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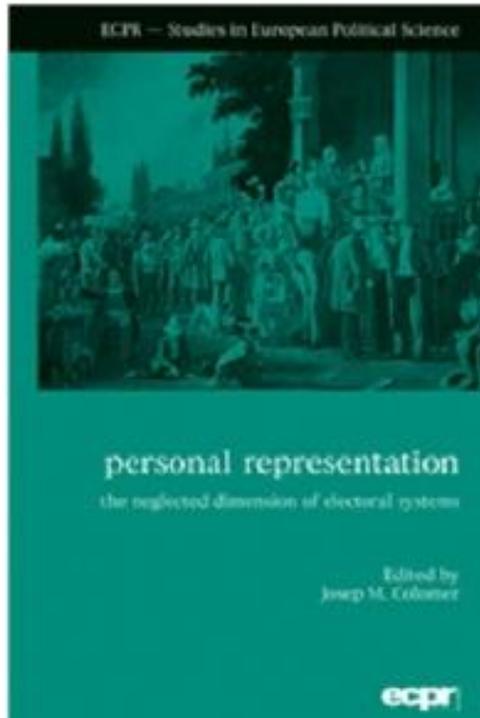
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# Personal Representation: The neglected dimension of electoral systems

Josep M. Colomer



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Personal representation is a necessary element to achieve a high quality of democracy. Many studies of electoral systems, by focusing on the allocation of seats to parties, have neglected the study of this essential dimension. In democratic countries different ballot forms and rules exist to vote for individual candidates and to allocate seats to individuals. This book studies the different voting procedures and formulas for personal representation, their origins and consequences, their compatibility with party representation and the strategies and normative criteria for electoral system choice. It presents an analytical framework, new empirical data, an innovative classification of electoral systems, and reproduction of ballots from different countries.

The book offers:

- a groundbreaking study of voting formulas, ballot forms and rules to allocate seats;
- a discussion of the relations between party representation and personal representation;
- new empirical data on voting forms;
- an innovative classification of electoral systems;
- reproductions of ballots from different countries;
- comparative and single-case studies of different rules for candidate selection and for voting for individual candidates.

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**Personal Representation:  
The neglected dimension of electoral systems**

**Josep M. Colomer (editor)**

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**Introduction**  
**PERSONAL AND PARTY REPRESENTATION**

**Josep M. Colomer**



**The County Election (1851-52)**  
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An efficient electoral system for a representative democratic government must include appropriate rules for both **party representation** and **personal representation**. Many classifications and analyses of electoral systems focus on the distinction between majority- and proportional-rules. By doing this they address only party representation, but neglect the second essential element of any electoral system: personal representation. Some basic elements of an electoral system, mainly district magnitude (or number of seats to be elected in each district) and the electoral formula, are tools to allocate **seats to parties**, that is, to produce party representation. The voting procedure as shaped by the ballot form, to be studied here, deals with the allocation of **seats to persons** in order to produce personal representation. An electoral system can include rules to allocate both seats to parties and persons in order to produce both party and personal representation.

The aim of this book is to clarify the importance of these two elements of electoral systems and, given the understudy of voting formulas for personal representation, to present a basic analytical framework and a number of applied analyses on the following aspects: the different **procedures of voting for individual candidates**, their origins and consequences, their degree of compatibility with formulas for party representation, and the contexts, strategies and normative criteria for the choice of personal representation formulas.

The systematic study of procedures for personal representation, together with the previously accumulated knowledge on those for party representation, should advance the discussion about 'the best' electoral system. Of course this discussion may never finish because it is strongly linked to different values and criteria held by different scholars, practitioners and voters (whether correspondence between votes and seats, political pluralism, government effectiveness, policy consistency or change, etcetera). However, a fine analysis of the different formulas, their expected consequences, and the trade-offs among them should reduce the disparity of evaluations, make some people reconsider their opinions or change their minds, and differ less on the basis of yet unsolved differences in scientific analysis than on difference of values.

## **The Origins of Party Representation**

The origins of the tension between personal and party representation are remote. They can refer to the most primitive emergence of organized political factions, later called political parties, when they began to run in elections which were conventionally organized with traditional rules favoring personal representation by means of the selection of individual candidates.

Traditional elections in small towns and communities, in local constituencies for ancient regime assemblies and parliaments, as many elections in current times for housing

condominium-, school-, university-, professional organization- and corporation-boards, and students' and workers' unions, focus on the choice of the best individual representatives to defend the interests or values of the community or group. This kind of election is conceived and broadly accepted in the intention to produce 'personal representation', that is the selection of the best individual representatives. This focus is based on the assumption that there is broad agreement or consensus in the group regarding the common interests to protect and the priority public goods to be provided by the action of the elected representatives.

In particular, many elections in local communities or small groups were held in the past and are still held today by a set of rules composed of **multi-member districts**, **open ballot** and **majority rule**. Basically, people vote for the individual candidates they prefer and those with higher numbers of votes are elected. This set of electoral rules indeed appears as almost 'natural' and 'spontaneous' to many communities when they have to choose a procedure of collective decision-making based on votes, especially because it permits a consensual representation of the community. Many formulas are compatible with the essentials of the electoral system just mentioned, including oral or written ballot, assembly or booth voting, variants of approval voting, as well as plurality or second round rules.

The combination of multi-member districts with majority rule has been neglected in recent political science literature on elections. Virtually all studies of electoral systems distinguish two basic types: one combining single-member districts with majority rules and another combining multi-member districts with proportional rule. However, the type of traditional electoral system just mentioned was used very widely in local and national assemblies in pre-democratic or early democratic periods before and during the 19th century, it has survived in a number of local elections, and has also been adopted in a few new democracies in recent times.

Specifically, two- or three-seat districts by plurality rule were largely used in English shires, towns and boroughs from the 13<sup>th</sup> century on and for the election of the House of Commons until 1935. Multi-member districts have survived in most English local elections. The English model of elections in multimember districts by plurality rule was adopted in all the British colonies in North America for the lower houses of their legislatures. With independence, it was used for most seats in state congresses, the U.S. Presidential College and the House of Representatives (in some cases until the 1960s). At state and local levels, most representatives have, most of the time, been elected in multi-member districts. In France, the tradition of using multi-member districts in indirect elections for municipalities and medieval provincial and general Estates was maintained for post-revolutionary national assemblies during most of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This system has survived in small French municipalities with less than 3,500 inhabitants. Also in Spain, multi-member districts with individual-candidate ballots were used in indirect elections of anti-French-invasion Juntas in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, including in the Spanish as well as in the Portuguese colonies in the Americas of the time, and in most constitutional elections until 1936. Nowadays, they are used for the election of the Spanish Senate, as well as in small towns with less than 250 inhabitants.

Variants of the above-identified electoral system with multimember districts, vote for individual candidates and majority rule were also used in medieval German and Swiss communes and cantons, in Italian communes, as well as for the election of the single or lower house of state parliaments and assemblies in some 30 countries at least in all parts of the world from the early 19<sup>th</sup> to the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. They are still widely used in local elections in a number of countries. (See detailed data and sources in Colomer 2004, 2007).

### **The Emergence of Political Parties**

The focus on personal representation held by elections with traditional rules was challenged with the emergence of organized factions or political parties running as lists of candidates and acting as compact groups in the subsequent councils and assemblies. In recent times, political parties emerged partly endogenously from the previously existing elections and assemblies, and partly exogenously to represent or promote the interests or values of different groups in new, larger and more complex societies.

In historical terms, voting ‘in bloc’ for a partisan list of candidates was not an institutionally-induced, but a strategy-induced behavior. In the old-fashioned way, certain men who were more or less distinguished for their professional or other activities were announced as being eligible by newspapers or offered themselves as candidates. Gradually, elected representatives moved to organize their supporters and present lists or tickets of candidates. The success of this new way may lie in the fact that ‘party’ candidacies and labels provide the voters with very cheap information about their candidates, which, in large constituencies and complex societies may be more difficult to obtain on those candidates who are not labeled. This may move voters to vote in bloc rather than for separately weighed individuals.

Party inducements to voting in bloc were crucially aided in some countries and periods by the form of the ballot, which is of course an institutional feature of elections. In the earliest times alluded to above, oral voting or handwritten ballots facilitated the voting for individual candidates regardless of their possible grouping or factional allegiance. At some time, which can be roughly located around the 1830s and 1840s for Britain, the United States and a few countries in Western Europe, the parties began to print their own ballots, listing only their own candidates. The voter needed only to cast the paper in the ballot box without marking any candidate in order to vote for the entire list (the ‘general ticket’). Typically, party ballots were of various sizes, colors and shapes, and thus distinguishable to the election officials, the candidates, the party organizers and the voters.

Still, splitting the vote between candidates from different parties was possible by crossing out and writing in names or by turning in multiple party ballots with votes marked on each. In fact, in 19<sup>th</sup> century England, about half of the districts with two seats rendered ‘split’ representation of two different groupings (Cox 1984). But in the United States, by about 1890, a single party swept all the seats in almost 90 percent of elections in multi-member districts (Calabrese 2000).

The so-called 'Australian ballot' again made non-partisan voting for individual candidates relatively easier. The new ballot, which was now printed and distributed by the electoral authority, listed the candidates of all parties instead of only one. As its name indicates, this new form of ballot was first introduced in the British colonies of Australia in 1856, expanded to New Zealand, Britain, Canada, Belgium, and several states in the U.S. during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and was later adopted by most other countries with democratic experience.

The Australian ballot ensures a secret vote if the procedure includes a booth where the voter can mark the ballot unobserved. In some cases, the ballot requires the voters to vote for each candidate for whom they want to vote, which facilitates the choice of individual candidates regardless of their party affiliation; but in other cases it is also possible to vote for all candidates of a party with a single mark, which still favors bloc voting.

Initially, factions and parties tended to be loose and fluctuating groupings of individuals who joined together to support a particular leader or policy, but from the beginning they were viewed as suspected of being destroyers of previously existing unity and consensus. In 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century Britain and North America, there is much evidence of a considerable degree of hostility towards parties and partisanship. Political actors eventually acknowledged that in mass elections in large societies, where the homogeneity of interests and values that had prevailed in small, simple communities during the previous eras was decreasing, the formation of political factions was unavoidable and perhaps even necessary to make the political representation of a diversity of groups possible. Gradually, tension was developing between the recurring suspicion of partisan divisions and the seeming inevitability of partisan organization. Parties were eventually conceived as 'unavoidable evils'.

Under traditional electoral rules conceived for the selection of individual candidates, the formation of electoral factions or parties introduced biased and partial representation. In comparison with the open ballot system, 'voting in bloc' for a list could change election results radically, typically producing a single party 'sweep' based on a minority of votes, or two-party polarization. Traditional formulas of voting and elections using plurality rule, majority runoff or other procedures supposedly based on the majority principle were unable to guarantee actual majority support from voters' first preferences for the winner and, in a context of increasing social complexity and political pluralism, tended to produce minority winners and socially or ethnically strongly biased governments. In some crucial cases, it was largely as a consequence of this type of experience that different political leaders, candidates and parties began to seek alternative, less intuitive, or 'spontaneous' electoral rules likely to be less advantageous for the best organized faction or party. In more recent times, this has also induced some party members and politically motivated scholars to devise and choose new electoral and voting rules and procedures.

## **The Invention of New Electoral Rules**

To the extent that parties and factionalization were accepted as unavoidable, the re-establishment of broad voting support for the elected required the invention and introduction of new electoral rules different from the traditional system based on multi-member districts and majority rule. Different electoral rules and procedures for voting and elections were then invented to try to satisfy fair or suitable 'party representation'. Some of these new inventions managed to combine new party representation with traditional or new forms of personal representation. But others threw away the kid with the dirty water and neglected or just discarded any form of personal representation.

Virtually all the new electoral rules and procedures that were created from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century on and are widely used nowadays can be understood as innovative variations of the simple, traditional system identified above. They can be classified into three groups, depending on whether they changed the district magnitude, the ballot, or the rule.

The first group of new electoral rules implied a change of the district magnitude from multi-member to single-member districts, keeping, of course, both individual-candidate voting and majority rule. With smaller, single-member districts, a candidate that would have been defeated by a party sweep in a multi-member district could be elected. Thus, this system tends to produce more varied representation than multi-member districts with party bloc vote or closed lists, although less varied than multi-member districts with open ballot. However, when more than two parties or candidates run, single-seat districts can also produce minority winners. In addition, most candidates running in individual districts have tended to be nominated by political parties, thus replacing the traditional system of personal representation with one in which party representation strongly prevails.

The second group of new electoral rules implied new forms of ballot favoring individual-candidate voting despite the existence of party candidacies, while maintaining the other two essential elements of the traditional system: multi-member districts and majority rule. By 'limited vote', each voter can vote for a lower number of candidates than seats to be filled so that one party can sweep as many seats as the voter has votes, but it is likely that the rest of the seats will be won by candidates of different political affiliation. The 'cumulative vote', by which voters can give more than one vote to some candidates, can also permit minority voters to elect some representatives. This kind of procedure may produce some representation for minority candidates, whether they are presented by a party or not, but they cannot prevent a single party 'sweep'. They were experimented with in Spain, Britain and Brazil, among other places, in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but in most cases were soon abandoned.

Finally, the third group of new electoral rules implied the introduction of proportional formulas, which permit the maintenance of multi-member districts and, in some variants, open or individual-candidate ballot as well. Contrarily to what well established classifications may suggest, it can be argued that majority rule and proportional representation are not opposite stances in terms of the most basic principles when political parties are central political actors.

The two corresponding types of rule cover different stages of the electoral process. With elections by majority rule, the winning party takes all and can usually access government. In contrast, assembly elections by proportional representation are not usually able immediately to produce a winning board or government, but they are just the first step in a process including further negotiations among parties in parliament or council to create a multiparty majority and the corresponding winner. Hence, in terms of general principles of governance, both majority and proportional electoral systems are based on the majority principle: both attempt to make the principle of majority government operational.

Actually, proportional formulas were invented in Europe in the late 19th century precisely with the aim of favoring majority rule. Traditional consensus vanished with the emergence of new political demands in large states and newly complex societies, the politicization of new issues and the shaping of incompatible policy proposals, as alluded to above. Although proportional systems have been interpreted as a device to permit minority representation, they were strongly motivated by the aim of preventing actual minority rule as it could be produced by a single party sweep under usual procedures inspired in majority principle. It is precisely by including varied minorities in the assembly that proportional representation can facilitate the formation of an effective political majority to legislate and rule.

All these voting formulas –single-seat districts, limited or cumulative vote, proportional representation-- and their variants, were invented at a time when electorates were enlarged and political parties emerged in a number of developed countries. They focus on party representation. The expected outcome of elections with the new rules was the production of an adequate representation of political parties in order to facilitate consistent, representative government.

However, many of these inventions, by focusing on party representation they neglected personal representation, which had been the only or main element in previous voting systems. This was particularly unfortunate, since the effects of ballot forms on personal representation, according to the analyses presented in several contributions to this book, would seem to be independent from the influence of electoral formulas on party representation. Reintroducing procedures for personal representation which can be compatible with fair party representation has therefore become a major challenge to achieving satisfactory electoral systems.

## **Personal Representation**

Party representation is necessary in order to select the most relevant issues in the public agenda and to design public policy when different interests enter into conflict and people develop significantly different policy preferences. But, in turn, personal representation or the choice of individual representatives is also necessary to achieve a high quality of representation and effectively promote the preferences of the community once these are well defined.

For 'personal representation' we refer to the personal quality of representatives, that is, their reliability and ability to fulfill electoral promises and respond to voters' demands. The presumption may be that fair party representation can be satisfactory for achieving consistent political parties and clear-cutting policy design, but adding some degree of personal representation can improve legislative and policy performance.

The personal quality of individual representatives has been a traditional concern for the quality of representative democracy. John Stuart Mill, for instance, already referred by the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century to the “grade of intelligence in the representative body”, complained that “it is becoming more and more difficult for any one who has only talents and character to gain admission into the House of Commons”, and remarked on the importance of voting procedures, together with internal party rules in the selection of electoral candidates.

In order to fulfill the classic aspiration to be ‘governed by the best’, democracy requires that talented and skilful people should run in elections. In current times, the complexity of the public agenda, the concentration of political communication into unilateral messages from politicians through the mass media, and certain institutional complications have raised new concerns about the ‘distance’ between citizens and representatives and the quality of the latter. In certain democratic regimes, the decision to run for public office in elections, which largely depends on the potential candidate’s opportunity costs, may not be taken by the best professionals or the most skilful individuals.

In many elections, the selection of candidates and likely office-holders greatly depends on party’s internal procedures. Furthermore, both in single-seat districts, such as in Britain, and in closed party list systems with proportional representation, such as in Spain, most seats are ‘safe’, that is, they are always allocated to the same party in successive elections. With this, the choice of representatives by the voters is largely replaced with the nomination of candidates by internal party processes. With single-seat districts and close lists, “party selection is equal to election”, as remarked by Nir Atmor, Reuven Y. Hazan and Gideon Rahat in their contribution to this book.

From the point of view of citizens’ participation in the selection of representatives, therefore, the electoral ballot is crucial. It can be expected that the greater the opportunities for voters to choose individual candidates, the better the personal qualities of the elected can be. Some classifications and analyses of voting formulas for individual candidates have focused on the degree of either the party-centeredness or candidate-centeredness of elections and forms of ‘intra-party’ competition, the degree of either localistic issues or large scale public goods that they tend to promote, and other aspects of the electoral supply (most notably Katz 1994, Shugart and Carey 1995, Grofman 2005). A different point of view from the demand side, that is, from voters’ opportunities to choose high quality representatives, is adopted in this book. In this respect, procedures for personal representation can be classified for the opportunities of choice and the proportion of seats for which the voter can choose political parties and individual candidates.

## **Ballot Forms**

We propose a new classification of voting procedures for its ability to produce different degrees of party representation and personal representation. Two elements of the ballot form can be taken into account: the number of choices available to the voter and the opportunity to vote for either political parties or individual candidates. Three groups of ballot forms can be distinguished, which can be called ‘closed’, ‘semi-open’ and ‘open’, respectively.

First, ‘closed’ voting procedures give voters only one choice, which is for a party candidacy. They include the single-seat system (like, for instance, for the British House of Commons), as well as some mixed systems permitting the voters to choose only one candidate (as in Mexico), and the party closed list system (as in Spain). All these systems, in spite of their differences, coincide in that they give the voters one single choice. It happens that the systems giving the voter only one choice always involves one party candidacy, since even if in the two first aforementioned forms of ballot the voter votes nominally for an individual candidate, in fact every candidate is appointed by a party, and the voter merely votes for the candidate appointed by the party. The voter chooses only a party even if the names of the candidates might be written in the ballot. Actually in some cases the names of the candidates does not even appear in the ballot, both in single-seat systems (as, for instance, in some states in India) and in closed list systems (as in Portugal). Thus, ballot forms with only one choice implies the choice for a political party: all these procedures serve to produce party representation, but not direct personal representation of voters separated from party representation.

A second group of ‘semi-open’ forms of ballot gives the voters more than one choice, which always involves both a party and one or more individual candidates. Several procedures can be included in this category. The two-round system (as used, for example, in France) gives the voter two choices, separated in time, each for a candidate, typically nominated by a party. Likewise, the primary election system for the selection of candidates (as implemented in most states of the U.S. for most elections) also gives the voter two choices for individual candidates involving a party choice.

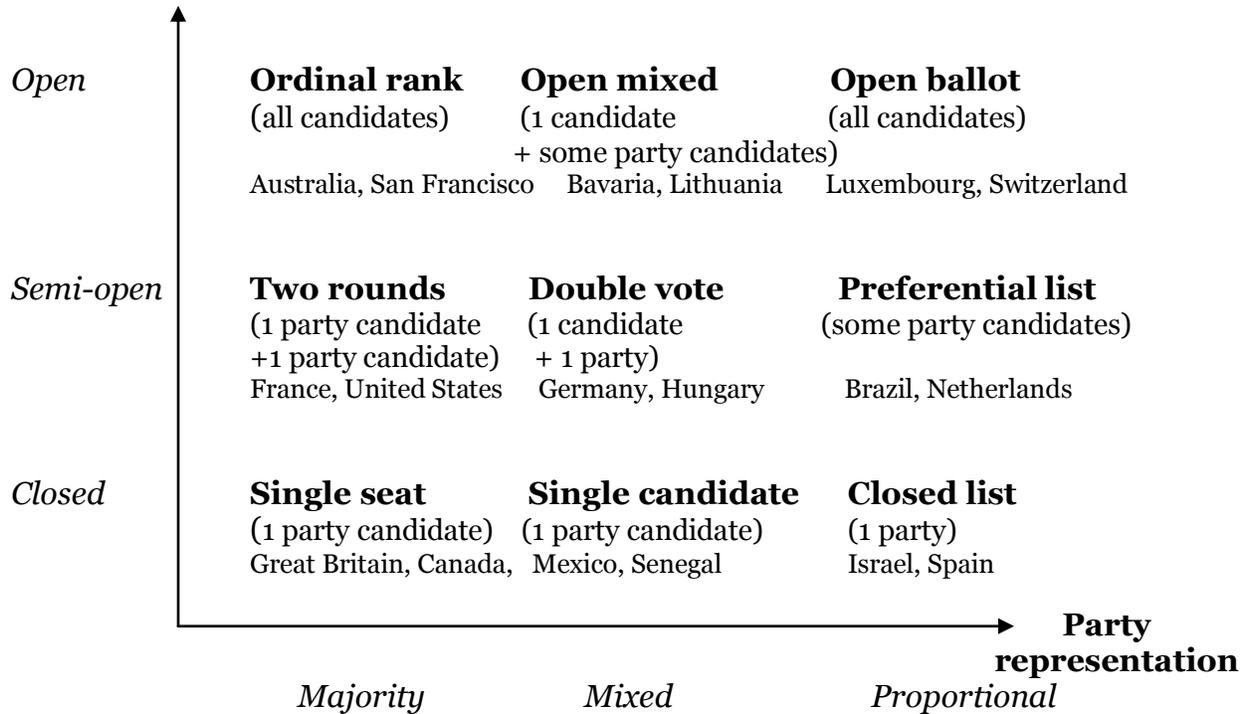
The other procedures we propose to include in this category give the voter two simultaneous choices for party and for candidate. The double vote (as in Germany and Hungary) gives the voter two choices, respectively, for a party and for a candidate who may not be of the party. Preferential list systems enable the voter to choose a party and one or more candidates from that party. Variants of this ballot form can be distinguished depending on whether they make voting for some individual candidate compulsory (as in Finland) or optional (as in Belgium). But the two variants give the voter two choices, even if with the second variant a voter, whose preference order for individual candidates may coincide with the order in which they are presented by the party, exerts only one choice.

Finally, the 'open' systems offer the voter more than two choices for both party and individual candidates. In ordinal rank ballots (as in Australia and Ireland), the voters can order some or all the candidates according to their preferences, regardless of the party for which they are presented. In some mixed systems, the voters can choose a party and a candidate who may not be of the party, but they can also select some candidates within the chosen party by a preferential list system (as in Lithuania). Finally, the open ballot (or 'panachage') allows the voter to choose as many candidates as seats up for election, regardless of the party to which they are affiliated (as in Switzerland). So, with all these forms, the voter can vote for more than one party and more than one candidate at the same time.

Note that this classification of ballot forms is independent from the one usually derived from the elements for party representation mentioned above: district magnitude and electoral formula. 'Closed', 'semi-open' and 'open' ballots are compatible with 'majority', 'mixed' and 'proportional' rules. It happens that some majority rule system, say in Australia, can produce better results regarding the selection of candidates for personal representation than some proportional system, say in Spain, because the former uses an ordinal rank ballot and the latter uses a closed list. Likewise, a proportional system with a preferential list, like in Finland, can be better for personal representation than a majority rule single-seat system as in Britain, and so on. We are dealing, thus, with a two-dimensional issue, producing, in our simplified classification, up to nine categories, all with illustrative cases in current democratic regimes. As the studies collected in this book focus on assembly or presidential elections, the analysis could be extended to council, mayoral and other single-person office elections, and to new rules and procedures (as proposed, in particular, by Brams 2008). See Table 1.1 for the two-dimensional classification and Table 1.2 for data on 45 major democracies.

**Table 1.1. A two-dimensional classification of electoral systems**

**Personal representation**



Note: Along the horizontal axis, electoral systems are classified for their formulas in favor of party representation, whether based on majority, mixed or proportional rules. The vertical axis classifies electoral systems for their different ballot forms for personal representation, whether closed, semi-open or open.

**Table 1.2. Party and Personal Representation in electoral systems**

<b><u>Party representation</u></b>	<b><u>Personal representation</u></b>	<b><u>Lower house</u></b>
<b>CLOSED</b>		
Majority	Single seat	Great Britain, Canada, India
Mixed	Single candidate	Mexico
Proportional	Closed list	Bulgaria, Italy, Portugal, Romania, Spain, Argentina, Costa Rica, Israel
<b>SEMI-OPEN</b>		
Majority	Two rounds Primary	France United States
Mixed	Double vote	Germany, Hungary, Japan, Korea, New Zealand
Proportional	Open list (preferential vote)	Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Czech R., Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Greece, Latvia, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, Brazil, Chile, Peru, Indonesia
<b>OPEN</b>		
Majority	Ordinal rank	Australia, Malta
Mixed	Open mixed	Lithuania
Proportional	Ordinal rank Open ballot (panachage)	Ireland Luxembourg, Switzerland, Uruguay

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 Note:  
 Author's own elaboration with data as for the end of 2009.

## **Choices and Consequences: A Research Agenda**

A number of suggestions on the origins and consequences of different ballot forms are presented in the following pages. Most of the hypotheses and empirical findings here offered, as they are based on the contributions collected in this book, are innovative or had been not previously subjected to systematic exploration. In the current state of the art, they may become platforms for further research rather than conclusive statements. First, some political and institutional contexts for the choice of different rules for personal representation are discussed. Second, a focus is cast on certain 'proximate' political consequences of ballot forms that can be observed on party and candidate strategies, as well as on voters' behavior and their relations with the elected representatives.

### **Choosing Ballots Forms**

In order to deal with the choice of ballot forms for personal representation, we should approach the relations between the voting rules and not the number of political parties, as in so many studies of electoral systems, but rather the relative strength of organized parties and individual candidates. As has been studied for many decades, the choice of electoral rules for party representation depends on the party system. As stylized by the 'Micromega rule', which states that 'the larger prefer the small, and the small prefer the large', a dominant party or two large parties tend to prefer small districts, particularly with a single seat each, by majority rule, while multiple small parties tend to prefer large districts with proportional rules. With this approach, we have been dealing with the relations between the rules for party representation and the numbers of parties.

In order to explain the choice and maintenance of rules for personal representation, the relevant variables are different. From the chapters compiled in this book, some tentative hypotheses can be formulated, respectively for old and new electoral democratic regimes.

First, for countries and communities with long traditions of voting and elections, typically using the kind of electoral system with multimember districts and majority rule discussed at the beginning of this introductory chapter, the adoption of the Australian ballot, which is provided not by the parties as under the previous system, but by the electoral authority, seems to have been a crucial moment. The Australian ballot was conceived to ensure the secrecy of the vote. But its design can vary immensely.

If the model adopted by the electoral authority somehow respects a previous tradition of open voting for individual candidates, the new ballot may include the names of the candidates and give the voter the choice of voting for some of them. This may imply more institutional continuity, as the historical experience of the cantons in Switzerland presented in this book by George Lutz, in particular, would seem to suggest. The open ballot used in Switzerland, which was made compatible with new rules of proportional representation by early 20th century,

implies in fact strong continuity with the choice of individual representatives typical of previous periods with majority rule. Other cases can be identified in the corresponding survey.

Alternatively, in other contexts in which political parties are sufficiently strong as organizations and are interested in promoting only those candidates previously selected by their own internal procedures, they can make the new ballot an institutional instrument for their strategy of inducing voters to vote in bloc for a closed list of candidates. In this case, previously informal party ballots would have become the only available form of legally available ballot. Indeed the introduction of the Australian ballot in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century coincided with the moment in which many of the new electoral rules above reported were invented.

In other cases in continental Europe and elsewhere, some decisions on the electoral system made at the time of introducing this typically mid- or late-19<sup>th</sup> century institutional reform in favor of the secret vote may have reflected the relative strength of political parties and individual candidates. The alternative variables to consider are consistently structured parties versus fluid and unstable candidacies, respectively implying significant leadership capacity to control party candidates and members of parliament or not. While this is a greatly understudied subject, a focus on this period of innovation in electoral institutions is certainly worth exploring in further research. In the absence of sufficient data on party organization in past historical periods, a first provisional suggestion may be to take the age of the parties as a rough proxy for their relative strength.

A second hypothesis can be more appropriate for most current democracies. Since electoral rules and voting procedures (including the Australian ballot) have been established in recent times, they may have implied lower institutional creativity. Most institutional designers tend to learn from others' experience or the existing literature. In his survey of open list systems in this book, Lauri Karvonen considers the hypothesis that sudden democratization from a dictatorial regime can favor the adoption of closed party lists strongly favoring party representation. Some institution-makers in this kind of context typically argue that, with relatively new and weak parties in a just improvised and fragile democratic regime, personal representation might become a factor of political instability. Consequently, preferential list systems, and possibly other semi-open or open forms of ballot, can be introduced more easily by political parties when the party system has been significantly well structured over a period of sound democratic experience, or perhaps just after some previous electoral experience by political parties under an authoritarian regime. Thus, there would be a line of succession from nondemocratic to soft-authoritarian, semi-democratic or democratic systems which would, first, favor party representation, and would bring about semi-open or open forms of personal representation at some later stage as the process moves ahead.

Some significant connection between party procedures for candidate selection and forms of ballot can also exist and contribute to create long-term stable sets of equilibrium formulas. For instance, openness at the stage of selecting the candidates, by means, for example, of primary elections, may be an alternative to the openness of the ballot, thus making the adoption of the latter less likely. In another instance, closed party lists may induce party leaders to strengthen

their grip over the organization and make the parties more rigid, closed and reluctant to open the system. As suggestive as these hypotheses look and can be illustrated with a few outstanding cases, they certainly require further empirical verification.

### **Political Consequences**

Many political consequences have been attributed to different rules on district magnitude and electoral formula, but not always with neat assumptions or solid empirical support. In order to deal with the consequences of different ballot forms, we suggest focusing, first, on the ‘proximate’ political consequences that can be observed on party and candidate strategies, as well as on voter behavior and voters’ relations with the elected representatives. The rest of the consequences should be considered relatively ‘remote’, indirect, and perhaps identifiable in terms of constraints, limits, and opportunities, rather than determining specific decisions or outcomes, especially as for the quality of representation, legislative and policy-making performance, the scale of public goods, and people’s degree of satisfaction with the democratic regime.

Let us start with party and candidate strategies. In an experimental exercise, it has been found that the different personal quality of candidates can affect the electoral equilibrium in the direction of producing greater policy distance between the contenders. The rationale for this is that relatively low quality candidates have to differentiate their policy positions in order to try to compete with other candidates who enjoy an advantage on the personal dimension. Likewise, relatively high quality candidates can exploit the opponent’s weakness by adopting the opponent’s policy position. As long as the candidates match each other on policy positions, the better candidate in terms of personal quality will have the advantage; as long as they differ in their policy positions, this advantage may count for less in the eyes of the voter. An implication of this is that higher quality candidates should be expected to be associated to more moderate policy positions than lower quality ones. (Aragonés and Palfrey 2004).

Different personal quality of candidates competing for the same seats can emerge in voting systems strongly favoring personal representation. This is consistent with the correlation between high levels of personal representation as induced by ordinal rank ballot and the predominance of valence policies in the public agenda, as noted by Michael Marsh in his analysis of the Irish system in this book. To the extent that party representation prevails, party competition can develop on the basis of position issues, which imply competition between distant policy proposals (such as in school or foreign policies). In contrast, if personal representation prevails, candidates may tend to focus on valence issues, that is, those on which there is broad consensus and almost everybody wants more of (such as peace or prosperity). Precisely, electoral competition on valence issues consists of claiming credit or getting blamed for them, mostly on the basis of candidates’ credibility and effectiveness.

With other ballot systems not favoring personal representation, the differences in personal quality of the candidates can more likely depend on different parties’ procedures for

candidate selection. In the absence of homogeneous regulation of internal party processes to select electoral candidates, different parties in the same institutional context can choose different formulas (including, for instance, primary elections, party conference nomination, or leadership appointment). Higher quality candidates would be those who would have been able to replace pressures from internal party's activists and militants, usually in favor of extreme policy positions, with the appeal of voters. Thus, diversity of internal party procedures may lead to greater policy divergence among candidacies than in contexts with homogeneous party rules.

The other interesting proximate consequence of different ballot forms refers to the relations between voters and the elected representatives. Note that we are dealing with likely effects of institutional rules, which should be explained in terms of incentives provided for different types of behavior. A different subject would be the analysis of voter's motivations, which may be conceived as mediations between institutions and choices. There is, in particular, an extensive literature on the 'personal vote' focusing on voter's motives which is not going to be reviewed here. In some analyses it is presumed that reelected representatives in single-seat systems tend to maintain close contacts with their voters and be more accountable in their endeavor, while the opposite happens in proportional systems. This presumption implies, however, a blatant confusion between proportional rules and closed party lists. While closed party lists indeed discourage close relations between voters and the elected representatives, semi-open and open forms of ballots with proportional rules may create opportunities for both personal vote and party vote and make personal and party representation not mutually exclusive, but to some extent harmoniously compatible.

In contrast to these long-transmitted assumptions, Helen Margetts argues in her contribution to this book that the system of single-seat districts in Great Britain does not serve 'personal representation' well. Most of the interactions between representatives and their constituents deal with private goods rather than collective goods (of the type usually labeled 'pork barrel' in the United States). Margetts goes so far as to compare a large portion of representatives' work with that of social workers rather than legislators. She puts her hopes for improved personal representation in alternative electoral systems, including ordinal rank ballots that are already used in the United Kingdom for other types of elections.

More along the lines of conventional wisdom, Pedro Riera documents in his chapter the overwhelming weight of party choices with the system of closed party lists. By using innovative hypotheses and new data from Spain, Riera is able to show tiny variations in amounts of party votes across districts in different elections when the top candidates in the party closed list change to well-known persons, such as prime ministers, members of regional cabinets, mayors, and incumbent members of parliament with long experience in it. The slight effect of the candidate decreases for lower places in the list. His findings can be interpreted as revealing some wishes from the voters to select the best individual representatives, even if the ballot system does not permit them to do so explicitly. But he concludes that all in all Spanish voters vote for parties rather than for candidates.

In comparison, personal representation thrives with semi-open and open forms of ballot. Some accumulated knowledge and the contributions to this book include the following empirical observations. Semi-open ballot forms with two rounds of voting by majority rule seem to encourage relatively high participation of voters in the choice of individual candidates. In particular, with the two-round system, as in France and other countries, the levels of participation in the two rounds of voting is very similar, with differences between the two rounds mostly depending on the expected competitiveness between the two surviving candidates in the second round. Participation in primary elections in the United States has also increased over time, reaching more than 60% of the voters in the final election during the presidential season of 2008. In his thorough analysis, of presidential primary elections in the United States and several Latin American countries, John M. Carey and Harry J. Enten conclude that for parties using primary elections, “increasing personal representation appears to be complementary with the overall partisan goal of winning elections, not at odds with it”.

Regarding mixed systems, in his chapter Louis Massicotte emphasizes that whenever the voters have a chance to express preferences for individual candidates, “they seize the opportunity”, including modifications in the ranking of candidates, the defeat of candidates who otherwise would have been elected thanks to their prime positions in the party lists, and the election of candidates who do not enjoy this advantage. With double vote, it has been observed that in Germany increasing amounts of voters split their choices between a party and a candidate from another party or source.

With preferential lists, Lauri Karvonen shows different tendencies. In some countries, very large portions of the electorate tend to make use of the opportunity to vote for individual candidates, as in Belgium and Brazil, and in these as well as in others in which the amounts of voters making those choices are relatively lower, such as Austria and the Netherlands, there is a tendency towards increasing numbers of preferential votes in successive elections. In some other countries, in contrast, the amounts of preferential votes are stable, as in Denmark and Sweden. But this may reflect the adaptation of political parties to use more open formulas of internal selection of candidates in order to be able to offer lists that can be accepted by most voters as they are, an indirectly induced effect of ballot rules which can also improve personal representation in the system.

With ordinal rank ballot, in Ireland, according to Michael Marsh, more than one third of voters say that they vote for the candidate rather than for the party, while about one another third of them shifts between the two dimensions of representation at different elections. However, the voters who take the opportunity to change the order of candidates as given in the ballot are a smaller percentage of the total, which suggests that, also in this case, political parties try to do their best to present the candidates in an order that can be accepted by people that care about personal representation.

With open ballot, in Switzerland, as documented by Georg Lutz, voters introduce many changes in the order of candidates and very few vote for the party lists as given. But people vote

mostly for candidates from one party and only a few from other parties, even if the ballot permits them to do so.

Let us remark again that we are dealing with institutional opportunities and incentives, not with observed actual behaviors, which always involve a limited sample of relevant cases to study. The real outcomes in some institutional systems may indeed not coincide with the expected effects, as also happens with electoral rules for party representation and other institutional devices. For instance, the degree of proportionality between party votes and seats in the relative majority rule system for the House of Representatives of the United States is on many occasions significantly higher than, for example, in Spain, where proportional rules are officially enforced. The explanation for the former is that very high disproportionalities between votes and seats at district level (since the single winner takes all, whatever his share of votes) can be compensated across districts in favor of each of the two larger parties, while on some other occasions the distortions can accumulate and even make the winner in votes the loser in seats. Analogously, in a closed system of personal representation, it may happen that some highly qualified leaders can reach at the top of the party by some chance events and process and produce better results than could be expected from the incentives provided by the system. This kind of possible empirical observations, however, does not deny the validity of institutional analysis for long-term predictions in a high number of cases, as well as for prudent institutional design and advice.

All in all, there seems to exist, as is logical to expect, significant empirical correlations between high opportunities for **personal representation** in the ballot form and the electoral system, the adoption of **moderate policy positions** by parties and candidates, the use of **open internal procedures by political parties**, and the actual **choice of individual candidates by voters**.

More specifically, a line of causality can proceed in this direction: in a consensual community with no important diversity of policy preferences, the selection of individual candidates can prevail over the choice of party; then, loose partisan groupings can adopt ballot forms favoring personal representation, as would have been the case in traditional local level elections. The other way around, the prevalence of party representation, as with closed lists, may make the parties more rigid and favor adversarial strategies and political confrontation. But in a well established democracy, the introduction of institutional opportunities for the voters to choose individual candidates can move political parties to adopt more open procedures for the selection of candidates, and both the profusion of voters' personal choices and the parties' openness may promote the adoption of moderate policy positions in the electoral competition. In a future research agenda, this kind of significant relationships should be submitted to broad empirical tests and discussion.

As shown in several of the contributions to this book, weaker although perceptible correlations are found between ballot forms and other aspects of the political process such as electoral turnout, number of parties in the system, the degree of proportionality between party votes and party seats, women's representation, the turnover of members of parliament, the

propensity of legislators to keep or shift party allegiances and coalitions, officers' corruption, and so on. Some of the just mentioned elements can depend on ballot forms only indirectly, through parties' strategies and voters' behavior, or derive more closely from other regulations of the system, other institutional elements of the political system and even non-political variables. This also suggests that the two main dimensions of the electoral systems discussed here are largely independent and no significant trade-off among them is faced at the time of institutional choice.

It is interesting to note, nevertheless, that, according to some tentative hypotheses discussed in this book, relatively open procedures to select candidates can keep party members together, as they can feel free to promote their candidacies under relatively fair procedures, and indirectly maintain a low number of parties in the system. The United States is a clear example of the correlation between primary elections and a system of two parties which are inclusive tents. In contrast, closed party lists and similar devices not permitting personal representation can foster internal party tensions among party members and encourage party splits, as in some relatively recent European democracies.

Likewise, the possibility to vote for individual candidates can make the voters more faithful to their preferred political parties than if they have to choose between the party political label and the personal quality of the individual candidates, which may not always coincide. Open or semi-open systems for personal representation can thus indirectly favor lower electoral volatility in successive elections and higher stability of party representation.

Much more research is needed on this important and neglected subject. Regarding explanatory analyses, we should take into account that relations between different variables such as ballot forms and other aspects of the political process cannot be clarified with only statistical correlations of appropriate data, but they also require the specification of the mechanisms by which they may exist. Regarding the normative discussion about 'the best' electoral system mentioned at the beginning of this Introduction, potential answers should bear in mind that a representative democratic government requires both fair party representation and efficient personal representation. In the final analysis, new contributions should help to understand how, by direct and indirect means, different types of ballot forms for party representation and personal representation can contribute to different levels of quality of democratic regimes.

## **The Book**

This book offers analyses of different ballot forms and procedures of voting for political parties and for individual candidates, their origins and consequences. They develop detailed analytic narratives for countries that innovatively introduced some of the procedures, as well as comparative data and discussion for some of the most common ballot forms permitting relatively high degrees of personal representation. We start with different procedures of candidate

selection, which are displayed and discussed by Nir Atmor, Reuven Hazan and Gideon Rahat. Then, two significant examples of closed ballots are addressed: the single-seat system in Great Britain, which is critically revised by Helen Margetts, and the closed party list system in Spain, which is innovatively studied by Pedro Riera. A variety of 'semi-open' systems are put under scrutiny: primary elections, as they have been recently used in the United States and Latin America, by John M. Carey and Harry J. Enten; all the variants of mixed systems giving voters the opportunity to vote for both a party and some candidates, by Louis Massicotte; and the several forms of preferential vote for individual candidates within a party list, thoroughly analyzed by Lauri Karvonen. Finally, two egregious examples of open ballot strongly promoting personal representation are well documented: the ordinal rank in Ireland, by Michael Marsh, and the open ballot in Switzerland, by George Lutz.

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From the very beginning, all the participants in this project have shared the feeling to be opening a gate to an unjustly understudied subject with paramount consequences on the quality of democratic regimes, as well as potentially fruitful new venues for future research. Rather than becoming a final treatise on the subject, the success of this book would be in inducing further discussions and revisions, collections of empirical data, and practical applications of the ideas we dare to present.