definition leaves some confusion about how we should classify them.

The first category clearly covers ballot papers in most countries. Here the voter expresses support for the sole candidate of a party under single-member plurality, for a party list as it happens for example in Israel or Spain, for one candidate as in Finland, the Netherlands and others, or also several candidates on one party's list as in pre-1994 Italy.

Instead, Rae's "ordinal" category, which has been presented as a little confusing, does not cover all the systems in which the ballot structure is not categorical. Rae describes the German two-vote system as categorical, even though voters have the possibility to cast their two votes for different parties and, therefore, to divide their vote. For this reason, it should be logic to claim that he deals similarly with those PR systems under which voters are provided with the so-called "panachage", through which they are given a number of preference votes and can distribute them among candidates on more than one party's list. This system is called "free list", it is used in Luxembourg and Switzerland and has also been adopted later in Honduras and El Salvador. However, Rae considers this system as an ordinal one, even though the voter cannot rank the options. Actually, Rae's classification would have been more useful with a division into three categories, by allowing to distinguish systems permitting rank ordering from those permitting simple vote splitting. This second type is also known as "dividual", since it enables votes to be "divided" among more than one party.[9] This category includes mixed systems where voters can cast, if they wish so, their constituency vote for one party's candidate and their list vote for a different one. In a two-party system, voters might switch from one party at the first round to a different one at the second, but they cannot split their vote in any one round and a contribution in the election of a candidate can be provided by only one of their votes. However, this is better classified as categorical.

On the other hand, PR list systems proposing the option of panachage belong in the dividual category where voters can split their votes among different parties, whereas systems are categorial if voters are confined to an intraparty choice.

[9] "Dividual" is defined as being capable of being divided into parts by the Oxford English Dictionary.

1.3.4 Choice of candidate within parties.

Understanding how ballot is structured can help to understand whether voters have any power to choose among the candidates of their party. This is obviously unavailable under single-seat constituency systems, when parties do not offer more than one candidate in the first place.[10]

PR-list system differs on this. The broadly termed preferential list systems enable the voter to indicate a preference for one candidate, or many candidates in some cases, on their party's list, and these preference votes play a decisive role in determining which candidates fill the seats that the party receives. However, some preferential lists are more open than others and, for this reason, a distinction can be drawn between fully open lists where the voters alone determine which candidates receive the seats, and flexible lists where the party's initial ordering of the candidates determines the outcome unless enough voters combine to overturn this (Shugart 2008). So, how much of a role the preference votes play varies from case to case: in some countries under fully open lists, they completely determine it (for example if the party wins three seats, they go to the three candidates with the highest numbers of preference votes), while in other countries under flexible lists, the impact of the preference votes is silenced by the detail of the rules.

Regarding this concept, Sartori (1997) made a generalization based on Italian experience, according to which party "machine bosses" can manipulate preference voting in order to have no doubts that they and their favoured candidates are elected even though the lists appear apparently "open". On the contrary, if we refer to PR list systems, we will see that they are all "closed lists" where the voter can choose among parties but not among candidates within parties, and the order of candidates' names that is decided by the party determines which of them receives the seats. In most of the mixed-member systems used to elect national parliaments, the list element employs closed lists even thought this is not an essential feature of such systems and lists could happen to be open, which is an option used in Lithuania by parties. In PR "closed lists" systems, voters can only choose among parties as the order of candidates' names is decided by the party. This determines which of them receive its seats. As stated by Gallagher and Mitchell (2005b:11):

> "It is possible to see two different concepts of representation underlying the choice to be made between preferential list and closed list systems… According to one concept, the purpose of elections is to enable the direct representation of the people, and consequently preferential list systems, allowing the people to choose their own representatives, are more appropriate. According to the other, representation takes place through the political parties and the purpose of elections is to enable the parties to secure their proper share of representation; consequently, closed lists are more appropriate than open ones because the parties' candidate selectors are better judges than the voters of who is best able to realize the ideas and goals of the parties… in "principal-agent" terms, MPs are the agents; closed list systems seem to assume that parties are the sole principals, while open list systems assume that MPs have two principals, parties and voters".

To sum up, it is usually highlighted that the open lists allow candidates more scope to chase "personal" votes while, in contrast, closed lists maximize party control over candidates. Ultimately,

[10] An exception can be found even to this: sometimes in Japan the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) allows two candidates to run and then admits its parliamentary party's victory (Reed 2008, 277-293). Cases of party running two or more candidates in safe single-seat constituencies also have occurred sometimes in the Philippines.

the choice is often related to single-nation specificities, as some European cases (including the Italian one, among others) show.

It is undeniable that this feature of voter choice has several implications regarding how voters cast their ballot, how parties and candidates' campaign, and how politicians represent their voters (Ames 1995; Bowler and Farrell 1993; Bowler 1986; Cox 1990; Katz 1980; Shugart 2001).
The connection between ballot structure characteristics of electoral systems and voter attitudes toward democracy derives from three mechanisms: the first one originating directly from the voting act itself, the second one based more indirectly on the relationship between politicians and their voters, and the third one referring to the ideological tendency within the party's political system.
The first mechanism is presented by supporters of preferential systems whose principal strength is the maximization of voter choice (Hallett 1984; Lakeman 1974). By acting in this way there is some stress on how systems like STV give "voters greater choice and makes possible ballot splitting to express highly differentiated preferences" (Bowler and Grofman 2000), a concept that gives voters more choice in the electoral act and which should result in a greater sense of efficacy on the part of voters and more say in electing their representatives.
On the other hand, the second mechanism draws attention to the linkage between politicians and voters (Lawson 1980; Mitchell 2000; Rommele et al. 2005), for which it is generally agreed that ballot structure affects the representative role of politicians (e.g., Ames 1995; Carey and Shugart 1995; Shugart 2001). Moreover, studies based on surveys of politicians have demonstrated how electoral systems that are characterized by a candidate-orientation in politics and high degrees of preferential voting tend to bring out more attention to personal vote chased by politicians and the maintenance of close links with their electorates (Bowler and Farrell 1993; Farrell and Scully 2003; Katz 1997a).
Finally, the third mechanism deals with the issue of how preferential systems might impact more generally on party politics, and this leads to a distinction between centrifugal and centripetal tendencies (Cox 1990; Sartori 1976). The idea is that preferential electoral systems encourage a politics of accommodation between politicians (Horowitz 1991; Reilly 2001; Sisk 1995), so this alternative perspective adopts a bottom-up approach in which politicians are encouraged to move towards the centre ground in an effort to sweep up more support in the form of vote preferences because of the electoral incentives promoted by preferential electoral systems.[11] The major implication of this argument is that such tactics should help to foster democratic stability, if it results to be successful, and therefore should be manifested in higher levels of voter support for democracy. This last mechanism suggests a significant role for these systems in newer democracies, in helping them to consolidate.
The choice between preferential list and closed-list systems is guided by two different concepts of representation, a distinction that emerged when the question of which variant to adopt was discussed in Sweden in the 1990s. According to one concept, the direct representation of the people should be the principal purpose of elections, and consequently preferential list systems seem to be more appropriate, as they enable people to choose their own representatives. According to the other, instead, the aim of elections is to enable parties to secure their proper share of representation, given that representation takes place through the political parties. Moreover, closed lists are more appropriate than open ones because the parties' candidate selectors are better judges than the voters

[11] See also Reynolds 1999 on STV.

of who is best able to realize the ideas and goals of the parties (Petersson et al 1999). In "principal-agent" terms, the agents are constituted by MPs, but parties are the sole principals for closed-list systems, while open-list ones claim that MPs are characterized by two principals, one being parties and the other voters (see Carey 2009).
Finally, PR-STV, as well as the panachage's method of the previous section, gives voters a choice both among their party's candidates but also across party lines, as voters' decisions on how to rank order on the ballot paper all the candidates' names do not encounter any constraints by party lines.

1.3.5 Levels of seat allocation.

In many countries there is only one seat of allocation, in the sense that each voter casts a vote in a constituency. In accordance with the rules, the seats in that constituencies are awarded to parties and candidates, and each's party national total of seats is simply considered as the sum in each constituency of the seats it won. By definition, in single-seat constituency systems such as Australia, Canada, France, India, United Kingdom and United States, there is only one level of seat allocation, but there is one level as well in many systems adopting PR such as in Finland, Belgium, Chile, and Spain.
Therefore, the question that arises from this clarification is why complicate matters by having more than one level or "tier" of seat allocation? The reasons for doing this are many, but the most usual is that it bypasses the problem caused by one of the most solid findings in electoral systems research, for which the smaller the average district magnitude, the greater the disproportionality. However, this relationship points to a trade-off between two desirable properties of electoral systems, ensuring a close correspondence between the overall levels of electoral support and seats for parties in parliament, and providing voters with a local constituency representative.
In case of just one tier, the two poles are a single-seat constituency system which scores well on the local representation dimension but poorly on proportionality, and a PR system covering the whole country with just one constituency, which gives no direct representation for localities but excellent proportionality. Therefore, it is needed to sacrifice a bit of one desirable property to get more of the other with only one level of seat allocation.
A different situation is experienced in archetypal mixed-member proportional (MMP) systems, such as the one adopted in New Zealand, where around 60 percent of the MPs are elected from single-seat constituencies (at the 2017 election 71 out of 120), while the rest of the MPs are appointed from party lists at national tier. This system was firstly adopted by Germany, where seats are awarded to parties to secure that each party's total number of seats is proportional to its share of the list vote.[12] The system transmits a high degree of general proportionality, but at the same time each voter has a local constituency MP. Thus, mixed-member systems have been described as "the best of both worlds" (Shugart and Wattenberg 2003c; Plescia 2016), at least at first sight, though another analysis marks them as the "worst of both worlds" (Doorenspleet 2010). What happens in mixed-member systems is that typically voters have two votes, even if in some of them voters cast a single ballot, such as in Lesotho, which counts both as a vote for a constituency candidate and as a vote for that candidate's party nationally, eliminating in this way any possibility of vote splitting. However, the same kind of thinking underlies the choice of a two-tiered or even three-tiered seat allocation in many other

[12] This is a simplified view of the German system in which many details are omitted, such as the threshold, *Uberhangmandate* (overhang seats), and *Ausgleichsmandate* (balance seats), which are explained fully in Saalfeld (2008).

countries, drawing a distinction between those using mixed-member systems, like New Zealand and Japan, and single-vote systems (Austria and Denmark). Giving additional benefit to the larger parties is usually an effect of having higher or "upper" tiers, as it happened in the PR used in Cyprus and Greece in the past, because of the party's need of a high threshold to qualify for any of the higher-tier seats.

In all MMP systems the higher tier is generally termed "compensatory" or corrective, as the seats awarded at the higher tier(s) are used to compensate the underrepresented parties at the lower level, and there, to correct all the disproportionalities.[13] Germany is an example of such concept, as there the smaller parties such as the Greens and the Free Democratic Party (FDP) win few, or any, of the single-seat constituencies and they arrive to their "fair" overall share by being given the appropriate number of list seats. However, in other cases, the two "tiers" are "parallel": each is on the same level and cannot be seen as higher or lower. In the mixed-member majoritarian (MMM) systems adopted in Russia and Japan, voters each have two votes, but the list seats are awarded in proportion to the list votes only, so large parties retain the seats bonus they usually achieve in the SSD component without any regard for the seats that the parties won in the single-seat constituency section of the election. Instead, the approach of the system used in Hungary, is somewhere between the two, as it has elements of parallel allocation but also provides for a degree of compensation and, therefore, can be seen as partly compensatory. According to Shugart and Wattenberg, such systems supply "vote linkage" rather than "seat linkage" between the PR and the SSD components, so that parties' list vote totals are reduced for each SSD seat won by them (Shugart and Wattenberg 2003b). Proportionality is usually very low in mixed-member majoritarian systems, and in the single-seat districts, the overrepresentation of the large parties is only partially corrected by the list seats (Gallagher 2014).

1.3.6 Limitations on proportionality.

Proportionality is usually regarded as a "good thing" (Herron, Pekkanen, and Shugart 2018), as few electoral systems go for broke on the proportionality dimension. However, most have some ways of limiting it.

The use of threshold is the most explicit entry barrier. Many PR systems employ thresholds which do not allow the smallest parties to get their "fair" share of the seats. In a plurality of post-communist countries (Czech Republic, Latvia, Poland, Slovakia), parties receive seats if they win 5 percent of the national votes (Rose and Munro 2003). This discrimination against small parties and their supporters is justified for preventing excessive fragmentation and, in this way, making it easier to form stable governments, which constitute a particular concern in post-communist countries given their particular weakly structured party systems.

Instead, non-PR systems generally do not have rules specifying a threshold because they do not need to. In practice, as also the literature pointed out, there is always an "effective threshold" that makes it impossible for parties below a certain size to win a seat. This is mostly determined by the district magnitude, and partly by the seat allocation formula which also plays its part. While it is not easy do

[13] In most countries compensatory seats correct almost all the disproportionalities that were introduced in the lower tiers. Since 2005, Italy has awarded "bonus seats" to the largest party, so the "correction" is inducing majority. An absolute majority (55 percent of the total seats) is guaranteed by the 2017 electoral system to a list that obtains at least 40 percent of the votes (see D'Alimonte 2015). The electoral system of Italy's neighbour San Marino also guarantees a majority, the 58 percent of the seats, to the largest party or coalition. Greece awards such "plurality bonus" seats too, in the sense that as it happened in the 2015 elections, 250 of the 300 seats, reaching the 3 percent threshold, were allocated proportionately among all parties, and the largest parties were awarded the remaining 50.

specify the formula that is used to identify the effective threshold in all circumstances, Lijphart (1997) and Taagepera (1998) claim that it can best be estimated by the formula (75/(M+1)), where M refers to the district magnitude. In other words, in a constituency with ten seats, the effective threshold equals 75/(10+1), so 75/11, or 6.8, in the sense that a party with fewer than 6.8 percent of the votes is unlikely to win a seat in such a constituency.[14] Therefore, if there is a formal threshold which is fixed at a level lower than 6.8 percent it is likely to be proved superfluous, while if it is higher than 6.8 percent, it may well prove meaningful.

On the other hand, in a two-seat constituency the effective threshold is 75/3, being 25 percent, meaning that only parties above this level of strength have a chance of gaining representation. This means that the effective threshold established by small district magnitude is usually even more deadly to small parties than a legal threshold in a PR system.

In a single-seat constituency systems proportionality is already certain to be low, so there is no need for formal thresholds. It increases as district magnitude increases, which happens when a PR formula is being used, but even when district magnitude is in the two to four range, we can expect a significant deviation from complete proportionality.

Another way of limiting proportionality is through malapportionment, in the sense of awarding some areas of a country more seats in relation to population than others.[15] For example, an analysis found that Chile and Spain, with Canada, India and France right far behind, were both present in the most malapportioned lower houses of parliaments' "top twenty". Malapportionment might be affected by the party in power for many partisan reasons; it would give more seats to the areas where it is strongest, but that is not always why it occurs. The areas which are most likely to receive generous representation are small, peripheral, predominantly rural regions of a country where population density is lowest and the contact between voters and MPs may be relatively difficult to bring about, even though this usually has political consequences with parties of the left typically losing out since they are weak in such regions. The constitution of laws in many countries places some constraints on how far the ratio of representation in each constituency can deviate from the national average future, but even so, it is often surprising to look at the range of variation within a country.[16]

1.4 Elections and government.

As we have seen, elections are regarded as the distinguishing institution of democracy, translating individual voter preferences into collective choices that can be said to reflect them.

Classic theories see democratic choice as a two-stage process, where voters choose legislatures and governments which then, autonomously, make decisions for them. This concept is not so far from "consociationalist" or "consensus" conceptions of democracy (Lijphart 1984), where party leaders negotiate policy compromises that deeply divided populations cannot agree on. In both cases the

[14] It has to be emphasized that this relationship applies only within an individual constituency. It does not demand to tell the effective national threshold in a country whose parliament is elected from a large number of ten-seat constituencies. Moreover, just as the effective threshold can be computed from a known district magnitude, so an effective magnitude can be computed from a known threshold. See Gallagher and Mitchell (2008, appendix C) for a more complete discussion.

[15] A concept which usually ends up with some parties paying a higher "price" than others in terms of votes per seat, is gerrymandering. While it is possible that the impact of malapportionment could increase proportionality in some circumstances, the principle of awarding to some parts of a country more seats per person than to others finds itself in contrast with the underlying philosophy of proportional representation.

[16] For this discussion see also the specific chapters in Grofman and Lijphart 2002.

choice of legislatures is the elections' role, which then can shape both governments and policy independently.

Still following the idea of a two-stage process, but shifting the focus from legislatures to governments, mandate theory sees parties as offering alternative policy programmes to electors. The most popular programme attracts majority endorsement and pushes its sponsor into government with majority backing. The consequent "elective dictatorship" then carries through the promised programme, for which it is held accountable at the next election. Once it moves into the real world, the problem for government mandate theory is that only one democracy in the world, that of USA, regularly produces a majority choice of governing party. Instead, elsewhere majorities, if they are produced at all, are manufactured either through the mechanics of electoral system or by negotiations between potential coalitions partners. This has led a lot of research on democracy to focus on government formation as the key process in its functioning, and as parties are carriers of specific policies (Castles 1982; Budge and Keman 1990), so the policy mix to be adopted as public policy will follow automatically once government composition is settled. However, is obscure how exactly this relates to majority preferences and the "consensus democrats", going back to the earlier "trustee" conceptions of representation, argue that the authority given by elections enables party leaders to conduct negotiations which are necessary compromises that could persuade voters to accept. This concept is not so far from the role assigned by Madison (1788) and later American writers to policy bargaining within and between political institutions that goes on autonomously from electors. The main issue is the lack of an institutional mechanism which ensures "a necessary correspondence between acts of governance and the equally weighted felt interests of citizens with respect to these acts" (Saward 1998; cf. Weale 1999). Representatives and parties might be consensual and consider the general good, but there is no mechanism to make them do so. Indeed, what distinguishes democracy from benevolent despotism are precisely its institutional mechanisms to guarantee a necessary correspondence between government policy and individual preferences, regardless of culture, elite temperament, or the goodwill of rulers.

Many studies concerning representation have articulated a structure connecting the median voter's ideological position and the ideological position of the policymaking government in developed parliamentary democracy. This argument can be found in Cox (1997, chapter 12) 's works, in which the connections are argued to work through different mechanisms of party competition and government formation in democracies with single-member district election rule than in democracies adopting proportional representation rules and their associated party systems. However, both mechanisms link the campaign promises articulated by the party or parties in government to the median voter, leading, in this way, the governing parties to carry out policies consistent with these promises. The number of parties is reduced in the single-member district systems (Duverger's Law), and the theory of two-party convergence to the median voter (Downs 1957) leads to the expectation that a party which is close to the median voter will receive a parliamentary majority. Hence, this party forms a government and carries out its promised policies, which are favoured by the median voter, under close scrutiny from the electorate which can clearly assess its accountability in keeping promises. In the PR systems more parties compete, and the ideological range of the citizens is reflected into the legislature, given the accurate vote-seat correspondence generated under PR in developed democracies (Lijphart 1994; Rae 1967). The median legislative party is close to the median voter's position, and as no party has received a majority, postelections bargaining results in coalition or minority governments. The legislative median party has some advantages in coalition bargaining

and is usually included in the coalition government (Laver and Schofield 1990) to also link the new government and its policies to the median voter.
The representation literature differs on whether majoritarian or PR systems should be expected to generate closer governments to the median voter, or whether each should be equally effective (Golder and Stramski 2007). For example, Cox (1997) claims that it depends on where we are more likely to find "coordination failures" in the competition, but also empirical studies are divided on this topic, where governments seem to be generated closer to the median by PR systems (Huber and Powell 1994; McDonald and Budge 2005; McDonald, Mendes, and Budge 2004; Powell 2000).

Elections supply a mechanism for identifying the median preferences from the distribution of votes over the various policy alternatives offered by parties. The electoral system often ensures that the party identified as carrier, or comes nearest to being so, also contains the median member of the legislature. Moreover, without that party, no legislative majority can be formed.
The identification and the empowerment of the median position represent an extension of traditional party mandate ideas rather than a rival to them. Both "median mandate" and "government mandate" are based on the same set of assumptions about party and electoral behaviour, even if the sole difference lies in the idea that the mandate is given by a cohesive popular majority to a single-party government. Median mandate theory, knowing that such majority will exist only rarely, looks for an acceptable substitute in the other cases and finds it in the median voter position that consequently forces its party carrier to effect it in office. Where there is a popular majority, the two versions of the mandate unify, and this is the special case where the median voter is found in the majority anyway. All the median mandate ideas reject from the traditional mandate approach is the tendency to bargain with practice by providing pluralities with a genuine majority's attributes. However, this is not acceptable, as a plurality-based government is opposed by the majority of voters unless it is at the median. Its strategic position certainly makes the median party a natural member of governments, and if a party gains a majority of votes, it will form the government itself with a direct mandate to carry through its policies. According to Laver and Budge (1992), coalitions tend to include median parties in about 80 percent of post-war governments, which form a natural anchor point for the other parties around them. Being in government naturally reinforces the ability of the median party to get its policy accepted and to be the most preferred policy by the majority of electors once they have constituted themselves as a majority.

In Britain, elections are conceived as a defective democratic mechanism because only a pivotal position in the legislature is allowed to the popular majority. In Britain, the single-member district (SMD) system generally awards a plurality party which will have won the majority of parliamentary seats, so the 37-48 percent of the national vote. It then forms a government that can do whatever it wants under the unwritten constitution, only subjected to the encountering extra-parliamentary resistance (Budge et al. 1998: 177-98, 681-700). Where the legislative majority and the governing party that it supports is also the median party judged in Left-Right terms, the situation may not be as anti-democratic and or anti-majoritarian as it seems.
Table 1.2 shows the extent to which this has been so during the post-war period.
During the sixteen elections from 1945 to 2001 inclusive, the median party became the legislative majority eight times, or after only half of the elections. The interesting and significant event is that six out of the eight occasions when the middle party got into office occurred between 1951 and 1970. In 1974 an extreme left-wing Labour Party won a parliamentary majority and then, from 1979 to

1997, an increasingly right-wing Conservative party got into government. Therefore, it can be claimed that there has been a tendency for parties which have taken an extreme ideological position rather than one based on the "middle ground" to win majorities from 1971 onwards. Considering this point, British government have moved away from reflecting the majority opinion during the recent post-war period, and only "New Labour" managed to reoccupy the centre in 1997 and 2001 by shifting rightwards and make itself a more consensual government.

The consequence of the incongruity between moderate majority preferences and extremist government policies from 1974 and 1997 is considered by many commentators a widespread loss of support for political institutions in general, popular cynicism about the extent of democratic choice and political apathy by 2001 when less than 60 percent of electors voted in the general election of that year.

When "working" mandate theories have to cope with the absence of a real majority party, rule by the plurality party is justified (Powell 2000), that is, in all elections but a few presidential ones in the USA.

Table 1.2 Equivalence between the median electoral party and the government in Britain, 1945-2000.

Election year	Post-election government party	Middle party Left-Right issues	Did middle party win?
1945	Labour	Liberals	No
1950	Labour	Conservative	No
1951	Conservative	Conservative (almost)	Yes
1955	Conservative	Conservative	Yes
1959	Conservative	Conservative	Yes
1964	Labour	Labour (almost)	Yes
1966	Labour	Labour	Yes
1970	Conservative	Conservative	Yes
1974 (i)	Labour	Liberals	No
1974 (ii)	Labour	Liberals	No
1979	Conservative	Liberals	No
1983	Conservative	Liberals – SD Alliance	No
1987	Conservative	Liberals – SD Alliance	No
1992	Conservative	Liberal Democrat	No
1997	Labour	Labour	Yes
2001	Labour	Labour	Yes

Source: McDonald and Budge 2005, 5-6.

In these cases, such theories justify the party which is nearest to the popular majority to take over government and putting its programme into effect without any kind of impediments, even though such party may eventually be strongly opposed by the actual majority, as happened with the Thatcherite and the Conservatives. Undoubtedly, the British electorate reacts in a way such as to endorse the alternative view that compromises produced by empowering the median position are more acceptable. The party "carrying" the median preference of the electorate should have a crucial voting position in the legislative, regardless of who forms the government. Indeed, the coincidence

ensures that public policy corresponds as closely as possible to the expressed preferences of the citizens, and obviously to the majority of them. The workings of the "elective dictatorship" in Britain over the last thirty centuries would be regarded by very few people as being very democratic.

1.5 Elections and democracy.

Democracy should involve popular specification of public policies (McDonald and Budge 2005). With the emergence of political parties, electors could choose among policy stances by the parties' election programme, even though the usual approach on elections focuses more attention on which parties would form the governments rather than policy adoption and implementation. For one thing, depending on the party system, forming governments often called for post-election party negotiations, while for another, even single-party governments face many obstacles to implementation.

Elections appear as approximate instruments, to the extent that most analysts are convinced that popular control over public actions is not really exercised (Powell 2000). SMD systems provide an incentive for two dominant parties to contest elections within a district (Duverger 1954; Katz 1980), and parliaments elected through this specific system are conceived as an evidence of the mechanisms of an electoral system of translating votes into seats in an odd way. This happens because of SMD's tendency to translate the vote percentage of the leading party into a seat percentage which is much larger, so in this way, the SMD system constructs parliamentary majorities out of electoral pluralities. The manufactured majority, together with other oddities of the vote-to-seat translation under SMD, strengthen arguments for using proportional representation (PR) to elect parliaments and, indeed, arguments in favour of a close linkage between party seat and party vote in the legislature are very forceful. However, it is still not clear whether PR systems do provide a connection between electorates and governments, as the reality is that in parliaments elected through PR rules, no party wins an outright majority of seats. Moreover, multiparty governments form based on post-election bargaining which may or may not fit together with the election results. According to Downs (1957), voters in multiparty systems do not possess the ability to predict the party coalitions that form governments after an election, so it is difficult for voters in PR systems to vote in a rational way where the purpose is to put the power in the hands of a party or parties that will do what the rational voter wants. In these circumstances, government formation is viewed as not really linked to election results, bur principally as a matter of legislative negotiation and consultation. Parties use seats as a resource when they attempt to understand what is in their best interest during the negotiations. For example, Riker (1982) suggests that one party might merge with another in a policy-blind calculation based on the spoils they can gain by forming such a minimal winning coalition. This coalition could be subordinated on policy preferences, in the sense that government coalitions are policy connected and they bring together ideologically adjacent parties (Axelrod 1970). Even with policy connectedness, a centre party in a predominantly three-party system could choose whether it wants to push the policy position of government to the right or to the left, regardless of the election results.

The role played by elections in democracy, going back to governments and the fact that most of them form autonomously, is that they specify not only the median (majority) preference of the population, but also the overall policy structure or space within which it is embedded. Then, politicians and parties operate within this revealed structure, which a properly functioning electoral system will reproduce in terms of party vote shares in the legislature. These will give a massive role on policy to the median party, as elections results both empower the median position and inform politicians what it is, thus eliminating the possibility of strategic miscalculation messing up median-based outcomes. Therefore,

the electoral process creates the “necessary correspondence”, if it functions properly, “between acts of governance and the equally weighted felt interests of citizens with respect to these acts” required by normative democratic theory (Saward 1998), and it achieves such in both a cognitive and empowerment sense. However, in many cases, the communicative and informative element comes first because politicians would not know how to react in strategic or power terms if they did not know the shape of the relevant policy configuration. To decide on appropriate action and to form alliances, they have to share a sense of what the policy dimension is and how parties and electors are arranged on it. Furthermore, if they do not know what party is at the median, or if they all had differing perceptions of it, their result behaviour would be erratic and stand little chances of translating electors’ preferences into policy.

This implies that there is a median position to be taken and a precise structure of preferences to sustain it. Mathematical analyses have expressed doubts on a median existing in Euclidean spaces of three or more policy dimensions (McKelvey 1979) and even with two policy dimensions. In terms of space, a median position can only be guaranteed by extension in one dimension, in policy-spaces with separable dimensions (Ordeshook 1986) or with correlated dimensions. Having a policy specifying, rather than a government specifying function, does not depend on the existence of a one-dimensional election space, but it is still facilitated by it. Left-Right terms, in which electoral debate is usually conducted, produce these types of spaces. Concerning this point, an active force simplifying and compressing other issues into such a space is the election campaign itself, while the dynamics of political rhetoric and media simplification for a mass audience require making some summary comparisons between national parties. In turn, these press the regional variants and group concerns along with peripheral issues, by focusing on their central confrontation that is considered in terms of a single Left-Centre-Right continuum.

Therefore, it is the election which identifies the median voter and his or her preferred party, and this party tends to be at the median on the majority of the separate issues into which the debate is divided in the inter-election period by policy specialization of ministries and complementary division of legislative labour. This contributes to the general influence made by legislative processes over public policies, which consequently enables it to bring them closer to its median supporters’ preferences and, therefore, to those of the popular majority.

Chapter 2 – Majoritarian Electoral Systems.

The history of majoritarian electoral systems is quite peculiar, and it deserves a detailed scrutiny to understand what they are and how they work. A majoritarian electoral system is one in which the candidates or parties which receive the most votes win (Bormann and Golder 2013). Although it can happen that some majoritarian systems require the winning party or candidate to reach an absolute majority of the votes, others only require that they win more votes than the competitors, which is called plurality or relative majority systems. However, in both cases we generally have single-member constituencies. Hence, there is always a winner who takes all, but a relative majority winner is simply who comes first and, therefore, is often the expression of the "major minority", wherever a winner with absolute majority represents a true one. Majoritarian systems do not aim for a parliament which reflects the distribution of votes; they specifically want to produce a clear winner. Their intent is not only to elect a parliament, but to elect a government at the same time, albeit just by implication. Most plurality systems can be distinguished for the number of votes per voters, as well as for seats per district. For example, in a single-member district plurality (SMDP) system, voters in a single-member district cast a single candidate-centred vote. Under the single non-transferable vote (SNTV), voters cast in a multimember district a single candidate-centred vote. The block vote (BV) is a candidate-centred system adopted in multi-member districts where voters have as many votes as there are districts. The limited vote (LV) is a candidate-centred system used in multi-member districts in which voters have fewer votes than there are district seats, even though they have multiple votes. In each of these systems, the victory goes to the candidates with the most votes. Instead, in the party block vote (PBV) voters cast a single party-centred vote in multi-member districts, and the party with the most votes wins all the district seats.

Majoritarian systems have been adopted by all European states at the beginning of the twentieth century. At the contrary, there are few advanced democracies using them today, like France, the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom and Australia.[17] The case of France is rather unique, both as it is the only non-Anglo-Saxon country among these major countries, as well as because it adopts the two-round system, introduced for the first time by General Charles de Gaulle exactly half a century ago. English-style majoritarian systems are one-turn majoritarian systems. If an absolute majority is required from the winner, then one must turn towards either the alternative vote, used for example in Australia for the lower House, or the two-round system which admits, in most cases, only the two most voted candidates of the first round to the ballot.

As was already presented in the previous chapter, there exist many variants of majoritarian systems: cumulative vote, single non-transferable vote, block vote and limited votes are the main variants which are still adopted today in some cases in the world. They select representatives in both legislatures at the national level and for lower tiers of government as well. However, today, the three major variants adopted by the countries here analysed are:

1. The plurality system, also known as "first-past-the-post" (FPTP), adopted since the fifteenth century in England, as well as in Canada and the US later.

[17] Majoritarian systems are also used for the direct election of heads of state or government in Finland, Ireland, Portugal and again the US, while New Zealand adopted single-member plurality until the 1993 electoral reform (Baldini and Pappalardo 2009).

2. The two-round system (TR) adopted in France for the last 50 years to elect the Assemblée National, as well as for a different version of the election of the President of the Republic.
3. The alternative vote (AV) adopted in Australia.

The alternative vote (AV) is a preferential voting system in single-member constituencies that requires each voter to arrange all candidates in a preferential order. The candidates with the lowest number of first preferences are eliminated and their preferences are redistributed until a winner emerges with an absolute majority. The alternative vote is thus a true majoritarian system, and it is also a system which allows and encourages, by strongly personalizing the vote, the crossing of practical lines. As for the two-round system, it is clear that if only two candidates are admitted to the second round, then one of them will obtain an absolute majority. However, both the alternative vote and the two round system will be analysed in more details and under different points of view later in this chapter.

Before this, it is essential to conclude the general overview on majoritarian systems by putting them in a basic comparison with other relevant systems of election, as widespread as them and also largely adopted by several countries in the world: the proportional systems.

First of all, while we have said that in the majoritarian systems the winner takes all, in the proportional ones the winning is divided among those who receive a sufficient share of the vote, which is generally, but not always, the so-called electoral quotient. In majoritarian systems the choice of the elector is channelled and ultimately restricted to a single alternative; in proportional systems, voters are not forced to concentrate the votes and their range of choice can be wide. On the other hand, the majoritarian systems propose single candidates, persons, while the proportional ones generally propose party lists. However, each system contains a large number of variants.

While all majoritarian systems reach the "takes all" winner, the majority in question can be, as already mentioned, either an absolute majority (of at least 50.1 percent), or a relative majority (plurality), which is the majority of who gets the highest number of votes. On the other hand, while all proportional systems are asked to translate their votes into seats "in some proportion", this proportion varies from an almost perfect match to a very imperfect one, that is, highly disproportional. Moreover, not all electoral systems can actually be classified as either majoritarian or proportional. For example, the two-round system can be either a majoritarian system with single-member constituencies or a proportional system with plurinominal constituencies.

However, the difficulty of dividing all electoral systems between majoritarian and proportional lies in the fact that the two labels are not symmetrical. When we say relative majority (plurality), we denote only an electoral criterion (the first wins over all), while proportional representation also, and inevitably, suggests a proportional outcome, referring to a representative body which somehow reflects the distribution of votes in proportion. It is true that we always feel that a proportional system can turn out to be highly unrepresentative, yet whenever a system is called proportional, we assume that there must be some equal ratio between votes and seats.

To solve this issue, it is therefore necessary to separate the criterion or method of election from its outcome, that is, from how a parliament reflects the distribution of votes of the electors. In this way, majoritarian and proportional systems can be clearly identified and defined by mutual exclusion, that is as negative of each other. Thus: an electoral system is majoritarian if the vote is expressed in constituencies (usually single-member) in which the winner is the one who crosses the final line first, the so-called first-past-the-post. Vice versa, every electoral system in which the vote is

expressed in multi-member constituencies (from two seats upwards) and produce winners (from two onwards) elected on the basis of highest proportions, is a proportional system.
Certainly, there are two very different ways of establishing these winning proportions: one (the most frequent) is to determine electoral quotients, while the other is simply to elect the first to arrive (the first two in binominal college, and so on). In the first case, the candidates are elected based on equal shares (the quotients); in the second, the candidates are elected on the basis of the highest portion of votes.
This distinction between majoritarian and proportional systems does not imply that all electoral systems can be classified either as majoritarian or proportional, since we must also consider another existing kind: the mixed systems. However, it is important to note that this notion is often misapplied. If we have, for example, a bicameral parliament whose Chambers are elected with different systems, this is not the same as a mixed system. Indeed, true mixed systems are only those that elect the same Chamber through a combination of proportional and majoritarian criteria. Nevertheless, it is obvious that this hybrid does not affect the division between these two systems, but rather, it presupposes it.

2.1 The simplest version of the majoritarian principle: Plurality System.

The plurality system is considered the simplest type of electoral systems, in which to assign seats, the territory is fragmented into many single-member districts whose number is equal to that of the seats to be assigned. Within each district, separate electoral competitions among individual candidates occur, and in the end the winner takes all despite how many votes more than the competitors he/she has obtained. This means reaching a plurality, not necessarily the majority of votes; for this reason, this system is also defined “first-past-the-post” (FPTP).
At the beginning of the 2000s, this system was adopted by 47 countries in the world to elect their legislatures (Reynolds et al. 2005). It used to be the most popular electoral system for presidential elections, even though it was recently overtaken by majority (Golder 2005). However, still today, the system is adopted by the largest electorate in the world because of its adoption for the election of the Indian parliament, although it has now been overtaken by PR in percentage terms (Reynolds et al. 2005).

2.1.1 A general overview on the Plurality System.

The basic system of simple plurality voting in parliamentary general elections is widely familiar: countries are divided into territorial single-member constituencies, in which voters cast a single ballot (marked by an X) for one candidate. At this point, the candidate with the largest share of vote in each seat is returned to office, and in turn the party with an overall majority of seats forms the government.
In countries that adopt single-member plurality (SMP), big parties are favoured by such system, while the small ones, especially those whose support is spatially dispersed, are severely penalized. Indeed, the plurality system tends to exaggerate the share of seats of those who are conceived as leading party to produce an effective working parliament majority for the government (Norris 1997, 300-301). This claim suggests that the plurality system is used to keep smaller parties in the shadows for the sake of stability and efficiency in the political system. Therefore, a party needs a strong territorial concentration to get access to representation, as it can give a plurality of votes to a

candidate whose party does not reach 2 percent of the votes at the national level.[18] However, the discussion about plurality system in small parties and the effects it produces will be presented in the following paragraph based on the effects and the consequences of such system.

Returning to the general overview on the plurality system, it can be claimed that it is used to the lower chamber's election in 43 countries including Canada, India, the United Kingdom, and the United States, as well as many more states of the Commonwealth.

In the "winner takes all" logic, the leading party boosts its legislative base, while the trailing parties obtain very few rewards as the main focus is effective governance, not representation of all minority views.

This system is characterised by the fact that single-member constituencies are based on the electorate's size. The United States is divided into 435 congressional districts, each of them including equal populations with one House representative per district. To equalize the electorate, district boundaries are reviewed at periodic intervals based on the census. However, the number of electors per constituency varies dramatically cross-nationally. Indeed, for example, India has 545 representatives for a population of 898 million, so each member of the Lok Sabha serves about 1.6 million people. The constituencies' geographic size also varies substantially within countries, moving from inner-city seats which are small but densely packed, to distending and more remote rural areas.

The two main advantages of the plurality system are its cheapness, but mostly, its simplicity. Indeed, it is simple for voters to understand, as the basic logic is that the candidate with most of the votes wins. Moreover, it is also simple to cast ballots because complicated ranking of preferences is not needed. This makes it an accessible system everywhere, even in places where voters' education is very limited, and the literacy rate is low. At the first attempt it produces a winner, saving time, reducing the costs of the political campaigning, as well as of the electoral administration, and also important, it reduces uncertainty during the electoral period,

However, just as some advantages can be identified for this system, some criticisms can be drafted as well, for instance on its unfairness and unrepresentativeness. Disproportionality indexes are very high, as in countries that adopt plurality system there are situations in which the party that has obtained most votes does not get most seats. Instead, in other cases, parties with as much as 15-20 percent of the votes are awarded a single figure percentage of seats.

Moreover, some analysis and studies have underlined a relationship between plurality and low turnout (see Blais and Aarts 2006). More generally, majoritarian systems are associated with 5 points average lower turnout (UK Ministry of Justice 2008), while others have pointed to the underrepresentation of women and minorities under this system (Norris 2004; Norris 2006).

Another argument is the particular sensitivity to district apportionment of the system, as malapportionment or gerrymandering (a practice establishing an unfair political advantage for a party by manipulating the elections) can produce even higher levels of the exaggerated levels of disproportionality.

Finally, it should not be forgotten that plurality is generally deemed to have helped to produce countries which are "divided into geographically separate party strongholds, with little incentive for

[18] In the UK, regionalist parties get fairly represented, and this is the case of the two main regionalist parties there. In the latest elections of 2019, the Scottish National Party won 48 seats out of 59, obtaining the 3.9 percent of the votes, while the DUP won 8 seats with 0.8 percent of the votes.

parties to make appeals outside their home region and cultural-political base" (Reynolds et al. 2005).

2.1.2 Effects and consequences of the Plurality System.

Returning to the issue of small parties operating in a plurality system, the party nationalisation literature claims that very often the smallest parties rely only on a small region's concentrated support, coinciding in many cases with a concentration of their social constituency (Riker 1982). This is caused by a general variation in the party supply of votes which is a consequence of an uneven distribution of economic and social groups or cultural identities, and of party's organizational structure (for instance local party branches) in the territory (Caramani 2004). Therefore, this effect is pronounced in plurality elections where small parties, except for their localised strongholds, struggle to gain ground outside of them (Caramani 2004; de Miguel 2017). Indeed, plurality vote systems have a powerful concentrating effect on party systems, but on the one hand, representation is concentrated by the translation of votes into seats on large parties. On the other hand, they can lead to anticipatory effects which consist in a decision taken by voters and political elites to opt for large parties to secure representation.

Concerning the first aspect, the vote-to-seat translation, additional developments of the rules demonstrate that the rates of the translation are determined by the territorial distribution of the votes and the number of electoral districts, and that they vary between countries and between parties (Gudgin and Taylor 1979, chapter 5; Sartori 1986; Bochsler 2010b; Taagepera 2002; Lublin 2014). Representation is better in small parties when the votes they receive are unevenly distributed, while it is the opposite in large parties where there is an even vote distribution and they profit from fewer districts (Johnston et al. 1999; Borisyuk et al. 2010; Calvo and Rodden 2015).

This literature addresses the electoral system's "mechanical effects", or how a given votes' distribution is translated into seats.

However, there is a second plurality vote's implication, as it affects the political actors' behaviour and the candidates' choice. If in an anticipatory move in district competitions, where small parties expect to be weak, they decide not to present any candidate, then the extent to which small parties are disadvantaged by the plurality vote is underestimated by studies of the vote-seat translation under the plurality vote. This strategic effect is usually dealt by comparative studies of electoral systems at national level (e.g., Lijphart 1994). There are few implications which focus on this "psychological effect" at the district level. Among them there are Singer and Stephenson (2009) who study Duvergerian dynamics in a cross-national setup, and Cain (1978), who focuses on United Kingdom's elections. He shows that, relying on voter's perceptions of the chances of their preferred candidates to be elected, they tend to switch their vote to their second preference if they realise that the chances of their first preferences are nil.

The expressions like "psychological effect" (Duverger 1951), "strategic voting", and the "strategic effect" are included in the terminology referring to the effect on electoral systems' vote distribution. All these terms imply that the effect of the electoral system is anticipated by political actors, and they adjust their behaviour accordingly. The term "strategic voting" is confined to the type of voters recognised as strategic agents (Cain 1978; Blais and Nadeau 1996). However, the electoral system's Duvergerian effect also addresses other agents, showing how the formation of political parties can be affected by the rules (Hug 2001), or how they can affect also political parties' decisions on whether to nominate candidates or not (Cox 1999). Moreover, some (minor) parties might not be able to compete in all electoral districts because parties also have limited organizational capacities,

and instead decide to run where they have the best chances of making a difference (Blais and Carty1991; Osborne and Silvinski 1996). In the strategic behaviour's notion, the major interest of agents is the eventual composition of Parliament (see also Cox 1990), so they maximise the likelihood that the outcome of the elections is decided principally by their vote. This also implies that when their vote has more chances of having an impact, agents vote for a different party than their own favourite. The net vote shift due to such strategic behaviour is addressed by the strategic effect of the plurality vote.

These effects will accentuate the major differences in the territory (Morgenstern et al. 2009; Bochsler 2010b). Most importantly, only in very limited districts, candidates of minor parties have a chance of being elected, being districts where their social or political constituency is strongly concentrated. Minor parties might have some difficulties in being elected in other districts, especially in the case where their votes could be decisive in the race between the large parties' candidates. Thus, minor parties might receive fewer votes compared to those they would have in a non-competitive district, or at least less competitive than the one just mentioned (Duverger 1951; Cox 1997; Singer and Stephenson 2009).

Political actors can behave strategically at the constituency level only if they can anticipate the candidate's ranking. Bochsler (2016) identifies two conditions which results to be necessary. First, a strategic vote usually relies on a clear gap in election chances concerning one's favourite candidate and the two front-running candidates. The strategic effect would not occur in the absence of an evident vote champion, so only in these situations it could make a difference. It does not make much sense that voters switch their votes to their second preference if they find it hard to judge whether their first preference might be among the two strongest candidates. This is the same for other actors' strategic behaviour (parties, donors, candidates), where it is difficult to identify the front-runners in a pluralised context, for instance where none of the parties is particularly strong. Second, strategic behaviours are conducted by political actors only if there is a reasonable chance that this will make a difference. There is no way in which strategic voting or strategic support for a candidate can alter the result of the election if another candidate, being the strongest, can count on the support of an absolute majority of voters. Indeed, the former would achieve a brilliant result but not win office even if all voters for minor parties decided to switch to the second-ranked candidate. Considering these two conditions, strategic behaviour has more possibilities to occur in the absence of a strongest, dominating the election, candidate with considerably more than 50 percent of the support, and in the absence of equally strong candidates. This occurs if the strongest candidate wins less than 40% of the votes.

Moreover, as already noted, under first-past-the-post, candidates usually do not need to pass a minimum threshold of votes, nor they require an absolute majority to be elected; instead, what is needed to win is a simple plurality, meaning just one more vote than their closest rival. The concept of the "winner takes all" also implies that no "compensation" for losers is provided, as instead happens in some mixed-member systems.[19] Hence, in seats where the vote splits almost equally three ways, the winning candidate may have only 35 percent of votes, while the other contestants get respectively 34 percent and 32 percent. The plurality of votes is decisive, even though two-thirds of the voters supported other candidates.

[19] One of the bizarre situations which can sometimes occur in some district is that, in 1997, in the Kerowagi constituency in Papua New Guinea, the winning candidate won with just 7.9 percent of the votes, meaning that 92.1 percent of the constituents voted for someone else. (Cox 1997, 85).

In this system the party share of parliamentary seats counts for the formation of government, not their share of the popular vote. Government may be formed by a party without a plurality of votes, as long as it has a parliamentary majority. For instance, in 1951, the British Conservative Party was returned to government with a 16-seat majority in parliament based on 48.0 percent of the popular vote, although Labour won slightly more (48.8 percent) of the vote. However, in February 1974, the opposite occurred, as the Conservatives won a slightly higher share of the national vote, but Labour formed the government. Moreover, under this system governments are commonly returned with less than a majority of votes. No governing party in the UK has won as much as half of the popular vote since 1935. For example, in 1983 Margaret Thatcher, with the support of less than a third of the total electorate (30.8 percent of electorates), was returned with a high number of seats producing a substantial parliamentary majority of 144.

2.2 The second type: Two-Round System (TR).

The principle of majority rule, when it comes to the selection of representatives, has often been interpreted to mean that each of them should obtain majority support in the territorial (or other) unit from which he or she is elected. Generally, the typical means of achieving this result is through multiple rounds in which voting is repeated until one of the candidates reach half of the votes. But, even though election through multiple balloting is regarded as the world's oldest electoral system, its effects are, quite often, not well understood by political scientists (Birch 2003). The study of electoral systems has focused mainly on the distinction between, on the one hand, single-member district majoritarian rules and, on the other hand, varieties of proportional representation (PR). The comparative study of two-round (TR) systems in parliamentary elections has been hindered by the decline in the adoption of such system at the start of the 20th century, and it was a relatively marginal electoral system type until the 1990s. Most commentators have confused the requirement for an absolute majority with the TR's mechanism, according to which a run-off election is required between the top candidates in the first-round if none receives over 50 percent of the first-round vote. The two institutions are not the same, as while the alternative vote achieves an absolute majority result by requiring voters to rank order their preferences in one round of voting, in the other systems a run-off is provided because of the failure of one candidate to win less than 50 percent of the vote or of the presence of a supermajority requirement in the first round.

2.2.1 A general overview on the Two-Round System.

The main alternative to representatives' election by a plurality is election by a majority, meaning by an "overall" majority referring to the 50 percent + 1 of the valid votes cast. In the situation where no candidate reaches 50 percent + 1 of the votes, a "run-off election", which is basically a second round of voting, takes place between the two leading candidates.

Therefore, a different class of electoral systems can be pointed out, the two-round system, defined as the one which has a relatively high threshold to achieve first-round success in single-member constituencies, and only if this threshold is not reached, necessitate a second round.[20]

Two-round systems were common in parliamentary elections throughout Europe until the late 19th and early 20th centuries, but they were virtually all abandoned in favour of proportional

[20] Regarding this definition there could be a minimum threshold requirement, as it happens in some countries such as Costa Rica and Argentina, otherwise a runoff is held.

representation around the time of mass enfranchisement (Carstairs 1980; Rokkan 1970). As we will see later in the following chapter, France remains the only major country to have adopted the TR system in fully democratic elections to the lower house of its national legislature. Nevertheless, these systems were used by about 40 states at some point during the post-war period, and today this is currently the electoral formula in use in some of the world's least democratic states, like Cuba, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Mauritania, North Korea, Vietnam and Turkmenistan. Finally, a number of states have employed the TR systems for one or two elections before switching to single-round voting: Algeria in 1991, Armenia in 1995, Côte d'Ivoire in 1980 and 1985, Lithuania in 1992 and 1996, and Ukraine in 1994.

Much of the work that has been carried out on TR electoral mechanisms concerned their effects on presidential elections. Absolute majority elections in two rounds are common in presidential elections, and the level of its use has risen substantially in recent years with the increase in the number of countries holding competitive presidential elections. This rise has shifted the attention toward the effects of plurality versus absolute majority TR rules for selecting the chief executive. This research has revealed that although absolute majority formulae are commonly defended as they encourage a majority to coalesce around a single party, their effect is actually the opposite. Indeed, TR presidential electoral systems have been associated with both increased fragmentation of presidential support and increased division in the legislature (Jones1995; Shugart and Carey 1992). This has been attributed to the fact that the second ballot gives outside candidates a greater chance of success whether they manage to mobilise a second-round majority against the frontrunner. This possibility is politically divisive, because it encourages minor candidates to enter the presidential race, which has a fissiparous effect on the party system.

TR systems are seen to have specific advantages when used to elect assemblies. First of all, one of its characteristics is that it allows a wide range of parties to gain representation while still carrying on the link between voter and representative. According to Duverger (1959), absolute majority systems allow the multiplication of parties as the psychological effect characteristic of plurality systems does not come into play. More parties are given a shot at second-round success as first-round choices are not constrained by considerations of electoral viability (cf. Sartori 1994).[21] Therefore, the fragmenting tendency of TR systems in presidential elections might really constitute an advantage when it comes to parliamentary elections, especially if the result is the selection of moderate candidates representing a diversity of interests.

The second main advantage of TR elections involves their tendency to encourage compromise on the part of voters whose preferred choice is eliminated in the first round, and on the part of parties that may form second-round alliances in order to prevent a common enemy from being elected (Bullock and Johnson 1992; Duverger 1984; Fisichella 1984; Norris 1997). Thus, TR systems generally prevent the election of extreme ("antisystem") options which are very much disliked by an absolute majority, even though they command plurality support.[22] In this way, this system ought to produce a large amount of moderate centrist legislators, especially in those areas where no political group has overall control.

Recent experience in France has also led many intellectuals to question the view that the TR voting promotes centrist parties, which is definitely the case with Macron, the current French president, and of his centrist party "En Marche!". In addition, a number of conditions whose fulfilments may

[21] See, however, Cox's (1997, p. 124) critique of this logic.

[22] See Sartori (1994, 67-68) for a detailed discussion of this aspect.

not always apply in other countries, despite their presence in France, is the cause of discrimination against antisystem parties by TR elections according to Fisichella (1984). Parties should be as disciplined and cohesive as to form effective alliances and strongly enough rooted in the electorate that voters will follow their cues in the second round. At the same time, both the parties and voters must be flexible in their ideology in order to enter into alliances in the one case and to be willing to vote tactically in the other.
Through his wide analysis, including democratizing countries, Richard Katz (1997) found that the TR system generated large-party systems, as Duverger already introduced. Generally, the typical size of party systems in TR countries exceeded those of proportional systems, leading many to question the view of the TR system as "moderate" compromise between plurality and PR. The characteristic effects of TR elections are poorly understood, but it is not so sure that its advantages identified by its proponents are actually inherent features of the system.
The TR system presents several disadvantages also in the context of democratic transition. The first of these is strictly connected to the direct effect of the diminution of uncertainty fostered by the gap between rounds, and the second with the strategies it encourages parties and voters to adopt in the second round. Democratic elections are a calculated risk based on uncertainty (Birch 2003), meaning that if all actors knew for certain what the outcome would be, then it would be in the interest of losers to opt for nonelectoral methods to achieve their ends. It could be caused by the veil of ignorance surrounding the area of elections that pushes actors to acquiesce to the relatively fair method of popular election as means of distributing power. The TR system removes this element of uncertainty by revealing the distribution of electoral strength before the final outcome is decided.

2.2.2 The TR system's electoral consequences.

The last point of the previous paragraph, the TR's ability to remove the element of uncertainty, has at least two fundamental consequences. In the first place, it encourages defections. If democratization involves getting all major parties to take the electoral gamble (DiPalma 1990; Przeworski 1991), there is the need for institutions which encourage commitment to unconditional participation by all major players. What happens with the TR systems is that they provide an exit option after the first round, thus promoting a wait-and-see attitude on the part of some actors. If the first round's results indicate that a party is likely to perform worse than it had initially anticipated, it has an interest in calling foul by claiming fraud or rigging. Such claims have considerable plausibility in many emerging democracies, especially if instances of mal - practice have been identified by monitoring organizations or if the regime supervising the elections has a poor record of rule of law. This has been a common scenario, where the opposition perceives that it has little chances of winning, so it boycotts the second round as happened in Congo (Brazzaville) in 1993, in Macedonia in 1994, and Haiti in 1995. Moreover, defection is not only limited to boycotts. Losers can be encouraged to take direct action after the first round, as in the case of Togo in 1994. Under this way, power holders also have a last option if the situation is not going as expected. As happened in Algeria in 1991, they can abort the election after the first round and wait for a better occasion, even though this is much more difficult to do when a legislative body has actually been chosen and begins to meet regardless of the efforts of the regime to suppress it. Defection by any major player breaks the democratic bargain and undermines the credibility of the results. Sartori (1994) praises the TR system in order to allow voters to make an informed choice in the second round, called "intelligent choosing".

TR systems also reduce uncertainty by allowing players to retarget their resources between rounds, giving more power to those who have resources to redistribute. Government-supported parties are at a particular advantage in this regard, though this strategy is available to all actors. Once they have decided what district they need to target in the second round, all manner of efforts can be made to lead local patrons and unsuccessful first-round candidates to declare their second-round support for the party in question, including promises of future government patronage and posts in administration. The strategic deployment of patronage will generally be an important tool for any government-supported party but such support, once it is clear where it is most likely to have a decisive impact, can be more effectively concentrated.

Finally, although this is more difficult to test directly, TR systems tend to destabilize the representative process in democratizing countries by encouraging candidate and voter strategies that weaken the party system. The tendency to two-round elections to produce compromise outcomes and marginalize extreme parties may further increase the propensity of extremists to defect from democracy and employ other means of achieving their ends.

However, TR laws cannot be expected to automatically generate moderate outcomes, as their ability to do so is dependent, as we have said above, on the incentives provided by the system for the formation of alliances between parties. Strategic bargaining will be highly credible, and patterns of cooperation can be expected to be regular in a state with established and restricted party system in which parties have extended histories of coexistence in the legislature. But for this mechanism to function, parties have to be both willing and able to form alliances. In a young party system, such agreements may be affected by a number of parties. First, lack of trust among parties and fears of defection may limit the extent to which alliances are entered into. Furthermore, credible commitments which could be made by parties, are likely to be characterized by a great degree of geographical diversity, especially in single-member districts and especially in new party systems in which political organizations have restricted support bases. This diversity of electoral alignments will have the effect of destabilizing the legislative process, so that legislators from different parts of the country will have an incentive to build ties with different parties in the legislature in anticipation of future electoral agreements. Such a situation can put considerable strain on the internal coherence of parliamentary parties in their ability to function as effective coalition partners. Campbell (1958) identifies this as one of the principal problems with the TR system as it operated in France during the early phase of democratization. The diversity of electoral alliances presented by candidates led to divided loyalties by parliamentary parties.

Second, voters are called to decide the vote choice in the definitive round, and it is not so wrong to believe that voters in young democracies may not always follow the recommendations of their favoured candidates once the latter have been eliminated in the voting's first round. Such behaviour in established democracies is predicated on the existence of a strong party identification and of a tight party discipline, whose presence is not so obvious in emerging democracies. French experience constitutes a proof that such alliances have not always been feasible in practice, as party's supporters in the electorate are not actually willing to follow, on every occasion, the lead of "their" candidates in making second-round vote choices (Bartolini 1984; Converse and Pierce 1986;

Cole and Campbell 1989; Criddle 1975). In reality, the TR system is more likely to encourage abstention or negative voting in the second round.[23]
For those voters who go voting at the polls a second time, choice of candidate will be arbitrary with respect to party identification, as their principal aim may be to prevent the election of a least-liked alternative (Duverger 1960). However, this will tend to fragment the parliamentary system even further by allowing the entry of small parties and obscure independents.
Therefore, the discussion suggests that the institution of the TR system increases the likelihood that elections in transitional countries will require authoritarian intervention, but even if this does not occur, the result will often be nondemocratic political action and/or considerable party system instability, which will tend to undermine any democratization process. Moreover, the "typical" effects produced in a given state by such a system will depend a lot on the structure of the party system, its relationship to the electorate, and the willingness of politicians to cooperate. As also the French example has shown, all these factors can vary from one region to another, from one end of the party spectrum to another, and from one election to the next. In short, the institution of the TR electoral system is one whose effects are highly unpredictable and strongly contingent on conjunctural factors.

2.3 The third type: Alternative Vote (AV).

The alternative vote (AV) is a majoritarian electoral system in which voters are asked to rank order the candidates, who are elected only if they reach at least the 50 percent of the votes in single-seat constituencies (or "electorates"). If no candidate achieves an overall majority on the basing of counting the first preferences on the ballot papers, the one with the least votes is excluded and those ballot papers are distributed, based on the next preferences expressed on them, among the remaining candidates in the election. The process persists until one candidate emerges with an overall majority.
The idea underlying this system is that voters are able to rank-order the candidates on the ballot paper, having in this way a say in the election of all successful candidates. For instance, if one of the voters' preferred candidates does not reach the sufficient number of voters to be elected, an opportunity is still available for the voter to shape the outcome of the other candidates in the race.

2.3.1 A general overview on the Alternative Vote.

Generally, the use of AV has been rare, raising only sporadic interest in the Asia-Pacific region, and having limited use in certain other countries, such as for electing the Irish President or the London mayor. Recently, however, there has been a renewed interest in AV as a possible reform in countries that currently use the single-member plurality (SMP) electoral system. For them, AV constitutes an interesting change, as it is a less radical departure from SMP practice than outright proportional representation. The most relevant discussion regarding AV has been held in the United Kingdom, where the report of the Independent Commission on the Voting System recommended that the UK replaced its SMP system with the AV in the 2011 United Kingdom Alternative Vote referendum in which, however, the proposal was rejected by 67.9 percent of voters (Dunleavy and Margetts 1999). By taking part in an emerging debate on electoral reform, also Canada has been a

[23] This tendency may derive from what Converse and Pierce (1986, 385-387) define as the "unfriendly neighbours" phenomenon, which refers to the voters' reluctance to support second-round vote choices made by ideologically adjacent parties, even when such choices are encouraged by their favoured party's leadership.

resurgence of interest in AV, because while most electoral reformers encourage either the adoption of the proportional system or that of the mixed electoral system, on the other hand, there is a small but increasing level of support for AV in Canada. Tom Flanagan (1999) has proposed the alternative vote because of its potential in allowing coalition building between parties through an exchange of preferences. Jeffrey Simpson (2001) follows Flanagan's leads by arguing that AV's requirement that members of Parliament receive a majority of the vote would improve their legitimacy and minimize the problem of wasted votes. At the time, these proposals, because of their potential to allow the Canadian Alliance and Progressive Conservative parties to maintain separate identities while cooperating against the Liberals, had important partisan ramifications. Even now, the alternative vote is subject of more attention and its importance in practice may one day match its importance in theory.

The limited use of AV has meant that much of what is known about the operation of this system comes from Australia, the single major democracy adopting it since 1918 to replace the existing FPTP. While drawing general conclusions based on one country's experience about a particular institution is a dubious practice in the majority of times, Australia is a problematic comparison case because of certain of its electoral law's features, such as mandatory voting and the requirement that voters have to rank every candidate on the ballot (Bennett 1996; Reilly 2001a). However, we will examine more properly the case of Australia as the country par excellence using the AV in the next chapter.

One efficient way to produce additional evidence is to simulate elections results in SMP countries as if they were conducted under AV rules (e.g., Bilodeau 1999). However, this approach presents two main problems. First, the differing incentives for strategic behaviour under the two electoral systems mean that voters will not necessarily formulate the same preferences or cast similar votes under the two systems (Cox 1997, chapter 4). Second, these simulations require the use of survey data about second and subsequent preferences of the electorate. These are necessarily aggregated at a superior level to the constituency, requiring the application of supra-constituency level set of preferences. Moreover, this kind of exercise is a very crude simulation at best because local campaigns and candidates do matter, even to a limited extent. While, on the one hand, these simulations are better than no evidence at all, there is on the other hand one source of information about the political consequences of the alternative vote. Indeed, three western Canadian provinces adopted AV for provincial elections during the first half of the twentieth century,

Many alternative vote's advantages are the same of those of the majoritarian two-round system. Indeed, it ensures that the winner is supported by a majority of voters, as well as it facilitates multi-party competition and excludes the spoiler effect. Moreover, alternative vote provides some rewards to candidates who are able to win the second or third preferences of voters, despite their core supporters or demographic base. Therefore, in terms of first preferences, it enables a runner-up to win the election at last once subsequent preferences are counted. The candidates' consideration of the subsequent preferences expressed by voters is believed to promote moderation, to reduce negative campaigning's incentives, and even to be a mean of reconciliation in divided societies (Reilly 2002). However, in such system there is no need for a second round of voting since it records all preferences simultaneously, meaning that the costs and all the complexities of the two-round system are avoided for everyone, both for election organizers and for parties and candidates. The alternative vote requires voters, rather than simply putting a cross or make a mark, to write numbers on the ballot paper, as well as it requires voters to express preferences between several candidates including relative preferences between minor candidates who probably are not well

known. Hence, it requires a high level of political awareness, and because of this the alternative vote may be unsuitable in low literacy rates or poor communications' contexts. In addition, another difference with the two-round system is that the absence of a second round of voting in the alternative vote system means that there is no opportunity for building coalitions, for realignment, or "buyer's regret" after the first and only vote.

2.3.2 Effects and consequences of the Alternative Vote.

Most commentators argue that the alternative vote does not provide more proportional outcome than does the single-member plurality system. Both use single-member districts, and this leads to disproportional outcomes since it is impossible to allocate a single seat proportionately (Lijphart 1997). Still, not everyone has the same opinion, for instance in advocating the use of AV in post-apartheid South Africa, Donald Horowitz claimed that AV produces more proportional results than the plurality system (1991; Reilly 1997).

A better test to measure the AV's impact on proportionality is to examine the passage from SMP to AV and vice versa in three specific Canadian provinces. Table 2.1 reports the values of the Loosemore - Hanby index of disproportionality (D) for each period in each province's electoral history, as calculated by Jansen (2004).[24]

At his aggregate level, in Manitoba, AV actually appears to have increased disproportionality, while it is associated with slightly lower disproportionality in BC (British Columbia). Instead, concerning the province of Alberta, the level of disproportionality arose considerably with the adoption of AV, but this increase constitutes a longer-term historical trend, as disproportionality continued to rise also after AV's abolishment. Although there are some slight differences between the performance of AV and SMP, none of these are statistically significant.[25] There is no evidence that AV is associated with more proportional or less proportional election outcomes than those produced by SMP. The level of proportionality is more strongly shaped by the nature of the party system in the provinces, and in Alberta, the values for "D" are significantly higher than those in the other two provinces. This reflects the relative lack of competitiveness in Alberta politics, particularly during the Social Credit era. However, within the merits of the alternative vote as an electoral system, improved proportionality outcomes are not there.

The second major effect of the electoral systems concerns the patterns of party competition, and particularly the number of parties.

Duverger's law has started many research and debates over the years, but the question of the impact of electoral systems other than SMP or PR on the number of parties has achieved very little attention. Duverger himself did not address directly the impact of the alternative vote, but he analysed the related two-round system with a run-off election to produce a majority victory. Because he noted that the AV's identification of the effects for party competition was more complicated than for plurality or PR systems, Duverger claimed "the second ballot must encourage the proliferation of parties" (1951). The reasons for this are that voters can vote for a smaller party without fearing of wasting their vote because of the opportunity to have their ballot transferred at a

[24] The Loosemore – Hanby index, $I_{LH} = 1/2 \sum|s_i - v_i|$ with n and i=1, returns a value of 0 for perfect proportionality and a value of 1 for perfect disproportionality. See Taagepera and Shugart (1989, 260-263) for a discussion on some D's properties.

[25] A set of two-tailed t-tests was performed for each province between the pre-AV and AV periods, as well as between the AV and post-AV periods. None were significant at a 0.05 level.

later stage of the counting process. Furthermore, Rydon (1989) argues that AV has not helped minor parties win seats in the House of Representatives, but from another point of view, it gives minor parties a role to play in the outcome of elections, even if they do not win many seats. Minor parties can bargain about preferences to be delivered to them either in other districts, or in the Senate itself.

Table 2.1 Mean disproportionality under SMP and AV in three Canadian provinces, 1924-1953.

Province	Manitoba	Alberta	British Columbia
SMP (Pre – AV)	0.163 (.080)	0.267 (.064)	0.235 (.092)
AV	0.224 (.082)	0.351 (.106)	0.217 (.010)
SMP	0.146 (.047)	0.391 (.017)	0.226 (.058)
Mean for All Elections	0.182 (.079)	0.337 (.092)	0.231 (.078)

Note: Standard deviations are in parenthesis. Source: Harold J. Jansen 2004, 651-652.

It is also difficult to draw conclusions about the AV's impact on the number of parties from a single case. The party system's character of a country is the result of a complex interplay between its social structure and electoral systems (Taagepera and Grofman 1985). The evidence of the previous provinces (Alberta, Manitoba and British Columbia) is useful in understanding the effects of AV on party systems.

Table 2.2 reports data from Jensen (2004) on the effective number of parties over time in each province. The effective number of parties weighs each party's contribution according to their vote shares, the effective electoral parties' number, or their seat shares, and the effective number of legislative parties (see chapter 8 of Taagepera and Shugart 1989).

The alterative vote's adoption affected the number of electoral parties in a very modest way. In all three provinces, the adoption of AV was accompanied by an increase in their effective electoral number. Indeed, the return to the plurality system implied a reduction in the number of electoral parties in Manitoba and British Columbia.

However, the impact on the number of legislative parties is more modest, as there was just a slight increase in their number in Manitoba, a slight decrease in Alberta, and an increase in British Columbia.

Only some of these differences, like the shift from SMP to AV in Alberta and Manitoba and the shift back to SMP in Manitoba, are statistically relevant.[26] Moreover, the only significant differences were found in the effective number of electoral parties, not in the number of legislative ones. When the data from all three provinces are pooled, the shift from SMP to AV increased the effective number of electoral parties through a statistically significant effect ($p < .01$). The return to SMP did not significantly affect the number of parties, nor was there any effect on the number of legislatives ones.

[26] In the British Columbia case, the small number of cases using AV causes the lack of statistical significance.

Table 2.2 Mean effective number of parties.

	Manitoba		Alberta		British Columbia	
Period	Electoral Parties	Legislative Parties	Electoral Parties	Legislative Parties	Electoral Parties	Legislative Parties
SMP (pre-AV)	2.51 (.85)	2.10 (.88)	2.22 (.10)	1.44 (.26)	2.81 (.63)	1.94 (.57)
AV	3.55(.47)*	2.43 (.54)	2.67(.22)*	1.40 (.44)	3.67 (.42)	2.72 (.57)
SMP (post-AV)	2.84(.18)*	2.26 (.25)	2.70 (.34)	1.14 (.05)	3.01 (.30)	1.98 (.21)
All Elections	2.96 (.77)	2.25 (.66)	2.56 (.29)	1.36 (.35)	2.95 (.59)	2.03 (.54)

Source: Harold J. Jansen 2004, 652-653.

*Two-tailed t-test indicates difference of means comparison with previous period significant at 0.05 level. Note: Standard deviations are in parentheses.

This finding clarifies the alternative votes' impact on party systems. The lack of impact on the effective number of legislative parties confirms the efficiency of the majoritarian logic of the alternative vote. In reducing the number of parties in the legislature, the AV is just as likely as the single-member plurality. However, the evidence from the Canadian provinces supports the argument that AV does provide an electoral role for minor parties and diminishes incentives for voters to abandon them for larger parties. Because of this, in Alberta and Manitoba, AV can be seen as contributing to the fractionalization of the party system at the level of electoral parties, while still producing essentially majoritarian outcomes. What is important to highlight is the fact that the partisan contexts in all three provinces were different under AV than under the plurality system before and after, and British Columbia provides the clearest example of this. The 1952 and 1953 elections made Social Credit the major alternative to the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) by realigning the party system in that province. The Liberals and the Conservatives, which were the ones dominating that province prior the emergence of the CCF, adopted AV to try to stem the increasing influence of that party. AV was not the cause of, but a response to the changing nature of the party system. Similarly, in Alberta and Manitoba, the period in which AV was used had a different partisan context than the preceding era. The Liberals and Conservatives dominated both provinces before the 1920s. Moreover, the fracturing of traditional party support occurred in elections prior to the adoption of AV: 1920 in Manitoba and 1921 in Alberta. The party systems in those elections were transformed by increasing labour radicalization and the electoral mobilization of farmers' movements. Then, it is difficult to conclude that the increased number of parties is due solely to the adoption of AV.

2.4 Evaluation of Majoritarian systems.

As a conclusion for this chapter, it is proper to present some final evaluations on majoritarian systems by identifying, above all, what are their main merits, as well as their main demerits.
The representation's theory and practice of the English model sacrifice the representativeness of parliament for efficient governments, so to the need for governability. Indeed, single-round majoritarian electoral systems seek governability by "manufacturing" majorities capable of

supporting the governmental action. Therefore, the majoritarian systems do not pay attention to the "exact representation" but favours the over-representation of the strongest contenders while penalizing the weakest who are heavily under-represented. The representative distortion can be so accentuated as to allow a party to win the government (by winning an absolute majority of seats) even though it arrives second in the popular vote.[27] And this is unacceptable for the critics of the majoritarian systems.

Moreover, its defenders argue that in many cases the difference in proportionality between the outcomes of the majoritarian systems and those of the proportional systems is modest.[28] For example, in the United States, the single-member constituency is represented more or less in proportion to the democratic and republican parties. This is true, but a third party that enters the dispute immediately discovers another truth, and that is how much the plurality system results, to its detriment, unrepresentative.[29] The point is that the argument is poorly formulated. The discovery that elections with relative majoritarianism do not necessarily lead to unequal representation looks at results that have already discounted the effect of the electoral systems, meaning that voters have already adopted the so called "strategic" vote and thus eliminated the third parties.

Therefore, the point is that the more the majoritarian systems work, that is the more they succeed in their intent, the more their manipulative impact disappears from the statistics that relate the votes to the seats. So, the accusation that majority elections hinder and distort "exact representation" cannot be empirically falsified.

Having identified this particular demerit, it is time now to move on to the merits of these electoral systems. All majoritarian systems are justified on the basis of four considerations: first, that they elect (help elect) a governing majority and, in this way, a government; second, that they reduce party fragmentation, ultimately reducing it to only two parties; third, that they create a direct (or more direct) relationship between voters and representatives; fourth, that they improve the quality of elected office holders.

The first merit, that of electing a government, exists only when majoritarian elections produce a two-party system. If this merit is claimed when the conditions which ensure it are absent, then it is an unfounded merit. Therefore the "strong" argument in favour of majoritarian elections is also a strongly conditioned argument and becomes a false one whenever the party system is insufficiently structured, and whenever the incoercible voters are insufficiently dispersed (in below-majoritarian proportions) through the constituencies. On the other hand, it is generally true, all things being equal, that a majority system is led to produce an efficient government more than a proportional system. However, this is a promise of governability that cannot guarantee that much.

The second merit, that of reducing party fragmentation, is generally more sustainable than the first. Although the first-past-the-post system cannot, by itself, reduce the number of parties to the two-

[27] For example, in England in 1974, the Labour party won the government with 37.2 percent of the vote against 39.9 percent reached by the Conservatives. Even worse, in New Zealand in 1978 and 1981, it was the party that came second in the vote that won an absolute majority of seats.

[28] Richard Rose (1983, 40-41) indicates that "the difference in proportionality between the median election in the proportional and majoritarian systems is very limited: only 7 percent."; and his data also indicate that some countries voting with the relative majoritarianism show more proportionality than other countries which adopt the proportional systems.

[29] For example, in the 1983 British elections, the Alliance (their determination at the time) won 25.4 percent of the vote and only 3.5 percent of the seats. On this occasion, the cost of a seat in the Municipalities was 40.000 votes for the Labour, while for the Alliance it was ten times as much: 400.000 votes.

party format, it can often compress or keep their number at a relatively low level.[30] And even when this compression is not immediately apparent in a huge and enormously different country like India, it remains true that, with a proportional system, countries like India would probably dissolve into party pulverization.

The third merit attributed to majoritarian elections is that they produce a direct link between the voters and the representatives they elect. This link cannot be denied in principle, since in the uninominal system there is not (almost never) the interposition of party lists and therefore the relationship between voting and electing is immediate. However, in practice, the value or significance of this direct relationship is all to be discussed. First, any relationship that claims direct meaning must take into account the numbers that are involved, as the size of the constituencies varies enormously. Indeed, small countries can afford 1 representative for every 20.000 voters (New Zealand), but medium-sized countries generally require around 50.000-70.000 voters (UK) per MP; and large countries (from the United States to India) have single-member constituencies with hundreds of thousands of voters. Second, the winner in the single-member constituency gets all with 50 percent or more of the votes only if the race is restricted to just two contenders. However, as this rarely happens, the one receiving more votes generally wins everything even with less than 50 percent of the vote. Then, it often happens that the vote of more than 50 percent of the voters is waste, that it does not count for anything. Therefore, if we insist on the direct link, we must recognise that a majority of the voters of the constituency is not represented at all.

The more reasonable argument then seems to be that the relative majority winner represents his constituency, but in this way the presumed direct link acquires a different meaning, as basically becomes a proximity lawyer, that is to say that here there is a politics centred on locality, or better, constituency-centred, centred on the constituency. This development is encouraged by the proponents of direct democracy since it undoubtedly brings politics closer to the people. In the United States, it has become a commonplace to assert that all politics is local politics. However, since a presidential system can neutralize centrifugal and localistic pressure better than a parliamentary system, Americans still do not perceive the difficulties that arise for their system of government if the policy of Congress degenerates into a “retail policy” inspired by constituency-serving interests. At this point, the most logical question is what would happen to the political community as a whole, to the general interest and to the common good if all politics were truly local. It is necessary to remember that the essence of the justification of majoritarian systems is that they promote governability by containing and reducing party fragmentation. Now, if party fragmentation is not so good, for the same reason a constituency-serving fragmentation, that is a “dispersion fragmentation” among the constituencies, must be seen as an even more devastating evil. Now, the question becomes whether the localistic evolution of the uninominal system is somehow natural and inevitable, or whether it is instead lockable. Looking around, we notice that the American evolution has not yet been followed in the other majoritarian countries of the English area. The reason for this difference is, at least in part, that while a presidential system based on the division of powers is somehow protected in the face of wandering and localistic behaviour of parliamentarians, this protection is lacking in parliamentary systems, especially if it is a two-party system. A two-party system structure constitutes a structured system on the national level, and this

[30] The term “often” is used because the returns from the proportional to the uninominal are an exception to this generalization when the grafting of a dry majoritarian takes place on a party system that has been consolidated and structured by the proportional.

implies that a constituency-serving policy is incompatible with a policy centred on two large national parties, as if localism asserts itself, then the very condition of the two-party system dissolves. England and the Commonwealth countries experience a strong resistance and reaction to localism thanks to the strength and self-preserving logic of the party system. Therefore, the majoritarian which feeds a localist policy could remain confined to the United States, but in the face of a growing and generalized weakening of the parties, the last word on the possibilities of a policy of "common interest" still remains to be said.
Finally, the fourth merit, the improvement of the quality of political personnel, runs into the preliminary difficulty that defining "quality" is difficult. As long as the voter comes across bad actors, corrupted, greedy, basically "dirty" politicians, then clean, honest, and well-meaning politicians certainly represent a quality improvement. However, throwing out the rascals does not automatically bring in "good" politicians who are such in their work, that is, politicians qualified by competence, vision and leadership skills. Good people do not necessarily cure bad governance, as private and public virtues are not homologous and do not resemble each other.
Admitted that "quality selection" is an elusive matter, it must still be recognised that with majority elections and in single-member constituencies the personal qualities and characteristics of candidates acquire more importance than in proportional systems with list voting. But does the "personal vote" really make a difference in the choice of candidates? According to Sartori (1994, 71), the candidate's personality is important and makes a difference in "insecure" constituencies, but not in safe ones. Indeed, where the competitors are close, where the race is even, or the electorate is volatile, here political parties or machines are urged to look around and look for "attractive" candidates.

After having analysed the three major majoritarian systems by presenting some general considerations, the effects and the consequences that they lead to, it is now time to address them in their own contexts, hence in specific countries adopting them.

Chapter 3 – Majoritarian Systems in Action: the case studies of UK, France, and Australia.

In the previous chapter, we have focused our attention mainly on analysing and reporting the literature concerning majoritarian systems and its main kinds: the plurality system, the two-round system, and the alternative vote. We have shown how they work, which are their mechanisms, consequences, effects and strategies, as well as a variety of considerations about them.
However, in this final chapter, the central issue is placing these ones in context, meaning that each of them is well known as being used in a specific country in elections' times, and they are best represented there. Therefore, the three case studies (UK for the plurality system, France for the two-round system, and Australia for the alternative vote) will be structured in this way: a first introductory part where the specific country and the corresponding majoritarian electoral system are presented, and three following subparagraphs. The initial one concerns the origins of the system in that country, referring to the historical period in which it has been adopted and the various reforms which led to its implementation. Instead, the second one aims at explaining how the system works in the country and how the elections are organized (voting day, mechanism of voting, dynamics of the vote etc.). Finally, the last subparagraph is reserved for the latest elections that took place in the countries mentioned, so that we can see the way in which the systems are currently still carried out. This gives us a view on how they are practically exercised, rather than literally explaining what they consist of.

3.1 The United Kingdom: master of plurality rule.

The United Kingdom is well known for a specific type of electoral system, which many political scientists call the single-member plurality (SMP) electoral system (Herron, Pekkanen and Shugart 2018). As already mentioned in the previous chapter, it is also known as "first past the post" (FPTP), a racing which highlights the winner-take-all logic of the majoritarian system, and it is used more commonly to elect the House of Commons, the lower house of Parliament. This system is also used in many other countries, typically those which had some experience with British colonialism, and FPTP has been conceived as controversial subject in the countries using it, including United Kingdom, where this system has been strongly criticized and also led to a referendum (Herron, Pekkanen and Shugart 2018).
However, while FPTP is widely used in the United Kingdom, several other electoral systems have been adopted also for other position or bodies in the country, a result that was achieved because of the process of decentralization, the so-called "devolution", in the late 1990s. After the transfer of power from Westminster to the constituent nations outside England, that is Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, the result was the development of six different electoral systems operating in different parts of the United Kingdom by the year 2000. Despite the presence of these multiplicity of different electoral systems and party systems, FPTP has persisted at Westminster, seeming immune to their contagion.
Three of the English electoral systems in the early twenty-first century were majoritarian: FPTP; the multiple non-transferable vote (MNTV, also known in the UK as the block vote), which was adopted for council elections in some English and Welsh local authority areas; and the supplementary vote (SV) used to elect the mayors of some English cities, as well as crime and police commissioners in England and Wales. On the other hand, other three electoral systems belonged to the forms of proportional representation: the single transferable vote (STV), mostly used in Northern Ireland and Scotland for many elections; regional list PR, used when Great Britain

was still part of the European Union for electing the English members of the European Parliament; and the mixed-member proportional (MMP) system (usually called "additional member system"), which was employed to elect the Scottish Parliament, the National Assembly for Wales, and the London Assembly.
This diversity at regional level has not led to a change at Westminster concerning electoral system where, despite the use of a system better suited to a two-party system, the multi-party one has persisted. While some observers, as Patrick Dunleavy, have pointed out that there has been a transition in the United Kingdom from two-party politics to multi-party politics, where many party systems existed at the various levels of governance since devolution, and since existing multi-party politics develop further, the expectation that some form of transition of representation seems inevitable (Dunleavy 2005, 505) had not been realized by the twenty-first century's second decade. As international comparisons show, even at electoral district level, there is the possibility for multi-party systems and FPTP to coexist. The United Kingdom's case under multi-level governance highlights this observation. Indeed, here, each level of governance constitutes its own political systems, with only occasional influence on other levels, rather than a situation in which electoral rules at the various levels of governance in multi-level systems are the same or significantly influence one another.

3.1.1 Origins of the UK electoral system.

Regarding the question of who identified SMP as Britain's electoral system, and since when that is considered, David Butler claimed that "the simple plurality system of election has hardly been tampered with since the Middle Ages" (Butler 1963), an observation which, at least for elections to the Westminster parliament, remains true more than forty years after it was presented. However, because of the longevity of the plurality decision rule (or electoral "formula"), the impression is that the SMP system has always been the British system of election. Single-member districts became the norm only in 1885, while it was in 1948 that they became the only type of district. The typical pattern in England before 1885 was to elect two members for each constituency, even though there were also district magnitudes of three and four in some constituencies. The block vote system was used to allocate seats in multimember constituencies, a proportional system in which the elector has many votes as there are seats to be filled.
Electoral laws were much debated during the period of the Reform Acts from 1832 to 1918, but these did not particularly concern the voting rules per se, rather related matters as plural voting, franchise extension, apportionment and at least the reduction of corrupt practices (malapportionment) in which some seats were donated by landed aristocrats (see Butler 1953/1963; O'Leary 1962; Carstairs 1980; Bogdanor 1981). What emerges from this is that successive attempts to allow gradual democratization by extending the franchise are associated to some politicians' attempts to protect their positions by means regarding seat redistributions, as well as attempts to alter the voting rules.
The 1867 (or "second") Reform Act, after having failed in introducing the cumulative vote as its amendment, succeeded instead in introducing the limited vote, according to which each voter was provided with one less vote than the district magnitude. For example, in the thirteen three-member districts produced by the Act, each elector was entitled to vote only for two candidates and no more. Most of the first attempts or proposals for electoral reform were guided by the need for "minority protection", "minority" which referred to the propertied educated elite, who mostly feared the enfranchisement of the masses (Hart 1992). However, the limited vote did not achieve the aims of

his supporters in representing minorities, also because it proved to be prone, mostly in Birmingham, to strategic manipulation, where Joseph Chamberlain's Liberal caucus demonstrated that it could win all three seats by a careful vote management, as it would be called today. Thus, it was possible to obtain highly majoritarian outcomes and the system was prone to be disproportional, and even perverse.

The limited vote was abolished by the 1885 Reform Act, and with it also most of the multi-seat constituencies. By this time, for most British advocates of reform, the electoral system of choice was the more sophisticated system known as PR-STV. Again, many reformers seem to have been motivated not by purely democratic considerations, but rather by defensive ones. Indeed, for example, it has been argued that the intention of Thomas Hare (one of the precursors of the system) "was to make universal suffrage tolerable" by facilitating the representation of the educated elite (Bogdanor 1981). The negative experience of the limited vote weakened the requests of those who aimed to more far-reaching electoral reform.

For a variety of reasons, the leaders of the largest parties (Liberals, Labour and Conservatives) did not see PR as an interesting system, but the birth of the new Labour Party led to some partisan calculations' revision with a direct significance for electoral reform. For instance, essentially before the First World War when the Liberals believed that the threat from Labour was not so severe, the Lib-Lab strategy[31] of restricting Labour's candidatures might seem preferable to adopting the alternative vote, which would have allowed the party to organize without any electoral penalty throughout the whole country. On the other hand, if Labour broke the pact and proved they were stronger than what the Liberals anticipated, then the Liberals could manage better under the AV or a form of PR by reason of similar logic tied to the adoption of PR in many other European countries around this period (Boix 1999; Rokkan 1970). Therefore, it is surprising that the Labour Party did not advocate PR, and while it was also internally divided on electoral reform, it rejected PR at its conference in 1914, mainly because of the views of its leader Ramsay McDonald, who correctly believed that Labour would benefit from the SMP system.

The coalition government during wartime period composed of the Liberals, Conservatives, and Labour, agreed to develop a "Speaker Conference" to consider registration's matters, franchise extension and the electoral system, since they realized that a post-war government would need to be based on new electoral register. Moreover, this Speaker Conference, in addition to proposals about the franchise's extension, also recommended PR-STV for urban districts (about one-third of constituencies) and AV for all other districts.[32] However, the Conservative and Liberal parties' leaders did not agree on reforming the electoral system and allowed a free vote by withdrawing their support for the proposals. PR-STV was rejected by the House of Commons on five occasions during 1917-18, firstly only by seven votes, and subsequently by larger margins. While all parties were divided regarding the adoption of PR, within the votes of House of Commons, on average 72% percent of Conservatives (of those voting) cast their vote against PR, while the Liberals and Labour were divided in 51 percent and 50 percent respectively voting against PR. Thus, the plurality system was established[33], as the British Conservative Party, unlike its sister parties in other

[31] In 1903 the "Lib-Lab" pact was agreed by Liberals and Labour to avoid splitting the "progressive" vote in selected constituencies by means of reciprocal candidate withdrawals.

[32] This would have been a system with simultaneous use of both majoritarian and proportional electoral formulae, hence an early forebear of a mixed member system.

[33] An ironic fact is that the House of Commons, between 1918 and 1922, voted for PR-STV but only for other territories, such as Ireland, India and Malta.

European countries (Boix 1999; Rokkan 1970), indicated that it could successfully continue to compete with its rivals even under a universal suffrage's regime. In contrast, the position of the Liberal Party was different, as if the party's members of parliament had voted for PR in the divisions of 1917-18, it may have even been introduced. However, when successive leaders of the Liberal Party were in government, they opposed the introduction of PR as they tended to associate democracy with majority rule. Bogdanor (1981) describes as the "most disastrous" decision of the twentieth century this opposition to PR of the Liberal Party, since right after their supporters became the main decision's losers to retain plurality rule and became from a leading party of government to a minor party in the 1920s. Thereafter, plurality electoral system was strongly defended by Labour and Conservatives, as they mutually benefited from it.

3.1.2 The Westminster electoral system.

The SMP electoral system is not designed, in any sense, to be "proportional", contrary to the proportionality of votes cast to seats awarded to parties which is widely considered as an indicator of the mechanisms under which the electoral systems function (Gallagher and Mitchell 2008). For example, at the 2005 election, there were 646 separate constituencies, where voters cast a single "X" vote against the name of one candidate in the single constituency in which they were registered. In the end, regardless of the percentage of the vote received[34], the candidate with most votes won. Thus, both all the votes cast for those who lose and those for the winning candidate that are "surplus" respect to the bare needed to win, are "wasted votes", meaning that they cannot be used for the election of a party colleague. The SMP has no mechanisms to ensure that there is a relationship between votes cast and seats won across the country, like for example transferring "wasted" votes or higher-tier compensatory seat allocations. Therefore, rather than part of the system's design, a proportional national outcome would be casual. However, in addition to the under-representation of third and minor parties non-geographically concentrated and the over-representation of the two leading parties, in the UK the SMP system can lead to the two main parties' disparities in the territoriality vote distributions. The country, back in the 1950s, had a more categorized party system[35]: indeed, the predictable relationship between vote and seat derived from the fact that Britain was composed by a two-party system, in which the country used to move from one major party to another in a similar extent: the postulate of "uniform swing". The leading parties were losing this geographically aggregative character by the 1960s, as Labour became more likely to win the "north" and urban constituencies, and the Conservative MPs to represent the "south" and rural areas. As a result of socio-economic and territorial cleavages, part of this trend generated changes in voting behaviour, but as Curtice and Steed argued (1982), "the greater part of the difference in the composition of the Conservative and Labour parliamentary parties is an artificial product of the electoral system".

Part of the defence of the SMP's operation in Britain has been that, even if someone discounts the inflated seat shares of the two leading parties, and the punishment of the third one, each of the "big two" should have equal chances of forming a government. In a sense, this allows voters to choose

[34] British MPs are favouring plurality winners rather than majority ones. Since 1974, even though a majority in the constituency was not achieved, 48 percent of them have been elected. As well, extreme results can be produced, like the case of 1992 in Inverness, where the winning candidate had 26 percent of the vote, meaning that 74 percent of those who voted did not vote for the resulted "winner" (Farrell 2001, 25-27).

[35] At the four elections held during the 1950s, 94 percent of the votes and 98 percent of the seats were attracted collectively, on average, by Labour and Conservatives.

between two alternative governing teams and to hold them accountable. However, the research has highlighted a matter that has been mostly overlooked: the SMP's operation has produced periods in which the "electoral system" seemed to be particularly biased against one or other of the major parties.

How many seats a party wins crucially depends on where the votes are located, and not only on how many of them it attracts. Due to the geography's interaction of party support and the geography of constituency boundaries, several findings suggest that UK electoral outcomes are biased, in the sense that the same share of the vote for each of two main parties can be translated into different seat totals, and not only in the traditional sense of being disproportional against all third and minor parties. This is also the case in the United States, where Democrats who were too concentrated in cities and urban states wasted votes and occupied less seats in both the House and the Senate than the Conservatives did with the same total national votes. Partisan electoral bias[36] is conceived as the difference in the quantity of seats that, in the case of the same share of the vote at a particular election, the two main parties would receive.[37] In a two-party system using SMP, the principal sources of partisan electoral bias are malapportionment, turnout differences or third party interventions which alters the number of votes needed in order to win, and differences in the party votes shares' distribution (the "efficiency" of a party's vote) (Grofman et al. 1997). Even though Johnston and his colleagues (2001) have sometimes used different labels, they have categorised bias into these three main categories. However, there are two main types of malapportionment in the UK. First, through the representation at Westminster of Scotland and Wales, some "size"-related bias has been built into the system and, thus, in these two countries the average seat has only about 80 percent of the number of electors that the average English constituency has. Given that, for the Labour Party, Scotland and Wales have become areas of strength, this malapportionment has been worth a bonus of ten to twelve seats to Labour in the elections (Johnston et al. 2001, 96).[38] The second constituency size component of bias results from the imperfect type of districting performed by the constituency's "ageing" between reviews ("creeping malapportionment", in Johnston et al.'s view), and by the Boundary Commissions. Labour has always been the strongest in urban constituencies, but these constituencies tend to lose electors while the rural ones get larger, requiring the Conservatives, in their stronger constituencies, to win more votes.

Of course, rather than the number of electors, it is that of votes which is crucial, and since 1955 Labour has benefited from different turnout. As turnout is mostly of the time lower in the more urban constituencies in which Labour has been strongest, the former wins with fewer votes these seats, and higher turnout would mostly lead to more "wasted" surplus votes.[39] To be more accurate,

[36] It is referred to as "partisan bias" by the literature on the USA (for example, Grofman et al. 1997).

[37] It is a procedure that calculates the situations that would have happened if there had been a uniform swing only between the two leading parties and, so, with the votes of all other parties remaining the same. For example, if Labour won 43.3 percent of the votes and the Conservatives 30.7 percent, then an equal national vote share (37 percent) involves Labour losing 6.3 percent, while the Conservative gaining the same amount in each constituency. Therefore, it is easy to calculate which party would have won each constituency after having applied these uniform additions and subtractions. The parties should win the same number of seats without any partisan bias, so bias is measured by a convenient metric: the number of extra seats won on an equal national vote share (Rossiter et al. "Changing Biases" 1999, 138).

[38] This form of malapportionment will matter less in the future since, for example, the Scottish seats' number at Westminster was reduced from seventy-two in 2001 to fifty-nine in 2005.

[39] The number of votes is also changed, by one of the two major parties which are required for victory, by the intervention of third and minor parties.

it is both the number of votes and their location that is decisive under SMP. Differences in the distribution of the strength of each party across constituencies that may have different proportions of "wasted" votes is seen to be one of the principal sources of partisan bias, and this relates to the efficiency of a party's vote distribution according to which a party will win more seats if higher proportions of its vote constitute "effective" votes. In other words, a party can receive a better "return on its votes" if votes are concentrated in the marginal constituencies where they are needed the most and less concentrated where it is certain to either lose or win.
Very often, the largest single component of partisan bias has been the "efficiency" of party vote distributions, and traditionally Labour has suffered because, in safe constituencies, it tended to accumulate large surplus votes. Therefore, the Conservatives benefited, almost always, from a more efficient vote distribution before 1997. However, in 1992 this began to change more dramatically, so that by 2001 a more efficient management of Labour's vote was projected to be worth seventy-two seats (Johnston et al. 2002, 150). Labour achieved this more efficient outcome because of carefully targeted campaigning's means, as well as through a tactic of anti-Conservative voting with the Liberal Democrats. According to Gallagher and Mitchell (2008), such evidence needs to be carefully analysed, since otherwise there is a temptation to conclude that electoral system is per se biased.
The central point is that these "biases", which in any case are mostly not a direct mechanism of the SMP electoral systems, are contingent and reversible. While malapportionment is usually concerned as an integral component of most SMP electoral systems, most of the other sources of partisan bias, instead, are not so much direct mechanical effects of the electoral system as political variables and components of party competition. These other sources of partisan bias include differential turnout and the efficiency of party vote distributions, being the latter influenced by targeted party campaigning and tactical voting. For example, the occurrence or not of extensive tactical voting at any given elections depends on the desire and ability of parties to organize it, but these are largely behavioural matters, rather than mechanical ones. Hence, it is more accurate to say that SMP facilitates this kind of strategic behaviour, rather than directly creating these biases.

3.1.3 The UK General Election of 2019.

The single-member plurality system which, as already noted above, is England's preferred system, can be clearly observed in the most recent election in the country, where the party with the plurality of the votes resulted as the winning one with a large majority in parliament.
After three elections which failed to deliver a stable majority, the UK General Election of 12th December 2019 saw the return of British democracy's normal functioning with one party, in this case the Conservatives, winning a clear majority of seats. No election was scheduled before 2022, but Boris Johnson, three months after becoming Prime Minister, called an early election which constituted the third British election in five years and the second "snap" election in a row (Prosser 2021).
With the Conservative victory, the political consequences of this outcome were immediately apparent, as the government had sufficient support in parliament to pursue its Brexit policy. Indeed, 50 days after the election, on 31st January 2020, the UK left the European Union.
The Conservatives promised to "Get Brexit Done" by making it a central issue of their agenda, while the Liberal Democrats wanted to "Stop Brexit". In the meanwhile, Labour continued to downplay Brexit, arguing that it was "Time for Real Change". However, Brexit was omnipresent in people's concerns, as in the pre-campaign wave of the British Election Study Internet Panel, 53

percent of respondents mentioned the word “Brexit” as part of their responses when asked about the most important issue facing the country (Fieldhouse et al. 2020b).
As the campaign went on, the Conservatives had a commanding lead in the polls over Labour, in the sense of an average lead of 10 points in the polls published in the campaign’s first week. As the campaign progressed, the realities of Britain’s first-past-the-post electoral system began to be noticed. Support for the Brexit Party had already begun to decline after Johnson’s election as Prime Minister, but the Brexit Party’s support, during the campaign, crashed as it dawned on voters that the chances of a pro-EU candidate winning their constituency would increase by splitting the Leave vote. Soon, the Brexit Party arrived at the same conclusion with the unilateral decision not to deploy candidates against incumbent Conservative MPs.
On the Remain side, the support for the Liberal Democrats began to decrease, as voters realised that the Liberal Democrats had little chance of winning in many constituencies. Therefore, the Liberal Democrats, the Green Party and Plaid Cymru announced a “Unite to Remain” electoral pact, with each party agreeing to step aside in 60 constituencies where one of the other parties was best placed to win. Both the Conservatives and Labour increased in their support in parallel to one another, with each finishing about ten points higher than they had started the campaign, when the Brexit Party and the Liberal Democrats began to slide in the polls.
The results of the general election came as a shock: Conservatives had won a large majority in parliament. Indeed, most forecasts had drastically underestimated the scale of the Conservative victory in terms of seats, even though the polls of the final election had been accurate in terms of vote shares. In Table 3.1 are shown the general election’s full results.
The Conservatives won 43.6 percent of the vote (with an increase of 1.3 points) and 365 seats (an increase of 48), reaching an 80 seats’ majority in the House of Commons. This 2019 election was the sixth election in a row at which the number of the vote’s share increased and the third time they had done so being the incumbent government.
Instead, Labour received 32.1 percent of the vote which is 7.9 points down on their 2017 share, and 202 seats, 60 fewer than 2017. However, Labour’s performance was better than their performance at the 2010 and 2015 elections (29.1 percent and 30.5 percent respectively) in terms of vote share. On the other hand, in terms of seats, 2019 was the worst performance of Labour party since 1935 when they had won 154.
The Liberal Democrats increased by 4.2 points to 11.6 percent their share of the vote but only won 11 seats, down one on their 2017 total but down ten from the 21 seats they had held when the election was called because of detections from other parties. Within these losses there was the party leader, Jo Swinson, and all the MPs who defected to the party since the previous election.
The Green Party won 2.7 percent of the vote, going up of 1.1 point from 2017 and retained their single MP who is Caroline Lucas. The Brexit Party won only 2 percent of the vote and no seats.
The 2019 election was unusual for the number of incumbent MPs (18), conceived as independents after having left (or being kicked out of) their parties or standing for different parties (and sometimes in different constituencies) to that which they had been elected in 2017. However, none of these candidates were ultimately successful.

Table 3.1 Elections to the UK's House of Commons on 12 December 2019.

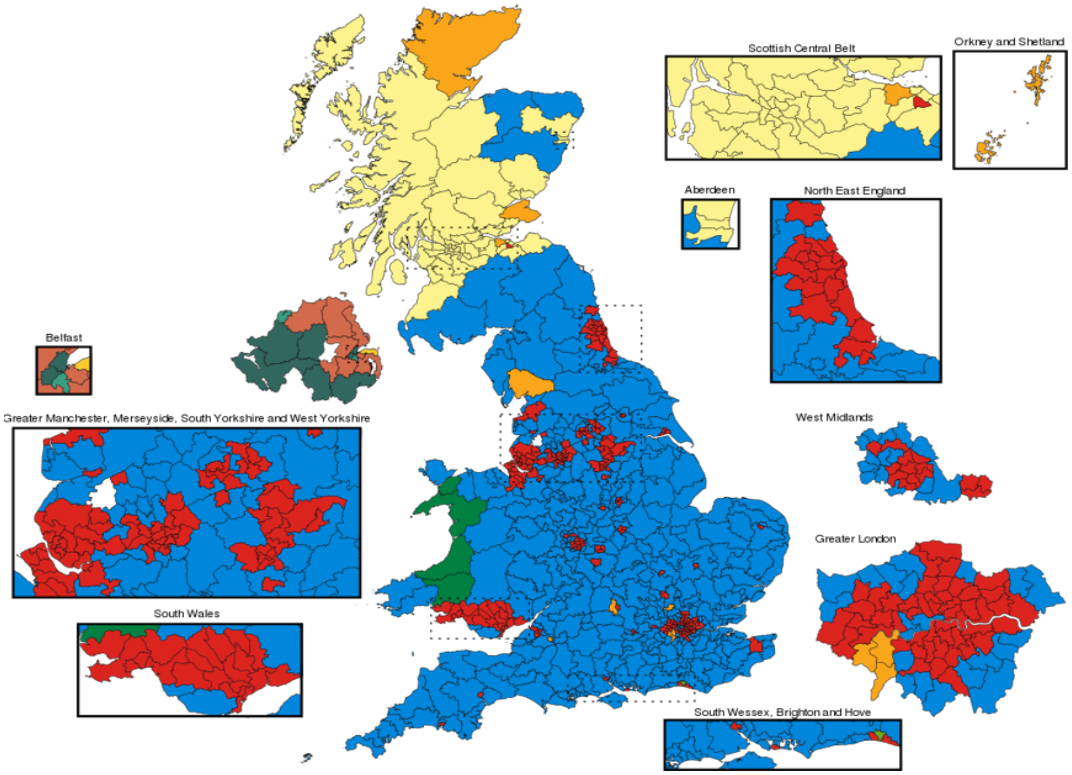
Parties	Seats	Seats (%)	Votes	Votes (%)
Conservatives	365	57.8	13,966,454	43.6
Labour	202	32.0	10,269,051	32.1
Liberal Democrats	11	1.7	3,696,419	11.6
Scottish National Party (a)	48	7.6	1,242,380	3.9
Green Party	1	0.2	865,715	2.7
Brexit Party	-	-	644,257	2
Democratic Unionist Party (b)	8	1.2	244,128	0.8
Sinn Fein (b)	7	1.1	181,853	0.6
Plaid Cymru (c)	4	0.6	153,265	0.5
Alliance (b)	1	0.2	134,115	0.4
Social Democratic & Labour Party (b)	2	0.3	118,737	0.4
Ulster Unionist Party (b)	-	-	93,123	0.3
Others (d)	1	0.2	404,613	1.3

Source: Christopher Prosser 2021, 457.

Notes: (a) Only contested seats in Scotland.
(b) Only contested seats in Northern Ireland.
(c) Only contested seats in Wales.
(d) Includes the Speaker of the House of Commons.

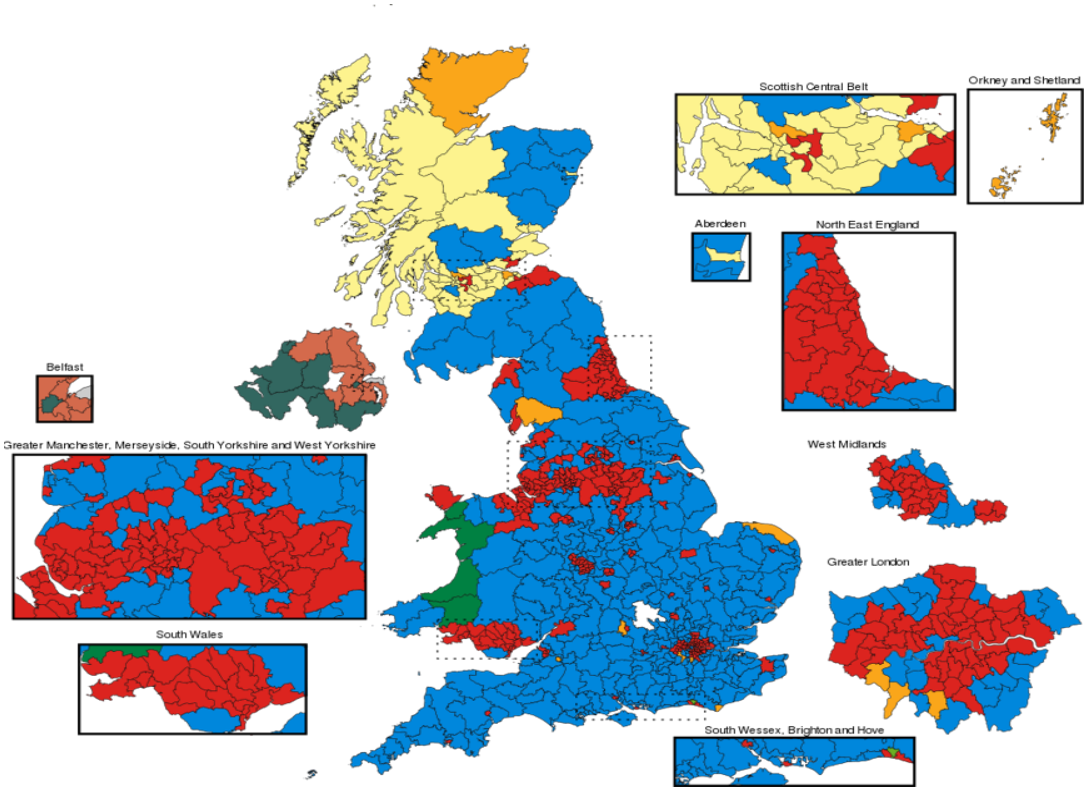
The official turnout was 67.3 percent, down 1.4 points from 2017, but higher than the drop predicted to happen by many because of a winter election and Brexit fatigue. The 2019 election saw a slight increase in party system fragmentation, with the effective number of electoral parties which grows from 0.3 to 3.2, so considerably lower than the peak levels of fragmentation that happened in 2015 (3.9), but in line with the 1997 and 2001's levels that were respectively 3.2 and 3.3.
Generally, the result of the election meant that the Conservatives were returned to government with a majority for their Brexit policy. At that point, the government was finally in position to publish its Brexit policy, and its Withdrawal Bill passed 359 to 324. Therefore, the official exit of the UK from the EU is dated to 31st January 2020.
To better understand the distributions of votes in the 2019 UK elections, Map 3.2 shows in details the country's geography resulting from them. Moreover, it is possible to look at the differences with the results of the previous elections in 2017 showed in Map 3.3.
In Scotland, the Scottish National Party went beyond all expectations, giving the idea that there might be soon a possibility to opt for a referendum on Scottish independence.
Across Northern England, the Conservative Party gained seats in the Labour heartland, changing the colour from red to blue. In Northern Ireland, the Democratic Unionist Party lost some seats, including one to Sinn Fein. Labour held on in Wales, even though they lost few seats which the Conservatives managed to pick up. In London, the Liberal Democrats failed to gain the seats it hoped for, leaving the majority of them to Labour, as well as many other to the Conservatives.

Map 3.2 The 2019 UK general elections' geography.



Source: Dunford, Stephenson et al. 2019.

Map 3.3 The 2017 UK general elections' geography.



Source: Walton, Lowther et al. 2017.

Finally, the 2019 elections' results lead to some conclusive considerations regarding the competing parties' decisive representation. Indeed, these confirms the over-representation of the Conservative party which dominated mainly in Northern and Southern England, but with some seats obtained also in Scotland, South Wales, West Midlands, and Greater London. On the other side, the Labour party reached a great result as well in Greater Manchester, Merseyside, South and West Yorkshire, and West Midlands, while obtaining more seats than even the Conservatives in Greater London. Among the geographically concentrated party we find the Scottish National Party, which was only voted in Scotland, even though it lost some seats there in favour of the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats. Instead, about that, it is evident the under-representation of the minor parties which obtained few seats in these elections, including the Liberal Democrats, the Democratic Unionist Party and Sinn Féin in Ireland, and Plaid Cymru in Wales. All these parties were concentrated in specific constituencies, but this was not enough to ensure them a successful outcome in the House of Commons.

3.2 France and its Two-Round system.

The current electoral system in France dates back to the Fifth Republic's foundation in 1958. As it not only sought to avoid a civil war but also to create a completely new power's distribution, it was conceived as an extraordinary event. This new distribution centred on strengthening the powers of government and preventing the party polarization of the *régimes d'Assemblée* that probably led to the demise of the Third and Fourth Republic (Sowerwine 2009).

Having experience, since 1789, with a large number of electoral systems, the French have learned that different results are produced by different rules and that each option may be decisive in the competing political camps' struggle for control of the state (Campbell 1965). Yet, the French Fifth Republic stands out for the high stability of its two-round (TR) majority-plurality electoral system. The electoral system is not inscribed in the constitution and, therefore, strongly motivated political actors could potentially tamper it, and one example was the 1986 legislative election conducted under a department-list-proportional representation (PR) system in an attempt presented by President Mitterrand to mitigate his party's almost-assured losses and to split his contenders' vote. Overall, elections are held in a two-round system, except for the European ones, and majoritarian principles promote most chosen rules, although each different electoral arena has its own particular procedures. The choice of such system was not, however, a novelty. Indeed, both the Second Empire (1852-1870) and the Third Republic (1870-1940) had already adopted it because of the freedom of choice given to the electors, but also its potential failings had been pointed out (Campbell 1965) due to the loose qualifications for the second round that prevailed then. Instead, the Fifth Republic with its more stringent rules, in conjunction with the new regime type, gave rise to an entirely different electoral arena.

Constitutionally, France is a semi-presidential regime (Duverger 1980; Shugart 2005; Elgie 2009), and by design, the French state is meant to be hybrid, in the sense of exerting presidential dominance when the president and the legislative majority come from the same political party, and a peculiar cohabitation regime when they are not. Moreover, there is much debate on whether, constitutionally speaking, the French president is a powerful actor (Elgie and Machin 1991; Siaroff 2003). Although the presidential or prime ministerial leadership's extent has varied across time, depending on the individuals in each of these offices, the executive in the French setting is favoured by the alleged balancing act between the executive and the legislative power once the regime type combines with the electoral system.

3.2.1 Origins of the electoral systems.

In June 1958, the political system in France collapsed. To save the regime, General Charles de Gaulle was called upon to form a government, and he agreed only on condition that there would be a new constitution. Therefore, after being approved in a referendum, in October 1958, the Fifth French Republic's constitution came into force. De Gaulle was elected in December 1958, after winning a landslide victory in the electoral college, as the first President of the Fifth Republic and then, in January 1959, he appointed Michel Debré as prime minister.

As already mentioned before, the origins of the electoral system for the National Assembly dated to the Fifth Republic's foundation in 1958, where a two-ballot was used during the Third Republic for much of the period between 1870-1940. However, a proportional representation highest-average list-based system was adopted during the Fourth Republic, but its collapse undermined the credibility of all the institutions which were associated with it. As result to this, electoral reform was inevitable right when de Gaulle returned to power in 1958, and Michel Debré was the main spokesperson of the gaullists on electoral reform. He was strongly in favour of a majority system, as he believed that such systems were mainly based on the state's conception as an independent actor, one that could shape the party system. In opposition to that, he believed that proportional systems were based on a political philosophy that conceived the state as the sum total of the interests of several groups conceived as a whole in the society (Harmsen 1988). Therefore, the former was entirely consistent with De Gaulle's political philosophy, while the latter was entirely repugnant to it. As a result, a shift to a majority system was inevitable even though Debré failed to gain support for either the details or the principles' inclusion of the new electoral system in the constitution (Wahl 1959).

Indeed, only the communists objected, as they claimed that there was little support among both the public and the political class for obtaining a UK-style single-member plurality system. By contrast, there was more support for the reintroduction of a two-ballot system, hence, a choice had to be made between a single-member constituency-based system and a department-based majority-list system. In the end, the General himself was in favour of the plurality system (Duverger 1960). This decision implied that the gains made by the gaullists in the first election were likely to be less than they would otherwise have been, but it also meant that there was no "problem" for the General to deal with a very large right-wing majority in the National Assembly, which probably would have been more in favour of Algeria remaining French (Duverger 1960). The new system was approved by decree on 13 October 1958 as a piece of emergency legislation, and a month later the first elections were held.

That said, since 1988, the current system has operated with no interruptions. The attempt to constitutionalize the electoral system in 1958 has failed (Gallagher and Mitchell 2008), and Article 34 of the constitution states that the National Assembly's system of election is determined by law. This means that it can be reformed simply by passing a new law. From 1958 to 1981 (included), National Assembly elections were contested on the two-ballot system's basis. However, in 1985 was introduced a PR's department-based list system (Knapp 1987), constituting an extremely controversial reform (Favier and Martin-Roland 1991). This reform was introduced just before the 1986 National Assembly, at which the prediction of the left's loss was very shared. In the end, even though the left still lost, at least the size of the defeat was greatly reduced. In addition, the extreme-right Front National party (FN) won thirty-five seats, while probably it would not have won any under the old system. Then, following the 1986 election, the right-wing majority opted for the two-ballot system. This reform was itself controversial because the right seemed to have the possibility

to gain the most from a return to the previous system, but also because the Minister of the Interior was accused of wanting to favour the right even more by gerrymandering the constituency boundaries. Indeed, the Constitutional Council limited the minister's right to redraw the constituency boundaries, and the socialists won the 1988 election as public opinion changed.
Regarding presidential elections, the situation is more straightforward. In 1958, the timing was not considered the right one for the direct election of the president. This was because, at least in part, citizens in Algeria would have been able to vote, so as a result, the president was indirectly elected, mainly comprising local *notables*, by an electoral college. However, once again the Algerian issue has been resolved in September 1962, and the decisions to amend the constitution and to introduce the direct election of the president were taken. At this time, there was little or no discussion about whether to adopt a two-ballot system for presidential elections or not, while instead, the main element of the discussion concerned the number of sponsors required to contest the election and the rules determining participation in the second ballot (Rudelle 1984). Even these issues were resolved quite quickly, and since 1962, the system has remained largely unaltered except for an increase in the required number of sponsors. In part, this is due to the constitutionalizing of the system's basic details at the time of the 1962 reform, being the rules for participation in the second ballot included. Thus, to change the details of the system, a constitutional reform was needed. More generally, the system has enjoyed popular and political support. Indeed, the 1993 Vedel committee on constitutional reform did not mention reforming the basic mechanisms of the system of election of the president, even though it addressed a wide range of issues.

3.2.2 How the electoral systems work.

National Assembly's elections are contested on the basis of single member constituencies. In France, constituencies can be situated either in metropolitan France and in France's overseas departments and territories. In metropolitan France, the department, which is the equivalent of the county in the UK or USA, is the typical territorial area in which constituencies boundaries are drawn. In a department, the number of constituencies varies according to the department's population, but there must be a minimum of two. In addition, the size of the electorate in any constituency should not vary by more than 20 percent from the electorate's average size in all constituencies in the department. More specifically, there are rules to guarantee some equality of representation, even though discrepancies still remain.
The 1986 electoral law declared that constituency boundaries should be redrawn after every other census, hence every twenty years or so. Government proposes the boundaries, more specifically the Minister of Interior, and boundaries are submitted, for their advice, to the highest administrative courts in the land (Council of State, Court of Accounts, and Court of Cassation). Subsequently, the changes are voted by the National Assembly.
Elections are always held on Sunday in each constituency and take place under a two-ballot majority-plurality system, as it is called (Elgie 1997). In basic terms, a candidate is elected by winning either a majority of votes at the first ballot or, if he or she fails it, a plurality of votes at the second ballot, hence majority-plurality. During the election day, the candidates' names are printed on different pieces of paper, and voters only have to vote by dropping the name of their preferred candidate into the ballot box. At the first round, a candidate is elected if he or she wins more than 50 percent of the valid votes cast and the votes cast's number for that candidate amounts to more than 25 percent of the registered electorate.

In the constituencies where there has not been the election of a candidate at the first ballot, there is a second ballot one week later. At the second ballot, the candidates who are allowed to stand are only those who already stood at the first one, and only those candidates who obtained, at the first ballot, the votes of more than 12.5 percent of the registered electorate can proceed to the second. In this sense, the two-ballot system used for National Assembly election is semi-closed. At the second ballot, the contest is not simply a repeat of the first. If the 12.5 percent threshold has been crossed by two candidates, the top two candidates may go through. However, only one candidate contests the second ballot in some cases. This happens when there are only two eligible candidates but one of them decides to drop out right after the first round. It always involves a situation where the two candidates are from allied parties, and the second-placed one is usually the one who is willing to step down. Instead, at the second ballot, a simple plurality of votes is required to secure election in the case of more than two eligible candidates.

The mechanisms of the presidential election system are similar to that used for National Assembly elections, but they are also slightly different from it. Even in this case, elections are held on Sundays. A candidate must win more than 50 percent of the valid votes cast to be elected at the first ballot, but if no candidates achieve so, and none has in the history of the Fifth Republic to date, then a second ballot is held after two weeks.

The presidential system differs from the National Assembly as it is a closed run-off system, where at the second ballot only the top two candidates at the first ballot are allowed to stand. If one of these candidates decides not to contest the second ballot, the next-highest-placed candidate can stand, even though this has never happened so far. At the second ballot, the candidate who wins the plurality of votes (which necessarily is more than 50 percent of the valid votes cast) is elected.

3.2.3 The French Presidential and Legislative Elections of 2017.

In 2017, the French two rounds of presidential elections took place respectively on 23 April and 7 May and, as usual, the candidate who gets above 50 percent of the overall national popular vote is elected as president for a five-year term. A candidate could also potentially win in the first round of voting, but it is highly unlikely given that there are usually more than just two competitive candidates.

Tables 3.4 and 3.6 provide the results of both the first and second round of voting in the 2017 French presidential elections, while Maps 3.5 and 3.7 show the geography of the country resulting from the same two rounds.

For the first round of a French presidential election in the 5th Republic, the level of abstention (22.2 percent) was the second highest. Nevertheless, during the first round of the presidential elections, having 77.8 percent of the registered voters going to the ballots still represents a comparatively high electoral mobilisation.

As the French polls already announced before the elections, the race was very close because of the small gaps between the scores of the four main candidates. The winner of the first round of French presidential elections was Emmanuel Macron with 24.01 percent of the votes. After him, Marine Le Pen obtained, as a far-right candidate at a French presidential election, 21.3 percent of the votes, allowing, as her father did in 2002, the National Front to reach the runoff. Instead, the two candidates of the traditional governing parties of the left and the right were disqualified from the runoff, the first being the Republican's presidential candidate François Fillon, who missed qualifying for the second round by a small margin with 20.01 percent of the votes.

The defeat is much clearer in the case of the main candidate of the former governing socialist party, Benoît Hamon, who achieved a low record for the PS (6.36 percent), even though this did not generate a surprise due to the turmoil and deep fragmentations of the party.

Table 3.4 The 2017 French presidential elections: first round results.

Candidates	Votes	%
Emmanuel Macron	8,656,346	24.01
Marine Le Pen	7,678,491	21.30
François Fillon	7,212,995	20.01
Jean-Luc Mélenchon	7,059,951	19.58
Benoît Hamon	2,291,288	6.36
Nicolas Dupont-Aignan	1,695,000	4.70
Jean Lassalle	435,301	1.21
Philippe Poutou	394,505	1.09
François Asselineau	332,547	0.92
Nathalie Arthaud	232,384	0.64
Jacques Cheminade	65,586	0.18
Blank ballots	659,997	1.78
Abstention	10,578,455	22.23

Source: Anja Durovic 2019, 1493.

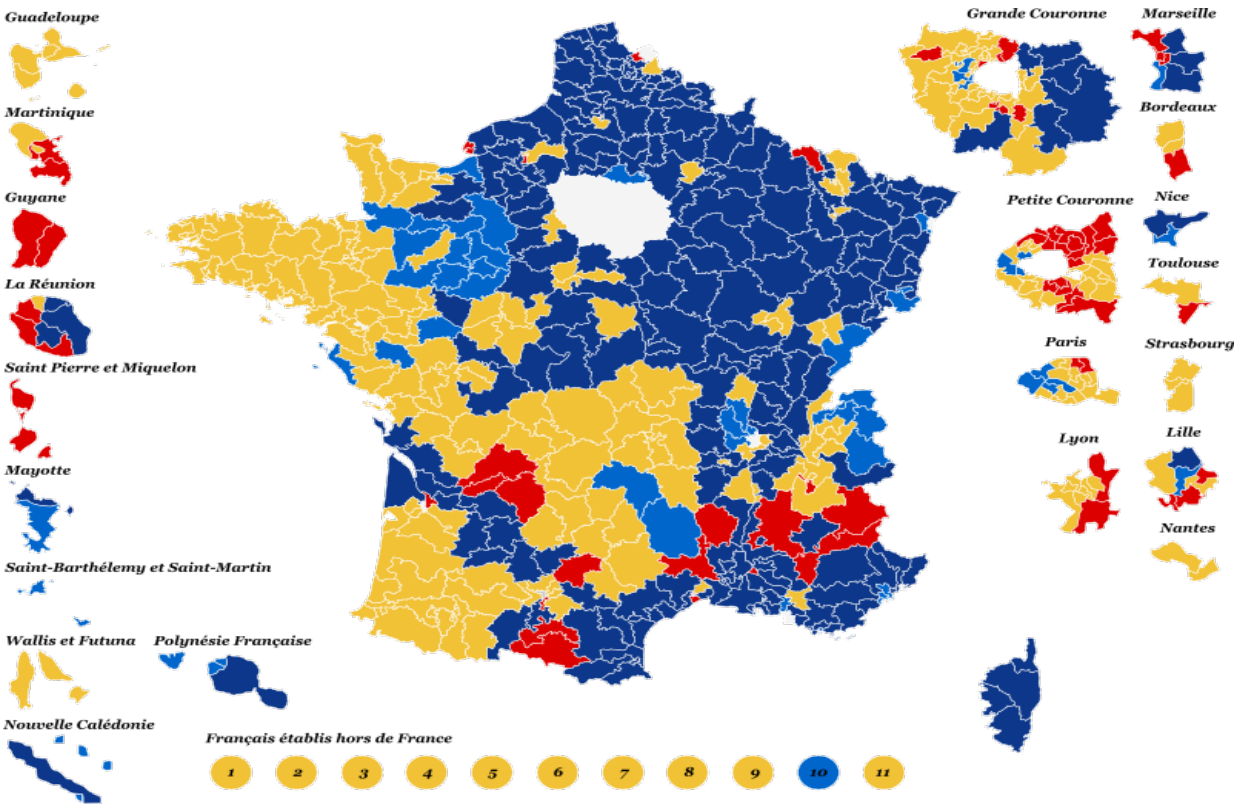
Note: Percentages are based on votes cast.

However, this low score and the fact that many PS' former political strongholds were lost in favour of Emmanuel Macron and Jean-Luc Mélenchon indicated that the party was abandoned by a significant part of its electorate. While Jean-Luc Mélenchon could not qualify for the second round, he at least became unquestionably the clear winner of the French left with 7,059,951 votes and thus the 70 percent of left-wing votes (Cautrès 2017, 177).

The second round of the presidential elections saw the growth of the level of abstention by around three percentage points, which is rather unusual. Indeed, in history, turnout has tended to increase between the two rounds.

This might be caused by the election's lower competitiveness, more particularly by the so-called "front républicain" which consists in the determination of a French electorate's great majority to keep the radical right far from reaching power and the call of many disqualified candidates to vote against the FN candidates. Moreover, it might also be due to the absence of a left-wing competitor, since the choice between Macron and Le Pen has been declined by a big fraction of left-wing voters (Gougou and Persico 2017). This led to an increase in the quantity of blank ballots which went from 1.78 percent during the first round to 8.52 percent during the runoffs.

Map 3.5 The 2017 French presidential election's geography in the first round.



Source: Conseil Constitutionnel 2017 (a).

Table 3.6 The 2017 French presidential elections: second round results.

Candidates	Votes	%
Macron Emmanuel	20,743,128	66.10
Le Pen Marine	10,638,475	33.90
Blank Ballots	3,021,499	8.52
Abstention	12,101,366	25.44

Source: Anja Durovic 2019, 1493.

Note: Percentages are based on votes cast.

The outcome of the runoffs was clearer than expected in terms of results: Macron won with 66.1 percent of the votes, and he became the youngest ever French President at 39. This also makes him the first candidate to win without being elected for office in the first place and without support from established political parties.

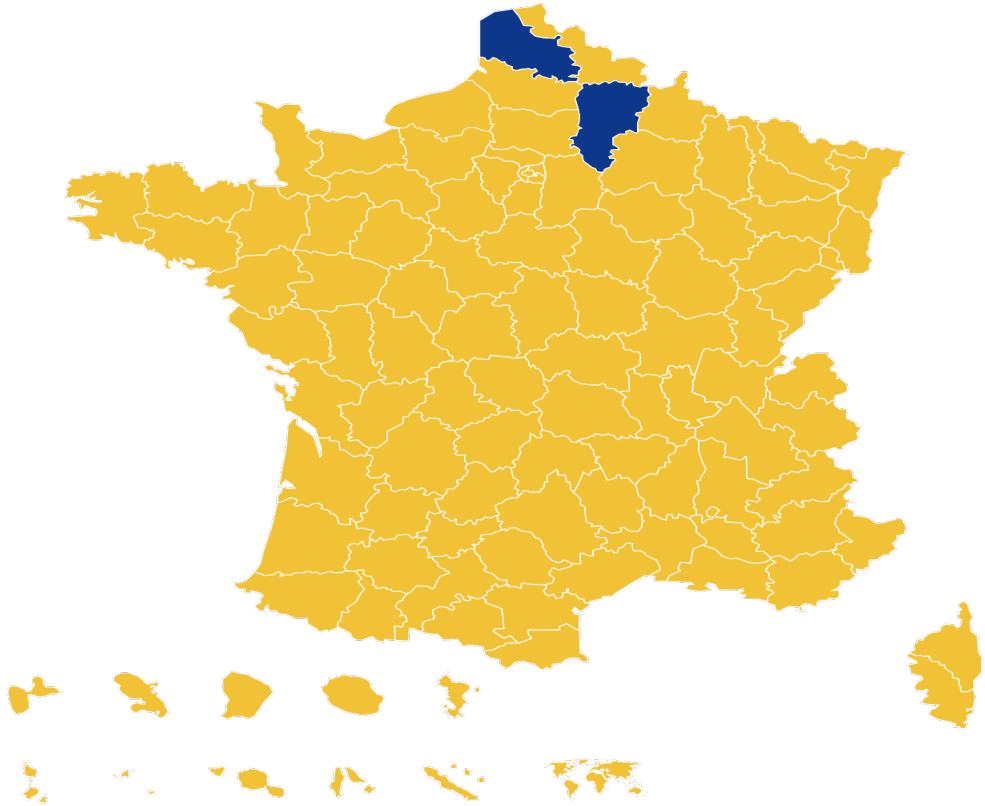
The so called "front républicain" played in favour of Macron, since a big amount of Fillon, Mélenchon and Hamon's supporters who voted in the second round, voted for Emmanuel Macron. Regarding this, a study on the electoral flows between the first and the second round of the 2017 presidential elections at the electoral section's level (Paparo 2017), is very efficient in showing how the electorates of the first round of the various candidates were divided in the final ballot, between abstention and voting for the two duellists. First of all, Macron and Le Pen have both returned to vote all their voters in the first round, yet for the latter there has been a slightly higher rate of

abstention, equal to about 7 percent, and the relative flow is significant (more than 1 percent of the French electorate). Instead, concerning the second preferences of those voters who did not have their favourite candidate in the ballot, Macron was their preferred candidate. This is due to the fact that among Fillon's voters, there were more than three of them who voted for Macron for each one of them who instead chose Le Pen. Moreover, the relationship between the votes for Macron and those for Le Pen among Mélenchon's electors is even more evidently in favour of the former and is more than double of that of Fillon, with seven votes for Macron for each vote for Le Pen. Even among the few socialist voters Macron dominated with twenty votes for him for every vote to the Front National's candidate. Le Pen won only in the smallest electorate of the first round, that of Dupont-Aignan, and by a narrower margin of four votes to her out of three for Macron. Finally, the current President was also favoured by part of the abstained ones in the first round who instead voted for him in the second, obtaining almost three votes for each Le Pen's vote in this basin. Therefore, Macron started with a slight advantage after the first round and, as we have seen in the conducted study on the electoral flows, he was clearly preferred by the second preferences of the voters whose candidates had not reached the second round.

Marine Le Pen was disappointed for her score of 33.9 percent, as she had allied, between the two rounds, with Nicolas Dupont-Aignan (Debout la France) to attract a larger electorate on the right. However, her score, compared to that of his father Jean-Marie Le Pen in 2002, is still two times higher as he obtained 17.79 percent of the votes in the second round of the presidential elections (Miguet 2002).

Overall, the 2017 French presidential elections' results implied several shifts in the structure of the French party system. The closeness of the presidential race between the four main candidates led to a break with its bipolar and tripolar shapes, as the French party system has moved more towards a bipolar shape since the end of the 2000s (Gougou and Labouret 2013; Grunberg and Haegel 2007), in opposition to the "tripolar" pattern of party competition used between the 1980s and the mid-2010s. This "tripartition" was structured around one left-wing bloc, one moderate right-wing bloc and finally one extreme-right bloc (Bornschier and Lachat 2009; Grunberg and Schweisguth 1997; Tiberj 2012). Yet the 2017 presidential elections mark a break with the French party competition's bipolar shape of the mid-2000s, and also point towards the end of standard tripartition. They rather present the introduction of a new four-party system or a "quadripartition" in French politics involving an eco-socialist bloc on the left, a cultural and economic liberal bloc at the centre, and two distinct poles on the right, one social-conservative and neoliberal bloc, as well as an anti-immigration and anti-globalisation bloc on the far right. However, Emmanuel Macron's victory in the presidential elections did not constitute a guarantee for him to get and form, after the imminent legislative elections, a majority government. His party (LREM) needed enough candidates to run for office in 577 districts all over France, many of which had local notables who had been in office for many years. Therefore, it was not so sure whether Macron and LREM could once again disrupt, even with his ally MoDem, the bipolar shape of the French party competition in legislative elections which are less candidate-centred and less mobilising than the presidential elections. Important factors for the electoral outcomes of the legislative campaigns in France include candidates' profiles and previous political experience (Brouard and Kerrouche 2013), even though research points to mixed results with regard to incumbency effects in French parliamentary elections (Murray 2008). However, this kind of effect could be anticipated to some degree by LREM by attracting defecting incumbents, who declared their intention to run for the presidential majority before the legislative elections, either from the right and the left.

Map 3.7 The 2017 French presidential election's geography in the second round.



Source: Conseil Constitutionnel 2017 (b).

About a month later the French presidential elections which ended in May 2017, the legislative ones were held on 11 June for the first round and on 18 June for the second round.
Since 2002, these elections have always taken place shortly after the presidential elections, generating a drag effect. This timing in the French calendar is the reason why the national parliamentary elections are conceived as a third and fourth round of the presidential elections (Dupoirier and Sauger 2010), and a sort of confirmatory election with the task of securing a working parliamentary majority for the presidential incumbent.
As usual, Tables 3.8 and 3.10 show the results of the elections' first and second rounds respectively, while Maps 3.9 and 3.11 present the geography of the country during the elections' periods.

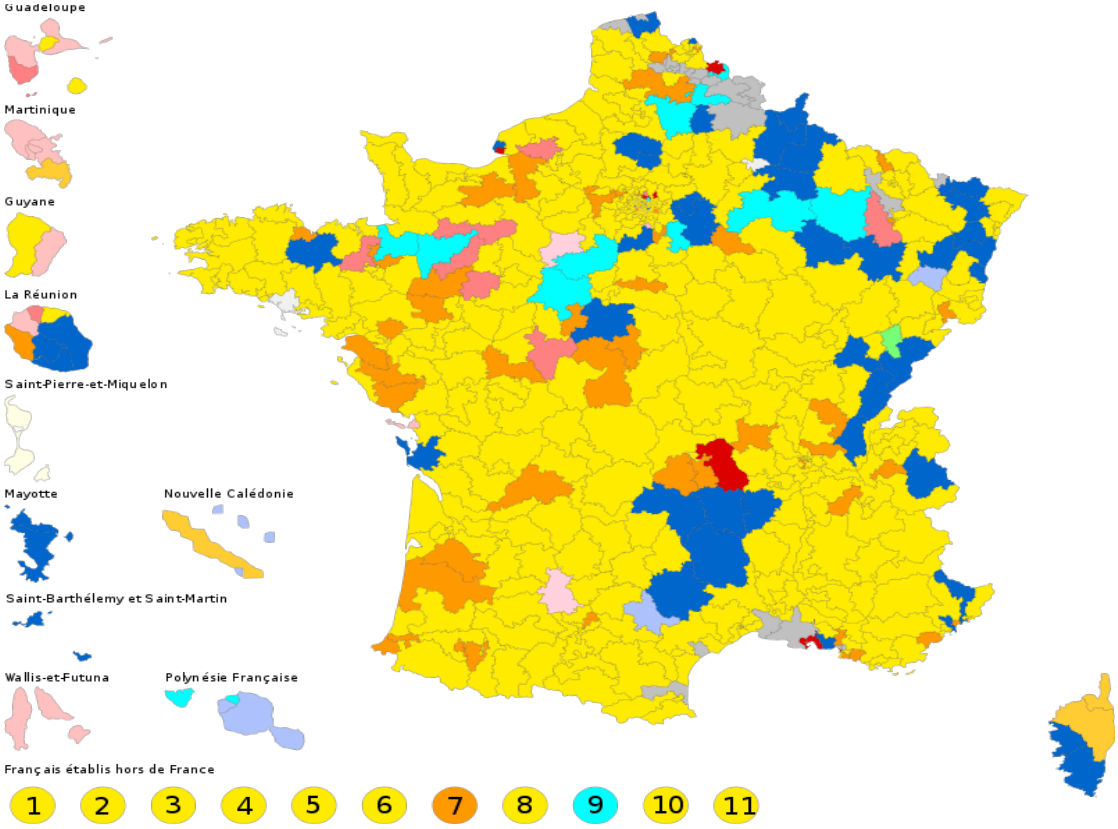
Table 3.8 The 2017 French legislative elections: first round results.

Parties	Votes	%
La République en marche (LREM)	6,391,269	28.21
Les Républicains (LR)	3,573,427	15.77
Front National (FN)	2,990,454	13.20
Parti socialiste (PS)	1,685,677	7.44
MoDem	932,227	4.12
Union des Démocrates et Indépendants (UDI)	687,225	3.03
Others	500,309	2.21
Parti radical de gauche (PRG)	106,311	0.47
Abstention		51.30

Source: Anja Durovic 2019, 1496.

In the first round, LREM presented itself as its clear winner with 28.21 percent of the votes, making the institutional confirmatory effect of the French legislatives elections valid as it worked to the party's advantage. Instead, the Republicans resulted in a clear setback with 15.77 percent of the votes compared to 27.12 percent in 2012's first round.
At the same way, the Socialist Party did not achieve a brilliant result as it obtained only the 7.44 percent of the votes, pushing Benoît Hamon, the former PS's candidate who was defeated in his district after the first round, to announce that he would live the party and create his own political movement.
The National Front received a further blow after its poor score at the presidential elections four weeks before, as it received the 13 percent of the votes, while the MoDem and the UDI fared even worse, as they respectively obtained the 4.12 percent and the 3.03 percent of the votes. Finally, the PRG was one of the parties with a lower result, corresponding only to the 0.47 percent of the votes.

Map 3.9 The 2017 French legislative election's geography in the first round.



Source: Ministère De l'Intérieur 2017 (a).

In the second round, LREM was the clear winner with 43.06 percent of the votes, and with 308 seats the absolute majority, fixed at 289 seats for the National Assembly, was secured. However, considering the more than 400 seats the polls had projected, it gained a much lower number of parliamentary seats, probably because of the demobilisation of its own electorate in opposition to the level of mobilisation of other political forces' electorates in the second round (Dolez and Laurent 2018). Moreover, the alliance with MoDem, which won an unprecedent number of seats (42), helped LREM to reach 49.12 percent of the votes in the legislative elections' second round. In the newly elected parliament, the score of 22.23 percent (thus 112 seats), represented a setback for the governing party (LR) from the right, even though it allowed the party to remain the main

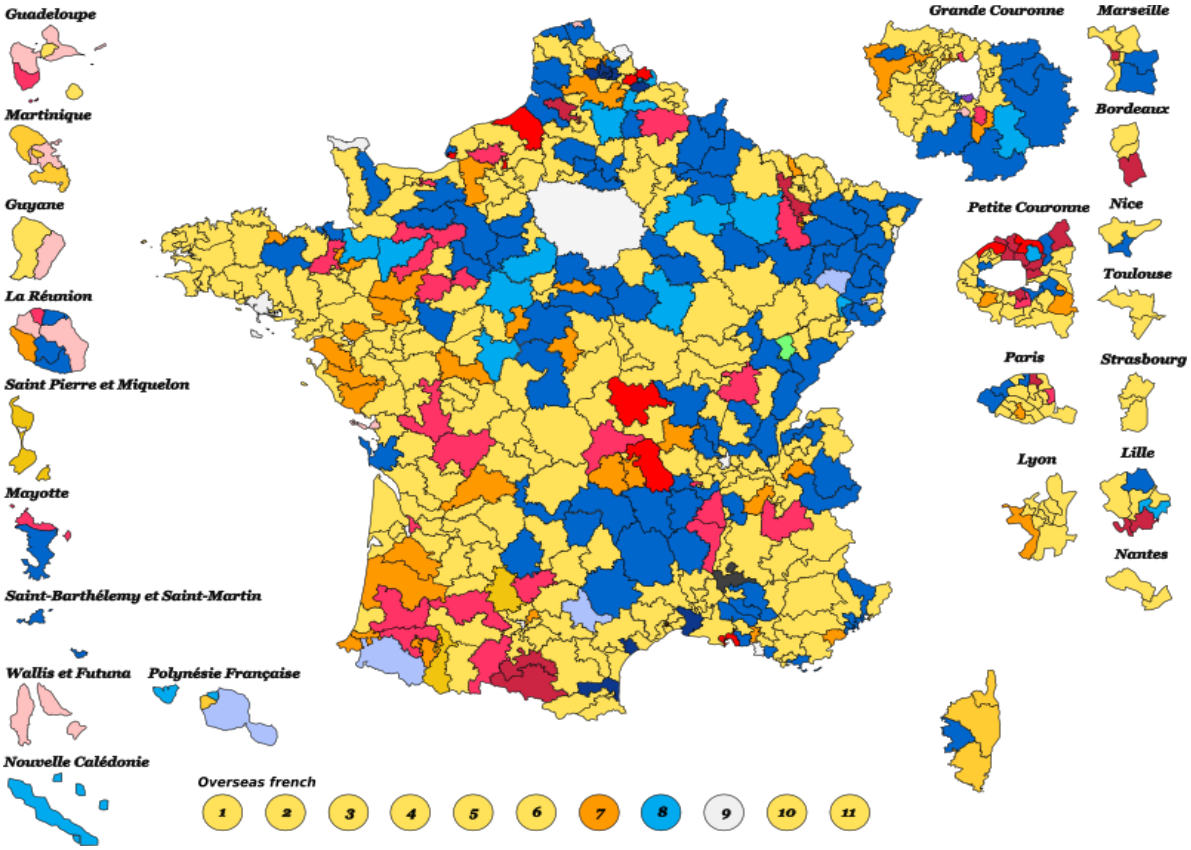
opposition party. The expectations for the other traditional governing party from the left (PS) could not be high after the first-round result. In the National Assembly, the small share of votes, 5.68 percent, and the low number of seats, 30, was not surprising. The National Front gained eight seats in the national parliament for the first time with a score of 13.20 percent, but it failed in forming a parliamentary group in the National Assembly, in which 15 elected members were needed.

Table 3.10 The 2017 French legislative elections: second round results.

Parties	Seats	Seats (%)	Votes	Votes (%)
LREM	308	53.4	7,826,245	43.06
LR	112	19.4	4,040,203	22.23
FN	8	1.4	1,590,869	8.75
PS	29	5.0	1,032,842	5.68
MoDem	42	7.3	1,100,656	6.06
UDI	18	3.1	551,784	3.04
Others	56	9.7	100,574	0.55
PRG	3	0.5	64,860	0.36
Abstention				57.36

Source: Anja Durovic 2019, 1497.

Map 3.11 The 2017 French legislative election's geography in the second round.



Source: Ministère De l'Intérieur 2017 (b).

3.3 Australia: the Alternative Vote in its highest expression.

For more than a century, the design of electoral institutions in Australia has been widely experimented. In 1952, the American political scientist Louise Overacker claimed that "no modern democracy has shown greater readiness to experiment with various electoral methods than Australia" (Overacker 1952), and things have not changed that much since then. This experimentation affected the federation's six states and two constituencies, as well as at the federal level itself, and between the upper and lower houses, resulting in a wide range of Australian electoral systems operating at local, state, and national levels. Moreover, these all had different rules and procedures, and they all were conducted under a system of compulsory voting. For all these reasons, it is not so exaggerated to claim that the Australian voter has become one of the most sophisticated in the world as it achieves to navigate this complex and changing system (Herron, Pekkanen and Shugart 2018).

As mentioned before when we were talking about the UK, in the mid-nineteenth century, before the formation of the Commonwealth in 1901, electoral experimentation began in the colonies. In Australia, the federal structure was based on the fact that each colony had its own electoral system, but a range of political reforms, which were far ahead of those of any other country in the world (possibly except for New Zealand), were introduced. By 1859, except for two of the colonies, all the others had introduced universal manhood suffrage, while in the Commonwealth elections in 1902, votes for women were granted.[40] In 1870, payment's principle for elected representatives was established in Victoria, and by 1890, most of the remaining colonies followed the same path. Perhaps, the most international innovation was what is still called "the Australian ballot" in many countries, which is a secret ballot. In 1856, Victoria became the first jurisdiction in the world which adopted in the electoral context a secret ballot, while Western Australia was the last one, adopting it only in 1877. By any standards, nineteenth-century Australia was a world leader in democratic reform.

Australia is internationally significant as it is the home of two main forms of preferential electoral systems: the alternative vote and the single transferable vote. It was the first country to use these systems: AV in Queensland in 1892, STV in Tasmania in 1896, AV in the Australian Commonwealth in 1918-19 for the elections of the House of Representative, and STV for Senate elections in 1949. Moreover, today Australia is the largest of only three established democracies (the others are Malta since 1921 and Ireland in 1922) to use these electoral systems for conducting all levels of elections. The reasons for this are based on the British debates during the nineteenth century about electoral reform that largely influenced the early electoral system designers, as well as the activities of a small number of electoral reform advocates who exercised a notable influence over the early Commonwealth parliamentarians.

The AV system is quintessentially Australian, apart from its use in Ireland for presidential elections and parliamentary by-elections and Sri Lanka for presidential elections, and on various occasions in parts of the USA and Canada at local or regional level. Moreover, especially in the UK where to elect the London mayor a specific variant known as the "supplementary vote" is used, the only relevant sign of this system in places outside Australia has been suggesting strong indications of

[40] This is in comparison with its introduction in New Zealand in 1879, in the United States in 1870, and 1918 in Britain. New Zealand granted the most the votes for women in 1893, with most of the Australian colonies following shortly after, while women had to wait for the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment in 1920 to gain the right to vote in the United States.

diffusion of "best practice" by Australian international non-government organizations in fledgling democracies in the Oceania region (Reilly 1997; Reilly and Reynolds 1999).
In this discussion, the focus will be mainly on the House of Representatives' system, not only because it corresponds to the alternative vote which must be analysed in the Australian context, but also because in the House of Representatives governments are formed. Therefore, the last paragraph of the discussion will be completely centred on the latest elections of this Australian Parliament's part in 2019.

3.3.1 Origins of the electoral system.

Before federation, four of the six colonial parliaments used single-member plurality, while of the remaining two parliaments Queensland used what was known as "the contingent vote", a form of AV, and Tasmania STV, which was referred to as "Hare-Clark". The methods of voting and counting which were used for the first federal election in 1901 were determined by the state parliaments because of these differing state electoral systems. However, the 1902 Commonwealth Electoral Act ended such diversity.
Australia's addiction for presidential systems has its origins in two main factors (Gallagher and Mitchell 2008). First, during the nineteenth century Australia was largely influenced by British debates about preferential electoral systems, particularly STV which is the multimember variant. Its merits began to be debated from the 1850s onwards, mainly after the publication of "Treatise on the Election of Representatives, Parliamentary and Municipal (1859)" written by Thomas Here, and his system's active promotion by John Stuart Mill (Hart 1992). From the 1880s, many efforts to promote STV were featured by the British Proportional Representation Society, and although not adopted in Britain, a period of colonial experimentation followed where STV was introduced in 1920 for all Ireland elections, in Malta in 1921, and in parts of India in the 1930s (Farrell 2001). Australian electoral designers were undoubtedly influenced by British debates over preferential electoral systems, as for example STV was introduced in two urban areas of Tasmania, Hobart and Launceston, in 1896.[41]
Instead, the second influence was the key actors' role, most notably a campaigner, Catherine Helen Space, a legislator, Inglis Clark and a theorist, Edward Nanson, each of them promoting the adoption of preferential systems. Spence and Clark had a very strong influence on the 1902 debate, but a major role was played by Nanson when it came to the specifics of electoral system design, and the systems which were proposed in 1902 were largely of his design.
Guided mostly by him, the Barton government proposed the STV's use for the Senate and AV for the House of Representatives, but after some debates for the most part focused on the STV rather than on AV, SMP was finally adopted for the House of Representatives after the government's proposals were defeated, and multimember block voting for the Senate. There are several reasons why at first this preferential voting system failed. One major factor concerned the balance in the new parliament of party-political forces that were ranged against the government, making it clear that a tough battle was around the corner. In either house, Barton's party did not obtain seats, and the support that it initially received from Labour for the proposed electoral systems was quite indifferent and fragile. In addition, many New South Wales and Victorian legislators, who

[41] The French second ballot system probably influenced the introduction of AV for the election of Queensland's Legislative Assembly in 1892, hence several years earlier (Reilly 1997).

comprised the two-thirds of the House's membership and one-third of the Senate, were unfamiliar with both the AV and STV systems (Hughes 2000).
The plurality electoral system's use (SMP and block) continued until the adoption of preferential voting in 1918. Because of its increased discipline, Labour benefited from the plurality systems' disproportional tendencies, and it was not until the Nationalist government's election in 1917 that a non-Labour government was able to implement a major revision of the federal electoral systems. In October 1918, the Commonwealth Electoral Bill proposed AV for the House of Representatives, and this was conceived as result of an agreement between the anti-Labour parties to present one candidate in a by-election in the Flinders constituency in May 1918, even though the imminence of a following by-election made the issue even more pressing, and finally the legislation passed after a brief debate. Table 3.12 shows that a large number of tries was needed before the Senate was to end up with the STV system adopted today.

Table 3.12 House of Representatives and Senate electoral systems since 1901.

	State	Electoral System
House of Representatives		
1901	NSW, Vic., WA	SMP
	Qld	AV; using contingent vote
	SA	Block vote
	Tasmania	STV
1903	All states	SMP
1918	All states	AV
Senate		
1901	All states, except Tasmania in 1901	Block vote (STV in Tasmania)
1919	All states	Preferential block
1949	All states	STV
1983	All states	STV with ticket-voting

Source: Gallagher and Mitchell 2008, 82.

In the 1919 the block vote system for the Senate was replaced by a preferential block voting system, so as to minimize the risk of voter confusion, enabling voters to rank-order candidates in the elections of both houses.[42] Then, STV was introduced in 1949. However, in 1983 there was a change, as voters were given the possibility to express just one preference for a party "ticket", transforming in this way STV into a form of closed-list system (Farrell and McAllister 2000).

[42] The preferential block voting system was a majoritarian multi-seat system, whose distinguishing features were, first of all, the electoral quota (which was a majority formula: [v/(1+1) + 1) and, second, the transfer at full value of all votes. In effect, this produced a series of mini elections, one for each candidate's election. All the votes of the winning candidate were then transferred to the remaining ones based on the next preferences, and subsequently there was a fresh count to see which of the remaining candidates had a vote's overall majority. Until the numbers of candidates required were elected, the process continues.

3.3.2 How the electoral system works.

The idea behind the adoption of preferential systems such as AV is that voters can rank-order the candidates on the ballot paper, so as to have relevance in the election of successful candidates. This means that if a voter's preferred candidate does not reach sufficient votes to be elected, the voter may still have the possibility to determine the other candidates' fate in the race.

As already clarified in the previous chapter, AV is a majoritarian electoral system in which a candidate, to be elected in single-seat constituencies, is required at least 50 percent of the votes. By counting the first preferences on the ballot paper, if no candidate achieves this overall majority, then the candidate with fewest votes is excluded and his or her ballot papers are distributed among the remaining candidates based on the next preferences expressed on the papers. The process continues until an overall majority emerges from one candidate.

AV is a non-proportional system, as the often-poor match between vote proportions and seat proportions shows. What distinguishes it from plurality electoral systems is the expectation that the candidate should reach an overall majority of the vote to be elected (Farrell 2001). However, while for the most part, and definitely in all the Australian cases today, the system is characterized by single-member constituencies, this does not need to be the only case. Indeed, there have been several occasions in Australia where AV was applied in multimember constituencies, the most particular case being the system used to elect the Senate from 1919 to 1948.

Australian electoral law tends to produce a considerable burden on voters, and this is true mostly regarding the strong element of compulsion which pervades the vote process. The system of compulsory voting is the massive manifestation of compulsion, in which not only the voters are required by law to register to vote, but they are also compelled to attend, though not necessarily to vote, the polling place. Although deciding not to vote without a valid reason is conceived as an offence, there is strong public support for the system, and very few non-voters were ever fined. Voters have the possibility to cast a ballot outside the constituency in which they are registered, and there are few restrictions regarding acquiring absentee or postal ballot. Moreover, another compulsion's aspect is that a voter must complete all the preferences on the ballot paper for his vote to be counted as valid (or "formal").

"Optional preferential voting" is currently in use in the New South Wales for their state parliamentary elections, where voters can express as many preferences as they like, while it was also employed in Queensland from 1992 to 2015 and in the Northern Territory in 2016. However, in the past it was briefly in use in just two others, Victoria and Western Australia, and it was introduced in 1980 by a Labour government in the New South Wales. Instead, in Queensland, its introduction in 1992 was due to a government commission's recommendations which expressed several objections to the compulsory expression of preferences, which required voters to express preferences for candidates they neither knew nor supported. Outside these states, the tendency is to favour the compulsory preferences' expression. This Australian practice reflects a particular political culture based on regulation and efficiency, as well as an emphasis on citizens' duty (McAllister 2002). From another point of view, it reflects the legislators' view that through the compulsory expression of preferences, the system or compulsory turnout is reinforcing, for "if it were to be conceded that voters have the right to be indifferent in regard to a subset of candidates, it would seem to follow that voters have the right to be indifferent in regard to all candidates" (Reilly and Maley 2000). The compulsory expression of preferences facilitates the virtual institutionalization of the Liberal-National coalition, as it avoids the dangers for them of vote splitting, allowing them both to present candidates in the same constituency, and increasing, at the

same time, the likelihood that one of them will have a candidate elected. While these trends tend to increase the sympathy for optional preferential voting among Australian Labour Party (ALP) politicians, this is not universal because, for instance, after the 2001 Western Australian state election which resulted in a new Labour government, the Liberal Party proposed a switch for future state elections to optional preferential voting, reflecting in this way the growing difficulty the larger parties are having in controlling the spread of preferences in a moment when preferences count more and more for the final result.

Optional versus compulsory preferential voting has also featured in federal level's debates, with the focus centred on issues relating to the compulsory voting's effects on smaller parties. After the 1998 election there were plenty of complaints over the degree to which compulsory preferential voting is used by the larger parties as a discriminatory feature against smaller parties. In particular, the attention mostly fell on the fact that Pauline Hanson's One Nation Party, despite attracting 8.5 percent of the national vote, failed to win any seats in the House of Representatives. In wide review of the evidence, the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters (a parliamentary committee), received from One Nation supporters a large number of submissions complaining that the larger parties had coalesced with One Nation candidates. However, the arguments in favour of a shift to optional preferential voting did not persuade the Committee (Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters 2000).

3.3.3 The Australian Federal Elections of 2019.

Before the 2019 Australian elections took place on May 18, 2019, many commentators had predicted a Labour victory (Creagh and Gwinner 2019), given that in the opinion polls Labour had been always ahead of the Coalition (Liberal-National) government, and that an electoral distribution, under Australia's independent Electoral Commission's auspices, also favoured the Labour party. However, the final federal election's result in the House of Representatives was Liberal National Coalition 77, which won one more seat than in the previous election; Australian Labour Party 68, one less seat that in the previous election; the Greens one seat; Katter's Australian Party one seat; Centre Alliance one seat; and three Independents (AEC, 2009c).

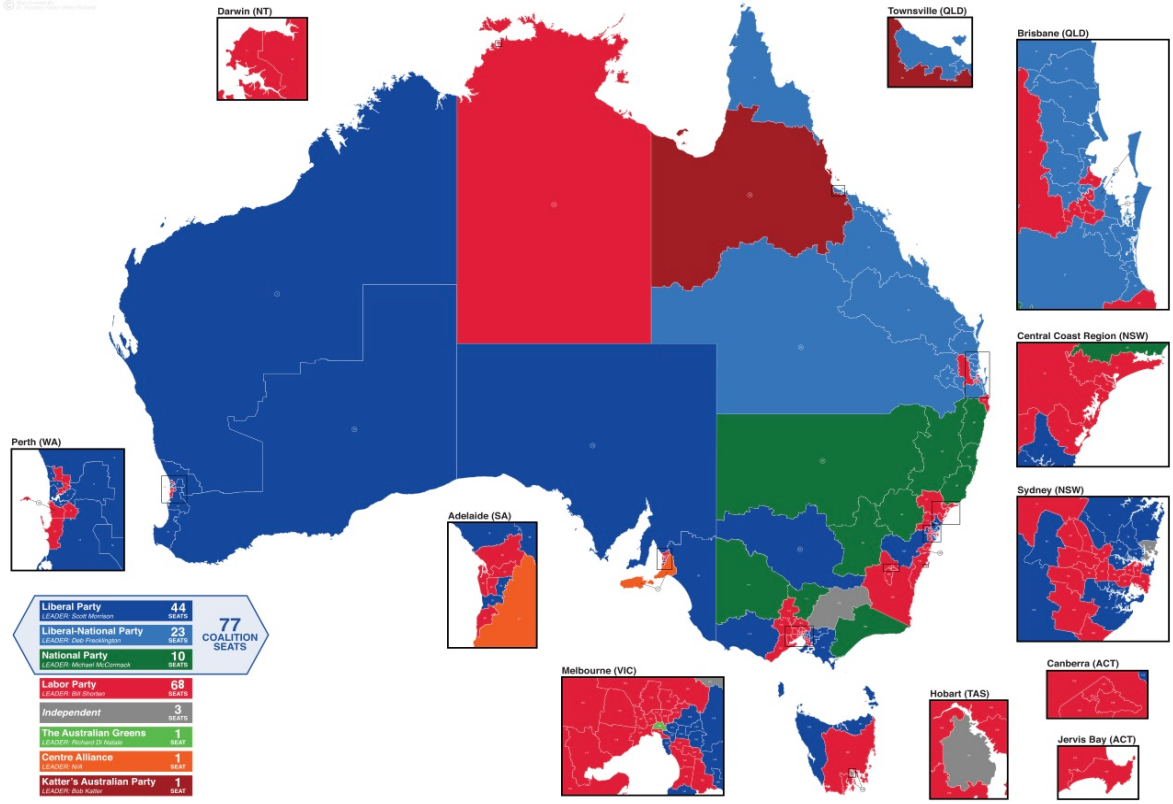
Table 3.13 shows the results of such parties in the 2019 elections, while Table 3.15 shows the results of the constituencies where the final challenge is only between the two main parties. As well, Map 3.14 shows the geographical final results of the elections, indicating how the votes of competing parties were distributed throughout the country.

Table 3.13 Australian House of Representative Election's results on 18 May 2019.

Party	Votes	%	Swing	Seats
Liberal National Coalition	5,906,875	41.44	-060	77
Australian Labour Party	4,752,160	33.34	-1.39	68
Greens	1,482,923	10.40	+0.17	1
Katter's Australian Party	69,736	0.49	-0.05	1
Centre Alliance	46,931	0.33	-1.52	1
Independents	479,836	3.37	+0.56	3

Source: Adapted from Australian Electoral Commission 2019 (a).

Map 3.14 The 2019 Australian federal election's geography.



Source: Australian Electoral Commission 2019 (b).

Here, we can see that the Liberal Party dominated the competition in Western Australia as, except in its capital Perth where the majority of votes were cast for the Labour Party, it won numerous seats. The same can be said for South Australia where, however, some votes were also attributed to Labour (in Adelaide), and to Centre Alliance which gained one seat. Instead, in the Northern Australian territory full support was given to the Labour Party, while in Queensland the situation was more complicated. There, the Liberal National Party reached more seats, but at the same time the Katter's Australian Party was able to obtain one seat, as well as the Labour party received some backing from the city of Brisbane. Moreover, in the New South Wales and in Victoria the votes were split between the Liberal, Labour and Greens parties, the latter being more supported in both regions, while only in Victoria the Independent won some seats. Finally, even in Tasmania the Independent was voted, even if only in its capital Hobart, while the rest of the seats were assigned to the Liberal Party and the Labour Party.

Given that there are 151 seats, it is clear that the Coalition had won a majority in their own right. Labour had won only 33.34 percent of the primary vote (first preference) with a swing of -1.39 percent against it. On the two-party preferred vote, hence after the distribution of preferences, the Liberal National Party won with 51.3 percent, an increase of 1.17 percent, and Labour achieved 48.47 percent, so a 1.17 percent decrease. Concerning Pauline Hanson's One Nation (PHON), whose first preference vote was 3.08 percent, up 1.79 percent, and the United Australia Party (UAP), whose first preference vote was instead 3.43 percent, neither one nor the other won a seat in the House of Representatives despite their assistance with preferences for the Coalition Government.

Table 3.15 Two-party-preferred vote in 2019 Australian House of Representative's Election.

Party	Votes	%	Swing	Seats
Liberal National Coalition	7,344,813	51.53	+1.17	
Australian Labour Party	6,908,580	48.47	-1.17	
Invalid/blank votes	835, 223	5.54	+0.49	-
Registered voters/turnout	16,419,543	91.89	+0.89	-

Source: Adapted from Australian Electoral Commission 2019 (c).

Being misled by positive polling, Labour put resources into seats it could not win and failed to defend other seats it continued to lose. Fears over jobs and the economy are widely considered to have contributed to Labour's poor showing in that economically vulnerable state by Tasmanian Labour sources (Humpries 2019). Therefore, fears over risks posed to coal mining jobs in Queensland by Labour's climate change policies contributed to the poor result in the state, particularly when combined with PHON and UAP preferences. However, climate change issues also contributed to the defeat of the former Liberal Prime Minister, and climate change sceptic, Tony Abbot, by an Independent in the prosperous Sydney seat of Warringah. Labour won two seats in the Labour-leaning state of Victoria, although they were not sufficient to counter the losses occurred in Queensland and Tasmania, while, in New South Wales, its winning of one seat was countered by the loss of another seat.

On the other hand, only half of the Senate normally faces election, so, considering already sitting senators, the 76- member Senate's final composition was the Coalition 35, Labour 26, the Greens 9, PHON 2, Centre Alliance 2, and both the Jacqui Lambie network and Independents 1. The Coalition (government) increased by four its numbers, while Labour, the Greens and PHON kept their existing numbers and the UAP lost its only seat. The new Senate's composition has made it easier for the Government to get sufficient crossbench (a term which refers to an independent or minor party member) support to pass its legislation.

Conclusion.

In this thesis I studied how majoritarian systems work in democratic countries, especially in the United Kingdom, France, and Australia, which are the paradigmatic examples of the three main types of majoritarian systems, being respectively the plurality system, the two-round system, and the alternative vote.

However, to do this, a study on the electoral systems' sphere was needed for giving a general overview on these practices, before entering more specifically in the majoritarian kind of elections. From this discussion, it can be derived that the electoral systems' study is very complex, as it involves several categories (single-seat constituency systems, mixed-member systems, closed-list systems, preferential list systems, PR-STV systems) which, in turn, include specific types as single-member plurality, alternative vote and two-round system for the first category, mixed-member proportional and mixed-member majoritarian systems for the second one, and open list and flexible list for the preferential list system.
Moreover, electoral systems are also rich in dimensions which help them to differ from one another and to assume a kind of uniqueness: the district magnitude which constitutes the number of seats for constituency, the number of votes cast representing the number of votes electors are allowed to express, the ballot structure which distinguishes between ballot papers under which voters must cast a vote for only one party and those in which they can rank order the parties or candidates, the choice of candidate within parties to understand whether voters have any power to choose among candidates of their party, levels of seat allocation and, at last, limitations on proportionality which is very widespread in many countries.
The role played by elections in democracy is that they specify not only the median (majority) preference of the population, but also the overall policy structure or space within which it is embedded. Then, politicians and parties operate within this revealed structure, which a properly functioning electoral system will reproduce in terms of party vote shares in the legislature.

After examining the electoral systems' universe, the thesis went on by entering the merits of the types of electoral systems on which it is based, namely the majoritarian ones and its three major variants.
A majoritarian electoral system is one in which the candidates or parties which receive most votes win (Bormann and Golder 2013). It can happen that some majoritarian systems require the winning party or candidate to reach an absolute majority of the votes, while others only require that they win more votes than anyone else (plurality or relative majority). However, in both cases we generally have single-member constituencies.
The first major majoritarian type of electoral systems is the plurality system, in which separate electoral competitions among individual candidates occur within each district, and in the end the winner takes all despite how many votes more than the competitors the candidate has obtained. This means reaching a plurality and, for this reason, the system is also defined "first-past-the-post" (FPTP). Here, big parties are favoured by such system, while the small ones, especially those whose support is spatially dispersed, are severely penalised. Indeed, the plurality system tends to exaggerate the share of seats of those who are conceived as leading party to produce an effective working parliament majority for the government (Norris 1997). This claim suggests that the plurality system is used to keep smaller parties in the shadows for the sake of stability and

efficiency in the political system. Therefore, a party needs a strong territorial concentration to get access to representation, as it can give a plurality of votes to a candidate whose party does not reach 2 percent of the votes at the national level.
The second type, the two-round system, has a relatively high threshold to achieve first-round success in single-member constituencies, and only if this threshold is not reached, necessitates a second round. Indeed, in a situation where no candidate reaches 50 percent + 1 of the votes, a "run-off election" (a second round of voting), takes place between the two leading candidates.
Much of the work carried out on TR electoral mechanisms concerned their effects on presidential elections. Absolute majority elections in two-rounds are common in presidential elections, and the level of its use has risen substantially in recent years with the increase in the number of countries holding competitive presidential elections. This rise has shifted the attention towards the effects of plurality versus absolute majority TR rules for selecting the chief executive.
Concerning the alternative vote, voters are asked to rank order the candidates, who require at least 50 percent of the votes to be elected. If no candidate achieves an overall majority on the basing of counting the first preferences on the ballot papers, the one with the least votes is excluded and those ballot papers are distributed, based on the next preferences expressed on them, among the remaining candidates in the election. The process persists until one candidate emerges with an overall majority. The idea underlying this system is that voters are able to rank-order the candidates on the ballot paper, having in this way a say in the election of all successful candidates. For instance, if one of the voters' preferred candidates does not reach enough votes to be elected, an opportunity is still available for the voter to shape the outcome of the other candidates in the race.

Finally, in the last chapter of the thesis, the three majoritarian systems have been related to the respective three major countries adopting them in order to provide a more practical overview on how they work in establishing the elected candidates or parties.
The United Kingdom is conceived as the champion of the plurality system, even though several other electoral systems have been adopted also for other positions or bodies in the country, a result that was achieved because of the process of decentralization, the so-called "devolution", in the late 1990s. In the UK the SMP system can lead to territorial disparities in the two main parties' vote distribution, other than to the under-representation of non-geographically concentrated third and minor parties and the over-representation of the two leading ones. However, part of the defence of the SMP's operation in Britain has been that, even if someone discounts the inflated seats shares of the two leading parties, and the punishment of the third one, each of the "big two" should have equal chances of forming a government. In a sense, this allows voters to choose between two alternative governing teams and to hold them accountable, though the research has highlighted a matter that has been mostly overlooked: the SMP's operation has produced periods in which the "electoral system" seemed to be particularly biased against one or the other of the major parties.
With respect to France, the promoter of the two-round system, it stands out for the high stability provided by such system. Elections are always held on Sunday in each constituency, and, in basic terms, a candidate is elected by winning either a majority of votes in the first ballot or, if he or she fails it, a plurality of votes at the second ballot, hence majority-plurality. During the election day, the candidates' names are printed on different pieces of paper, and voters only have to vote by dropping the name of their preferred candidate into the ballot box. At the first round, a candidate is elected if he or she wins more than 50 percent of the valid votes cast and the votes cast's number for that candidate amounts to more than 25 percent of the registered electorate. In the constituencies

where there has not been the election of a candidate at the first ballot, there is a second ballot one week later. At the second ballot, the candidates who are allowed to stand are only those who already stood at the first one, and only those candidates who obtained, at the first ballot, the votes of more than 12.5 percent of the registered electorate can proceed to the second.
Ultimately, Australia is regarded as the major country adopting the alternative vote, even though it is also the home of another form of preferential electoral system: the single transferable vote. The former is used for the elections of the House of Representative, while STV for Senate elections.
The idea behind the adoption of preferential systems such as AV is that voters can rank-order the candidates on the ballot paper, having in this way relevance in the election of successful candidates. This means that if a voter's preferred candidate does not reach sufficient votes to be elected, the voter may still have the possibility to determine the other candidates' fate in the race
Voters have the possibility to cast a ballot outside the constituency in which they are registered, and there are few restrictions regarding acquiring absentee or postal ballot. Moreover, another compulsion's aspect is that a voter must complete all the preferences on the ballot paper for his vote to be counted as valid (or "formal").

Generally speaking, three main factors are usually associated with majoritarian electoral systems: simplicity, accountability, and government stability. Indeed, what emerged from the analysis of the three majoritarian systems is that they involve very simple election mechanisms, from the highest number of votes for a candidate or party in the plurality system, to a second round in case no competitor wins more than the 50 percent of votes in the two-round system, or to the ranking of competitors based on voters' preferences in the alternative vote. Moreover, simplicity can be identified also in their levels of costs, even if this is mostly referred to the plurality system and the alternative vote which do not need a second round (as happens instead in the two-round system). Hence, the costs are avoided both for election organizers and for candidates and parties.
Instead, the second factor, the accountability of electoral systems, is an essential democratic feature which compels them to act on the electors' willingness of rewarding or sanctioning the incumbent government. Accountability is stronger in majoritarian systems rather than in proportional systems, as majoritarian ones produce a strong bipolarity, which refers to a political system which leads to the opposition of two distinct blocs, two coalitions or groupings of parties.
Concerning the third factor, which is government stability, majoritarian electoral systems, and in particular the plurality system, provide a great governmental stability by producing two-party system, a political system in which the electorate gives most of the votes to two major political parties. In this way, one party or the other can win a majority in the legislature and provide a stability in the government. However, this implies giving up to some minority representation and favour large parties, as we have already seen during the plurality system's analysis.
The detailed analysis of the three countries examined in this thesis does not show any threat to these positive features, at the contrary, it underlines their effectiveness and confirms that they are visible characteristics of majoritarian electoral systems.
In all cases, we can say that these systems present a high degree of resilience, despite several criticisms on some types of consequences they have been blamed for causing.

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Riassunto in italiano.

Introduzione.

In tutto il mondo, le elezioni costituiscono uno degli elementi centrali dello studio delle scienze politiche, poiché sono un punto cruciale per i politici, i media, ed i cittadini. I sistemi elettorali portano ad importanti risultati politici, tra cui scelte politiche, sistemi di partito e diversità dei funzionari pubblici. La ricerca sui sistemi elettorali è stata concepita per decenni come miglior esempio di accumulo di conoscenza nelle scienze politiche (Ricker 1982). Tuttavia, il campo di indagine non è statico, a causa dello sviluppo di nuove regole elettorali, dell'istituzione di nuovi sistemi democratici e della scoperta di nuove regolarità teoriche ed empiriche che hanno caratterizzano il campo nel corso di decenni.
Lo scopo di questo elaborato è di focalizzare l'attenzione su una delle categorie più comuni e diffuse di sistemi elettorali, quelli maggioritari, in cui candidati e partiti vincono se ottengono più voti degli altri partecipanti alla competizione, e di analizzarli nel dettaglio per capire come funzionano nei paesi democratici.
La tesi si sviluppa in tre capitoli. Nel primo, viene presentata una panoramica di tutti i sistemi elettorali trattando la loro origine, il concetto di rappresentanza, le loro dimensioni principali e il rapporto tra elezioni e democrazia. Nel secondo, l'attenzione sarà focalizzata sul tema centrale dello studio, quindi sulla discussione dei sistemi maggioritari nella quale sono presentate le sue tre maggiori varianti (sistema di pluralità, sistema a due turni e voto alternativo). Infine, nel terzo ed ultimo capitolo vedremo i tre sistemi maggioritari in azione, nel senso che verranno approfonditi in relazione a tre paesi democratici che hanno deciso di adottarli da ormai molti anni: l'Inghilterra per il sistema di pluralità, la Francia per il sistema a due turni, e l'Australia per il voto alternativo. Seguirà poi una breve conclusione nella quale verrà ripreso lo scopo della tesi e verranno aggiunte delle considerazioni finali sull'argomento.

Capitolo 1 – Una Panoramica Dettagliata sui Sistemi Maggioritari.

La definizione più diffusa, usata per fornire una spiegazione al concetto di sistema elettorale, è *l'insieme di leggi che regolano la trasformazione delle preferenze in voti e dei voti in seggi*.
I sistemi elettorali svolgono un ruolo fondamentale nel collegare le preferenze dei cittadini alle scelte politiche fatte dai governi, sono scelti dagli attori politici e hanno conseguenze politiche per tali attori.

La classificazione più semplice, ed anche la più comune, dei sistemi elettorali è quella riguardante i sistemi maggioritari e proporzionali. I due si basano su idee diverse di rappresentanza (McLean 1991; Sartori 1994). In particolare, la classica differenza è tra i sistemi di pluralità (definiti anche sistemi uninominali) da un lato e i sistemi proporzionali dall'altro.
Le teorie di rappresentanza fanno una distinzione tra composizione del governo e decisioni di governo, nella quale quest'ultima viene presa in considerazione dai sostenitori dei sistemi uninominali, e l'analisi si basa sul rapporto che esiste tra i vari rappresentanti dei cittadini e dei loro elettori. Qui, un rappresentante può agire sia come un agente che come un fiduciario del collegio

elettorale, usando il proprio tipo di giudizio per governare e determinare quali interessi perseguire in parlamento (McLean 1991; Sartori 1994).
Per quanto riguarda la rappresentanza proporzionale, i suoi sostenitori tendono a sovrapporre la composizione del governo alle decisioni del governo perché, attraverso le cosiddette teorie della rappresentanza dello "specchio" e del "microcosmo", il governo dovrebbe apparire come una miniatura della società che intende rappresentare. In sintesi, si può affermare che con i sistemi maggioritari prevale lo scopo di governare, mentre con quelli proporzionali lo scopo di rappresentare.

Negli ultimi anni sono stati raggiunti enormi sviluppi per quanto riguarda la letteratura sulle origini e la trasformazione dei sistemi elettorali. Per comprendere i sistemi elettorali, è fondamentale segnare l'evoluzione di due principi fondamentali: il principio di maggioranza e il principio di proporzionalità.
Il principio di maggioranza è stato originariamente considerato attraverso collegi plurinominali nelle forme dei voti cumulativi, bloccati e limitati, nonché del voto unico non trasferibile che esiste ancora oggi in alcuni Paesi. La regola della maggioranza, in cui i seggi sono assegnati solo ai candidati che raggiungono la maggioranza assoluta, è stata applicata sia in Francia che in Australia nello stesso periodo alla fine del XIX secolo come variante alla regola della pluralità.
Invece, il principio di proporzionalità è stato implementato nel mondo contemporaneo come mezzo di distribuzione dei seggi tra gli stati degli USA. Questo principio è stato accolto come un sistema di rappresentanza più equo soprattutto nei paesi che presentano un elevato livello di eterogeneità sociale, culturale e linguistica (Baldini e Pappalardo 2008).
Tuttavia, poiché questa distinzione tra sistemi maggioritari e proporzionali non soddisfa i criteri fondamentali di esaustività (secondo la quale ogni sistema conosciuto dovrebbe poter essere collocato all'interno di una famiglia), ed esclusività (in cui ogni sistema dovrebbe appartenere ad una sola famiglia), è opportuno presentare le loro dimensioni principali per avere un'idea più dettagliata su come i sistemi elettorali si differenziano tra di loro.

La prima dimensione, la grandezza del distretto, costituisce il numero di seggi per collegio. Misurare la grandezza media dei distretti è piuttosto semplice nei paesi in cui tutti i collegi elettorali hanno la stessa dimensione. Nel caso dei collegi uninominali, la variabile fondamentale che viene vista come fattore determinante nell'effetto complessivo del sistema elettorale è la suddivisione del territorio. Questo problema si è sviluppato a causa della necessità di eliminare le differenze in termini di "costo di seggi", quindi del numero di elettori rappresentati dall'eletto.
Per quanto riguarda i distretti plurinominali, essi sono molto diversi. Ogni distretto assegna più di un solo seggio, per cui la suddivisione del territorio è facilitata dalla preesistenza di suddivisioni amministrative. Pertanto, la nomina è molto importante per i suoi effetti sul sistema elettorale sia nel sistema maggioritario che in quello proporzionale.
Tuttavia, molti paesi oggi sperimentano una sorta di cattiva ripartizione, nel senso che hanno distretti con rapporti significativamente diseguali tra elettori e rappresentanti. Spagna, Canada e Francia sono solo alcuni dei 30 Stati con il più alto tasso di mal ripartizione (Samuels e Snyder 2001), anche se questa pratica è più diffusa nei paesi non democratici.

La seconda dimensione di variazione nei sistemi elettorali è rappresentata dal numero di voti espressi. Il principio del "una persona un voto" è il segno distintivo di un sistema democratico che

attribuisce a ciascun elettore un voto unico, personale e segreto. Ciò nonostante, può incontrare alcune variazioni. Questo accade perché dare alle persone più di un voto non viola i principi democratici se fornisce comunque a tutti lo stesso numero di voti. Pertanto, in alcuni casi e in alcuni paesi, quando gli elettori si recano al seggio elettorale il giorno delle elezioni, ricevono una scheda elettorale che richiede loro di esprimere un voto per un candidato che rappresenti il proprio collegio elettorale locale, ed un altro per un partito nel concorso per i seggi assegnati a livello nazionale. Questa di solito è un'opzione che caratterizza la maggior parte dei sistemi misti, mentre per lo più nei sistemi maggioritari di solito non c'è scelta di candidato all'interno dei partiti.

Per quanto riguarda la terza dimensione, la struttura del voto, la distinzione tra schede in base alle quali l'elettore deve esprimere il suo voto per uno e un solo partito, che viene definito "categoriale" o "nominale", e quelle invece in base alle quali l'elettore può ordinare i partiti o i candidati, che viene definito "ordinale", è stata introdotta per la prima volta da Douglas Rae (1971). Le strutture del voto consentono all'elettore di "dividere" il suo voto tra due o più partiti ma non di fare alcun ordine di graduatoria, quindi la definizione di Rae lascia una certa confusione su come dovremmo classificarli.
La prima categoria copre chiaramente le schede elettorali nella maggior parte dei paesi. Qui l'elettore esprime sostegno per l'unico candidato di un partito a pluralità uninominale, per una lista di partito, o anche per più candidati di una lista di partito.
Invece, la categoria "ordinale" di Rae non copre tutti i sistemi in cui la struttura del voto non è categorica. Rae descrive il sistema tedesco a due voti come categorico, anche se gli elettori hanno la possibilità di esprimere i loro due voti per partiti diversi e, quindi, di dividere il loro voto. Per questo dovrebbe essere logico affermare che si tratta in modo analogo di quei sistemi di pubbliche relazioni in base ai quali agli elettori viene fornito il cosiddetto "panachage", attraverso il quale vengono attribuiti un numero di voti di preferenza che possono essere distribuiti tra i candidati su più dell'elenco di una delle parti.

Capire come è strutturato il voto può aiutare a comprendere se gli elettori hanno qualche potere di scelta tra i candidati del loro partito, fattore che costituisce la quarta dimensione dei sistemi elettorali. Questo ovviamente non è disponibile nei sistemi elettorali uninominali, quando in primo luogo i partiti non offrono più di un candidato.
Il sistema dell'elenco appartenente alla rappresentanza proporzionale differisce su questo. I cosiddetti sistemi di lista preferenziale consentono all'elettore di indicare una preferenza per un candidato, o più candidati in alcuni casi, nella lista del proprio partito, e questi voti di preferenza svolgono un ruolo decisivo nel determinare quali candidati occupano i seggi che il partito riceve. Se invece facciamo riferimento ai sistemi di liste della rappresentanza proporzionale vedremo che sono tutte "liste chiuse" dove l'elettore può scegliere tra i partiti ma non tra i candidati all'interno dei partiti, e l'ordine dei nomi dei candidati che è deciso dal partito determina chi di loro riceve i seggi. Solitamente viene evidenziato che le liste aperte consentono ai candidati maggiori possibilità di inseguire voti "personali" mentre, al contrario, le liste chiuse massimizzano il controllo del partito sui candidati. In definitiva, la scelta è spesso legata alla specificità di una singola nazione, come mostrano alcuni casi europei (tra cui quello italiano, tra gli altri).

In molti paesi esiste una sola assegnazione dei seggi, nel senso che ogni elettore esprime un voto in un collegio. In conformità con le regole, i seggi in quei collegi vengono assegnati a partiti e

candidati, ed il totale nazionale dei seggi di ciascun partito è semplicemente considerato come la somma in ciascun collegio dei seggi che ha vinto.
Nel caso di un solo livello, i due poli possono essere sia un sistema di collegi uninominali che ottiene buoni risultati sulla dimensione della rappresentanza locale ma scarso sulla proporzionalità, sia un sistema di rappresentanza proporzionale che copre l'intero paese con solo un collegio elettorale e che non fornisce una rappresentanza diretta per le località ma ottima proporzionalità. Una situazione diversa si verifica nei sistemi proporzionali a membri misti, dove circa il 60 percento dei parlamentari è eletto da collegi uninominali, mentre il resto dei parlamentari è nominato da liste di partito a livello nazionale.

La proporzionalità è generalmente considerata un elemento positivo (Herron, Pekkanen e Shugart 2018), poiché pochi sistemi elettorali scarseggiano sulla loro. Tuttavia, la maggior parte possiede alcuni modi per limitarla, e ciò costituisce l'ultima dimensione dei sistemi elettorali.
L'adozione di una soglia è la barriera d'ingresso più esplicita. Molti sistemi di pubbliche relazioni utilizzano soglie che non consentono ai partiti più piccoli di ottenere la loro "equa" quota di seggi. In una pluralità di paesi post-comunisti (Repubblica Ceca, Lettonia, Polonia, Slovacchia), i partiti ricevono seggi se ottengono il 5 percento dei voti nazionali (Rose e Munro 2003). Questa discriminazione nei confronti dei piccoli partiti e dei loro sostenitori è giustificata per prevenire un'eccessiva frammentazione e, in questo modo, facilitare la formazione di governi stabili.
Invece, i sistemi di non rappresentanza proporzionale generalmente non hanno regole che specificano una soglia perché non ne hanno bisogno. In pratica, come rileva anche la letteratura, esiste sempre una "soglia effettiva" che rende impossibile l'assegnazione di un seggio a partiti al di sotto di una certa dimensione. Ciò è determinato principalmente dall'ampiezza del distretto e in parte dalla formula di assegnazione dei seggi, la quale, secondo Lijphart (1997) e Taagepera (1998), corrisponde a (75/(M+1)), dove M si riferisce alla magnitudo del distretto.

Come abbiamo visto, le elezioni sono considerate l'istituto distintivo della democrazia, che traduce le preferenze dei singoli elettori in scelte collettive che si può dire che le riflettano. Le teorie classiche vedono la scelta democratica come un processo in due fasi, in cui gli elettori scelgono legislature e governi che poi, automaticamente, prendono decisioni per loro.
Il ruolo svolto dalle elezioni in democrazia è quello di specificare non solo la preferenza mediana (maggioranza) della popolazione, ma anche la struttura politica generale o lo spazio in cui è inserita. Quindi, politici e partiti operano all'interno di questa struttura rilevata, che un sistema elettorale correttamente funzionante riprodurrà in termini di quote di voto di partito nella legislatura. Questi daranno al partito mediano un ruolo enorme sulla politica, poiché i risultati delle elezioni rafforzano la posizione mediana e informano i politici di cosa si tratta, eliminando così la possibilità di errori di calcolo strategici che incasinano i risultati basati sulla mediana.
L'elezione identifica l'elettore mediano e il suo partito preferito, e questo partito tende ad essere al mediano sulla maggior parte delle questioni separate in cui si articola il dibattito nel periodo inter-elettorale dalla specializzazione politica dei ministri e divisione complementare del lavoro legislativo. Ciò contribuisce all'influenza generale esercitata dai processi legislative sulle politiche pubbliche, che di conseguenza le consente di avvicinarle alle preferenze mediane dei suoi sostenitori e, quindi, a quelle della maggioranza popolare.

Capitolo 2 - I Sistemi Elettorali Maggioritari.

Un sistema elettorale maggioritario viene generalmente definito come un sistema in cui i candidati o i partiti che ricevono il maggior numero di voti vincono le elezioni (Bormann e Golder 2013). Sebbene possa accadere che alcuni sistemi maggioritari richiedano al partito o al candidato vincitore di raggiungere la maggioranza assoluta dei voti, ovvero almeno il 50.1 percento, altri richiedono solo che ottenga più voti di chiunque altro (sistema di pluralità o a maggioranza relativa).
Come già presentato in precedenza, esistono molte varianti di sistemi maggioritari, ma i tre tipi principali adottati oggi dai paesi analizzati in questa tesi sono: il sistema di pluralità, noto anche attraverso il termine inglese "first-past-the-post" (FPTP), il sistema a due turni, ed il voto alternativo.

Il sistema di pluralità è considerato il tipo più semplice dei sistemi elettorali, in cui, per assegnare i seggi, il territorio è frammentato in molti collegi uninominali il cui numero è pari a quello dei seggi da assegnare. All'interno di ogni distretto si svolgono competizioni elettorali tra i singoli candidati, e alla fine il vincitore prende tutto nonostante quanti voti in più rispetto agli altri competitori ha ottenuto. Ciò significa raggiungere una pluralità, non necessariamente la maggioranza dei voti.

Il sistema di base del voto di pluralità nelle elezioni generali parlamentari è ampiamente noto: i paesi sono divisi in collegi territoriali uninominali, in cui gli elettori esprimono un solo voto (contrassegnato da una X) per un candidato. A questo punto torna in carica il candidato con il maggior numero di voti in ogni seggio e, a sua volta, il partito con la maggioranza assoluta dei seggi forma il governo.
I due principali vantaggi del sistema di pluralità sono la sua economicità, ma soprattutto la sua semplicità. In effetti, è semplice da capire per gli elettori, poiché la logica di base è che vince il candidato con la maggior parte dei voti. Inoltre, è anche semplice votare perché non è necessaria una complicata graduatoria delle preferenze.
Tuttavia, così come si possono individuare alcuni vantaggi per questo sistema, si possono anche formulare alcune critiche, ad esempio sulla sua iniquità e non rappresentatività. Gli indici di sproporzione sono molto alti, in quanto nei paesi che adottano il sistema di pluralità ci sono situazioni in cui il partito che ha ottenuto più voti non ottiene più seggi. Inoltre, alcune analisi e studi hanno evidenziato una relazione tra pluralità e bassa affluenza (vedi Blais e Aarts 2006). Più in generale, i sistemi maggioritari sono associati ad un'affluenza media inferiore di 5 punti (Ministero della Giustizia del Regno Unito 2008), mentre altri hanno indicato la sotto-rappresentanza delle donne e delle minoranze in questo sistema (Norris 2004; Norris 2006).

Nei paesi che adottano la pluralità uninominale, i grandi partiti sono favoriti da tale sistema, mentre quelli piccoli, soprattutto quelli il cui sostegno è disperso nei territori, sono severamente penalizzati. La letteratura sulla nazionalizzazione dei partiti afferma che molto spesso i partiti più piccoli fanno affidamento solo sul sostegno concentrato di una piccola regione, coincidendo in molti casi con una concentrazione della loro circoscrizione sociale (Riker 1982). I sistemi di pluralità di voto hanno un potente effetto di concentrazione sui sistemi di partito, ma da un lato, la rappresentanza è concentrata dalla traduzione dei voti in seggi di grandi partiti. Dall'altro lato, possono portare a

effetti anticipatori che consistono in una decisione presa dagli elettori e dalle élites politiche di optare per i grandi partiti per assicurarsi la rappresentanza.
Per quanto riguarda il primo aspetto, la traduzione da voto a seggio, ulteriori sviluppi della normativa dimostrano che i tassi di traduzione sono determinati dalla distribuzione territoriale dei voti e dal numero delle circoscrizioni elettorali, e che variano da paese a paese e da partito a partito (Gudgin e Taylor 1979; Sartori 1986; Bochsler 2010b; Taagepera 2002; Lublin 2014). Tuttavia, c'è una seconda implicazione del voto di pluralità, in quanto influenza anche il comportamento degli attori politici e la scelta dei candidati. Se in una mossa anticipatrice nei concorsi distrettuali, dove i piccoli partiti si aspettano di essere deboli, decidono di non presentare alcun candidato, allora la misura in cui i piccoli partiti sono svantaggiati dal voto di pluralità è sottovalutata dagli studi sulla traduzione dei seggi di voto sotto il voto di maggioranza.

La principale alternativa all'elezione dei rappresentanti attraverso la pluralità è l'elezione a maggioranza, ovvero tramite una maggioranza totale che si riferisce al 50 percento + 1 dei voti validi espressi. Nel caso in cui nessun candidato raggiunga questo risultato di voti, tra i due candidati in testa si svolge un ballottaggio che è sostanzialmente un secondo turno di votazioni.
Si può dunque individuare una seconda classe di sistemi elettorali maggioritari, il sistema a due turni, definito come quello che richiede una soglia relativamente alta di successo al primo turno nei collegi uninominali, e solo se tale soglia non viene raggiunta necessitano di un secondo turno.
Si ritiene che i sistemi a due turni abbiano vantaggi specifici quando vengono utilizzati per eleggere le assemblee. Innanzitutto, una delle loro caratteristiche è quella di consentire ad un'ampia gamma di partiti di ottenere rappresentanza pur mantenendo il legame tra elettore e rappresentante. Il secondo vantaggio, invece, consiste nella loro tendenza a incoraggiare il compromesso da parte degli elettori la cui scelta preferita viene eliminata al primo turno, e da parte dei partiti che possono formare alleanze al secondo turno per evitare che un nemico comune sia eletto (Bullock e Johnson 1992; Duverger 1984; Fisichella 1984; Norris 1997).
Tuttavia, il sistema a due turni presenta anche diversi svantaggi nel contesto della transizione democratica. Il primo di questi è strettamente connesso all'effetto diretto della diminuzione dell'incertezza favorita dal divario fra i turni, mentre il secondo alle strategie che incoraggia partiti ed elettori a adottare nel secondo turno. Le elezioni democratiche sono un rischio calcolato basato sull'incertezza (Birsch 2003), il che significa che se tutti gli attori sapessero con certezza il risultato, allora sarebbe nell'interesse dei perdenti optare per metodi non elettorali per raggiungere i propri fini. Questo potrebbe essere causato dal velo di ignoranza che circonda l'area delle elezioni, il quale spinge gli attori ad accettare il metodo relativamente equo dell'elezione popolare come mezzo di distribuzione del potere. Il sistema a due turni rimuove questo elemento di incertezza rivelando la distribuzione della forza elettorale prima che venga deciso l'esito finale.

L'ultimo punto del paragrafo precedente, la capacità del sistema a due turni di rimuovere l'elemento di incertezza, ha almeno due conseguenze fondamentali. In primo luogo, incoraggia le defezioni. Se la democratizzazione implica che tutti i principali partiti si mettano in gioco elettorale (DiPalma 1990; Przeworski 1991), c'è bisogno di istituzioni che incoraggino l'impegno alla partecipazione incondizionata di tutti i principali attori. Quello che succede con i sistemi a due turni è che forniscono un'opzione di uscita dopo il primo turno, promuovendo così un atteggiamento di attesa da parte di alcuni attori. Se i risultati del primo round indicano che è probabile che una parte ottenga

prestazioni peggiori di quanto inizialmente previsto, questa ha interesse a chiamare fallo rivendicando frode o brogli.
In secondo luogo, gli elettori sono chiamati a decidere la scelta del voto nel turno definitivo, e non è poi così sbagliato credere che gli elettori nelle giovani democrazie possano non sempre seguire le raccomandazioni dei loro candidati favoriti una volta che questi ultimi sono stati eliminati al primo turno del voto. Tale comportamento nelle democrazie consolidate si basa sull'esistenza di una forte identificazione di partito e di una rigida disciplina di partito, la cui presenza non è così evidente nelle democrazie emergenti. L'esperienza francese costituisce una prova che tali alleanze non sono sempre state realizzabili nella pratica, in quanto i sostenitori di un partito nell'elettorato non sono infatti disposti a seguire, in ogni occasione, l'esempio dei "loro" candidati nelle scelte di voto del secondo turno (Bartolini 1984; Converse e Pierce 1986; Cole e Campbell 1989, Criddle 1975). In realtà, è più probabile che il sistema a due turni incoraggi l'astensione o il voto negativo al secondo turno.

Infine, l'ultimo sistema maggioritario qui analizzato è il voto alternativo, in cui agli elettori viene chiesto di classificare i candidati, che richiedono almeno il 50 percento dei voti per essere eletti. Qualora nessun candidato raggiunga la maggioranza assoluta in base al conteggio delle prime preferenze sulle schede, viene escluso quello con il minor numero di voti e tali schede sono distribuite in base alle successive preferenze su di esse espresse tra i restanti candidati all'elezione. Il processo dura fino a quando non emerge un candidato con la maggioranza assoluta.

Molti vantaggi del voto alternativo sono gli stessi del sistema maggioritario a due turni. Infatti, esso assicura che il vincitore sia sostenuto dalla maggioranza degli elettori, oltre a facilitare la competizione multipartitica ed escludere l'effetto spoiler. Inoltre, il voto alternativo fornisce alcuni premi ai candidati che sono in grado di vincere la seconda o la terza preferenza degli elettori, nonostante i loro sostenitori principali o la base demografica. Pertanto, in termini di prime preferenze, consente ad un secondo classificato di vincere le elezioni una volta conteggiate le preferenze successive. Tuttavia, in tale sistema non c'è bisogno di un secondo turno di votazione poiché registra tutte le preferenze contemporaneamente, il che significa che i costi e tutte le complessità del sistema a due turni sono evitati sia per gli organizzatori delle elezioni che per i partiti e candidati.
Il voto alternativo richiede che gli elettori, piuttosto che semplicemente mettere una croce o lasciare un segno, scrivano dei numeri sulla scheda elettorale, così come richiede agli elettori di esprimere preferenze tra diversi candidati comprese le preferenze relative tra i candidati minori che probabilmente non sono ben noti. Inoltre, un'altra differenza con il sistema a due turni è che l'assenza di un secondo turno di votazione nel sistema di voto alternativo significa che non c'è l'opportunità di costruire coalizioni, di riallineamento o di "rimpianto dell'acquirente" dopo il primo ed unico voto.

La maggior parte dei commentatori sostiene che il voto alternativo non fornisca un risultato più proporzionale rispetto al sistema di pluralità uninominale.
Un test molto valido per misurare l'impatto del voto alternativo sulla proporzionalità consiste nell'esaminare il passaggio da pluralità uninominale a voto alternativo in tre specifiche province canadesi. La tabella 2.1 riporta i valori dell'indice Loosemore-Hanby di sproporzionalità (D) per ogni periodo nella storia elettorale di ciascuna provincia, come calcolato da Jensen (2004).

Tabella 2.1 Sproporzionalità media sotto pluralità uninominale e voto alternativo in tre province canadesi, 1924-1953

Provincia	Manitoba	Alberta	Columbia Britannica
Pluralità uninominale (Pre – voto alternativo)	0.163 (.080)	0.267 (.064)	0.235 (.092)
Voto alternativo	0.224 (.082)	0.351 (.106)	0.217 (.010)
Pluralità uninominale	0.146 (.047)	0.391 (.017)	0.226 (.058)
Media di tutte le elezioni	0.182 (.079)	0.337 (.092)	0.231 (.078)

Nota: le deviazioni standard sono in parentesi. Fonte: Harold J. Jansen 2004, 651-652.

Al suo livello aggregato, in Manitoba, il voto alternativo sembra effettivamente aver aumentato la sproporzionalità, mentre è associata ad una sproporzionalità leggermente inferiore in Columbia Britannica. Per quanto riguarda invece la provincia di Alberta, il livello di sproporzione è aumentato notevolmente con l'adozione del voto alternativo, ma questo aumento costituisce una tendenza storica a più lungo termine, poiché la sproporzione ha continuato a crescere anche dopo l'abolizione del voto alternativo.

Capitolo 3 – Sistemi Maggioritari in Azione: i casi del Regno Unito, Francia, e Australia.

In questo capitolo finale, la questione centrale è contestualizzare le tre principali varianti di sistemi maggioritari analizzate precedentemente, poiché ognuna di esse è ben nota per essere utilizzata in un determinato paese in tempo di elezioni e per essere meglio rappresentate lì. Quindi, analizzeremo il caso del Regno Unito per il sistema di pluralità, quello della Francia per il sistema a due turni, e l'Australiano per il voto alternativo.

Il modello tipico in Inghilterra prima del 1885 era quello di eleggere due membri per ogni collegio elettorale, anche se in alcuni vi erano anche magnitudini distrettuali di tre o quattro.
Le leggi elettorali furono molto dibattute durante il periodo degli Atti di Riforma dal 1832 al 1918. Per una serie di ragioni, i leader dei maggiori partiti (Liberali, Laburisti e Conservatori) non consideravano le pubbliche relazioni un sistema interessante, e il governo di coalizione durante il periodo di guerra composto da questi tre partiti ha accettato di sviluppare una "Conferenza degli oratori". Tuttavia, la Camera dei Comuni respinse il voto singolo trasferibile proposto dalla Conferenza ed il sistema di pluralità fu istituito alla fine, poiché il Partito Conservatore Britannico credeva fortemente che avrebbe potuto continuare a competere con successo contro i suoi rivali anche in regime di suffragio universale.

Il sistema elettorale a pluralità uninominale non è concepito, in alcun modo, come sistema proporzionale, poiché ad esempio nelle elezioni del 2005, c'erano 646 collegi elettorali separati, in cui gli elettori hanno espresso un solo voto attraverso una "X" per il nome di un candidato nel collegio unico in cui erano registrati. Alla fine, indipendentemente dalla percentuale di voti ricevuti, ha vinto il candidato con più voti.

Quanti seggi vengono vinti da un partito dipende in modo cruciale da dove si trovano i voti, e non solo da quanti di essi attira. Diversi risultati suggeriscono che i risultati elettorali del Regno Unito sono distorti, nel senso che la stessa quota di voti per ciascuno dei due partiti principali può essere tradotta in diversi totali dei seggi, e non solo nel senso tradizionale di essere sproporzionati rispetto a tutti i terzi e minori partiti.
In un sistema bipartitico che utilizza la pluralità uninominale, la principale fonte di pregiudizio elettorale è soprattutto la cattiva ripartizione. Ci sono due tipi principali di cattiva ripartizione nel Regno Unito. In primo luogo, attraverso la rappresentanza a Westminster della Scozia e del Galles, è stato incorporato un certo pregiudizio relativo alla "dimensione" e, quindi, in questi due paesi il seggio medio ha solo circa l'80 percento del numero di elettori che l'inglese medio elettorale ha. La seconda componente della dimensione del collegio elettorale deriva dal tipo imperfetto di distretto eseguito dalle Commissioni di confine e dall'"invecchiamento" del collegio elettorale tra le revisioni ("malpartizione strisciante", secondo Johnston et al.).

Dopo tre elezioni che non si sono concluse con una maggioranza stabile, le elezioni generali britanniche del 2019 hanno visto il ritorno al normale funzionamento della democrazia britannica con un partito, in questo caso i Conservatori, che ha ottenuto la netta maggioranza dei seggi.
I risultati delle elezioni generali sono stati uno shock, poiché i Conservatori avevano vinto una larga maggioranza in parlamento. In effetti, la maggior parte delle previsioni aveva drasticamente sottovalutato l'entità della vittoria dei Conservatori in termini di seggi, anche se i sondaggi delle elezioni finali erano stati precisi in termini di quote di voto.
Nella Tabella 3.1 sono riportati i risultati delle elezioni generali del 2019.
Si può vedere come i Conservatori hanno ottenuto il 43.6 percento dei voti (con un aumento di 1.3 punti) e 365 seggi (un aumento di 48), raggiungendo una maggioranza di 80 seggi alla Camera dei Comuni.

Tabella 3.1 Elezioni alla Camera dei Comuni del Regno Unito del 12 Dicembre 2019.

Partiti	Seggi	Seggi (%)	Voti	Voti (%)
Partito Conservatore	365	57.8	13,966,454	43.6
Partito Laburista	202	32.0	10,269,051	32.1
Liberal Democratici	11	1.7	3,696,419	11.6
Partito Nazionale Scozzese (a)	48	7.6	1,242,380	3.9
Partito Verde di Inghilterra e Galles	1	0.2	865,715	2.7

Note: (a) Solo seggi contestati in Scozia. Fonte: Christopher Prosser 2021, 457.
(b) Solo seggi contestati in Irlanda del Nord.
(c) Solo seggi contestati in Galles.
(d) Include il Presidente della Camera dei Comuni
Invece, i Laburisti hanno ricevuto il 32.1 percento dei voti, 7.9 punti in meno rispetto alla loro quota del 2017, e 202 seggi, 60 in meno rispetto al 2017. I Liberal Democratici sono aumentati di 4.2 punti all'11.6 percento della loro quota di voti, ma hanno vinto solo 11 seggi, mentre il Partito Verde ha ottenuto il 2.7 percento dei voti, salendo di 1.1 punti dal 2017.

Per quanto riguarda il caso francese, le origini del sistema elettorale per l'Assemblea nazionale risalgono alla fondazione della Quinta Repubblica nel 1958, dove durante la Terza Repubblica era stato adottato il ballottaggio a due turni.

Tuttavia, durante la Quarta Repubblica, fu utilizzato un sistema di rappresentazione proporzionale, ma presto crollò. Bisognava dunque scegliere tra un sistema basato sul collegio elettorale uninominale e un sistema basato sulla maggioranza dipartimentale. A quel punto, il sistema a due turni è stato approvato con il decreto del 13 ottobre 1958, e dal 1988 l'attuale sistema funziona senza interruzioni.

Le elezioni dell'Assemblea Nazionale si tengono sempre la domenica in ogni circoscrizione e si svolgono con un sistema di maggioranza-pluralità a due scrutini, come viene definito (Elgie 1997). In linea di massima, un candidato viene eletto ottenendo o la maggioranza di voti al primo scrutinio o, in mancanza, la pluralità dei voti al secondo scrutinio, quindi maggioranza-pluralità. Durante il giorno delle elezioni, i nomi dei candidati vengono stampati su diversi pezzi di carta e gli elettori devono votare solo inserendo il nome del loro candidato preferito nell'urna. Al primo turno, un candidato viene eletto se vince più del 50 percento dei voti validi espressi e il numero di voti espressi per quel candidato è superiore al 25 percento dell'elettorato registrato.
Nelle circoscrizioni dove non c'è stata l'elezione di un candidato al primo scrutinio, c'è un secondo scrutinio una settimana dopo. Al secondo scrutinio, sono ammessi alla candidatura solo quelli che si erano già presentati al primo scrutinio, e solo i candidati che in questo hanno ottenuto oltre il 12.5 percento di voti dell'elettorato registrato.
I meccanismi del sistema elettorale presidenziale sono simili a quelli utilizzati per le elezioni dell'Assemblea Nazionale, ma differisce allo stesso tempo in quanto il primo è un sistema di ballottaggio chiuso, dove al secondo scrutinio sono ammessi solo i due candidati più votati durante il primo scrutinio.

Nel 2017, i due turni delle elezioni presidenziali francesi si sono svolti rispettivamente il 23 aprile e il 7 maggio e, come di consueto, il candidato che ottiene oltre il 50 percento del voto popolare nazionale complessivo viene eletto presidente per un mandato di cinque anni.
Le Tabelle 3.4 e 3.6 forniscono i risultati sia del primo che del secondo turno di votazioni delle elezioni presidenziali francesi del 2017.
Il vincitore del primo turno delle elezioni presidenziali è stato Emmanuel Macron con il 24.01 percento dei voti. Dopo di lui, Marine Le Pen ha ottenuto, come candidata di estrema destra, il 21.3 percento dei voti, permettendo al Fronte Nazionale di arrivare al ballottaggio, mentre i successivi due candidati, Fillon e Mélenchon, sono stati squalificati dal ballottaggio finale.

Tabella 3.4 Le elezioni presidenziali francesi del 2017: risultati del primo turno.

Candidati	Voti	%
Emmanuel Macron	8,656,346	24.01
Marine Le Pen	7,678,491	21.30
François Fillon	7,212,995	20.01
Jean-Luc Mélenchon	7,059,951	19.58
Blank ballots	659,997	1.78
Abstention	10,578,455	22.23

Fonte: Anja Durovic 2019, 1493.

L'esito del ballottaggio finale è stato più chiaro del previsto in termini di risultati: Macron ha vinto con il 66.1 percento dei voti ed è diventato il presidente francese più giovane di sempre a 39 anni.

Questo lo rende anche il primo candidato a vincere senza essere eletto alla carica dall'inizio e senza il sostegno di partiti politici affermati.

Tabella 3.6 Le elezioni presidenziali francesi del 2017: risultati del secondo turno.

Candidati	Voti	%
Macron Emmanuel	20,743,128	66.10
Le Pen Marine	10,638,475	33.90

Fonte: Anja Durovic 2019, 1493.

Circa un mese dopo le elezioni presidenziali francesi, le legislative sono state condotte l'11 giugno per il primo round e il 18 giugno per il secondo.

Nel primo turno, LREM è risultato il vincitore con il 28.21 percento dei voti, mentre invece i Repubblicani hanno segnato un netto arretramento con il 15.77 percento dei voti. Il Partito Socialista non ha raggiunto un risultato brillante ed ha ottenuto solo il 7.44 percento, mentre il Fronte Nazionale ha ricevuto una percentuale un po' più alta, ovvero il 13.20 percento dei voti e, al contrario, il MoDem una percentuale molto scarsa, il 4.12 percento.

Table 3.8 Le elezioni legislative francesi del 2017: risultati del primo turno.

Partiti	Voti	%
La République en marche (LREM)	6,391,269	28.21
I Repubblicani (LR)	3,573,427	15.77
Fronte Nazionale (FN)	2,990,454	13.20
Partito Socialista (PS)	1,685,677	7.44
MoDem	932,227	4.12

Fonte: Anja Durovic 2019, 1496.

Nel secondo turno, si è confermato vincitore il partito LREM con il 43.06 percento dei voti e con 308 seggi che hanno assicurato la maggioranza assoluta fissata a 289 seggi per l'Assemblea Nazionale. Tuttavia, l'alleanza con il MoDem che ha ottenuto un numero di seggi senza precedenti (42), ha aiutato LREM a raggiungere il 49.12 percento dei voti al secondo turno delle elezioni legislative.

Tabella 3.10 Le elezioni legislative francesi del 2017: risultati del secondo turno.

Partiti	Seggi	Seggi (%)	Voti	Voti (%)
LREM	308	53.4	7,826,245	43.06
LR	112	19.4	4,040,203	22.23
FN	8	1.4	1,590,869	8.75
PS	29	5.0	1,032,842	5.68
MoDem	42	7.3	1,100,656	6.06

Fonte: Anja Durovic 2019, 1497.

Infine, nel caso australiano del voto alternativo, bisogna iniziare da quando il governo Barton ha proposto l'uso del voto singolo trasferibile per il Senato e del voto alternativo per la Camera dei Rappresentanti, ma dopo alcuni dibattiti concentrati principalmente sul voto singolo trasferibile piuttosto che sul voto alternativo, il sistema di pluralità uninominale è stato adottato per la Camera dei Rappresentanti e il voto di blocco multi-membro per il Senato. Tuttavia, questo sistema di voto preferenziale fallì e fu solo nell'ottobre 1918 che il Commonwealth Electoral Bill propose il voto alternativo per la Camera dei Rappresentanti, e questi fu concepito come risultato di un accordo tra i

partiti anti-laburisti per presentare un candidato in un'elezione suppletiva nella circoscrizione Flinders nel maggio 1918.

L'idea alla base dell'adozione di sistemi preferenziali come il voto alternativo è che gli elettori possono ordinare i candidati sulla scheda elettorale in modo da avere rilevanza nell'elezione dei candidati vincitori.
Come già chiarito nel capitolo precedente, il voto alternativo è un sistema elettorale maggioritario in cui a un candidato è richiesto almeno il 50 percento dei voti per essere eletto in collegi uninominali. Contando sulla scheda le prime preferenze, se nessun candidato raggiunge tale maggioranza complessiva, viene escluso il candidato con il minor numero di voti e le sue schede vengono distribuite tra i restanti candidati in base alle successive preferenze espresse sulle schede. Il processo continua fino a quando non emerge la maggioranza assoluta da un candidato.
Il voto alternativo è un sistema non proporzionale, come dimostra spesso la scarsa corrispondenza tra le proporzioni dei voti e le proporzioni dei seggi. Ciò che lo distingue dai sistemi elettorali di pluralità è l'aspettativa che il candidato raggiunga la maggioranza assoluta dei voti per essere eletto (Farrell 2001).

Le elezioni australiane del 2019 si sono svolte il 18 maggio ed i suoi risultati alla Camera dei Rappresentanti sono visibili nella Tabella 3.13, la quale mostra i numeri raggiunti dai vari partiti, e nella Tabella 3.15 che indica i risultati dei collegi elettorali in cui la sfida è solo tra i due principali partiti.

Tabella 3.13 Le elezioni australiane della Camera dei Rappresentanti del 18 maggio 2019.

Partiti	Voti	%	Swing	Seggi
Partito Nazionale/Liberale	5,906,875	41.44	-060	77
Partito Laburista Austr.	4,752,160	33.34	-1.39	68
Verdi Australiani	1,482,923	10.40	+0.17	1
Katter's Australian Party	69,736	0.49	-0.05	1
Alleanza di Centro	46,931	0.33	-1.52	1
Indipendenti	479,836	3.37	+0.56	3

Fonte: Adattato dall' "Australian Electoral Commission" (2019b).

Dato che ci sono 151 seggi, è chiaro che la Coalizione ha ottenuto la maggioranza a pieno titolo. I Laburisti, invece, hanno vinto solo il 33.34 percento dei voti primari (prima preferenza) con uno swing del -1.39 percento contro. Sul voto di preferenza a due, quindi dopo la distribuzione delle preferenze, il Partito Nazionale/Liberale ha vinto con il 51.3 percento, con un aumento dell'1.17 percento, mentre i Laburisti hanno raggiunto il 48.47 percento, un calo dell'1.17 percento.

Tabella 3.15 Preferenza a due partiti nelle elezioni australiane del 2019.

Partiti	Voti	%	Swing	Seggi
Partito Nazionale/Liberale	7,344,813	51.53	+1.17	
Partito Laburista Austr.	6,908,580	48.47	-1.17	
Voti non validi/vuoti	835, 223	5.54	+0.49	-
Elettori registrati/affluenza	16,419,543	91.89	+0.89	-

Fonte: Adattato dall' "Australian Electoral Commission" (2019b).

Conclusione.

In questa tesi ho studiato come funzionano i sistemi maggioritari nei paesi democratici, in particolare nel Regno Unito, Francia e Australia, i quali sono esempi paradigmatici dei tre principali tipi di sistemi maggioritari, ovvero il sistema di pluralità, il sistema a due turni ed il voto alternativo.

Da questa discussione si può evincere che la sfera dei sistemi elettorali è piuttosto complessa, in quanto coinvolge diverse categorie (sistemi uninominali, sistemi misti, sistemi a liste chiuse, sistemi a liste preferenziali, sistemi a voti singoli trasferibili) che, a loro volta, comprendono tipologie specifiche come pluralità, voto alternativo e doppio turno per la prima categoria, sistemi misti proporzionali e maggioritari misti per la seconda, ed infine lista aperta e lista flessibile per il sistema di lista preferenziale.
Inoltre, sono molte le caratteristiche da considerare per ogni sistema elettorale, come per esempio i diversi meccanismi di elezione di candidati e partiti, gli effetti e le conseguenze che la loro adozione comporta, così come i problemi e le difficoltà relazionate ad alcuni loro aspetti.

Tuttavia, generalmente, i tre fattori principali che sono solitamente associati ai sistemi elettorali maggioritari sono la semplicità, la responsabilità e la stabilità del governo.
Dall'analisi dei tre sistemi maggioritari è infatti emerso che essi prevedono meccanismi elettorali molto semplici, dal maggior numero di voti per un candidato o partito nel sistema di pluralità, al secondo turno in caso nessun competitore vinca più del 50 percento dei voti nel sistema a due turni, o alla graduatoria dei candidati in base alle preferenze degli elettori nel voto alternativo. Invece, il secondo fattore, ovvero la responsabilità dei sistemi elettorali, rappresenta una caratteristica democratica essenziale che li costringe ad agire secondo la volontà degli elettori di premiare o sanzionare il governo in carica. La responsabilità è più forte nei sistemi maggioritari piuttosto che in quelli proporzionali poiché i primi producono una forte bipolarità, un concetto che si riferisce ad un sistema politico che porta all'opposizione di due blocchi distinti, due coalizioni o raggruppamenti di partiti.
Per quanto riguarda il terzo fattore, la stabilità del governo, i sistemi elettorali maggioritari e in particolare il sistema di pluralità, forniscono una grande stabilità di governo producendo un sistema bipartitico, ovvero un sistema politico in cui l'elettorato dà la maggior parte dei voti a due grandi partiti politici. In questo modo, un partito o l'altro può ottenere la maggioranza nella legislatura e fornire stabilità al governo. Tuttavia, questo implica rinunciare a qualche rappresentanza di minoranze e favorire i grandi partiti, come abbiamo già visto durante l'analisi del sistema di pluralità.
L'analisi dettagliata dei tre paesi esaminati in questo elaborato non mostra alcuna minaccia a queste caratteristiche positive, al contrario, ne sottolinea l'efficacia e conferma che esse sono caratteristiche visibili dei sistemi elettorali maggioritari.
In tutti i casi, possiamo dire che questi sistemi presentano un alto grado di resilienza, nonostante diverse critiche su alcuni tipi di conseguenze di cui sono stati accusati.

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