



WOMEN AND LEGISLATIVE REPRESENTATION

Electoral Systems, Political Parties, and Sex Quotas

Edited by
MANON TREMBLAY



Women and Legislative Representation

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In memoriam

Wilma Rule
(1925–2004)

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Foreword

This year (2007) marks the centenary of the election of the first women to parliament anywhere in the world—in Finland. Finland was exceptional: not only were women elected in its first election with universal suffrage, but they were elected in considerable numbers. When its magnificent parliament building was finally built in 1931, it even included a special conference room for its women parliamentarians. Elsewhere, women had to wait much longer to be elected in significant numbers as legislators, and global progress was by no means linear. In the early 1990s the fall of communist and other authoritarian regimes led to an initial drop in the average parliamentary representation of women across the world. The decade of the 1990s also, however, saw the successful politicization of the absence of women from parliamentary bodies. Such absence became a marker of “democratic deficit.” With the help of women mobilizing at home and abroad, the representation of women in parliament is now widely accepted as an indicator of the quality of democracy. It has become a proxy for equality of citizenship and equal opportunity and is seen as contributing to the legitimacy of parliamentary institutions and their capacity for inclusive deliberation.

Strategies to deal with this democratic deficit have included the adoption of electoral quotas for women in over 100 countries. A global focus on the representation of women in public decision making was reinforced by the Platform for Action adopted by the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995. According to the platform, women’s equal participation in political life plays a “pivotal role in the general process of the advancement of women,” and the UN Economic and Social Council subsequently endorsed the use of quotas to achieve it. The systematic monitoring by the Inter-Parliamentary Union of the level of representation achieved in national parliaments and, more recently, the monitoring of the adoption of quotas by the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA) have helped raise awareness of exactly how and where gains are being made. Numerous nongovernmental bodies, often at the regional or international level and supported by multi-lateral bodies such as IDEA, have come into being to support women into politics. Above all, the level of women’s movement mobilization, both

nationally and internationally, and both inside and outside political parties, helps provide momentum for the adoption of mechanisms such as quotas, while pressure from aid donors also plays its part.

As a result of all these efforts the number of women in national parliaments has been rising in most parts of the world. In the ten years since 1997, average representation has risen from 11 to 17 percent, while the number of countries where women form over 30 percent of national legislators has risen from 5 to 17. Nonetheless, progress is still patchy and has even stalled in some of the older democracies. This means the question of the most effective means to increase the representation of women in parliament is very much a live issue and one that requires the attention and knowledge of experts in electoral politics and electoral systems. The significance of the type of electoral system for the representation of women and minorities has long been recognized, and valuable work was done over many years by a pioneer in this field, the late Wilma Rule.

Manon Tremblay has now taken on the mantle of Wilma Rule to take forward the study of how electoral system design can advance the representation of women. She has brought together an outstanding team of experts to assist her with the task of analyzing the full gamut of electoral systems and their interactions with specific national contexts in producing particular gender outcomes. She has organized the project around three main families of electoral systems: first, plurality and majority systems; second, proportional representation (PR), including closed and open lists and single transferable vote; and third, mixed systems, combining constituency and party list votes, and varying in accordance with whether the party list element is designed to be fully or only partially compensatory.

It has long been a central tenet of the electoral system literature that PR systems are more woman friendly than single-member electorate systems. This is because of differing incentives they create for candidate selection. As Wilma Rule and others have argued, PR systems give political parties an incentive to produce a balanced ticket to appeal to all sections of the community and to appease all sections of the party, rather than seeking a lowest common denominator candidate as in single-member systems. PR also means representation for smaller and newer parties such as the Greens, in which women play a major role, although it may also mean representation for small parties of the religious or populist Right, which tend to be male led. But perhaps, most importantly, PR makes it easy to introduce quotas, because representation is not a zero-sum game in which a male candidate must be replaced by a female one.

Women and Legislative Representation: Electoral Systems, Political Parties, and Sex Quotas takes us well beyond the existing state of knowledge concerning the impact of electoral systems on the representation of women and,

indeed, challenges a number of existing beliefs concerning the significance of district magnitude or the supposed advantages of closed compared with open lists. An interesting aspect of open list systems that has been analyzed elsewhere by Anne Maria Holli is that they can give parliamentarians greater independence of political parties and hence facilitate cross-party cooperation by women parliamentarians. Such cooperation by women across Left-Right divisions in Finland in 1994 helped achieve a legally enforceable right to childcare for all children under three, despite the opposition of a right-wing Cabinet.

The spread of mixed-member systems has increasingly problematized easy assumptions about PR. Sarah Childs and her colleagues, writing about the United Kingdom, confirm that in the mixed electoral systems used for Scotland and Wales, equality measures in the constituency seats were more important than the list seats in increasing women's representation. In New Zealand, Jennifer Curtin finds that although the list seats have returned a higher percentage of women than the constituency seats, the move of a major party to the Right can swamp the incentives provided by PR.

This is not just a book for electoral system enthusiasts, but rather a contribution to knowledge that is of practical importance for all people working toward the greater electoral representation of women. Its 15 case studies are carefully chosen to illustrate the dynamics of the full range of electoral systems across all continents and in both developing and long-established democracies. The intersection of electoral systems with a range of other political factors forms a vital part in the explanation of gender outcomes, for example, the effects of incumbency or term limits in the United States or Mexico, the significance of personal support networks in Japan, the feminization of the Labour Party in New Zealand, or the influence of the Social International on the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party. While electoral systems may have a positive effect in terms of the representation of women, this will always be context dependent. This book increases our knowledge of both the nuances of electoral systems and their interplay with other political variables. It is an important step toward better understanding of what works for women in electoral system design.

Marian Sawer

Canberra, May 2007

Preface and Acknowledgments

Since the beginning of the 1980s, the invigoration of two historically marginalized fields of political science has resulted, among other things, in a publication boom: these fields are electoral studies and “women and politics” (sometimes called “gender and politics”). Although they share a similarly marginalized status within the discipline, these two fields have rarely intersected—or rather, to be precise, the works identified with electoral studies have rarely incorporated a gender perspective. The inverse is more frequent, as demonstrated by two collections edited by Wilma Rule and Joseph F. Zimmerman, *United States Electoral Systems: Their Impact on Women and Minorities* (Praeger, 1992) and *Electoral Systems in Comparative Perspective: Their Impact on Women and Minorities* (Greenwood, 1994). By contrast, electoral studies volumes published since the mid-1980s either completely ignore the representation of women or discuss women in a “sociodemographic representation in parliament” section, thereby treating 50 percent of the human species as a minority group. In addition, certain concepts used in electoral studies demonstrate little sensitivity to women. Thus, the concept of “proportionality,” which is essential for defining the merits of a voting procedure, applies to the relationship between the proportion of valid votes cast for a political party and the proportion of seats obtained in parliament, but it does not take into account the relationship between the proportion of women in the population and the proportion in parliament. The latter, however, is a key measure of political representation, known as microcosmic or descriptive representation; it is concerned with proportionality between the whole (i.e., the population) and a sample (i.e., the group of female and male representatives).

The present work aims to reconcile two fields of political science: “electoral studies” and “women and politics.” Naturally, some researchers have already explored these two perspectives, notably in *Electoral Systems in Comparative Perspective: Their Impact on Women and Minorities* (edited by Wilma Rule and Joseph F. Zimmerman, Greenwood, 1994) and *Women’s Access to Political Power in Post-Communist Europe* (edited by Richard E. Matland and Kathleen A. Montgomery, Oxford University Press, 2003). However, the former is now outdated and the latter is limited to a specific region. In contrast,

Women and Legislative Representation: Electoral Systems, Political Parties, and Sex Quotas adopts an international perspective by touching upon each and every continent.

I began this project while I was a visiting researcher in the Department of Political Science at the Australian National University (ANU) from January to June 2006. I wish to thank Dr. Alastair Greig, who was Head of the School of Social Sciences at the time, as well as Dr. Gwendolyn Grey. These two people made my visit to Canberra possible. ANU offers a visually stunning and intellectually stimulating environment and it seems that anything is possible there.

I would also like to express my sincere gratitude to the colleagues who accepted my invitation to write a chapter for this book. Their expertise and professionalism, their enthusiasm for this project, their respect for the, at times, demanding specifications, and, finally, their willingness to respond to my numerous questions all contributed to enabling *Women and Legislative Representation* to see the light of day. I am deeply indebted to Marian Sawyer who agreed to write the Foreword. It was truly an honor to have her participate in this endeavor.

Manon Tremblay
Montréal, September 2007

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Rosie Campbell is a lecturer in research methods in the School of Politics and Sociology, Birkbeck College, University of London. Her research examines gender and politics, particularly voting behavior, representation, and participation. Her book *Gender and the Vote in Britain* (ECPR, 2006) compares men and women's political attitudes and behavior from 1997 to 2005. Her most recent research includes a study of elite and mass political opinion, interest in politics, and how morale frameworks relate to vote choice.

Sarah Childs is a senior lecturer in politics at the University of Bristol, United Kingdom. Her research explores the relationship between sex, gender, and politics. In particular, it addresses the key question of what difference women's political presence makes, in both theoretical and empirical terms. Her book *New Labour's Women MPs: Women Representing Women* (Routledge, 2004) provides the first academic analysis of the attitudes and experiences of Labour women MPs first elected in 1997. Her most recent

publication is the 2005 Hansard Society Report *Women at the Top*. Her next book, *Women in British Party Politics*, will be published in 2008 (Routledge). She has also published widely in numerous academic journals, including the *British Journal of Political Science*, the *British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, the *European Journal of Women's Studies*, *Parliamentary Affairs*, and *Political Studies*.

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Andrea Fleschenberg is currently working as a research consultant on gender and politics in Afghanistan. She has been working, in 2007, as visiting professor at the University of the Punjab (Lahore, Pakistan). From 2003 to 2007, she was a research fellow at the University of Duisburg-Essen, a lecturer of comparative politics at the Universities of Cologne and Duisburg-Essen, and (in 2006) a visiting professor, International Masters Peace and Development Studies, University Jaume I, UNESCO Chair of Philosophy for Peace (Castellon, Spain). She is a member of the board of the German Asia Foundation and Watch Indonesia. Her recent publications include "Asia's Women Politicians at the Top—Roaring Tigresses or Tame Kittens?" (in *Women's Political Participation and Representation in Asia: Obstacles and Challenges*, edited by K. Iwanaga, NIAS Press, forthcoming) and "Elections in the 'New' Afghanistan. Commanders, 'Quota Women' and Missing Political Parties" (with C. Derichs, in German, in *ASIEN*, no. 98 [January 2006]).

Yvonne Galligan is reader in politics and director of the Centre for Advancement of Women in Politics at Queen's University Belfast. She is

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Magda Hinojosa is assistant professor of political science at Arizona State University. She received her PhD from Harvard University in 2005. Before joining the faculty at Arizona State University, she was an assistant professor in the Political Science Department at Texas State University. She is currently working on a manuscript that assesses the effects of party candidate selection procedures on women’s municipal representation in both Mexico and Chile. She was a visiting researcher at the Instituto Tecnológico Autónomo de México in Mexico City in 2003 and was a Fulbright–García Robles International Scholar in Mexico in the same year.

Dr. Gabriella Ilonszki works for the Institute of Political Science at Corvinus University of Budapest and heads the Elite Studies Centre there. Her research focuses on the working of parliamentary government and the role of elite groups in democratic politics, including the role of women politicians. Her English language publications most relevant to this volume include *Women in Parliamentary Politics. Hungarian and Slovene Cases Compared* (with Milica G. Antic; Peace Institute, 2003); “Weak Mobilization, Hidden Majoritarianism, and Resurgence of the Right: A Recipe for Female Under-Representation in Hungary” (with Kathleen Montgomery; in *Women’s Access to Political Power in Post-Communist Europe*, edited by R. E. Matland and K. A. Montgomery, Oxford University Press, 2003, pp. 105–129); and “Women in Politics: The European Union and Hungary” (in *Changing Roles. Report on the Situation of Women and Men in Hungary*, edited by I. Nagy, T. Pongrácz, and I. Gy. Tóth, TÁRKI, 2005, pp. 57–69).

Joni Lovenduski is anniversary professor of politics at Birkbeck College, University of London. Her most recent published work on gender and politics includes *Feminizing Politics* (Polity Press, 2005), *State Feminism and Political Representation* (edited with Claudie Baudino, Maria Guadagnini, Petra Meier, and Diane Sainsbury, Cambridge University Press, 2005), *The Hansard Report on Women at the Top* (with Sarah Childs and Rosie Campbell, Hansard Society, 2005), and *Gender and Political Participation*

(with Pippa Norris and Rosie Campbell, Electoral Commission, 2004). She is also the author of many articles and essays in edited collections on issues of gender and politics. Her current research is on gender and the state, including equality policy, political representation, and public policy debates.

Ian McAllister was professor of politics at the University of NSW from 1985 to 1996 and professor of government at the University of Manchester from 1996 to 1997. From 1997 to 2004 he was director of the Research School of Social Sciences at the Australian National University and is now professor of political science there. He is the coauthor of *How Russia Votes* (Chatham House, 1998) and *The Australian Electoral System* (UNSW Press, 2006) and coeditor of *The Cambridge Handbook of the Social Sciences in Australia* (Cambridge University Press, 2003). He is currently completing a book on the Northern Ireland conflict.

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Gregory D. Schmidt is a professor of political science at the University of Texas at El Paso, where he serves as chair of the department. He also has taught at Northern Illinois University and several leading Peruvian universities. Professor Schmidt has published extensively on Peru in leading journals and for prestigious presses, focusing on development, decentralization,

electoral rules and administration, executive-legislative relations, and gender. Among his publications are “All the President’s Women: Fujimori and Gender Equity in Peruvian Politics” (in *The Fujimori Legacy: The Rise of Electoral Authoritarianism in Latin America*, edited by Julio Carrión, Pennsylvania State Press, pp. 150–177) and “Effective Quotas, Relative Party Magnitude, and the Success of Female Candidates: Peruvian Municipal Elections in Comparative Perspective” (*Comparative Political Studies* 37, no. 6 [2004]: 704–734, with Kyle L. Saunders).

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Donley T. Studlar is Eberly Family Distinguished Professor of Political Science at West Virginia University, where he teaches courses in comparative politics and public policy. Over the past 20 years his work on gender politics and electoral systems has been published in leading international journals and books, most recently *Representing Women in Parliament: A Comparative Study* (edited by M. Sawyer, M. Tremblay, and L. Trimble, Routledge, 2006). Two of his contributions were awarded best paper prizes at the conferences where they were first presented. The author of an award-winning PhD dissertation, four books, and over 100 articles, he has served in various professional roles, including 11 years as executive secretary of the British Politics Group and on editorial boards for internationally oriented journals.

Manon Tremblay is professor at the School of Political Studies at the University of Ottawa. Her research interests are women and politics, electoral studies, the Canadian parliamentary regime, social movements and pressure politics, sexual identities and politics, as well as art and politics. She has extensively published in academic journals, notably *Australian Journal of Political Science*, *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, *Democratization*, *International Political Science Review*, *Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Politics*, *Journal of Legislative Studies*, *Party Politics*, *Politics & Gender*, and *Political Science*. Her most recent publication is *Representing*

Women in Parliament: A Comparative Study (coedited with M. Sawyer and L. Trimble, Routledge, 2006). She has been the French coeditor of the *Canadian Journal of Political Science* (2003–2006). She was honored with the Wilma Rule Award for the best paper on gender and politics at the 2006 International Political Science Association Congress (Fukuoka, Japan).

Celia Valiente is associate professor in the Department of Political Science and Sociology at Universidad Carlos III de Madrid. Her main research interests are gender-equality policies and the women's movement in Spain from a comparative perspective. Her most recent book is *Gendering Spanish Democracy* (with M. Threlfall and C. Cousins, Routledge, 2005). She has published articles in *Gender & Society*, *European Journal of Political Research*, and *South European Society & Politics* and has contributed chapters in *Women's Movements Facing the Reconfigured State* (edited by L. A. Banaszak, K. Beckwith, and D. Rucht, Cambridge University Press, 2003) and *State Feminism and Political Representation* (edited by J. Lovenduski et al., Cambridge University Press, 2005).

Introduction

Manon Tremblay

At the beginning of 2007, 17.2 percent of all members of the lower or single houses of some 190 national parliaments are women.¹ Thus, women's share of seats in parliament remains very much lower than that required for parity between the sexes. In fact, only two parliaments—those of Rwanda and Sweden—comprise almost an equal number of women and men. Although these countries clearly have very different cultural, socioeconomic, and political profiles, they have in common an important feature: proportional representation (PR) voting systems. For many years now, studies have identified the primary role that electoral systems play in ensuring a sizable proportion of women parliamentarians (Larserud and Taphorn 2007; Matland 2003; McAllister and Studlar 2002; Norris 1987: 123, 1997a, 2004: 187; Norris and Inglehart 2005; Paxton 1997; Reynolds, Reilly, and Ellis 2005: 60–61; Rule 1987, 1994a, 1994b; Rule and Norris 1992; Sawer 1997; Schwindt-Bayer and Mishler 2005). However, things are rarely so simple. The Inter-Parliamentary Union's figures also show that many countries using PR systems achieve only modest proportions of female legislators and, moreover, that many such countries are outperformed by those with majoritarian systems. In addition, more and more scholars argue that previous studies may have exaggerated the extent to which voting systems² can promote or hinder the achievement of a substantial presence of women in parliaments. Salmond (2006), for example, contends that “previous work has overstated, by factors of between two and three, how much of a difference an electoral system can make” (175). The relative influence of voting systems on the election of women remains a significant area of debate in the field of women and politics and is the reason for this book.

The overarching objective of *Women and Legislative Representation: Electoral Systems, Political Parties, and Sex Quotas* is to examine the effects of voting systems on the proportion of women in national parliaments, while also taking into account the roles of other variables (cultural, socioeconomic, and political). To do this, it examines 15 countries, which are divided

among the three following electoral families: (1) plurality/majority systems: First Past the Post (FPTP), Single Nontransferable Vote (SNTV), Two-Round System (TRS) and Alternative Vote (AV) System; (2) PR systems: Closed List PR, Preferential (Open) List PR, and Single Transferable Vote (STV) systems; and finally (3) Mixed-Member (MM) systems: Proportional (MMP), Majoritarian with Partial Compensation, and Majoritarian (MMM) systems. More specifically, *Women and Legislative Representation* pursues three secondary objectives. First, the work aims to assess and explore the contention that PR systems favour women's entry into parliaments. This idea is widely taken for granted in works studying the election of women in politics. A critical examination involves identifying and evaluating the validity of effects that could create such a relationship, such as the hypothesis that closed lists encourage the election of women. It also requires us to assess the corollary argument that majority voting systems do not favour the election of women. Second, *Women and Legislative Representation* aims to evaluate the role of other variables—cultural, socioeconomic, and political—in women's election to parliamentary seats, with particular attention to both political parties and sex quotas. This secondary objective explores the idea that voting systems do not automatically determine the proportion of women in parliaments, but they do contribute to determining it, albeit in combination with other factors, notably political parties' demand for candidates and sex quotas. If voting systems concern interparty competition (i.e., the conversion of votes into seats in parliament and their allocation to the different parties), it is the political parties that are responsible for the intraparty competition (i.e., which candidates will sit in parliament). Further, when properly designed and implemented, sex quotas (legal and party quotas) may play a key role in the feminization of parliamentary arenas. The third and final objective of the work is to present relevant case studies.

In the following sections of this introduction, I will first develop the concept of representation and how it relates to voting systems. Second, I will review relevant literature on the factors influencing women's legislative representation, with special attention to electoral systems, political parties, and sex quotas. Third, I will describe the analytical framework used by the contributors in their case studies. Finally, I will explain the rationale for the choice of countries and outline the shared format in which all chapters are structured.

Political Representation and Electoral Systems

In her book, which nearly four decades after its release is still an authority on the subject, Pitkin (1967) distinguishes between four meanings of political representation: symbolic representation, which embodies an idea or an entity (e.g., a flag or a king represents the nation); formal representation,

which refers to institutional rules and procedures by which representatives are designated (i.e., the electoral regulations and the voting system); descriptive representation, which refers to the similarities and differences between representatives and the represented; and substantive representation, which evokes the activities of representation (and more specifically the responsiveness of representatives to the represented). The present study is firmly anchored in the descriptive and formal conceptions of political representation, as they apply to women in parliamentary assemblies. It does not, therefore, attempt to examine what happens once women achieve access to political arenas (women's substantive representation).

In terms of descriptive representation, a legislative assembly is said to be representative if its makeup constitutes a miniaturized model or a microcosm of society. Consequently, it is argued that women are equal citizens and therefore should share, equally with men, public decision-making positions; otherwise, there is a representation deficit. While this is not a new view of representation, it has gathered momentum in recent years. If, historically, the discussion of political representation excluded women, today it is impossible to imagine it proceeding without addressing the political representation of women. In fact, the proportion of women in parliament is increasingly perceived as an indication of a state's quality of political representation.

Formal representation refers to the institutional rules and procedures through which representatives are chosen. The voting system, as the primary mechanism for this choice, is the process through which the will of the people is converted into seats in parliament (Farrell 2001: 4; Gallagher and Mitchell 2005a: 3). There are three basic types of electoral systems: plurality/majority (or majoritarian) systems, PR systems, and mixed systems (Massicotte and Blais 1999; Norris 2004: 41; Reynolds, Reilly and Ellis 2005: 27). Each type of electoral system is based on a particular concept of political representation. McLean (1991) suggests that voting systems be classified according to the distinction between the "microcosm" and "principal-agent" conceptions of representation. Lijphart (1984: 150) stresses the same point. PR systems find their ideological justification in the "microcosm" conception of representation. Such systems are intended to represent both the majority and the minorities proportionally translating party votes into party seats in parliament. Consequently, PR systems are those most likely to give rise to multiparty arrangements. By contrast, majoritarian systems, which are based on the "principal-agent" conception of representation, not only bestow victory on the majority while ignoring minorities, but they also give further power to the victorious party by accentuating its representation in parliament (to the detriment of other political groups). Such systems give rise to a smaller and less diverse range of parties than do PR systems. This is, of course, a general description; a closer look at the evidence reveals several

nuances: some PR systems behave like majoritarian systems (in Hungary, for instance), while some majoritarian systems do allow for minority representation (for example, in India, where representation is supported by a system of reserved seats for members of depressed classes). Nevertheless, the general pattern illustrates a persistent conflict between principles of universality and particularity in political representation. Mixed systems, to borrow from the title of a book by Shugart and Wattenberg (2001a), are an attempt at bringing together the best of both worlds, although some writers, such as Sartori (1994), feel that they actually combine the weaknesses of the two contributing formulas (for a contrary opinion, see Shugart 2001). In any case, the choice of voting system is not neutral: in one sense, it corresponds with a conception of political representation while, in another, it determines how the people's will is represented in parliament.

The plurality single-seat constituency system (also called the FPTP system) is in some ways the basic electoral model: one individual is elected per constituency and this is the person who receives the greatest number of valid votes cast in her or his favour. The elector is granted only one vote and goes to the polls only once (a one-round system). This system is used in many countries, including Bangladesh, Canada, Great Britain, India, Malawi, Malaysia, Sudan, Uganda, and the United States. Plurality voting may also occur in multimember electoral districts (this is called the block vote [BV]). In this case, the elector is granted as many votes as there are seats to be filled,³ and the winners are the candidates who receive the greatest numbers of votes in their favour in each electoral district. This formula is used in countries including Kuwait, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mauritius, Palestine, Tonga, and Tuvalu. The BV can also be implemented at the party level (as in Djibouti): the elector receives one vote to choose a party (not candidates) and the political party that receives the most votes wins all of the seats in the district. This is called the party block vote (PBV).

Some countries with majoritarian systems require an absolute majority (at least 50 percent plus one) of the valid votes cast in a district in order for a candidate to be declared the winner. At least two formulas exist. The first, the TRS, involves summoning the electorate to a second election if no absolute majority is obtained by any candidate in the first round. In the second round, one of two processes is used: the two candidates who received the most votes during the first election run against each other, the winner being the one who receives the absolute majority of valid votes cast (this, the runoff election, is the method used for presidential elections in France); alternatively, a few candidates selected according to the electoral rules compete again, the winner being the one who receives the most votes, but not necessarily an absolute majority (this process is used for the legislative elections in France and Hungary). The second absolute majority formula, the AV, asks the elector to rank

candidates in order of preference. Once the first-preference votes are tallied, if no candidate has received an absolute majority of the valid votes cast, the second-choice votes for the least popular candidate are redistributed among the other candidates; this is repeated until one of them achieves an absolute majority. The election of the members of the House of Representatives in Australia is carried out in this fashion. Fiji and Papua New Guinea also use the AV. Except for the PBV, all plurality/majority systems require the elector to vote for one or more candidates and not for political parties.

Proportional representation is an attempt to match the proportion of seats assigned to a political party in the legislative assembly to the proportion of the valid votes cast for that party. Essentially, there are two types of proportional systems: STV—also called the Hare system, after its inventor, Thomas Hare—and the list proportional representation system (list PR). Under STV, the voter must rank all or some of the candidates whose names appear on the ballot in decreasing order of preference. In other words, the elector marks “1” on the ballot next to her or his favourite candidate, then, if required to do so, a “2” next to her or his second-choice candidate, and so on. This is typically a vote for an individual and not a party (although the party option is available for the Australian Senate and is used by more than 95 percent of electors). An electoral quota is established,⁴ which determines the minimum number of valid votes required for a seat in the assembly. The ballot count initially considers each candidate’s first-preference votes, and those who reach the quota are elected. If the first count does not fill all of the seats, additional counts are held that consider and allocate three types of votes: the first preference votes assigned to unelected candidates; the next preferences (second, third, fourth place votes, etc.) of ballots that gave higher preference to candidates already elected; and, finally, the next preferences of ballots that gave higher preference to any candidate eliminated because she or he received the lowest number of votes in a given round⁵ (for an excellent description of the STV calculation process, see Farrell 2001: 121–152; Gallagher and Mitchell 2005b: 593–596). This procedure continues until all the seats are assigned. Ireland and Malta used the STV, as does the Australian Senate.

List PR is the most common procedure used in proportional representation systems. In this procedure a country is either designated as a single electoral district (Israel and the Netherlands) or divided into several multimember districts. On polling day, the voter selects one of the lists created by the political parties in the race (as in Costa Rica and South Africa) or one or more candidates whose names appear on the lists (as in Brazil, Finland, and Indonesia). In other words, the lists may be open (vote for a candidate) or closed (vote for a party), so that the voter may or may not have the option of changing the order of names determined by the parties.⁶ Seats are assigned to political parties according to various procedures (there are two

main categories of electoral formula, the highest average method and the largest remainders method⁷) and then to candidates according to their ranking on the list.⁸ To avoid proliferation of parties represented in parliament, list PR systems usually impose a threshold for representation. This threshold is the minimum proportion of valid votes required for a political party to win a seat in parliament (for instance, 5 percent of the national vote in Germany). A wide array of countries in all regions (with the exception of Oceania and the Pacific islands) use the list PR system.

Apart from plurality/majority and PR systems, a third variety of voting system has recently gained popularity in the electoral sphere: the mixed system. Bolivia, Germany, Italy, Japan, Lesotho, Macedonia, Mexico, New Zealand, Russia, Senegal, and Venezuela are among the countries that use the Mixed-Member System. Essentially, this hybrid electoral formula pursues two ideals: stable effective government (a characteristic of the majority governments typically formed in plurality/majority systems) and sociodemographic representation in parliament (a characteristic of PR). The typical MM System operates as follows: one portion of the seats in the legislative assembly is allotted by plurality/majority representation (usually FPTP) and the other portion by the PR system (usually by list PR in multimember districts). The voter has two ballot papers, one for the majoritarian tier and the other for the PR tier, in order to elect representatives who will sit in the same legislative assembly.

In terms of the plurality/majority tier, usually the candidate who receives a simple plurality of the valid votes cast in her or his district is declared the winner after only one round. This is the case in Mexico, New Zealand, and Thailand, for example. Sometimes, however, the requirements are more demanding and the election continues into a second round, in which the candidate who receives the absolute majority (in a runoff, as in Georgia) or a plurality (as in Hungary) is elected. While the PR tier is most often in lists (usually closed), sometimes there are no lists, and the seats are assigned by the parties to their highest-polling unsuccessful candidates, or “best losers” in the majoritarian tier. This list may be national (as in New Zealand) or by electoral district (as in Mexico).

While MM systems combine the principles of majority and proportional representation to elect the members of the legislative assembly, the assigning of seats may or may not take into consideration the interaction of these principles. Mixed-Member systems are known as compensatory when the distribution of seats in one tier (usually the proportional tier) depends on the parties’ gains in the other tier (usually the majoritarian one). This is the case in Bolivia, Germany, New Zealand, and Venezuela. MM systems in which the distribution of seats in both tiers is carried out in an independent manner are known as parallel. This is the case, for example, in Armenia, Japan, Monaco, Russia, and Ukraine. These two approaches result in different distributions of seats in the