



**Proceedings Initiated by Committee**

# **The Reform of the Voting System in Québec**

*Discussion Paper*

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# Table of Contents

<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>1. Should we reform our voting system? .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>1.1. The timeliness of reform and the choice of a voting system .....</b>	<b>9</b>
1.1.1. Public perception and voter turnout .....	10
1.1.2. Choosing a voting system .....	11
<b>1.2. Reaching a decision .....</b>	<b>12</b>
1.2.1. Experiments abroad and factors of change .....	12
1.2.2. A referendum on the voting system .....	13
1.2.3. A National Assembly vote .....	14
<b>2. Overview .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>2.1. Principal voting systems worldwide .....</b>	<b>15</b>
2.1.1. General definitions .....	15
2.1.2. Plurality-majority systems .....	16
2.1.3. Proportional representation (PR) .....	22
2.1.4. Mixed systems .....	25
2.1.5. The impact of voting systems on voter representation .....	27
<b>2.2. The Voting system in Québec .....</b>	<b>29</b>
2.2.1. A brief history of the debate over electoral reform .....	29
2.2.2. Overview of solutions proposed for Québec: proportional and mixed systems .....	32
<b>3. Assessing Québec current Voting system.....</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>3.1. The simplicity of the current voting system and Québec political tradition .....</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>3.2. The voter-member link .....</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>3.3. Constituency size and electoral boundaries .....</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>3.4. Government effectiveness and stability .....</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>3.5. Responsible representatives and government .....</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>3.6. Distortions in representation .....</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>3.7. Third parties and “strategic voting” .....</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>3.8. Representation of women .....</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>3.9. Representation of natives and minorities .....</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>4. Prospects for electoral reform in Québec.....</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>4.1. Proportional systems proposed in Québec .....</b>	<b>43</b>
4.1.1. List systems: moderate regional proportional and territorial proportional representation .....	43
4.1.2. The single transferable vote (STV) applied in Québec .....	47

<b>4.2. Mixed voting systems proposed for Québec</b>	<b>49</b>
4.2.1. The compensatory mixed-member system, or “personalized proportional representation” (PPR)	49
<b>4.3. Effects of a proportional or mixed voting system and related considerations</b>	<b>51</b>
4.3.1. Electoral threshold	51
4.3.2. The possibility of having two votes	52
4.3.3. An open or closed list?	52
4.3.4. Electoral boundaries in a proportional system	52
4.3.5. Coalition governments	53
4.3.6. Methods of calculation	53
4.3.7. Two types of members?	53
4.3.8. Double candidacy	54
4.3.9. The number of members in the National Assembly	54
4.3.10. Party representation at the National Assembly	54
4.3.11. The choice of a voting system	54
<b>GLOSSARY</b>	<b>55</b>
Electoral Division	56
<b>Selected references</b>	<b>60</b>



## INTRODUCTION

On December 19, 2001, the Committee on Institutions, one of ten National Assembly parliamentary standing committees, resolved to address the issue of \*voting system reform. Its commitment was as follows:

- *To evaluate Québec's current voting system*
- *To study various avenues for voting system reform*
- *To measure the impact on*
  - *Representation, particularly in the outlying regions*
  - *The role and operation of parliamentary institutions*
  - *Government formation and stability*
  - *Québec's political system in general*

For quite some time, the voting system has been regularly making the headlines. The current “\*first-past-the-post” system has its proponents, but it has also faced serious criticism for its inability to accurately translate voters’ wishes into an appropriate distribution of seats in the National Assembly. Partisans of electoral reform hold that the current system inadequately represents voter choices, as seen in the imbalance between the percentage of votes a political party receives and the number of seats it wins in the Québec Parliament. On three occasions in the 20th century (most recently in 1998, but also in 1944 and 1966), this imbalance has resulted in the party with the greatest percentage of votes being named the opposition. It has also created disproportionate majorities for the parties in power. Many people in Québec, the rest of Canada, and other countries with similar systems therefore consider the system unjust with regard to voters’ true choices.

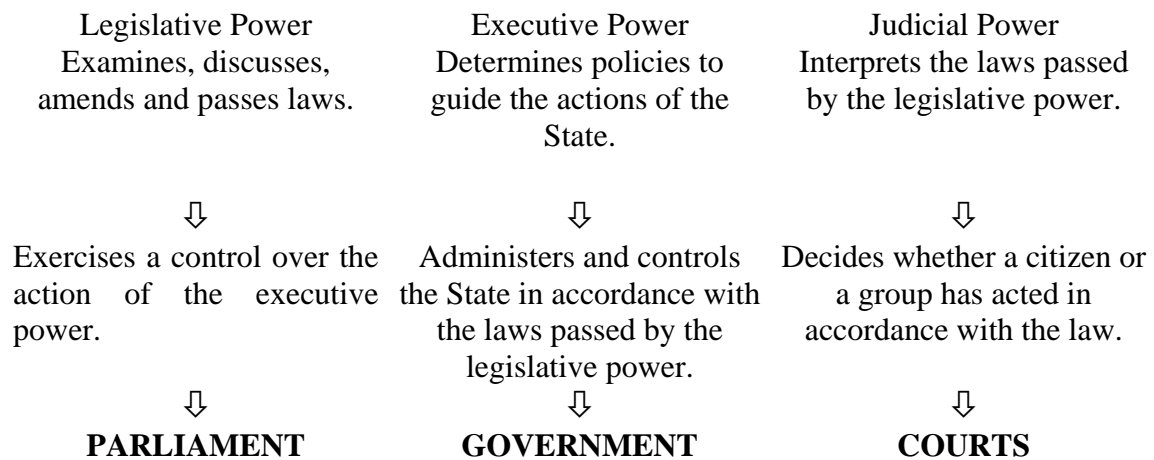
Our voting system has been analyzed for many years and from many angles, but the issue should not simply be left to the experts. The time has come to let the people have their say. This discussion paper is intended to take the public’s pulse on the issue. It was written to support general consultations the Committee is holding to ask the public to express its opinions on this issue of critical importance to the state of Québec democracy.

The subject may seem complex, but voters certainly understand the basics of elections and voting. The Committee wants to inform voters about the existing voting systems, hear their opinions on the system currently used to elect representatives to the National Assembly, and initiate debate on possible avenues for change in Québec.

We live in a \*representative democracy in which voters choose men and women to speak on their behalf in an elected house of parliament. The Committee is now calling on

all parties to collectively reflect first and foremost on the system used to select the representatives who sit in this house, the National Assembly. The primary role of a voting system is to designate these representatives. The Assembly is currently made up of 125 members, each representing one \*electoral division, or geographical area defined for electoral purposes. Once elected, a member represents this area and its population. At each election, Québec residents who are eligible to vote are asked to select a candidate to represent their constituency in the Assembly. Members are usually elected under the banner of a political party<sup>1</sup> and, in theory, represent all voters in their constituency regardless of party ties.

### **THE THREE POWERS OF THE STATE**



Most people consider that their member’s role is basically to represent their region in the Parliament. However, in our British-style parliamentary system, elected members have three main roles:

- To legislate: Members examine, analyze, and vote on bills in the National Assembly. This involves multiple stages as bills go through the Assembly and parliamentary committees. In this role, members exercise legislative power.
- To keep the government in check: *In the Assembly and in parliamentary committees, members can question the government’s actions in a variety of ways. They thereby provide essential checks and balances on government administration.*
- To act as an intermediary between voters and public administration: *Members act as mediators, information officers, and leaders, listening to*

*their fellow citizens and dividing their time between their duties in Parliament and their constituency. Members ensure that their communities receive their fair share from public programs, thereby acting as a type of ombudsman.*<sup>2</sup>

Parliamentarians place great importance on their role as representatives. Studies show that at both levels of government, members see their intermediary role as the most important of all three major spheres<sup>3</sup>—particularly so for members of the National Assembly.<sup>4</sup> In addition, in terms of their work as intermediaries, elected officials note that voters have a better perception of their member than what the weak confidence level toward politicians in general (according to certain polls) leads us to believe.

The Committee is calling for the public to express its opinions on Québec’s current voting system and, if reform proves warranted, to speak out on the various options. But we are not treading in unexplored territory. In fact, various avenues for reform have been suggested in the past. However, these proposals were set aside, and in the mid-1980s discussions of voting system reform went into “hibernation.”<sup>5</sup> For many Quebecers, the results of the 1998 general election brought renewed interest in our electoral system.

This is an indispensable opportunity for both voters and parliamentarians to explore the various systems that could be used to elect representatives to the National Assembly and make recommendations as to the direction in which they believe our electoral system should be taken. The members of the Committee on Institutions, after voting unanimously to adopt this discussion paper, thus invite any interested individual or organization to present its opinions at the general consultations. Parliamentarians will study the issue from all angles, taking nothing for granted and welcoming all suggestions. Upon completion of the hearings held throughout Québec, the Committee will submit a report on its observations and recommendations.

## **1. Should we reform our voting system?**

### 1.1. The timeliness of reform and the choice of a voting system

*“If an electoral reform resulting in \*proportional representation is to come anywhere in Canada, it will be in Québec because of the recent currency the idea has had there,”* asserted Professor Henry Milner in 1994,<sup>6</sup> referring to the proposals of the early 1980s.<sup>7</sup> But the reform debate is in limbo, and Québec voters have not yet had the opportunity to speak out for or against.

The voting system used to elect members to the \*National Assembly has been a matter of debate in political and university circles since the 1960s and 1970s, and interest was rekindled by the most recent election in 1998. But not all Quebecers have enough familiarity with the various voting systems to form opinions on the subject and, until now, the catalyst required to legitimize the issue with the population as a whole has been lacking. Indeed, one of the goals of this document is to inform the public and provide Quebecers the knowledge they need to reflect on the issue. We must also find the best way to resolve the debate.

#### 1.1.1. Public perception and voter turnout

The discussion can be boiled down to one key question: Do Quebecers feel that the way they select their representatives lets them clearly express their opinions to the National Assembly on the issues that matter to them? Members speak and make decisions in the Assembly on behalf of voters. The task at hand is therefore to determine whether Quebecers feel well represented in Parliament and whether changes to the voting system could resolve some of the dissatisfaction.

If the voting system is to be reformed, voters must see the benefits and members of the National Assembly must come to a broad consensus on the changes. Each of the three political parties that currently have members in the National Assembly have built electoral reform into their platforms.<sup>8</sup> The same holds true for the other parties presenting candidates in the upcoming elections.<sup>9</sup>

What do the people think? According to a poll on the first-past-the-post system published in 2000, 21% of Quebecers consider it “acceptable” that a party can win a majority of seats and form the government without winning a majority of the votes, while 52% find this “unacceptable.”<sup>10</sup> In May 2002, another poll showed that 68% of the population would agree to adding a proportional component to our voting system.<sup>11</sup> In an opinion poll published in August 2002, 48% of Quebecers said they preferred the current system, while 47% said they would rather see a different voting system put into place (proportional representation: 30%; \*preferential vote: 17%<sup>12</sup>). However, according to experts, the available data shows that the public is lacking information on today’s various voting systems,<sup>13</sup> just as in the 1980s. In any case, the time seems ripe to hold a forum on the issue—a forum that will be kept as open as possible.

The debate on electoral reform branches back to the issue of \*voter turnout at elections and public confidence in politics. Lower turnout has been noted in countries using a first-past-the-post system—including the United States<sup>14</sup> and Canada at the federal level<sup>15</sup>—and is a major concern for elected officials and political experts. As for

elections in Québec, the average turnout in the 1990s was higher than in many democratic countries and most Canadian provinces.<sup>16</sup>

***Would changing the voting system maintain or improve voter participation?***

***Would changing the voting system have an impact on how politics is conducted, thereby increasing public confidence in our elected representatives?***

***What do you expect from a member?***

#### 1.1.2. Choosing a voting system

Some have said that the selection of a voting system must take into consideration the social and political profile of a community. A new system could not be instituted in Québec without being adapted to our political traditions. If the system used to elect our members is slated for reform, this consideration will be key. The line of questioning suggested in this document seeks to determine what Quebecers require when it comes to electing their representatives.

Many factors come into play in the decision to be made: the member-voter link, the definition of \*electoral divisions, the number of members, the dual requirement of \*representation in the National Assembly and government effectiveness, and so on.

We must determine which system best meets the needs of Quebecers.

***What are the main factors influencing your vote in an election?  
Please rank the following elements in order, from most (“1”) to least important (“7”):***

***The candidate*** ( )

***The party*** ( )

***The party leader*** ( )

***Ideas and party programs*** ( )

***Government performance*** ( )

*Premier's performance* ( )

*Other (specify):* \_\_\_\_\_ ( )

***Would you prefer a voting system that results in a parliamentary majority and ensures that the government is formed by a single party, or rather a system that ensures more faithful representation of voter opinion in the National Assembly?***

## 1.2. Reaching a decision

### 1.2.1. Experiments abroad and factors of change

In the 1990s, interest in electoral systems increased worldwide, not only in the new states that emerged after the fall of communist Europe, but also in established parliamentary democracies, a number of which reformed their voting systems. In 1993, Italy moved from \*list proportional representation (PR) to a mixed system based on a simple majority vote, while New Zealand replaced its first-past-the-post system with a mixed system similar to that used in Germany. In 1994, Japan's legislative assembly (the Diet) decided to elect its representatives using a \*mixed system based on a simple majority vote.<sup>17</sup>

In the United Kingdom, the Jenkins Commission has studied the possibilities for reform, and a referendum may be pending.<sup>18</sup> The process of "devolution" has also given Scotland and Wales the opportunity to experiment with voting systems according to the needs of their people and territory. These experiments may inspire an eventual reform of the parliament in London. In Belgium and the United States, the public is keeping the issue on the agenda. Here at home, groups of Quebecers are also encouraging the debate.<sup>19</sup>

The political situation in Québec is unique, and projects implemented elsewhere cannot be exactly replicated here at home. On the other hand, the reforms implemented in various countries have not always had the expected results. But the experiences of other countries may have much to teach us. Certain experts have compared the situations in various states and made a number of observations worth highlighting:

- The public must be sufficiently informed about electoral systems and given a variety of ways to participate in the debate.

- Political parties and the members themselves have a key role to play in the process. For such a change to be made, the political forces and the people must generally be in agreement.
- Stakeholders without party affiliations, such as civil society organizations, are also important.
- The political situation influences voting system selection. Circumstances may or may not be favorable for reform, but, in the words of Dennis Pilon of York University, “reformers must seize opportunities when they arise — they’re rarely announced in advance (our translation).”<sup>20</sup>

When is the right time for reform? Timing can work for or against such an undertaking. While members of the National Assembly may agree on the idea of reform, we must remember that the associated changes may affect their working conditions. In order to allow parliamentarians to adjust to a new system, it would therefore be preferable to determine the best time for change.

***In the event of reform, when should a new voting system be introduced?***

1.2.2. A referendum on the voting system

In Québec, the *Referendum Act*<sup>21</sup> makes it possible to hold \*referendums on the voting system. In 2003, once the Committee on Institutions has submitted its report on the topic and parliamentarians have discussed its recommendations, the government will be able to call a referendum to gather the opinions of Quebecers. The premier would raise the issue.

Here, referendums are consultative, meaning that people are asked for their opinion on a question or a bill approved by the National Assembly. The government is not bound by popular opinion, but ignoring the results would put it in poor stead.<sup>22</sup>

In recent years, a number of countries have held public referendums to help them decide whether to reform their voting systems. Examples include Italy and New Zealand. In Italy, change occurred extremely quickly; in New Zealand, it took more time.

In a ratification referendum held in November 1993, New Zealanders decided to replace their \*first-past-the-post system, which had been in place for 138 years, with a German-style “personalized proportional representation” system. The first election under the system took place in 1996.

It took many years for New Zealand to reach that point. The debate was spurred by particularly unfair election results in 1978 and 1981, in conjunction with public disillusionment with politics and political parties. The Royal Commission on the Electoral System, created by the labor government, presented a report in 1986 recommending that a mixed system be adopted.

In a televised electoral debate in 1987, labor party Prime Minister David Lange promised to call a national referendum on reform. He had made a commitment and could not turn back. A consultative referendum was organized in 1992. Voters approved reform and, from four options, selected a mixed system to replace their majority system. The binding referendum of 1993 confirmed their choice. Let us add that keeping the issue on the table was a combined effort of the Royal Commission and a parliamentary committee.<sup>23</sup>

This last case study is interesting for Québec, since the reformed voting system was the same as that in effect here. The situations of these two governments obviously have similarities as well as differences. As seen in New Zealand, consulting the public can go a long way in legitimizing any decision as important as this one.

***Should a referendum be held to choose the voting system that will be used in Québec?***

1.2.3. A National Assembly vote

The voting system could also be changed upon a simple vote by members of the National Assembly, as is the case for any modification to the Québec *Election Act*, including provisions involving voter qualification, the right to vote, and party financing.<sup>24</sup>

Voting system reform could change many aspects of the *Election Act*, such as clauses related to the definition of constituencies and the counting of ballots in an election.

Some decisions require at least a 2/3 majority vote in the National Assembly. Examples include the nomination of an ombudsman, an auditor general, or a \*chief electoral officer.<sup>25</sup>

Since voting system reform would have a major impact on elections, many believe the decision should require a 2/3 majority. The 1977 *Act to govern the financing of political parties*, for example, was approved unanimously by all members of the Assembly.<sup>26</sup>

*Would a vote by members of the National Assembly be enough to choose a voting system?*

*If so, should a 2/3 majority vote be required, as is the case for certain important decisions?*

## 2. Overview

### 2.1. Principal voting systems worldwide

#### 2.1.1. General definitions

- *What is a voting system?*

In a \*representative democracy like ours, citizens express their will by electing their representatives.<sup>27</sup> The act of casting or recording ballots is known as a \*vote, which is held on polling day or election day. The \*voting system determines how winners and losers are chosen. During the election of the members of a parliamentary assembly (in our case, the National Assembly), this system allows for the election of representatives from each \*electoral district and determines how overall voter preferences translate into seats.

The choice of a voting system has a direct impact on how the political opinions of voters are represented in parliament, as well as on the way in which governments are formed. In Québec, the existing voting system ensures that the party winning the most seats in the National Assembly normally forms the government on its own.

- *Two main families: plurality-majority and proportional*

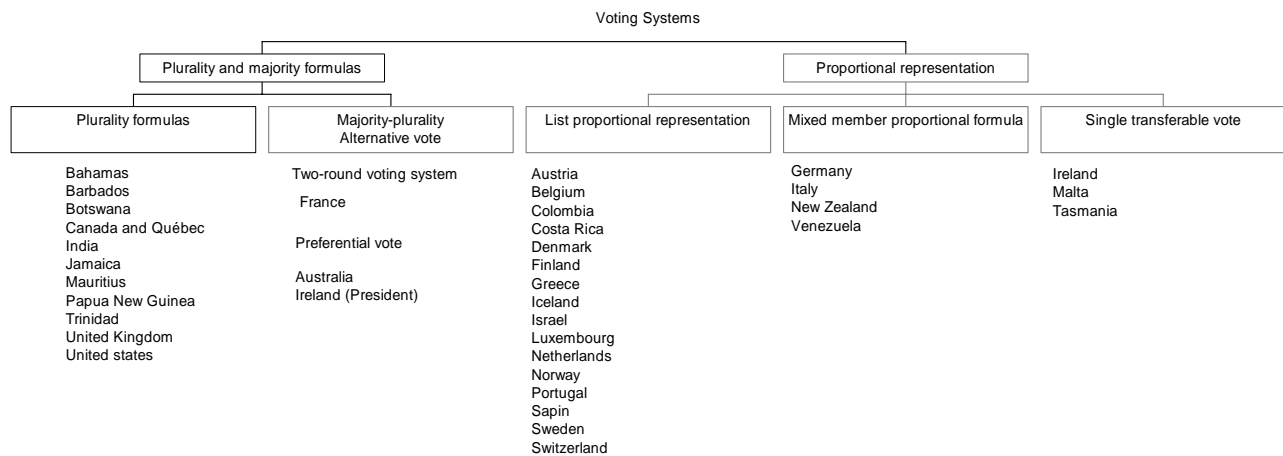
There are different systems for electing representatives. They can be divided into two main families: plurality-majority systems and proportional systems:

- *Plurality-majority systems:* Such systems are based on the simple principle that the candidate obtaining the most votes in an election wins. Normally, there is only one representative per district (as in our system). There may be a single round of voting (as in Québec and the rest of Canada) or two rounds (as in France).

- *Proportional representation (PR)*: Proportional systems are designed to attribute parties a share of seats more or less equivalent to the percentage of the popular vote they obtain in a given territory during an election. There are several ways of converting PR votes into seats. PR systems are divided into two main types: *list systems* (where voters choose from lists of candidates presented by the parties) and *\*single transferable vote systems* (where voters rank their choices by order of preference).

In addition, certain countries use mixed or parallel systems that combine the supposed advantages of both systems.

The following table shows the distribution of the different voting systems worldwide:



### 2.1.2. Plurality-majority systems

- *First-Past-the-Post System*

Sometimes known as the plurality, single-member district system, this is the voting system used in Québec. It is known as a first-past-the-post system because the victorious candidate is the one who wins a \*plurality of votes in a single round of voting, without necessarily obtaining an absolute majority. It is a “single-member district” system because there is only one member elected per constituency.

The first-past-the-post system is used today in the United Kingdom and other parliamentary democracies rooted in the British tradition—including Québec, the rest of Canada, New Zealand (until 1993), several Caribbean nations (Bahamas, Jamaica, Trinidad), and India—as well as for congressional elections in the United States.

Under this system, a territory is divided into electoral districts, each with an equal number of voters. The winner in each district is the candidate who obtains the most votes. The party that elects the most candidates forms the government, whereas the second-place party becomes the official opposition. This system is also referred to as a “winner-take-all” system, an apt description of the outcome.

## The electoral map

The first-past-the-post system derives its legitimacy from its territorial representation, with each elected member representing a well-defined area.<sup>28</sup> Under this system, the overall electoral majority is based on the votes obtained in each segment of the territory, rather than in the country as a whole. Each segment is called a “district” or “constituency.” Together, these districts make up the electoral map. Electoral boundaries are drawn in such a way that majorities must be calculated in each district for each individual member.

The electoral map must take into account a number of constraints that raise issues of fairness and equity. Most important of these is the fact that country populations are not evenly distributed. These days, most people live in cities, and many regions are seeing their populations decline. In order to respect the principle of “one person, one vote,” each elected member must represent a more or less equal number of voters. Otherwise, a vote in a densely populated district will carry less weight than a vote in a larger but sparsely populated constituency. As a result, the territory must be divided as into districts that are as equal as possible in this respect.

In addition, populations are by no means homogenous. Linguistic, cultural, social, and political differences may be present depending on the region. These differences can affect election outcomes and may play to the advantage or disadvantage of certain candidates or parties. Therefore, partisan interests must be not influence redistribution of the electoral map. In the past, there have been cases where electoral boundaries were drawn in a strange way to favor a particular group or party (a tactic known as \*gerrymandering). This is why redistribution is entrusted to an impartial and independent organization. In Québec, the \*Commission de la représentation électorale (CRE) is entrusted with this task. The CRE is made up of the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) of Québec and two other members appointed by the National Assembly.

The Québec *Election Act* determines the number of electoral divisions, which must not exceed 125—the current number—or fall below 122. As of June 30, 2000, the number of voters per constituency in Québec was 42,713: This represents the total electoral population of Québec (5,339,121) divided by the number of constituencies (125). The CRE redistributes electoral boundaries every second election.

[Sources: Benoît Mercier and André Duhamel, *La démocratie, ses fondements, son histoire et ses pratiques*, Sainte-Foy: Directeur général des élections, 2000, pp. 118–119; Gilles Pageau and Jacques Laflamme, *Le système électoral québécois*, 5th ed., Sainte-Foy, Directeur général des élections, 2002, pp. 17–19. See also the Website of the Commission de la représentation électorale: <http://www.dgeq.qc.ca/cre/index.html>]

The first-past-the-post system often causes distortion between the percentage of votes and the number of seats obtained. The result is the overrepresentation of the party that elects the most members and the underrepresentation of the other parties, with third parties more often than not eliminated altogether. The winning party also benefits from a seat “bonus.” Furthermore, critics argue that first-past-the-post systems do little to favor the representation of women and minorities.<sup>29</sup>

In fact, the first-past-the-post system aims less to faithfully represent voter opinion in parliament than to establish a parliamentary majority by ensuring that a single party forms the government. In other words, it subordinates one of the two requirements of a political society—representation—to the other, governance.<sup>30</sup> In short, plurality-majority advocates believe that the system’s main purpose is to elect a government. In their eyes, the representativity of the parliamentary assembly is a secondary concern (despite the fact that single-member constituencies were originally created to ensure greater representativity than systems with multi-member districts.<sup>31</sup>)

A number of observers have noted that countries with first-past-the-post systems have historically tended to alternate between two main parties, with each of the two vying to form the government. For plurality-majority supporters, this corresponds to the ultimate goal of forming a single party government “with an absolute majority in the house.”<sup>32</sup> According to system advocates, the formation of a government by a single party helps ensure government stability.

### The Québec electoral system: a system made for two parties?

For many political scientists, the first-past-the-post system favors a two-party system in which two main parties dominate the political stage at the expense of third parties (although debate continues over how voting systems influence party systems). For these observers, our system’s inherent logic encourages electors to cast a “useful vote” and polarizes the outcome, thereby serving the dominant parties and fostering a two-party dynamic: “Knowing how important an advantage the leading party enjoys, some voters will support its main opponent rather than a party they prefer, but which has no hope of victory, just to stop the frontrunner from winning (our translation).”<sup>33</sup> This is also known as “strategic voting.” However, Pierre Martin, a political scientist at the Centre national de la recherche scientifique (CNRS) and a researcher at the Institut d’études politiques in Grenoble, claims that the “strategic voter” only accounts for a very small proportion of the electorate.<sup>34</sup>

A number of scholars note that in Québec, as in the rest of Canada, the 20th century was dominated by bipartism. “Ever since the union of the colonies of British North America, alternating majorities have characterized political life in the House of Commons and the provincial legislative assemblies (our

translation),”<sup>35</sup> writes André Bernard, political scientist at Université du Québec à Montréal and author of several works on Canadian and Québec politics.

Some of the specialists who have noted the tendency toward bipartism in Québec consider it socially and politically counterproductive, to the extent that “parties generally stick to their role as lawyers for the prosecution or the defence, depending on whether they are in opposition or in government (our translation).”<sup>36</sup> Certain political scientists argue that parties in Québec find themselves in a political system that encourages conflict between political options.<sup>37</sup> A more proportional system could, in their view, result in a more consensus-oriented Assembly and government.

The first-past-the-post system has been the subject of debate in most of the countries where it is in use. Some of these nations have introduced reforms. In 1993, for example, New Zealand gave up the system following a referendum. It has since adopted a mixed-member system based on the German model, which gives each elector two votes, one to elect members in single-member districts, the other to elect members under a proportional system.<sup>38</sup>

In 1998, the Independent Commission on the Voting System established by the Tony Blair government in the United Kingdom tabled a report suggesting ways to reform the first-past-the-post system. The Commission had to consider four criteria in its appraisal of the existing system and the possible alternatives: the need for more proportional representation, the importance of stable government, the need to increase the degree of choice available to voters, and the importance of maintaining the link between members and their constituencies. In its report, the Commission recommended the adoption of a mixed system.<sup>39</sup>

- *\*Two-round system*

France also uses a single-member, plurality-majority system, but with a second round of voting. Citizens are called to vote twice (once to narrow down the number of candidates in contention and a second time to choose between them). This system is designed to elect the candidate who obtains an absolute majority of votes (in the first round). It is used in a number of countries with direct presidential elections, including France, Austria, and Portugal, but is much less widely used in legislative elections.<sup>40</sup> The French have used this system since 1958 to elect representatives to their National Assembly.<sup>41</sup> In Europe more generally, this system was in vogue in a number of countries in the late 19th and early 20th century, but in a political context very different than that of the present day.<sup>42</sup>

Two-round systems initially operate much like ours. However, to be elected in the first round, candidates must obtain an absolute majority of the votes cast. In electoral

districts where this is the case, there is no second round. Otherwise, a second vote is held to decide between either the two top-finishing candidates or the candidates who received a certain percentage of first-round votes.<sup>43</sup> Candidates do not need to obtain an absolute majority (50% + 1) in the second round to win. A plurality of votes is sufficient.

The main advantage of this system, according to French political scientist Pierre Martin, “is that it forces political parties to reveal their alliances and gives voters an opportunity to validate or repudiate them (our translation).” Two-round systems also influence the strategies parties choose, because the number of seats they obtain may depend as much on their alliances as their share of the vote.

Like the first-past-the-post system, the two-round system also produces distortions between the number of votes and the number of seats parties obtain.<sup>44</sup> According to Professor Arend Lijphart of the University of California in San Diego, the French system is the most “disproportional” of all the 36 democracies he examined in a recent book.<sup>45</sup>

Two-round systems tend to penalize parties at opposite extremes of the political spectrum.<sup>46</sup> In the last French legislative elections, the Union for a Presidential Majority (UMP) took 365 seats and the Socialist Party 141 seats out of a total of 577.<sup>47</sup> These results deprived the National Front of representation in the Assembly. In addition, there was a 40% abstention rate in second-round voting on June 16, 2002.<sup>48</sup> Abstentionism in the second round is an occasional occurrence in this system.<sup>49</sup>

Among major states with a democratic tradition at least 25 years old,<sup>50</sup> France is the only country to use a single-member, two-round system for its legislative elections (the only other Western European state to do so is Monaco). Most other independent nations using a two-round system are former French colonies or countries that have been heavily influenced by France, notably certain African states.<sup>51</sup>

In Québec and the rest of Canada, two-round and multi-round systems have been used at party leadership conventions. At the federal level, it took two rounds of voting to elect a leader at the Progressive Conservative Party convention in 1998 and the Bloc québécois convention in 1997.<sup>52</sup>

- *Preferential voting*

Single-member preferential voting systems are designed to elect representatives with an absolute majority (50% + 1). Preferential ballots are very similar to those used in our system, except that voters must rank candidates by order of preference (1 to 5, for example, if there are five people running) instead of marking an “x” by a single name. After the votes are counted, the candidate obtaining 50% + 1 of the vote is declared elected. If none of the candidates win an absolute majority, the one who received the

fewest first choice votes is eliminated. The second choice votes from that candidate's ballots are reallocated to the other candidates. This process continues until one of the candidates attains the required minimum. This voting system is mainly used in Australia (for the House of Representatives), where it is known as alternative voting.<sup>53</sup>

Elsewhere, the Irish use this formula to elect their president (the system being the main variant of the \*single transferable vote that we will look at later.) Preferential voting has also been used in Western Canada (in British Columbia and in rural ridings in Alberta and Manitoba<sup>54</sup>), and has also won the support of certain election reform advocates in the United States.<sup>55</sup> In 1998 in Great Britain, the Jenkins Commission recommended the introduction of a preferential system for the election of local members.<sup>56</sup>

Despite the fact that preferential, or alternative, voting is not a proportional system, it has the advantage of reducing “wasted” votes as well as offering voters more choice than in a first-past-the-post system. Because small parties and independent candidates have a better chance of winning support, they are more inclined to seek election.<sup>57</sup> Voters can also count on the fact that candidates were elected by more than half the voters. Furthermore, according to Giovanni Sartori, a professor at Columbia University in New York, it would be wrong to consider the alternative vote as a simple “variation” on the French two-round system, the main difference being that whereas a plurality of votes is all it takes to elect a representative during second-round voting in France, a majority is required with the alternative vote (as used in Australia).<sup>58</sup>

### 2.1.3. Proportional representation (PR)

Proportional representation ensures that each political party receives a number of seats more or less equal to its share of the vote. PR supporters view voter representativity as the key criterion for establishing an electoral system. Under this model, achieving the parliamentary majority required to govern depends on party efforts to negotiate a \*coalition government—a frequent outcome of PR elections—*after* the vote has been held.

## The origins of proportional representation

Proportional representation systems first emerged in Europe during the 19th century. The rise of PR on the continent corresponded with the extension of the right to vote and the appearance of mass parties. With more people voting and political parties representing an ever-larger proportion of the population, many voters felt it normal that these same parties obtain a larger share of the seats in parliament, which was possible under PR.<sup>59</sup> In certain countries that adopted such systems early on, including Finland, PR accompanied other changes, such as the granting of the right to vote to women.

Belgium<sup>60</sup> and Switzerland proved fertile ground for PR right from the start. Both countries had significant religious and cultural cleavages, and their populations wanted this diversity to be represented, something a plurality-majority system could not guarantee.<sup>61</sup> Belgium became the first country to introduce a PR system in parliamentary elections. Finland did the same in 1906, followed by Sweden in 1907. By the 1920s, most continental European countries had adopted some form of PR.<sup>62</sup>

After 1945, PR was introduced in various countries liberated from Nazism and fascism in World War II.<sup>63</sup> More recently, election reforms of the 1990s have seen the introduction of PR or mixed systems in New Zealand, Scotland, Wales, and the new democracies that emerged after the breakup of the Soviet Bloc.<sup>64</sup>

- *List proportional representation*

Among the main types of PR, the list PR system is the most common for allocating seats in a legislative assembly. List PR systems exist in many European countries, as well as in Israel and Costa Rica.

List systems require larger electoral districts than first-past-the-post systems, since each constituency is represented by several members. Each political party runs a list of candidates for the seats to be filled. Voters choose from the lists, marking their ballots with the party of their choice. Parties are allocated seats in proportion to their share of the vote. For example, if the “Black Party” takes 40% of the vote in a five-member district, it wins two of the five available seats. The two party members are chosen on the basis of their position on the list.

The two main types of list are the *\*open* and *\*closed list*:

- In some countries, electors must vote for a complete list of candidates. Such lists are known as closed lists (the oldest form of list PR). Parties determine the order in which candidates appear on the ballot, and voters simply choose

the list they prefer. They cannot indicate a preference for a given candidate and must accept the list as presented by the party. Winning candidates are selected in the exact order that they appear on the list.

- Other European democracies now use an open list system. In this system, voters can vote for a specific candidate on a party list rather than just the party list *per se*, giving them the opportunity to determine which candidates will be elected. In the Finnish system, for example, the names of candidates for each party are printed on the ballots in random order. Voters must choose an individual candidate, with their votes counting for both the candidate and the party he or she represents. Final candidate order on each party list is determined by the number of individual votes candidates win, with the most popular topping their respective lists and enjoying the best chances of being elected.<sup>65</sup>
- Lastly, in some countries, such as Switzerland and Luxembourg, voters can choose candidates from more than one party list, a system known as \*panachage or cross-party voting.

Lists may be regional (as in Austria, Belgium, Finland, Sweden, Greece, and several other countries) or national (as in the Netherlands and Israel). In the latter case, a single electoral district encompasses the entire country (a pure PR system).

This brings us to another factor influencing proportionality in a PR system, the average number of seats per district (\*district magnitude). Various authors argue that district magnitude is the element with the greatest impact on the degree of proportionality and the number of parties represented in a parliament. For example, a party with 10% of the votes in a given region has little chance of winning a seat in a five-member district, but is likely to win in a ten-member district. A two-member district cannot readily be considered proportional. At the other extreme, the most proportional results of all are undoubtedly found in the Netherlands and Israel, since both states have one single electoral district encompassing the entire country.<sup>66</sup>

PR systems also generally set a \*threshold beneath which a party cannot be represented in parliament. This threshold is generally set at 4% or 5% of the votes cast. The higher the threshold, the harder it is for small parties to obtain seats in parliament.<sup>67</sup>

List PR systems also require a \*proportional allocation method (d'Hondt method, Sainte-Laguë method, etc.<sup>68</sup>). Certain methods benefit third parties, others large parties.

For example, the most common, the d'Hondt method (the “highest average” formula), benefits large parties.<sup>69</sup>

- *Single transferable vote (STV)*

The second most common type of PR system is the single transferable vote (STV). This system is used in Ireland, Australia (Senate elections), Tasmania, and Malta, all countries with a British parliamentary heritage.<sup>70</sup> In the United States, STV was used in a dozen municipalities in the early 20th century, including New York City.<sup>71</sup> It is also the only proportional formula ever employed in Canada, where it was used in urban ridings in Manitoba (1920 to 1955) and Alberta (1926 to 1956).<sup>72</sup>

STV allows each voter to support a given candidate while ensuring a certain degree of proportionality (less than list PR, but more than a first-past-the-post system).

Electoral districts are multi-member (three to five seats in Ireland). Voters select their preferred candidate by writing a “1” beside the name on the ballot. They can also rank subsequent candidates (this is an option in most such systems) on the ballot (“2,” “3,” etc., up to the number of seats to be filled), as in preferential voting.<sup>73</sup>

Given that this voting system has already been proposed as a possible option for reform in Québec, it will be examined in greater detail in Section 4 (Prospects for Voting System Reform in Québec).

The experience with STV in Ireland has led specialists to a number of observations. First, since there is no list in the strict sense of the term, central party authorities have relatively little control over candidates. Second, the system has not led to a proliferation of parties. There are only three main parties in Ireland,<sup>74</sup> although other parties may be represented in the lower house (the 166 seat *Dáil*). Moreover, the results are relatively proportional. Even though the party with the most votes enjoys a small seat bonus, the bonus is less significant than under Québec’s first-past-the-post system.<sup>75</sup> Two-thirds of Irish voters see their first-choice candidate elected and on average, only 20% of votes are “wasted,” to the extent that they have no influence on the final outcome.<sup>76</sup> Lastly, according to Université Laval professor emeritus Vincent Lemieux, STV has no visible effect on the closeness of voter-representative relationships (in the Irish case), but does appear to undermine the representatives’ legislative role.<sup>77</sup>

#### 2.1.4. Mixed systems

Italy introduced plurality-majority voting in the early 1990s due to dissatisfaction with its PR system whereas the French and British (not to mention numerous Quebecers) “deplore the excesses of the plurality-majority system,” leading Jean-Louis Quermonne,

professor emeritus at the Institut d'études politiques in both Grenoble and Paris, to ask, "Does the answer lie somewhere in the middle, with a mixed system?"<sup>78</sup>

Mixed systems allow voters to elect members in two different ways, and may be set up on a proportional or plurality-majority basis, depending on whether reformers seek a more representative house or a majority outcome.

- *Mixed-member proportional systems*

The mixed-member proportional system is the model that was put in place in the Federal Republic of Germany after World War II. This formula, a compensatory proportional system, combines a proportional (list PR) and a first-past-the-post component, with members elected by both methods sitting together in the German Parliament.

Compensatory PR (also known as "personalized" PR), ensures that proportional voting compensates for the distortions of the first-past-the-post system, with 50% of the members of the German Bundestag elected by plurality-majority vote and 50% by PR.

Results achieved under this system are highly proportional. Although the vote itself is mixed—each voter has two distinct votes, one for a constituency representative and the other for a party list—the outcome, at least in the German case, are just as proportional as under a list PR system.<sup>79</sup> This has led Pierre Martin to conclude that the system is fully proportional in its outcome and that the "mixed-member" designation is, in his view, inappropriate.

Pierre Martin provides a good description of the system in place in Germany: "Technically, a first past-the-post system is used to elect half of the representatives in a vote in which electors have two ballots. The second ballot, the most important, is used to determine, on the basis of party lists, the overall share of seats each party with over 5% of the vote—or at least three seats under the first-past-the-post system—is entitled to. Seats attributed to the 50% of members elected proportionally from party lists are allocated in such a way as to ensure the overall proportionality of representation in the Bundestag. In other words, the members elected by list PR *compensate* for the majoritarian effects of the first-past-the-post system (our translation)."<sup>80</sup>

New Zealand has also used a mixed-member proportional system since 1996.<sup>81</sup> As in Germany, New Zealand voters have two votes: one to elect a local constituency representative, the second to choose a party. The first vote serves to attribute 69 of the 120 single-member seats in the New Zealand parliament (including those reserved for Maoris). The second vote is used to select the 51 other members from party lists, using a compensatory formula.<sup>82</sup>

The Scottish and Welsh regional parliaments established in 1998 as part of the process of devolution from the United Kingdom<sup>83</sup> elect their members using a system similar to the German model. In Scotland, 73 local representatives are elected on a first-past-the-post basis, whereas an additional 56 regional representatives—accounting for 43% of the total seats—are elected from closed party lists.

- *Mixed-member majoritarian systems*

Since 1994, Italy has also had a mixed-member system, but one that operates on a majoritarian basis. In Italy, 75% of seats in both the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate are reserved for single-member districts, whereas 25% are allocated on a PR basis.<sup>84</sup> Italy had a list PR system from 1946 to 1992.

#### 2.1.5. The impact of voting systems on voter representation

The type of plurality-majority or PR voting system used to elect representatives has an inevitable impact on the way in which groups in a society are represented, notably women, cultural communities, native nations, and the various political forces. The voting system can also affect regional representation in parliament.

The harshest and most common criticism of the first-past-the-post system has to do with its non-representative nature. No matter which alternative is chosen, a proportional system ensures a more faithful relationship between a party's share of the vote and its representation in parliament.<sup>85</sup> Certain alternatives are much less proportional than others, although though are preferred by some for reasons of political stability.

Proportional systems can also lead to increased representation of women and cultural communities because political parties can use party lists to ensure balanced representation. A 1997 international comparison of 162 countries found that all states where women accounted for 25% or more of elected representatives had proportional or mixed systems.<sup>86</sup> More recent statistics (2002; see the table “Women in Parliament” below), tend to support this finding, and one exception appears to confirm the rule. After the Québec by-elections of June 2002, women's representation in the National Assembly increased to 28%. Fully 35 of the 125 seats are now held by women elected under the first-past-the-post system, making the Assembly one of the British-style parliaments with the highest proportion of women members.

**Women in Parliament:**  
Percentage of Women Members in Single  
Chamber Parliaments and Lower Houses Worldwide

	<b>Voting System</b>	<b>Seats in the House</b>	<b>Women members</b>	<b>% of women</b>
Sweden	PR	349	149	42.7
Denmark	PR	179	68	38.0
Finland	PR	200	73	36.5
Norway	PR	165	60	36.4
Netherlands	PR	150	51	34
Germany	Compensatory mixed	666	211	31.7
Costa Rica	PR	57	18	31.6
New Zealand	Compensatory mixed	120	35	29.2
Spain	PR	350	99	28.3
<b>Québec</b>	<b>First past the post</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>28.0</b>
Austria	PR	183	49	26.8
Australia	Preferential (alternative)	150	38	25.3
Belgium	PR	150	35	23.3
Switzerland	PR	200	46	23.0
<b>Canada</b>	<b>First past the post</b>	<b>301</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>20.6</b>
Portugal	PR	230	44	19.1
United Kingdom	First past the post	659	118	17.9
United States	First past the post	435	61	14.0
Ireland	STV	166	22	13.3
Israel	PR	120	16	13.3
France	Two-round	577	71	12.3
Italy	Mixed majoritarian	630	62	9.8
Venezuela	Compensatory mixed	165	16	9.7
Japan	Mixed majoritarian	480	35	7.3

[Sources: Inter-Parliamentary Union, "Women in National Parliaments," Situation as of August 15, 2002: <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm>; National Assembly, "The Members: Present Composition of the Assembly," figures as of June 17, 2002: <http://www.assnat.qc.ca/eng/Membres/index.html>]

In a first-past-the-post system, the elected candidate must represent all voters in his or her constituency, even those who supported other candidates.<sup>87</sup> According to professors Jean-Marie Cotteret and Claude Emeri,<sup>88</sup> this may give voters an opportunity to get to know their candidate better, especially in less populated constituencies. "[F]rom this perspective, it could be said that members truly represent their electors. They know their constituents and their concerns and effectively channel their demands and opinions. Politically speaking, they are perfect barometers (our translation)."<sup>89</sup>

Duverger's "Laws":  
The influence of voting systems on the party system

In discussions of electoral systems, the issue of voting system impact on the number of parties is often raised. The fundamental terms of debate on this issue are set out in the classic analysis by the eminent French jurist and sociologist Maurice Duverger, despite the controversy it has generated since its publication in the 1950s. Duverger's analysis is summarized in three "laws" according to which the type of voting system determines the type of party system:

First-past-the-post systems tend to foster two-party systems (alternation of two main parties in power).

Proportional representation tends to foster multiple parties.

Two-round systems tend to foster multiple parties and encourage coalitions.

Duverger's laws were contested soon after their publication, first by jurist and political scientist Georges Lavau. According to Lavau, party systems are not the product of voting systems. On the contrary, they are primarily the result of socioeconomic, historical, and geographical factors, with voting systems being less important than one might think. Duverger quickly qualified his interpretation, admitting that social conditions, rather than voting systems, were the driving force behind political party formation. Instead, he suggested that voting systems act as a check, in the case of plurality-majority systems, or a catalyst, in the case of PR, the latter facilitating the multiplication of political parties, the former erecting obstacles in their path.

Despite these nuances, Duverger's laws continue to fuel debate, notably in light of the fact that the bipartism frequently observed in Great Britain and Canada no longer seems to be the rule in recent years.

[Sources: Jean-Marie Cotteret and Claude Emeri, *Les systèmes électoraux*, Paris: Presses universitaires de France, pp. 89–111; Maurice Duverger, *Les partis politiques*, Paris: Armand Colin, 1981; Maurice Duverger (ed.), *L'influence des systèmes électoraux sur la vie politique*, Paris: Armand Colin, 1950; Georges Lavau, *Partis politiques et réalités sociales*, Paris: Armand Colin, 1953; Pierre Martin, *Les systèmes électoraux et les modes de scrutin*, Paris: Montchrestien, 1997, pp. 115–148]

## 2.2. The Voting system in Québec

### 2.2.1. A brief history of the debate over electoral reform

With the majoritarian system that we have here, as in France, the sole mandate conferred by voters in each electoral district is decided by half of the votes plus one, whereas half of the votes minus one cast by those who take the time to express their

views on how the affairs of the country, their affairs, should be run are inevitably deprived of the legitimate representation to which they are entitled in Parliament. Is this not a blatant injustice (our translation)?<sup>90</sup>

This opinion, which was published in a 1902 newspaper (and despite its inaccurate description of the first-past-the-post system) is one of the sole pronouncements in favor of a PR system in Québec prior to the 1960s. Otherwise, PR generated little interest, with the exception of an attempt at municipal election reform in 1921 and a brief debate in the Legislative Assembly in 1922.<sup>91</sup>

Public interest in the electoral system tended to pick up when unusual events occurred, notably when the party with the most votes lost an election.<sup>92</sup> In Québec, the November 1998 election results revived this interest when the Liberal Party went down to defeat, despite winning a slightly higher percentage of the vote than the PQ. The Liberal Party took 43.5% of the vote and 38% of the seats, whereas the Parti Québécois won 42.9% of the vote and ended up with 61% of the seats. It was the third time that such an outcome had occurred since 1944. Moreover, as in 1994, Action démocratique du Québec only elected a single member, despite the fact that the party doubled its percentage of the popular vote to 11.8%.

Debate on the voting system got underway in earnest in the wake of the unfair results of the 1966 election (the Union Nationale won despite being outpolled 6% by the Liberals). Prior to this, the legitimacy of the system does not seem to have been called into question, despite the distorted results of the 1944 election. During the 20th century, debate over fair representation, on those occasions when it actually did spur a desire for change, led decision makers to change the electoral map rather than act on the voting system.

The following table provides a brief overview of the history of the debate in Québec.

<b>Event</b>	
1944 August 8	General election: Adélard Godbout's Liberals take the plurality of votes (39.4% and 40.7% of the seats), losing to the Union Nationale (UN) led by Maurice Duplessis (38% of the vote and 52.7% of the seats). Reactions were few with the exception of certain party newspapers, including that published by the Bloc populaire, which won only 4.4% of the seats despite its 14.4% share of the vote.
1965	The Rassemblement pour l'indépendance nationale (RIN) is the first political party to make PR-based electoral reform part of its platform.

- 1966 June 5 General election: Daniel Johnson's UN takes power with a much lower share of the vote (40.8% and 51.9% of seats) than Jean Lesage's Québec Liberal Party (47.3% of the vote and 46.3% of the seats). Variety of reactions, calls for a mixed system in certain papers.
- 1970 April 29 General election: Victory for Robert Bourassa's Liberals with an excessive margin of seats (45.4% of the vote and 66.7% of the seats). René Lévesque's Parti Québécois (PQ), second in terms of popular vote (23.1%), wins only 7 seats (6.5%), far fewer than the UN and Social Credit Rally. Indignant reactions in the newspapers.
- June The Committee on the National Assembly is asked to study electoral reform. First presentation of moderate regional proportional representation (MRPR) by professors Vincent Lemieux and Jean Crête of Université Laval.
- December Passage of the *Act respecting electoral districts*, abolishing protected "electoral districts," the 18 constituencies established under Section 80 of the *Constitutional Act, 1867*.
- 1972 November Drouin Committee report acknowledging that the voting system issue requires more study.
- December Premier Bourassa states that he is not convinced of the relevance of PR.
- Major electoral boundary reform intended to eliminate imbalances favorable to certain constituencies.
- 1973 October 29 General election: Victory of Bourassa's QLP, which wins 54.7% of the vote and 92.7% of the seats in the Assembly, a distortion (seat bonus) of 38%. The PQ increases its share of the vote from 23.1% to 30.2%, but nonetheless drops a seat.
- 1976 November 15 General election: PQ victory over the Bourassa Liberals. With 41.4% of the vote, the PQ wins 64.5% of the seats.  
Creation of the position of Minister of State for Electoral Reform.
- 1977 August Passage of the *Act to govern the financing of political parties*, which limited to voters the right to make contributions to political parties and set limits on maximum contributions.
- 1979 Establishment of the Commission de la représentation électorale (CRE), an independent organization responsible for drawing up the electoral map.
- April Robert Burns, Minister of State for Electoral Reform, tables the Green Paper on electoral reform, which includes a proposal for MRPR.
- May Minister Burns undertakes a series of regional consultations.
- August Robert Burns leaves politics before the reform process is complete.
- 1981 April 13 General election: The PQ under René Lévesque defeats Claude Ryan's Liberals and is reelected with 49.2% of the vote and 65.6% of the seats.

	June	The Secrétariat à la Réforme électorale reintroduces the idea of MRPR.
	November	Plans for a new voting system are mentioned in the inaugural address.
1982	June	Discussion paper released by Minister of State for Electoral Reform, Marc-André Bédard, presenting MRPR and mixed systems.
1983	June	Commission de la représentation électorale (CRE) is called upon to assess the possibilities for voting system reform.
1984	March	Final report of the CRE recommends adoption of the territorial proportional, a variant of MRPR.
1985		Robert Bourassa's Liberal Party withdraws support for the reform, which is shelved by the government. Reform plans go into "hibernation," as France Lavergne writes in a Master's thesis submitted in 1992.
1998	November 30	General election: PQ victory under Lucien Bouchard (42.9% of the vote and 60.8% of the seats) over Jean Charest's Liberals, despite a slight Liberal advance in the popular vote (43.5%, but 38.4% of the seats). Action démocratique only elects one member, despite winning 12% of the vote. Resurgence in interest for voting reform.
2001	December	The Committee on Institutions undertakes proceedings initiated by committee to study voting system reform.

### 2.2.2. Overview of solutions proposed for Québec: proportional and mixed systems

Since the 1970s, various avenues for reform in Québec have been proposed by the government, political parties, academics, and the media. Debate has covered the entire range of possibilities, including keeping the existing first-past-the-post system, although the idea of a Netherlands-style pure proportional system has very few supporters. However, some proposals, which we will examine in more detail in Section 4 (Prospects for Electoral Reform in Québec), have attracted special attention.

Two proposals for a list PR system were debated in Cabinet in the early 1990s. The first was the moderate regional proportional representation (MRPR) model suggested by Vincent Lemieux, Robert Burns, and Marc-André Bédard. Under this formula, the 122 existing seats in the National Assembly would have been regrouped into approximately 30 regional constituencies with three to seven members each. MRPR was judged "too moderate" by the \*Commission de la représentation électorale (CRE), which tabled its report in 1984. The CRE proposed a second alternative, the territorial proportional (TP) model. Under TP, every constituency would have had at least three seats—and as many

as 14 or 19 seats in highly populated areas—as well as a threshold of only 4% to facilitate the presence of “new political parties” in parliament.<sup>93</sup>

Another option that has attracted the interest of Québec decision makers and specialists is the personalized proportional representation model (PPR), or “German mixed-member system” mentioned in the 1972 Drouin Report and the 1979 green paper. Under this system, electors would have two votes, one for the candidate of their choice—as with the first-past-the-post system—and another for the party of their choice in a regional constituency. Moreover, numerous observers as well as Québec’s main parties have also evoked “3/4–1/4” and “2/3–1/3” mixed-member systems, since they make it possible to preserve single-member constituencies while adding a proportional element to the voting system. The 1979 green paper includes a proposal for a 2/3–1/3 mixed-member model.

Other political observers had suggested switching to the single transferable vote, a model seen as corresponding to certain characteristics of Québec and the rest of Canada.<sup>94</sup> At present, however, the trend seems to be in favor a mixed system similar to the German model.<sup>95</sup> The choices made in New Zealand, Scotland, and Wales as well as the publication of the Jenkins Report in England<sup>96</sup> undoubtedly contribute to this perception. In fact, each of the three parties represented in the National Assembly proposed adopting a version of the mixed-member model in their latest platforms.

After numerous changes to the electoral map<sup>97</sup> and the adoption of innovative legislation on party financing, Québec has yet to make a decision on voting system reform. The Committee on Institutions invites citizens to express their views on the issue.

### **3. Assessing Québec’s current voting system**

It will be helpful to start by reviewing the key characteristics of the first-past-the-post voting system and examining a number of facts associated with its use in Québec. Many of these characteristics resurface frequently in discussions on the topic both here and abroad, and some were evoked at the 1983 consultation of the Commission de la représentation électorale, the last held on the subject in Québec.

Some characteristics of the current system elicit support, while others draw criticism. In fact, many of these features are worth debating, as they may be seen as strengths or weaknesses, depending on the position citizens hold.

### 3.1. The simplicity of the current voting system and Québec political tradition

The current voting system is quite simple, and Québec voters have grown accustomed to it. It is easy to understand and easy to administer, something its proponents see as an indisputable advantage. To vote, one simply selects a candidate from among those listed on the ballot. Next, the winners are quickly determined, simply by counting the votes for each candidate and compiling the results on election night. The obvious relationship between constituencies and their members further exemplifies the simplicity of the system.

Quebecers are familiar with this voting system and have a good grasp of the phases of an election. On general election night, when voters hear the TV announcer utter the stock phrase “If the trend continues...” they know the score: One of the parties in the race is winning a majority of seats in the National Assembly and will form the next Government of Québec. Voters can thus clearly identify who will form the government as soon as the winning party is announced (while in a PR system, there is a delay as parties negotiate to form a coalition government). Voters also know whether their vote went to a member of the new government, a member of the opposition, or whether they “lost” their vote.

Tradition is another argument in favor of retaining the current system. Some citizens believe that our voting system should be maintained for this reason, despite its apparent decline and the increased popularity of PR worldwide.<sup>98</sup> But for advocates of reform, the “weight of tradition” is an obstacle to change: “This system has become a value with which society identifies (our translation),” states France Lavergne, author of a Master’s thesis on voting system reform in Québec.<sup>99</sup>

In fact, only a handful of parliaments worldwide use plurality-majority systems for legislative elections, while the vast majority of democracies rely on some form of proportional representation. The circle of states that elect representatives using the first-past-the-post system is essentially limited to the United Kingdom and certain former British colonies (including Québec and Canada), as well as the United States. Most western and northern European countries (including Austria, Belgium, Portugal, Spain, the Netherlands, and all the Scandinavian countries) use a list system, while others use a mixed system (Germany) or a single transferable vote system (Ireland). Moreover, in the final decades of the 20th century, many countries that had made the transition from a totalitarian to a democratic regime adopted proportional or mixed systems, notably some of the former communist states (including Poland and the Czech Republic<sup>100</sup>).

Some citizens believe that the plurality-majority system's long history, far from being a testament to its respectability, instead makes it an outdated system out of step with today's realities. Now in the 21st century, as Québec society becomes increasingly diverse—both socially and culturally—the move to a more proportional system of representation is justified, according to some.<sup>101</sup>

***Do you consider the current first-past-the-post voting system to be a simple one?***

***If the voting system were modified, would you want the new system to keep certain features of the current system? If so, which ones?***

### 3.2. The voter-member link

Québec's single-member constituencies (one elected member per constituency) makes it easy for voters to know who represents their "district." The current electoral system thus fosters a special link between voters and their members. In addition to acting on behalf of a certain party, members also view their role as that of intermediaries between citizens and the government (and more specifically between citizens and the bureaucracy). At any rate, members say they view their role as intermediary as highly important.<sup>102</sup>

A member's position in the National Assembly may undoubtedly affect this aspect of his or her work. One can see how members of the party in power might be in a position to more easily and effectively transmit the concerns of their fellow citizens to the appropriate minister.<sup>103</sup> Members of the Cabinet have an even greater advantage in this respect because as ministers they "are in the best position to see that the interests of their electors are duly considered in developing government policy," while "ordinary members must vie with civil servants, pressure groups, and other members to make their voices heard within the main decision-making bodies (our translation)."<sup>104</sup> Yet it could also be argued that "opposition members have more freedom than government members to represent their electors." Their position in the Assembly means they are not obligated to show solidarity with an unpopular government decision, whereas government members generally avoid criticizing the government in public. Still, government members may exercise considerable clout in private. "Thus, ministers [...] are more inclined to listen to their grievances, and the ruling party caucus can be used to advantage to halt the government machine or spur it on (our translation)."<sup>105</sup>

But not all experts are convinced that voters need to identify with their constituency and member. Referring to a poll conducted by the Secrétariat à la réforme électorale in

1984, Vincent Lemieux maintains that this need is an illusion and that things have not changed much since 1985, to the extent that the public has manifested a certain degree of disinterest in politics. The poll in question showed that citizens had few personal contacts with their members.<sup>106</sup> Louis Massicotte, a voting system expert and professor of political science at Université de Montréal, believes that voter-member ties do exist outside large urban centers, “where citizens have easier access to government services (our translation).”<sup>107</sup>

Some also wonder whether a single person can represent all the citizens in a constituency.<sup>108</sup> As noted at the 1983 CRE consultation, voters siding with a particular party may not feel adequately represented by a member from another party and may even take their concerns to the representative of another constituency. Sometimes, “in regions with a high concentration of members from the same party, voters may have to travel great distances (our translation).”<sup>109</sup> At the same consultation, some also criticized the fact that member areas of concern were limited to the interests of their own constituency (local interests) and urged the creation of some form of intra- or interregional dialog.<sup>110</sup>

***Do you know the name of your constituency?***

***Do you know who your member is? Have you ever contacted your member for any reason?***

***Can a member speak on behalf of voters who supported a party other than his or her own?***

### 3.3. Constituency size and electoral boundaries

Among the advantages of the current single-member system mentioned at the 1983 CRE consultation was the fact that under this system, constituencies can be made small enough to maintain relative demographic, socioeconomic, and geographic homogeneity. This purportedly helps electors identify with their “district” and member<sup>111</sup> and encourages members to act as spokespersons in the Assembly on behalf of a district, locality, or region. Under the current system, representation is based on the territory and population of a constituency, rather than the interests and orientations of specific groups in society.

Yet some believe that voter identification with the traditional “district” is a myth and is rarely discernible, except at election time. They see electoral boundaries as artificial and neglectful of cultural, social, economic, and geographic realities. A “district” is “an area useful only in electing members, with no relationship to real life (our

translation),”<sup>112</sup> especially in large cities. In Montréal and Québec City, for instance, living on one side of the street or the other can change a person’s constituency, after redistribution of the electoral map.<sup>113</sup> In short, critics contend that traditional constituencies are outdated and out of sync with today’s realities.

*Do you feel a sense of belonging to your constituency?*

*Which territory do you feel most attached to?*

*Your municipality?*

*Your constituency?*

*Your region?*

*Another territory? Please specify:*

*Do you feel that the existing electoral map and voting system benefits certain areas (urban centers like Montréal and Québec City, certain regions, etc.)? If so, which ones?*

### 3.4. Government effectiveness and stability

First-past-the-post advocates argue that by giving the winning party a clear majority in most cases, plurality-majority elections guarantee strong, stable, effective governments that last, whereas the coalition governments favored by PR are more fragile.<sup>114</sup> Defenders of the current system believe that the plurality of house seats earned by the winning party in elections is enough to guarantee government legitimacy, despite the resulting distortion of popular will. They say that the government majority in the Assembly leaves the majority party completely free to govern effectively, since it can develop policies without having to negotiate the approval of one or more other parties. Ostensibly, this also makes it easier for the majority party to carry out its program.

But opponents view the frequent parliamentary majorities under this system as a drawback rather than an advantage. They believe that weaker majorities would lead to greater consensus and the revitalization of the member’s role as legislator and regulator. As for the argument that elections serve less to elect a representative parliament than to elect a stable, functional government.<sup>115</sup> Claude Ryan recently rejected this claim, asserting that a strong, stable government was possible without elections. Ryan, a former minister and editor of *Le Devoir*, and ex-leader of the QLP, places the priority on the representation of the popular will.<sup>116</sup> In addition, certain participants in the 1983 CRE

consultations believed that social stability should be given just as much weight as political stability.<sup>117</sup>

Some critics actually maintain that plurality-majority systems can breed their own brand of political instability. The slightest change in voter opinion can send the governing party into opposition (for example, if party support slips from 52% to 48% and it loses the elections). The new party in power can then completely abandon projects launched by the old government and steer an entirely new course, even if variations in public opinion are minimal. These same critics assert that PR coalition governments allow for less radical change and promote continuity in the development of laws and policies.<sup>118</sup>

Between 1960 and 1998, Québec government terms in office lasted an average of 3.8 years. Between 1976 and 1998, governing parties remained in power about four and a half years.

***In your view, should a voting system result in the formation of a strong and effective government?***

***Do you think that the current first-past-the-post system is the best way to ensure the formation of a stable and effective government?***

### 3.5. Responsible representatives and government

In a plurality-majority system, it is easy to identify the people behind government policies. At election time, voters can deliver a verdict on how the party in power has administered public affairs by voting for it or another party.

For its proponents, this is one of the main advantages of the system.<sup>119</sup> Even supporters of the proportional system seem to agree. Among them are Professor Arend Lijphart, who sees in it the virtue of an electoral system in which two parties compete: “What two-party systems do excel in [...] is clear government accountability: Voters know that the governing party is responsible for past government performance, and they can decisively return this party to power or replace it with the other party.”<sup>120</sup>

***At election time, is it important for you to know who is responsible for the political decisions that concern you and to be able to express your opinion on their performance by casting your ballot? If so, do you believe that the current system allows you to clearly express your position on the policies of the government in power?***

*Do you think that the current voting system ensures that government representatives are held accountable for their election promises?*

### 3.6. Distortions in representation

As we have seen, the main criticisms of the plurality-majority system involve its lack of representativity and the distortions it creates. The party that wins a majority of votes often obtains a number of seats that is vastly disproportionate to the number of votes in its favor. A case often cited in Québec is that of the 1973 election, when the liberals took 93% of the seats after receiving only 55% of the vote.

For opponents of the current system, such imbalances between the number of votes and the number of seats obtained fly in the face of a democratic regime. Some believe they cast doubt on government legitimacy.<sup>121</sup>

This voting system can also create surprises by “reversing” voting results and preventing the party with the most popular support from taking power. This occurred as recently as 1998, when the Liberal Party claimed 43.5% of the popular vote and the Parti Québécois won 42.9% but took 76 of 125 Assembly seats and formed the government.

Due to the winner’s bonus in seats, the first-past-the-post system also hinders the emergence of third parties and the expression of diverse ideological currents within the National Assembly. In this system, small parties cannot obtain a place in Parliament unless their support is concentrated in certain regions,<sup>122</sup> while those with supporters scattered throughout Québec have almost no chance of being represented in the Assembly.

In fact, the current situation puts more than third parties at a disadvantage. In Québec, the electoral map results in a permanent distortion in favor of one the two large parties to the detriment of the other, contend professors Louis Massicotte and André Blais of Université de Montréal. Massicotte, who has christened this phenomenon “linguistic gerrymandering,” explains that massive support for the Liberal Party by the anglophone minority concentrated in certain regions upsets the proper functioning of a first-past-the-post system. While such a system theoretically favors large parties to the detriment of small ones, it nevertheless does not provide any exclusive structural benefits for any particular party. In the particular case of Québec, however, one of the two, dominant parties is virtually guaranteed to lose the election—even if it receives more votes—if its lead over the other party falls below a certain threshold, i.e., approximately 7.5% of the popular vote (approximately 300,000 votes), according to the calculations of Massicotte and Blais. This was the case for the Liberal Party in 1998, and also explains the “bizarre” results of 1944 and 1966. “To repeat the horse racing analogy that gave rise to the

expression ‘first past the post,’ there’s a race, and the race seems fair, but one of the two favorites is running on lead feet (our translation),” explains Massicotte with irony.<sup>123</sup>

In response to criticism regarding unequal representation, defenders of the plurality-majority system say that voter representation is ensured by the parties. In Québec, the Parti Québécois and the Liberal Party, which have dominated Québec’s political scene since the 1970s, may be viewed as broad coalitions of party members with different origins and with views that their leaders work hard to reconcile within the parties.<sup>124</sup>

This is supposed to compensate, in a certain way, for the limited choice many voters feel they have at election time and, according to some observers, encourages citizens to join the parties. At the 1983 consultation, members of Québec’s cultural communities pointed out that the system allowed them to be represented by a party, preventing them from being confined to a ghetto.<sup>125</sup> In sum, political parties—not elected officials—guarantee fair representation in government .

*Under the first-past-the-post system, a party can win a majority of seats and form the government without winning a majority of votes. Do you find this acceptable or unacceptable?*

*The first-past-the-post system favors the party in power in the National Assembly by securing it additional seats at the expense of the opposition party and smaller third parties. Do you find this acceptable or unacceptable?*

*Under the first-past-the-post system, are voter aspirations reflected in the composition of the National Assembly?*

*Do you believe that Québec voters suffer from a “democratic deficit?”*

### 3.7. Third parties and “strategic voting”

The threshold a party must attain to achieve representation in a plurality-majority system is very high. In fact, it may take up to 35% of the votes or more to win a seat in parliament, while the threshold is often around 5% in proportional systems.<sup>126</sup> This automatically eliminates most third parties and gives new movements almost no chance of being heard unless support for a small party is concentrated in one region. But where proponents of the proportional system see injustice, defenders of the current system see its virtue as a moderator of political forces. In particular, they argue that plurality-

majority systems discourage extremist groups from seeking election. They also contend that “since each of the two main parties must seek the support of undecided and moderate electors in order to beat its competitor, party stances are generally moderate (our translation).<sup>127,</sup>”

In Québec, polls tend to confirm that the voting system works to the advantage of large parties and to the detriment of small ones. Third parties have consistently received greater support in the polls than in elections over a good number of years, since the fear of “losing one’s vote” encourages electors to “vote strategically.<sup>128,</sup>”

This system can also lead to a large number of “wasted” votes. To take an extreme example, in a two-candidate contest, 49% of the votes could be “wasted.” This situation could cause citizens to lose interest in elections.<sup>129</sup>

***Do you think that the existing system hinders the emergence of new or fringe parties?***

***Have you ever voted for a different party than the one you supported (or spoiled your ballot) because you felt that the party you preferred had no chance of electing its candidate or forming a government?***

### 3.8. Representation of women

Data tends to show that the plurality-majority system is an obstacle to women seeking election. A proportional voting system might be a way to increase the number of women in the National Assembly. Still, in 2002 women members accounted for 28% of the members of the National Assembly, making it one of the British-style parliaments with the highest proportion of women.<sup>130</sup>

But the fair representation of women may depend on factors other than the voting system, such as society’s political habits and the role of political parties. The way parties select candidates is thus an important consideration. For example, there was a time when women candidates were given constituencies that were “lost in advance,” while parties reserved “safe seats” for men, an outdated practice that is now virtually nonexistent.<sup>131</sup> In addition, the more women candidates the parties present, the greater the chances of women being elected.<sup>132</sup> Furthermore, PR does not guarantee an increase in the number of women candidates,<sup>133</sup> although it may promote it. It should also be added that more women in Parliament does not necessarily mean more women in the Cabinet.<sup>134</sup>

***What would be the best way to maintain or increase the number of women members in the National Assembly? Are such measures necessary?***

### 3.9. Representation of natives and minorities

Spokespersons for native nations and linguistic and cultural minorities are concerned by the underrepresentation of these groups in parliament in a plurality-majority system. PR and a lower threshold (number of votes needed for election) may be ways to increase the chances of native peoples and minorities winning a seat in the National Assembly. However, some believe that these tools are not enough to ensure that the opinions of various groups regarding the laws and policies that affect them are heard.

There are approximately 78,000 natives (Amerindians and Inuit) in Québec, or about 1% of the population.<sup>135</sup> Native peoples and many other observers view native communities as different, due to their historic status as the country's first nations. Some have suggested that a single-member seat be set aside for them in the National Assembly, since the location of their communities and their small population prevent them from electing a representative by PR. This was one of the suggestions of the Commission de la représentation in 1984.<sup>136</sup>

In some countries, seats are reserved to ensure that specific groups are represented, such as the Hungarian and Italian minorities in Slovenia.<sup>137</sup> In New Zealand, seats are set aside for the Maori, who account for approximately 14.5% of the total population<sup>138</sup>—a greater proportion than Québec's natives—to allow them to win seats in a proportional system. There are currently seven Maori seats in New Zealand's parliament. This number varies according to the number of Maori voters, who may choose to register on either the Maori voters list or the “general list.”<sup>139</sup>

For some, however, measures intended to integrate citizens of certain groups into the political scene or ensure their representation in parliament are incompatible with the “modern concept of representation, in which elected officials represent the nation (our translation)” rather than certain sectors or communities.<sup>140</sup>

In Québec, minority issues are obviously linked to the position of the anglophone community and cultural communities. Citizens have pointed out that anglophones and other minorities are underrepresented in the National Assembly.<sup>141</sup>

***Should steps be taken to ensure the representation of natives and linguistic and cultural minorities in the National Assembly?***

## 4. Prospects for electoral reform in Québec

In this chapter, we will seek to define current public expectations concerning possible voting system reform by examining the characteristics of proportional and mixed representation systems. Examples are taken specifically from certain proposals for reform made in Québec over the last thirty some years.

### 4.1. Proportional systems proposed in québec

#### 4.1.1. List systems: moderate regional proportional and territorial proportional representation

Moderate regional proportional representation (MRPR) and territorial proportional (TP) representation were the two list PR models considered during attempts at reform in the early 1980s in Québec. MRPR is inspired by formulas already used in countries that have adopted a PR system (such as Belgium, Sweden, Austria, and Norway). The TP system is a variant of MRPR.

First, we will look at **moderate regional proportional representation** (MRPR). This voting system is

- **Proportional** because all seats in the National Assembly are allocated to political parties in proportion to their share of the popular vote (according to one of the PR allocation methods<sup>142</sup>)
- **Regional** because members are elected in *regional* constituencies that are larger than current constituencies and are each represented by several members, and
- **Moderate** because the party with most votes in the election receives a “winner’s bonus” of 5% to 10% in terms of seats, and because the number of seats per constituency is limited (three to five in general and sometimes as many as seven, though some countries that use PR may have districts with 15 members or more)

According to proponents of this formula, the limited number of seats per region makes it possible to maintain the current number of seats in the National Assembly while “moderating the possible effects of a pure proportional system.” For example, in a five-

seat constituency, a party could only elect candidates who had received at least 15% of the votes. This helps prevent the proliferation of small parties and “eliminates the risk of political fragmentation (our translation).”<sup>143</sup>

MRPR operates on the following principles:

- The National Assembly maintains its current 120 seats (despite the fact that this number was 122 when the project was first presented ) divided among approximately 30 regional constituencies and two single-member constituencies (in order to take into account the special situations of Îles-de-la-Madeleine and Nouveau-Québec—corresponding in part to the current Nord-du-Québec region).
- On the ballot, the names of the political parties are shown along with a list of the candidates for each party in the party’s order of preference.
- Voters have two votes: They vote for a party *and* for one of the candidates on one of the party lists (voters may choose a candidate from any party, not necessarily the party they voted for<sup>144</sup>).
- Seats are allotted to the parties based on the number of votes for each party, using the “highest average technique<sup>145</sup>” .
- Within each party list, seats are allotted to the candidates who received the most individual votes.<sup>146</sup>

It seems as though the inventors of this system wanted to allay the fears of PR opponents through “moderation” mechanisms while offering PR supporters a voting system reform that, at least in appearance, goes further than a mixed system that maintains a large number of single-member constituencies.<sup>147</sup>

The second list PR proposal is the **territorial proportional** (TP), a model promoted by the \*Commission de la représentation électorale (CRE) in 1984. Information on the characteristics of this system is taken from a document published that year by the CRE.

This voting system is

- **Proportional** because it corrects the distortions of the plurality-majority system “without creating two categories of members, as is the case in mixed systems (our translation).”<sup>148</sup>

- **Territorial** rather than regional because CRE representatives did not subscribe to the idea that all of Québec can be divided into “natural regions” (an idea expressed in MRPR proposals), instead considering Québec to be divided into “a multitude of territorial units” for various purposes and “without any coherent overall logic. The voting system recommended by the CRE is said to be territorial because it includes constituencies that are not necessarily “regions.”<sup>149</sup>”

TP would use open lists and allow “panachage,” enabling voters to choose their own candidates from among those appearing on the lists. Electors would vote as follows:

- The first vote, which is mandatory, is for a party (or an independent candidate).
- If voters approve of the entire list of candidates from the party they selected in the first vote, they make no other marks on the ballot. But they can also vote for their favorite candidates, so long as they do not exceed the number of seats to be filled in their constituency. These candidates can be chosen from any party list (\*panachage).

The CRE aims to maintain a number of seats in the Assembly as close as possible to the existing number, or between 118 and 127.<sup>150</sup> The threshold for election would be 4%. As for electoral boundaries, the CRE calls for the creation of constituencies much larger than the current ones. There would be two possibilities: constituencies of 3 to 14 seats or of 3 to 19 seats each. The number of seats would be higher in highly populated regions, which, according to the CRE, will encourage the emergence of new political trends without leading to chronic governmental instability.<sup>151</sup> In addition, a single-member seat would be reserved for native peoples.

The CRE further proposes that there no longer be any by-elections when seats are left vacant. A position left vacant following a member’s death or resignation would be filled by the next candidate on the same list from which the deceased or outgoing member was elected, thus a candidate from the same party.<sup>152</sup>

What would election results look like under an MRPR or TP model? In 1998, the Liberal Party and the Parti Québécois would have won roughly the same number of seats, with the “balance of power” lying with Action démocratique.<sup>153</sup> The exact number of members from each party depends on the method of calculation used. A simulation using older election results<sup>154</sup> shows that the liberals, not the Union Nationale, would have taken power in the 1966 election, in keeping with the popular vote. In 1976, the PQ

would have won exactly half the seats (55), the Liberal Party 37 seats, and the other opposition parties 18 seats.<sup>155</sup> The new system would thus have prevented the distortions characteristic of the first-past-the-post system and resulted in a more representative Assembly.

Also, in order to govern under this system, the party receiving the most votes in the 1998 election (QLP or PQ) would have had to form a \*coalition with the ADQ (or perhaps with another party, as this system may allow more parties to win seats). In Québec, citizens have never experienced this type of government. We must look to Ottawa for examples of what a coalition government might be. The Parliament of Canada saw several \*minority governments in 20th century periods when there were more MPs from the opposition parties than the party in power. During \*motions of non-confidence on important issues (such as budget votes), the government party ran the risk of losing power. This occurred in Ottawa in 1979 when Joe Clark's Progressive Conservative Party was defeated in a budget vote by the majority of MPs.<sup>156</sup>

A situation like this in the Assembly can force the governing party to cooperate with opposition parties to a certain extent and, conversely, force opposition parties to cooperate more with the government in order to ensure that their ideas are considered. Such a situation somewhat resembles that of the coalition governments in a number of European countries, except that coalitions in these countries are the norm, while here the objective is for a single party to win a majority of seats and govern alone.

One of the main criticisms of PR is the instability of coalition governments. It is true that ministerial stability is weaker in countries with PR systems than in those that elect their representatives under a plurality-majority system. However, while PR produces less stable governments, it does not necessarily result in poor governments or poor state management. In comparative research, Arend Lijphart, an eminent professor at the University of California in San Diego, suggests that these countries perform no worse in terms of such indicators as economic growth, inflation, unemployment, and law enforcement. "In other words, we can certainly demonstrate that PR shortens a government's lifespan, but not that long-term governments exercise power better (our translation)," writes Professor Louis Massicotte in support of Lijphart.<sup>157</sup>

Moreover, Vincent Lemieux believes that coalition governments have the advantage of being more consensus-based, adding that with PR, the opposition is generally more constructive because some opposition parties know that they may one day be called upon to govern in conjunction with government coalition parties.<sup>158</sup>

#### 4.1.2. The single transferable vote (STV) applied in Québec

Observers of different trends have suggested giving some thought to this voting system, especially Professor Vincent Lemieux, an electoral systems expert who actively contributed to the CRE’s work in 1983. In a 1977 article, Lemieux highlighted the relevance of this formula.<sup>159</sup> The single transferable voting system is the only proportional formula ever used in Canadian electoral history, specifically in Alberta and Manitoba from the 1920s to the 1950s.

Although relatively uncommon worldwide (only two countries use it in legislative elections: Ireland and Malta, both since the 1920s), this system produces fairer results than the current plurality-majority system (although results are less proportional than in list systems).

Voters indicate their favorite candidate on the ballot by putting a “1” next to his or her name. If they want, they can also mark their second choice, their third, and so on up to the number of seats to be filled in the constituency.

To be elected, a candidate must exceed a representation “quotient” (which is, in fact, a threshold) determined by dividing the number of votes in the constituency by the number of seats plus one, then adding one to the result, as follows:

$$\frac{\text{number of votes}}{\text{number of seats} + 1} + 1$$

For example, if there are 10,000 valid votes and three seats, the quotient is 2,501. The number of “1” choices per candidate is calculated. Candidates attaining the 2,501 vote threshold are elected.

Those who attain the quotient (with “first choice” votes) are elected. Votes are “transferred” in two cases:

- If no candidate is elected, the candidate with the fewest first choice votes is eliminated, and the second choice votes of his or her supporters are distributed to the remaining candidates.
- If a candidate receives enough votes to be elected, the candidate’s extra votes above the required threshold—or 2,501 in our example—are distributed to the second-choice candidates indicated on the ballots.

These steps are repeated until all constituency seats have been attributed.

Professor Lemieux believes that STV would meet the following three requirements for voting system reform:

- Fairer representation of the various political parties in the National Assembly than with the current system
- Adaptation to the geographic characteristics of Québec, where a number of regions have a low population density
- A certain degree of continuity with the current voting system<sup>160</sup>

A number of authors coincide in their assessment of the single transferable voting system, to the extent that it offers a balanced solution to the problems of the plurality-majority system by giving more proportional results while avoiding certain drawbacks noted by PR opponents. Jean-Pierre Derriennic, a political science professor at Université Laval, believes that STV “allows electors to vote calmly and wisely” and that it “promotes stable coalitions and large, moderate parties without completely depriving small parties of the chance to participate in political life (our translation).”<sup>161</sup> For political scientist Denis Monière, a professor at Université de Montréal, STV combines the advantages of both the plurality-majority system and PR, without the drawbacks of either. It gives voters considerable freedom and above all “allows all the subtleties of nationalism to be represented without engendering a runaway multiparty system (our translation).”<sup>162</sup>

Others are less enthusiastic. In its 1984 report, the CRE in fact expressed the opinion that implementing this system was “so complex that election officials and electors would have difficulty understanding it, particularly in terms of calculating seat allocation (our translation).”<sup>163</sup>

In the last legislative elections in Ireland (on May 17, 2002), Fianna Fáil (conservative) took 80 seats, Fine Gael (center right) 31, Labour 21, and the Progressive Democrats (liberal) 8.<sup>164</sup> As a result, Fianna Fáil again formed a coalition with the Progressive Democrats. This coalition government—which went from a minority (with 80 seats) to a majority (88 seats)—thus became the first to achieve reelection since 1969. Compared to the last general election in Québec, Fianna Fáil’s bonus in seats (obtained through transfer votes<sup>165</sup>) was much smaller than that obtained by the Parti Québécois in 1998. The PQ took 61% of the 125 seats in the National Assembly with 43% of the votes, while Fianna Fáil—which received approximately 41.5% of the votes—won 48% of the 166 seats in the *Dáil*.<sup>166</sup>

Would the single transferable vote work in Québec? Professor Lemieux believes that adopting this system would require redrawing constituencies three to five times larger than current ones, but “experience in Ireland nevertheless shows that the three, four, or five members for a single constituency generally divide up their constituency so that each represents a clearly defined section (our translation).”<sup>167</sup>

Let us imagine a hypothetical National Assembly that maintains 125 seats, but divided among Québec’s 17 administrative regions. This would give an average of seven seats per region (electoral boundaries and the exact number of seats per region could obviously be adjusted to take into account the population of each region, as well as other demographic and geographic factors).

Lemieux sees two additional advantages of STV, in terms of voter trust in elected officials. He points out that in Ireland, approximately 70% of voters “are represented by the person who was their first choice,” whereas in Canada, generally “less than half of all electors are represented by the person for whom they voted.” He also believes that systems like STV are better able to reconcile the demands of governance and representation “by making representation the first priority, as it should be (our translation),” he states.<sup>168</sup>

## 4.2. Mixed voting systems proposed for québec

Because it would maintain a link to the current system while ensuring proportionality by “compensation,” the German system is another option preferred by a number of experts.<sup>169</sup>

### 4.2.1. The compensatory mixed-member system, or “personalized proportional representation” (PPR)

Among the proposals described in the 1979 Green Paper is the “1/2–1/2 German mixed-member system.” Under this system, the National Assembly would have 220 seats, 110 corresponding to single-member constituencies—as in the current system—and 110 others divided among 28 regional constituencies. Each region would have several representatives, with the exact number established on a pro rata basis according to the size of the electorate.<sup>170</sup>

This system would give electors two votes:

- One for a candidate in a single-member constituency (in order to choose their local member, as in the current first-past-the-post system)

- *And* one for a party in a regional constituency (voters would chose from party according to the principle of the closed list). It is this second vote that would determines the total number of seats each party is entitled to in the Assembly and which would be used to elect regional members.

After counting list system votes received by each party in each regional constituency, regional seats are proportionally allocated according to the “highest average (d’Hondt) method.”<sup>171</sup> Next, the number of local (single-member) seats won by a party in a region is subtracted from the number of seats it is entitled to under the allocation calculation to obtain the final number of regional (proportional) seats it receives.<sup>172</sup>

In this way, the number of local seats a party obtains is compensated by a number of regional seats. This results in fairly proportional party representation in the Assembly, although the winning party may still receive a small bonus in seats. Parties that do not attain the 5% vote threshold in Québec (the same threshold as in the German Parliament) are not entitled to PR seats. In addition, cross-filing—which allows candidates to run both locally and regionally—is permitted only for party leaders.

According to a simulation presented in the 1979 Green Paper, application of Germany’s mixed-member system to the 1976 election would have resulted in the election of a Parti Québécois minority government, with the PQ receiving 44.6% of the seats.<sup>173</sup> A similar simulation applied to the 1998 election suggests that the two main parties would have again obtained an equivalent number of seats, with QLP’s share of seats rising from 38.4% (actual results) to 45.6%. ADQ’s share would have increased from 0.8% to 8.8%, and that of the PQ would have dropped from 60.8% to 45.6%.<sup>174</sup>

The hypothetical compensatory system described here was based on a 220 member National Assembly. It would also be possible to create a smaller Assembly, as New Zealand did in the 1990s when it replaced its first-past-the-post system with a German-inspired system. Normally, the New Zealand parliament has 120 seats. Of this number, 69 members are currently elected under to a plurality-majority system, and 51 others under a list system.<sup>175</sup>

Another option would be to create a system that retains the current total number of seats (125), by using the federal electoral boundaries for seats filled on a first-past-the-post basis (75 seats) and adding 50 seats filled through PR. In an article published in summer 2002, Professor Louis Massicotte suggests a system “in which 75 constituency representatives would sit alongside 50 list members distributed in a compensatory manner (our translation).”<sup>176</sup>

Other mixed systems with varying combinations of single-member and proportional seats have also been presented. One is the 2/3–1/3 “independent” mixed-member system discussed in the above-mentioned green paper, according to which the National Assembly would have approximately 160 seats, 110 of which would be filled on a first-past-the-post basis and 50 by PR. Québec would be divided into 110 single-member constituencies and 13 regional constituencies. Voters would have one local vote and one regional vote.

Applying the “independent” mixed system proposed in the green paper to the 1976 election, the portion of seats won by the Parti Québécois would drop slightly, from 64.6% to 59.1%, and that of the Liberal Party would rise from 23.6% to 28.9%. This formula would have allowed the two main parties to elect members in regions where they are not necessarily represented under the current system. Thus, in 1976, the PQ would have won a proportional seat in west Montréal, a region where it was absent, and the QLP would have taken one seat in the Laurentides-Lanaudière region and two on Montréal’s south shore. Overall, this formula would have given 23 additional seats to the PQ, 20 to the QLP, and 6 to the Union Nationale (in a 159 seat Assembly<sup>177</sup>).

Such a system could thus provide more balanced representation for the main parties by allowing them to elect members outside their “strongholds.” In addition, it could ensure the formation of a larger opposition, whether opposition members belonged to a main party or a third party.

In a hypothetical Parliament of 185 members with 60 proportional seats, the QLP’s share of seats would have risen from 38.4% to 39.5% in the 1998 election; ADQ’s share would have risen from 0.8% to 3.8%, and the PQ would have formed a majority government with 56.6% of the seats instead of 60.8%. Note that the formula is of little benefit to ADQ, a third party whose share of seats would have remained far below its share of votes.<sup>178</sup>

### 4.3. Effects of a proportional or mixed voting system and related considerations

#### 4.3.1. Electoral threshold

To prevent certain parties with marginal status or very limited support from being represented in the National Assembly, a minimum vote threshold can be established for electing candidates, thereby attenuating one of the effects of proportional representation (something certain citizens consider desirable). This percentage of required votes is also designed to prevent political fragmentation.

*Would you be in favor of imposing an electoral threshold in order to prevent the presence of certain fringe parties in the National Assembly and avoid political fragmentation? If so, should the threshold be low, high, or moderate?*

4.3.2. The possibility of having two votes

*When a general election is held, would you like to be able to cast two separate votes, one for the candidate in your constituency and a second for the party you support (even if it is different from that of your local candidate)?*

4.3.3. An open or closed list?

In a proportional system, there are several seats to be filled in each constituency. Each party presents a list of candidates for the seats available. There are closed lists (where you vote for a party and accept the candidates in the order the party presents them) or open lists (where you yourself select the candidate(s) of your choice from the list).

*If your ballot showed lists of candidates from the various parties, would you be inclined to*

*Vote directly for the party and accept the candidates in the order the party presents them?*

*Vote for the candidates from the same party, but in the order you prefer?*

*Vote for candidates from any party, according to your preferences?*

4.3.4. Electoral boundaries in a proportional system

In a proportional system, electoral districts would have to be larger than under the current system, which has a single member per constituency. Each new “district” would be represented by several members. How would the boundaries of these electoral districts be determined?

*Can Québec be divided into “natural regions” with which citizens identify? If so, is it possible to redraw electoral boundaries in a way that reflects the boundaries of these regions?*

*If proportional representation were adopted, would it be suitable to create electoral districts corresponding to Québec’s 17 existing administrative regions?*

*Would there be disadvantages to creating larger districts*

*For the public?*

*For the elected members?*

#### 4.3.5. Coalition governments

*Would a new voting system change the way governments are formed and the way they govern?*

*Would a coalition government be less effective and less stable than a government elected under the first-past-the-post system?*

*Would the opposition be stronger and more effective in a proportional (or mixed) system?*

#### 4.3.6. Methods of calculation

*Does the complexity of the methods used to allocate seats under a proportional or mixed system create an obstacle to the adoption of a new system?*

#### 4.3.7. Two types of members?

*In a system that elects both “constituency” representatives and “additional” representatives, would the latter have a different role than the former?*

#### 4.3.8. Double candidacy

*If we adopted a mixed system, should candidates have the right to run both locally and on the party list?*

#### 4.3.9. The number of members in the National Assembly

At present, there are 125 seats in the National Assembly. The adoption of a more proportional system (list-based or mixed) would require larger constituencies and could also entail the addition of extra seats to ensure greater proportionality. The greater the number of elected members, the greater the proportionality of the Assembly.

*Would you agree to increase the number of members from the present 125 in order to increase the proportionality of the National Assembly? If so, how many additional seats would you like to see added?*

#### 4.3.10. Party representation at the National Assembly

*Would the major parties benefit from the introduction of a proportional or mixed system?*

*Would a proportional or mixed system automatically improve small party representation in the National Assembly?*

#### 4.3.11. The choice of a voting system

*After reflecting on the various options available, how would you like to see your elected representatives chosen?*

- *The current first-past-the-post system?*
- *Another winner-take-all system, whether*
- *A two-round system?*
- *A system under which candidates are ranked by order of preference to elect a single member per riding, as in the current system?*

- *A system that elects an assembly whose makeup more accurately reflects the percentage of votes obtained by each party, whether:*
- *A system in which you choose from a list of candidates?*
- *A system in which you rank candidates by order of preference to elect a number of members in each riding?*
- *A mixed system under which you could elect members as you do presently and also on a proportional basis?*
  
- *Another solution?*

## **5. GLOSSARY<sup>179</sup>**

See terms with an asterisk (\*) in the text.

### **Chief Electoral Officer (Office of the)**

The Québec government agency responsible for administering elections and the permanent list of electors as well as for watching over party financing and overseeing election expenses at both the provincial level and in cities of 10,000 people and over.

### **Coalition**

An alliance of two or more groups or political parties that join forces to form a government.

### **Commission de la représentation électorale (CRE)**

A Québec government body responsible for drawing up the electoral map. The Chief Electoral Officer of Québec is also the president of the CRE.

### **District Magnitude**

The average number of seats attributed per electoral district. Increasing this number increases the proportionality of the electoral system.

## **Electoral Division**

A geographical division for electoral purposes within which voters elect one or more candidates to represent them in a parliamentary assembly. More commonly known as a constituency, electoral district, or riding. Most states are divided into multiple electoral districts. However, certain countries have a single electoral district used to allocate list seats (Israel).

Electoral divisions are **single member** if they elect a single representative or **multi-member** if they elect several. In Québec, the official term for electoral division in use prior to 1979 was “electoral district.” Prior to 1866, the term used was electoral county.

## **First-past-the-post system**

The system used in Québec and the rest of Canada (federal parliament and the provinces), the United States, India, and the United Kingdom.

## **Gerrymandering**

Technique developed by former Massachusetts governor Elbridge Gerry that involves deliberately drawing electoral boundaries to favor a particular political party by including zones of party supporters and excluding zones of party opponents. The districts created by Gerry looked like salamanders, hence the term “gerrymandering.”

## **List, Party**

List of candidates selected by a political party to run for election under its banner and presented to voters in a party list proportional representation system. Such lists can be “open” or “closed.”

## **List, Closed**

Variant of a party list proportional representation system in which electors must vote for a complete party list and cannot express a preference for any particular candidate.

## **List, Open**

Variant of a party list proportional representation system in which voters can rank candidates from one or more parties by order of preference. Open lists may also permit “\*cross-party voting,” or “panachage.”

## **Minority government**

Government formed by a party that does not hold a majority of seats in the Assembly.

## **Mixed system**

Also known as a parallel or mixed-member system, a mixed system combines elements of more than one voting system. The most common type combines elements of both plurality-majority and proportional systems.

## **Motion of non-confidence**

Motion requesting the Assembly to withdraw its confidence in the Conseil Éxecutif and demand the resignation of the premier and the government.

## **National Assembly**

Name of the sole house of the Parliament of Québec since 1968. The National Assembly of Québec has 125 members representing an equal number of electoral divisions. Members have three principal responsibilities: passing legislation, monitoring government activity, and representing their electors.

## **Panachage**

In party list proportional representation, a rule allowing electors to vote for more than one candidate and to select candidates from different party lists.

## **Plurality of votes**

Results of an election in which a candidate or party wins more votes than their opponents, but fewer than 50% of all votes cast.

## **Personalized proportional representation**

Technical name for the German voting system.

## **Preferential vote**

### **(Preferential plurality-majority system)**

A system used in single-member districts under which voters use numbers to rank their preferences for candidates or political parties. In Australia, this system is known as the alternative vote.

## **Proportional allocation methods**

In a party list proportional representation system, there are several methods of allocating seats from party lists according to the popular vote obtained. With a divisor method, the number of votes per list is divided by a series of numbers. Using the d'Hondt method (named after its founder, Belgian statistician Victor d'Hondt), the number of votes obtained by each party list is divided by 1, 2, 3, 4, etc., and the results are then ranked from highest to lowest. Starting with the party that obtained the highest quotient, seats are subsequently allocated until all available seats have been distributed. The d'Hondt method tends to favor larger parties. The other method—the Sainte-Laguë method—uses a different series of divisors (1,3,5,7) and tends to benefit smaller parties. The Scandinavian countries use a modified version of the Sainte-Laguë method employing the divisors 1,4,3,5, etc. It is less biased in favor of smaller parties and does not disadvantage mid-sized parties. In short, outcomes achieved under proportional representation may vary with the mathematical methods used.

## **Proportional representation (PR)**

Any system designed to ensure a direct and proportional relationship between a party's share of the votes and its share of seats. Electoral legislation in effect in a PR system includes a seat allocation rule to ensure proportionality. There are three main categories of PR: single transferable vote systems; party list systems (with divisors and quotients), which are widely used in continental Europe; and compensatory proportional systems (notably used in Germany).

## **Referendum**

A consultative referendum gives voters the opportunity to express their opinion on an idea or measure they wish to introduce. The public is called upon to give its view. Legally, consultative referendums are not binding on the government, but voter opinion carries considerable political weight. In a ratification referendum, citizens are called upon to give final approval to a government bill or measure, participating directly in the legislative process. These consultations are also known as binding referendums because the government must abide by the result. In Québec, referendums are purely consultative.

## **Representative democracy**

Conception of democracy under which people choose representatives to exercise power on their behalf. This is the basis of the political system in Québec and the rest of Canada.

## **Representativity**

Term used to describe the situation of an elected official or an institution such as the National Assembly that speaks or acts on behalf of a large number of people and enjoys excellent credibility in the eyes of the public.

## **Single transferable vote (Hare system)**

A proportional voting system that uses preferential voting to elect candidates in multi-member districts. Votes obtained in excess of a candidate's electoral quotient are allocated to other candidates. This system is used in Ireland.

## **Threshold**

The minimum proportion of votes a party must obtain in a proportional system to have seats allocated in the parliamentary assembly.

## **Two-round voting system**

System in which electors vote a second time if none of the candidates obtain an absolute majority (50% of votes + 1) in the first round of voting. France has used this system virtually without interruption since 1958. Also known as a run-off or double ballot system.

## **Vote**

The act of casting or recording votes. The day of the vote is known as election day or polling day.

## **Voter turnout**

The percentage of voters who actually vote in an election in relation to the number registered on the permanent list of electors.

## Voting system

The rules and regulations that govern how a vote is held. In simple terms, the voting system determines how candidates are elected. There are three main categories of voting systems: plurality-majority systems, proportional representation systems, and semi-proportional or mixed systems.

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## **Selected Websites**

There are many online resources on electoral and voting systems. Here are some of them:

*National Assembly:* **<http://www.assnat.qc.ca/>**

Watch for information on the Committee on Institutions proceedings on voting system reform.

*The Center for Voting and Democracy:* **<http://www.fairvote.org/>**

The main organization promoting U.S. electoral system reform. This site includes information on the preferential vote (“instant runoff voting”) and the single transferable vote.

*Electoral Reform Society:* **<http://www.electoral-reform.org.uk/>**

British organization founded in 1884 to promote electoral system reform. The site includes information on the single transferable vote and other systems.

*The International Foundation for Election Systems (IFES):* **<http://www.ifes.org/>**

Organization whose mission is to provide assistance with monitoring, supporting, and strengthening electoral processes worldwide.

*The International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA):* **<http://www.idea.int>**

Organization whose mission is to promote viable democracy worldwide, as well as improving and strengthening electoral processes. In particular, the site provides extensive data on voter turnout and women’s representation in countries around the world.

*Lijphart Election Archive:* **<http://dodgson.ucsd.edu/lij/>**

Detailed information on the results of some 350 elections in the national legislatures of 36 countries.

*Minister responsible for the Reform of Democratic Institutions:*

**<http://www.pouvoircitoyen.com>**

The minister’s site includes a number of links to other sites providing information and opinions on democratic institutions and political systems.

*Mouvement Démocratie nouvelle:* **<http://www.democratie-nouvelle.qc.ca/>**

Movement in favor of voting system reform in Québec .

*Fair Vote Canada:* **<http://www.fairvotecanada.org>**

*Administration and Cost of Elections (ACE) Project:* **<http://www.aceproject.org>**

Comparative information and data on the various aspects of electoral processes. This is a joint project of IFES, International IDEA, and the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

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1 The last time independent candidates were elected in a general election was in 1966 (Office of the  
Chief Electoral Officer, “Répartition des sièges à l’Assemblée nationale à la suite des élections  
générales 1966–1998.” [http://www.dgeq.qc.ca/information/tab\\_rep\\_ass\\_nat\\_66-98.fr.html](http://www.dgeq.qc.ca/information/tab_rep_ass_nat_66-98.fr.html)

2 Information on the member’s role is available on the National Assembly Website at  
<http://www.assnat.qc.ca/eng/Assemblee/deputes.html>.

3 See Manon Tremblay, *Que font-elles en politique?*, Sainte-Foy, Les Presses de l’Université Laval,  
1995, pp. 59–61. The results of Tremblay’s study of how National Assembly members and  
Québec representatives in the House of Commons in Ottawa perceive their role seem to confirm  
previous studies conducted in Canada and other countries with British-style parliamentary  
systems. See also Guy Lachapelle et al., *The Quebec Democracy: Structures, Processes and  
Policies*, Toronto, McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1993, pp. 217–218.

4 These polls of members ostensibly confirmed “the idea that the intermediary function is perhaps  
the very essence of a political mandate, even more so at the provincial level where the capital and  
the constituency seem closer than at the federal level” (Tremblay, *op. cit.*, p. 60).

5 France Lavergne, *Hibernation de la réforme du mode de scrutin au Québec*, Master’s thesis  
submitted in 1992, Faculté des sciences sociales, Université Laval.

6 Professor Milner teaches political science at Collège Vanier, Université Laval, and Université de  
Umea (Sweden).

7 Henry Milner, “Obstacles to Electoral Reform in Canada,” *The American Review of Canadian  
Studies*, vol. 24, no. 1, spring 1994, p. 51.)

8 The Parti Québécois 2000 program still advocates a compensatory proportional system retaining  
members elected under the current system while adjusting the number of members from each party  
based on their lack of representation in certain regions. In their October 2000 convention, the  
liberals approved a resolution in support of a reform introducing “elements of a proportional  
system.” The 2001 ADQ program is similar, suggesting that the current system be changed to  
include a proportional component.

9 For example, the Green Party of Québec mentioned this in its December 2001 program outline, as  
did Union des forces progressistes (UFP), for which Paul Cliche is a spokesperson (Cliche ran  
independently in the Mercier by-election on April 9, 2001). In its June 2002 platform, UFP  
recommended the adoption of a proportional voting system.

10 The poll in question concerned the election of members to the House of Commons in Ottawa.  
Since the voting system is the same as that used in Québec, these figures are indicative of  
Quebecers’ current opinion of the first-past-the-post system. By comparison, in 1990, 33% of  
Quebecers (answering the same question) considered the system “acceptable” in a poll conducted  
by the Royal Commission on Electoral Reform and Party Financing. In 2000, an additional 12%  
were opposed to the situation (Paul Howe and David Northrup, “Strengthening Canadian  
Democracy,” *IRPP Policy Matters*, vol. 1, no. 5, July 2000, 13–16 and 68–71. See also André  
Blais and Elisabeth Gidengil, *Making Representative Democracy Work: The Views of Canadians*,  
Research Studies, vol. 17, Toronto and Oxford, Dundurn Press/Montréal, Wilson & Lafleur, 1991,  
pp. 61–66).

11 A study regarding certain aspects of the ADQ’s political program. Michel Corbeil, “Sondage  
SOM-*La Presse-Le Soleil*: Qui a peur de l’ADQ?” *Le Soleil*, May 11, 2002, p. A3.

12 Residents of Western Canada are more in favor of proportional and preferential voting systems.  
Fabien Deglise, “Sondage Environics-Focus: L’Ouest plus ouvert au scrutin proportionnel,” *Le  
Devoir*, August 19, 2002, p. A1 and A8.

13 This is one of the reasons why Louis Massicotte takes the results of the August 2002 poll “with a  
grain of salt” (Deglise, *ibid.*, p. A8). For 1970–1980, see Lavergne, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

14 Voter turnout rates around the world are available on the International IDEA Website under  
“Voter turnout from 1945 to date.” <http://www.idea.int/vt/index.cfm>

15 See Statistics Canada, “Federal general elections, by electors, ballots cast, and participation,”  
updated January 4, 2002. <http://www.statcan.ca/english/Pgdb/govt09c.htm>

16 In elections held in the 1990s, an average of approximately 80% of registered voters exercised  
their right to vote (source: Le Directeur général des élections, <http://www.dgeq.qc.ca>). This  
percentage was higher than in the United Kingdom (72%), in France (61%), federally in Canada  
(60%), and in the United States (45%), but lower than in Italy (90%) and Belgium (84%) (source:  
International IDEA, <http://www.idea.int>). Quebecers also turn out in higher numbers to elect their  
Assembly members than do Ontarians (62%). <http://www.electionsontario.on.ca/index.htm>

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17 See Section 2 for a description of the various systems.

18 Independent Commission on the Voting System. *The report of the Independent Commission on the*  
*Voting System*, presented to Parliament by the Secretary of State for the Home Department by  
command of her Majesty (Roy Jenkins), London, The Stationery Office, 1998.

19 Mouvement Démocratie nouvelle (MDN) promotes voting system reform in Québec, while Fair  
Vote Canada does the same at the federal level.

20 Dennis Pilon: *Renewing Canadian Democracy: Citizen Engagement in Voting System Reform.*  
*Phase One: Lessons from Around the World*, joint research project of the Law Commission of  
Canada and Fair Vote Canada, March 2002. See also Pierre Martin, *Les systèmes électoraux et les*  
*modes de scrutin*, Paris, Montchrestien, 1997, pp. 144–147.

21 *Referendum Act. A special version of the Election Act for referendums. A special version of the*  
*Election Regulations for referendums*, Office of the Chief Electoral Officer, 2002.  
[http://www.dgeq.qc.ca/pdf/loi\\_consul\\_populi.pdf](http://www.dgeq.qc.ca/pdf/loi_consul_populi.pdf)

22 *La consultation populaire au Canada et au Québec*, 3rd edition updated by Julien Côté, “Études  
électorales” collection, Sainte-Foy, Office of the Chief Electoral Officer, 2000, pp. 5 and 29.

23 Peter Aimer, “From Westminster Plurality to Continental Proportionality: Electoral System  
Change in New Zealand,” in Henry Milner (ed.), *Making Every Vote Count: Reassessing*  
*Canada’s Electoral System*, Peterborough, Broadview Press, 1999; David Denemark, “Choosing  
MMP in New Zealand: Explaining the 1993 Electoral Reform,” in Matthew Soberg Shugart and  
Martin P. Wattenberg (eds.), *Mixed-Member Electoral Systems: The Best of Both Worlds?*, Oxford  
and New York, Oxford University Press, 2001, pp. 70–95.

24 The main legislation defining election law in Québec is the *Election Act*. The Canadian and  
Québec Charters of Rights and Freedoms cover certain key principles, including the right to vote.  
See Henri Brun and Guy Tremblay, *Droit constitutionnel*, Cowansville, Les Éditions Yvon Blais,  
1997, pp. 298–322.

25 *Public Protector Act*, R.S.Q., Chap. P-32, Art. 1; *Auditor General Act*, Chap. V-5.01, Art. 7;  
*Election Act*, R.S.Q., Chap. E-3.3, Art. 478.

26 National Assembly, *Journal des débats*, 2nd session, 31st legislature, Friday, August 26, 1977,  
vol. 19, no. 101, pp. 3484–3485.

27 They also vote on certain issues in referendums.

28 André Bernard, *La politique au Canada et au Québec*, Sillery: Presses de l’Université du Québec,  
1979, p. 171

29 See, for example, Joseph F. Zimmerman, “Equity in Representation for Women and Minorities,”  
in Wilma Rule and Joseph F. Zimmerman (eds.), *Electoral Systems in Comparative Perspective:*  
*Their Impact on Women and Minorities*, Westport: Greenwood Press, 1994, pp. 6–9.

30 Vincent Lemieux, “Le vote unique transférable,” *Options politiques*, November 1997, p. 15.

31 On this topic, electoral system specialist Pierre Martin has argued that it is wrong to describe these  
voting systems as “majoritarian” because this confuses a frequent outcome (the amplification of  
the popular vote obtained by the winning party into a superior number of seats) with the system’s  
purpose. According to Martin, these systems “are absolutely not ‘majoritarian’ in the same sense  
that proportional votes are proportional because the electoral laws that govern them contain no  
provisions to ensure that the party with the most votes obtains the majority of seats (our  
translation).” (“Les principaux modes de scrutin en Europe” in Pascal Delwit and Jean-Michel De  
Waele (eds.), *Le mode de scrutin fait-il l’élection?*, Brussels: Éditions de l’Université de  
Bruxelles, 2000, pp. 41–42). The commonly observed paradox of inversion (when the party with  
the most votes does not win the most seats) is certainly problematic, but clearly indicates that first-  
past-the-post systems do not guarantee a majority to the party with most votes. Martin prefers to  
call such systems “single-member district systems,” and notes that the transition from a multi-  
member to a single-member system in Great Britain and France during the 19th century came in a  
response to concerns about “ensuring the plurality of representation in elections dominated by  
partisan organizations.” (*Ibid.*, p. 42).

32 Martin, *op. cit.*, 1997, p. 138.

33 Bernard, *La vie politique au Québec et au Canada*, Sainte-Foy: Presses de l’Université du Québec,  
2000, p. 278.

34 Martin, *op. cit.*, 1997, pp. 119–121.

35 Bernard, *op. cit.*, 2000, p. 277.

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36 Lemieux, *op. cit.*, 2001, p. 40.

37 Pierre Martin explains that “plurality-majority systems are found in political systems that value competition and conflict, whereas proportional systems correspond better to systems that value cooperation (our translation).” (*op. cit.*, 1997, p. 141)

38 Nigel Roberts, “New Zealand: a Westminster Democracy Switches to PR,” *Administration and Cost of Elections Project (ACE)*, 2000,  
39 [http://www.aceproject.org/main/english/es/esy\\_nz/default.htm](http://www.aceproject.org/main/english/es/esy_nz/default.htm).

40 Independent Commission On the Voting System, *op. cit.*

41 David M. Farrell, *Electoral Systems: A Comparative Introduction*, New York: Palgrave, 2001, pp. 50–51.

42 This formula has been used in France for most legislative elections, except from 1940 to 1958, when it was reestablished under the Fifth Republic. There was also a two-year hiatus (1986–1988) during which a PR system was used in the March 1986 election (See especially Martin, *op. cit.*, 1997, pp. 124–130).

43 For example in the Netherlands (1906–1918), in Germany and Austria (1906–1919) and in Norway (1906–1921). See Giovanni Sartori, *Comparative Constitutional Engineering. An Inquiry into Structures, Incentives and Outcomes*, New York, New York University Press, 1994, p. 61. See also Martin, *op. cit.*, 1997, pp. 37–38.

44 In France, those with the support of at least 12.5% of registered voters can run. The second round is held one week after the first. In 2002, the two rounds were held on June 9 and 16 (Martin, *op. cit.*, 1997, p. 129).

45 See “Description des systèmes électoraux,” on the MDN Website: <http://www.democratie-nouvelle.qc.ca/>.

46 By cumulating the data on presidential and legislative elections (Arend Lijphart, *Patterns of Democracy. Government Forms and Performance in Thirty-Six Countries*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1999, p. 163–164).

47 Sartori, *op. cit.*, p. 64–69.

48 See the French National Assembly Website: <http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/12/tribun/comm6.asp>

49 See the Ministry of the Interior Website under the heading “Les élections”:  
<http://www.interieur.gouv.fr>

50 Douglas J. Amy, *Behind the Ballot Box. A Citizen’s Guide to Voting Systems*, Westport (Ct.), Praeger, 2000, p. 48. A U.S. expert on electoral systems, Amy is a professor of politics at Mount Holyoke College in Massachusetts. He is the author of numerous works on voting systems and electoral reform.

51 Although not everyone agrees on what constitutes a democracy, certain criteria are widely accepted by specialists. A democracy has two minimum requirements: “an executive or government accountable to an elected legislature, and relatively extensive and inclusive voting rights (our translation).” (Pilon, *op. cit.*, mars 2002, p. 6). We can also refer to the eight criteria enumerated by leading U.S. political scientist Robert Dahl of Yale University: (1) the right to vote, (2) the right to seek election, (3) the right given to political leaders to compete for elector support and votes, (4) free and fair elections, (5) freedom of association, (6) freedom of expression, (7) the existence of diversified information sources (8) the dependence of policy-making institutions on the vote and other expressions of public preference (R. Dahl, *Polyarchy : Participation and Opposition*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1971, p. 3; see also Lijphart, *op. cit.*, 1999, pp. 48–55).

52 This voting system is also found in post-Soviet states like the Ukraine and Belarus (Ben Reilly and Andrew Reynolds, “Two-Round System,” *ACE Project*,  
<http://www.aceproject.org/main/francais/es/esd04/default.htm>).

53 For the federal parties, see “About Parliament: Leadership Conventions,” on the Parliament of Canada Website: <http://www.parl.gc.ca/information/about/related/Parties/LeaderConv.asp?Language=E>. For Québec, see William Cross, “Direct Election of Provincial Party Leaders in Canada, 1985–1995: The End of the Leadership Convention?”, *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, vol. XXIX, no. 2, June 1996, p. 302.

54 Reilly, Ben, “Alternative Vote,” *ACE Project*, 2000,  
<http://www.aceproject.org/main/english/es/esd03.htm>.

54 See Dennis Pilon, “The History of Voting Reform in Canada,” in Milner (ed.), *op. cit.*, 1999, p. 111–121.

55 See the interactive simulation of preferential voting (“Instant Runoff Voting”) inspired by the results of the last U.S. presidential election in Florida at <http://www.chrisgates.net/irv/>

56 According to the Jenkins report, voters would also be called upon to elect regional representatives (on a second ballot) (INDEPENDENT COMMISSION ON THE VOTING SYSTEM, *op. cit.*).

57 Amy, *op. cit.*, p. 155.

58 Sartori, *op. cit.*, pp. 62–63.

59 Amy, *op. cit.*, pp. 65–66.

60 See Jean Stengers, “L’établissement de la représentation proportionnelle en Belgique en 1999”, in Delwit et De Waele, *op. cit.*, 2000, pp. 129–143.

61 Amy, *op. cit.*, p. 66.

62 Amy, *op. cit.*, p. 66.

63 Martin, *op. cit.*, p. 65.

64 Amy, *op. cit.*, p. 66; Martin, *op. cit.*, p. 65.

65 See Amy, *op. cit.*, pp. 86–87

66 On district magnitude, see Lijphart, *op. cit.*, 1999, pp. 150–153.

67 On thresholds, see Lijphart, *op. cit.*, 1999, pp. 153–154.

68 See “Proportional allocation methods” in the glossary at the end of the report.

69 Lijphart, *op. cit.*, 1999, p. 147; Martin, *op. cit.*, 2000, p. 40.

70 STV was conceived by Thomas Hare (this model is also called the “Hare system”) and promoted by John Stuart Mill. Irish voters twice rejected government proposals to replace STV with a first-past-the-post system in referendums held in 1959 and 1968.

71 Amy, *op. cit.*, pp. 177–178. See also Belle Zeller and Hugh A. Bone, “The Repeal of P.R. in New York City - Ten Years in Retrospect,” *The American Political Science Review*, vol. XLII, no. 6, Dec. 1948, pp. 1127–1148.

72 Louis Massicotte, “Pour une réforme du système électoral canadien,” in *Choix*, IRPP, vol. 7, no. 1, February 2001, p. 10 and 29n. See also Dennis Pilon, “The History of Voting System Reform in Canada,” in Milner (ed.), *op. cit.*, 1999, p. 111–121.

73 Michael Gallagher, “Ireland: the Archetypal Single Transferable Vote System,” *ACE Project*, 2000 (1997), [http://www.aceproject.org/main/english/es/esy\\_ie.htm](http://www.aceproject.org/main/english/es/esy_ie.htm); Ben Reilly and Andrew Reynolds, “Single Transferable Vote,” *ACE Project*, 2000 (1997) <http://www.aceproject.org/main/francais/es/esf04.htm>.

74 The Fianna Fáil, the Fine Gael and the Labour Party.

75 Lemieux, *op. cit.*, 1997, p. 13.

76 Gallagher, *op. cit.*

77 Lemieux, *op. cit.*, 1997, p. 13.

78 Jean-Louis Quermonne, *Les régimes politiques occidentaux*, Paris, Seuil, 2000, p. 192.

79 Other mixed electoral systems cannot be classified as proportional because the seats allocated through PR “do not compensate for the lack of proportionality of the simple or absolute majority system” (MDN, “Description des systèmes électoraux,” <http://www.democratie-nouvelle.qc.ca/>). In this case, to echo Pierre Martin, we are dealing with majority outcome systems, as in Italy since 1994.

80 Martin, *op. cit.*, 2000, p. 41.

81 See Aimer, *op. cit.*, pp. 145–156; Thérèse Arseneau, “Electing Representative Legislatures: Lessons from New Zealand,” in Milner (ed.), *op. cit.*, 1999, pp. 133–144; Jack H. Nagel, “The Defects of Its Virtues: New Zealand’s Experience with MMP,” in Milner, *op. cit.*, pp. 157–170.

82 Arseneau, *op. cit.*, p. 137; “New Zealand Electoral System,” Elections New Zealand Website [http://www.elections.govt.nz/elections/esyst/govt\\_elect.html](http://www.elections.govt.nz/elections/esyst/govt_elect.html). Note that periodic modifications to the electoral map can lead to changes in the number of single-member and compensatory seats.

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83 See Charlie Jeffery, “La dévolution au Royaume-Uni: anatomie d’un processus de réforme,”  
84 *Politique et sociétés*, vol. 21, no. 1, 2002, pp. 3–23.

85 Alessandro Chiaramonte, “Le nouveau système électoral italien et l’interminable transition,” in  
86 Delwit and De Waele, *op. cit.*, p. 72.

87 Andrew Reynolds, “PR Systems,” *ACE Project*, 2000 (1997)  
88 <http://www.aceproject.org/main/francais/es/esf.htm>.

89 European Parliament, Directorate General for Research, *Differential Impact of Electoral Systems  
90 on Female Political Representation*, Working Document, Women’s Rights Series, W 10,  
91 Summary, March 1997 [www.europarl.eu.int/workingpapers/femm/w10/abstract\\_fr.htm](http://www.europarl.eu.int/workingpapers/femm/w10/abstract_fr.htm).

92 For some, however, this idea makes reference to a certain “false theory of representation,” as  
93 Vincent Lemieux explains: “This is Rousseau’s theory, which holds that subsequent to a vote,  
94 those who end up in a minority position will recognize their error and rally to the majority, even a  
95 relative one, because it incarnates the general will. In other words, even if 55% or 60% of voters  
96 do not support the elected candidate, the candidate nonetheless goes on to represent the entire  
97 constituency, and therefore all the voters (our translation).” (Lemieux, *op. cit.*, 1997, p. 15).

98 Respectively professors at the Sorbonne and Université des Antilles et de la Guyane.

99 Jean-Marie Cotteret and Claude Emeri, *Les systèmes électoraux*, Paris, Presses universitaires de  
100 France, coll. “Que sais-je?,” 1999, p. 49.

101 Amédée Denault, “La représentation proportionnelle,” *Le Pionnier*, January 26, 1902.

102 In Montréal in 1921, a study group suggested that city council be elected by single transferable  
103 vote. The project was backed by *La Presse* and *The Gazette*, but rejected by mayor Médéric  
104 Martin, a proponent of the plurality-majority system. City voters supported the status quo in a  
105 referendum held in May. In 1922, Arthur Sauvé, leader of the Conservative opposition, introduced  
106 a motion in the Legislative Assembly (which was defeated after a short debate) proposing that “a  
107 special Committee of the House be created with the goal of investigating the various systems of  
108 proportional representation adopted or proposed elsewhere to perfect the electoral methods in  
109 vogue in this province (our translation).” On this subject, see Massicotte and Bernard, *op. cit.*, pp.  
110 106–108.

111 In the 1990s, this occurred in Québec, but also in British Columbia and Saskatchewan.

112 Commission de la représentation électorale (C.R.E.). *Pour un mode de scrutin équitable. La  
113 proportionnelle territoriale*. Sainte-Foy: La Commission, 1984, pp. 91 and 107.

114 See among others Jean-Pierre Derriennic, “Trois dimensions de la justice pour évaluer les modes  
115 de scrutin,” *Options politiques*, (July–August 2001): p. 48; Lemieux, *op. cit.*, 1997, pp. 12–15;  
116 Denis Monière, “Pour un nouveau mode de scrutin: le vote unique transférable,” *L’Action  
117 nationale*, LXXVI, 8 (April 1987): pp. 685–690.

118 At least this is the view of certain specialists, such as Louis Massicotte (“Un mode de scrutin à  
119 revoir,” *Relations* (July–August 2002: p. 35) and Lemieux (*op. cit.*, 2001, p. 42), as well as Milner  
120 (*op. cit.*, 1994, p. 41).

121 INDEPENDENT COMMISSION ON THE VOTING SYSTEM, *op. cit.*

122 See Massicotte and Bernard, *op. cit.*, Chap. II.

123 For example, Jean Paré, former editor of *L’Actualité* magazine asserts, “They say that only  
124 England, the United States, Canada and—to a certain extent—France have yet to reject  
125 proportional representation. That makes for a lot of people in the world of successful democracies!  
126 (our translation)” (“Un rêve de bureaucrates,” *L’Actualité*, May 15, 2002).

127 Lavergne, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

128 For a classification of electoral systems by country, see in particular Lijphart, *op. cit.*, 1999, pp.  
129 144–150, and Paul Cliche, *Pour réduire le déficit démocratique au Québec: le scrutin  
130 proportionnel*, Montréal, Édition du renouveau québécois, L’aut’ Journal, 1999, pp. 42–46.

131 An opinion suggested in particular by Bassam Adam in a lecture entitled “Identité et citoyenneté”  
132 at the DND symposium on voting system reform on June 8, 2002, in Québec City.

133 See Tremblay, *op. cit.*, 1995, pp. 59–61 and Lachapelle et al., *op. cit.*, pp. 217–218.

134 Grant Purves and Jack Stilborn, *Members of the House of Commons: Their Role*, Ottawa, Library  
135 of Parliament, 1997 (1988), <http://www.parl.gc.ca/information/library/prbpubs/bp56-e.htm>;  
136 Lachapelle et al., *op. cit.*, p. 218.

137 Purves and Stilborn, *op. cit.*

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105 *Ibid.*

106 Of them, 75% state that they have never met their member, and 87% have never requested anything of their member. See Kathleen Lévesque, “Le scrutin proportionnel suscite un débat,” *Le Devoir*, December 15, 2001, p. B3.

107 *Ibid.*

108 Amy, *op. cit.*, p. 49.

109 CRE, *op. cit.*, p. 58.

110 *Ibid.*, p. 59.

111 *Ibid.*, p. 57.

112 Paul Cliche, *op. cit.*, p. 64.

113 Paul Cliche, *op. cit.*, p. 65; CRE, *op. cit.*, 1984, p. 59.

114 Lévesque, *op. cit.*

115 An argument also appearing in Jean Paré’s texts, *op. cit.*

116 Round table on the voting system held at the symposium of the Association québécoise de science politique, *La démocratie représentative en crise? 70th ACFAS Convention*, Université Laval, May 15, 2002.

117 CRE, *op. cit.*, p. 60.

118 See Amy, *op. cit.*, pp. 33–34, and Lijphart, *op. cit.*, 1999, pp. 259–260.

119 “Of course, democracy means choosing a government, but more importantly it means getting rid of it without having to resort to force (our translation),” asserts Jean Paré (*op. cit.*).

120 Arend Lijphart, *Electoral Systems and Party Systems. A Study of Twenty-Seven Democracies 1945–1990*, Oxford and New York, Oxford University Press, 1994, p. 144. Professor Lijphart is referring to G. Bingham Powell, Jr., “Constitutional Design and Citizen Electoral Control,” *Journal of Theoretical Politics*, no. 1, 1989, pp. 107–130). Although Lijphart’s opinion on the issue is qualified, he still raises an objection: “But greater accountability does not directly translate into greater responsiveness to citizen interests. There is no evidence that coalition cabinets in multi-party systems are less responsive than one-party majority cabinets; on the contrary, coalition cabinets are usually closer to the centre of the political spectrum—and hence closer in their policy outlook to the average citizen—than one-party cabinets representing either the left or the right. But it is entirely legitimate, of course, to regard government accountability as a value in and of itself—just as proportionality is an ultimate value for many PR supporters.”

121 CRE, *op. cit.*, p. 60.

122 This has occurred on a number of occasions in the past 40 years. In 1970, even though the Social Credit Rally won only half as many votes as the Parti Québécois, it took 12 seats thanks to support concentrated in rural constituencies, while the PQ had to settle for seven members. In 1989, the Equality Party was able to elect four members, thanks to the support of anglophone voters in west Montréal.

123 Massicotte, *op. cit.*, 2002, p. 32. For background on “linguistic gerrymandering,” see also L. Massicotte, “Éclipse et retour du gerrymander linguistique québécois,” in Alain-G. Gagnon and Alain Noël (ed.), *L’espace québécois*, Montréal, Québec/Amérique, 1995, pp. 227–244; Massicotte and Bernard, *op. cit.*, chap. IX; L. Massicotte and André Blais, “Dernières élections: le PLQ aurait eu besoin de 300 000 votes de plus,” *La Presse*, January 7, 1999, p. B3; Michel Venne, “Faut-il réformer le mode de scrutin?” *Québec 2000*, Montréal, Fides, 1999, pp. 320–321.

124 See in particular A. Brian Tanguay, “Québec’s Political System in the 1990s: From Polarization to Convergence,” in Alain-G. Gagnon (ed.), *Québec: State and Society*, 2nd ed., Scarborough, Nelson, 1993, pp. 174–198.

125 CRE, *op. cit.*, p. 58.

126 Dennis Pilon, *Canada’s Democratic Deficit: Is Proportional Representation the Answer?* The CSJ Foundation for Research and Education, 2000, p. 12.

127 Martin, *op. cit.*, 1997, p. 122.

128 Richard Nadeau and Éric Bélanger, “L’appui aux partis politiques québécois, 1989–1998,” in Robert Boily (ed.), *L’année politique au Québec 1997–1998*, Les Presses de l’Université de Montréal, pp. 206 and 214.

129 Amy, *op. cit.*, p. 35.

130 See table showing the percentage of women in various parliaments around the world (Section 1 of  
this document).

131 Réjean Pelletier and Manon Tremblay, “Les femmes sont-elles candidates dans des  
circonscriptions perdues d’avance? De l’examen d’une croyance,” *Revue canadienne de science  
politique*, vol. 25, no. 2, 1992, pp. 249–267; Donley T. Studlar and Richard E. Matland, “The  
Dynamics of Women’s Representation in the Canadian Provinces: 1975–1994,” *Canadian Journal  
of Political Science*, vol. 29, no. 2, 1996, p. 269–293.

132 Arseneau, *op. cit.*, p. 144.

133 Manon Tremblay, “Les femmes et la participation politique au Canada,” *Perspectives électorales*,  
January 2001, p. 6.

134 Arseneau, *op. cit.*

135 Sources: *Registre des Indiens*, Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development,  
December 31, 2000, and *Registre des bénéficiaires cris, inuits et naskapis de la Convention de la  
Baie-James et du Nord québécois*, Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux du Québec, April  
5, 2001 (available on the Secrétariat aux Affaires autochtones Website:  
<http://www.mce.gouv.qc.ca/d/html/d1017008.html>).

136 CRE, *op. cit.*, p. 107.

137 Ben Reilly and Andrew Reynolds, “Minority Provisions,” 2000 (1997),  
<http://www.aceproject.org/main/english/es/esc07b/default.htm>.

138 Figures from 1996. Currently, the total population of the country is approximately 3,800,000 (see  
Statistics New Zealand site: <http://www.stats.govt.nz>).

139 *Maori Roll or General Roll? It’s your Choice*, Ministry of Maori Development/Electoral  
Commission, 2001 ([http://www.elections.govt.nz/elections/esyst/meo\\_2001.pdf](http://www.elections.govt.nz/elections/esyst/meo_2001.pdf)).

140 See Pablo Santolaya and Diego Iniguez, “Ethnic or Cultural Groups,” 2000 (1997)  
(<http://www.aceproject.org/main/francais/lf/lf03g/default.htm>). On the creation of native  
constituencies in New Brunswick, see Colin Feasby, “Don’t let race draw electoral boundaries,”  
*The Globe and Mail*, August 15, 2002, p. A-17, and Bruce Budd (response to Feasby), “Racial  
voting?” *The Globe and Mail*, August 17, 2002, p. A-16.

141 Don MacPherson, “Tinkering with How We Vote,” *The Gazette*, August 20, 2002, p. B3.

142 See the glossary regarding seat allocation methods.

143 Government of Québec (Conseil exécutif), *La proportionnelle régionale, un nouveau système  
électoral*, Direction générale des publications gouvernementales of the Minister of Culture and  
Communications, 1983, p. 20.

144 In this case, an open list is used (see Government of Québec, *op. cit.*, 1983, p. 25), whereas the  
version advocated by Minister Burns and the 1982 discussion paper has a closed list (Ministre  
d’État à la réforme électorale [Robert Burns]), *Un citoyen, un vote. Livre vert sur la réforme du  
mode de scrutin*, Québec, Éditeur officiel, 1979, pp. 60–61; Ministre d’État à la réforme électorale  
(Marc-André Bédard), *La réforme du mode de scrutin*, discussion paper, Québec, Secrétariat  
général à la réforme électorale, June 1982, p. 21).

145 See the glossary.

146 On the features of MRPR, see Massicotte and Bernard, *op. cit.*, p. 202. See also Bédard, *op. cit.*

147 See Massicotte and Bernard, *op. cit.*, pp. 201–208.

148 CRE, *op. cit.*, p. 102.

149 *Ibid.*, pp. 104–105.

150 *Ibid.*, p. 117.

151 *Ibid.*, p. 107.

152 *Ibid.*, p. 122.

153 According to the calculations of Paul Cliche, *op. cit.*, pp. 88 and 111.

154 Minister Bédard’s June 1982 discussion paper contains a simulation of the results that would have  
been obtained in certain elections with an MRPR system (Bédard, *op. cit.*, pp. 23–24).

155 The actual 1976 results were as follows: PQ, 71 seats; PLQ, 26; Union Nationale, 11; Social  
Credit Rally, 1; Parti national populaire, 1; or a total of 39 seats for all opposition parties.

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156 See Peter Dobell, *À quoi les Canadiens peuvent-ils s'attendre d'un gouvernement minoritaire?*  
Enjeux publics/IRPP, vol. 1, no. 6, November 2000, pp. 8–9.

157 Massicotte, *op. cit.*, 2001, p. 19. See also Lijphart, *op. cit.*, 1999, especially Chapter 15.

158 Lemieux, *op. cit.*, 1997, p. 14.

159 *Ibid.*, pp. 12–15. Lemieux again brought up STV at a round table in May 2002 (symposium of the  
Association québécoise de science politique, *La démocratie représentative en crise?* 70th ACFAS  
Convention, Université Laval, May 15, 2002)

160 Lemieux, *op. cit.*, 1997, p. 12.

161 Jean-Pierre Derriennic, “Trois dimensions de la justice pour évaluer les modes de scrutin,”  
*Options politiques*, July–August, 2001, p. 48.

162 Denis Monière, “Pour un nouveau mode de scrutin: le vote unique transférable,” *L’Action*  
*nationale*, vol. LXXVI, no. 8, April 1987, pp. 688 and 690.

163 CRE, *op.cit.*, p. 102.

164 These elections also made room for small parties, the surprise being the position of Sinn Féin  
(political branch of the Irish Republican Army), which went from one to five members in the  
house.

165 *Courrier international*, no. 603, May 23–29, 2002, p. 19.

166 On the last elections in Ireland, see also “Return of the Teflon Taoiseach,” *The Economist*, May  
25, 2002, pp. 49–50, as well as the site <http://www.electionsireland.org>.

167 Lemieux, *op. cit.*, 1997, p. 14.

168 *Ibid.*, p. 15.

169 Among the most recent pronouncements in favor of a German-style mixed-member system for  
Québec is that of Professor Louis Massicotte, “Un mode de scrutin à revoir,” *Relations*, July–  
August 2002, p. 32–35.

170 Burns, 1979, p. 88–89.

171 See the glossary.

172 Burns, 1979, pp. 90–91.

173 Burns, *op. cit.*, p. 100.

174 Cliche, *op. cit.*, p. 119.

175 In New Zealand, periodic modifications to the electoral map can change the number of local seats  
and consequently the number of regional seats. See the site *Elections New Zealand*:  
[http://www.elections.govt.nz/elections/esyst/govt\\_elect.html](http://www.elections.govt.nz/elections/esyst/govt_elect.html).

176 Massicotte, *op. cit.*, 2002, p. 35.

177 Burns, *op. cit.*, pp. 84–85.

178 According to the calculations of P. Cliche, *op. cit.*

179 Sources of glossary definitions (see selective bibliography) : Amy (2000); Boudreau and Perron  
(2002); Debbasch and Daudet (1988); Deschênes (1992); Director General of Election (2000);  
Ducasse (1983); Martin (1997); Ministre d’État à la réforme électorale (1979); Perrineau and  
Reynié (2001); Administration and Cost of Elections Project (ACE).