



Changing the Rules of the Game:  
On the Determinants and Consequences  
of Electoral Reforms in Contemporary Democracies

Pedro Riera

Thesis submitted for assessment with a view to  
obtaining the degree of Doctor of Political and Social Sciences  
of the European University Institute

Florence, June, 2013



European University Institute  
**Department of Political and Social Sciences**

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## Abstract

As the “Short Twentieth Century” came to an end, more and more democracies seriously considered the possibility –often for the first time in their history- of changing their national electoral system. Since then, the total number of electoral reforms enacted in countries that select their rulers through free and fair elections has sharply increased: in the last two decades over 33% of the world’s democratic states modified the formula employed for choosing the members of their national legislatures, and a similar percentage adjusted other elements of the rules of the game such as the district magnitude, the legal threshold, the assembly size or the ballot structure. Unfortunately, the academic examination of the causes and consequences of these episodes of institutional change has lagged well behind these empirical developments with single case studies and small n studies still the norm. In light of this gap, research on the determinants and the outcomes of electoral reform processes is increasingly needed. The aim of this study is to transcend the analysis of a small number of cases, and instead to comparatively examine the universe of electoral system changes that have occurred in 60 contemporary democracies between 1945 and 2010.

The thesis has three main findings. First, the levels of party system fragmentation and citizens’ satisfaction with democracy have strong potential to explain electoral system changes in contemporary democracies. Contrary to what is usually implied by the literature on electoral reform, parties are seen to have strong tendencies to pass restrictive rather than permissive electoral system changes in circumstances where the electoral system might be considered to be already overly-permissive resulting in excessive numbers of parties. Moreover, electoral reforms in the intraparty dimension usually take place when large numbers of voters are currently dissatisfied with the way democracy works in their country.

The second main finding is that electoral reforms can reshape the morphology of established party systems through two distinct mechanisms of electoral engineering. The first mechanism takes place at the interparty level, with permissive reforms reducing the difference between the percentage of votes received and the percentage of seats obtained by a party, and restrictive reforms enlarging this gap. The second mechanism operates at the intraparty level, where candidate-centred reforms decrease the level of party system nationalization while party-centred reforms leave party system nationalization unchanged.

Finally, the third main finding of the thesis is that parties’ positions regarding the possible modification of the rules of the game have an electoral effect. Parties that advocate a permissive reform in countries with low party system fragmentation are more likely to electorally benefit. By contrast, support for such reforms when the number of parties is large is more likely to result in electoral losses.



*Para mi abuela Paquita,  
que nunca leerá esta tesis;  
Per la meva neboda Irene,  
que esper que algun dia la llegeixi.*





## Acknowledgments

After seven long years of almost Biblical curse, my thesis comes to an end with these brief pages of acknowledgments. Seven years is a long period of time in which I have had the opportunity of travelling a lot and visiting wonderful places (almost always for academic reasons) while doing one of the most important things for me: Learning. Perhaps even more relevant, the succession of grants that I have enjoyed during my years in grad school has allowed me to meet an extraordinary group of people that made the trip enormously less unpleasant. Unfortunately, the footprint of this bunch of Teachers, colleagues and friends in my memories is as difficult to delete as complicated is to list all their names here. Hence, I would like to start this preface by sincerely apologizing to all of you that will have the extraordinarily bad taste of starting to read this book and will not find their name on it.

Whether my interest in academia started when I moved to Barcelona to study my Law degree in 1998 or even before is still an open empirical question. In fact, it was back in the days of high school in the *Lluís Vives* of my hometown (Palma, Mallorca) when I heard for the first time talking about what would become one decade later the topic of this doctoral dissertation: the dynamics of continuity and change of any material body - in my case a political institution, the electoral system. However, I firmly believe that my impressionable years really started when I crossed the Mediterranean to live six of the best years of my life in Barcelona. The UB (*Universitat de Barcelona*) gave me a sort of personal and academic background that has come with me since then. I am extremely grateful to all the people that I met there, but especially to the members of the AEP (*Associació d'Estudiants Progressistes*) for making me believe in politics and not only in political science; to Jesús de Miguel, for offering me the first job in university and training me to write paragraphs of at least ten lines; and to Jorge Calero, for teaching me to say that everything was ok even though nothing went well.

When I was admitted to the Juan March Institute programme in Madrid, Jesús de Miguel told me that I would finally start to work hard. I did know at that point how right he was. I spent three wonderful years in Madrid learning a lot and meeting long-lasting friends and colleagues. I feel very honoured for belonging to such an excellent scientific community that I hope will survive now that it will not be able to take *cañas* in our favourite bar of the *Barrio de Salamanca* – the *Cassandra*. In the Juan March group I need to include Cesc, Elna, Juanan, Luis, Sebas, Alfonso, Marga, Raúl, Julia, Pablo, Nacho, Albert, Gonzalo and Carlos, and especially Dídac and Mariajo, for being crazy enough to let me speak on their wedding day as evidence of our friendship, and Magdalena and the people in the library (Paz, Gema, Almudena and Martha) for their proverbial efficiency. I am indebted to all of them.

Above all, the Juan March gave me the opportunity of meeting a long-lasting supervisor. I know José Ramón Montero, my external supervisor, for almost one decade. Yet, I feel like knowing him for ages. Over the years, José Ramón has become a true academic father for me in all the aspects. Whatever I said here would not be enough to express the deep admiration that I feel for him as a person, as a scholar or simply as the professor that accepted to captain my doctoral boat when it was still in the shipyard. I would like to specially thank him for the tremendous amount of time he has spent reading my manuscripts and commenting on them, and

for his incredible doses of confidence in me when I was the intellectual equivalent of a forty-four kilos weakling (for example, by inviting me to write together); and I would also like to apologize to his wife for having contributed to his insanely early mornings with my calls and emails from San Diego.

When I first arrived to California, a tough period of my life started. However, things started to get a lot easier when someone introduced me to one of the best persons I have ever met. Cantú (Francisco) is one of those human beings that you rarely find in this world. His worthiness as a person is only comparable to his quality as an academic. Always well seconded by Martincito, Riverita, Mike and Rosarito (his fortunate wife), he was enormously helpful when things went initially wrong in San Diego. So, I need to express thanks to him. I am also extremely grateful to Matt Shugart for his academic guidance during (and after) my two years in San Diego, and for having agreed to serve in my jury. Mission will be definitely accomplished if I finish this thesis by knowing at least a small portion of what he knows about electoral systems. I am also indebted to Sebastian Saiegh for having been an important person to whom I could resort and talk about our two shared passions: political science and football. Finally, Sam Popkin, Joel Sobel, Kaare Strøm and Kit Woolard also contributed decisively to make my first American experience worthwhile; so, I am thankful to all of them as well.

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Including four years of Florence in my life to undertake a PhD in Political Science at the European University Institute is probably one of the best decisions I have ever taken. The intellectual context of the EUI provides the best environment to carry out the task of writing a thought-provoking dissertation in a very reasonable period of time. But again and probably even more true this time, the EUI and by extension Florence it is their places and their people. It is Fiasco and my Thursday “legendary shifts” with Kevin. It is the people working in the cafeteria (mainly, Antonella, Fiamma, Guia, Loredana) and their not less legendary *macchiati*. It is the *Pavone*, the Drink Team, or simply Punky, either cooking burgers or fixing cars but always distilling some doses of his never-ending sympathy. It is the staff of the SPS Department with la *Capa Gabriella* in front of it. It is, in the end, the *Squadra Fantastica* (including the after-match beers in Finnegan’s) and its historic 2013 *Scudetto*. To all of them I am also deeply indebted.

In a plaque in his honour we can read: “Scholar, writer, political scientist; Friend of EUI researchers in and out of the Bar Fiasco”. Although unfortunately he will not be able to read these lines, I would like to warmly thank Peter Mair for having invited me to include these four years of Florence in my life. In my first two courses at the EUI I had the opportunity of attending all the three seminars he was teaching. Those that were there with us will remember that we frequently had different points of view and ended up maintaining fruitful and instructing (mainly,

for me) academic discussions. His premature death on 15 August 2011 deprived the Department and the whole Institute of one of their crucial figures. That day, I wrote on my Facebook wall that I would send him my thesis wherever he was going to be once it was finished. If he keeps being with his time as generous as he always was, I am sure I will receive the most comprehensive feedback from him.

One of the things that I most appreciate from the combo EUI/Florence is the nice balance that offers between work and free-time. And Alex Trechsel and Fabrizio Bernardi are the best representatives of this equilibrium. I am really grateful to Alex Trechsel for having supported me so hard both academically and personally since the very beginning, and mainly for having allowed me to participate in his *Seminario Cinque* lessons during the last two years. I am also indebted to Fabrizio Bernardi for having agreed to serve in my jury. Although very far from my substantive interests, he has been always eager to provide me with advice and suggestions on my work, my career or even my personal life. They constitute the perfect excuse to visit Florence in the upcoming courses.

In four years in Florence you have fine, good and excellent moments. The time spent with the “Spanish Community” (*lato sensu*) undoubtedly belongs to the latter category. Over the courses, people pass, find a partner, or even have time to finish a PhD at the EUI. But there is always an incorrigible group of researchers easily recognizable by their horrible accent in English (although this has considerably improved in the last years) and their late-lunch habits: the “Spanish Community”. In this group I need to include Juanan, Pablo, Morchón, Fer, Jeni, Don Ricardo, Miguelito, Jeroen, Kivanc, people that left Florence before me, and people that will stay here after me. There is not space to express my gratitude to all of them and especially to Juana, for showing me that happiness is the winning strategy in life; to German (“El Eternal”), for bringing *Serie A calcio* to *Cerreti* every other week and mainly for his friendship; and to Elias, for being how he is: A genius hidden behind a yellow Old Holborn package of tobacco and a Mac constantly running models in Stata.

The completion of this thesis represents, among other things, the culmination of the supervision tasks of the Inaugural Stein Rokkan Chair in Comparative Politics of the EUI. We could say lots of things about Mark Franklin and probably not all of them would be good. In my view, we are in front of a terrific supervisor. Once he manages to learn your name (and my own experience indicates that this usually takes him a while), it is insane the enormous quantity of effort, energy and time he invests in you. In the future, Mark will be probably credited for a long list of qualities (incredible intellectual curiosity, outstanding working capacity, huge motivations skills...). Above all of them, I especially appreciate his constant attempts to strengthen the quantitative orientation of the political science in our institution or the long hours he devoted to teaching, advising or simply commenting papers during the sessions of the Colloquium on Political Behaviour. Under his decisive leadership, an exceptionally promising group of young political scientists trained to employ cutting-edge statistical techniques in their research emerged within the SPS Department. It is again very difficult for me to express in plain English (and let me tell the reader that my language skills have considerably improved since I met him) how honoured I feel for having turn out to be his last supervisee, and how indebted I am for his tremendous help. From now onwards I can only promise that I will work hard to become a great last spark.

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Finally, the completion of this thesis (and this is literally true) could not have been possible without the company during the last months and the assistance during the last days of a very special person that I am just starting to know now. Leaving this small hill in the middle of Tuscany would have been always difficult. I hope that doing it without her will not transform the endeavour into an impossible mission. To her and to her illuminating green eyes I only can say two things: *Grazie e ci vediamo presto!*

Pedro Riera Sagrera

(Sunny) Florence, May 2013

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## Chapter 1. Introduction

The race is over!  
But who has won?  
Everybody has won, and all must have prizes.  
(Lewis Carroll 1865)

If God were to write an electoral law, He would write a majoritarian one.  
(Andrzej Olechowski, Convention of the *Platforma Obywatelska* (PO), 24 January 2001)

### 1.1. Introduction

Electoral reforms<sup>1</sup> have gone from rarity to an almost everyday occurrence over the last twenty years. Changing the rules of the game is not uncommon anymore in some countries, and so Arend Lijphart's (1994) conclusions about the essential stickiness of electoral institutions look a bit outdated. In recent times, some well established democracies like New Zealand, Japan, and Italy introduced a sort of mixed system of representation.<sup>2</sup> In other countries like the United Kingdom or Canada, advocates of electoral reform were less lucky. And, finally, the French case in 1985 and 1992 illustrates the trickiness of establishing the causes of electoral reforms: facing a similar electoral defeat in both years, the incumbent Socialist Party opted for changing the rules of the game in the former episode but not in the latter.<sup>3</sup> As can be seen below, some heterogeneity also emerges in Latin America and Eastern Europe, where some countries reform quite often their electoral systems while others have kept them more or less unmodified since the very beginning of the current democratic period. In the last decade, two Colombian Presidents publicly advocated electoral reform, but only Álvaro Uribe was able to get his proposal passed. All in all, there are too many such reforms to be dismissed simply as aberrations, but the situations are diverse enough to prevent us from making easy generalizations on them. In this

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<sup>1</sup> *Electoral reforms, electoral system changes, modifications of the electoral law or in the rules of the game* are used interchangeably in this thesis

<sup>2</sup> Italy abandoned its mixed-member rules in 2005 (Renwick et al. 2009).

<sup>3</sup> And these are only examples of *major* electoral reforms. If we also look at *minor* electoral reforms as I do in this thesis, the number of cases is almost countless.

thesis, I aim to explain why electoral reforms take place in contemporary democracies, and to examine some of their effects.

The study is limited to electoral reforms between 1945 and 2010 in countries where free and fair elections are held. In particular, I only take into consideration nations where “incumbents lose elections and leave office when the rules so dictate” (Przeworski et al. 2000: 54). The main advantage that derives from this election is parsimony and the avoidance of excessive proliferation of new terms and concepts (Collier and Levitsky 1997). Moreover, praise is most justified in the case of Przeworski et al.’s (2000) conception of democracy because they were particularly insightful concerning the selection of indicators and especially clear and detailed concerning coding rules despite being a bit narrow and weak when it comes to the selection of measurement level (Munck and Verkuilen 2002).

I only examine democracies because the reasons for changing the electoral system are more intriguing there. In autocratic systems, rulers can theoretically modify the rules of the game at will to restrict political competition (Gandhi and Lust-Okar 2009; Lust-Okar and Jamal 2002). Moreover, the consequences of this kind of institutional change might radically differ if citizens cannot hold governments to account. By the same token, note that the instances of electoral reform are restricted to situations in which the first elections after the democratic transition have already taken place. Hence, the present volume does not deal with transitions from authoritarian regimes towards a democratic system (Linz and Stepan 1996; O’Donnell and Schmitter 1986).

Given the set of countries and time frame, which type of electoral reforms do I study? I define *electoral reform* as a significant change in at least one of the following elements of an electoral system: the electoral formula, the number of districts, the assembly size, the electoral threshold, the presence (or absence) of a ban on pre-electoral coalitions and linked lists, the number and relationship between electoral tiers, and the ballot structure. Note that this is slightly more comprehensive than the list that previous studies use (Golder 2005a; Lijphart 1994). However, because I am interested in explaining not only the occurrence of electoral reforms but also the direction in which the electoral systems change, I need to provide a definition of their

different types. In order to do that, I first classify reforms in the *interparty dimension*<sup>4</sup> by distinguishing between permissive and restrictive electoral system changes (Taagepera 2007a).<sup>5</sup> In a nutshell, the former are supposed to improve the proportionality of electoral outcomes whereas the latter are expected to produce an opposite change. Second, I take into account the *intraparty dimension* of electoral systems, and differentiate between candidate-centred and party-centred reforms (Carey and Shugart 1995). In brief, the former are supposed to increase candidates' incentives to cultivate a personal vote whereas the latter are expected to decrease them.

Apparently, one of the historical modifications in electoral laws that has drawn most attention in the last decade have been those that followed the suffrage extensions to the lower classes and women at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Acemoglu and Robinson 2000; Lizzeri and Persico 2004; Przeworski 2009). By contrast, changes in electoral institutions since 1945 rarely concern the enfranchisement or disenfranchisement of citizens. Yet, tinkering with the electoral system has been frequent after the Second World War. This is one of the reasons why I choose it as my period of study. The second reason why I mainly focus on changes in “electoral formulas, district magnitudes, and structure of ballots” (Massicotte et al. 2004: 4) is because they are the elements of the rules of the game with the most marked impact on incumbents' chances of re-election and other party system features I am interested in.

The project revolves around three main questions. Firstly, why do some national contexts lead to electoral reforms while others do not? To continue with some additional examples, what is it about Greece (or Poland) that makes these countries more likely to reform their electoral systems than Portugal (or Hungary)?<sup>6</sup> A second question is what are the consequences of the electoral reforms at several different levels? For example, do inclusive changes in the rules of the

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<sup>4</sup> Just as electoral systems affect the concentration or dispersion of authority *across* parties (the interparty dimension) they also affect the concentration or dispersion *within* parties (the intraparty dimension).

<sup>5</sup> As I will explain below, the terms *proportional*, *permissive*, *inclusive* or *weak*, on the one hand, and *majoritarian*, *restrictive*, *exclusive* or *strong*, on the other hand, are used interchangeably in this thesis.

<sup>6</sup> In December 2011, Hungary's parliamentarians passed a new electoral law that involved the first significant overhaul of the Hungarian electoral system since the country's first post-communist democratic elections in 1990. However, I do not address either the causes nor the consequences of this electoral system change because it lies beyond the temporal scope of this study: 1945-2010.

game improve the overall proportionality of electoral outcomes? Do party-centred electoral reforms increase party system nationalization? How do voters react to the position adopted by parties in processes of electoral system change? Does it pay off electorally to support some particular reforms? Finally, what happens when voters are confronted with new electoral rules? Do voters everywhere respond in the same way to particular changes? Are the effects the same for all voters alike?

The rest of this chapter proceeds as follows. After a brief discussion of the relevance of the puzzles at hand and the significance of my findings, I elaborate upon the two central research questions in the following two sections. Building on this, I overview the main analytical approach adopted and outline the theory underlying this study. In the next step, I discuss case selection, and explain my research design in the methods and data section. This chapter concludes by outlining this dissertation's main findings and structure.

## **1.2. Motivations and contributions**

The interest of the topic lies basically in the fact that the occurrence of electoral reforms entails the essential *paradox* or *aporia* of incumbent parties changing the rules of the game they are winning (Katz 2005). Theoretically, parties in office should have an interest in preserving the same electoral system that brought them into power. Hence, the continuity of electoral rules could be explained in terms of a natural tension between the losers' will to enact the reform and the winners' power to do it. In the same vein, Patrick Dunleavy and Helen Margetts (1995) argue that it is not only parties that have vested interests in maintaining the institutional status quo, but also individual incumbents and strong interest groups (Rahat 2011). Nevertheless, the paradox might have become less evident in recent times because of the high proportion of parties in office that do not get re-elected. Partially as a consequence of this so-called increasing *negative incumbency effect theory* (Müller and Strøm 2000),<sup>7</sup> parties in power should in principle reform electoral systems more frequently nowadays than in the past. However, not every incumbent

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<sup>7</sup> These two leading scholars find that government incumbency has been an electoral liability in the 1980s and 1990s in the 13 Western European countries they analyse (see also, for example, Paldam 1986: 19; Nannestad and Paldam 2002: 21; Powell and Whitten 1993: 410; Mackie and Rose 1983; Strøm 1990: 124).

party in trouble changes the electoral system. In these latter cases, “explaining the absence of change is harder than explaining change itself” (Bowler 2006: 577).

Yet, the central research questions in this dissertation have not been addressed before in the way I plan to do it. First of all, electoral reform has never been studied with quantitative methods across so many countries and over so many years. This is perhaps surprising given the relatively high frequency of the phenomenon and the considerable importance of electoral rules. Secondly, there is a paucity of studies that focus on the reasons that parties have for reforming the electoral system (first group of research questions) so as to make normative evaluations of this behaviour. Finally, from a policy-oriented point of view, the analysis of the effects of changing the rules of the game (second group of research questions) allows us to assess to what extent we can really talk of the existence of electoral engineering (Norris 2004).

The goal of this study is to open the black box of electoral reform by focusing on the determinants of its occurrence as well as its consequences. In so doing, the thesis gets into what Matthew Shugart (2005: 51) considers being a “research frontier for the twenty-first century”. The shortage of studies on the origins of electoral systems was already noted by Lijphart in 1985. In recent times, there has been some progress relating to the shift of many European countries from majoritarian to proportional representation (PR) systems at the beginning of the twentieth century (e.g., Boix 1999; Cusack et al. 2007; Rokkan 2009 [1970]). Although some of these studies are reviewed below, they are not at the centre of this thesis because they occurred in a substantially different context (Rahat 2011), characterized by a considerably diverse set of actors.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, most of the existing analyses of the politics of electoral reform concentrate on single episodes, and cross-national comparisons that include a large number of cases are only now starting to appear (Best 2011; Harfst 2013; Pilet and Bol 2011; Remmer 2008). This change in research strategy will expand the scope of case studies (Leyenaar and Hazan 2011).

Furthermore, there are in my view two additional problems with existing approaches (e.g., Norris 1995; Shugart and Wattenberg 2001) that need to be addressed. First of all, many

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<sup>8</sup> For explanations wherein suffrage extension becomes the trigger, old ruling centre-right parties and new emerging socialist parties are the most commonly identified actors involved in the process of electoral reform. By contrast, political actors other than these two may play a role in contemporary reforms.

works give exclusive attention to major electoral system changes without encompassing a broader set of modifications that also have important effects on political systems. By contrast, following Kristof Jacobs and Monique Leyenaar (2011), I aim to focus on the electoral system changes that might have consequences for seat distribution *between* (interparty dimension) and *within* (intraparty dimension) parties. Secondly, I acknowledge that one of the fronts in this debate that remain also rather open is concerning the cases of study (Norris 2011). Previous research usually refers to a quite restricted group of countries (mainly, established democracies). By contrast, if we want to have enough and sufficiently diverse cases of reform to permit theoretically and statistically valid generalizations, I need to combine an adequate number of cases from consolidated and new democracies.

The study of electoral reforms gains in importance if these phenomena turn out to have effects on the political arena. If, for instance, electoral system change affects party choice, this has important implications for electoral studies in general, and for the applicability of commonly used assumptions about the strategic behaviour of actors (parties/candidates and voters) in particular (Cox 1997). It would imply that major parties can rely on restrictive electoral reforms to not only increase the underrepresentation of small parties but also reduce their presence on the ballot, and/or the number of voters willing to support them. Moreover, by demonstrating this manipulative aspect of electoral reforms (Cox 1997; Lijphart 1994; Sartori 1968; Taagepera and Shugart 1989), this dissertation's findings may also be important in two additional senses.

First of all, my findings may help to adjudicate between the different theoretical approaches used to study the politics of electoral reform (i.e., power-maximization [Benoit 2004] and inherent and contingent factors [Shugart 2008]). Second, the fact that electoral systems are shaped by the parties they supposedly determine or the incumbents whose re-election they help to assure casts serious doubts on the conclusions about the independent causal effect exerted by the rules of the game (Benoit 2007). If the science of electoral systems enables political actors to anticipate the consequences of changes in the rules of the game, then the effects of electoral reforms cannot be fully understood without examining their determinants (Penadés 2006). In the same spirit, Alexander (2001: 265) argues that “when actors treat institutions as effects, our ability to treat them as causes is circumscribed”.

In overall terms, electoral system changes raise a first-order problem from a normative point of view because they give to political parties the opportunity to establish the rules that bring and keep them in power. In a world in which firms do not usually pass anti-trust laws and students do not play any role at all in deciding grading policies, letting political parties choose at will about the electoral system is at best questionable from the normative point of view. Without a careful analysis of the context in which electoral reforms take place, a normative judgment regarding the reasons that lead politicians to change the rules of the game would be difficult. On the one hand, democracy is supposed to be a political regime characterized by the accountability of rulers to the ruled, and elections are believed to work as the mechanism through which this can be enforced (Cheibub and Przeworski 1999). On the other hand, politicians are usually considered as perfect re-election seekers who prefer to avoid accountability if possible. Of these two arguments, "which one has the upper hand?" is thus a critical question and it is perhaps one of the most important questions addressed in this dissertation. In this regard, examining the origins of electoral systems may give us some clues about reformers' democratic objectives.

This dissertation's findings may also be important beyond their scientific relevance, and, in particular, for public debate about how to deal with problems that are rooted in the rules of the game. Although it is widely argued that there is no such thing as the ideal electoral system (Carey and Hix 2011),<sup>9</sup> and that the answer to the question about which electoral system is the best depends on 'who you are, where you are, and where you want to go' (Katz 1997: 308),<sup>10</sup> this has not deterred specialists from proffering advice on where to place greatest emphasis in electoral system design and reform (for a recent illustration, see Taagepera 2002), and trying to discover the particular electoral system towards which the specialists are themselves leaning (Bowler et al. 2005).<sup>11</sup> In this regard, first-past-the-post (FPTP) systems tend to yield majority

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<sup>9</sup> Just as Carey and Hix (2011) sought to identify a "sweet spot" on the interparty dimension where the goals of representation and accountability should be tried to maximize, Bergman et al. (forthcoming) share a similar ambition for the intraparty dimension by pursuing the design of a non-transferable preference votes system where a proliferation of candidates may provoke that many voters will be unrepresented by a candidate of their choice.

<sup>10</sup> The idea that there is no single electoral system that is likely to be best for all societies is also present in other theorists' work (see, for example, Diamond and Plattner 2006; Norris 1997; Reilly and Reynolds 1999). Likewise, Mackenzie (1957: 255) warns us against the dangers of transplanting of electoral systems from one country to another.

<sup>11</sup> Although compensatory mixed systems were the most highly ranked in this study, those who study electoral systems are far from being in agreement about which if any is the best one. For example, Sartori (1997 [1994])

governments but not proportionality of electoral outcomes and PR systems tend to yield proportionality but sometimes at the expense of majority governments (Farrell 2011 [2001]: 227-229). Candidate-centred rules feature strong incentives for personal votes but at the expense of broad policy preferences while party-centred electoral institutions make legislators' incentives to be aligned with the collective goals of their parties but do not ensure a transparent relationship between politicians and voters. Within this framework, much effort has been put into designing hybrid systems that provide some aspects of personal voting without sacrificing PR (Shugart 2001) and even systems (so-called, "bonus-adjusted proportional representation" systems)<sup>12</sup> that guarantee a government even with PR.<sup>13</sup> In this thesis, I intend to see whether these various compromises motivate politicians to "tweak" their electoral system to give it more of the attributes it lacks.

All in all, this dissertation takes some steps towards an evaluation of a relevant object of study (i.e., electoral reforms) from an analytical and normative point of view. At first glance, enduring electoral institutions seem to be superior in every respect. For example, potential advantages of changing the rules of the game could be offset by the continuous working of the current electoral system over time. In Taagepera and Shugart's words (1989: 236), "Keeping the ills we know of may be better than leaping into the unknown".<sup>14</sup> However, this is only half of the story. To complete the picture we need to examine more in depth the long-run impact of stable electoral systems on the formation of partisan preferences. As Joergen Boelstad et al. (forthcoming) show, parties that gain from tactical voting due to restrictive electoral rules may also obtain more long-term support as voters come to identify with the parties they vote for; and so the increases in efficiency that becomes possible with a smaller party system may in the long

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favours two-round systems, while Lijphart (1994) is a supporter of the Danish system with lists a little less open than they are. Both Taagepera and Shugart (1989) and Carey and Hix (2011) have expressed sympathy for small, multi-member constituencies, with some kind of proportional representation formula. Likewise, Hermens (1984) and Taagepera (1984) propose three and two-member districts, respectively, as acceptable alternatives to the usual plurality methods in single-member districts. For Duveger (1984) and Johnston (1984), PR is not a threat to stable government as long as the executive is not dependent on a legislative vote of confidence in a parliamentary system. Within the forms of PR, Lakeman (1984) prefers STV to list PR. Finally, Gallagher (2005) summarizes the criteria identified by a number of scholars evaluating electoral systems and creates his own list.

<sup>12</sup> "Bonus-adjusted proportional representation" is the terminology employed by Shugart in his blog to refer to the current Italian electoral system.

<sup>13</sup> The 2012 Greek elections and the 2013 Italian elections cast serious doubts about the validity of this statement.

<sup>14</sup> Talking about the 1993 new Italian electoral law, Reed (2001) argues that the equilibrium is rarely established in the first elections under new rules.



run not leave voters dissatisfied with their more restricted choice options, even if certain small parties have paid a large penalty.

Summing up, studies of electoral systems constitute a strong branch in the field of comparative politics. Nevertheless, it is possible to identify two serious shortcomings in the literature. The first one is substantive: the impact of the consequences of electoral systems on the institutional preferences of political actors is still poorly understood. The second problem is an imbalance between large-N and small-N studies. On the one hand, we often see in depth case-studies whose conclusions are not easily exportable to other historic or national contexts. On the other hand, there are comparative works that fail to capture the main causal mechanisms that lead to electoral system change. This project aims to offer a comprehensive and theoretically well-grounded explanation of why electoral reforms takes place in a contemporary democracy and what are their consequences. Hence, the added value of this thesis could be summarized as follows: better theory, better data, and better methods. However, I am also aware of the limitations of this study. It is simply not easy to come up with a definitive explanation of electoral reform. This is pretty much what Blais (2008: 6) suggests when he points out that “no simple and parsimonious model can explain why electoral reform does or does not emerge on the political agenda, and, when it does, why it sometimes succeeds, and, more often, fails”. And, likewise, Benoit (2007: 387) concludes in his review article that “we are unlikely ever to discover any unified field theory of institutional change that can perfectly fit every applied setting.”

Bearing all this in mind, examining the determinants and impact of electoral reforms involves a daunting number of tasks for this study. First of all, the definition and operationalization of the concept of electoral system change is one of my main tasks. Political scientists have mainly addressed questions about electoral reforms while either lacking an explicit definition of the object of study, or implicitly equating system change with formula change. Although it might seem only a modest improvement, the absence of a universally accepted and exhaustive definition of electoral reform suggests the need for devoting some efforts to this task. Secondly, there is an additional job that needs to be done that is concerned with the collection of data. I think that the only way the causes and consequences of electoral

reform can be unpacked is by complementing the existing datasets on electoral systems (mainly but not only, Golder and Johnson and Wallack's) with new information obtained directly from the electoral laws themselves, or acquired after a careful study of secondary sources.<sup>15</sup> And an analogous argument could be made regarding the calculation of some of the main variables (i.e., party system fragmentation,<sup>16</sup> electoral disproportionality and volatility).

### 1.3. Research questions

There has been a wide variety of research questions concerning the origins of electoral systems. That being said, one significant theoretical and empirical issue in the literature that needs to be taken into account in the first place is the direction of reforms. There is a major claim made by Josep Maria Colomer (2005: 2) about “a general trend toward proportional representation over time”. Likewise, Renwick and Pilet (2011) hypothesize that changes in electoral systems in recent decades have trended towards candidate-centrism and away from party-centrism. Although the logic underlying these two statements is somewhat appealing, neither the theoretical arguments nor the empirical evidence are fully persuasive (Shugart 2005). Moreover, the reality of major electoral reforms in four established democracies in the 1990s (i.e., Israel, Italy, Japan and New Zealand) raises an important question in the light of previous consensus by commentators that such episodes of institutional change were rare (Birch et al. 2002; Gallagher 2005; Katz 2005; Lijphart 1994; Nohlen 1984b; Norris 1995; Taagepera 2007b).<sup>17</sup> To sum up, the purpose of a first group of questions is to provide an overview of the recent evolution of electoral systems in the interparty and intraparty dimensions. More specifically, the aim is to evaluate different claims about the increasing proportionality and personalization of the rules of the game, and to assess the existence of temporal and cross-regional variation regarding modifications of electoral systems as well.

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<sup>15</sup> On 8 February 2013 the article “Democratic Electoral Systems Around the World, 1946-2011” (Bormann and Golder forthcoming) was made available online on the *Electoral Studies* website. In a nutshell, this research note describes an update to *Democratic Electoral Systems* dataset. I employed this update to identify any possible inconsistency in my data regarding the 10 last years.

<sup>16</sup> In the whole manuscript, party system *fragmentation* and party system *size* are used interchangeably.

<sup>17</sup> Against this, see Colomer (2001a).

Why are electoral systems reformed in some contexts but not in others? This is the second research question of the dissertation. An obvious starting point for an answer to it is to look at the motivations stated by the politicians that engage in this type of electoral engineering in one country, and to see whether they share a common pattern with other cases. For example, one of the reasons that representatives of the established Italian parties usually provided for the 1993 electoral reform was to offer cabinets more stability and capacity to govern (Katz 1996; Sakamoto 1999). And it would seem reasonable to take this explanation at face value: During its nearly fifty years of history, the so-called “First Italian Republic” (1946–1994) had the highest rate of cabinet turnover in Western Europe, at more than twice the regional average (Müller and Strøm 2000). There are valid arguments for reforming in a restrictive direction electoral systems that produce high cabinet instability and, as a result, substantial policy immobilism (Curini 2011). And this was an objective agreed by elites of both sides of the political spectrum.<sup>18</sup> Eleven years later, when the issue of electoral reform returned to the political agenda, the rules of the game changed again, although a bonus-adjusted PR system was adopted that time. However, the most important feature of that change for my purposes is that seat-maximization on its own cannot account for it either (Renwick 2010). In fact, the party that initiated the change (UDC) suffered a fall in its seat share despite doubling its vote share.<sup>19</sup> Hence, the 1993 and the 2005 electoral reforms in Italy points to the existence of other kinds of motivations that go well beyond the strict maximization of seats (e.g., ensure a stable party system structure).<sup>20</sup>

Turning now to the determinants of electoral reform from a comparative perspective, Colomer (2005: 1) argues that “it is the number of parties that can explain the choice of electoral systems, rather than the other way round”. In making this case, he challenges the so-called *Duverger’s Propositions* (Benoit 2007; Grumm 1958; Lipson and Hanus 1964). Unfortunately, the link is more complex (Renwick 2010). For example, if we limit our focus to situations of

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<sup>18</sup> Achille Occhetto (first National Secretary of the *Partito Democratico della Sinistra*) advocated the electoral reform “to facilitate the formations of homogenous and compact parliamentary majorities from the moment of the vote” (*Atti della Camera*, April 23, 1992:2), whereas Mario Segni (formerly, a long-time member of the *Democrazia Cristiana*) argued that “governability cannot be assured by any technique of constitutional engineering, unless there is also a simplification and homogenization of the political scene” (*Il Sole 24 ore*, July 16, 1993:2).

<sup>19</sup> It might also be claimed that the UDC just made a mistake. In the same vein, Andrews and Jackman (2005) argue that the British Liberals made a similar mistake by not pushing for PR in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>20</sup> Were we to focus on seat-maximization alone, other cases like for example the opposition to PR within the French Socialist Party in 1991 and 1992 would be difficult to understand (Renwick 2010: 106).

high party system fragmentation in established democracies since 1962, it is striking that the electoral rules either remain unchanged or are repeatedly reformed in a restrictive direction, whereas almost none of them are modified in a permissive way.

Regarding to electoral reforms in the intraparty dimension, Renwick and Pilet (2011) hypothesize that changes in electoral systems towards more personalized rules in the last decades are provoked because voters are becoming distrustful of the way representative democracy works in their countries. However, the fact that this widespread dissatisfaction brings about in recent times either party-centred or candidate-centred reforms seems to indicate that it is not only by fostering candidates' (and MPs') incentives to cultivate a personal vote that parties try to handle such dissatisfaction. Apparently, there are institutional formulas to address the democratic malaise other than increasing "the extent to which individual politicians can benefit by developing personal reputations distinct from those of their party" (Carey and Shugart 1995: 418-419). A candidate-centred reform may be only one of the possible ways in which to address the progressive disengagement of citizens in conventional political participation. If anything, electoral system changes in the intraparty dimension have in common that they seem to be adopted in case of a malfunctioning of the established political power that is perceived as such by the electorate. Thus, in addition to testing theories that link voters' discontent and increasing personalization of the electoral systems, I also aim to see whether public discomfort leads to the adoption of more party-centred rules.

The third main group of questions that I would like to address in this dissertation concerns the *consequences* of electoral reforms. At the macro-level, restrictive electoral system changes in the *interparty dimension* can be an effective strategy to prevent small parties from gaining seats by boosting the overall degree of disproportionality –that is the difference between the percentage of votes received and the percentage of seats obtained by a party in the resulting legislature- produced by the rules. The latter occurs because, unless parties and voters react immediately to the modification in the incentives provided by the electoral laws, the relationship between the percentage of votes received and the percentage of seats a party gets in the resulting legislature fundamentally changes after such a reform. Regarding the consequences of electoral reform in the *intraparty dimension*, this investigation examines the impact of movements

towards more or less candidate-centred electoral rules on party system nationalization.<sup>21</sup> Hence, other macro-level effects of interest, such as their consequences for turnout, satisfaction with democracy or provision of public goods, fall outside of its scope. Although it might be interesting to see whether electoral reforms have an impact on these phenomena, due to space and time constraints, I am only concerned with their effects for electoral disproportionality and party system nationalization.

There are, however, other levels at which the consequences of electoral reforms can be assessed. Perhaps more important than consequences for the functioning of the party system are effects on the votes obtained by parties that take one side or the other in terms of support for a given reform before it is enacted. Only if there are such consequences will it be possible for voters to influence the reform process. In this study I argue and show that taking the “wrong” side in a process of reform electorally hurts the party in question.

In conclusion, in this dissertation I intend to address three types of questions. First of all, and from a descriptive point of view, I plan to examine the overall evolution of electoral systems in both the interparty and the intraparty dimension. Second, and with regard to the determinants of electoral reforms, I aim to find out which factors better explain them in both the interparty and the intraparty dimension across countries and over time, and to see whether these different causes interact with each other. Finally, and concerning the consequences of electoral reforms, I would like to address the following three questions:

- Does electoral reform matter at all?
- Do politicians generally achieve the goals they pursue when they reform the rules of the game?
- How long does it take for an electoral reform to have its full effects?

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<sup>21</sup> According to a relatively widespread definition, the level of party system nationalization refers to the “degree to which parties are uniformly successful in winning votes across districts” (Moenius and Kasuya 2004: 545).

#### 1.4. Theoretical framework and main argument(s)

Analyzing the causes and consequences of electoral reform requires a theory of parties' (and voters') preferences on electoral system change, and a notion of how political actors react once it has been put in place. However, let me start by pointing out that several different approaches are taken to study this phenomenon. Admittedly, this decision entails a considerable effort. But, otherwise, over-simplification would make it impossible to successfully address such a complex area of research.

Needless to say, this study is limited to describe how things “are”, as opposed to how they “should be” (Hume 1890 [1739]). Hence, it is a positive rather than normative project in the sense that it intends to be “value free”. Its main aim is not to investigate which is the best electoral system but to employ the standard trade-offs that electoral rules commonly involve in trying to predict electoral system continuity and change.<sup>22</sup> In order to do that, I incorporate a norms-based approach into the model of electoral reform developed in this dissertation. No party in office will reform the electoral system against its self-interest; but no incumbent party will be able to pursue its institutional goals at will. Norms matter in that politicians' strategies of survival through electoral reform are heavily constrained by voters' considerations of what constitutes a fair representation of interests. This is partly due to the importance of the “sociological” concept of legitimacy of the electoral system. In his classic study, *Political Man*, Seymour Lipset (1963: 64) defines it as “the capacity of a political system to engender and maintain the belief that the existing political institutions are the most appropriate and proper ones for the society”. Likewise, Shugart (2008: 15) employs the term *act-contingent* reasons of electoral reform to refer to those motivations present when “the concept of ‘reform’, albeit perhaps vaguely understood among the public, is itself popular”. It is worth emphasizing, however, that the argument that norms matter does not imply that strategic interests of rational political actors are thrown aside. In this regard, electoral reforms are not automatic responses to failures of the current institutions in meeting their normative expectations, but reasoned and negotiated reactions of parties to a variety of circumstances (Sakamoto 1999).

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<sup>22</sup> These trade-offs are perfectly exemplified by the words of the Norwegian politician Jan P. Sye (Conservative), who during the late 1980s summed up the essential elements of any electoral reform saying that: “An electoral system must be a compromise between desires for the best possible degree of proportionality, regional representation and the need for a parliamentary situation that can give stable governments” (Stortingsforhandlinger 1987-88, nr. 31: 3252; 3274).

Yet, in this dissertation several different approaches to understand actors' behaviour are presented as well, yielding alternative answers to the research questions. In doing so, I argue and empirically demonstrate that it is most fruitful to assume that actors have a variety of different concerns and that which of these concerns comes to the fore in any reform situation in a contemporary democracy depends on the circumstances. Part of the answer to the question of why reforms take place, and what are their consequences, can be based on rational choice theory and, broadly speaking, a political economy approach. With regard to the former, suffice it to say that I adopt a view of rationality according to which political actors are assumed to follow a reasonable process for choosing (Simon 1957 [1947]). Hence, my starting point is the usual assumption of bounded or procedural rationality, that is, "behaviour that is adaptive within the constraints imposed *both* by the external situation and by the capacities of the decision maker" (Simon 1957 [1947: 294, original italics]). Concerning the political economy theoretical framework, I assume that private and public decision makers can be described in the same way (Caporaso and Levine 1992: 154). Moreover, I also agree with Peter Ordeshook (1990: 1) when he says that "political and economic processes cannot be separated". I hereby present an approach that combines theoretical insights from political science, and empirical devices from economics (Levi 2000). However, the fact that many forms of political economy do not take into account historical obstacles to electoral reform (i.e., the role played by tradition) has been widely criticized (e.g., Green and Shapiro 1994; Rahat 2011). Following Sven Steinmo et al. (1992), I believe that any institutional change is context-dependent at least in the sense that it is a consequence of political circumstances at a given point in time (see also Taagepera and Shugart 1989).

Finally, I am primarily interested in using institutionalism as a methodology and not as a body of substantive work (Diermeier and Krehbiel 2003). These scholars define a political institution "as a set of contextual features in a collective choice setting that defines constraints on, and opportunities for, individual behaviour in the setting" (2003: 125); and they also differentiate between institutional theories (in which institutions are exogenous) and theories of institutions (in which some institutions are endogenous). This distinction corresponds to the two propositions of "new institutionalism" raised by Adam Przeworski (2004: 527): "(1) Institutions

matter”; (2) “Institutions are endogenous”. In this dissertation, I aim to evaluate these two statements. In fact, Daniel Diermeier and Keith Krehbiel argue that “a theory of institutions cannot exist without institutional theories” (2003: 130).

The core actor of this dissertation is the party. How do the parties make their decisions on electoral reforms? The field of electoral engineering is dominated by two main theoretical claims. With regard to changes in the interparty dimension, the *micro-mega rule* explains electoral reform on the basis of party system fragmentation (Colomer 2004b: 3).<sup>23</sup> Typically, *larger* parties prefer more restrictive (i.e., small assemblies and districts but high thresholds), and *smaller* parties more permissive (i.e., big assemblies and districts but low thresholds) electoral systems (Benoit 2007: 378). Colomer himself (2005) demonstrates that this approach has some merit in explaining the adoption of PR from the nineteenth century onwards. True, a large number of parties generate incentives to change the electoral system. However, as can be seen in Chapter 4, I argue and demonstrate contrary to Colomer that a rise in the number of parties in contemporary democratic life precedes the adoption of a more majoritarian rather than a more proportional system because parties are not only seat-maximizers.

Following Wolfgang Müller and Kaare Strøm’s (1999) theoretical framework, I assume that parties change the electoral system with a view to maximizing *votes, office and policy*. Several scholars have argued that parties’ attempts to maximize their seat shares provide a powerful explanation for electoral reform (e.g., Benoit 2004).<sup>24</sup> However, I also focus on other kinds of instrumental motivations parties have in mind when adopting an electoral system change. Although I do not deny the importance of the seat-maximization goal, parties seem to pursue other types of objectives in processes of electoral reform. In the same vein, Richard Katz (2005: 69) comes to the conclusion from his review of 14 cases of major reforms since 1950 in established democracies that there are six general reasons why politicians change the rules of the game they are winning: first, negative electoral prospects; second, lack of control over the electoral reform process; third, conflict of interests among members of the winning coalition;

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<sup>23</sup> Microméga refers to the title of a tale by Voltaire (*Micromégas* 1752) in which dwarfs and giants dialogue.

<sup>24</sup> The most clearly specified version of the conventional wisdom is Benoit’s model (2004: 373-374) when he states that “a change in electoral institutions will occur when a political party or coalition of political parties supports an alternative which will bring it more seats than the status quo electoral system, and also has the power to affect through fiat that institutional alternative”.



fourth, short-term seat-maximization; fifth, long-term change in the competitive system; and sixth, exchange of non-electoral interests for electoral gains.

Yet, parties' behaviour regarding electoral reform is also completely in accordance with the *cartel party theory* (Katz and Mair 1995). According to them, parties have adapted themselves to declining levels of participation and involvement in party activities by not only turning to resources provided by the state but also by doing so in a collusive manner. Because the electoral rules are determined by the parties themselves, they can also enhance their capacity to resist challenges from newly mobilized alternatives by enacting an electoral reform (p. 16). Katz and Mair do not mention electoral systems (and their reforms) as one of the most powerful devices to ensure parliamentary parties' survival. Hence, it is original to apply this theory to the ruling parties' attempts of protecting their interests by tailoring the electoral system accordingly (Tworzecki 2003).<sup>25</sup> Building on Katz and Mair's ideas, I more specifically expect insider parties to become less interested in *efficient reforms* (i.e., restrictive electoral system changes in case of high party system fragmentation) when electoral disproportionality and/or volatility is already high.<sup>26</sup>

Until recently, political parties have been the most commonly identified actor involved in the processes of electoral reform (Benoit 2007). However, I think that, contrary to conventional wisdom, other types of actors (i.e., voters and all sorts of veto players) may contribute to an explanation of these phenomena. Regarding the former, voters come into my explanation of institutional change by disliking blatant manipulation of the rules of the game, constraining political leaders' attempts to pass a merely self-interested electoral reform, and appreciating those modifications that are (or tend to be) Pareto-improving (e.g., improving cabinet stability, increasing the legislative passage rate, and so on). In other words, citizens may conceive an electoral reform as either *redistributive* or *efficient* (Tsebelis 1990). The closer we get to the

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<sup>25</sup> Unfortunately, this is only be part of the story. As Kitschelt (2000) highlights, one of the potential shortcomings of the cartel party theory is the prisoner's dilemma that it involves. Cartel members have powerful incentives to defect and let the other major parties pass a restrictive electoral reform while winning the support of junior coalition partners and, more broadly, the entire population of the country by advocating the preservation of the (permissive) *statu quo*. This element could explain why we do not see as frequently as expected the manipulation of the electoral rules by the major parties in countries like Germany (Jesse 1990; Saalfeld 2005) or Israel (Rahat and Hazan 2005).

<sup>26</sup> Hereafter I define *efficiency* of electoral institutions (or changes in the rules of the game) as those promoting "responsiveness to the collective-goods preferences of the majority of the electorate" (Shugart 2001: 173).

efficiency pole with a reform that improves the condition of all (or almost all) individuals or groups in a society, the more likely it is that the voters will appreciate it. In this regard, a main hypothesis linked to voters' political attitudes and the occurrence of electoral reforms in the intraparty dimension can be expressed along the following lines: *Widespread dissatisfaction with the way democracy works among the citizenry of a country leads to electoral system changes that either increase or decrease candidates' incentives to cultivate a personal vote.* Finally, actors other than political parties and voters may play a role in the choice of electoral institutions if they are veto players and can block a change from the status quo at different levels and/or stages of the reform process (Blau 2008; Hooghe and Deschouwer 2011; Nikolenyi 2011; Tsebelis 2002).

With regard to the consequences of electoral reforms, several research pieces that date back at least from the early 1950s (e.g., Duverger 1964 [1954]) and that are impossible to summarize here suggest that electoral systems have an impact on various important outcomes either at the aggregate or at the individual levels.<sup>27</sup> However, a still empirically open question is how these cross-sectional findings show themselves from a dynamic point of view. In this regard, the *Duvergerian gradual learning process* based on experience and information (see also Taagepera and Shugart 1989; Taagepera 2007a) and the McPhee and Ferguson's (1962) *political immunization thesis* (see also Butler and Stokes 1974) are the two main theoretical approaches that account for the fact that the overall impact of a reform can hardly be evaluated in the first election after it is enacted. To be more specific, some aspects of reform might be best assessed immediately (i.e., the mechanical effects), while the psychological ones remain initially "controlled" because it takes actors several elections to adjust their behaviour to them.

In effect, because voters know the distortion entailed by the transformation of votes into seats –namely, the mechanical effects of electoral systems–, they adapt their behaviour so as to make their votes count –namely, the psychological effect– (Cox 1997; Duverger (1964 [1954])).<sup>28</sup> Yet, the gradual anticipation by voters (and parties and candidates) of the mechanical effects

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<sup>27</sup> For a summary of them, see Chapter 2.

<sup>28</sup> There's a debate whether to conceive the latter as a pre-electoral (i.e., strategic entry or the small parties' decision of not running because they would be the victims of strategic desertion by voters) or a post-electoral effect (i.e., tactical vote or the fact that some candidates are just ignored by voters on the election day).

requires, among others, a rather stringent assumption about the repeated organization of elections over time under the same electoral rules. For example, Rein Taagepera and Matthew Shugart (1989) argue that it takes at least two elections with the same institutional framework for the psychological effect to manifest itself (see also Bielasiak 2002; Dawisha and Deets 2006); and Bruno Fey (1997: 142) summarizes contemporary received wisdom in the political science literature about the process of strategic voting development:

Indeed, the reasoning Duverger offers for his law is a dynamic story in which voters, over time, gradually abandon an unpopular party in larger and larger numbers until no support remains.<sup>29</sup>

Finally, the idea that generational replacement plays a role in voting behaviour change after an electoral reform is one that has not been extensively explored in the literature. Newly enfranchised individuals are known to be particularly affected by political events and to be largely responsible for changes in the support for existing parties (Dinas 2010; Franklin 2004). Such individuals are also known to rapidly become immunized against changing their minds if they support the same party at even a quite small number of consecutive elections. The implications of this last insight for electoral change after a reform in the rules of the game has not been addressed, though it might well supply an explanation for the fact it takes several elections with a new institutional framework to see its full effects.

### **1.5. Research design: Case selection, data and method**

The causes and consequences of electoral reforms have been analysed in several case studies (e.g., Bawn 1993; Benoit and Schiemann 2001; Hazan and Rahat 2000; Kaminski 2002; Katz 1996; Moraski 2007; Nagel 2004; Reed and Thies 2001; Renwick et al. 2009; Shugart et al. 2007; Pachón and Shugart 2010), and in comparative research on various countries, including contemporary (e.g., Best 2012; Bielasiak 2006; Birch et al. 2002; García Díez 2001; Harfst 2013; Ishiyama 1997; Remmer 2008; Renwick 2010) and earlier democracies (Boix 1999; Cusack et al.

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<sup>29</sup> An unpopular party is, according to Fey, a party that does not obtain a considerable vote share rather than a party that lacks citizens' popularity.

2007; Rokkan 2009 [1970]). However, their determinants and effects have never been systematically analyzed. For this reason, in this thesis I intend to formulate a body of theoretically driven and empirically rigorous comparative work on the causes and consequences of this phenomenon by bringing together several theoretical frameworks and employing various empirical strategies. Moreover, I plan to widen the scope of study from a single reform or small set of reforms to a wider group of episodes of this kind of institutional changes. This provides more leverage for my statistical analysis, and gives the opportunity for broader generalizations.

In this dissertation, I examine more than 100 electoral reforms in 60 democratic countries from four continents (Europe, America, Asia and Oceania) between 1945 and 2010. More specifically, I study modifications in the rules that shape electoral outcomes at the national level. It is obvious that electoral reforms can happen at all levels of government at which elections take place. However, I prefer to avoid studying electoral reforms at the international, the regional or the local level because this research attempts to obtain results as comparable as possible. Consequently, I only study them at the national level. After all, some authors argue that changes in voting systems at other electoral levels than the national should be categorized as *minor* (Bowler and Donovan 2008; Dalton and Gray 2003). Moreover, there is still a second reason to focus on electoral reforms at this tier of government. If we take seriously the “second-order” elections theory (Reif and Schmitt 2006 [1980]), national elections are the most important ones. In fact, they are perceived to be so by both voters and parties (candidates), in spite of the processes of supranational integration and territorial devolution that have taken place all over the world in recent times. Therefore, the cases selected for this study concern the electoral system at the national level.<sup>30</sup>

Finally, an explanation needs to be given concerning the countries that elect more than one office at the national level. With regard to presidential and semi-presidential systems, I prefer to stick to legislative elections in order to maximize comparability across countries.<sup>31</sup> With regard to bicameralism in parliamentary and semi-presidential democracies, I choose to focus on

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<sup>30</sup> For a study of the adoption of the mixed-member proportional systems in Scotland, Wales and for the London Assembly, see Dunleavy and Margetts (2001).

<sup>31</sup> For a study of the adoption or the change of the electoral formula in presidential elections in Latin America, see Negretto (2006).

the rules employed to elect the chamber of parliament to which the national government is mainly responsible. This solution also avoids giving more weight to countries with presidential or bicameral systems. Problems, however, begin to arise as soon as we start to think about countries where cabinets have to win confidence votes in both chambers in order to stay in office (like in Italy). In such cases (not that many, to be frank), I take into account the rules employed to elect the chamber that is traditionally considered the lower house.<sup>32</sup> And the same solution applies to those presidential countries that are bicameral.

I take into consideration as many political contexts as reasonably feasible in order to circumvent small-N problems related to scarcity of statistical power, and avoid large-N problems associated with lack of comparability. In particular, three criteria regarding case selection are applied. First of all, I only look at countries and periods in which free and fair elections take place, as I said earlier. This criterion rules out many electoral systems around the world. A second criterion that guides case selection is the availability and reliability of comparable data on electoral laws and party system features across all the countries under study. For this reason, the case selection is limited to post-World War II democracies and third-wave democracies from Southern, Central and Eastern Europe, and Latin America. Table 1.1 displays the list of countries and time periods comprised. Notwithstanding the incomplete nature of this catalogue, the aim is to draw valid inferences on the origins and consequences of electoral reforms in all contemporary democracies. Finally, I examine presidential, semi-presidential, and parliamentary regimes. After all, in spite of their distinct institutional setup, the basic logic of bargaining should be similar there (Strøm et al. 2008). Thus, I think it is a worthwhile attempt to formulate decision theories that cover all three types of systems (Amorim Neto 2006).

With regard to the data and methods employed, various research strategies are here combined to answer the central questions of this study. In brief, the empirical part of my dissertation tries to maximize the evidence supporting my theory.<sup>33</sup> However, this involves several tasks.

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<sup>32</sup> For example, because the president of the Senate stands in the role of Head of State when the president of the Republic needs to be replaced, the Senate is traditionally considered the upper house in Italy.

<sup>33</sup> It was my first intention to use a so-called *mixed method* and combine a cross-country large-N part with some evidence from in-depth case-studies. I think this nested research had a synergistic value (Lieberman 2005), and

**Table 1.1. Countries and time periods analysed**

| <b>Countries</b>   | <b>Time Periods</b> | <b>Countries</b> | <b>Time Periods</b>  |
|--------------------|---------------------|------------------|----------------------|
| Albania            | 1992-2010           | Italy            | 1946-2010            |
| Argentina          | 1983-2010           | Japan            | 1946-2010            |
| Armenia            | 1995-2010           | Latvia           | 1993-2010            |
| Australia          | 1946-2010           | Lithuania        | 1992-2010            |
| Austria            | 1945-2010           | Luxembourg       | 1945-2010            |
| Belgium            | 1946-2010           | Macedonia        | 1994-2010            |
| Bolivia            | 1985-2010           | Malta            | 1966-2010            |
| Brazil             | 1982-2010           | Mexico           | 2000-2010            |
| Bulgaria           | 1990-2010           | Moldova          | 1994-2010            |
| Canada             | 1945-2010           | Netherlands      | 1946-2010            |
| Chile              | 1993-2010           | New Zealand      | 1946-2010            |
| Colombia           | 1958-2010           | Nicaragua        | 1984-2010            |
| Costa Rica         | 1948-2010           | Norway           | 1945-2010            |
| Croatia            | 1992-2010           | Panama           | 1989-2010            |
| Cyprus             | 1970-2010           | Paraguay         | 1989-2010            |
| Czech Republic     | 1996-2010           | Peru             | 1980-1989; 2001-2010 |
| Denmark            | 1945-2010           | Poland           | 1991-2010            |
| Dominican Republic | 1966-2010           | Portugal         | 1975-2010            |
| Ecuador            | 1979-2010           | Romania          | 1990-2010            |
| El Salvador        | 1985-2010           | Slovakia         | 1994-2010            |
| Estonia            | 1992-2010           | Slovenia         | 1992-2010            |
| Finland            | 1945-2010           | Spain            | 1977-2010            |
| France             | 1945-2010           | Sweden           | 1948-2010            |

single-unit and cross-unit research designs could be complementary (Coppedge 1999; Gerring 2004). On the one hand, statistical analyses could help me with the case selection for the in-depth research and be used to provide additional tests of hypotheses generated from small-N studies. On the other hand, case-study analyses could be used to assess the plausibility of observed statistical relationships between variables and to generate theoretical insights from outliers. In the same vein, James Fearon and David Laitin (2008: 773) believe that case studies can be quite useful for ascertaining and assessing the causal mechanisms that give rise to the empirical regularities discovered in large-N analyses. So, combining these two approaches would have allowed me to overcome the usual pitfalls that each type of method presents. However, Alexander George and Andrew Bennett (2005) identify several weaknesses recurrent limitations of case-study methods such as the problem of case selection, the trade-off between parsimony and richness, and the related tension between achieving high internal validity of particular cases versus making generalizations that apply to broad populations. For these reasons, and because of time and space constraints, I finally decided to take in-depth studies out of the research and confine a preliminary sketch of the cases in Appendix 4 to this thesis.

|           |           |                |           |
|-----------|-----------|----------------|-----------|
| Germany   | 1949-2010 | Switzerland    | 1947-2010 |
| Greece    | 1974-2010 | Ukraine        | 1994-2010 |
| Guatemala | 1990-2010 | United Kingdom | 1945-2010 |
| Honduras  | 1985-2010 | United States  | 1946-2010 |
| Hungary   | 1990-2010 | Uruguay        | 1989-2010 |
| Iceland   | 1946-2010 | Venezuela      | 1963-2010 |
| Ireland   | 1948-2010 |                |           |
| Israel    | 1949-2010 |                |           |

First of all, the electoral systems of all the countries and for each year under study have to be identified and classified as either “reform” or “no reform” and coded as to reform type (see below) on the basis of the criteria stated earlier. In order to do that, I examine all the electoral laws available in the languages that I read (i.e., Spanish, English, Italian, French and Portuguese), and cross-validate the results with an extensive review of secondary sources. Having collected the data, I perform quantitative analyses using the appropriate statistical tools. In the first part of the dissertation, I use the aforementioned two typologies of electoral reform as dependent variables in order to explain the variation in the likelihood of occurrence of each category of institutional change. More specifically, the estimation of several dynamic models on the basis of two-self built datasets allows me to find out why electoral system change takes place in some cases, and not in other highly similar ones.

The two typologies of electoral reform are the main independent variables in the first two chapters of the third part of this research (i.e., Chapters 6 and 7), which aim at exploring the consequences of this type of institutional change at the macro-level. In a set of comparative analyses based on several cross-sectional times series models, I assess the consequences of changes in the rules of the game for disproportionality and party system nationalization. In the chapter concerning the effect of the position adopted by each party during electoral reform processes (i.e., Chapter 8), their performance in the immediately following legislative election at the national level serves as dependent variable. This last potential impact is measured by implementing the corresponding hierarchical lineal models, and after having updated a dataset on parties’ preferences about electoral reform that Damien Bol has kindly shared with me. This innovative data source has been built on the basis of an expert survey conducted regarding 30

different national processes of electoral reform. Finally, Appendix 6 to this thesis employs individual-level data from several New Zealand Election Studies. The availability of data limits the analysis of the consequences of electoral reforms at the individual level to only this country. In this appendix, a combination of various econometric techniques specially designed to deal with endogeneity problems are employed.

### **1.6. Main findings**

As seen above, I make two types of proposition about electoral reforms in contemporary democracies. First of all, I examine their determinants and conclude that parties change the rules of the game on the basis of a combination of redistributive and efficiency considerations. The difference between cases in which a permissive electoral system change is implemented, cases in which the rules of the game stay the same, and cases in which the electoral system becomes more restrictive lies in the level of party system fragmentation: the higher the effective number of parties, the more likely it is that it will be reformed in a restrictive direction. Parties clearly take into account the need for governability when deciding whether and how to reform the interparty dimension of the electoral system. This is not the whole story, however, and once electoral disproportionality or volatility interacts with the degree of party system fragmentation, the impact of the latter on restrictive electoral reform becomes less obvious. Likewise, one could expect that the impact of party system fragmentation on the likelihood of electoral reform in the interparty dimension varies across different democratic ages. And, in fact, it does. Furthermore, if citizens are less satisfied with the way democracy works in their country, reforms in the intraparty dimension of the system are also more likely.

A second group of findings concerns the effects of electoral reforms at different levels of analysis. The results of the econometric models with both aggregate and individual data suggest that this type of institutional change is highly consequential in several ways. First of all, permissive electoral system changes in the interparty dimension contribute to reduce the overall deviation of the parties' seat shares from their vote shares. In the same vein, candidate-centred electoral reforms decrease the level of party system nationalization. The magnitude of these two effects decisively hinge at the same time on the values of several other modifying variables.



Particularly important in this respect is the number of elections that have taken place after the implementation of the reform. In brief, electoral system changes are deemed to have powerful consequences that are increasingly felt over time through the processes of generational replacement (of voters) and gradual learning (by voters and parties).

Finally, there are still other important findings in this dissertation regarding the performance of parties at the subsequent election after a reform process has taken place. In this vein, parties' stances on electoral reform lead them to gain or lose votes in the following elections. More specifically, supporting a restrictive electoral system change when party system fragmentation is high and advocating a permissive one when the number of parties is low improve the electoral fortunes of the parties. Second, I demonstrate that major parties are electorally hurt after the implementation of a permissive reform through three mechanisms (i.e., party switching, differential abstention and new voters), and assess the importance of each of them. Finally, I confirm that the type of electoral system matters for individual political behaviour by changing the explanatory power of several independent variables.

### **1.7. Plan of the dissertation**

The dissertation contains three main parts, consisting of two, two and three chapters, respectively, as well as an introductory and a concluding chapter. Part 1, entitled "Electoral systems in contemporary democracies: Theoretical and empirical insights", reviews the literature on the effects and origins of electoral rules, as well as the definition and measurement of electoral reforms in contemporary democracies. More specifically, I develop a theoretical framework for the comparative analysis of the causes and consequences of the occurrence of electoral reforms to be conducted in the next chapters. Chapter 3 introduces the electoral system changes under study, mainly focusing on the conceptualization and operationalization of the notion of "electoral reform".

Part 2, titled "The occurrence of electoral reform and its causes", consists of two chapters in which I successively examine the determinants of electoral reform in the interparty and the intraparty dimension.

And Part 3, labelled as “The occurrence of electoral reforms and their consequences at different levels”, consists of three chapters. The first two chapters examine the effects of electoral system changes at the macro (i.e., country) level while Chapter 8 does so at the meso (i.e., party) level.<sup>34</sup> In Chapter 6, the impact of electoral system changes in the interparty dimension on the degree of disproportionality of electoral outcomes is analyzed in depth. In Chapter 7, the consequences of electoral reforms in the intraparty dimension for the level of nationalization of the party systems are evaluated. This chapter is followed by Chapter 8 in which I investigate the effects of the positions adopted by parties in the processes of change of the rules of the game on their subsequent electoral performance.

The dissertation’s last chapter, Chapter 9, summarizes the findings, discusses the limitations of the study as well as its theoretical and practical implications, and sketches several avenues for further research.

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<sup>34</sup> My initial plan was to have a Chapter 9, the last one in Part 3, in which I would have assessed the significance of electoral reforms at the individual level by employing survey evidence from New Zealand and Italy. Unfortunately, space and time constraints forced me to get rid of this chapter and only include some preliminary analyses on New Zealand in Appendix 6 to this thesis.

## **Part 1**

*Electoral systems in contemporary democracies: Theoretical and empirical insights*



## Chapter 2. Electoral systems: Theoretical approaches on their causes and consequences

[Electoral systems] are strange devices-simultaneously cameras and projectors. They register images which they have partly created themselves.

(Maurice Duverger 1984: 34)

The choice of the electoral system is among the most important constitutional choices that have to be made in democracies.

(Arend Lijphart 1994: 202)

### 2.1. Introduction: The interparty and the intraparty dimensions of electoral systems

In 1985, Arend Lijphart concluded in a survey of the literature of comparative electoral systems that the field was underdeveloped.<sup>35</sup> Twenty years later, Matthew Shugart considered that we could speak of a mature field (2005). Nowadays, the ostracism of studies on electoral rules with a comparative perspective has ceased to exist. However, the room for improvement has not. In this chapter, I will briefly discuss the state of the art in this research field. In order to do that, I will firstly elaborate on the basic distinction between the interparty and the intraparty dimensions of electoral systems. After doing so, the most relevant works on the consequences of electoral systems will be presented, which will constitute a short but I hope exhaustive assessment of the main effects of the rules of the game. Finally, I will confine the last part of my review to the literature on the causes of electoral systems and, more broadly, institutional change.

Most of the research over several decades of the development of the field has been concerned with the so-called *interparty dimension of electoral systems*, that is, the part of the

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<sup>35</sup> The state of the art on comparative electoral systems was even worse 20 years before Lijphart. According to Rae (1971 [1967]: 6):

The limitations of the existing literature reflect the three most persistent shortcomings of its component studies: (1) categories of analysis are seldom defined precisely, (2) data are almost never treated systematically, and (3) the standards of verification are usually left inexplicit. The properties of electoral laws – ballot form, districts, “formulae” – are not classified according to explicit, precise categories, and party systems are usually described in similarly vague terms. Data are often confined to the experience of a single country, and the population of facts is either small or, worse yet, undefined. Standards of evidence...are typically left flexible or even unstated...

electoral systems that affect the concentration or dispersion of authority *across* parties (Shugart 2001). Research on this dimension has shown, on the one hand, how electoral systems affect the translation of votes into seats for competing political parties, and, as a result, the overall structure of the party system (e.g., Taagepera 2007a); and, on the other hand, why electoral rules that increase the number of parties and foster a proportional allocation among them are chosen over other more restrictive methods (e.g., Colomer 2004b and 2005). However, electoral systems also affect the concentration or dispersion of power *within* parties. This is what I will call the *intraparty dimension of electoral systems* (Shugart 2005). The group of works that speak to this second dimension of electoral systems address questions like, on the one hand, how do variations in the rules of the game affect the balance between a “personal” and a “partisan vote”, or the ways in which individual legislators (or legislative candidates) relate to constituents; and, on the other hand, why candidate-centred rules are chosen over other less personalistic ones (Carey and Shugart 1995).

Although some significant findings have emerged in all these areas, we can safely say that the literature on the intraparty dimension lags behind that on the interparty dimension, an observation already made by Lijphart back to 1985. Moreover, there is still a considerable shortage of studies on the origins of electoral systems in both dimensions, a gap that this dissertation aims to address. With regard to the former, suffice it to say that the distinction between systems in which voters select parties and those in which they select candidates is at least as important as the proportional representation (PR) versus plurality/majority debate (Grofman 1999). Concerning the latter, Shugart (2005: 51) considers studies of electoral system choice to be a “research frontier for the twenty-first century”.

The chapter has two main goals. First, it highlights some remaining puzzles in the study of the consequences of electoral systems. The explanation of the electoral system outcomes is directly addressed by two literatures that are in many respects similar. These literatures are an extensive group of works on the effects of electoral rules in the interparty dimension and a less-extensive corpus of research on their impact in the intraparty dimension. The former consists mainly of large-N, cross-national studies of the direct and indirect effects of electoral systems. The latter consists of single-country studies as well as cross-national comparative work. Finally,

the chapter discusses the literature on the origins of electoral systems and their analytical successes, as well as identifying the puzzles that have not yet been fully addressed.

## **2.2. The consequences of electoral systems**

There are at least two main types of effects of electoral rules that need to be dealt with. The first regards all the variables related to the interparty dimension. The second refers to the impact of the intraparty dimension. I address each of these issues in turn.

### **2.2.1. The interparty dimension**

#### **2.2.1.1. Direct effects**

It seems fair to credit Maurice Duverger with being the most distinguished French political scientist of the last century (Benoit 2006). His chief contribution deals with party politics and electoral systems, and can be summarized in what have come to be called *Duverger's Law and Duverger's Hypothesis* (1964 [1954]). At least since his seminal contribution, probably the vast majority of works on electoral systems that have been published have revolved around two main questions: How do the electoral rules shape the party system? And to what extent are voters influenced by electoral systems? According to Duverger, the negative consequences of restrictive electoral rules on party system fragmentation are understood as the result of two mechanisms. First, minor parties typically are awarded a much smaller share of seats than the share of votes they receive. Second, the existence of this *mechanical effect* creates incentives for electoral coordination. As defined by Gary Cox (2000: 49), *electoral coordination* “refers to a variety of processes by which groups of voters and politicians coordinate their electoral actions in order to win more legislative seats or executive portfolios” (see also Riker 1982). Therefore, we expect electoral restrictiveness to decrease the number of parties by generating incentives for strategic entry or withdrawal on the part of political entrepreneurs and tactical voting on the part of voters (Cox 1997). Duverger uses the term *psychological* for these behavioural consequences of non-permissive electoral laws on the party system size.

Yet, the effects of electoral rules are not as straightforward as most institutional studies suggest (Benoit 2001; Blais and Carty 1991; Duverger 1964 [1954]; Katz 1980; Lijphart 1994;

Rae 1971 [1967]; Sartori 1997 [1994]; Shamir 1985; Taagepera and Shugart 1989). Recently, some prominent scholars have successfully argued that the *strength* of electoral rules interacts with the number of sociological cleavages to shape party systems (Amorim Neto and Cox 1997; Golder 2006; Guinjoan 2009; Mozaffar et al. 2003; Ordeshook and Shvetsova 1994; Taagepera 1999). These works suggest that the district-level number of parties should be an interactive function of the number of social cleavages and electoral permissiveness. If this general conclusion were valid, multipartism would arise as the joint product of many exploitable cleavages and a permissive electoral system. Unfortunately, this proposition is largely untested at the district level, even though that is the level at which relevant pressures are expected to work.<sup>36</sup>

The second source of deviation from *Duverger's Law* among single-member districts (SMDs) with plurality rule has an exclusively institutional origin. Strategic entry and tactical voting assume the complete independence of a majoritarian system from other sets of electoral rules; and this assumption simply does not hold most of the time. In fact, some previous research has shown that there are *interaction* or *contamination* effects between the different kinds of electoral systems used in a given country (Ferrara and Herron 2005). Although the presence of contamination has been demonstrated in scenarios of incongruent bicameralism (Lago and Martínez 2007), presidential systems (Shugart and Carey 1992), multilevel polities (Lago and Montero 2009) or high district magnitude variance under PR rules (Lago 2009), recent literature has been particularly successful at showing evidence of this type of effects in mixed-member electoral systems between their PR and SMD tiers (Cox and Schoppa 2002; Crisp et al. 2013; Herron and Nishikawa 2001; Krauss et al. 2012).<sup>37</sup>

Further work on the direct effects of the interparty dimension of electoral systems has built upon Duverger's contribution and has cumulated into a literature that consistently produces findings about levels of disproportionality of electoral outcomes (Anckar 1997; Benoit 2000; Carey and Hix 2011; Lijphart 1994; Rae 1971 [1967]; Taagepera and Shugart 1989), amount of

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<sup>36</sup> For three exceptions, see Crisp et al. (2012), Hicken and Stoll (2011), Riera (2013), Singer (2013), and Singer and Stephenson (2009).

<sup>37</sup> Another systematic account of deviant cases from *Duverger's Law* among plurality systems is the presence of what have come to be called sectionalist third parties, that is, non-national parties that are sufficiently competitive locally to benefit from, rather than be punished by, *Duverger's Law* (Rae 1971 [1967]; Riker 1982). Given the fact that the central concern of this thesis pertains to party system size at the national level, I will not attempt to explain why the number of parties inflates at the local level (Chhibber and Kollman 2004; Cox 1999a).



wasted votes (Queralt 2009; Tavits and Annus 2006; Ugglá 2008), the emergence of new political parties (Harmel and Robertson 1985; Hug 2001; Lago and Martínez 2011; Tavits 2006), and the likelihood of formation of pre-electoral coalitions (Golder 2006a and b; Golder 2005b). In a nutshell, the more inclusive the electoral formula, the higher the district magnitude and the lower the legal threshold, the less disproportionality may be generated, the fewer votes may be wasted, the more new parties may emerge, and the fewer pre-electoral coalitions may be formed. As an explanation of some of the consequences of electoral rules, most of these findings suffer from two important shortcomings: either they lack an adequate econometric basis, or they do not use information at the district-level.<sup>38</sup>

Several efforts to understand the direct effects of the interparty dimension of electoral systems have focused on other types of possible consequences. Some have suggested that there is simply a centre-left bias under PR according to which governments of that ideology are more frequent with this particular electoral formula (Iversen and Soskice 2006). In a similar vein, Monroe and Rose (2002) note that there is a partisan bias effect in PR systems that results from variation in district magnitude and favours rural parties. Furthermore, the underrepresentation of urban parties may also be a result of densely populated areas having lower magnitude districts than they would have if the ratio of voters to seats were more uniform across districts (Samuels and Snyder 2001). However, we still have a poor understanding of the relationship between these two last phenomena called variance effect and malapportionment, respectively (Shugart 2005).

In a very nice article, Bernard Grofman et al. (1997) provide an integrated analysis of the three potential sources of partisan bias in single-member districts with plurality rule –namely, malapportionment, turnout differences, and the geographic distribution of party vote shares–; but these authors cannot obviously examine the role possibly played by the variance effect because magnitude does not change across districts there. It is well known that partisan bias in such institutional context is, at least to a large extent, a function of the asymmetry in the distribution of partisan voting strength across constituencies (among others, Johnston 1979; Rodden 2011). However, causes of partisan bias under PR are still a puzzle. To the best of my knowledge, there

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<sup>38</sup> Finally, John Carey and Simon Hix (2011) posit that low-magnitude multi-member districts (the so-called *limited PR systems*) produce a distance between the median voter and the median government (in case of majority cabinets) or legislature (in case of minority cabinets) party that is statistically indistinguishable from zero.

are only two empirical studies on Argentina (Calvo and Murillo 2004) and Spain (Lago and Montero 2005) on this issue that point to the reinforcement of malapportionment and the variance effect; and a more theoretical paper by Alberto Penadés and Pedro Riera (2011) that tries to conceptualize and operationalize the sources of partisan bias in systems with multi-member districts from a comparative perspective. But I definitely agree with Shugart (2005: 33) when he claims that more work on these topics is “in order”.

Two types of electoral systems arguments are especially relevant for explaining electoral volatility. First, Stefano Bartolini and Peter Mair (2007 [1990]) discovered that institutional modifications which lead to significant changes in the proportionality of electoral outcomes are associated with higher levels of volatility in Western Europe. In the same vein, Roberts and Wibbels (1999) find that forms of institutional instability can foster electoral instability in Latin America. Second, Bartolini and Mair’s (2007 [1990]) findings indicate the existence of a positive relationship between volatility and the number of parties in Western Europe. However, this second connection is slightly less robust in Latin America (Roberts and Wibbels 1999) and post-communist Europe (Tavits 2005 and 2008).

Finally, there is at least one important group of direct consequences of the interparty dimension of electoral systems that are built into the theories of political attitude formation and voting behaviour. First, candidate recognition is higher in plurality and majority systems as well as under mixed-member rules, than in PR systems (Holmberg 2009). Third, the literature concludes that incumbents under majoritarian electoral institutions are more vulnerable to voters’ evaluation of the economy than are their counterparts under PR systems (Fisher and Hobolt 2010). Finally, Susan Banducci et al. (1999) and Jeffrey Karp and Susan Banducci (1999) find, respectively, that there was a general shift towards more positive attitudes on some measures of political efficacy and reversal in a long-term downward trend in voter turnout as a consequence of the adoption of the mixed-member system in New Zealand in the mid-1990s, although the latter effect turned out to be rather short-lived (Vowles 2010).

### 2.2.1.2. The “consequences of the consequences”

A second set of open questions in the interparty dimension of electoral systems relate to what Penadés (2006: 194) calls the “consequences of the consequences”: indirect effects of the rules of the game that perhaps have a bigger impact on citizens’ lives. These outcomes can be reduced to four dimensions: the parties’ policy positions and the issue of political representation, the dynamics of coalition government formation and duration, the macroeconomic policies of resulting governments and provision of public goods by political institutions, and the level of voters’ turnout. In what follows, I delineate these different aspects found in the literature on electoral systems, starting with the most common.

At least since one of the first formulations of the median voter theorem (Downs 1957), two-party systems observed under plurality rule are thought to produce “tweedledum–tweedledee” political competition where the policy moderation is the dominant party strategy.<sup>39</sup> Conversely, proportional electoral rules should enhance the distinctiveness of parties’ policy programmes and promote extreme party positioning (Cox 1990). In the same vein, Katz (1980) shows issue extremism, consistency, and appeal to a codified party doctrine to be associated with proportional electoral formulas. Although political scientists and analysts have long been in agreement on that, Lawrence Ezrow’s (2008) empirical analyses do not support these claims. However, working with only fifteen countries increases the probability of incurring in a type II error<sup>40</sup> and, hence, limits considerably the reliability of this last author’s findings.

Studies of congruence between citizens and policymakers constitute another category of research concerned with the indirect impact of electoral rules on political representation. For example, several studies demonstrate that governments elected under PR rules are significantly closer to their national median voter than are cabinets elected according to other types of electoral systems (Huber and Powell 1994; Powell and Vanberg 2000). By contrast, André Blais and Marc André Bodet (2006) argue that the net overall impact of PR on congruence between represented and representatives is nil because this type of electoral systems has two contradictory effects that cancel out: more parties that are less centrist and, as a result, more distant from the

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<sup>39</sup> However, see Grofman’s piece (2004) against “a simplistic notion” that in plurality elections we ought to expect party convergence to the views of the median voter.

<sup>40</sup> According to Kennedy (2003), a type II error is the failure to reject a false null hypothesis.

voters, and more coalition governments that are closer to the centre of the policy spectrum and, hence, reduce the distance between the government and voters. Moreover, Wlezien and Soroka (2012) demonstrate that governments in proportional systems are less responsive to changing public opinion. Finally, Matt Golder and Jacek Stramski (2010) distinguish between governments in proportional democracies, which are not substantively more congruent with their voters in policy terms than those in majoritarian countries; and legislatures in proportional democracies, which are more representative.

The literature also contains strong arguments as to why cabinet formation and stability might be indirectly affected by the interparty dimension of the electoral system. For example, the direct relationship between the proportionality of the rules and the number of parties lead scholars to predict single-party governments or minimal winning coalitions under majoritarian rules, and a mix of minority (in consensual systems) and undersized and oversized cabinets (in highly conflictual ones) under proportional rules (Grofman 1989). In the same vein, the effective number of parties allows us to account well for much of the variation in cabinet duration (Taagepera and Sikk 2010). By contrast, Gary King et al. (1990) find no statistically significant effect of party system fragmentation on the likelihood of government survival.

Third, a number of empirical studies have found that the interparty dimension of the electoral system also has an effect on the size of the public sector (Bawn and Rosenbluth 2006; Persson and Tabellini 2005), the type of policy outputs that governments in such systems provide (Bawn and Rosenbluth 2006; Lizzeri and Persico 2001; Milesi-Ferretti et al. 2002; Weingast et al. 1981), and the degree of redistribution (Iversen and Soskice 2006). Although the claims of these scholars about the theoretical mechanisms are different, all of them argue that PR systems increase the fraction of GDP accounted for by government spending. Above all, this is because left-wing parties enjoy larger seat shares in European parliaments under PR, and have spent more years than have their ideological comrades in other OECD countries that did not adopt PR (Iversen and Soskice 2006; Rodden 2011). Turning now to a second group of works that explain variations in macroeconomic variables (e.g, Persson and Tabellini 2005), the literature suggests that targetable policy outputs and pork-barrel goods are more common in majoritarian

electoral systems rather than under PR.<sup>41</sup> By contrast, the latter should generate more redistribution than the former (Iversen and Soskice 2006).

Finally, there is wide agreement that the proportionality of electoral systems, measured with different indexes, is positively associated with voters' turnout (Blais and Carty 2006; Cox 1999b; Franklin 2004; Jackman 1987). For example, Benny Geys (2006) finds in his meta-analysis of studies on the determinants of electoral participation that 70 per cent of them succeed in actually demonstrating a positive effect of proportionality on turnout. Despite the unequivocal evidence in favour of this relationship, disagreement emerges on its explanation (Blais 2006). For this reason, the recent work by Peter Selb (2009) showing that variable levels of local competitiveness and, hence, uneven turnout across districts make voters' participation rates to be lower in majoritarian systems is particularly refreshing. Finally, a couple of studies by Aina Gallego (2010) and Gallego et al. (2012) point to new agendas to pursue on the relationship between electoral rules, party system fragmentation, disproportionality and turnout. In the first one, Gallego (2010) shows that the negative effect of party system fragmentation on turnout is lower for the highly educated. In the second of these studies, Gallego et al. (2012) propose and test a theory to account for the puzzle that disproportionality of electoral outcomes has a negative effect on voter participation in established democracies, but not in new ones.

### **2.2.2. The intraparty dimension**

Although the initial underdevelopment of the field of comparative electoral systems was particularly salient in the case of the intraparty dimension, we can see it nowadays as one of the areas of most profound progress in the subfield (Shugart 2005). In order to systematically explore the questions outlined in this area, I will subdivide this part of the review into two big sections. I will first offer a summary of the patterns of descriptive representation provoked by electoral systems. I will then devote the core of the review on the intraparty dimension to the

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<sup>41</sup> The literature certainly suggests that incentives to pork-barrel are more common in the US, and the US is a majoritarian system. But the US is also a system with separated powers in which pork replaces party discipline. This latter logic suggests that we would not find pork barrel politics in majoritarian parliamentary systems. This remark notwithstanding, Stratman and Baur (2002) identify the effect of electoral rules on German legislators' behaviour and show that pork barrel politics are due to the electoral rule employed. More specifically, they find significant differences in committee membership depending whether the legislator is elected through FPTP or PR. Hence, the government funds legislators obtain for their constituencies in order to win reelection cannot be fully attributed to the separation of powers.

study of the impact of electoral systems on the legislators' (and legislative candidates) incentives to cultivate a personal vote.

### **2.2.2.1. Socio-demographic effects**

The impact of electoral rules on the representation of social and demographic groups in the electorate –namely, “descriptive representation” in Hanna Pitkin’s (1972 [1967]) words- could be erroneously conceptualized on both the interparty and intraparty dimension (Shugart 2005). On the one hand, if we started with the observation that levels of representation of ethnic and religious minorities and women is higher under proportional representation than in single-member districts (Duverger 1964 [1954]; Matland and Studlar 1996; Norris 1985), we could think we are in front of an interparty effect. In addition, incumbents are consistently found to have an electoral advantage over their challengers in majoritarian systems –the so-called, *incumbency advantage*- (e.g., Mayhew 2004 [1974]); and this effect is detrimental for non-incumbent politicians, including those from traditionally under-represented groups such as women (Henig 2001). However, we are not speaking of the interparty dimension when discussing effects of electoral systems on representation of women, unless PR means more “women’ parties”; given that the usual effect is more women in various parties, it is an intraparty effect.<sup>42</sup> Moreover, as soon as we stop implicitly equating PR with closed lists, and focus on proportional systems that promote intraparty competition for preference votes, we observe that not all inclusive electoral formulas favour female representation. And the latter is also basically an intraparty effect.

Although ethnic and religious groups can frequently gain representation through single-member districts where their own geographic concentration permits them to do that, women (and other socio-demographic groups) are typically better represented under proportional rules. By contrast, proportional representation with multi-member districts –especially, where there is only one constituency that is national and the list is closed like in Israel- could lead to little or no representation at all of regional groups. Despite the soundness of the latter argument, Michael Latner and Anthony McGann (2005) provide evidence of the type of geographical representation we should not be likely to see when there are no institutions that enforce specific geographical

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<sup>42</sup> I would like to thank Matthew Shugart for having raised this point.

patterns (i.e., proportional representation with a single national constituency). Looking at two of the most “extreme” cases of proportional representation, Israel and the Netherlands, they find that not only central metropolitan areas but also most peripheral regions are somewhat over-represented in the respective legislatures. Hence, these last findings point out some limitations on the expected intraparty effects of electoral systems. First of all, representation remains more territorialized than a deterministic reading of the national constituency would have suggested in those countries. Second, it makes no substantial difference to the functioning of a national constituency whether or not the parties present ranked ballots and voters simply select one party list over another (Israel’s closed lists), or the allocation of seats to candidates takes into account both the party-provided rank order and the preference votes (the Netherlands’ flexible lists).<sup>43</sup>

#### **2.2.2.2. The personal vote**

Turning now to the second main consequence of the variations in the intraparty dimension, electoral systems have also been found to have an impact on the *personal vote*, typically defined as “that portion of a candidate’s electoral support which originates in his or her personal qualities, qualifications, activities, and record” (Cain et al. 1987: 9). Hence, the personal vote may be based on either actual behaviour or assigned attributes. First, some empirical studies examine the impact of the variations in the rules of the game on the characteristics of candidates. If the electoral system promotes a personal vote, candidates will exhibit personal attributes that may attract preference votes away from co-partisan, or even from candidates of a different party. By contrast, if citizens cast votes strictly for a political party, with little or no regard to, or evaluation of, the individual(s) representing that party in electoral contests, there is no personal vote. Shugart et al. (2005) provide the first comparative empirical evidence in this regard. Using data from six European cases under proportional representation, they find that the probability that a legislator will display personal vote-earning attributes (PVEAs) -operationalized as local birthplace and prior representative experience at the municipal or regional level- is higher with specific institutional characteristics on the intraparty dimension of electoral systems that foster candidates’ incentives to cultivate a personal vote, but is lower when those institutional characteristics are absent. In the same vein, using the case of Japan’s second chamber, Kuniaki

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<sup>43</sup> The fact that Dutch voters vote in one of nineteen electoral districts casts some doubts about the convenience of the research design adopted by these authors (Andeweg 2005).

Nemoto and Matthew Shugart (2012) demonstrate that local profiles are effective PVEAs to mobilize votes under the two personalistic systems (single-non transferable vote or SNTV and open list proportional representation or OLPR), while they do not matter under party-centred (closed list proportional representation or CLPR); and Crisp et al. (forthcoming), using data from Slovakia, show that incumbents cultivate personal reputations because parties reward preference vote earnings with better *pre*-election list positions in the future.

Second, there clearly are behavioural consequences of the intraparty dimension of electoral systems that go beyond parties' incentives to nominate candidates with diverse characteristics and profiles that appeal to constituent subgroups. For example, Heithusen et al. (2005) examine the constituency focus of MPs in six legislative chambers that span a variety of electoral systems. In the same vein, Shaun Bowler and David Farrell (2008 [1993]) suggest that institutional variables of electoral systems affect the frequency with which members of the European Parliament engage in constituency service. By contrast, the contribution of Roger Scully and David Farrell (2003) on members of the European Parliament counter-intuitively suggests that those elected from open lists place more emphasis on traditional parliamentary activities.<sup>44</sup> This effect, however, tends to disappear as district magnitude increases. Finally, in a slightly different way, Shane Martin (2011) shows that the impact of ballot structure on committee system strength is dependent on how legislators cultivate a personal vote.

The intraparty dimension has also an effect on the types of bills that legislators initiate. In this regard, Brian Crisp et al. (2004) provide evidence that perfectly fits with the incentives allegedly generated by the electoral system to cultivate a personal vote, and show that the probability that a legislator initiates a local bill is higher in candidate-centred rather than in party-centred systems. Likewise, another interesting avenue of research in the field in the recent past has been the analysis of the assignment of legislators to committees. To my knowledge, there are at least a couple of papers that consider the committee assignments according to the tier (nominal or list) by which a member was elected in Germany (Gschwend et al. 2009; Sieberer

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<sup>44</sup> I believe that this is counter-intuitive because, if the theory was true, representatives elected through open lists should be more focused on constituency service rather than parliamentary activities. By contrast, it could be argued the opposite by claiming that constituency service implies voters can reward incumbents for "bringing home the bacon" (Samuels 2002: 845), and with  $M$  much greater than 1 under open-list proportional representation rules that may not be possible. In other words, personal vote seeking and constituency service should not be conflated.



2010; Stratmann and Baur 2002). Robert Pekkanen et al. (2006) also show that members of the Japanese Parliament elected from PR lists and single-member districts receive different types of positions, reflecting their distinct electoral incentives. Unfortunately, it is yet untested how voter interests match with the committee system in closed-list PR systems (Shugart 2005: 48). Jones et al. (2002) provide the only study on committee assignment under party-centred electoral rules that I am aware of, but they do not use district magnitude as an explanatory factor. Finally, the electoral connection between legislators and voters affects the extent of party unity within the chambers. Legislative factionalism is higher in countries where candidates compete against members of their own parties for personal votes (either in primaries or in the general election) than where nominations are controlled by party leaders and electoral lists are closed (Hix 2004; Katz 1980; Sieberer 2006). In other words, where legislators have to please only one principal, that is, the party leader, defections do not exist in practice (Carey 2009).

Nor are intraparty effects of electoral systems confined to legal behaviours or merely aspects of electoral campaigns or parliamentary daily life. Broadly speaking, there are two main alternative perspectives on which electoral system generates more opportunities for incumbents to advance narrow over general interests, and extract political rents. On the one hand, Lijphart (1999) advocates the use of PR systems to avoid political corruption. On the other hand, Torsten Persson and Guido Tabellini (2005) argue that the freedom to choose individual candidates (rather than party lists) is associated with less corruption. Likewise, Jana Kunicová and Susan Rose-Ackerman (2005) find that rules that reduce individual accountability (i.e., proportional representation systems) are associated with higher corruption.<sup>45</sup> Finally, Eric Chang and Miriam Golden (2007) provide the most recent test to date on the relationship between electoral rules and corruption by looking at a large sample of contemporary democratic nations. In contrast to the previous works, they find that open lists can increase or have no effect on political corruption depending on district magnitude.

The impact of electoral rules on the level of voters' turnout can also be conceptualized on the intraparty dimension. If the intraparty competition promoted by an electoral system hampers

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<sup>45</sup> For them, all proportional representation systems reduce individual accountability but this is obviously not true if we also take into consideration preferential-list electoral rules. Unfortunately, they do not distinguish between the latter and closed lists.

electoral turnout, we are obviously speaking of an intraparty effect. Prominent among the group of works that study this relationship are those of Eva Anduiza (1999) and Joseph Robbins (2010). The former posits that the possibility of expressing a preference acts as an incentive to participation only for individuals with high levels of resources and motivations, while it increases the level of abstention for disadvantaged electors. Likewise, Gallego (2010) argues that the poorly educated people vote more frequently when the voting procedure is easy, that is, in a non-preferential vote system. Finally, Robbins (2010) finds that where electoral competition is predicated on party, rather than candidates' reputations, turnout levels rise. However, these last results seem to be at odds with those that show that preferential systems promote a greater sense of fairness about election outcomes among citizens and, in turn, a higher public's satisfaction with the democratic system (Farrell and McAllister 2006).

Closely related to the personal vote and to constituency service is the political economy literature that takes as dependent variable macroeconomic policies and outcomes. In this vein, several works posit that the extent of intra-party competition can be expected to shape the levels of government expenditure (Edwards and Thames 2007), trade protection (Hankla 2006; Nielson 2003), budget discipline (Hallerberg and Marier 2004), and efficacy in education spending (Hicken and Simmons 2008). A complementary perspective sees economic reform as less successful in countries where electoral rules encourage the personal vote (Bagashka 2012).

To sum up, the literature that examines the relationship between electoral systems and personal vote across countries, although with a scope increasingly comparative, have long been hampered by variation in the numerous intervening variables that influence legislative behaviour. As a consequence of this, several scholars have examined whether personal vote exists (or not) in a large collection of single-country studies that focus on a different electoral system: single transferable (Marsh 2007; Martin 2010) and non-transferable (Hirano 2006) vote, closed (Crisp and Desposato 2004; Riera 2011) and open (Ames 1995; Golden 2003; Samuels 1999) list proportional representation, mixed-member proportional and majoritarian rules (Canache and Mondak 2000), and single-member districts with plurality rule (Gaines 1998). In the same vein, Johnson and Hoyo (2012) argue that personal vote building is likely to occur in ways that promote good vote divisions where strong vote division incentives are present (e.g., under the

former Japan's SNTV system).<sup>46</sup> And, likewise, other political scientists have taken advantage of the recent proliferation of countries adopting mixed-member systems, or of the current existence of bicameral systems where members of each chamber are elected according to different rules (e.g., Desposato 2006; Kunicová and Remington 2008; Moser and Scheiner 2004; Nemoto et al. 2008; Thames 2005). In spite of this large literature, Scott Morgenstern and Stephen Swindle (2005) find, however, only limited evidence that electoral systems affect the personal vote.

Finally, I will close this section by briefly disentangling the ways in which electoral systems affect party system nationalization. Broadly speaking, the impact of the rules of the game on the degree of similarity of parties' electoral support across districts can be conceptualized both on the interparty and intraparty dimensions. First, institutional incentives in the interparty dimension pertain to economies of scale and have the following form: some political group from one district seeks to induce a number of legislative candidates or members of parliament from other constituencies to participate in a larger organization to accomplish a task that requires their help. In this regard, different versions of linkage emerge because the task can broadly range from securing more seats and votes to increasing the likelihood to pass legislative packages through the improvement of the chances of winning the presidency or controlling the government. For example, the existence of upper tiers and national thresholds, and the requirement of qualified majorities all promote the nationalization of party systems (Cox 1997 and 1999).<sup>47</sup> Second, candidate-centred electoral rules should also hamper the nationalization of the party system by encouraging the pursuit of personal votes and, hence, fostering candidates' strategies of differentiation from other members of their parties (Morgenstern and Swindle 2005).<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> By contrast, Nemoto et al. (forthcoming) find that ambitious factions of Japan's Liberal Democratic Party under the former single non-transferable vote system nominated too many candidates.

<sup>47</sup> The existence of national thresholds and upper tiers lead politicians to run in different districts under a common party label. As long as this strategic entry decision provokes a high degree of homogeneity in parties' electoral success across districts, it can be argued that these two institutional features encourage party system nationalization.

<sup>48</sup> Although party system nationalization will be deemed to be cause and consequence of electoral reforms in the intraparty dimension in this thesis (see Chapters 5 and 7), I admit that this feature of the party system falls into a slightly different dimension than the other matters I have been discussing, and dealing with it in a cursory fashion along with other intraparty effects can make it a bit awkward.

### **2.3. The origins of electoral systems**

The consequences of electoral laws are a research topic that is considerably more developed than the causes of those laws. Following Kenneth Benoit (2007), I will divide the main studies explaining electoral system adoption and reform according to three criteria. First, a key question revolves around the actors and the forces involved in the modification. By addressing the issue of who or what effects the change, we can distinguish between party-centric (Benoit 2004; Birch et al. 2002; Boix 1999; Colomer 2004b; Lundberg 2009), president-centric (Benoit and Hayden 2004; Hazan 1996; Lehoucq 2000; Remington and Smith 1996), democratic (Bielasiak 2006; Birch 2006; Blais et al. 2005), technocratic (Benoit and Schiemann 2001; Nagel 2004), economic (Cusack et al. 2007; Katzenstein 1985; Rogowski 1987), geographical (Dahl and Tufte 1973), historical (Brady and Mo 1992; Carstairs 1980; Elster et al. 1998; Jesse 1990; Mikkel and Pettai 2004) international (Blais and Massicotte 1997; Lundell 2009) or societal (Lijphart 1992; Nohlen 1993; Rokkan 2009 [1970]) approaches to electoral adoption and reform.

Second, the analysis of electoral system adoption and change points to another traditional division in comparative politics concerning the number of countries analyzed. A full review of the studies that address this topic means not only taking into account non-quantitative (e.g., Bielasiak 2006; Birch et al. 2002; Elster et al. 1998; García Díez 2001; Ishiyama 1997; Jones Luong 2002; Lijphart 1992; Negretto 2009; Renwick 2010; Sakamoto 1999; Zovatto and Orozco Henríquez 2008) or quantitative (e.g., Best 2012; Colomer 2005; Harfst 2013; Nobbe 2013; Remmer 2008; Wills-Otero 2009) examinations of multiple cases, but also considering propositions inductively generated from single case-studies (e.g., Bawn 1993; Benoit and Schiemann 2001; Díaz-Cayeros and Magaloni 2001; Kaminski 2002; Lago and Montero 2005; Moraski 2007; Remington and Smith 1996; Shugart et al. 2007).

Finally, four broad categories of contexts in which the origins of electoral systems are rooted can be identified. The first category links electoral system adoption and change to the extension of the suffrage in Western Europe in the years immediately before and after World War I (e.g., Ahmed 2010; Andrews and Jackman 2005; Blais et al. 2005; Boix 1999; Calvo 2009; Carstairs 1980; Cusack et al. 2007; Kreuzer 2010; Leemann and Mares 2012; Penadés 2008 and 2011; Rodden 2011). I consider this group of studies to be at the core of the research

on the origins of electoral systems. For this reason, I will review it separately below. Second, the analysis of electoral reform in well developed democracies constitutes another category of studies that take the electoral system as dependent variable (e.g., Hazan and Rahat 2000; Katz 1996; Nagel 2004; Reed and Thies 2001; Renwick et al. 2009; Renwick 2010). Third, scholars may also examine the adoption of a new electoral system in the context of a democratic transition (e.g., Bawn 1993; Benoit and Schiemann 2001; Díaz-Cayeros and Magaloni 2001; Elster et al. 1998; Jones Luong 2002; Kaminski 2002; Lijphart 1992; Lago and Montero 2005; Nobbe 2013; Remington and Smith 1996). Finally, several studies address electoral system changes in new democracies (e.g., Birch et al. 2002; Dawisha and Deets 2006; García Díez 2001; Harfst 2013; Remmer 2008; Wills-Otero 2009).

Of course, the core concerns of the field can be traced back to Stein Rokkan's examination of the introduction of PR in continental Europe at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century as a consequence of suffrage extension. According to him, shifts to PR came about "through a convergence of pressures from below and from above" (Rokkan 2009 [1970: 157]). In other words, both the established bourgeois parties and the new socialist parties had strong interests in changing a system that jeopardized the survival of the former and prevented the emergence of the latter. These claims are especially relevant for predicting electoral reform in contemporary democracies because they suggest that a coalition of competing and even more hostile parties may have an interest in changing the electoral system in order to maximize their representation.

Almost three decades later, Carles Boix's work (1999) constitutes the first attempt to fully test Rokkan et al.'s argument. However, the key point in his argument is slightly different: while Boix attributes switches to PR to failed electoral coordination between the parties of the property owning classes, Rokkan argues that the right changes the rules of the game because it is highly divided by noneconomic issues –namely, "the inheritance of hostility and distrust" (Rokkan 2009 [1970: 158]). Boix then verifies that PR was adopted not only when the right-wing parties were fragmented but also when the recently emerged social democratic party was electorally powerful. Boix (2010) himself checks the robustness of the theoretical model by regressing the position publicly favoured with regard to PR by non-socialist parties on whether the party was electorally vulnerable.

Although theoretically valuable, I think that Boix's work is wrong in terms of the logic he develops and the cross-national evidence he uses. First, the failed coordination argument has difficulties. Following its logic, the solution of the problem might have simply resulted from the adoption of a runoff system that would have enabled voters on the right to coordinate on the leading bourgeois party in the second round on a constituency-by-constituency basis (Cusack et al. 2007); and, in fact, this is what seems to have initially happened because at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century majority systems were more common than plurality systems (Blais et al. 2005).

Second, Boix's main independent variable is the effective number of parties at the national level. But this does not distinguish cases of two parties equally sized at the district-level from cases with two right parties' dominating in half of the districts each. For example, as Penadés (2005) shows, there was a mean gap of about 30 percent in the vote share of the two established parties at the district-level before the adoption of PR in continental Europe at the beginning of the 20th century. Hence, voters would have been able to strategically abandon the locally weakest right-wing party had the electoral rules remained the same. Moreover, nor is Boix's (1999) argument borne out by statistical evidence. Penadés (2005), for example, shows that Boix's findings decisively hinge on the selection of cases. Likewise, Cusack et al. (2007) point out three measurement issues that in their view cast doubt on the robustness of the results. In the same vein, Josephine Andrews and Robert Jackman (2005) and Blais et al. (2005) also consider Boix's account not to be entirely appealing for introducing country size in the specifications or for excluding strict controls, respectively. Ernesto Calvo (2009) is quick to point to a number of cases (for example, Belgium) that considerably deviate from the causal mechanism specified by Boix (see also Ahmed 2010). Finally, there is also a serious problem in the way the key interaction is specified in two out of three models (Brambor et al. 2006). As we already know, the strength of the new Socialist Party encourages the adoption of proportional representation in countries with a high effective number of old parties. However, he draws this conclusion based on a couple of models that include an interaction term without any of the constitutive terms.

Bearing all these considerations in mind, Thomas Cusack et al.'s (2007) economic approach can be seen as an appropriate supplement to the Rokkan-Boix argument. For them, the adoption of PR in the first quarter of the twentieth century was largely driven by the structure of the organization of economic interests. Proto-corporatist democracies in which economic interests were collectively organized (e.g., Belgium, Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland) adopted PR whereas liberal countries (like the UK, the United States, New Zealand, Canada and Australia) remained majoritarian.<sup>49</sup> However, this essentially long-run economic argument is severely criticized for neglecting the shorter-term politics of electoral choice (Kreuzer 2010). This last point breeds quite acceptable criticism regarding the validity of economic analysis because it is useless for explaining substantial electoral reforms in established democracies in the 1990s. Cusack et al. (2010: 394) defend themselves in a more recent piece by claiming that they “are not proposing a general theory of PR adoption”. Even more importantly for my purposes here, they argue that all parties from the same country should prefer one electoral system over another. Nevertheless, this last prediction is not borne out in Boix's empirical analysis (2010) of partisan preferences for proportional representation.

Despite the fact that Boix and Cusack et al.'s arguments constitute the two most well-known attempts to establish the determinants of the adoption of proportional representation, they are not of course the only ones dealing with the historical origins of electoral systems. In fact, the literature is loaded with accounts of this phenomenon. For example, Andrews and Jackman (2005) highlight the role played by uncertainty and suggest that any strategic behaviour with regard to electoral engineering was at best short-term, reflecting the largest party's seats/votes ratio in the most recent election. This formulation stands in stark contrast to Cusack et al.'s contention that the choice of PR was fostered by a disproportional electoral outcome.

Blais et al.'s (2005) work is not exempt from criticism on the basis of Boix's argument either. In their account of the adoption of PR between 1865 and 1939, they do not find support for the socialist threat thesis once they control for the effect of other explanatory factors like the spread of democracy and existing electoral institutions. In particular, they claim using a more

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<sup>49</sup> For an alternative economic story, see also Katzenstein (1985) and Rogowski (1987).

detailed dataset that the relationship between multi-party systems and PR adoption is mainly spurious and largely driven by the electoral formula previously employed. Wherever majority systems had replaced plurality rule, party system fragmentation and coalition governments pushed for the adoption of PR (see also Penadés 2005).

In recent developments, there are also cases of wholesale critiques of Boix's work that claim that the socialist "threat" cannot explain 1900s adoption of PR in certain countries where a strong socialist party is absent. In fact, Penadés (2008) shows variation within the group of socialist parties in terms of their institutional preferences with regard to electoral reform and attributes this variation to the strength of labour unions and the nature of union-party relations. In a nutshell, he claims that only socialist parties with weak ties to small unions ended up supporting PR. In the same vein, he argues in a recent piece that preferences for PR also differed across centre-right parties, and decisively hinged on whether they were religious or not and, hence, were less or more likely to coordinate with liberal forces (Penadés 2011).

To explain cases in which an electoral socialist threat was an unlikely explanatory factor for the adoption of PR, Calvo (2009) develops an alternative hypothesis according to which new inclusive electoral rules were implemented in situations where partisan biases did systematically hurt an established party or coalition. Finally, one recent study puts historical knowledge back on the agenda on the origins of proportional representation (Ahmed 2010). In an in-depth analysis of the cases of the United Kingdom and Belgium, this author claims that both single-member plurality (SMP) and PR were devised as electoral safeguards to protect right-wing parties against the impact of suffrage expansion. Hence, she proposes an exclusively political explanation of the choice of proportional representation that fundamentally departs from Cusack et al.'s (2007) economic arguments.

Jonathan Rodden (2011) also believes it is important to establish why some countries retained small plurality electoral districts while other rejected it in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. In his opinion, the former electoral rules survived in either of two rather different types of situations. First, there was little interest in electoral reform among the "established" parties of the right when socialist entry was sufficiently limited. Second, when socialist parties supplanted the pre-



existing “left-wing” party very quickly, the former had few incentives to change the electoral system, and the latter did not get an opportunity. Hence, Rodden’s argument accomplishes two objectives. First, he shows (like Penadés [2008] does) that not all socialist parties favoured proportional representation. Second, he introduces a specific coordination problem that concerned the “left-wing” rather the “right-wing” parties.

Finally, Leemann and Mares (2012) offer a test of some of these competing explanations for the adoption of proportional representation. Taking advantage of a historical dataset in late-19<sup>th</sup> century Germany, they show that the skill structure of a district has no predictive power in accounting for support for changes in electoral institutions at the level of the individual legislator. Alternatively, they find that legislative support for the adoption of proportional representation can be explained by a combination of district specific vulnerabilities to the rise of Social Democratic candidates and partisan calculations concerning the disproportionality of the translation of votes to seats.

Summing up, the works just reviewed form the foundation upon which the field would later be built. However, adopting them to study electoral reform in contemporary democracies is not cost free for two main reasons. First of all, it seems that a more flexible framework is better suited to the purpose of studying the politics of electoral reform after the Second World War because it enables us to take into account the fact that elections in this period were conducted under different rules across countries and over time. In other words, in the case of contemporary democracies, it is worth including more factors and variables in a broader explanation because *ex ante* variation in electoral rules will likely develop substantially different patterns and produce substantially different results. Second, it seems illogical to apply any of these theories due to the lack of an exogenous shock in contemporary democracies comparable to the suffrage extension that takes place at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. For example, all four phenomena that Boix (1999) mentions as possible triggers for the switch to PR – the extension of universal suffrage, introduction of competitive elections, massive political realignment among voters, and a high turnover of party organization – fail to account for the most recent reforms (Rahat 2011).

The increased scholarly interest in the question of electoral system origins owes much to the more general literature on institutional change that focuses from an empirical point of view on the origins of several central institutions of modern democracies like the regime type (Colomer 2001b; Sartori 1997 [1994]), the power of the cabinet (Cox 2005 [1987]), the territorial division of power (de Figueredo Jr. and Weingast 2005), and the rules of the parliamentary game (Sieberer et al. 2011). On the theoretical level, rational choice theory (Calvert 1995; Greif and Laitin 2004; H eritier 2007; Knight 1992; Milgrom et al. 2006; North 1990; Shepsle 2006; Tsebelis 1990) and historical institutionalism (Mahoney and Thelen 2010; Pierson 2000) constitute the two main research paradigms in this regard. Broadly speaking, the former focuses on rational decisions by political actors trying to achieve their goals by changing the rules of the game, whereas the latter concentrates on the question of how historical continuities guide and constrain institutional development. Hence, institutions are not, according to most of the rational choice work, a “deus ex machina” of a political system but are themselves devices created, maintained and changed by human agency (Diermeier and Krehbiel 2003). Given actors’ preferences, institutions can be viewed as an equilibrium emerging from an underlying game in which they constantly decide whether to keep or change the formal rules. This *institutions-as-equilibrium* perspective is theoretically more powerful than earlier views of institutions as exogenous rules of the game because it allows us to explain decisions *within* institutions and decisions *about* institutions using the same model of strategic interaction among rational actors (Sieberer et al. 2011). Moreover, it is very useful in analyzing the balance of interests that lead to the frequent preservation of the rules (Rahat 2011). But there is also a price for adopting this approach that we as researchers might not want to pay.

First, stability in any political institution can derive not only from political equilibrium—in the absence of exogenous changes—but also from what Kenneth Shepsle (1979) refers to as a structurally induced equilibrium. In other words, changes in political institutions are governed by other institutional rules (“*second-order*” institutions or *meta-institutions*), which might, in turn, induce institutional stability (Benoit 2007). George Tsebelis’ (2002) veto players can also be seen through this lens. Second, any institutional reform involves transaction costs that may deter changes (Shepsle 1989). According to this idea, institutions would exhibit stability in spite of not being well-suited to the actors’ preferences because transaction costs provide them with

something of a cushion that increase the costs of enacting the institutional reform (Dunleavy and Margetts 1995). In the same vein, it is also possible that a party that is seen to change institutions too frequently will be discredited as manipulating the rules for its own political gain (Benoit 2004). And Shugart (2008) uses the concept of *act-contingent* motivations of electoral reform to refer to electoral system changes pushed by a party that expects to gain electorally for supporting them.

Third, actors have to decide on how to discount future compared to current payoffs, and how to deal with the lack of information about the effect of institutional change and about their own position under the new rules (Andrews and Jackman 2005). Similarly, Gallagher (2005: 567) argues that the consequences of electoral systems and, hence, reforms are to some degree country specific and, thus, unpredictable. This also helps to explain why actors do not constantly reshape institutions as was originally expected by William Riker (1980). Finally, on an empirical ground, rational choice is not particularly suitable for explaining institutional reform (Rahat 2011). That is, this perspective predicts that changes in the rules of the game should occur when the equilibrium in the underlying game about institutions is disturbed (Sieberer et al. 2011). Such disturbances can originate either from an endogenous development or from an exogenous shock. These two sources are frequently tied, in turn, to the distinction between redistributive and efficient institutions and reforms (Tsebelis 1990). In the latter scholar's view, "redistributive" institutions have a zero-sum character in the sense that payoffs awarded to one actor can only come at the expense of someone else. By contrast, efficient institutions can enhance the welfare of all the actors. Although it is usually worthwhile to differentiate between these two types of institutions, the distinction does not always hold in practice. For example, electoral reforms that curb the excessive proportionality of a system producing cabinet instability and legislative paralysis are likely to be of the efficient type; but they also advance the interests of some actors, usually the major parties, at the expense of others, usually minor ones. Likewise, reforms in reaction to external developments can also have redistributive consequences (Sieberer et al. 2011). This point is also nicely illustrated in Birch's argument on how transition to democracy in Central and Eastern Europe overwhelmingly led rational actors to adopt PR systems. This change not only solved the legitimacy problem regarding the electoral system but at the same time made possible the survival of some former communist parties.

## **2.4. Conclusion: The challenges ahead**

In this chapter, I have discussed the state of the field regarding consequences and causes of the rules of the game. More specifically, I have referred to the effects of the interparty and intraparty dimension of the electoral system, pointing out some remaining gaps. After this, I have presented the bulk of the literature that addresses the origins of the electoral rules. A disadvantage of this second branch of the field is that the study of the effects of an institution lends itself better to systematic theory (and quantification) than does the study of its genesis (Shugart 2005). Moreover, it may sometimes be more difficult to assess why one electoral system is chosen over another because there are (naturally) fewer cases to analyze (Rahat 2011).<sup>50</sup> For instance, in most systems of single-member districts and plurality rule, the same electoral rules have been in use since their initial adoption. And the same can be said about the PR and mixed-member systems of several countries like Argentina or Japan. These cases are quite rare, however.

In the next chapter, I will identify the cases of electoral reform that are the subject of this dissertation and that I will employ as dependent and main independent variable in Part 2 and Three, respectively. Note that not all the episodes of electoral law changes will be classified as electoral reforms. This will conclude Part 1 of the dissertation. The aim of Part 2 will be to tease out the causes of electoral reforms in contemporary democracies.

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<sup>50</sup> Katz (2005: 74) warns in the same vein that “While it may be possible statistically to estimate the probability of reform in any particular year, it would appear that even the ‘peaks’ in predicted probability will be so low as to leave accounting for specific instances in the realm of historical reconstruction rather than statistical prediction.”

## **Chapter 3. Electoral systems in movement: Towards a definition and a classification of electoral reforms**

It is the easiest thing in the world to get inextricably tangled among the complexities of electoral systems.

(Harry Eckstein 1963: 249)

The whiff of electoral reform is in the air. Everywhere you look some government or other seems to be discussing whether to change its electoral system.

(David Farrell 2011 [2001]: 172)

### **3.1. Introduction**

Historically, various kinds of electoral reforms have been enacted in democratic countries. For example, several established governing parties at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century adopted a proportional representation (PR) system so that they could keep a voice in parliament even if they became a minority after the extension of the suffrage. Of all the possible modifications of the electoral laws, this study will only focus on electoral system changes in its interparty and intraparty dimensions. Electoral reforms in the former dimension are relatively easy to define and identify as they tend to be more prominent both in reality and the relevant literature. Having critically reviewed the literature that takes the adoption and the modification of electoral systems as the dependent variable in the previous chapter, I will devote the following pages to provide a definition and a classification of electoral reforms. Partly as a consequence of the extension of this field, scholars do not agree on the features that characterize an episode of electoral reform. In this chapter, I aim to clarify the situation by offering my own notion and typology of electoral reforms.

In the rest of the chapter, I first discuss the most relevant classifications of electoral systems and definitions of electoral reforms that we find in the literature. I then offer my own definition and typology of electoral reforms. Third, I present some preliminary data on the main

dynamics of electoral system change in the examined countries. Finally, the last section summarizes the main points in the chapter.

## **3.2. Defining and classifying electoral institutions**

### **3.2.1. Electoral systems**

In recent decades, scholars have attempted to construct a common framework for the comparative analysis of electoral systems. Part of this significant effort has involved the establishment of a widely accepted classification of the object of study. Nevertheless, these attempts have been often fruitless. As I will point out below, electoral systems present many sources of variation, the most important concerning the ballot structure, the form and number of districts, and the electoral formula (Rae 1971 [1967]). It is impossible to discern whether one of these elements is more important than the others. Although most scholars prefer to start by addressing the types of electoral formulas, Rae in the book that establishes the foundations of the modern science of comparative electoral systems chooses to start by analysing the different kinds of ballot structure. By contrast, and in conformity with the other chapters in this thesis, the analysis of the elements that have an impact in the interparty dimension will precede here the review of the body of research that explores the different types of ballot structure.

#### **3.2.1.1. The interparty dimension**

The original classification of electoral systems based on formulas dates back to 1951, when Duverger states his famous *Law and Hypothesis*<sup>51</sup> (Riker 1982). As Maurice Duverger originally does in 1951, Rae (1971 [1967]) identifies three kinds of electoral formulas: plurality, majority, and proportional representation (see also Blais 1988). However, Gary Cox (1997: 58) points out that the distinction between plurality/majority and proportional representation (PR) does not exhaust the distinctions to be made. PR formulas can be classified into highest average and quota systems (Farrell 2011 [2001]; Norris 2004). The latter are usually known as largest remainders systems as well, but this is not completely appropriate because the largest remainders method is

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<sup>51</sup> I follow Riker's (1982: 754) terminology and distinguish between *Duverger's Law*, that links the simple-majority single-ballot formulas and the two-party systems, and *Duverger's Hypothesis*, that associates simple-majority systems with second ballot and proportional representation to multi-partyism.

just one way of distributing the unallocated seats (Golder 2005a). The D'Hondt<sup>52</sup> method (within the category of the highest average systems) and the Hare quota with largest remainders (among the quota-based proportional systems) are by far the most common.

In spite of the apparent consensus on the importance of the distinction between plurality/majority and PR, things have become trickier in the course of time. First of all, some authors refer to semi-proportional systems (Lijphart 1994). The limited vote and its most well-known subtype, the single non-transferable vote (SNTV), are labelled this way because they are “providing only rough accuracy of representation” (Bogdanor 1983: 8). This line of reasoning is a bit problematic because it confuses the outcome of an electoral formula with its mechanics (Golder 2005a). In fact, each of these systems requires successful candidates to win either a plurality or a majority of the vote. For this reason, I will consider these types of electoral rules to be majoritarian. Rein Taagepera and Matthew Shugart (1989) introduce a different approach to the topic when they firstly distinguish two methods by which votes are translated into seats: those which apply to single-member districts and those which apply to multi-member districts. This peculiar way of classifying electoral systems provokes strange results: for example, the SNTV and the limited vote appear just after the explanation of the PR formulas rather than being with the rest of electoral systems that use a majoritarian formula because they are employed in multi-member districts (just like the PR formulas).

In recent times, a second controversy arises around those systems in which seats are allocated in more than one tier. Additional tiers of seat allocation are usually implemented to correct disproportionalities that arose at the lower tiers (Gallagher and Mitchell 2005b: 13).<sup>53</sup> Scholars who propose a classification of electoral systems differ enormously in the attention devoted to multi-tier methods of allocation. For example, some authors prefer not to deal with these kinds of systems because they consider them to be a mere mixture of some more basic components (Blais 1988). In the same vein, Cox's (1997) remarks on multi-tier systems are very brief. By contrast, Arend Lijphart (1994) distinguishes two types of multi-tier methods: remainder-transfer and adjustment-seat systems. The former use a quota formula in the lower-tier

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<sup>52</sup> Following Gallagher and Mitchell (2005a), the capitalized form D'Hondt will be used in this thesis.

<sup>53</sup> By contrast, these tiers sometimes have the main effect of giving additional benefit to the larger parties, as in the “reinforced proportional representation” used in Greece (Lijphart 1994).

districts, but instead of allocating any seats left to the parties with the largest remainders in these districts, all remaining votes and seats are transferred to, and allocated in, higher-tier districts. In turn, in adjustment-seat systems, the districts at the lower level are used for the initial allocation of seats, but the final allocation takes place at the higher level on the basis of all the votes cast in all the lower-tier districts that together make up the higher-tier district.

A different particularly interesting debate revolves around the exact nature of the so-called *mixed systems*. On the one hand, Matthew Shugart and Martin Wattenberg (2001) contend that this sort of electoral systems is a subtype of multi-tier methods of allocation of seats; according to them, the specific proviso that characterizes this subset of systems is the fact that there are two overlapping tiers, and one of them allocates seats nominally whereas in the other the allocation is by lists. They identify then two broad subtypes: mixed-member proportional, that “lean” towards proportional, and mixed-member majoritarian, that “lean” towards majoritarian. The primary variable that allows us to distinguish between mixed-member majoritarian (MMM) and mixed-member proportional (MMP) systems is the presence or absence of a linkage between tiers. David Farrell (2011 [2001]) also uses this classification in his book.

On the other hand, Matt Golder (2005) claims that mixed systems are not a subset of multi-tier systems. In fact, he thinks that Shugart and Wattenberg’s (2001) typology is a bit problematic because it does not indicate how multi-tier systems that combine majoritarian and proportional formulas should be classified.<sup>54</sup> In order to remove this shortcoming, Golder defines “multi-tier systems as those in which a single electoral formula is used across multiple tiers” (2005: 110). In this point, he uses a very broad concept of single electoral formula that includes all the allocation methods that belong to the same main category (majoritarian or proportional). In turn, mixed systems are those “that employ a mixture of majoritarian and proportional rules” (Golder 2005a: 111). Hence, the combination of different types of electoral formulas (proportional versus majoritarian) rather than the mixture of different types of ballot structures or representatives (nominal versus lists) is the primary variable that allows Golder to identify mixed systems (see also Norris 2004).

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<sup>54</sup> It is the case, for example, of Iceland between 1946 and 1959.



Following Louis Massicotte and André Blais (1999), Golder divides mixed systems into those in which the two electoral formulas work independently and those in which they are linked. In the former, the two formulas are implemented separately from each other, while in the latter the application of one of them is conditional on the outcome produced by the other. He then further separates these two main categories into different subtypes: first, independent systems into coexistence, superposition and fusion; and second, dependent into correction and conditional.<sup>55</sup> Finally, Josep Maria Colomer (2004b) differentiates three types of mixed systems: coexistence, multiple tier, and parallel. Surprisingly, he applies the term multiple-tier allocation to a subtype of mixed systems. Moreover, it is not clear according to his classification whether the German electoral system, usually labelled as personalized proportional representation, is a mixed system or not. Table 3.1 provides a summary of the different classifications of mixed electoral systems.

As I have already pointed out, electoral systems have been traditionally classified on the basis of their formulas. Several scholars, however, emphasize the role played by at least two more elements of the interparty dimension. The first one is district magnitude, and is defined as “the number of representatives elected in a district” (Lijphart 1994: 10). Although district magnitude is characterized as “the decisive factor” by Taagepera and Shugart (1989: 112), Blais (1988) and Cox (1997) propose the broader concepts of constituency and district structure, respectively, in order to capture not only the size but also the nature of the district. Douglas Rae (1971 [1967]) identifies two kinds of districts based on the magnitude: single-member and multi-member. Unfortunately, this distinction incorrectly blurs the substantial variations that exist within the category of multi-member districts. In recent times, some scholars have highlighted the impact of district magnitude on the level of electoral disproportionality, the size of party system, the number of wasted votes, or the proportion of women in Parliament<sup>56</sup> (Anckar 1997;

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<sup>55</sup> A *coexistence system* is one in which some districts use a majoritarian formula, while others employ a proportional formula; a *superposition system* is one in which two different formulas are applied nationwide but the districts are not completely overlapping; a *fusion system* is one in which majoritarian and proportional formulas are used within a single district; a *correction system* is one in which seats distributed by proportional representation in one set of districts are used to correct the distortions created by the majoritarian formula in another; and a *conditional system* is one in which the actual use or not of one electoral formula depends on the outcome produced by the other.

<sup>56</sup> The effects of electoral rules are analyzed in detail in Chapter 2.

**Table 3.1. Classifications of mixed electoral systems**

| <i>Scholar</i>                | <i>Type</i> | <i>Subtype</i>                           | <i>Examples</i>                           |
|-------------------------------|-------------|--|---|
| Golder (2005)                 | Independent | Coexistence                              | Iceland (1946-59)                         |
|                               |             | Superposition<br>Fusion                  | Russia (1993-2003)<br>Turkey (1987, 1991) |
|                               | Dependent   | Correction                               | Albania (1992, 2001, 2005)                |
|                               |             | Fusion                                   | France (1951, 1965)                       |
| Shugart and Wattenberg (2001) | MMM         | No linkage                               | Lithuania (1992-)                         |
|                               |             | Vote linkage                             | Hungary (1990-)                           |
| Colomer (2004b)               | MMP         | Seat linkage                             | Albania (1992, 2001, 2005)                |
|                               |             | Coexistence<br>Multiple tier<br>Parallel |   |

*Note:* Golder’s (2005) classification is firstly established by Massicotte and Blais (1999) and used by Norris (2004). Shugart and Wattenberg’s (2001) scheme is also applied by Farrell (2011 [2001]).

Golder 2006; Tavits and Annus 2006; Wängnerud 2009). In the same vein, Michael Gallagher and Paul Mitchell (2005) identify small district magnitude as one of the measures to limit the degree of proportionality. In addition, other authors claim that a high variation in the district magnitude tends to disadvantage large parties with a predominantly urban base (Monroe and Rose 2002). Finally, it is necessary to establish how we should calculate average district magnitude. In this regard, Gallagher and Mitchell (2005b) offer a very convenient way to calculate it when there is more than one tier of seat allocation.

Significant vote thresholds that parties need to cross in order to get any representation are the second devices traditionally used to limit the degree of proportionality of electoral results (Gallagher and Mitchell 2005b). Electoral thresholds can be imposed either at the national, the regional, or the district level. In this regard, Cox (1997: 62-63) differentiates two main categories of threshold: those defined at the level of the “primary district”, and those defined at the level of the “secondary district”. Almost every PR system employs some kind of threshold. By contrast, non-PR systems generally do not have rules specifying a threshold, mainly because they do not need it. As Taagepera and Shugart (1989) point out in their discussion of thresholds, the low magnitude of single-member districts makes prohibitively high the costs of entrance to Parliament for small parties. For that reason, Lijphart (1994: 12) claims that “legal thresholds

and district magnitudes can be seen as two sides of the same coin”. The concept of *effective threshold* illustrates very well the functional equivalence that exists between these two elements of the electoral systems. According to its most recent formulation, the effective threshold should be estimated by the formula  $(75 / (m+1))$ , where  $m$  refers to the district magnitude (Lijphart 1994). A party has to gather a percentage of votes higher than the effective threshold in order to be likely to win at least one seat in a particular constituency.<sup>57</sup> If the legal threshold (i.e., the legally stipulated minimum percentage of votes parties must obtain to be entitled to obtain seats) is higher than the result of this calculation, the effective threshold becomes the legal threshold.<sup>58</sup>

The last two elements of electoral systems that have an impact in the interparty dimension are the assembly size (Lijphart 1994; Taagepera 2007a), and the levels of malapportionment (Horiuchi 2004; Samuels and Snyder 2001). These two variables have not been traditionally included among the different elements of the electoral systems. First of all, Rae (1971[1967]: 158) considers assembly size to be the “generally neglected variable”, though he does not include it in his empirical analysis either. In spite of this, the total number of available seats has an obvious impact on disproportionality and multipartism (Anckar 2000; Lijphart 1994; Taagepera and Shugart 1993). Second, whether the seats are distributed among districts according to the size of their population or not, that is, what are the levels of malapportionment observed in a system, should have an evident impact on how proportional electoral outcomes are. In this regard, disproportionality should increase where malapportionment is sufficiently large as to permit some parties to perform particularly well in those overrepresented districts. Unfortunately, studies analyzing the possible existence of this relationship are still scarce.

### **3.2.1.2. The intraparty dimension**

Thus far, I have paid attention to the elements of the electoral systems that have an impact in the interparty dimension. By contrast, the analysis of the consequences of electoral systems in the

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<sup>57</sup> For other similar measures, see the aggregation threshold functions (Ruiz-Rufino 2007).

<sup>58</sup> A common mistake, made in a surprisingly considerable number of highly regarded publications, is to project the effective threshold from the constituency to the national level. It is obvious upon reflection that if we want to estimate the national-level effective threshold, we need to take the number of constituencies into account; whatever the effective threshold may be within each constituency, the more such constituencies there are, the lower the national-level effective threshold will be (Taagepera 1998).

intraparty dimension forces me to review the traditional classifications of ballot structures. According to Rae (1971 [1967]), there are two types of ballots: categorical and ordinal (see also Farrell [2011 [2001]]). The former “asks the voter to decide which one of the parties he prefers” and the latter “allows the voter to express a more complex, equivocal preference by rank-ordering the parties” (p. 17). Unfortunately, this typology fails to grasp the entire complexity of ballot structure in the real world (Blais 1988). For example, permitting simple-vote splitting, and enabling voters to rank-ordering candidates are two different features of electoral systems (Gallagher and Mitchell 2005b). However, Rae wrongly lumps electoral systems allowing voters to do each of these things under the same label. Partly for this reason, Taagepera and Shugart (1989: 14) argue that the distinction between categorical and ordinal ballots is not clear-cut, and suggest that there is a continuum between these two ideal types.

I believe the distinction between categorical and ordinal ballots is still valid. However, it only addresses two aspects of the ballot structure: the number of votes allowed, which may range from one to the number of candidates, and the type of information the voter is asked to provide, which can be nominal, ordinal or cardinal. In this regard, Blais (1988) warns his readers that sources of variation in the ballot structure cannot be reduced to these two aspects because they only identify how voters are asked to reveal their preferences. According to this scholar, it is also necessary to indicate whom the citizens can vote for. In order to cope with this problem, Shugart and Wattenberg (2001) distinguish between nominal and list voting (see also Farrell 2011 [2001]). Whereas under the former citizens cast votes for candidates by name and seats are allocated to individual candidates on the basis of the votes they receive, list votes are pooled among multiple candidates nominated on a list submitted prior to the election by a party, alliance, or other political organization.<sup>59</sup> This distinction has important practical implications because “Caligula’s horses” are less easily elected with single-person voting than with list systems in multi-member constituencies (Sartori 1997 [1994]: 17). Lastly, Lijphart (1994: 119) calls attention to a different shortcoming in Rae’s analysis of the ballot structure by pointing out that he misclassifies Germany as categorical, and Luxembourg and Switzerland as ordinal.

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<sup>59</sup> See also below for Cox (1997) and Ortega Villodres’ (2004) classifications.

In the course of time, descriptions and classifications of electoral systems based on the ballot structure have gained importance. In fact, most scholars, once they have established the main categories of electoral systems based on allocation rules and district magnitude, employ the three aspects of ballot structure I have just sketched to refine their classification. In this regard, Taagepera and Shugart (1989: 24) distinguish between PR (closed) list systems in which the voter can only choose one of the many party symbols or names and hence automatically vote for all candidates of that party, and PR (preferential) list systems in which she/he is able to choose specific candidates separately. In the same vein, Farrell (2011 [2001]) divides list systems into closed and open; and Colomer (2004b) distinguishes between open ballot (*panachage*), preferential vote for individual candidates, and categorical vote. Finally, Shugart (2005) furthers the classification between closed and open lists by splitting preferential-list systems into four categories: open, flexible, quasi-list, and latent list.<sup>60</sup> It is important to note that the logic behind Colomer and Shugart's classifications are different: while the former highlights the degree of freedom the voter has regarding individual candidates, the latter also takes into account the presence (or absence) of other determinants of candidates' rank on the list besides preference votes. On this basis, the former does not differentiate open and flexible lists.<sup>61</sup>

In fact, one of the most significant changes in the literature on the intraparty dimension over the last couple of years has been the more frequent adoption of the voters' perspective. Since the emergence in the mid-1980s of the first studies that addressed these questions, one point of view (that of the candidates) and two particular scholars (Carey and Shugart) had dominated in the literature.<sup>62</sup> However, this approach has been increasingly complemented by a second strand of research that emphasizes what Farrell and Gallagher (1998: 56) call the "openness" of the electoral system, by which they mean "how much choice is given to voters" (Farrell and Gallagher 1998: 56; Renwick and Pilet 2011). Similarly, Paulo Trigo Pereira and Joao Andrade e

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<sup>60</sup> *Open-list systems* are those in which the ballots provided by parties are unranked and preference votes alone determine the order of election from a party's list. In *flexible-list systems*, allocation of candidates takes into account the party-provided rank order and preference votes. *Quasi-list and latent-list systems* are two subtypes of open-list and flexible-list systems, respectively, in which the citizen only indicates preference votes.

<sup>61</sup> In the 1980s, a similar controversy arose between Vernon Bogdanor (1983) and Michael Marsh (1985). The former did not address the issue of flexibility of lists (in Shugart's terminology) at all, while the latter proposed to differentiate "systems where seats are allocated between candidates purely on the basis of preference votes and those where the ordering of the list by the party is also a factor" (Marsh 1985: 376).

<sup>62</sup> For example, Karvonen (2010: 35-40) applies Shugart's revised schema in order to assess the degree of "personalization" of electoral systems. The most important illustrations of this approach were given in Chapter 2.

Silva (2009) come up with an index of citizens' freedom to choose their representatives. In order to do that, they take into account three different elements of the electoral system: voters' "options" (the cardinality of the choice domain), "choices" (the number of revealed preferences on candidates/parties), and "information" (on candidates' characteristics).

Finally, also of interest is Carmen Ortega Villodres' classification of preference voting systems (2004), that is, of those allocation methods where the voter has the possibility to choose among a party's candidates. According to her, this kind of systems can be defined in terms of three variables: ballot structure, constituency structure, and formulaic structure. The added value of her research lies in her description of the three main sources of variation that the ballot structure has: ballot paper,<sup>63</sup> system of voting and nominative votes.<sup>64</sup> Unfortunately, she does not address very thoroughly the way her classification improves the existing typologies of preferential voting systems. Ortega Villodres distinguishes between two basic types of voting systems: personal and list procedures. In the latter, a vote for a particular candidate may contribute to the election of all other candidates of the same party, while under personal voting systems votes are given only to candidates. This distinction resembles Cox's between votes that affect only a single-seat relevant vote total (exclusive votes) and those that can affect more than one-seat relevant vote total (non-exclusive votes). In other words, some votes benefit only the candidate for whom they are cast (the exclusive ones), while others (the non-exclusive ones), besides appearing in the vote total of the candidate for whom they are cast, also affect a different vote total used in the allocation of legislative seats. He then differentiates three types of non-exclusive votes: the transferable vote, which is transferred to the vote total of another individual candidate; the pooling vote, which is transferred to the vote total of the party list to which the candidate originally voted for belongs; and the fused vote, which simultaneously affects the vote totals of candidates running for two or more different offices.

More in depth, Ortega Villodres further classifies personal voting systems according to the number of nominative votes allowed. In this regard, she distinguishes between: single-vote

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<sup>63</sup> The ballot paper is not considered in most comparative studies on electoral systems as a basic component of electoral systems. For this reason, I will not make any further comments on it.

<sup>64</sup> In her work, the constituency structure has the exact same meaning as the more well-known concept of district magnitude; and her observations on the formulaic structure are either inaccurate or redundant.

systems, that is, those where each voter can vote only for one candidate; the limited vote, under which voters have more than one but fewer votes than the district magnitude; the block vote, which allows voters to cast as many votes as seats are allocated to candidates in the district; and approval voting, which enables voters to cast a ballot for as many candidates as they wish. According to her, there are also many variations of list voting systems. In particular, she distinguishes between closed and open lists. Her definition of closed-list systems is astonishingly broad and includes not only those in which parties present ranked ballots and voters simply select one party list over another (see, for example, Shugart 2005), but also those where a voter is allowed to select particular candidates within a party list. She then distinguishes between those closed-list systems in which the rank of candidates is only determined by the number of individual votes they receive (that she terms as flexible), and those others where candidates are elected on a combined basis of party-ranking and preferential votes (the so-called rigid closed-list systems).<sup>65</sup> Finally, preference votes entirely determine the final candidates' ranks in open-list systems. In this type of electoral systems, the names of candidates can appear on the ballot in alphabetical order or by party.<sup>66</sup>

Summing up, there is no universally accepted way of classifying electoral systems based on the ballot structure. Table 3.2 provides a summary of the different classifications of electoral systems according to the ballot structure. In addition, some scholars do not deal with ballot structure at all (e.g., Golder 2005a), and others consider it as a minor element of electoral systems (e.g., Lijphart 1994). By contrast, most authors would strongly agree today with the idea of establishing two main categories of electoral systems (majoritarian and proportional) based on the formula employed. According to Dieter Nohlen (1984a), electoral systems lean towards the majority/plurality or the proportional principles of representation. In the same vein, Giovanni Sartori (1997 [1994]: 42) distinguishes between *strong* and *feeble* electoral systems. However, there is a fundamental difference between Nohlen and Sartori's conception of electoral systems: the former considers the majority/plurality and the PR principles as antithetical, while Sartori

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<sup>65</sup> It is remarkable that systems that take into account both the party-provided rank order and preference votes are termed flexible and rigid lists systems by Shugart (2005) and Ortega Villodres (2004), respectively.

<sup>66</sup> Ortega Villodres (2004) also differentiates preferential list systems according to the number of nominative votes allowed. The range of variation on it goes from 1 (e.g., in Chile) to the district magnitude (e.g., in Switzerland and Luxembourg).

**Table 3.2. Classifications of electoral systems according to the ballot structure**

| <i>Scholar</i>          | <i>Type</i>  | <i>Subtype</i>   | <i>Examples</i>   |
|-------------------------|--|--|---|
| Rae (1971 [1967])       | Categorical<br>Ordinal                               |  |   |
| Colomer (2004b)         | Categorical vote<br>Preferential vote<br>Open ballot |  |   |
| Ortega Villodres (2004) | Personal voting                                      | Multiple voting<br>(block vote and limited vote)<br>Single voting<br>(SNTV and STV)  | Ecuador (1999),<br>Spanish Senate (1977-)<br>Japan (1947-1993), Australia (1949-),<br>Ireland (1920-)   |
|                         |  | List voting  | Closed lists (rigid and flexible)<br>Open lists<br>(party and alphabetical)<br>Luxembourg (????)  |
| Shugart (2005)          | Non-list   | Non-transferable<br>(single-member plurality [SMP],<br>two-round majority [TRM], SNTV,<br>limited and unlimited vote)<br>Transferable (AV and STV) | United Kingdom (1885-),<br>France (1958-1981; 1988-),<br>Japan (1947-1993)<br>Australia (1949-), Ireland (1920-)  |
|                         |  | Preferential-list  | Unranked ballots<br>(open list and quasi-list)<br>Party-provided rank<br>(flexible and latent list)<br>Brazil (1979-),<br>Chile (1989-)<br>Czech Republic (1996-),<br>Estonia (1992-) |

*Note:* Ortega Villodres' (2004) classification only takes into account preferential electoral systems.

defines them as the two extremes of a unipolar continuum on which all electoral systems can be located (see also Rose 1984).

### 3.2.2. Electoral reforms

Thus far, I have dealt with electoral systems from a static point of view without taking into consideration their dynamics of continuity and change. However valuable is this approach, it is not enough for a dissertation that tries to establish the causes and consequences of electoral reforms. In the following pages, I will thus overview the most successful attempts at defining electoral reforms that we find in the literature. Unfortunately, this task of definition is usually overlooked. Many scholars who address the issue of why proportional representation was adopted in some countries at the beginning of the twentieth century (e.g., Andrews and Jackman 2005; Blais et al. 2005; Cusack et al. 2007; Penadés 2008) consider the electoral system to be a dichotomous variable. In other words, countries use either a PR or a non-PR formula. Hence, this approach does not take into account the extraordinary heterogeneity that exists within these two



main categories. In order to overcome this potential shortcoming, Carles Boix (1999) takes the changes in the effective threshold of representation as his dependent variable. This solution certainly reduces the bias that we introduce when we lump together all the PR systems. Nevertheless, determining the effective threshold is certainly anything but easy (Lijphart 1994). More importantly, taking the effective threshold as the dependent variable underestimates the rate of occurrence of electoral reforms. In this regard, if we take, for example, 20 per cent or greater changes in the effective threshold as electoral reforms, we only count 11 actual episodes in the 27 countries<sup>67</sup> examined by Lijphart (1994) between 1945 and 1990.<sup>68</sup>

A different solution is provided by Lijphart (1994) in his path-breaking work on electoral systems. According to him (1994: 13), electoral systems can be defined in terms of the following four elements: the electoral formula, the district magnitude, the electoral threshold, and the assembly size. And then he adds that “if there is a significant change on one or more of the four dimensions, this means that a new electoral system must be distinguished”. Immediately, two questions emerge: first, which kind of institutional modification can be considered as a significant change; and second, how new is the reformed electoral system. The definition of significant change will depend on the element of the electoral system under consideration. On the one hand, characterizing a modification of the electoral formula as significant does not entail any problem: every change can be described in this way because this is a discrete variable. By contrast, a criterion has to be specified for the other three variables since all of them are continuous. In this regard, Lijphart (1994: 13) proposes a 20 per cent criterion. In other words, the assembly size, the district magnitude or the electoral threshold have to change by at least 20 per cent in order to identify an actual episode of reform. As I will argue below, this is a prudent cut-off point designed so the number of cases is not artificially inflated. On the basis of it, Lijphart counts 30 reforms in the democracies he analyzes between 1945 and 1990.<sup>69</sup> By contrast, according to Richard Katz’s more stringent rules, the list of major reforms in established democracies since 1950 numbers 14 (Katz 2005: 58). In particular, this last scholar “limits the meaning of ‘major reforms of national electoral systems’ to the wholesale

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<sup>67</sup> The countries he examines are: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Costa Rica, Denmark, Germany, Greece, India, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and United Kingdom.

<sup>68</sup> By contrast, Lijphart identifies up to 30 cases of electoral reform.

<sup>69</sup> See also Ruiz-Rufino (2005).

replacement of the electoral formula through which a strong president, or the chamber of parliament to which the national government is responsible, is elected".<sup>70</sup> Hence, the conclusion about the essential *stickiness* of the electoral system still stands if we look only at developed democracies (Birch et al. 2002: 1; Lijphart 1994: 52; Nohlen 1984b: 218; Norris 1995: 297).

Lijphart's work has had an undoubted impact on the way other scholars define electoral reforms. Golder (2005), for example, characterizes an electoral reform by looking at changes in the same four elements that Lijphart does. However, he adds to the definition of electoral reform several extra features. First of all, the introduction of presidential elections or the introduction of presidential runoffs entails a change in the electoral system. Second, a different electoral system emerges when there is an introduction or abolition of electoral tiers, or a change in the way they are connected. Finally, two electoral systems are classified as different if they are separated by a period of dictatorial rule. Following these criteria, he distinguishes 261 different democratic electoral systems between 1946 and 2000. All in all, Golder (2005) improves and clarifies some of the obscure points in Lijphart's definition. For this reason, I will introduce some of his amendments in my own definition of electoral reform.

Colomer (2004b) defines electoral reforms in a very different way. According to him, four basic categories of legislative electoral systems should be distinguished: indirect, majority rule (including multi-member districts with bloc ballot, multi-member districts with limited or cumulative ballots, and single-member districts), mixed systems, and proportional representation (including those where the average district magnitude is lower than nine with any formula and procedure, those where the average district magnitude is higher than eight with closed lists, and those where the average district magnitude is higher than eight with open lists, open ballot or personalized PR). He then counts 82 major electoral system changes for assemblies between the four basic categories, and 126 changes between the eight subcategories. These numbers could look impressive, but it should be remembered that his period of observation starts in the early nineteenth century for the countries that were democratic then (and for which data are available). When the set of electoral system changes is limited to those produced during the current

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<sup>70</sup> Katz devotes attention to the established democracies (roughly, democratic since 1950), though he does not include the exact list of the countries he analyzes.

democratic period, major changes between the four basic categories and eight subcategories are only 19 and 30, respectively. Hence, the stringent rules that Colomer uses leads him to underestimate the number of electoral reforms as well. Finally, it is a remarkable fact that electoral reforms tend to always happen in the same countries. In this regard, the changes between the four basic categories and eight subcategories occur only in 41 and 49 out of 89 countries, respectively.

Kristof Jacobs and Monique Leyenaar (2011) distinguish between major, minor and technical reforms. Referring to electoral system changes that affect the proportionality of the outcomes, they label any movement from one to another of the three main sub-dimensions of *electoral formulas* as a major change. They also consider reforms to be major when the average district magnitude or the effective threshold changes by at least 20 percent. With regard to the intraparty dimension, changes of type of the ballot structure also fall in the category of major reforms. By contrast, changes within a category of electoral formula, modifications of more than 1 percent and less than 20 percent in the average district magnitude or the effective threshold, or alterations in the number of votes or their impact on the identity of the candidate actually elected between 1 and 20 percent are conceptualized as minor electoral reforms. Finally, technical reforms involve really tiny modifications of the rules of the game. Changes of less than 1 percent in the average district magnitude, the effective threshold, or the number and impact of votes can be found within this category.

### **3.3. Electoral reforms in my dissertation**

#### **3.3.1. Electoral reforms in principle: Definition and typologies**

An electoral system is defined either as “a set of essentially unchanged election rules under which one or more successive elections are conducted in a particular democracy” (Lijphart 1994: 13), or as a collection of laws “which govern the process by which electoral preferences are articulated as votes and by which these votes are translated into distributions of governmental authority (typically parliamentary seats) among the competing parties” (Rae 1971 [1967]: 14).<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Other scholars offer similar definitions to these ones. For example, Blais (1988: 100) defines electoral systems as “those rules which govern the processes by which preferences are articulated as votes and by which these votes are

By electoral reform I mean a *significant change* of at least one of the major elements of an electoral system. The list of these components comprises the electoral formula, the number of districts, the assembly size, the electoral threshold, the presence (or absence) of a ban on pre-electoral coalitions and linked lists, the number and relationship between electoral tiers, and the ballot structure. Thus, as in Rae (1971 [1967]), electoral systems are taken to be a subset of election laws, which correspond to the whole set of rules according to which the elections are conducted (Blais 1988). On this basis, the definition of electoral reform does not include changes dealing with other aspects of the electoral law like:

1. the franchise extension,<sup>72</sup> suffrage restrictions and registration requirements;<sup>73</sup>
2. the ease of voter and party/access to the electoral process;
3. special features of the ballot format;<sup>74</sup>
4. campaign financing and timing rules;
5. the degree of “bundling” of elections; and<sup>75</sup>
6. the implementation or elimination of term limits.<sup>76</sup>

In sum, I do not aim to provide a legal definition of electoral reform. In fact, changes in the rules of the game may come through a constitutional amendment, a law, or a decree. More in depth, the criteria that I use to identify an electoral reform are the following seven. The first six refer to reforms in the interparty dimension whereas the last one is about changes in the intraparty dimension.

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translated into the election of decision-makers”. Finally, Cox (1997: 38) understands an electoral system “to be a set of laws and party rules that regulate electoral competition between and within parties”. Hence, this last scholar is the only one that explicitly mentions party rules as an element of electoral systems.

<sup>72</sup> By contrast, Jacobs and Leyenaar (2011) propose referring to wider universe of changes in electoral laws that include the suffrage extension, among others.

<sup>73</sup> In several Eastern Europe countries like the Czech Republic or Poland, the so-called *lustration laws* limited the political participation of former communists. As time went by, these regulations were gradually abolished. Furthermore, those who did not speak the official language in Estonia or Latvia were prevented from becoming members of the Parliament.

<sup>74</sup> The colour of the ballots was a key issue, for example, in Bulgaria because it had been a major means of partisan identification. For that reason, it had to be addressed by a reform of the Electoral Law on 12 September 1991 which provided more flexibility in the ballot design so that parties could be identified with their traditional colours despite the multiplication of new organizations.

<sup>75</sup> As Remmer (2008) points out, several Latin American countries modified the status of temporal concurrence of presidential and legislative elections during the period of observation by reducing the presidential mandate.

<sup>76</sup> Mexico has prohibited consecutive terms for legislators since the 1930s, as Costa Rica since the 1940s. Ecuador did it at one time, but the prohibition was then lifted (Carey 1998).

1. *A change in the electoral formula.* This kind of modifications may include a transition either between the main categories of electoral formulas (majoritarian and proportional) or within them. In order to classify an electoral formula either as majoritarian or proportional, I take into account its mechanics rather than its outcome.<sup>77</sup> First-past-the-post and absolute and qualified majority are considered to be majoritarian formulas.<sup>78</sup> By contrast, proportional representation formulas are divided into two main categories: highest averages (including D'Hondt, Sainte-Laguë, and modified Sainte-Laguë, among others), and quotas (including Hare, Droop, Imperiali, and Reinforced Imperiali, among others). The replacement of any of these formulas implies a change of the electoral system. In addition, some electoral systems employ more than one formula or the same formula twice. For example, multi-tier systems are those in which a formula of the same family (proportional or majoritarian) is used across multiple tiers. Multi-tier systems can be divided into those in which the electoral tiers are connected and those in which they are not (Golder 2005a). Finally, mixed-member electoral systems are those that combine the “plurality principle” and the “proportional principle” of electoral representation (Shugart and Wattenberg 2001). Mixed systems can be divided into those in which the operation of the two electoral formulas is dependent and those in which they work independently. Even more in depth, independent mixed systems can be separated into coexistence, superposition, and fusion subtypes, while dependent mixed systems can be divided into correction and conditional subtypes (Golder 2005a; Massicotte and Blais 1999). Summing up, an electoral reform can take place through two channels in multi-tier and mixed systems: one, through a change of any of the electoral formulas that are in use; and two, through a change of the way in which the formulas are working.
2. *A change in the number of districts.* This criterion of electoral reform separates me from Lijphart (1994) and Golder (2005) since both of them use the district magnitude to identify an electoral reform. I do so for at least two reasons. First, I argue that using the number of districts rather than the district magnitude allows me to avoid the

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<sup>77</sup> As Katz (1997: 109) argues, the approach of classifying electoral rules based on their outcomes is both “circular and self-contradictory”.

<sup>78</sup> There are only these three kinds of majoritarian formulas because other kinds of electoral systems of this family (i.e., the limited vote, the alternative vote (AV), the single non-transferable vote (SNTV), and the Borda count) require successful candidates to win either a plurality or a majority of the vote.

complications that entail the calculus of average district magnitude in some electoral systems (specially, in the so-called remainder-transfer two-tier systems). Second, it seems to me a bit arbitrary to take the mean as the best measure of the impact that the district magnitude has on the proportionality of the electoral outcomes. In fact, Octavio Amorim Neto and Gary Cox (1997) use the median rather than the mean magnitude in their research on the determinants of party system size. Obviously, the average and the median district magnitude on one hand, and the number of districts on the other are highly correlated, and replacing the former by the latter will have virtually no impact on the final results. Finally, a somewhat numeric criterion has to be specified since district magnitude is a continuous variable. I will follow Lijphart (1994) and Golder (2005) on this, and an electoral reform is considered to have taken place when there has been a modification of at least 20 per cent in the number of districts.<sup>79</sup> Lijphart himself admits that this is necessarily an arbitrary decision. However, I think it as a good way to avoid artificial inflations of the number of cases of electoral reforms.<sup>80</sup>

3. *A change of the assembly size.* It could be argued that this institutional feature is largely out of the control of institutional designers (Harfst 2007). In fact, Taagepera (2007) proves that assembly sizes usually fit the cube root of population. However, this scholar himself admits that the population of a country just puts broad limits on the size of its national assembly. Hence, electoral reformers enjoy certain autonomy when they establish the size of the legislature, and that is why changing it entails the emergence of a new electoral system. Finally, it should be said that the 20 per cent criterion proposed by Golder (2005) and Lijphart (1994) also applies here, and only those cases in which the assembly size changes by at least 20 per cent are considered actual cases of reform.
4. *A change of the electoral threshold.* As Lijphart (1994) points out, electoral thresholds can exist at the district, the regional or the national level. Even more important, they can be calculated as proportions over the total of votes, or over the electoral quota. A change

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<sup>79</sup> This will be the same criterion I will use for changes of the assembly size and the electoral threshold.

<sup>80</sup> Taking a lower percentage as a cut off could lead to consider as actual cases of electoral reforms slightly modifications in the number of districts that produce a tiny impact on the proportionality of outcomes. By contrast, requiring a change of more than 20 per cent in the number of districts in order to identify an actual case could mean that significant modifications in the rules of the game are not considered as electoral reforms.

is considered to have taken place when there has been a modification of at least 20 per cent in it (Golder 2005a; Lijphart 1994). An electoral reform also occurs when the electoral threshold for pre-electoral coalitions of parties changes by at least 20 percent.

5. *The introduction (or the suppression) of a ban on pre-electoral coalitions, or the linkage of lists (or apparentment).* With regard to the former, the banning of pre-electoral coalitions (where they were previously allowed) or their lifting (if they were prohibited before) could be considered as extreme cases of changes of the electoral threshold for this kind of electoral agents. With regard to the latter, the question of whether or not *apparentment* is permitted can be of great importance for small parties.
6. *A change in the number of electoral tiers.* Although most electoral systems have only one level of seat allocation, some countries have implemented one and, even, two additional tiers to distribute seats among parties.
7. *A change in the ballot structure.* Following Blais (1988), I will classify the ballot structure according to several aspects. The first one refers to whom the citizens can vote for. In this regard, citizens can vote for individuals (e.g., in the single transferable and single non-transferable vote), groups of individuals (e.g., in PR-list systems), or a combination of them (e.g., in mixed systems). The second aspect to take into account is the number of pieces of information imparted by the voter. In this regard, the number of votes or preferences permitted may be one (e.g., under single-member plurality and SNTV), two (e.g., under most mixed systems and majority runoff systems),<sup>81</sup> more than one but less than the number of seats (e.g., under some preferential-list systems and most limited vote systems),<sup>82</sup> equal to the number of seats (e.g., under some other preferential-list systems and the unlimited vote), or equal to the total number of candidates in the district (e.g., under the alternative or the single transferable vote). The third aspect is the type of information the voter is asked to provide. In this regard, a

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<sup>81</sup> For example, Mexico's mixed electoral system allows citizens to provide just one piece of information.

<sup>82</sup> I equal here the number of seats to the number of candidates in a list, though in Brazil, for example, it is not the same.

piece of information can be nominal, ordinal, or numerical (or cardinal).<sup>83</sup> Nominal ballots are members of a group or not. In other words, either citizens cast a ballot for a party or a candidate, or they do not.<sup>84</sup> This category covers ballot papers in most countries. By contrast, ordinal voting permits voters to rank-order the parties or candidates on the ballot paper. In Ireland or Australia, for example, voters may rank all the candidates in the constituency in order of their choice. Finally, the term numerical is referred to instances in which voters are able not only to rank candidates<sup>85</sup> but also to indicate the exact distances between them. This last category includes cumulative voting, a system that is not currently in use for electing the national Parliament of any country in the world. According to the fourth aspect, we can distinguish between categorical (where voters express support for the sole candidate of a party, for a party list, or for one candidate or perhaps several candidates on one party's list), and "dividual" ballots (where voters can "divide" the vote among different parties).<sup>86</sup> Categorical ballots include plurality rule, two-round, and PR-list without *panachage* systems; and dividual ballots include mixed and PR-list with *panachage* systems (Gallagher and Mitchell 2005b). The fifth aspect is the degree of choice a voter has regarding individual candidates. As is well known, in the closed-list systems the voter can choose among parties but not among candidates within parties. By contrast, other PR-list systems, broadly termed preferential-list systems, enable the voter to indicate a preference for one candidate on her/his party's list. Third, the single transferable vote (STV) and the alternative vote (AV) give voters a choice not only among their party's candidates, but also across party lines (see also the preferential-list systems with *panachage*). Finally, some other electoral systems (e.g., most mixed ones) allow voters to express a preference across party lines, but not among their party's candidates. The sixth and last aspect of the ballot structure to take into consideration only varies within

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<sup>83</sup> Although using "nominal" for the type of information voters are asked to provide in list systems seems an unfortunate choice given the other very different meaning of "nominal" in electoral systems, I follow here the seminal typology proposed by Stevens in a 1946 Science article titled "On the theory of scales of measurement".

<sup>84</sup> Although it should be theoretically possible to rank parties, the only empirical cases of ordinal ballots I know are referred to candidates.

<sup>85</sup> As far as I know, numerical voting does not exist with respect to parties.

<sup>86</sup> I use the term "dividual" following Gallagher and Mitchell's terminology. Dividual is defined by the Oxford English Dictionary as meaning "capable of being divided into parts, divisible, divided into parts, fragmentary, divided or distributed among a number".



preferential-list PR systems. And it does so according to two primary criteria. First of all, preferential-list PR systems are heterogeneous in terms of which are the determinants of the order of election. Based on it, we can distinguish between those systems where the rank order of the candidates on the list is determined exclusively by the voter (i.e., open and quasi lists) and those others where the preference votes are not the sole criterion for determining candidates' ranks (i.e., flexible and latent lists). The second source of variation is whether the voter is not given the option of simply favouring a party list, but must cast a preference vote (i.e., quasi and latent lists systems), or there is also the possibility of casting a list vote (i.e., open and flexible lists systems). In the former case, the systems are only list-systems in the sense that all candidate votes are pooled at the party level to determine the allocation of seats among parties (Shugart 2005). No possibility of a list vote or a party-provided ranking of candidates exist at all in them. For a summary on the different dimensions of my classification of ballot structure, see Table 3.3.

A reform of the rules of the game is considered to have taken place if the ballot structure changes on any of the six aspects I have just sketched.<sup>87</sup> In fact, ballot structure usually changes in more than one way at the same time. Moreover, a change in the ballot structure often goes hand in hand with a modification of the electoral formula. However, a combination of reforms of the electoral formula and the ballot structure does not always happen, and we find cases in the real world in which the interparty dimension changes and the intraparty dimension remains unmodified, and vice versa.

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<sup>87</sup> Thus, not every change in the number of pieces of information imparted is an electoral reform. In fact, only changes among the four categories I have just described will count as electoral reforms. For example, an electoral reform does *not* take place in a hypothetical district whose magnitude is 5, and the number of votes allowed goes from 3 to 4. By contrast, I would code this change in the electoral law as an actual case of electoral reform if the number of votes allowed would go from 3 to 5 since this would mean the replacement of a limited vote system by one of unlimited vote.

**Table 3.3. Sources of variation in the ballot structure**

| <i>Criterion</i>  | <i>Category</i>  | <i>Examples</i>  |
|---|--|--|
| Who the citizens can vote for?                                  | Individuals  | STV (Ireland [1920-])<br>SNTV (Japan [1947-1993])  |
|   | Groups of individuals  | PR-list systems<br>(Spain [1977-], Austria [1994-])  |
|   | Mixture of individuals and groups                                  | Mixed systems<br>(Germany [1949-])   |
| How many pieces of information are voters allowed to provide?   | 1  | SM plurality (UK [1885-])<br>TR majority (France [1988-])<br>Closed-list PR systems (Spain [1977-])                      |
|   | 2  | Most mixed systems<br>(Germany [1949-])  |
|   | More than 1<br>but less than the number of seats                   | Some preferential-list PR systems<br>Limited vote  |
|   | Equal to the number of seats                                       | Some preferential-list PR systems<br>Unlimited vote  |
|   | Equal to the number of candidates                                  | AV (Australia [1949-])<br>STV (Ireland [1920-])  |
|   | Which kind of information are voters asked to provide?             | Nominal  |
| Ordinal   |  | AV (Australia [1949-])<br>STV (Ireland [1920-])  |
| Numerical   |  | Cumulative vote  |
| Are voters allowed to split their vote between two parties?     | No: Categorical  | SM plurality (UK [1885-])<br>Closed-list PR (Spain [1977-])<br>PR-list without <i>panachage</i><br>(Austria [1994-])     |
|   | Yes: Dividual  | TR majority (France [1988-])<br>Mixed systems (Germany [1949-])<br>PR-list with <i>panachage</i><br>(Luxembourg [1924-]) |
| How much choice do voters have regarding individual candidates? | No choice of candidate neither within party nor across party lines | SM plurality (UK [1885-])<br>Closed list PR (Spain [1977-])  |
|   | No choice of candidate within party but choice across party lines  | TR majority (France [1988-])<br>Mixed systems (Germany [1949-])  |
|   | Choice of candidate within party but not across party lines        | Preferential-list PR systems without <i>panachage</i> (Austria [1994-])  |

|                                      |  |  |
|--------------------------------------|--|--|
|                                      | Choice of candidate within party and across party lines        | Preferential-list PR systems with <i>panachage</i> (Luxembourg [1924-])<br>AV (Australia [1949-])<br>STV (Ireland [1920-])                     |
| Preferential-list allocation methods | Are preference votes the sole determinant of candidates' rank? | Yes: Open list (Brazil [1979-]),<br>Quasi-list (Chile [1989-])<br>No: Flexible list (Czech Republic [1996-]),<br>Latent list (Estonia [1992-]) |
|                                      | Does the voter indicate only preference vote?                  | Yes: Quasi-list (Chile [1989-]),<br>Latent list (Estonia [1992-])<br>No: Open list (Brazil [1979]),<br>Flexible list (Czech Republic [1996-])  |

The following examples illustrate how these criteria have been applied:<sup>88</sup>

1. The electoral systems used in the Polish elections in 2001 and 2005 are treated as different because in 2001 the modified Sainte-Laguë formula was employed, while before the 2005 election the D'Hondt method was implemented. In Bolivia in 1991, the seats allocation formula changed from “double quota” (*doble cociente*)<sup>89</sup> to Ste.-Laguë. For this reason, I will code this episode as an actual case of electoral reform. Albania is considered to have changed its electoral system in 1996 and 2001. In both cases, the main change deals with the linkage between tiers. Initially created as a mixed dependent system, Albania got rid of the linkage between tiers just before the 1996 election, and employed a non-compensatory hybrid system for the following two elections. However, the linkage between tiers was reinstated before the 2001 election.
2. The electoral systems used in 1994 and 1998 Slovak elections are considered to be different because the number of districts changed by more than 20 percent: whereas in the

<sup>88</sup> The examples have been selected following two criteria: first, including cases as much heterogeneous as possible; and two, broadening the geographical scope of the sample.

<sup>89</sup> This system allocates seats by simple quota and largest remainders, but has a threshold, known as the participation quota, equivalent to one simple quota of the valid votes. To further complicate matters, all the electoral laws in use from 1979 through 1985 contained a provision that permitted parties that failed to meet the participation quota to nonetheless obtain a seat, provided that their vote total was not less than the lowest remainder that earned a seat in the district (Mayorga 2001: 195).

former contest the seats were allocated in 4 districts, in the 1998 election this number decreased to 1. In the same vein, I will consider that Colombia introduced a new electoral system in 1991 because the number of districts changed from 26 to 33.

3. In 1990, the Bulgarian National Assembly was composed of 400 members. In the following election in 1991, that number decreased to 240. An electoral reform is also considered to have taken place in 1998 in Guatemala because the size of the lower house increased from 80 to 113 deputies.
4. In 2000, the Slovenian Parliament changed from 3 quotas (more or less, 3.3 per cent) to 4 percent the minimum level of votes a party needs to obtain in order to be able to participate in the allocation of seats. For that reason, the systems used in 1996 and 2000 Slovenian general elections are considered to be different. The Panamanian electoral system also changed in 1993 because of the elimination of a restriction that prevented parties from obtaining seats through remainders if they had not obtained a seat through quotas.
5. Latvia enacted an electoral reform by banning pre-electoral coalitions in 1998. In addition, the only change in the Estonian electoral law that meets the requirements of my definition of electoral reform also occurred in 1998. That year, the *apparentment* of lists was prohibited.
6. In El Salvador, an electoral system based on one tier of seats allocation was used in 1988; just before the 1991 election, an additional national constituency of 20 out of 84 deputies was created. By contrast, the 1998 Czech election was the last time in which two tiers of seats allocation were employed in that country. In the following contest in 2002, the whole legislature was elected in only one tier.
7. Eight of the examined countries (Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Ecuador, Italy, Macedonia, Russia and Ukraine) abandoned the mixed-member electoral system they used to employ

in order to implement a pure PR system.<sup>90</sup> This electoral reform can be considered a change in the ballot structure in several senses. First of all, voters are not allowed to cast a vote for both candidates and parties anymore, and are forced to choose now among groups of individuals. Second, they cease to be asked for two pieces of information. Finally, they stop having the possibility of casting a split-ticket vote because the ballot structure changes from “dividual” to categorical. Another example of modification in the ballot structure took place in Honduras in 2004 when the system changed from proportional representation with closed lists to proportional representation with *panachage*. In this case, the ballot structure is considered to have changed for the same three reasons we have just seen: (1) a change of whom the citizens can vote for; (2) a change of the number of pieces of information they are asked to provide; and (3) a change from a categorical to a “dividual” ballot. Moreover, the degree of choice for voters widens because they are able to choose now among their party’s candidates and across party lines. Other examples of electoral reforms in which the ballot structure changes are the movement from closed to flexible lists in the proportional tier of the Lithuanian electoral system in 1996, and the introduction of preferential voting in the Dominican Republic in 2002 for the election of representatives to the lower house.

To sum up, my definition of electoral reforms is pretty close to Lijphart’s (1994) even though I depart from it in some important senses. First of all, Lijphart barely talks about multi-tier and mixed electoral systems. In addition, he states that in two-tier districting systems the definition of electoral reform should be applied to what he defines as the decisive tier. In general, the upper level is the decisive tier, and the only exception concerns the electoral formula in remainder-transfer systems. This criterion seems to me a bit arbitrary. In this regard, the formula employed in the nominal tier of mixed-member systems is often crucial in order to understand electoral outcomes in those countries. However, tinkering with it is not an electoral reform according to Lijphart’s criteria. For that reason, I propose to apply the seven elements of the

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<sup>90</sup> Two of them (i.e., Bulgaria and Ukraine) adopted a law that reinstated the mixed system in the last couple of years. By contrast, Hungary’s parliamentarians passed a new electoral law in December 2011 that involved the first significant overhaul of the Hungarian electoral system since the country’s first post-communist democratic elections in 1990. However, I do not address either the causes or the consequences of Hungary and Ukraine’s recent electoral system changes because they lie beyond the temporal scope of this study: 1945-2010.

definition of electoral reform I have just sketched to any of the levels of seat allocation that exist either in multi-tier or in mixed electoral systems.

The second main difference between Lijphart's and my definition of electoral reforms concerns the importance I attach to the changes in the number of tiers and the existence or absence of linkage between them. In this regard, Lijphart himself (1994: 36) states that large upper-tier districts in PR two-tier districting systems increase the overall level of proportionality and party fragmentation; and Shugart and Wattenberg (2001: 13) argue that the presence or absence of linkage between tiers is the "primary variable" to differentiate MMM and MMP. Thus, it is pretty reasonable to identify an actual case of electoral reform when the number of tiers or the kind of connection between them changes.

Finally, I devote more attention to the intraparty dimension of electoral systems than Lijphart does. Although ballot structure is one of Rae's (1967) three basic elements of electoral systems, Lijphart (1994) considers it to be a minor component of electoral systems. On this basis, he does not use a change in the ballot structure as a criterion to identify a new electoral system. By contrast, scholars are becoming increasingly interested in the intraparty dimension; and since the publication in 1995 of Carey and Shugart's seminal paper on the incentives to cultivate a personal vote, the analysis of the intraparty dimension is one of the areas of most profound progress in the field. In the same vein, Bernard Grofman (1999) argues that the distinction between systems in which voters select parties and those in which voters select candidates is at least as important as the PR versus plurality/majority debate (Carey 2009; Shugart 2005). This last remark and the fact of being an ongoing agenda of several scholars lead me to consider significant changes in the ballot structure as actual episodes of electoral reforms as well.

Thus far, I have offered my own definition of electoral reforms, and provided examples of actual episodes in some of the examined countries that fit it. Obviously, this definition can be controversial. In fact, the list of modifications of the electoral law enacted in the examined countries is longer and more complex than the one I have just described. For the sake of simplicity, I have opted to exclude from my definition some cases of institutional change. However, I think it is worthwhile to summarize them. These episodes are as follows:

1. *A change in malapportionment.* Regarded as “pathology” of electoral systems by Taagepera and Shugart (1989), in a malapportioned system the votes of some citizens weigh more than the votes of other citizens (Samuels and Snyder 2001). Malapportionment is sometimes included in the electoral law as a way of advantaging the least populated districts, that is, the rural ones. Although Gallagher (1991) warns his readers that malapportionment may also affect the degree of proportionality of election outcomes, Lijphart (1994) does not find in his multivariate analysis a statistically significant impact of this variable on the levels of disproportionality of electoral outcomes, or the likelihood of occurrence of parliamentary and manufactured majorities.
2. *A change in the variance effect.* This feature of electoral systems is characterized by Burt Monroe and Amanda Rose (2002) as the group of political consequences that the district magnitude variation within a single electoral system has. I run the risk of mistaking the mechanics for the outcomes of electoral systems if I code changes in the variance effect as actual cases of electoral reform.
3. *A redistricting decision.* It is undeniable that this kind of policy change have an impact on elections that is as profound as any of those changes of electoral law will be listed above (Bowler and Donovan 2008; Katz 2005). However, I contend that they are particularly important in single-member districts systems; and, as I will see below, almost every examined country allocates seats in multi-member districts. Obviously, not every redistricting process is excluded from my definition of electoral reforms. For example, every modification of the number of districts is logically tied to a redrawing of the boundaries of the constituencies, and, in these latter cases, an electoral reform is considered to have taken place.
4. *A change in the rules regarding ethnic minorities.* Ethnic minority parties have been banned in some Central and Eastern Europe countries<sup>91</sup> while in others special constituencies for national minorities have been created<sup>92</sup> (Bochsler 2010c). Moreover,

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<sup>91</sup> Albania and Bulgaria appear to be the examples.

<sup>92</sup> Croatia, Romania, Slovenia, and Colombia appear to be the examples.

legal thresholds do not apply to ethnic minority parties in some countries.<sup>93</sup> The impact of these kinds of rules on the representation of ethnic groups is undeniable. However, they do not have any effect on the proportionality of electoral outcomes, or the candidates' incentives to cultivate a personal vote.<sup>94</sup>

5. *An implementation of gender quotas and their subsequent reforms.* Jennifer Piscopo (2006) documents that 13 Latin American countries have currently gender quotas. According to her, the initial law introducing them has been reformed in most cases. In the same vein, Mona Lena Krook (2009) lists 15 European democracies in which this type of provisions were in force in 2007. However, the introduction of these quotas and their subsequent reforms do not have any impact on the two consequences of electoral systems I am interested in, that is, the proportionality of electoral outcomes and the incentives to cultivate a personal vote.<sup>95</sup>

Let's take the case of Bolivia in 2008 as an example of modification of the law that does not fit my definition of electoral reform. That year, the new Bolivian Constitution introduced a few changes in this Andean country's legislative electoral system. In synthesis, the legislature was renamed Plurinational Legislative Assembly, though the MMP remained. From then on, the electoral system was required to have seats set aside for indigenous representation. However, these seats would have to come from the 130 total. Thus, none of the relevant elements of the electoral systems changed, and a reform did not take place according to my definition.

Now that I have offered a definition of electoral reforms, I will deal with the thorny task of classifying them. In this regard, I aim to construct a twofold typology of the phenomenon on the basis of the consequences the electoral reforms are expected to have. The effects of electoral systems on (1) the proportionality or disproportionality of the electoral outcomes and (2) the degree of multipartism and the tendency to generate majority governments have been widely analyzed in the last half century. In fact, as already noted, the distinction between majoritarian,

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<sup>93</sup> Lithuania during the first election and Poland during the whole period of observation appear to be the examples.

<sup>94</sup> For example, the replacement of single-member by multi-member districts forces to perform a redistricting process.

<sup>95</sup> Conversely, Celis et al. (2011) argue that the spread of gender quotas should also be included in the study of the politics of electoral reform.



which provoke a huge deviation from perfect correspondence between seats and votes, and proportional systems, which bolster it, is the most popular way to classify electoral rules (Taagepera and Shugart 1989). Hence, having defined disproportionality as “the deviation of parties’ seat shares from their vote shares” (Lijphart 1994: 57), I will divide electoral reforms into permissive, restrictive and ambiguous. Whereas reforms of the first type increase the capacity of a parliament to exactly capture the distribution of vote among parties, reforms of the second type increase the chances of getting a clear electoral winner. As I said earlier, the terms *proportional*, *permissive*, *inclusive or weak*, on the one hand, and *majoritarian*, *restrictive*, *exclusive or strong* are used interchangeably. Lastly, ambiguous electoral reforms do not change the overall degree of proportionality produced by the pre-reform electoral system either because the change only has to do with the intraparty dimension, or because the modification combines proportional and majoritarian features. I will consider the following modifications of the electoral law as cases of permissive reforms:<sup>96</sup>

1. One of these changes in the electoral formula:

- a. Across families of electoral systems, the replacement of majoritarian rules either by mixed or by proportional ones, or the substitution of mixed rules by proportional ones.
- b. Within families of electoral systems:
  - i. Across types of majoritarian institutions, the replacement of plurality rule either by qualified or absolute majority, the substitution of absolute majority by qualified majority (if it is above 50 per cent), or the switch from qualified (if it is below 50 per cent) to absolute majority.<sup>97</sup>
  - ii. Within families of proportional formulas:<sup>98</sup>
    1. Across highest average formulas, a change in this direction: D’Hondt → modified Sainte-Laguë → Sainte Laguë.
    2. Across quota formulas, a change in this direction: Reinforced Imperiali → Imperiali → Droop → Hare.

2. A reduction of the number of districts.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> By contrast, a restrictive reform will occur in the opposite situations.

<sup>97</sup> None of the examined countries uses a qualified majority system. For this reason, I do not take them into account.

<sup>98</sup> This part of the typology follows Urdánoz Ganuza’s (2007) classification of proportional formulas.

3. A rise of the assembly size.
4. A reduction of the electoral threshold.<sup>100</sup>
5. The implementation of an additional tier to allocate seats in PR systems,<sup>101</sup> a rise in the percentage of seats that are allocated in the PR tier in mixed systems, or the introduction of linkage between tiers in multi-tier or mixed systems.
6. A significant reduction of the number of votes a citizen can cast in “first-M-past-the post” systems.<sup>102</sup> A significant reduction is considered to have taken place when there has been a modification of at least 20 per cent.

Frequently overlooked in the past, the analysis of the intraparty effects of the rules of the game has seen major progress in the last 20 years.<sup>103</sup> By intraparty effects of electoral rules I mean “how do variations in electoral rules affect the internal organization of parties and the ways in which individual legislators (or legislative candidates) relate to constituents” (Shugart 2005: 36). Although the literature on the intraparty dimension lags still behind that on the interparty dimension, we have considerably improved our knowledge in this area. For example, many scholars have paid attention to the institutional determinants of personal vote, that is, “the portion of a candidate’s electoral support which originates in his or her personal qualities, qualifications,

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<sup>99</sup> In bloc vote systems, a reduction of the number of districts means decreasing the overall degree of proportionality of the electoral outcomes (Lijphart 1994). However, majoritarian systems with multi-member districts have gradually disappeared in world politics. In fact, none of the examined countries employs an electoral system of this kind.

<sup>100</sup> As Lijphart (1994) shows, the effective threshold and the assembly size affect significantly the degree of disproportionality of the electoral outcomes. As the effective threshold is an index determined by the district magnitude, that is at the same time a function of the number of districts, and the legal threshold, we can conclude that modifications of these two elements of the electoral system change the overall degree of disproportionality of electoral outcomes.

<sup>101</sup> In fact, the only two cases of majoritarian multi-tier countries are Papua New Guinea and Mauritius (Golder 2005). As already noted, they are not included in this study.

<sup>102</sup> For example, the SNTV system employed in Japan until 1993 might be considered a perfect example of a “first-M-past-the post” system, where *M* is the number of members that gather most votes in the district and, hence, are elected from it.

<sup>103</sup> The distinction between the interparty and intraparty dimensions of electoral systems closely resembles the two major trade-offs, that is, party versus individual representation and single-party versus coalition government, that arise in designing an electoral system (van der Eijk and Franklin 2009: 69).

activities, and record” (Cain et al. 1987: 9). In this regard, Carey and Shugart’s (1995) theory on how different systems affect the incentives to cultivate a personal vote provides the framework to analyze electoral reforms from the perspective of the intraparty dimension.

Keeping this in mind, I will divide electoral reforms along the intraparty dimension into three groups. Candidate-centred reforms will increase the candidates’ incentives to cultivate a personal vote. By contrast, Party-centred reforms will decrease the candidates’ incentives to cultivate a personal vote. Finally, ambiguous reforms will be ambiguous from the perspective of the intraparty dimension either because they combine elements of change in both directions or because the candidates’ incentives to cultivate a personal vote remain the same.<sup>104</sup> I will consider the following modifications of the electoral law as cases of candidate-centred reforms:<sup>105</sup>

1. A reduction in the degree of control party leaders can exercise over ballot rank. The degree of party leaders’ control decreases as the following score increases:
  - 0: Leaders present a fixed ballot, and voters may not “disturb” the list (for example, in closed-list PR);
  - 1: Leaders present party ballots, but voters may “disturb” the list (for example, in flexible-list PR);
  - 2: Leaders do not control rank (for example, in open-list PR).

Thus, unlike Carey and Shugart (1995), I do not consider changes in the control over party endorsements as episodes of reform in the intraparty dimension of electoral systems.

2. A reduction in the contribution that votes cast for one candidate of a given party makes to the number of seats won in the district by the party as a whole. This contribution is considered to decrease as the following score increases:
  - 0: A vote for any candidate of a given party is counted as a vote for the whole party in the district. Such systems include closed-list, open-list, and multiple-list methods.

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<sup>104</sup> Unfortunately, ambiguous reforms are relatively frequent compared to straightforward reforms. The main problem lies in the fact that many electoral reforms change the allocation method of seats among parties without modifying the amount of incentives to cultivate a personal vote.

<sup>105</sup> By contrast, a party-centred electoral reform will occur in the opposite situations.

- 1: Votes are also pooled, but they are pooled across candidates or across factions, rather than across entire parties. Such systems include those in which voters can designate to whom their votes should be transferred if they are not needed to elect their first choice, or if their first choice is too unpopular to be elected. This “selective” pooling takes place under the STV formula used in Ireland, and under the alternative vote (AV) used in Australia.
  - 2: No vote pooling occurs at all. Such systems include the SNTV used, for example, in Taiwan to allocate nominal seats in elections for the Legislative Yuan.
3. A change in the number and the level at which citizens are allowed to cast votes. In order to capture this effect, incentives to cultivate a personal vote are assumed to increase as the following score increases:
    - 0: Voters cast a single vote for one party, as in Rae’s notion of a categorical vote. Examples include all types of closed-list systems.
    - 1: Voters cast more than one vote, as in dividual and ordinal ballot structures already defined. This can happen either within a given election (including mixed systems, PR-list with *panachage*, and the single transferable or the alternative vote) or over time (in runoff elections).
    - 2: Voters cast a single vote below the party level. This describes, among others, the SNTV formerly used in Japan, and the open-list proportional representation (for example, in Brazil).
  4. A reduction of the number of districts if the electoral formula itself fosters personal vote behaviours. As the number of districts decreases, the district magnitude increases; and, according to Carey and Shugart (1995: 430), personal reputation-seeking increases as districts become bigger in those systems in which intraparty competition already exists.
  5. The introduction of a majoritarian tier in PR systems.

6. The elimination or a reduction in the size of the PR-tier in mixed systems. There are two alternative ways through which the latter may happen: one is direct and occurs when the number of PR seats decreases, and the other one is indirect and occurs when the number of majoritarian seats increases.
7. A rise in the size of the so-called *personal tier in multi-tier systems*. By personal tier I mean that in which the electoral formula itself fosters personal vote behaviours. The personal tier can become bigger in either two ways: directly, by increasing the number of seats allocated in that tier in the so-called adjustment-seats systems; or indirectly, by lowering the amount of votes a candidate must win in that tier in order to obtain a seat in the so-called remainder-transfer systems.
8. A decrease in the number of preferences a voter can express in preferential-list allocation methods.
9. A rise in the degree by which preference votes may change the party-provided ranking in flexible-list systems.

In conclusion, I will broadly follow John Carey and Matthew Shugart (1995), though I will make two main changes in their scheme. First of all, I will divide their ordinal scoring system of electoral systems into the four first variables I have just dealt with. Although these scholars combine the so-called *ballot, pool and votes* variables in only one index, I will not do it for substantive reasons. For example, it seems to me a bit arbitrary to argue that open-list, single-vote systems increase incentives to cultivate a personal vote compared to the STV just because in the former citizens can only cast a single vote. In order to illustrate this, let's take the Brazilian and the Irish electoral systems. In Brazil, candidates get automatically some benefit from the votes cast for other hopeless members of their own party running for office. By contrast, in Ireland votes are pooled across candidates of the same party only if the citizen wants it. Thus, it is at least dubious if personal reputation is more important in Brazil rather than in Ireland.<sup>106</sup> Lastly, my typology also differs from Carey and Shugart's because I add several more features

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<sup>106</sup> In the Appendix 1 to this thesis, I will indicate all the cases on which I disagree with Carey and Shugart.

(the numbers from 5 to 9 above) to the list of institutional changes that enhance personal vote-seeking behaviours.

### **3.3.2. Electoral reforms in practice: Empirical patterns<sup>107</sup>**

This last section of the chapter elaborates on the general dynamics of electoral system change in the countries examined and during the period of time under study. After the definition and operationalization of electoral reform, the next question is the following: how common are they? Although electoral systems have frequently captured the attention of comparative politics, the availability of data has been less than impressive. This problem gets worse when questions about the evolution of electoral systems are posed for a relatively long period of time and for a considerable number of countries. A typical way to address it is to use Golder's data (2004). However, this solution is far from ideal because these data lack some relevant information (e.g., that concerning the legal thresholds or the variables regarding the intraparty dimension) and I must slightly amend his definition of electoral system change. Moreover, I will not consider the introduction of presidential elections or the introduction of presidential runoffs to be an electoral system change.<sup>108</sup> The same is true for the alternation between presidential, parliamentary or mixed forms of government. Finally, I will not classify two electoral systems as different simply because they are separated by a period of dictatorial rule.<sup>109</sup> To sum up, the use of Golder's data will be confined to the broad pictures provided by Figures 3.1 and 3.2, and I will employ my own data in all the other figures and tables of the thesis.

The third wave of democratization provides us with a unique opportunity to evaluate whether the impact of party system fragmentation on the likelihood of electoral reforms differs across diverse levels of democratic experience. From 1970 to 1990, most of the former autocracies in Latin America and Europe became democratic. Leaving aside more precise causal dynamics, to which I will return in Chapters 4 and 5, I exploit regional variation for plotting effects because I expect electoral reform type and frequency to at least roughly cluster in some

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<sup>107</sup> For a complete list of electoral reforms in the examined countries, see the Appendix 1 to this thesis.

<sup>108</sup> Since in my dissertation I am only addressing changes in the legislative electoral rules, these two institutional reforms are left out of my definition.

<sup>109</sup> Theoretically, I should not find periods of dictatorial rule in my dataset. However, I find some cases (e.g., Peru) in which democracy turned into autocracy for a couple of years (i.e., between 1990 and 2000). If features of both the previous and the posterior electoral system are identical, I will not code these cases as episodes of electoral reform.

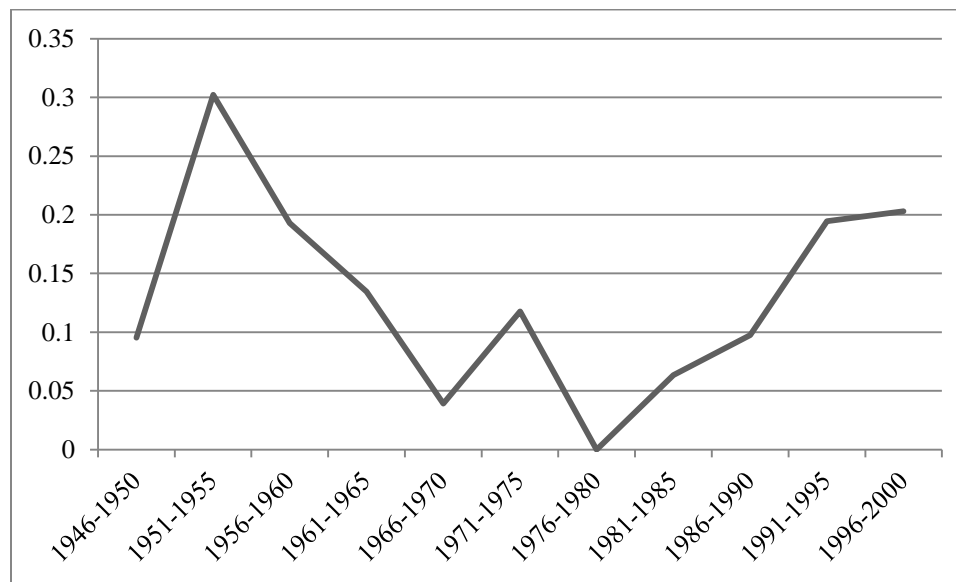
particular continents. And, in fact, it does so. In contrast to some of the most consolidated democracies, the proportion of them that adopted a majoritarian system was very low. The absence of free and fair elections for a relatively long period of time contributed without question to the adoption of notably permissive rules in most of these countries. More importantly, there were frequent reforms of the electoral rules initially adopted. Electoral system changes in recently democratized countries included the raising of thresholds, the transformation of mixed rules into full PR and several modifications in the assembly size. However, data presented in Figures 3.1-3.6 suggest that the occurrence of electoral reforms is far from being confined to either recent decades or young democracies. For instance, Figure 3.1 plots the proportion of reforms per election over time. As can be clearly seen, parties seem to have been particularly keen on the idea of electoral reform in the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century; but the proportion of electoral system changes was still higher between 1951 and 1955. Hence, the number of modifications in the rules of the game did not grow steadily from the Second World War as some more impressionistic pictures have suggested.

Regarding the geographical distribution of electoral system changes, Figure 3.2 displays the cross-regional comparison of episodes of electoral reform in the world between 1946 and 2000.<sup>110</sup> This figure illustrates very well the enormous differences that exist across regions in the stability of electoral rules. In particular, the figure reports the ratio of elections that take place under a new electoral system in each region. For example, the figure indicates that around 30 per cent of the legislative elections in Middle East and North Africa, and in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union are held after an electoral reform. Sub-Saharan Africa and Latin American countries also show high scores for institutional instability. These rates seem to indicate willingness to experiment with electoral institutions and the lack of equilibria in multi-party competition. By contrast, electoral systems appear to be more stable in the Caribbean and non-Hispanic America region. It could be argued that the stability of electoral institutions is somewhat overstated in these regions due to the large number of elections that have occurred in completely consolidated political systems like the United States and Canada. However, let's remember that stable systems exist across all the regions. The completely stable systems of

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<sup>110</sup> This figure employs Golder's dataset that covers the electoral institutions used in all of the democratic legislative and presidential elections in 199 countries only between 1946 (or independence) and 2000.

**Figure 3.1. Proportion of electoral reforms in democracies over time, 1946-2000**



*Source:* Golder (2004).

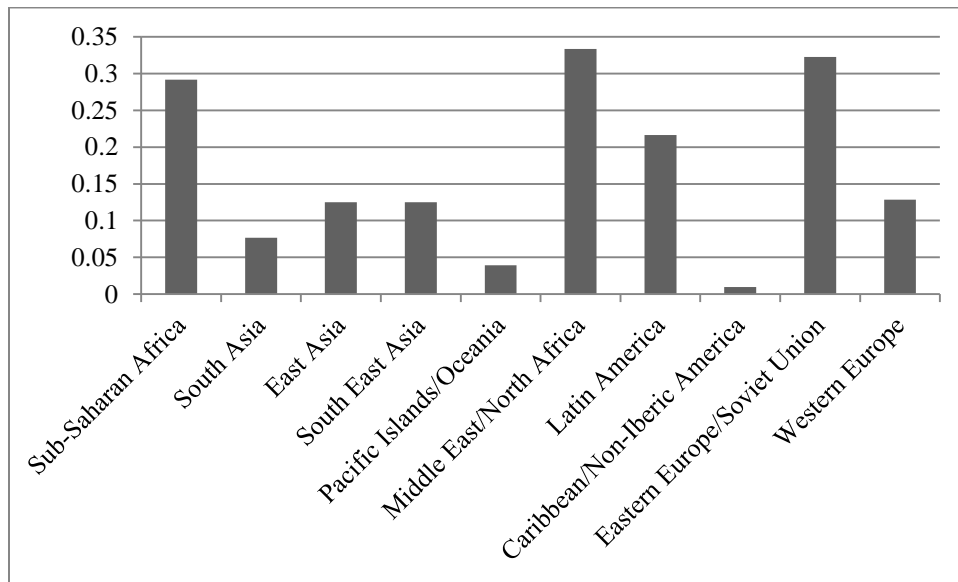
Switzerland and the United Kingdom, for example, do not lower the average of Western Europe below the mean.

Despite the higher incidence of reforms in African countries, the proportion of them registered in Latin America and Eastern and Western Europe support the case selection adopted for this thesis. Moreover, the striking differences depicted in Figure 3.2 between established democracies from the Old and the New World seem to imply that the practice of reforming the electoral rules does not completely hinge on the age of the current democratic regime. Apart from looking at these two continents, I will also examine Australia, Japan, Israel and New Zealand in order to incorporate more variability in my sample. Summing up, I will analyze cases of electoral system change in all democratic terms from 1945 to 2010 in 60 countries. With 722 legislative terms and 128 electoral reforms covered (about 20 per cent of the sample), the dataset includes almost 3,000 country-year cases.<sup>111</sup> In sum, this is an impressive and, as far as I know, unique dataset that captures electoral reforms in a wide group of countries since World War II.

<sup>111</sup> Specifically, I examine data from Albania, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bolivia, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Dominican Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Macedonia, Malta, Mexico, Moldova, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway,



**Figure 3.2. Proportion of electoral reforms in democracies across regions, 1946-2000**



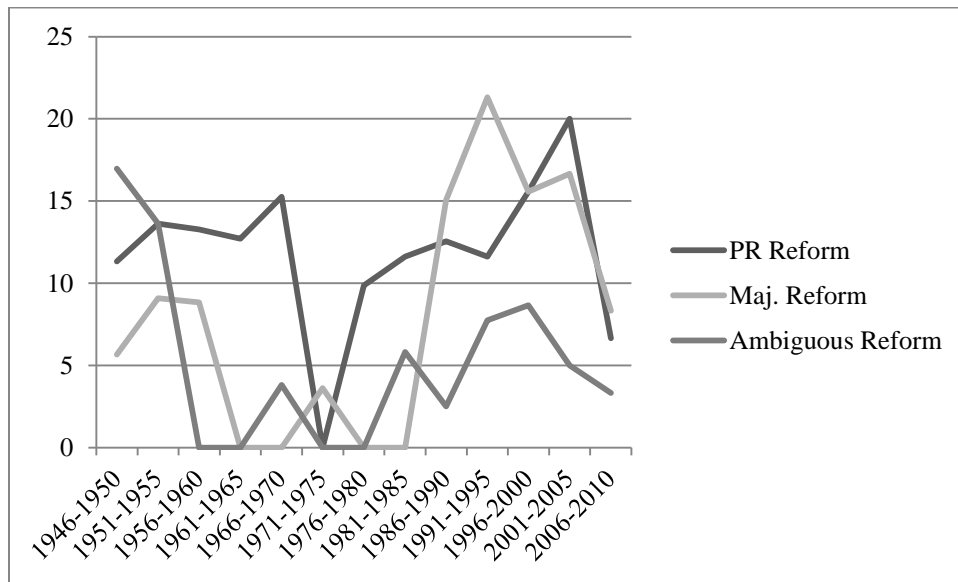
*Source:* Golder (2004).

I now analyze the different types of changes in the interparty dimension of the rules of the game in all the elections from 1945 to 2010 (Figure 3.3). The overall proportion for all three types of reforms (i.e., permissive, restrictive and ambiguous) follows a U-shape pattern again. In the years from 1961 to 1985, only restrictive electoral system changes were relatively likely. Although the ratio of ambiguous reforms remained comparatively low after that year, the level of electoral engineering in the years following the fall of the Berlin Wall appears to be particularly high (at least, until 2006) with regard to the other two types of institutional change. In fact, the most important spikes for these two types of electoral system changes can be observed between 1991 and 1995 (for restrictive reforms) and 2001 and 2005 (for permissive reforms). Hence, the evidence in favour of a trend towards more proportionality described by Colomer (2005) seems to be weak.

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Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States, Uruguay and Venezuela.

**Figure 3.3. Types of electoral reforms in the interparty dimension over time, 1946-2010**

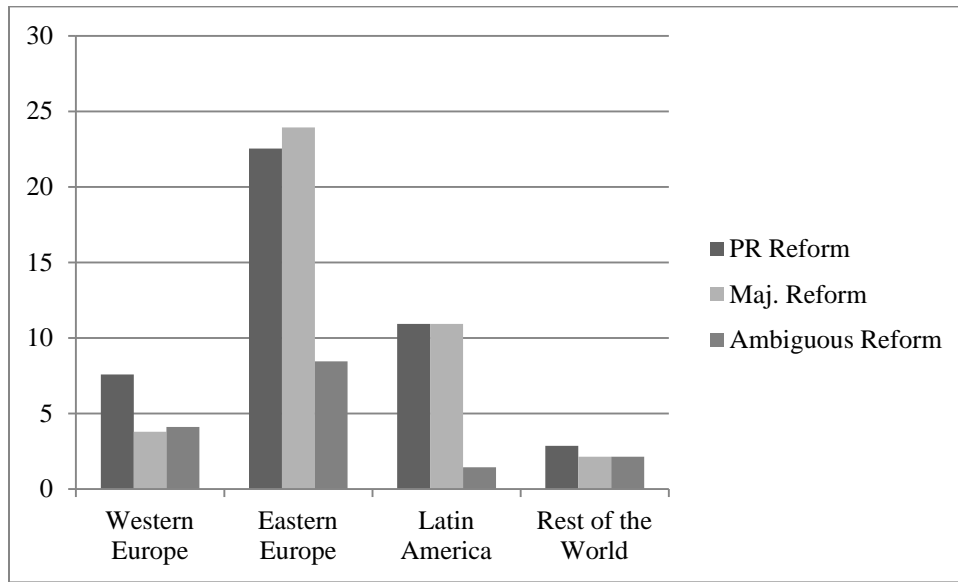


Source: Own elaboration.

The analyses that follow draw on data on the geographical distribution of electoral reforms in the interparty dimension. They span four regions and the period between 1945 and 2010 (Figure 3.4). More often than in other regions, parties in Eastern Europe have changed their electoral system. For all 71 cases of legislative terms from this group of countries, both the proportions of permissive and restrictive reforms are above 20 per cent. The proportion of ambiguous electoral system changes is considerably lower (around 8 per cent). These figures also suggest that the incorporation of new information into the definition of electoral reform (those concerning electoral thresholds among others) makes the overall number of modifications go up. By contrast, electoral reforms among the 20 Western European democracies included in this study are relatively less frequent. To be more precise, in all but 5 per cent of cases only permissive electoral system changes take place. Permissive and restrictive electoral reforms are adopted in about 10 per cent of the cases in Latin American countries. For ambiguous electoral system changes in the interparty dimension, the proportion is less than 2 per cent. Finally, the proportion of electoral reforms in the countries from the rest of the world is almost negligible (i.e., less than 3 per cent in all three categories).<sup>112</sup>

<sup>112</sup> Six countries (i.e., Australia, Canada, Israel, Japan, New Zealand and United States) belong to this category.

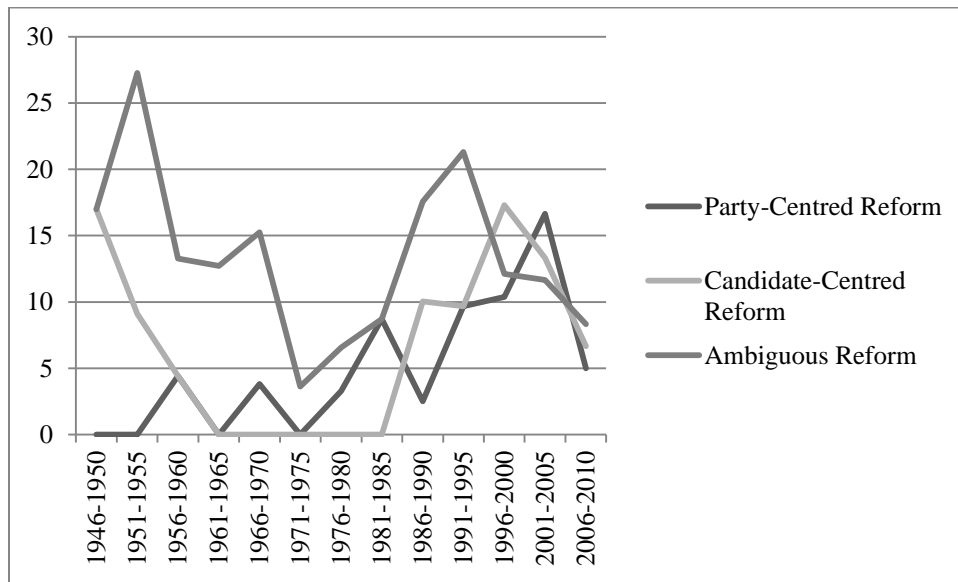
**Figure 3.4. Types of electoral reforms in the interparty dimension across regions, 1946-2010**



*Source:* Own elaboration.

The existence of a U-shape curve is also evident in the evolution of the proportion of reforms registered in the intraparty dimension of the electoral systems over time (Figure 3.5). This is first of all because some ambiguous and candidate-centred changes are adopted just after the Second World War, and the number of countries already democratic by then is relatively low. But the explanation of this result also lies in the fact that the proportion of candidate-centred and party-centred reforms starts to grow steadily after 1985 and 1990, respectively. Although there is less evidence for such a positive trend in the last years under study, the post-2000 proportion of reforms in the intraparty dimension is far from negligible as well. All in all, data seem to cast serious doubts on the existence of the process of personalization of electoral systems hypothesized by Alan Renwick and Jean-Benoit Pilet (2011). Even though these scholars argue that changes in electoral systems in recent decades should trend towards candidate-centrism and away from party-centrism, data do not support this claim.

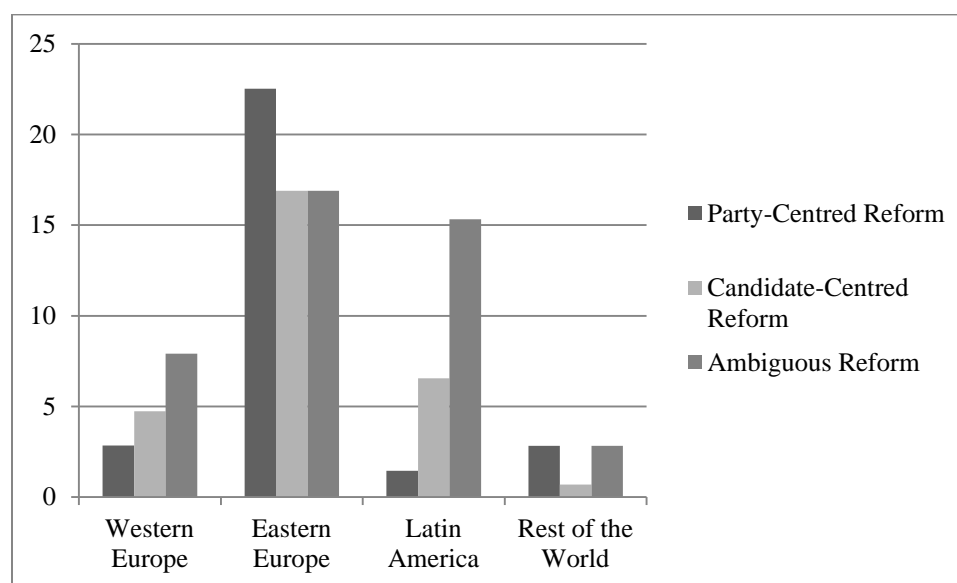
**Figure 3.5. Types of electoral reforms in the intraparty dimension over time, 1946-2010**



*Source:* Own elaboration.

The above trends are informative, but they do not tell us much about the geographical distribution of the electoral reforms in the intraparty dimension. For example, is the post-1985 increase in the number of electoral system changes of this kind systematic, or does it vary depending on the level of democratic experience of each country? Put differently, is this upsurge simply a compositional effect produced by the incorporation into the study of new democracies after that year? To better understand the phenomenon, it is useful to approach it by analyzing the ratio of electoral reforms in the intraparty dimension across continents (Figure 3.6). During the years under study, there were party-centred electoral reforms in more than 20 per cent of the legislative terms in Eastern Europe. The probability of other types of electoral system changes in the intraparty dimension in this same group of countries is slightly lower. By contrast, candidate-centred reforms are more frequent than party-centred changes in Western European and most Latin American democracies, and the proportion of reforms in the intraparty dimension is almost negligible in the rest of the world.

**Figure 3.6. Types of electoral reforms in the intraparty dimension across regions, 1946-2010**

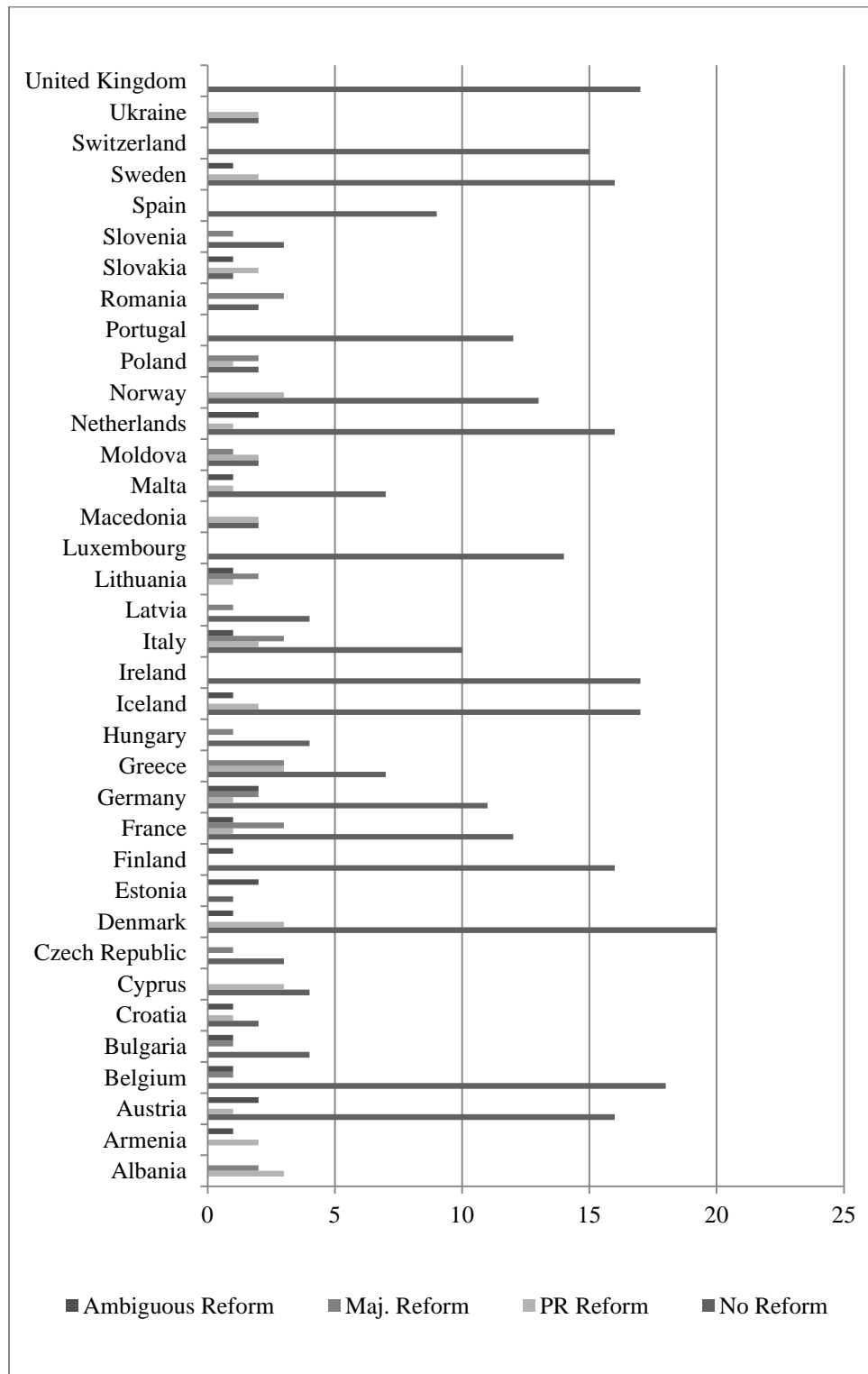


*Source:* Own elaboration.

Data displayed in Figures 3.7 and 3.8 suggest that there is also variation within regions concerning the number and type of electoral reforms adopted in the interparty dimension. For instance, among European third-wave democracies, restrictive reforms appear to be almost three times more likely than permissive electoral system changes. By contrast, proportional reforms are twice as frequent as majoritarian ones in established democracies of this continent. Variation is also evident in the disaggregated figures by country. From 1945 onwards, there is not a single electoral system change in Ireland, Luxembourg, Portugal, Spain and United Kingdom. By contrast, Norway and Romania each adopted three permissive and three restrictive reforms, respectively, in this same span of time.<sup>113</sup> Likewise, the proportion of electoral reforms varies considerably outside of Europe. In countries like Brazil, Canada, Chile, Mexico, United States and Uruguay, not a single-reform has been passed, although in two of them -Canada and United States- more than 20 elections have taken place since the end of the World War II. By contrast, the frequency with which electoral system changes occur in Israel and Venezuela appears to be quite remarkable.

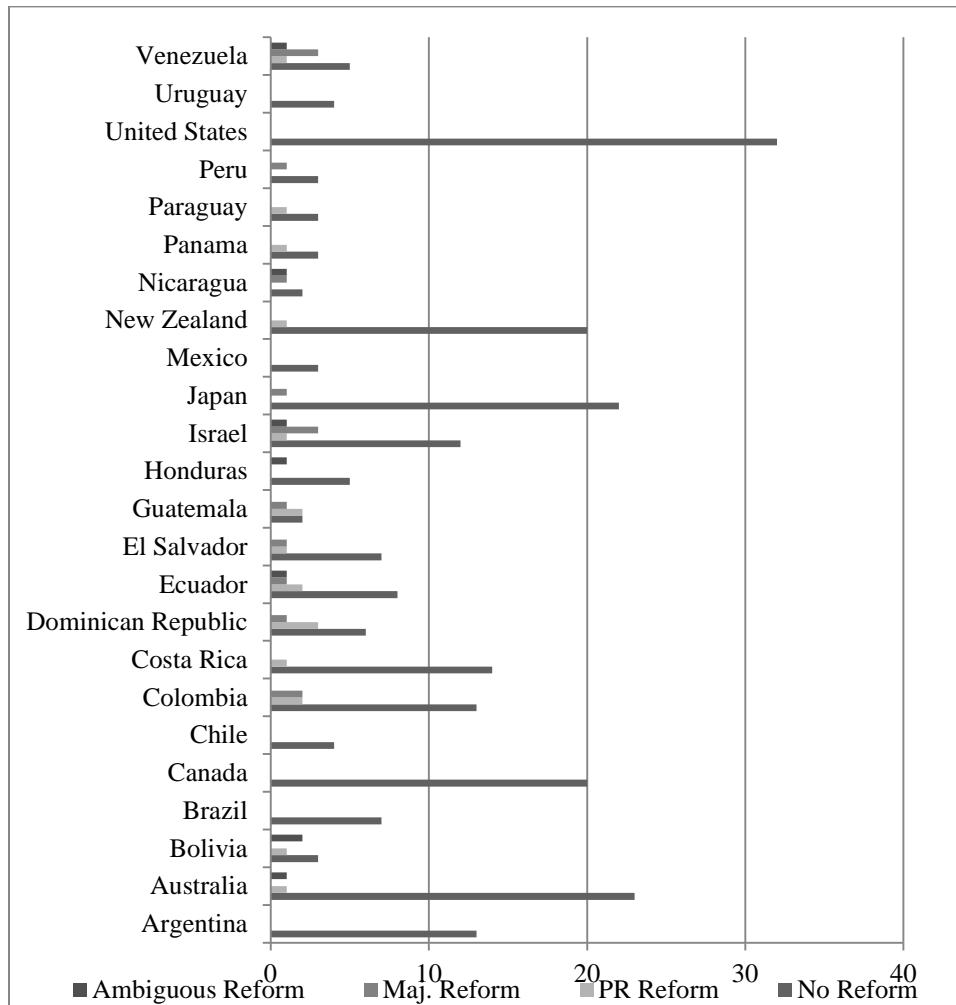
<sup>113</sup> Obviously, Portugal, Spain and Romania are only taken into consideration once they became democratic. To complete its trend towards exclusiveness, Romania has changed its electoral system to FPTP in 2012. Since the temporal scope of this study ranges from 1945 to 2010, I leave this last reform out of it.

**Figure 3.7. Types of electoral reforms in the interparty dimension, Europe 1946-2010**



Source: Own elaboration.

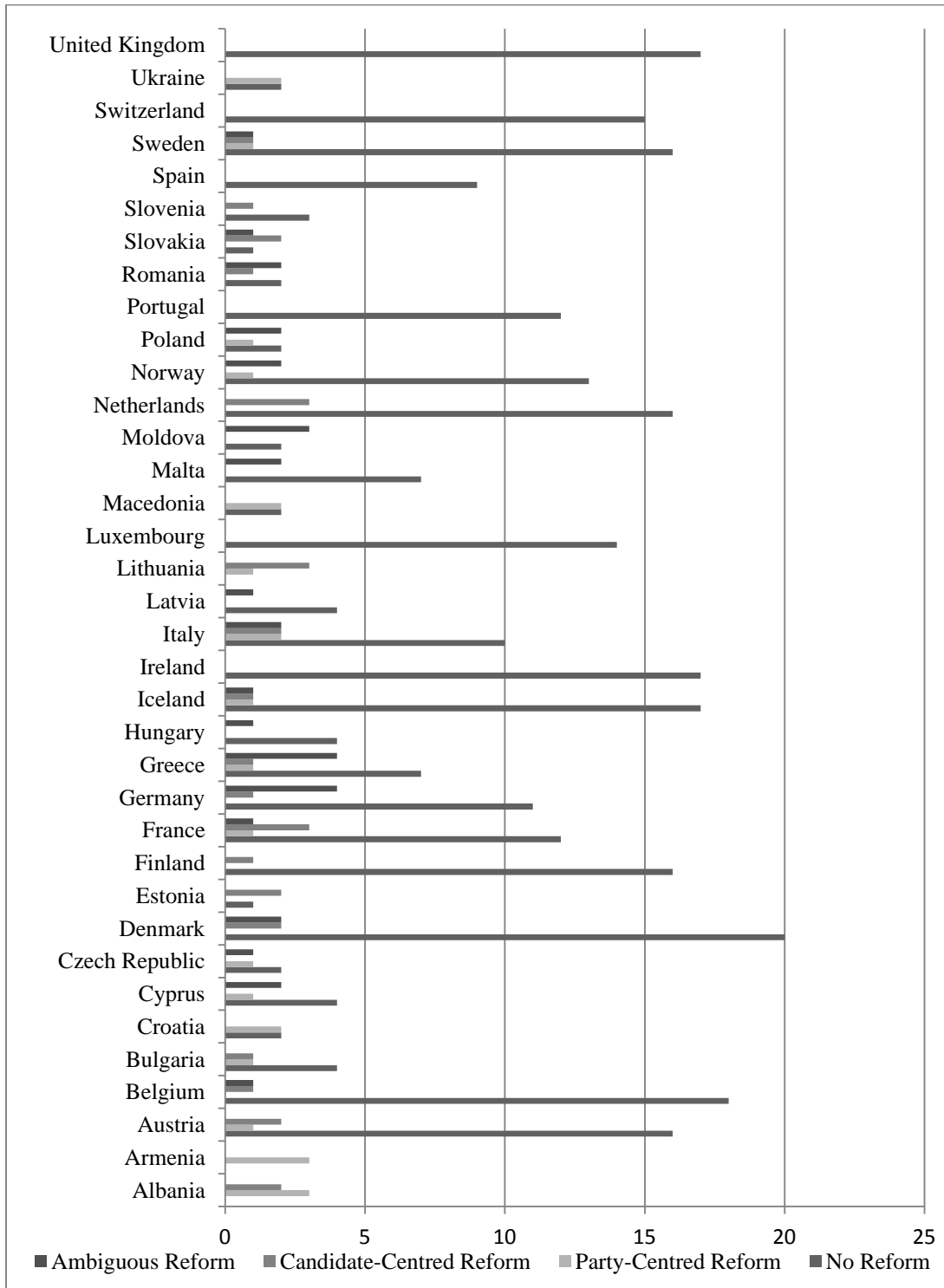
**Figure 3.8. Types of electoral reforms in the interparty dimension, rest of the world 1946-2010**



*Source:* Own elaboration.

Finally, data displayed in Figures 3.9 and 3.10 suggest that there is also variation within regions concerning the number and type of electoral reforms adopted in the intraparty dimension. At first sight, this kind of reform appears to have taken place more often in European countries. Among these, there are two cases (i.e., Albania and Armenia) that come close to modifying their electoral system towards more party-centrism before each election. This striking fact fits the remarkable association seen above between being a new democracy in Eastern Europe and adopting a party-centred reform. However, not all the countries from this region present the same

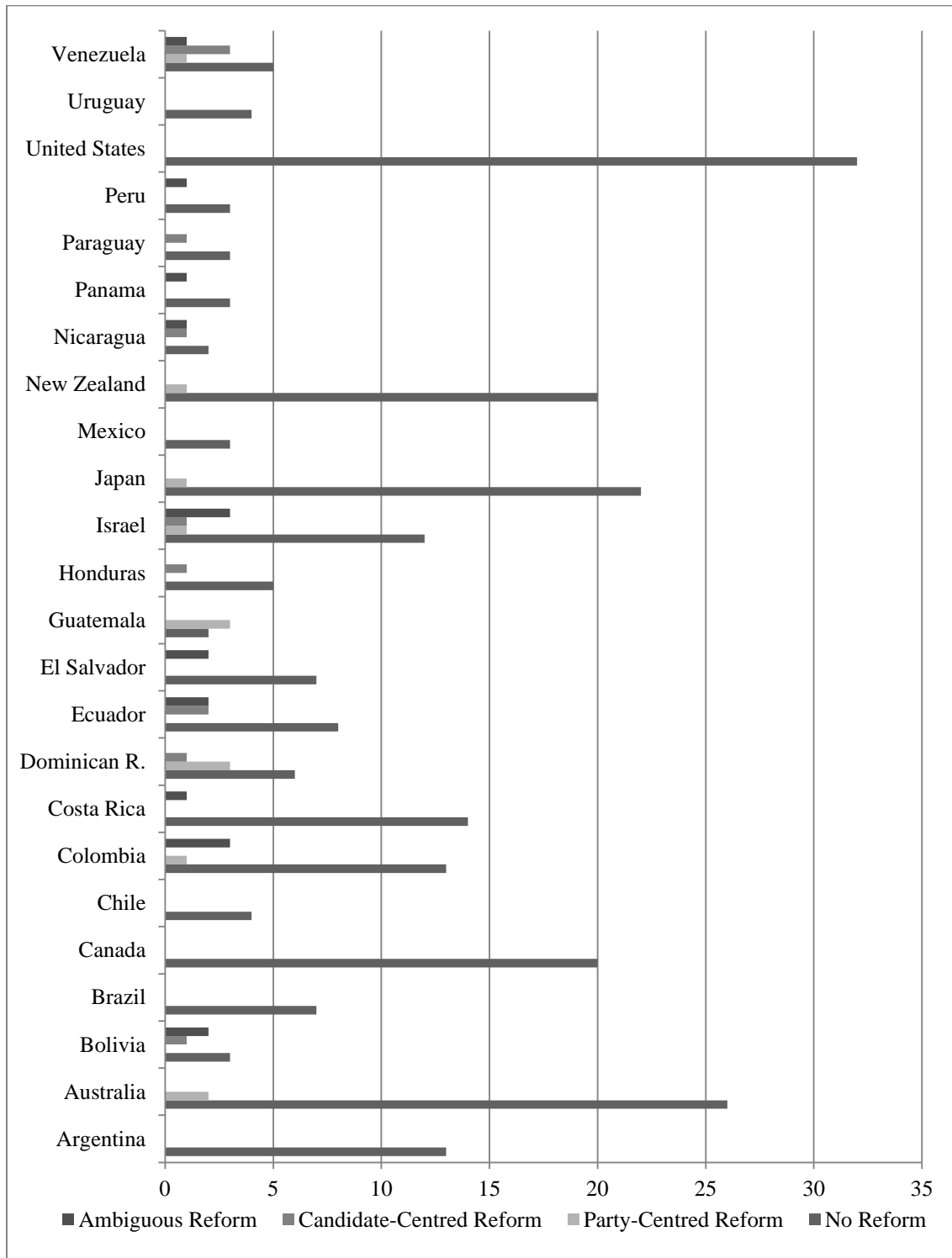
**Figure 3.9. Types of electoral reforms in the intraparty dimension, Europe 1946-2010**



Source: Own elaboration.



**Figure 3.10. Types of electoral reforms in the intraparty dimension, rest of the world 1946-2010**



Source: Own elaboration.

pattern. For example, data reported in Figure 3.9 suggests that parties in Lithuania (like in France) are shying away from party-centeredness.<sup>114</sup> Lastly, evidence in Figure 3.10 supports the argument that Venezuela is also an outlier in terms of electoral reform among Latin American democracies. Only this country and Ecuador change towards a more personalized system a considerable number of times (four and two, respectively). The frequency of consequential (i.e., non-ambiguous) reforms of the intraparty dimension in the rest of democracies outside of Europe is nearly insignificant.

### **3.4. Conclusion**

The field of comparative electoral systems research is richer than 20 years ago. However, compelling definitions and classifications of the object of study have been missing. The lack of agreement on what constitutes an electoral reform and which is the best way of classifying them appears as particularly troubling for this dissertation. In this chapter, I have overviewed the main contributions to this task provided by the literature. Moreover, I have offered my own definition of electoral reforms. In this regard, I have argued that a reform takes place if a significant change occurs in any of the seven relevant components of electoral systems I have listed. These seven elements are: the electoral formula, the number of districts, the assembly size, the electoral threshold, the presence (or absence) of a ban on pre-electoral coalitions and linked lists, the number and relationship between electoral tiers, and the ballot structure.

The second goal I aimed to pursue in this chapter was to offer some appropriate criteria to classify electoral reforms. Obviously, the two most relevant are those based on the impact that the institutional change is supposed to have in the interparty (more or less proportionality) and the intraparty (more or less incentives to cultivate a personal vote) dimensions of electoral systems. I have then provided some preliminary information on the dynamics of electoral reforms in contemporary democracies. Although several problems might plague the measurement of a concept such as electoral reform, the results show interesting variations over time and space. First of all, data does not seem to support the existence of a general trend

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<sup>114</sup> I should be a bit more careful about France because, although parties there move the electoral system towards candidate-centrism three times (like in Lithuania), the series of democratic elections is obviously longer.

towards more proportional electoral rules over time or across countries. The figures reported here clearly contradict Colomer's expectations (2005). In fact, the overall picture of electoral reform in the interparty dimension is pretty messy, and there is not a universal tendency in the other direction either.

Second, with regard to the intraparty dimension, there is clearly more to it than just increasing personalized electoral systems, as some authors have suggested (Renwick and Pilet 2011). The fact that the rules of the game do not trend towards more candidate-centeredness does not mean that parties act out of mere self-interest. Perhaps different parties would, in the end, arrive at a different institutional answer (more party-centeredness versus more candidate-centeredness) despite of the fact they share the same starting point (discontent with politics).

Finally, the geographical and temporal scope of this study presents much variation with respect to the occurrence of electoral reforms that deserves further inquiry. Now that I have outlined my definition of electoral reform and conceptualized its different types, I am ready to put forward my theory of institutional change and test its validity. This is the task I aim to accomplish in the next two chapters.



## **Part Two**

*The occurrence of electoral reforms and its causes*



## Chapter 4. “Changing things so that they stay as they are”: The determinants of electoral reforms in the interparty dimension

Se vogliamo che tutto rimanga com'è, bisogna che tutto cambi.

(Tancredi Falconeri in *Il Gattopardo* 1957: 41)

Electoral systems do not arise from a vacuum but from political debate and struggle. They mirror the politics of the time of their creation and are altered when politics change to the point where the existing electoral system becomes too restrictive.

(Rein Taagepera and Matthew Shugart 1989: 234)

### 4.1. Introduction

Electoral reforms have been characterized as fairly uncommon in democratic regimes (Birch et al. 2002; Gallagher 2005; Lijphart 1994; Nohlen 1984b; Norris 1995; Taagepera 2007b).<sup>115</sup> Fair and freely elected politicians in power may lack incentives to change the rules of the game they are winning (Katz 2005; Leyenaar and Hazan 2011). In fact, processes of electoral reform seem to be always governed by the inherent tension “between having the *will* and the *power*” to implement it (Mitchell 2005). Nevertheless, electoral system changes were quite prevalent in established democracies during the 1990s (e.g., Israel, Italy, Japan or New Zealand), and became prominent in the early stages of democratization in Eastern Europe and Latin American countries (Lijphart and Waisman 1996). The latter is perhaps not surprising considering that party systems in new democracies were in constant flux after the autocratic breakdown (Smith 2005; Toole 2000). However, a similar pattern seems to have emerged following party system unfreezing even in established democracies (Lipset and Rokkan 1967), as increasingly vulnerable parties lacked effective weapons to attract a sufficient number of voters (Dalton and Wattenberg 2000), and party leaders had to turn to institutional devices for an adequate strategy of political survival (Mair 1997). In fact, previous studies of electoral reforms have pointed to attempts of the ruling class to perpetuate their power over the challenges from newly mobilized alternatives by changing state’s regulations to their own advantage (Katz and Mair 1995).

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<sup>115</sup> Against this, see Colomer (2001a).

Given the apparently increasing frequency of electoral reforms, one would expect explanations of such episodes of institutional change to flourish over time. Nevertheless, we do not yet have a body of theoretically driven comparative work on why one electoral system is used rather than another (Shugart 2005; Taagepera 2007a). Until very recently, there was still a scarcity of studies examining the processes of adoption and reform or the high degree of cross-national variation in electoral systems. As can be seen in Chapter 2, it is well established that electoral rules have an impact on the number of parties that get into the Parliament (Cox 1997; Duverger 1964 [1954]; Lijphart 1994; Rae 1971 [1967]; Sartori 1997 [1994]; Taagepera and Shugart 1989), the candidates' incentives to cultivate a personal vote (Carey and Shugart 1995), the incumbents' opportunities to engage in corrupt behaviour (Kunicová and Rose-Ackerman 2005), the government's motivations to increase public expenditure or run budget deficits (Persson and Tabellini 2005), and the achievement of some sort of geographical (Latner and McGann 2005) or gender-balanced (Iversen and Rosenbluth 2008) representation; but only in recent years has the long list of effects the literature attributes to electoral systems provoked the emergence of a true body of research on the determinants of their origins and changes.

Previous studies of electoral reforms have focused on country-specific examinations of the determinants of these episodes of institutional change (e.g., Bawn 1993; Renwick et al. 2009; Shugart et al. 2007), or historical accounts of the adoption of proportional representation as a consequence of the suffrage extension in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century (Ahmed 2010; Andrews and Jackman 2005; Blais et al. 2005; Boix 1999; Calvo 2009; Carstairs 1980; Cusack et al. 2007; Kreuzer 2010; Leemann and Mares 2012; Penadés 2008 and 2011; Rodden 2011). The unsurprising conclusion that runs throughout many of these studies is that “it’s parties that choose electoral systems” (Colomer 2005). Yet, there have been few attempts thus far to investigate whether party system factors systematically contribute to the implementation of electoral reforms in contemporary democracies. Even more importantly, what is missing from these orthodox accounts of electoral reforms is a theoretical model of what causes some rules of the game to be replaced with an alternative (Laver and Shepsle 1998). For example, Colomer (2004b) predicts the occurrence of permissive reforms when the number of parties rises too high



under restrictive electoral rules.<sup>116</sup> But in terms of the formation of the institutional preferences of political parties, episodes of hyper-fragmentation of the party system that tend to foster the incentives of legislators to pass a permissive electoral reform might also lower their capacity to do it. Even more importantly, very fragmented electoral (and/or parliamentary) contexts might affect the utility function of political actors in the opposite direction and lead them to prefer a more restrictive system. This institutional change would bestow more power on the eventual winners to "get things done".<sup>117</sup> Indeed, and despite the theoretical soundness of many of these propositions, our knowledge about them is certainly far from systematic and is almost always confined to anecdotal evidence.

In this chapter, I propose a theoretical framework to explain electoral reform in contemporary democracies that takes as its main explanatory factor *systemic failures* in the working of the political system provoked by the rules of the game. Specifically, I argue that the perceived value of a restrictive reform will be greater where electoral rules generate fragmented party systems and, as a consequence, the political forces in power have difficulty either forming durable governments, passing their legislative agenda or both, leading, hence, to a radical change in the institutional preferences of rational actors. In short, this series of system-level variables (i.e., cabinet instability and low legislative productivity) are considered as anomalous outcomes and can override a narrow interest in political survival operating at the party-level, and make political actors develop a concern with the overall efficiency of the whole system.

For example, just prior to the 1993 election, the ruling centre-right coalition in Poland adopted a new electoral law that sought to decrease the overall proportionality of the system and reduce, thus, the number of parties in Parliament (Benoit and Hayden 2004; Birch et al. 2002; Millard 2004; Sanford 2002). Similarly, the Israeli Knesset passed an electoral reform in 1992 which called for the direct election of the Prime Minister as a way of curbing the rampant fragmentation of the party system in that country and ensuring the necessary cabinet stability (Hazan and Rahat 2000; Rahat and Hazan 2005). In New Zealand, the problem seems to have

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<sup>116</sup> As I mention above, the terms *proportional*, *permissive*, *inclusive or weak*, on the hand, and *majoritarian*, *restrictive*, *exclusive or strong* are used interchangeably.

<sup>117</sup> The wholesale rejection of extremely fragmented party systems that bring about considerable instability into politics is not difficult to document in the literature (Daalder 2002: 45). Three major examples are the traditional treatment of the politics of the French Third and Fourth Republic, Weimar Germany, and post-1945 Italy.

been the opposite during the 1990s: the succession of three single-party majority governments that decided to implement radical and widely unpopular policies with a total lack of restraint led most New Zealanders to the conclusion that democracy was not working as it should and they had to move to a more proportional system (Denemark 2001; Nagel 2004; Vowles 2008). Even worse, two of these majorities (in 1981 and 1984) had been manufactured by the first-past-the-post (FPTP) electoral system giving more seats to the party (National) that won fewer votes.

This chapter evaluates the potential impact of the number of parties on electoral engineering by addressing the following interrelated questions: Which factors explain the reform of electoral systems in contemporary democracies, and why does the degree of institutional stability vary across countries and over time? Are democracies with different levels of party system fragmentation likely to adopt different types of electoral reforms? If manipulation of the rules of the game always provides parties in power with electoral advantage, why are reforms more frequent in some democracies than in others?

I test my theory by employing my own dataset of electoral systems employed in 60 democracies around the world between 1945 and 2010, and find that the likelihood of adopting a restrictive reform increases in very fragmented party systems. Although permissive electoral system changes are slightly more likely as the number of parties goes down, this finding is considerably less robust across different model specifications. More importantly, the positive effect of electoral disproportionality and volatility on the likelihood of observing a permissive reform<sup>118</sup> is itself indicative of the need of a more comprehensive empirical approach to understand the occurrence of electoral system change in democratic countries. Finally, I find that electoral disproportionality and volatility, and the length of the democratic rule modify the impact of party system fragmentation on the likelihood of adopting electoral reforms.

The rest of the chapter proceeds as follows. In the next section, I introduce a theoretical framework for understanding the causes of electoral reform in democratic countries. I then elaborate a series of working hypotheses that describe the conditions under which electoral

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<sup>118</sup> According to the definition included in Chapter 3, a *permissive reform* is supposed to increase the overall proportionality of the electoral outcomes produced by the rules of the game.

reforms are more likely to occur. In the fourth and fifth section, I present my methods and data, and conduct the corresponding empirical tests. Finally, section six concludes.

#### **4.2. A model of electoral reform in contemporary democracies**

The analysis of electoral system change is a complex process composed of several building blocks. My purpose here is to set out a systematic theoretical framework to explain why a reform in the interparty dimension of the electoral rules<sup>119</sup> takes place. In order to do so, I need to address who are the key actors, how they may be motivated, and what opportunities and constraints they face. The broad model which is used and specified in the pages below is summarised in Figure 4.1.

More in depth, I consider first that electoral reforms occur through the conscious decisions of two main agents of change: parties and citizens. Hence, I deem negligible the role played by other sources of transformation like experts (Benoit and Schiemann 2001; Nagel 2004), judges (Cox and Katz 2002; Katz 2011), or external actors (Blais and Massicotte 1997; Lundell 2009).<sup>120</sup> The importance of parties and citizens lies in their power to translate their institutional preferences into outcomes.<sup>121</sup>

Turning to the actors' preferences over electoral systems, I analyze the goals that parties and citizens pursue when deciding to push an institutional change of this kind. As previously noted by Kenneth Benoit (2007), different electoral rules have diverse properties and come with various costs and benefits that motivate preferences among alternative choices. I thus have to

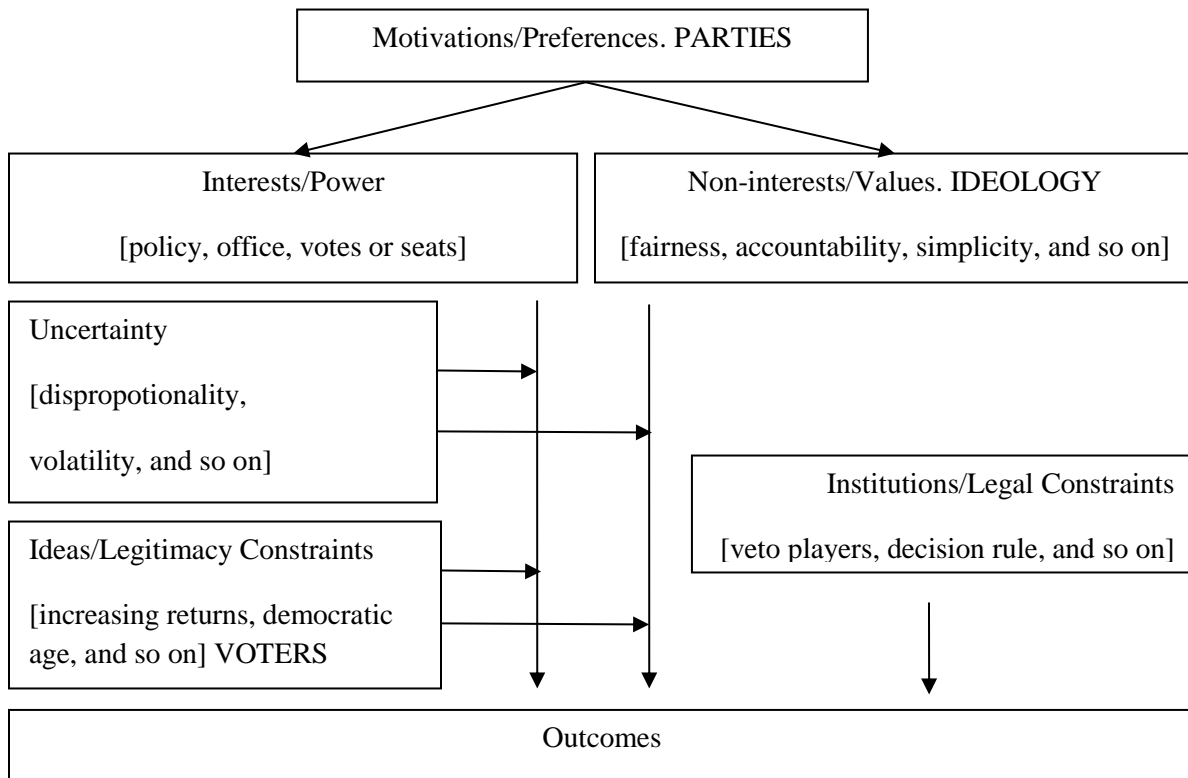
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<sup>119</sup> According to the definition included in Chapter 2, the *interparty dimension* of an electoral system affects the seat distribution between parties.

<sup>120</sup> On the one hand, transnational organizations like IDEA (International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance) can rarely impose a particular electoral system. On the other hand, colonial influences can be helpful to understand why some given rules are adopted after the independence of a country, but not the frequency or the direction of changes once they are in use.

<sup>121</sup> Citizens can be involved directly in the electoral reform process (LeDuc 2011) through referenda like in Italy (Donovan 1995) or New Zealand (Vowles 2008) or through citizens' assemblies like British Columbia (Carty et al. 2008) or the Netherlands (van der Kolk 2007), or indirectly through elections (Shugart 2008). In this vein, Renwick (2009: 379) documents nineteen referendums on significant electoral reform around the world since 1945-fifteen of them in the last twenty years.

**Figure 4.1. Broad theoretical model of electoral reform in the interparty dimension**



identify and explain these motivations. In short, I argue that an electoral reform is enacted when it serves the interests and/or values of a party or coalition of parties with the power to affect it through fiat (Benoit 2004). However, the formation of preferences and the transformation of them into final outcomes is complicated by several factors (Renwick 2010). First, the full rationality of political actors may be seriously limited in contexts of high-uncertainty (Andrews and Jackman 2005). Second, politicians may also be subject to legitimacy constraints that bound the options that they seriously consider (Shugart 2008). For instance, it could be argued that governments decide to keep or change an electoral system by taking into serious consideration the voters' ideas of what constitutes a good or bad representation of social interests (Blais 2008). Finally, institutions come to play a role by determining whether it is formally easy or difficult to adopt a new electoral law (Benoit 2007).

Why would an electoral reform take place? Recent analysis of electoral system change has yielded the interests-driven explanation as the main theoretical perspectives regarding the adoption and modification of the rules of the game. This view “assumes that politicians control the choice of electoral system and that they are motivated to maximize their power” (Renwick 2010: 7-9); and is specified most precisely by Benoit (2004), but also underlies the work of Carles Boix (1999) and Josep Maria Colomer (2004 and 2005), among others.<sup>122</sup>

A change in electoral institutions will occur when a political party or coalition of political parties supports an alternative which will bring it more seats than the statu quo electoral system, and also has the power to affect through fiat that institutional alternative.

(Benoit 2004: 373-4)

Despite the widespread acceptance of this seat-maximization model, some serious problems emerge with it. First of all, as Benoit (2004: 367-8; 2007: 378-80) and Richard Katz (2005: 61-2) have pointed out, even if politicians simply pursue power, power may mean multiple other things beyond seats, and may be influenced by electoral system choice in many ways. In this regard, Wolfgang Müller and Kaare Strøm (1999) argue that politicians value all three of the things that competing models have identified as important in their utility function (office, policy, and votes), and the manipulation of the rules of the game emerges as an attractive path to maximize all of them. In other words, seats matter, but so do, for example, possibilities for inter-party coalition building and parties’ popularity among the electorate. Obvious trade-offs exist between these three goals, and also between them and the maximization of parliamentary representation described as the main goal of electoral engineers in mainstream models of institutional change. Thus, a party’s decision regarding whether or not to reform an electoral system is a delicate one because the party’s assumed goals –maximization of office, policy, votes and seats – cannot simultaneously be pursued.

Second, although William Riker (1984: 103) contends that “most actual choices [of electoral systems] have been made with the intention of promoting partisan advantage rather than

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<sup>122</sup> This can be seen, for example, in the explanation of the choice of the Hungarian (Benoit and Schiemann 2001), Polish (Benoit and Hayden 2004), Russian (Remington and Smith 1996) or Taiwanese (Brady and Mo 1992) electoral systems; or the replacement of the French two-round majoritarian rules by PR in 1985 (Elgie 2005).

with the goal of incorporating sound constitutional principles into governmental structure”, some other authors argue that electoral engineers are also concerned with values when designing an electoral system (e.g., Blais and Massicotte 1997; Katz 2005). The list of values that explain preferences of actors over electoral systems is long and arises from the basic characteristics or the intrinsic qualities that they associate with particular institutional alternatives. For instance, Michael Gallagher (2005) summarizes eight key criteria for evaluating electoral systems. Values are usually behind what Benoit (2007) identifies as *direct preferences* among electoral system alternatives. In other words, institutional designers may hold a direct preference for proportional representation (PR) systems because of its fair representation of society, affirmation of links with national tradition or avoidance of connections with a formerly autocratic regime;<sup>123</sup> or they can prefer first-past-the post because they value accountable governments, efficient decision-making, or simple electoral processes (Benoit 2007). In spite of these claims about the importance of values, I will mainly focus on power/interests-driven motivations here for problems of operationalization.

Interests-driven explanations of reform start by noting that electoral systems serve a fundamentally *distributive* function (Tsebelis 1990). In this view, institutions (i.e., electoral rules) are created to serve the interests of those with the bargaining power to devise them rather than to be socially efficient (North 1990: 16). Hence, an analysis of electoral system change has to explicitly recognise interest-based conflict over the rules of the game (Knight 1992). Electoral institutions have such important consequences in shaping party systems that we can assume they are chosen by incumbent parties in their own interest, and the implementation of institutions that produce a general improvement of the condition of the society is at best secondary (Colomer 2005: 1). The anticipation of distributive consequences associated with different institutional alternatives lead political actors to form *derived preferences* for electoral systems (Benoit 2007).

Derived preferences over institutional alternatives are related to Giovanni Sartori’s description of electoral systems as “the most specific manipulative instruments of politics” (1968: 273). As Rein Taagapera and Matthew Shugart (1989: 4) later argue, when compared to

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<sup>123</sup> According to Birch et al. (2002), the promotion of fair outcomes was in the mind of designers of founding electoral systems in post communist countries.

other components of political systems, “electoral systems are the easiest to manipulate with specific goals in view” (see also Cox 1997: 17).<sup>124</sup> Hence, the process of institutional design is less a co-operative process concerned with the collective good and more a self-interested move to secure partisan advantage (Bielasiak 2006). In short, the fundamental assumption across mainstream models of institutional change is that actors choose among alternatives in order to maximize their self-interest. Based on the fundamentally distributive function that rules of the game perform, the bargaining process over an electoral law is traditionally depicted as a zero-sum game, and parties involved in its design are considered as self-interested actors that seek to maximize future seat shares. However, to what extent do these assumptions always hold? Can one conceive of some special situations in which an essentially zero-sum game ceases to exist and instead we see a coordination game?

More importantly, as emphasized above, power-driven readings of electoral reforms have traditionally focused on *seat-maximization* and overlooked other types of interests. However, single-party majorities are rare in the context of multiparty systems (Amorim Neto 2006; Blondel and Müller-Rommel 2001; Strøm 1990), and agents of representation need to cooperate between them in order to get into office. As an additional consequence of that, parties usually lack the number of seats necessary to change the electoral system on their own, and have to work together in order to get their way. This cooperation regarding electoral reform often presents two main problems: one, the substantial differences in terms of party size; and two, the fact that popularity rates and vote shares of the members of a coalition are not moving in step in most cases (van der Brug et al. 2007). In this light, the assumption of unitary rational actors is at best questionable, and there will be a division of interests among the members of the potential enacting coalitions of electoral reforms (Katz 2005). These facts mean that parties typically face a trade-off between seat-maximization and *office-maximization*. But this is not the only trade-off that parties have to address when trying to change the electoral system.

An increasing concern with governance or governability has emerged in the past three decades (Saiegh 2009). Based on this idea, party leaders are mostly interested in obtaining

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<sup>124</sup> In Cox’s view (1997: 17), “if electoral laws do indeed affect the ability of political parties to survive as independent organizations [...] then presumably parties will seek to manipulate those laws to their own advantage when they can”.

passage of their pieces of legislation. And this type of considerations comes to the fore when the need of an electoral reform is evaluated. As we have seen, there is a substantial record of minority governments in multi-party democracies; and parties in office that are short of a majority in parliament might trade away the electoral reform that apparently maximizes their seats in order to secure their legislative objectives (Katz 2005).<sup>125</sup> Hence, there is often a second central trade-off involved in the decision to reform an electoral system between seat-maximization and *policy-maximization*.

The implication that governing coalitions are motivated by considerations of short-term advantage in terms of seats may be defective if we see electoral reform as the product of a mix of inherent and contingent factors (Shugart 2008). This latter approach departs fundamentally from the seat-maximizing model because it confers a role on a wider range of actors -in particular, ordinary citizens- (Gallagher 2005: 565; Renwick 2010: 7-8). Moreover, this perspective requires the concurrence of two types of contingencies (i.e., outcome and act-contingent) when an electoral reform is enacted. On the one hand, *outcome-contingent* motivations are present when parties in office expect to benefit from the operation of the new electoral system. On the other hand, *act-contingent* reasons lead incumbents to support reform because this issue is itself popular, and citizens will credit them for the very behaviour of voting for change.<sup>126</sup> After all, as V. O. Key (1966) observed long ago, “voters are not fools” (see also Popkin 1991). The politicians’ anticipation that they will sooner or later be held accountable by the voters is the most powerful constraint shaping their decisions (Strøm et al. 2008).

In short, this latter perspective expects a change in electoral institutions when a political party or coalition of political parties supports an alternative which will bring it more seats than

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<sup>125</sup> For example, Bawn’s (1993) explanation of the electoral reforms in West Germany after the Second World War takes into consideration policy-oriented motivations of actors. According to her story, the SPD (one major party) pursues the adoption of a mixed system (a non seat-maximizing option for it) with two goals in mind: one, easing the entry of the FDP (a minor party and its potential legislative ally) to the Bundestag; and two, hampering the absolute majority of the CDU-CSU (the other major party and its main rival). In the same vein, see the opposition of the Japanese Socialist Party to the introduction of first-past-the post during the 1956 discussions (Reed and Thies 2001). But see Dawisha and Deets (2006: 702) for a contrary view.

<sup>126</sup> Quintal (1970: 755) uses the expression “costs of voter affect” to refer to the penalization in terms of votes suffered by incumbents that try to blatantly manipulate the electoral system. According to Renwick (2010: 104-105), the French Socialists did not end up manipulating again the electoral systems before the 1993 election because the manoeuvre was harder to execute without high cost to voter affect.



the status quo electoral system (outcome-contingent motivations) and will at least not penalize it in terms of votes (act-contingent motivations). Shugart's theory combines both the norms-based and the rational-actor approaches. No party in office will reform the electoral system against its self-interest; but no incumbent party will be able to pursue its institutional goals at will. Norms matter in that political leaders' strategies of seat-maximization through electoral reform are heavily constrained by the voters' (and other parties') considerations of what constitutes a fair representation of interests. It is worth emphasizing, however, that an argument that norms matter does not imply that strategic interests of rational political actors are thrown aside. In this regard, electoral reforms are not automatic responses to inherent failures of the current institutions, but reasoned and negotiated reactions to a variety of circumstances.

A final but also important consideration in electoral reform processes is the role played by self-reinforcement or a set of complementary institutions that encourage the initial electoral system choice to be sustained (Page 2006), the increasing returns generated by the current electoral rules (Pierson 2000), and the transaction costs that would be incurred as a result of the introduction of the new electoral institutions (Shepsle 1989). Although frequently ignored, the basic intuition here is that the probability of success of the electoral reform depends on the rules of the game (Blais 2008; Gallagher 2005; Massicotte et al. 2004; Rahat and Hazan 2011). Hence, we must consider first the meta-institutions governing change when developing any model of electoral system change (Benoit 2007), concerning either the number of veto players (Blau 2008; Nikolenyi 2011; Tsebelis 2002),<sup>127</sup> or the majority or supermajority required to amend the electoral law (Birch 2003).<sup>128</sup> Second, we have to be able to identify potential path-dependent

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<sup>127</sup> Popularly-elected presidents in non-parliamentary systems can be seen as important veto players in electoral reform processes. In fact, some of them in former post communist countries like Vaclav Havel in the Czech Republic, Petru Lucinschi in Moldova, Lech Walesa in Poland, Boris Yeltsin in Russia, or Leonid Kuchma in Ukraine expressed preferences for specific electoral institutions or participated actively in processes of electoral reform in the past.

<sup>128</sup> The non-exhaustive list of countries that have specified at least partially the electoral system in the national constitution is comprised by the Czech Republic, Georgia, Estonia, Iceland, Ireland, Latvia, Moldova, Poland, Slovenia and Spain. By requiring a two-thirds majority to effect electoral rule change, the Hungarian electoral law of 1989 was also quite resistant to change (Benoit 2005). Likewise, the requirement of a 4/7 majority in both Chilean houses for reform has probably contributed to the stability of the electoral system in that country after Pinochet's dictatorship (Siavelis 2005). Finally, the possibility of altering the electoral system by a simple majority vote has meant that electoral reform is almost permanently on the political agenda in France (Elgie 2005) but not in Finland (Raunio 2005).

decisions of electoral system adoption (David 1985),<sup>129</sup> and quantify the transaction costs that proponents of change incur when trying to modify the electoral law (Shepsle 1989). In the latter view, transaction costs provide electoral rules with something of a cushion, giving them a stability they might not otherwise enjoy because prospective gains from change are often outweighed by the costs of affecting it (Dunleavy and Margetts 1995).

In conclusion, I do not claim that this overview of my model of electoral reform is entirely exhaustive. In fact, I have only listed its components and the support given by other authors for those components. But the discussion here supports my main point: the seat-maximization model of electoral system change is not all-encompassing either. Mine is not a general attack on the rationality paradigm or a claim that rational choice models are incapable of explaining electoral reforms (Green and Shapiro 1994). What I intend here is to draw conclusions on the determinants of electoral system change by trying to integrate competing explanations. The seat-maximization model gives an essential starting point in understanding electoral reform processes but does not provide the last word on them because it does not take into consideration other determinants of parties' motivations like office or policy-seeking interests or their own values and those of their voters. Moreover, it fails to notice how uncertainty regarding the effects of reform or how legal and legitimacy constraints affect these motivations. I aim to take further steps in this direction by developing a series of hypotheses concerning the determinants that may explain the occurrence of electoral reforms in the next section.

### **4.3. Hypotheses**

The factors analyzed so far suggest that parties fail to behave in a fully seat-maximizing way when they are involved in processes of electoral reform. However, let me return now to this theoretical perspective and its main empirical implication –the so-called, *micro-mega rule-*

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<sup>129</sup> Path-dependence may also shape electoral reform at a “cultural” level. For example, Holger Eriksen, the Social Democratic spokesman on the Danish electoral law amendments in 1961, concluded: “Apart from the fact that such a system (the British single-member district system) would scarcely be in accord with the Constitution, there is no basis for discussing it in a country which for forty years has had proportional representation, and thus has created completely different traditions from those prevailing, for example, in England” (*Folketingstidende*, Jan. 26, 1961, column 927).

(Colomer 2004b and 2005). Regarding the choice of electoral rules by political parties, this tenet predicts the occurrence of reforms when the electoral and the party systems become incompatible (Renwick 2010: 23). When the number of parties rises too high under restrictive rules, or falls too low under permissive systems, reforms are likely to be observed (Colomer 2004). The causal mechanism that gives rise to this prediction is based on an upside-down reading of *Duverger's Law and Hypothesis*<sup>130</sup> (Colomer 2005; Grumm 1958). The intuition that small parties maximize their seat share in large districts with proportional formulas and low thresholds result in the prediction that this kind of rules tend to be adopted where there are many of them in Parliament. By contrast, large (and, subsequently, fewer) parties take advantage of majoritarian electoral institutions. For this reason, they aim to pass restrictive electoral reforms when party system fragmentation goes down. Hence, electoral system changes reinforce and not only follow voting trends (Colomer 2005): the introduction of permissive electoral rules is provoked by an increasing number of parties, whereas declining party system fragmentation is expected to yield shifts in the opposite direction (Dunleavy and Margetts 1995: 24).

Despite the theoretical soundness of the positive link between party system fragmentation and electoral rules permissiveness, I will argue that it suffers from at least five different substantive flaws. First of all, for the *micro-mega rule* to operate as the fundamental explanation of political parties' preferences over alternative electoral systems, the assumption of risk-averse actors is required. By contrast, I believe that parties may be characterized by risk neutrality, and do not always prefer to guarantee a secure partial victory rather than risk entire defeat. In fact, they may end up promoting new electoral rules with an uncertain but hopefully higher payoff rather than another bargain with certain but expectedly lower payoff (i.e., the status quo) if the guaranteed benefit is almost insignificant and the likely returns of the *lottery* are high enough. The fact that those able to adopt electoral reforms are often overly optimistic about their own prospects under one particular system, or misperceive its probable negative consequences is evident in several cases of institutional continuity (i.e., the United Kingdom) or change (i.e., Israel, New Zealand, Poland, Romania...).<sup>131</sup>

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<sup>130</sup> I follow Riker's (1982: 754) terminology and distinguish between *Duverger's Law*, that links the simple-majority single-ballot formulas and the two-party systems, and *Duverger's Hypothesis*, that associates simple-majority systems with second ballot and proportional representation to multi-partyism.

<sup>131</sup> For the intricacies of these episodes, see Andrews and Jackman (2005), Birch et al. (2002), and Katz (2005).

A second logical requirement for Josep Maria Colomer's argument to be true is the emergence of a situation of either uncertainty or threat for existing winners. More specifically, the proliferation of small parties makes incumbents feel less confident in their own electoral prospects and more sceptical about the convenience of keeping restrictive rules. In fact, they may believe that their continued subsistence is seriously threatened under the existing system (Katz 2005). And the stronger the minor parties may happen to appear, the riskier the maintenance of the same electoral institutions. For this reason, large parties in power (or opposition) in highly-fragmented party systems foresee either an uncertain or a bad electoral future and perceive a permissive reform as the unique device of lowering the stakes of political competition and, hence, guaranteeing their survival (Przeworski 1991). This is, in Rawlsian parlance, the "maximin" strategy: politicians seek to maximize their minimum return even if their popular support turns out to be low (Rawls 1999 [1971: 52-54]; Renwick 2010: 56).

Yet, the lack of empirical evidence for the argument that powerful parties in fragmented contexts think the consequences of the current rules are uncertain or harmful for their interests suggests that this line of reasoning is problematic. As has been previously noted (Andrews and Jackman 2005), processes of institutional choice are often plagued with lack of information on the following three matters: (1) the number of competitors in subsequent elections; (2) the level of popular support that will be obtained by parties; and (3) the effect of the rules themselves. For this reason, we need to depict the rationality of actors at most as bounded (Simon 1957 [1947]). Colomer (2005) attributes the implementation of more inclusive rules to the increasing demands and pressures from opposition groups (see also Remmer 2008); and Katz (2005) refers to divisions of interests among the members of the winning coalition as a possible reason why parties change, or allow to be changed, the rules of the game they are winning. A high level of party system fragmentation obviously lies behind both situations. However, it is not clear to me that an increasing number of parties rather than other institutional factors (i.e., democratic age, electoral disproportionality, volatility...) are the main source of insiders' electoral uncertainty in the near future. Moreover, the misperception of the political stances of potential parliamentary allies or enemies can become an additional source of incomplete information. Finally, let's imagine a situation in which vote shares of small parties increase, and, as a result, the level of

party system fragmentation at the electorate level also does. As long as these parties remain either out of the Parliament, or sufficiently under-represented in it, they will not jeopardize the survival of the most established ones and will not provide them with incentives to reform an electoral system that is exactly producing the outcome it is supposed to generate. In fact, why should major parties open a window of opportunity for minor parties by adopting more permissive electoral rules?

Third, Colomer's logical model implies that parties should value short-term electoral advantage over long-term positive change in the competitive system or increasing opportunities for coalition-building (Katz 2005). Actors' time horizons may at best vary (Renwick 2010; Rose 1983). Even more importantly, parties may not be concerned simply with the result of the following election, and may attach weight to the outcomes of the elections after that. Or they may lay greatest stress on the long-term competitive dynamic that an electoral system encourages, or the achievement in the future of other goals (exerting policy influence, sharing spoils of office...). There is no simple, *a priori* way of predicting a party's time horizons. They may be determined partly by actors' enduring nature or by the characteristics of the party system: some parties may just think more to the long term than others; particular contexts can shape actors' time horizons in many different ways. The bottom line, thus, is that short-term motivations of electoral reform only captures a limited part of the real-world story, but leaves much to be explained. Hence, there is clearly scope for further clarification. Indeed, policy-oriented parties may think their support will increase in a system where they are able to achieve their policy objectives.

Fourth, the *micro-mega rule* overlooks the fact that equal-size parties may be divided by non-institutional issues, rendering them unable to make common cause against the rising new political forces. According to Stein Rokkan (2009 [1970: 158]), the inheritance of mutual hostility and distrust among the parties of the old order prevented them from successful electoral coordination to face the socialist threat, and provoked the adoption of PR (see also Boix 1999). However, I do not really see how bitter enemies like these were able to collectively embrace inclusive electoral rules. Nowadays, this kind of coordination seems problematic on logical grounds as well. The *micro-mega rule* suggests that because of extreme party system

fragmentation, all parties will agree on the institutional solution that entails their own survival – permissive electoral institutions. But the theory is silent about the way political forces will overcome sharp ideological divisions among them.<sup>132</sup>

Fifth, Shugart's (2001 and 2008) theory about *inherent and contingent motivations* of electoral reform casts some additional doubts on the validity of the *micro-mega rule*. Following his claims, we can argue that changes will occur only when electoral outcomes are *extreme*.<sup>133</sup> When electoral rules produce *systemic failure*,<sup>134</sup> public opinion becomes more sceptical about its operation, and citizens see with clear eyes the idea of electoral reform as the best way of fixing it. Alan Renwick (2010) coins the concept “reform by elite-mass interaction” to refer to the types of institutional change when existing winners are not entirely in control of the situation, and can have reforms imposed upon them by the electorate. In the same vein, Pippa Norris (2011) demonstrates that democratic aspirations of the citizenry are a strong, significant, and robust predictor of the occurrence of subsequent electoral reforms

There are several examples of situations that constitute deviations from the “efficient” ideal consequences of electoral systems (i.e., Shugart's definition of extreme outcomes), and make more likely the reform. However, we are particularly interested here in how hyper-

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<sup>132</sup> Moreover, there are still other types of circumstances in which the desire for permissive reforms among deputies of small parties may not be as great as the parties' size alone would lead us to expect. Think, for example, about the case of a party of local notables who may prefer single-member districts to larger districts in which their strong local support would be diluted (i.e., the Nouveau Centre in France after the 2007 elections), or the case of locally strong non-statewide parties that may prefer low-magnitude districts to larger districts in which they would no longer be able to monopolize the representation of the regional interests (i.e., Convergència i Unió and the Partido Nacionalista Vasco in Spain after the 2008 elections). For a refinement of the latter argument, see Ziegfeld (2013).

<sup>133</sup> Systems that generate governments representing well under a majority of the electorate (i.e., the so-called *pluralitarian* systems), and systems that provoke governments that are usually not identifiable in the election campaign that precedes their formation (i.e., the so-called *hyper-representative* systems) are deemed to be extreme in the interparty dimension. Pre-reform New Zealand and Italy are two prime examples (Shugart 2001).

<sup>134</sup> In his work on the causes of reform of FPTP, Shugart (2008) argues that when the poor performance of the rules leads to clearly anomalous outcomes (i.e., lopsided majorities and plurality reversals) it can be said that we are in front of a systemic failure. And he then adds the following (p. 56):

The concept of systemic failure, as defined here, could be applied to any other category of electoral system, including PR. For instance, a PR system could be said to have failed if a set of parties closely allied to with one another obtained a majority of votes, but not the seats to form a government (perhaps due to fragmentation, failure of some allied parties to cross the threshold, etc.). However, a PR system would not be said to have failed on its own normative criteria on account of frequent coalition governments or their breakdown between scheduled elections. The latter are occurrences that are expected under PR, and even considered advantages by the system's advocates. The concept of systemic failure in systems other than FPTP deserves further treatment, but the present work will be confined only to FPTP.

representative and pluralitarian electoral systems provoke movements away from and towards more proportionality, respectively (Shugart 2001). Indeed, if we read carefully his theoretical development, we will note that the empirical predictions that we derive from it are completely at odds with what Colomer suggests. Hence, the lack of efficiency entailed by either the impossibility of identification of governments before the election in too proportional systems, or the emergence of manufactured majorities under too majoritarian rules lead to institutional change, but not in the direction suggested by Colomer.

Christopher Wlezien's (1995) research that public opinion responds to policy outputs and functions like a *thermostat*, demanding more right-wing policies as leftist policies accumulated, and then moderating the demand from right-wing policies as those policy demands in turn were met, eventually swinging back to the left as right-wing demands were satisfied, may be helpful as well. People notice what outcomes electoral systems produce. Even if people lack perfect information about the exact operation of electoral rules, they can still make a rational, reasoned judgment about their consequences and the need to change them or not (Lupia and McCubbins 1998). If they do not get what they want (e.g., more parties), they keep wanting more proportional rules and they sometimes "throw the rascals out"; but if they do get what they want they notice too, and eventually stop wanting more of the same. In regard to the permissiveness of the rules of the game, public opinion could also operate like a thermostat, helping politicians to regulate the level of policy provision. When too much policy is provided (e.g., too much party system fragmentation), the public sends a signal to the effect of limiting the proportionality of the electoral institutions.

Finally, the value of Colomer's model is not determined solely by its theoretical consistency but also by its performance in an empirical test. In this regard, the figures provided by Renwick (2010: 249) clearly contradict Colomer's expectations. Looking at electoral system changes in established democracies since 1962, Renwick shows that reforms towards more proportionality are more often preceded by a lower effective number of electoral parties than are restrictive reforms. In the same vein, the evidence regarding the impact of party system change on electoral reforms in Latin America over the past two decades is again not consistent with Colomer's model (Remmer 2008). Likewise, Jack Bielasiak (2006: 421) argues that many former

communist countries adopted less inclusive electoral rules during the first democratic decade as a way of curbing the excessive number of parties.<sup>135</sup> Finally, Robin Best (2011) demonstrates the impact of only some long-term cumulative changes in party system size on electoral reform by drawing on data from 23 established democracies from 1946 to 2010.

Bearing all these considerations in mind, the goal of this chapter is to analyze whether party system fragmentation provides a disincentive for permissive electoral reforms. My theoretical expectation is that a large number of parties will boost the likelihood of adopting a restrictive reform. I believe that even though there may be forces pushing for permissive electoral system changes when party system fragmentation goes up, parliamentary atomization proves able to explain the adoption of restrictive electoral rules. A less fragmented legislature brings several benefits to parties. First of all, a small number of parties can enhance their capacity to enjoy stable and durable cabinets (Diermeier and Stevenson 2000; King et al. 1990; Warwick 1994). If the effective number of parties goes up, so does the risk of early government termination. Limiting party system fragmentation, in turn, produces longer-lived governments. And cabinet stability is probably something valued by both parties and voters. This is why they might support a restrictive electoral reform in case of high party system fragmentation.

Second, legislative passage rates appear to be lower when there is a multiparty coalition rather than a single-party government, and when there are more permissive electoral rules (Saiegh 2009). And party system fragmentation is arguably correlated with these two variables. Parties and voters concerned about the possibility of having ineffective legislatures unable to pass legislation may strategically be in favour of the adoption of a restrictive electoral law in case of high party system fragmentation. In other words, elections should be a device not only for determining who should govern (Schumpeter 2012 [1942]) but also for empowering a government. If the latter does not happen, the system becomes inefficient and offers considerable room for improvement and, hence, reform (Shugart 2001). In this regard, parties that advocate a

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<sup>135</sup> These attempts of constraining high levels of party system fragmentation seem to have been matched by popular approval in East European party systems. In this sense, a public opinion survey during the 1990s in the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, and Russia found that 54 percent of the interviewed persons on average favoured fewer parties (Rose and Munro 2009 [2003]: 88).



restrictive electoral reform when party system fragmentation is high are trying to electorally benefit from the likely improvement of legislative productivity.

Finally, and on top of this, adopting a permissive electoral reform when party system fragmentation is high does not necessarily constitute the seat-maximizing (and vote-maximizing) strategy for parties. In fact, fostering the overall proportionality of the electoral rules may become a double-edged tactic for existing winners that want to create fewer opportunities to be converted into absolute losers. On the one hand, adopting more inclusive rules will have negative effects for established parties because voters can perceive minor political forces as more likely to re-enter the parliament and strengthen their presence there. On the other hand, the electoral appeal of large parties would most likely suffer if voters perceive them as blatant manipulators that take advantage of a low party system fragmentation to enact restrictive reforms. Hence, I put forward the following hypothesis: *Party system fragmentation has a positive effect on the probability of restrictive electoral reforms; and the reverse is true for permissive reforms (H<sub>1</sub>).*

Before testing the impact of party system fragmentation, I first turn to other factors that may explain the occurrence of electoral reforms, and that could be formulated as complementary hypotheses. The first variable that is expected to play a role is the level of electoral disproportionality (Gallagher 1991). The likelihood of changes in the interparty dimension of the electoral system is predicted to vary according to the degree of correspondence between the percentage of votes and seats that each party obtains (Leemann and Mares 2012). In contexts of high disproportionality, established parties will be inclined to incorporate small/non-parliamentary parties to the *cartel* by adopting an inclusive electoral reform (Katz and Mair 1995). The rationale behind this is straightforward. We know that electoral systems that have a propensity to produce high disproportionality are, in general, more risky for parties than those using inclusive rules.<sup>136</sup> Self-interested actors will prefer and tend to choose electoral rules creating low opportunities for them to become absolute losers under conditions of serious threat. And extremely disproportional systems seem to generate this serious threat. On the one hand, a party that competes under highly restrictive rules has to fare particularly well at the polls in order to obtain at least the same share of the seats as it won of the votes. On the other hand, the

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<sup>136</sup> Highly disproportional rules are not usually risky for large parties in low-volatile countries.

difference between its share of votes and its share of seats will be substantial as long as it does not perform above this threshold.<sup>137</sup>

Taking this into account, I expect the positive effect of party system fragmentation on the likelihood of restrictive reforms to be mitigated when electoral disproportionality is high. In other words, parties in very disproportional systems should not respond to atomized political scenarios with the same institutional strategies. As stated above, the process of electoral reform is driven by shifts in the electoral risks faced by politicians able to control the reform process. And, arguably, these risks are higher when electoral disproportionality is high. Hence, party system fragmentation can reduce, increase or have no effect on electoral reform depending on the level of electoral disproportionality. In the end, parties are not political kamikazes. Hence, they are not willing to curb the proportionality of an extremely permissive system whatever the cost, even one that produces a proliferation of parties in parliament and, hence, reduces cabinet stability and legislative productivity. Institutional change is also the product of a calculation of partisan self-interest. For this reason, an unconditional model specification that did not take into account the modifying impact of the level of electoral disproportionality would misleadingly suggest that party system fragmentation always lead to an increase in the likelihood of a restrictive reform.

To sum up, I hypothesize that *party system fragmentation has a positive effect on the probability of restrictive electoral reforms that gets weaker as electoral disproportionality increases; and the same is true for the expected negative effect of party system fragmentation on*

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<sup>137</sup> This reasoning would lead one to expect a PR system in Great Britain long ago. It has not happened because large parties expect to continue to benefit from the existing biases. The only time it might have happened was in 1918 when the Liberal Party had the votes to enact universal male suffrage and could at the same time have saved themselves from the likely (and actual) consequences of keeping the FPTP system by introducing PR. But this solution either did not occur to them or appeared likely to create too much of a furor, providing some preliminary evidence of the role played by the values variable. By 1945 no-one with the power to change the system had the motivation to do so whatever the degree of disproportionality. This suggests an additional interaction (i.e., disproportionality\*values) that can override self-interest; and, more importantly, an interaction with what might be termed "windows of opportunity". Once the British Liberal party had lost its position of dominance it could no longer save itself. Of course, I cannot actually include these additional interactions in my models because of problems of feasibility (i.e., operationalization), in practice falling into the error term. Moreover, the relatively low levels of electoral volatility observed in Great Britain during the whole 20<sup>th</sup> century seem to have persuaded parties about the suitability of keeping the single-member districts and plurality rule system.

*permissive reforms* (H<sub>2</sub>).<sup>138</sup> In other words, the marginal effect of party system fragmentation on the probability of restrictive (permissive) electoral reforms is positive (negative) when electoral disproportionality is at its lowest level. The magnitude of these effects may decline as electoral disproportionality goes up. At some value of electoral disproportionality, party system fragmentation has no effect on the probability of electoral reforms. As electoral disproportionality rises further, the initially positive (negative) effect of party system fragmentation on restrictive (permissive) electoral reforms becomes negative (positive) and strengthens in magnitude as electoral disproportionality increases.

The second supplementary hypothesis also slightly qualifies the idea that only party system fragmentation creates increasing difficulties for existing winners. According to it, electoral volatility, defined as the net change within the party system resulting from individual vote transfers over elections (Gómez Martínez 2012; Pedersen 1979), affects parties' calculations and increases uncertainty about their electoral prospects (Mainwaring and Zoco 2007), creating incentives for a permissive reform. High electoral volatility means that existing winners today (i.e., those actors with enough parliamentary muscle to change the electoral system) have a high chance of becoming losers tomorrow and, hence, are interested in the adoption of more inclusive rules (Bielasiak 2006; Geddes 1996; Lijphart 1992; Przeworski 1991; Remmer 2008). Power and willingness to make the system more proportional exceptionally go hand in hand with in contexts of high volatility. Parties in power run a serious risk of being decimated after the following elections if they keep the same rules. By contrast, there is little incentive to amend the system since it already works to the benefit of the existing winners where the distribution of power is known and entrenched (i.e., when volatility is low). Thus, parties recognize the overwhelming importance of, first and foremost, guarantying their own survival and the difficulties for them to do it in high volatile contexts. Moreover, it is the existence of high levels of volatility that explains why the effects of electoral reform are sometimes unpredictable (Shepsle 2001: 324). The latter has been stressed in several studies that emphasize the ways that uncertainty undermines the effectiveness of the strategic behaviour of parties (Andrews and Jackman 2005: 66 and 85). For this reason, what I suggest here is that the considerable security for existing

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<sup>138</sup> In the formulation of hypotheses of this thesis positing interactions, I follow Berry et al.'s (2012) recommendations.

winners generated by low amounts of volatility may bias the outcomes of the processes of institutional change in favour of preserving the status quo and not opening up the can of worms of electoral reform even in case of mounting party system fragmentation. Parties in countries with permissive rules attempt to constrain the overall proportionality produced by the electoral institutions, and support reforms that hinder it. However, they are hypothesized to gradually become less interested in pushing for restrictive reforms as volatility goes up. The lesser extent of structure in elections conducted in highly-volatile contexts reduces the influence of these pro-majoritarian preferences.

In short, the marginal effect of party system fragmentation on the probability of restrictive (permissive) electoral reforms is positive (negative) when electoral volatility is at its lowest level. These effects may decline in magnitude as electoral volatility increases. At some value of electoral volatility, party system fragmentation has no effect on the probability of electoral reforms. As electoral volatility is even higher, the initially positive (negative) effect of party system fragmentation on restrictive (permissive) reforms becomes negative (positive) and strengthens in magnitude as electoral volatility increases. To sum up, I hypothesize that *party system fragmentation has a positive effect on the probability of restrictive electoral reforms that gets weaker as electoral volatility increases; and the same is true for the expected negative effect of party system fragmentation on permissive reforms* (H<sub>3</sub>).

Finally, substantial differences between old and young democracies are expected with regard to the impact of party system fragmentation on electoral reform. The willingness of parties to recognize and act upon situations where voting for one's supposedly seat maximizing option leads to a less desirable outcome heavily depends on the age of democracy. The main causal mechanisms that explain why actors in recently democratized countries behave differently when deciding to change or to keep the electoral system are several (Benoit 2007). First of all, uncertainty, lack of reliable information, and imperfect understanding of electoral rules and their effects often feature prominently in many transitional contexts. According to Robert Moser (1999), electoral systems affect the number of parties in post communist countries and more established democracies in very different ways. More specifically, he shows that some new democracies of this region of the world, most notably Russia and Ukraine, have not followed the

standard pattern of party consolidation over time in reaction to incentives of electoral systems. In addition, the high volatility that characterized the first decades of democratic elections in Eastern Europe and Latin America (Epperly 2011; Powell and Tucker forthcoming; Roberts and Wibbels 1999; Tavits 2005 and 2008) complicated the task of designing the right institutions to achieve the desired goals.

A second, but also important, consideration in new democratic contexts is the perceived legitimacy of the institutions chosen. For instance, Sarah Birch et al. (2002) conclude that in post communist electoral systems the achievement of collective fairness was given high priority during the first electoral system choices in those countries. So, the need to keep palpably fair electoral rules after a long autocratic period could be a second reason that explains the low explanatory power of party system fragmentation in new democracies. Finally, the process by which governments are chosen in young democracies is often full of illustrations of how badly mechanisms of electoral accountability perform there (Rose and Shin 1999). Parties in power can easily circumvent the control of voters, and many of them may feel free to adopt “unacceptable” electoral rules because of the lack of opportunities for real accountability there.

Yet, the argument continues and presumes the existence of a learning process based on the acquisition of experience and knowledge over the course of increasingly numerous elections. As a result, uncertainty about the consequences of electoral reform declines over decades. Further, the initially high levels of electoral volatility are overcome as democracies mature and, moreover, instrumentally rational voters are progressively more likely to attach weight to the positions adopted by parties in the processes of institutional change. Hence, the marginal effect of party system fragmentation on the probability of restrictive electoral reforms should be negative when democratic age is at its lowest level; and the reverse holds for permissive reforms. This effect would decline in magnitude as democracies aged; at some value of democratic age, party system fragmentation should have no effect on the probability of restrictive electoral reforms. As democracies aged further, the effect of party system fragmentation would become negative and strengthen in magnitude as democracy age increased. In short, I put forward the following hypothesis: *Party system fragmentation has a positive effect on the probability of restrictive electoral reforms that gets more pronounced as democratic age increases; and the*

same is true for the expected negative effect of party system fragmentation on permissive reforms (H<sub>4</sub>).<sup>139</sup>

#### 4.4. Data and research design

##### 4.4.1. Dependent variable

My dependent variable is the existence (or absence) of an electoral reform, and its different types. For an extensive definition and typology of electoral reform, see Chapter 3.<sup>140</sup> The identification of a case of electoral reform without specifying the direction in which the rules of the game change is clearly insufficient. On this basis, it is very useful to distinguish between *permissive* and *restrictive* reforms, which decrease and increase the overall disproportionality produced by the electoral rules, respectively (Taagepera and Shugart 1989). In general, disproportionality can be defined as “the deviation of parties’ seat shares from their vote shares” (Lijphart 1994: 57). Further details of all the episodes of electoral reform identified are given in the Appendix 1 to this thesis.

##### 4.4.2. Independent variables

The first key independent variable is the level of *party system fragmentation*, which is captured by the effective number of electoral parties in the current term (ENEP). This index was first introduced by Markku Laakso and Rein Taagepera in 1979, and indicates “the number of hypothetical *equal*-size parties that would have the same total *effect* on fractionalization of the system as have the actual parties of *unequal* size” (p. 4). Its exact operationalization corresponds to the inverse of the sum of the square of all parties’ vote shares,<sup>141</sup> and ranges from 1 to infinity

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<sup>139</sup> My logic would also call for at least a higher-level interaction of democratic age with party system fragmentation\*electoral disproportionality and party system fragmentation\*electoral volatility. Unfortunately, I do not have a sufficient number of cases to test them.

<sup>140</sup> *Sources*: Birch (2003), Birch et al. (2002), Bowler and Grofman (2000), Colomer (2004a), Gallagher and Mitchell (2005a), Golder (2004), Grofman et al. (1999), Grofman and Lijphart (2007 [2002]), the Inter-Parliamentary Union (n.d.), Johnson and Wallack (2010 [2003]), Jones (1995 and 1997), Lijphart (1994), Lundell and Karvonen (2003), Negretto (2009), Payne (2007), Remmer (2008), Renwick (2011), Shugart and Wattenberg (2001), Shvetsova (1999), Wills Otero and Pérez-Liñán (2005), Zovatto and Orozco Henríquez (2008), and electoral laws of each country.

<sup>141</sup> To be more precise, the formula is:

(in fact, to the number of parties that obtain at least one vote).<sup>142</sup> In the past two decades, the effective number of parties “has become the most widely used measure” of party system size (Lijphart 1994: 70) because it considerably improves on the merits of other previous measures of party system fragmentation. First, it is comparable across very diverse country cases. Moreover, it weights the count of parties by their relative electoral strength, and, hence, takes into account their “coalition” and “blackmail” power (Sartori 2005 [1976]). Maurice Duverger (1964 [1954]: 207-208) clearly had the concept of effective parties in mind when discussing party systems (see also Clark and Golder 2006: 680). However, using it also entails potential problems that cannot be ignored.<sup>143</sup>

I also include in the models the value of the Gallagher’s Index of *electoral disproportionality* in the current term. This measure is calculated according to the following formula: *Disproportionality Index (DI)* =  $\sqrt{\frac{1}{2} \sum (v_i^2 - s_i^2)^2}$ , where  $v_i$  is the percentage of vote obtained by party  $i$  and  $s_i$  is the percentage of seats obtained by party  $i$ .<sup>144</sup> This index can range from 0 to 100 (Gallagher 1991). The disproportionality index not only helps me to test hypothesis 2, but also seeks to control for the presence of ceiling or floor effects.<sup>145</sup> The third independent variable of interest is *electoral volatility*, which is measured on the basis of the Pedersen’s Index in the current term (Pedersen 1979). This index is created by adding the net difference (i.e., in absolute terms) in the percentage of votes obtained by each of the parties in a

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$$ENEP = \frac{1}{\sum_{i=1}^n p_i^2}$$

where  $p_i$  is the percentage of votes obtained by party  $i$ .

<sup>142</sup> Source: Golder (2004) complemented by Gallagher’s dataset ([www.tcd.ie/Political\\_Science/Staff/Michael.Gallagher/EISystems/index.php](http://www.tcd.ie/Political_Science/Staff/Michael.Gallagher/EISystems/index.php)).

<sup>143</sup> One such potential problem corresponds to the “other” and “independent” categories. In this chapter, I correct the effective number of electoral parties by using the least component method of bounds suggested by Taagepera (1997). This operation essentially requires calculating the effective number of electoral parties treating both categories as a single party (smallest effective number of parties), then recalculating the effective number of parties as if every vote in the “other” and “independent” categories belonged to a different party (largest effective number of parties) and taking the mean. The incidence of independent candidacies is only high in Russia and Ukraine.

<sup>144</sup> Source: Gallagher’s dataset ([www.tcd.ie/Political\\_Science/Staff/Michael.Gallagher/EISystems/index.php](http://www.tcd.ie/Political_Science/Staff/Michael.Gallagher/EISystems/index.php)).

<sup>145</sup> One could argue that there is a ceiling and floor effects problem in my analyses because extremely permissive (restrictive) systems, that produce a high (low) party system fragmentation, cannot become more permissive (restrictive). The introduction of the Gallagher’s Index of Disproportionality seeks to fix this problem by trying to control for the degree of permissiveness of the current system. As a robustness check, I also show some additional results in which the “extreme” systems (i.e., FPTP and PR systems with a single-national district) have been excluded.

given pair of elections and dividing it by two, and ranges from 0 to 100.<sup>146</sup> Scott Mainwaring, Peter Mair and Joshua Tucker kindly shared their data on electoral volatility with me.<sup>147</sup>

Summing up, I do not examine the long-term effect of any of these variables on electoral reform. In fact, it could be argued that the effect of these explanatory factors occur mostly over a series of two or three elections. However, this issue is far from having been completely demonstrated in the literature. Moreover, the way in which party system fragmentation, electoral disproportionality and electoral volatility should be theorized and calculated to affect the likelihood of electoral system change in the long-term (e.g., averaging their value in the last three elections) and the limited data availability lead me to exclude this idea from the empirical analysis.

Finally, I also include in the models as an additional independent variable the *duration of the current democratic period*. A regime qualifies as democratic if all of the following conditions are met: one, direct or indirect election of the effective executive; two, election of the legislature; three, multiple parties are legally allowed; four, existence of parties outside of the ruling coalition; five, the alternation rule is not violated; and six, at no time during their current tenure in office the incumbent (person, party, military or hierarchy) unconstitutionally closed the lower house of the national legislature nor rewrote the rules in their favour.<sup>148</sup>

#### 4.4.3. Control variables

I use the following two controls: first, Henisz's *political constraints* index; second, the real GDP per capita; and third, the ideology of the party in government. The rationale behind the first control seems straightforward because it is necessary to take into account the number of potential veto players that can block the reform of the electoral system (Tsebelis 1990). In this regard, the higher the number of veto players that exist, the more difficult the electoral reform becomes. Henisz's index (2000 and 2002) measures the feasibility of policy change, i.e. the extent to

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<sup>146</sup> To be more precise, electoral volatility is calculated according to the following formula:

$$TV = \frac{1}{2} \sum |\Delta p_i|,$$

where the variation in vote share for each party is  $\Delta p_i = p_i(t+1) - p_i(t)$ ,  $i = 1, \dots, n$ .

<sup>147</sup> Ideally, the amount of available voters in Bartolini and Mair's sense (1990) would have been proxied by some other more precise measure (i.e., the proportion of non-identified citizens with a party). However, the lack of appropriate data in this respect has led me to employ Pedersen's Index as a second best option.

<sup>148</sup> Source: Cheibub et al. (2009).



which a change in the preferences of any one political actor any lead to a change in government policy. The index is composed from the following information: the number of independent branches of government with veto power over policy change, counting the executive and the presence of an effective lower and upper house in the legislature (more branches leading to more constraint); the extent of party alignment across branches of government, measured as the extent to which the same party or coalition of parties control each branch (decreasing the level of constraint); and the extent of preference heterogeneity within each legislative branch, measured as legislative fractionalization in the relevant house (increasing constraint for aligned executives, decreasing it for opposed executives). The index scores are derived from a simple spatial model and theoretically range from 0 to 1, with higher scores indicating more political constraint and thus less feasibility of policy change.<sup>149</sup>

In addition, I introduce *economic performance* as a second control variable whose omission could bias the estimation of the coefficients of the main independent variables. Because electoral outcomes are shaped by economic performance in contemporary democracies (van der Brug et al. 2007), the real GDP per capita (in 1,000s) is added to the models.<sup>150</sup> If the economy performs poorly, parties in power will probably lose votes in the following election. This should make them more likely to reform electoral rules in a permissive direction. Real GDP per capita is a chain index obtained by first applying the component growth rates between each pair of consecutive year, 't-1' and 't' (t = 1951 to 2007), to the current price component shares in year 't-1' to obtain the domestic absorption (DA) growth rate for each year. This DA growth rate for each year 't' is then applied backwards and forwards from 2005, and summed to the constant price net foreign balance to obtain the Chain GDP series.

Finally, the *ideology of the government* may be of importance as a control variable as well (Bol 2011; Bowler et al. 2011). In particular, it might be interesting to distinguish between left-wing and right-wing cabinets. As previous works have shown, left-wing parties should be more likely to support electoral reform than right-wing parties. The ideology of the executive is proxied by the parties' orientation with respect to economic policy using the following criteria:

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<sup>149</sup> Source: Henisz (2010).

<sup>150</sup> Source: Heston et al. (2012).

the variable takes value 1 for parties that are defined as conservative, Christian democratic or right-wing; 2 for parties that are defined as centrist; and 3 for parties that are defined as communist, socialist, social democratic or left-wing.<sup>151</sup>

#### **4.4.4. Econometric technique**

Event history data for discrete time processes generally record the dependent variable as a series of categorical outcomes denoting whether the events occurred or not at the observation point. In fact, discrete time data look a lot like Binary dependent variable Time-Series Cross-Section (BTSCS) data when we want to explain a dichotomous outcome (Beck et al. 1998). The only real difference between the discrete time duration models and other types of continuous time survival specifications is that in the former duration data is disaggregated into discrete time units (Bernardi 2006). Like in the OLS world, none of the models that belong to the familiar world of categorical dependent variables (logit, probit, multinomial logit/probit...) takes account of the problem of time dependence. If there is time dependence, models such as these produce estimates that are consistent but inefficient and with wrong standard errors (Poirier and Ruud 1988). In fact, if serial correlation (time dependency) is high, simulations by Beck and Katz (1997) have shown that the standard errors from a normal categorical dependent variable may be underestimated by 50 per cent or more. In order to deal with time dependence, I will do two things. First of all, I will estimate all the models with several additional parameters or cubic splines (Beck et al. 1998) even though they will not be shown to save space. Smoothing functions such as cubic splines are attractive alternatives to temporal dummies when tackling serial correlation because they consume fewer degrees of freedom. Beck et al. (1998) argue that cubic splines are probably the most appropriate and flexible way to deal with temporal dependence in discrete time duration models. Additionally, I will employ robust standard errors clustered by legislative term. This second operation not only seeks to address serial correlation but also attempts to correct for possible problems of heteroskedasticity.

Summing up, I will first test the hypotheses by way of a set of seven multinomial logistic regressions, since the dependent variable has more than two discrete and unordered categories (Long 1997). The observation is the country-year, and the time-period will go from 1945 to

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<sup>151</sup> *Source:* Beck et al. (2001).

2010. I will deal with duration dependence by including cubic splines in all the specifications (Beck et al. 1998). However, I will also follow David Carter and Curtis Signorino's recommendation (2010) as a robustness check, and all the models will be rerun including a cubic polynomial transformation of time ( $t$ ,  $t^2$  and  $t^3$ ).<sup>152</sup>

Finally, as an alternative to the BTSCS models that I have covered, I will specify several Cox models. The main characteristic of these transition rate models with continuous time is that the specific distributional form of the duration times is left unspecified. In other words, there is no need to assume that the duration times have a particular distribution. What we only care about is how a set of covariates moves the baseline hazard up or down. Because of the strong assumptions of parametric models about the shape of the hazard, parametric models are not as widely used outside the social sciences as is the Cox model (Box-Steffensmeier and Zorn 2001). An important issue involved in model specification concerns treating permissive reforms as being subjected to different risks than restrictive electoral system changes. This feature points one to a *competing risks* framework, which makes it possible to explore separately the factors that increase the likelihood that politicians will modify the electoral system through either of these events.

## **4.5. Empirical results**

### **4.5.1. The determinants of electoral reforms in the interparty dimension**

The effect of democratic experience on electoral reform is evident in the differences between old and young democracies displayed in Table 4.1. Drawing on comparisons across all the democracies included in the analysis, the data indicate that the probability of adopting a new electoral system is directly related to the level of democratic experience. The second interesting finding is that the ratio of institutional movements towards more and less proportionality in old democracies does not differ significantly from that observed in new ones. Finally, an additional general conclusion can be drawn from this evidence: in the countries analyzed, there has not been a predominant trend towards the adoption of more permissive electoral systems. Hence, the evidence does not fit Colomer's expectation (2005: 2) about the existence of a general drift towards higher proportionality.

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<sup>152</sup> Results are displayed in Table A2.5 of Appendix 2, and do not fundamentally change.

**Table 4.1. Democratic age and the types of electoral reforms in the interparty dimension, 1945-2010**

|                       |              | No Reform      | PR Reform    | Ambiguous Reform | Maj. Reform   | Total          |
|-----------------------|--------------|----------------|--------------|------------------|---------------|----------------|
| <b>Democratic Age</b> | <b>Old</b>   | 368<br>(87.61) | 23<br>(5.47) | 13<br>(3.09)     | 16<br>(3.8)   | 420<br>(63.54) |
|                       | <b>Young</b> | 165<br>(68.46) | 34<br>(14.1) | 13<br>(5.39)     | 29<br>(12.03) | 241<br>(36.45) |
|                       | <b>Total</b> | 533<br>(80.63) | 57<br>(8.62) | 26<br>(3.93)     | 45<br>(6.8)   | 661<br>(100)   |

*Note:* Row percentages in parentheses. *Source:* Own elaboration.

Table 4.2 displays the descriptive statistics, and Table 4.3 shows the results of the multivariate regression analysis for seven separate models. Model 1 only measures the effect of party system fragmentation, while Models 2-4 introduce sequentially electoral disproportionality, volatility and democratic age. Models 5-7 test the validity of the interactive hypotheses, and Figures 4.3-4.5 show the marginal effects for them given an increasing level of disproportionality and volatility, and democratic age. According to Thomas Brambor et al. (2006) and Cindy Kam and Robert Franzese (2007), the effect of an interaction term cannot be evaluated through the p-value shown in the regression table. Thus, it is necessary to graphically illustrate the marginal effect of party system fragmentation on the likelihood of electoral reform as the value of the modifying variable changes.

Although party system fragmentation is a good predictor that the current electoral system will be replaced by a *stronger* one in the first two models, it is no longer more likely to observe a restrictive reform as the effective number of electoral parties goes up once we control for the level of volatility (Models 1-3). Likewise, the likelihood of permissive reforms also seems to be unaffected by party system fragmentation in all the three first models. By contrast, the predicted probability of adopting a *weaker* electoral system is higher under remarkably disproportional rules, and in considerably volatile contexts. Moreover, electoral volatility also shapes politicians' incentives to adopt more restrictive rules. In this regard, results in Model 3 indicate that higher levels of this variable increase the attractiveness of movements towards *stronger* systems. Hence, high volatility in many democracies creates pressures to trim the permissive nature of the

**Table 4.2. Descriptive statistics**

| Variable                                       | Mean   | Std. Dev. | Min. | Max. | N     |
|--|--------|-----------|------|------|-------|
| Party System Fragmentation Electoral Level     | 4.16   | 1.74      | 1.35 | 12   | 2,679 |
| Party System Fragmentation Parliamentary Level | 3.49   | 1.42      | 1.06 | 10.4 | 2,679 |
| Electoral Disproportionality                   | 5.73   | 4.81      | 0.34 | 34.5 | 2,679 |
| Electoral Volatility                           | 16.91  | 16.59     | 0.3  | 100  | 2,679 |
| Democratic Age(logged)                         | 3.31   | 0.91      | 0    | 4.52 | 2,679 |
| Time   | 18.706 | 15.67     | 1    | 66   | 2,679 |
| Political Constraints Index                    | 0.43   | 0.12      | 0    | 0.72 | 2,657 |
| Real GDP per Capita(in 1,000s)                 | 16.12  | 9.69      | 1.89 | 77.8 | 2,418 |
| Ideology of the Government                     | 2.09   | 0.93      | 1    | 3    | 1,714 |
| Changes of Prime Minister                      | 0.34   | 0.84      | 0    | 5    | 1,102 |
| Legislative Success Rates                      | 76.98  | 18.12     | 10.7 | 100  | 852   |
| Polarization                                   | 1.09   | 0.92      | 0    | 2    | 1,728 |

electoral system and try to impose structure through more restrictive rules (Bielasiak 2006: 421). Finally, the negative coefficient for democratic age with regard to both types of electoral system changes supports the argument that parties are shying away from electoral reforms as elites and voters get more experienced.

Next, I explore the role of electoral disproportionality and volatility, and democratic age more in depth. Specifically, I aim to investigate the extent to which they modify the positive effect of party system fragmentation on restrictive electoral reform. I do this by re-estimating Models 2-4 but including as additional independent variables the following interaction terms: *Effective\_Number\_of\_Electoral\_Parties\*Disproportionality\_Index*, *Effective\_Number\_of\_Electoral\_Parties\*Volatility\_Index*, and *Effective\_Number\_of\_Electoral\_Parties\*Democratic\_Age (logged)*. In the first two cases, the focus is on whether disproportionality and volatility are effective at removing the positive effect of party system fragmentation on restrictive reforms. And, in fact, they partially are. While the precise magnitude and statistical significance of the coefficients are hard to interpret given the categorical and interactive nature of the dependent and independent variables, respectively, the estimates in columns 5 and 6 suggest that high levels of disproportionality and/or volatility undo some of the direct effect of party system fragmentation on restrictive reforms. By contrast, the

**Table 4.3. Determinants of electoral reform in the interparty dimension: Discrete time duration models/Binary times-series cross-section models**

| <b>VARIABLES</b>  | <b>Model 1</b>                   | <b>Model 2</b>                    | <b>Model 3</b>                  | <b>Model 4</b>                    | <b>Model 5</b>                   | <b>Model 6</b>                   | <b>Model 7</b>                     |
|---|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <b>Permissive Reform</b>                                    | <b>coefficient</b>               | <b>coefficient</b>                | <b>coefficient</b>              | <b>coefficient</b>                | <b>coefficient</b>               | <b>coefficient</b>               | <b>coefficient</b>                 |
|   | <b>(se)</b>                      | <b>(se)</b>                       | <b>(se)</b>                     | <b>(se)</b>                       | <b>(se)</b>                      | <b>(se)</b>                      | <b>(se)</b>                        |
| Party System Fragmentation (Electoral Level)                | <b>-0.019</b><br><b>(0.076)</b>  | <b>-0.086</b><br><b>(0.077)</b>   | <b>-0.056</b><br><b>(0.078)</b> | <b>-0.026</b><br><b>(0.076)</b>   | <b>0.001</b><br><b>(0.137)</b>   | <b>-0.114</b><br><b>(0.164)</b>  | <b>-0.567***</b><br><b>(0.214)</b> |
| Electoral Disproportionality                                |                                  | 0.094***<br>(0.015)               |                                 |                                   | 0.111**<br>(0.048)               | 0.018<br>(0.031)                 | 0.073***<br>(0.018)                |
| Electoral Volatility  |                                  |                                   | 0.028***<br>(0.007)             |                                   | 0.018**<br>-0.00782              | 0.0194<br>(0.022)                | 0.021***<br>(0.008)                |
| Democratic Age(logged)                                      |                                  |                                   |                                 | -0.373***<br>(0.128)              | -0.303*<br>(0.17)                | -0.236<br>(0.266)                | -1.037***<br>(0.342)               |
| Party System Fragmentation*<br>Electoral Disproportionality |                                  |                                   |                                 |                                   | <b>-0.008</b><br><b>(0.0108)</b> |                                  |                                    |
| Party System Fragmentation*<br>Electoral Volatility         |                                  |                                   |                                 |                                   |                                  | <b>0.001</b><br><b>(0.003)</b>   |                                    |
| Party System Fragmentation*<br>Democratic Age(logged)       |                                  |                                   |                                 |                                   |                                  |                                  | <b>0.175**</b><br><b>(0.073)</b>   |
| Constant  | -3.345***<br>(0.439)             | -3.936***<br>(0.46)               | -4.240***<br>(0.542)            | -2.570***<br>(0.535)              | -4.147***<br>(0.903)             | -3.535***<br>(1.269)             | -1.892**<br>(0.879)                |
| <b>Restrictive Reform</b>                                   |                                  |                                   |                                 |                                   |                                  |                                  |                                    |
| Party System Fragmentation (Electoral Level)                | <b>0.194***</b><br><b>(0.06)</b> | <b>0.212***</b><br><b>(0.057)</b> | <b>0.0899</b><br><b>(0.089)</b> | <b>0.170***</b><br><b>(0.057)</b> | <b>0.331**</b><br><b>(0.146)</b> | <b>0.481**</b><br><b>(0.215)</b> | <b>-0.326*</b><br><b>(0.195)</b>   |
| Electoral Disproportionality                                |                                  | -0.008<br>(0.025)                 |                                 |                                   | 0.088<br>(0.082)                 | -0.099*<br>(0.051)               | -0.055<br>(0.033)                  |
| Electoral Volatility  |                                  |                                   | 0.029***<br>(0.008)             |                                   | 0.028***<br>(0.008)              | 0.098***<br>(0.032)              | 0.031***<br>(0.008)                |
| Democratic Age(logged)                                      |                                  |                                   |                                 | -0.535***<br>(0.197)              | -0.460*<br>(0.261)               | -0.193<br>(0.406)                | -1.236***<br>(0.335)               |
| Party System Fragmentation*<br>Electoral Disproportionality |                                  |                                   |                                 |                                   | <b>-0.031*</b><br><b>(0.018)</b> |                                  |                                    |
| Party System Fragmentation*<br>Electoral Volatility         |                                  |                                   |                                 |                                   |                                  | <b>-0.009*</b><br><b>(0.005)</b> |                                    |
| Party System Fragmentation*<br>Democratic Age(logged)       |                                  |                                   |                                 |                                   |                                  |                                  | <b>0.168**</b><br><b>(0.068)</b>   |
| Constant  | -4.579***<br>(0.482)             | -4.582***<br>(0.494)              | -5.415***<br>(0.705)            | -3.456***<br>(0.545)              | -4.999***<br>(1.064)             | -6.587***<br>(1.898)             | -2.194***<br>(0.847)               |

|                       |          |           |          |          |           |          |           |
|-----------------------|----------|-----------|----------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|
| N (Observations)      | 2,883    | 2,853     | 2,700    | 2,883    | 2,679     | 1,722    | 2,679     |
| Chi <sup>2</sup>      | 54.18*** | 104.75*** | 78.57*** | 90.72*** | 127.25*** | 80.74*** | 124.72*** |
| Pseudo-R <sup>2</sup> | 0.04     | 0.06      | 0.07     | 0.06     | 0.09      | 0.11     | 0.10      |

*Note:* The dependent variable takes value 0 if there is no reform or the reform that takes place has an ambiguous impact in the interparty dimension; 1 if it is supposed to produce less disproportionality; and 2 if it is supposed to produce more disproportionality. Cluster standard errors by terms in parentheses. \* Significant at 0.10; \*\* Significant at 0.05; \*\*\* Significant at 0.01 (two-tailed tests). The counter of stability years and the cubic splines are included but not shown.

estimates for permissive reforms are statistically insignificant again. These are some of the main results of the chapter.<sup>153</sup>

Yet, perhaps one of the most important questions, given the heterogeneous sample of countries, is whether democratic experience contributes to effectively foster the impact of party system fragmentation on electoral reform. The estimates are reported in column 7 of Table 4.3 and suggest that the important role of the number and size of parties in adopting a new electoral system changes radically as democracies age. First, the coefficient of the constitutive term of party system fragmentation on restrictive reforms is very close to zero and only statistically significant at the 10% level. This result supports the idea that short-term horizons of parties and failure of accountability mechanisms in new democracies offset the incentives of political actors to enact efficient electoral reforms despite their apparent popularity. But the positive estimate of the interaction term also suggests that lots of small parties lead to more restrictive systems in the long run. This indicates that an unconditional model specification that did not take account of the modifying impact of democratic age would misleadingly suggest that a fragmented party system always leads to an increase in the likelihood of a restrictive reform.<sup>154</sup>

<sup>153</sup> All the models of Table 4.3 are re-estimated but including the effective number of parliamentary instead of electoral parties as the main independent variable. The results for party system fragmentation at the parliamentary level displayed in Table A2.1 in Appendix 2 remain mainly similar, though the statistical significance of the coefficients is remarkably lower.

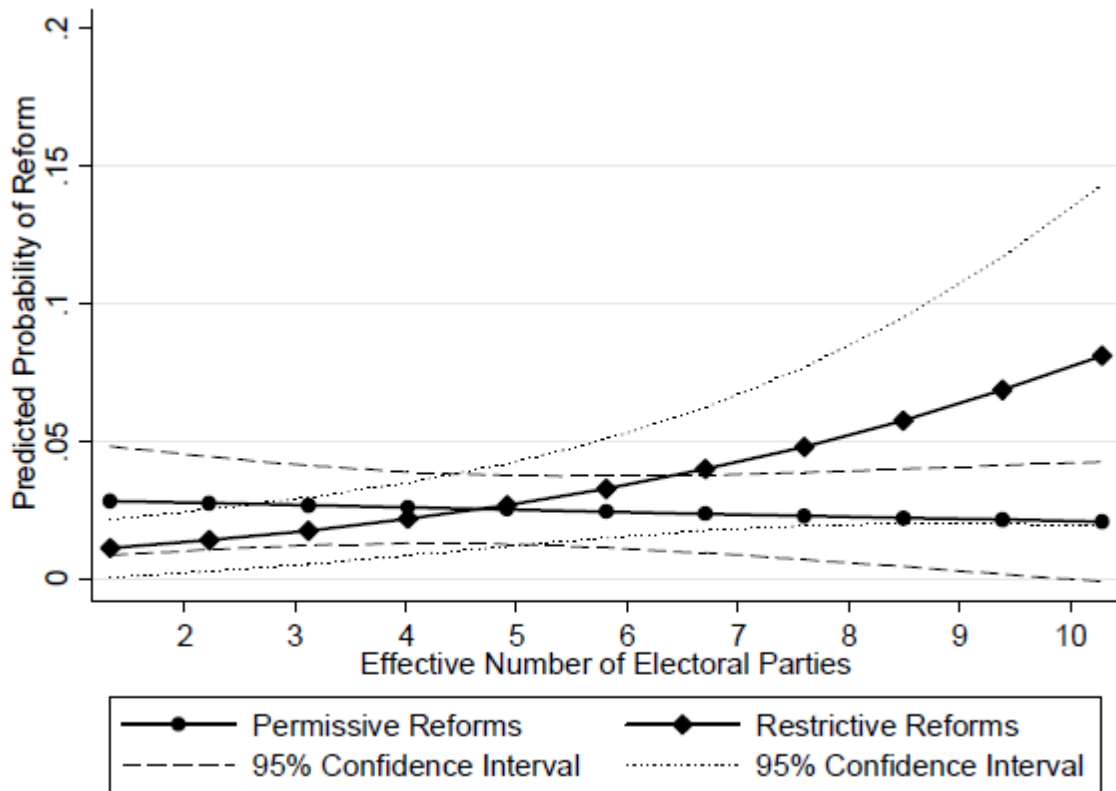
<sup>154</sup> In a supplementary analysis, I also test the effect of the level of democratic age by including a dummy variable, *EstablishedDemocracy*, which is first coded as “1” for those countries that have remained democratic since the end of World War II and “0” otherwise; and then is coded as “1” for the first three elections since the end of the autocratic rules and “0” otherwise. Results are not shown, but corroborate those using the more elaborate measure of *DemocraticAge*.

Simulations using the CLARIFY software (King et al. 2000; Tomz et al. 2003) and reported in Figures 4.2-4.5 facilitate the interpretation of the marginal effect of the main independent variables. While the information provided in Table 4.3 is informative, it remains somewhat limited for two reasons. First of all, since these are in the end multinomial logistic regressions, the magnitude of the effects cannot be assessed just by looking at the coefficients. Second, the results in the interactive models do not indicate after all whether party system fragmentation has a statistically significant impact on electoral reform when the value of the modifying independent variables is greater than zero. As a result, I graphically illustrate the probability of a given electoral reform to happen according to the variation of party system fragmentation at the electoral level (Figure 4.2), and the marginal effect of the effective number of electoral parties on the likelihood of institutional change across the observed range of disproportionality, volatility and democratic age (Figures 4.3-4.5). The solid sloping line in this second group of figures indicates how the marginal effect of party system fragmentation changes as the value of the conditioning independent variable increases. One can see whether this effect is statistically significant by considering the two-tailed 90 per cent confidence intervals that are drawn around it (i.e., the dashed lines). The effect of the effective number of electoral parties is distinguishable from zero whenever the upper and lower bounds of the confidence interval are both above (or below) the zero line. Superimposed over the marginal effect plot is a histogram portraying the frequency distribution for the modifying variables (i.e., electoral disproportionality or volatility and democratic age). In the four figures, the observation is at the mean of all other variables included in the model.

The first important conclusion that emerges in Figure 4.2, based on Model 1, is the illustration of the effect of party system fragmentation on the likelihood of restrictive reforms that was already apparent in Table 4.3. By contrast, the effective number of electoral parties has a weaker non-significant effect on the probability of occurrence of permissive reforms. It is, hence, notable that parties in power precisely seem to react in case of high party system fragmentation by enacting a restrictive electoral reform but not the other way around.



**Figure 4.2. Probability of electoral reform in the interparty dimension as party system fragmentation changes**

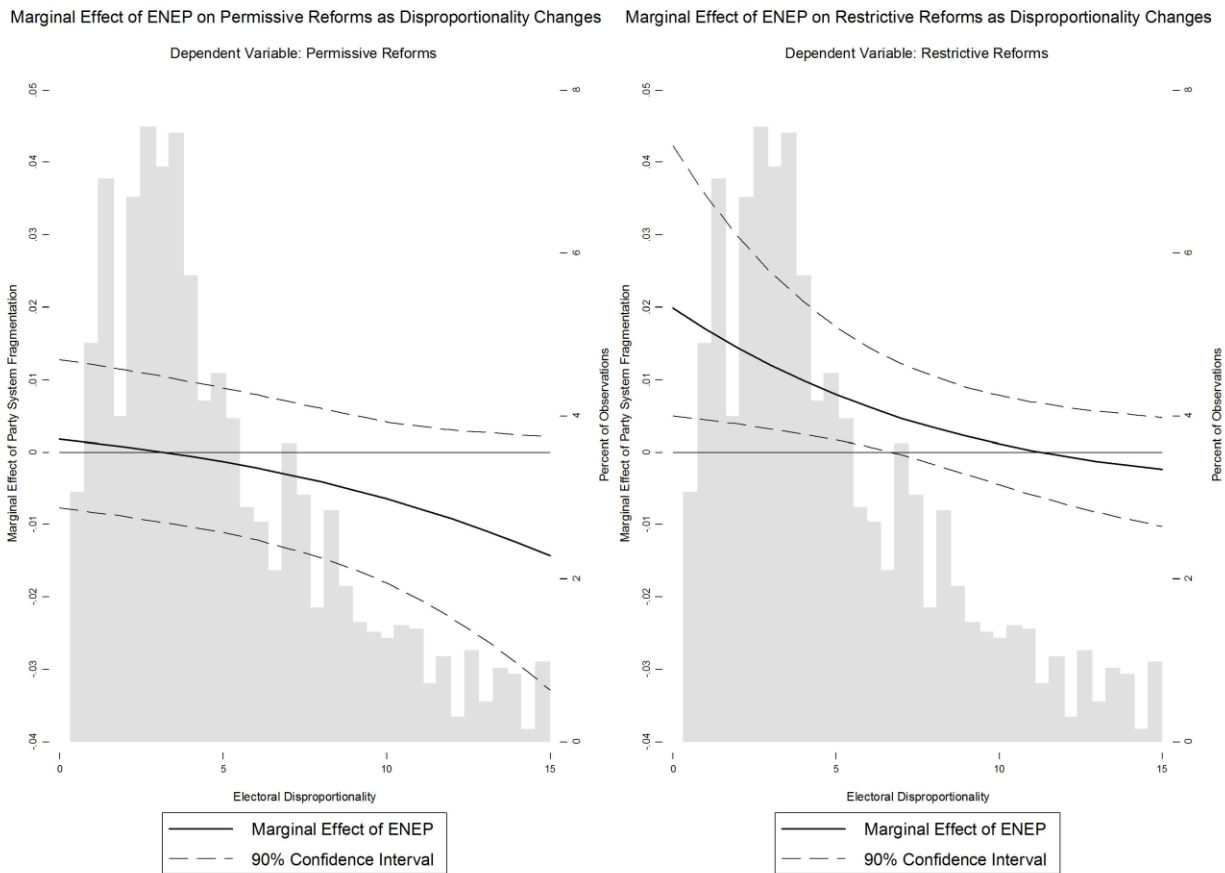


*Note:* Results are derived from Table 4.3, Model 1.

Figures 4.3 and 4.4 look remarkably similar.<sup>155</sup> As predicted by the second hypothesis, party system fragmentation has a strong positive effect on restrictive reforms when there is low disproportionality (Figure 4.3). However, this effect declines as the correspondence between parties' vote and seat shares gets worse. The effective number of electoral parties stops having a statistically significant effect on the likelihood of institutional change once Gallagher's Disproportionality Index is more than 6. Roughly 50 per cent of legislative elections in the sample have produced a disproportionality lower than this. Hence, the results presented here clearly indicate that party system fragmentation only has a statistically significant effect on restrictive reform when the disproportionality is low. By contrast, it is interesting to note that the

<sup>155</sup> I am grateful to Matt Golder for kindly providing in his *web* page the STATA codes to graph the marginal effects of the multiplicative models used in Brambor et al. (2006).

**Figure 4.3. Marginal effect of party system fragmentation on electoral reform in the interparty dimension as electoral disproportionality changes**

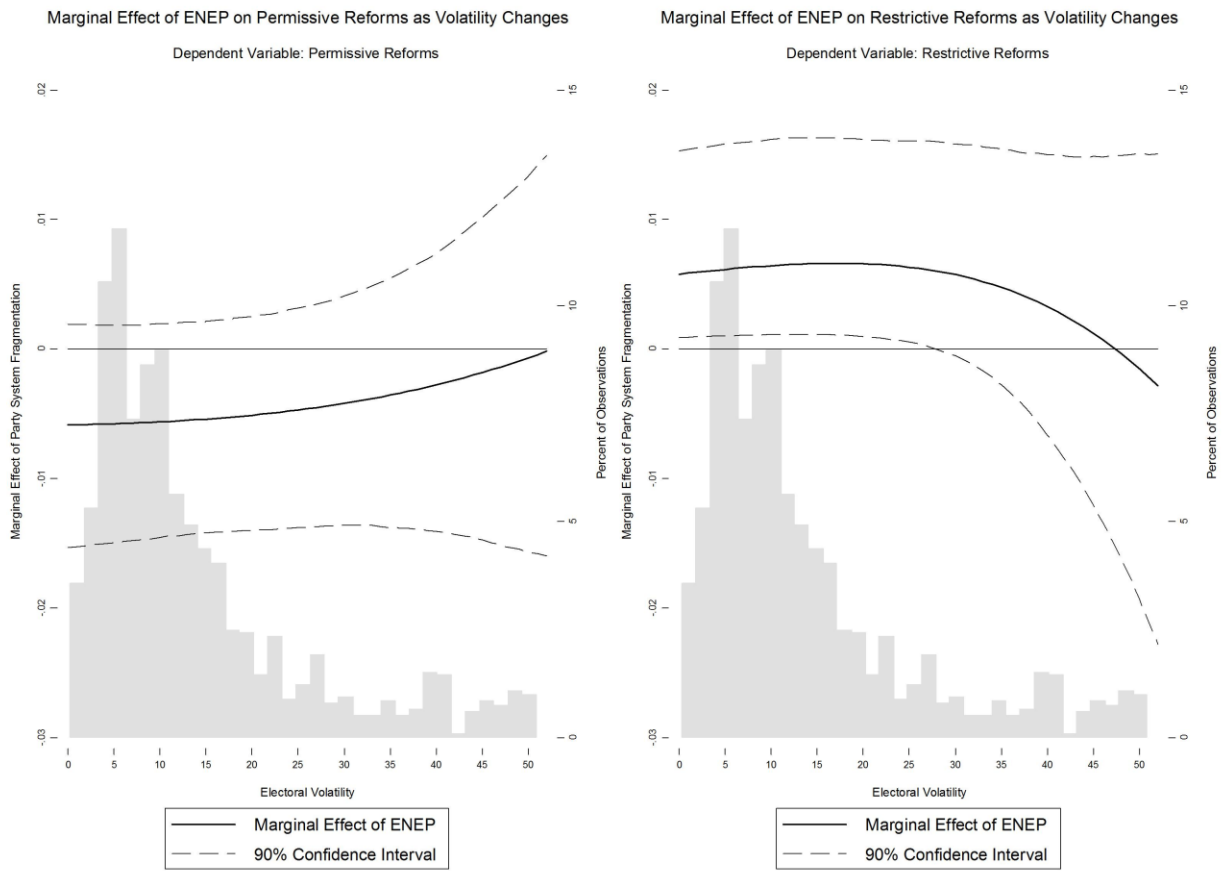


*Note:* Results are derived from Table 4.3, Model 5.

effective number of parties does actually have no impact if the value of the disproportionality index is sufficiently high. Moreover, this variable fails to have any distinguishable effect from zero on movements towards more proportionality (i.e., permissive reforms).

Likewise, Figure 4.4, based on Model 6, indicates that party system fragmentation will increase the likelihood of restrictive reforms as long as we do not move beyond a given threshold of electoral volatility -Pedersen's Index = 25. Once again, the equivalent figure from the same model that shows the probability of adopting a permissive electoral system change provides much weaker evidence in support of Hypothesis 3. In this regard, results are not anomalous

**Figure 4.4. Marginal effect of party system fragmentation on electoral reform in the interparty dimension as electoral volatility changes**

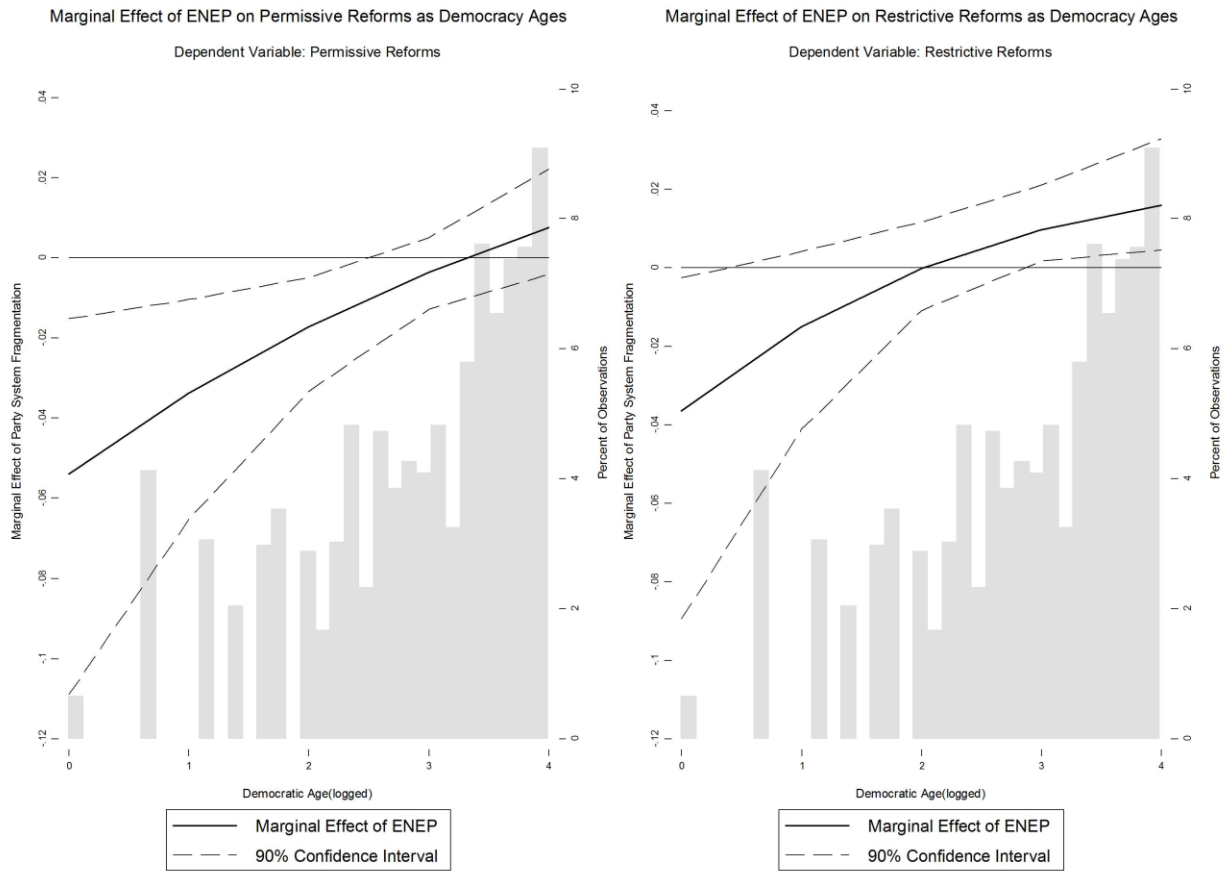


Note: Results are derived from Table 4.3, Model 6.

given that the coefficient of *Party\_System\_Fragmentation\*Electoral\_Volatility* on this second category of reforms is insignificant (although positive). However, this last coefficient is perhaps not too surprising given that the hypothesis linking permissive electoral system change and the number of parties was previously rejected in Model 1. Large parties may simply not have incentives to adopt a permissive reform when they become the “only sheriffs in town”, thereby weakening the results.

Finally, what about the effect of democratic age? Figure 4.5 plots the marginal effect of the effective number of electoral parties as democracies get older. On the one hand, and contrary

**Figure 4.5. Marginal effect of party system fragmentation on electoral reform in the interparty dimension as democracy ages**



*Note:* Results are derived from Table 4.3, Model 7.

to my expectations, it should be clear that party system fragmentation has a strong reductive effect on the likelihood of observing a permissive reform when the democracy is young. However, this reductive effect declines as the number of years under democracy increases. Once the level of democratic experience becomes sufficiently large (about 8 years), the effective number of parties stops having a significant effect on the likelihood of adopting this kind of institutional change.<sup>156</sup> On the other hand, the figure also indicates that party system fragmentation will reduce the likelihood of restrictive reforms after 10 years of democracy but have no effect before that because this impact depends on the level of democratic experience. Hence, there is some evidence to support the hypothesis that the likelihood of efficiency-seeking

<sup>156</sup> The variable *Democratic\_Age* is logged in order to account for potential non-linearities.

reforms, as measured by restrictive electoral system changes when the number of parties goes up, significantly increases once the country goes beyond the first decade of democracy.

Thus far, considerable evidence has been provided about the positive impact of party system fragmentation on restrictive electoral reforms and the modifying role played by the levels of disproportionality and volatility and the number of years under democracy. These findings, however, need to be taken with some caution, since they might be simply due to the omission of the relevant control variables. For this reason, Table A2.2 in Appendix 2 to this thesis displays some robustness checks based on estimates of the previous equations but using the Henisz's political constraints index, real GDP per capita and the ideology of the government as additional explanatory factors. All the main results remain basically unchanged. More importantly, none of the control variables perform particularly well.<sup>157</sup>

As a second robustness check, it needs to be noticed that the findings remain very similar when “extreme” electoral systems are excluded from the analyses (see Table A2.3). FPTP and PR systems with a single-national district are deemed to be “extreme”.<sup>158</sup> None of the interactions between party system fragmentation and the modifying factors lose statistical significance at traditional levels of confidence in this new group of analyses. Table A2.4 shows the results of the Cox models displayed as coefficients rather than hazard ratios. Party system fragmentation has mixed success in explaining electoral reform there. Moreover, the level of electoral disproportionality or volatility is not a significant modifying factor for the effective number of parties, nor is the number of years under democracy. Finally, when temporal dependence is modelled by including time, time<sup>2</sup> and time<sup>3</sup> in the regressions, the main results do not change either (see Table A2.5).

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<sup>157</sup> Following the suggestion of Henisz himself, all the main results keep remaining basically unchanged when I use the CHECKS index of the Database of Political Institutions as a robustness check.

<sup>158</sup> More specifically, the cases excluded from this part of the analysis are: Canada, Israel (except for 1996 and 1999), Macedonia (1994), Moldova, Netherlands, Slovakia (1998-2010), Ukraine (1994), United Kingdom, United States and Uruguay. As Shugart points out in at least two pieces (2001 and 2008), the performance of a plurality system is not always “extreme” in terms of producing an exaggerated relationship between how people vote and how their representation is distributed across the competing political parties. Were there data on when the system does not generate a clearly identifiable and accountable majority for the plurality party and a strong opposition to monitor that majority and serve as a potential prospective majority at the next election (i.e., a spurious and lopsided majority, respectively) for all the countries and time periods considered, I could have used them to identify cases of “extreme” performance of a plurality system. Unfortunately, these data are missing for some of them.

#### 4.5.2. Why does party system fragmentation matter?

The statistical evidence presented here suggests that a high degree of party system fragmentation positively affects the probability of changing the rules of the game in a restrictive direction. Now that this pattern has been observed in a range of analyses, I should begin to investigate various explanations for the apparent robustness of this finding. Two hypotheses suggest themselves.

- First, party system fragmentation decreases executives' (prime ministers or presidents) legislative success rates.<sup>159</sup> When a particular ruler regularly fails to pass legislative packages, he or she becomes less likely to get re-elected. Moreover, this kind of argument is also consistent with the idea that politicians consider efficient institutions to be valuable. Poor lawmaking abilities of chief executives increase, by this account, the likelihood of adopting a more restrictive electoral system. To test this hypothesis, I will use a variable that denotes the proportion of executive initiatives introduced to the legislature that were approved.<sup>160</sup>
- The number of parties is also associated with shorter durations of cabinets.<sup>161</sup> The informed voter may regard having short-lived governments with a certain amount of apprehensiveness. Like chief executives' legislative success rates, this pattern also concerns the overall efficiency of the political system. After all, how could one expect a democratic regime to function effectively if its governments fall apart all the time? To test this mechanism, I will use the number of changes of prime minister since the last election.<sup>162</sup>

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<sup>159</sup> For example, the 1993 Electoral Law was enacted in Poland because parties were typically too small and frail to sustain working legislative majorities (Ka-Lok Chan 2001).

<sup>160</sup> Source: Saiegh (2009).

<sup>161</sup> At least initially, the pursuit of stable government lies at the heart of the 1994-1996 attempts of changing the electoral system in Slovakia. At that time, Prime Minister Mečiar told his party's congress that the lessons of 1994 (the fall of his government and the difficulty of forming a new one after early elections) showed that the 5 per cent threshold was not enough to ensure a manageable number of parties (Birch et al. 2002).

<sup>162</sup> Source: Hellwig and Samuels (2007). Data for all other cases calculated from information in *Keesing's Record of World Events*. Readers will notice this solution is far from ideal. Should there be information on only those changes of prime minister that happen between elections, I could have used it in the manuscript. Unfortunately, these data are not available.

**Table 4.4. Mechanisms of electoral reform in the interparty dimension: Discrete time duration models/Binary times-series cross-section models**

| <b>VARIABLES</b>             | <b>Model 1</b>                 | <b>Model 2</b>                    | <b>Model 3</b>                    | <b>Model 4</b>                 | <b>Model 5</b>                   | <b>Model 6</b>                   | <b>Model 7</b>                     | <b>Model 8</b>                   |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <b>Permissive Reform</b>     | <b>coefficient<br/>(se)</b>    | <b>coefficient<br/>(se)</b>       | <b>coefficient<br/>(se)</b>       | <b>coefficient<br/>(se)</b>    | <b>coefficient<br/>(se)</b>      | <b>coefficient<br/>(se)</b>      | <b>coefficient<br/>(se)</b>        | <b>coefficient<br/>(se)</b>      |
| Changes of Prime Minister    | <b>0.005</b><br><b>(0.409)</b> | <b>-0.162</b><br><b>(0.457)</b>   | <b>0.538*</b><br><b>(0.326)</b>   | <b>-0.394</b><br><b>(0.67)</b> |                                  |                                  |                                    |                                  |
| Legislative Success Rates    |                                |                                   |                                   |                                | <b>-0.017</b><br><b>(0.026)</b>  | <b>-0.0102</b><br><b>(0.028)</b> | <b>0.058</b><br><b>(0.078)</b>     | <b>0.008</b><br><b>-(0.039)</b>  |
| Electoral Disproportionality | 0.043<br>(0.0503)              | 0.038<br>(0.054)                  | 0.054<br>(0.051)                  | 0.045<br>(0.0507)              | -0.508**<br>(0.198)              | -0.382<br>(0.301)                | -0.632**<br>(0.261)                | -0.555**<br>(0.222)              |
| Electoral Volatility         | 0.029*<br>(0.015)              | 0.029*<br>(0.015)                 | 0.028*<br>(0.015)                 | 0.0303**<br>(0.015)            | 0.095**<br>(0.041)               | 0.095**<br>(0.042)               | 0.32<br>(0.197)                    | 0.105**<br>(0.045)               |
| Democratic Age(logged)       | 0.121<br>(0.329)               | 0.132<br>(0.331)                  | -0.035<br>(0.301)                 | 0.088<br>(0.321)               | 0.246<br>(0.402)                 | 0.223<br>(0.402)                 | -0.16<br>(0.489)                   | 1.268<br>(0.911)                 |
| Changes of Prime Minister*   |                                | <b>0.024</b>                      |                                   |                                |                                  |                                  |                                    |                                  |
| Electoral Disproportionality |                                | <b>(0.084)</b>                    |                                   |                                |                                  |                                  |                                    |                                  |
| Changes of Prime Minister*   |                                |                                   | <b>-0.021*</b>                    |                                |                                  |                                  |                                    |                                  |
| Electoral Volatility         |                                |                                   | <b>(0.012)</b>                    |                                |                                  |                                  |                                    |                                  |
| Changes of Prime Minister*   |                                |                                   |                                   | <b>0.006</b>                   |                                  |                                  |                                    |                                  |
| Democratic Age(logged)       |                                |                                   |                                   | <b>(0.005)</b>                 |                                  |                                  |                                    |                                  |
| Legislative Success Rates*   |                                |                                   |                                   |                                |                                  | <b>-0.002</b>                    |                                    |                                  |
| Electoral Disproportionality |                                |                                   |                                   |                                |                                  | <b>(0.002)</b>                   |                                    |                                  |
| Legislative Success Rates*   |                                |                                   |                                   |                                |                                  |                                  | <b>-0.002</b>                      |                                  |
| Electoral Volatility         |                                |                                   |                                   |                                |                                  |                                  | <b>(0.002)</b>                     |                                  |
| Legislative Success Rates*   |                                |                                   |                                   |                                |                                  |                                  |                                    | <b>-0.0008</b>                   |
| Democratic Age(logged)       |                                |                                   |                                   |                                |                                  |                                  |                                    | <b>(0.0007)</b>                  |
| Constant                     | -5.572***<br>(1.579)           | -5.567***<br>(1.573)              | -5.174***<br>(1.542)              | -5.510***<br>(1.575)           | -2.227<br>(2.175)                | -2.654<br>(2.328)                | -6.716<br>(5.103)                  | -5.85<br>(4.203)                 |
| <b>Restrictive Reform</b>    |                                |                                   |                                   |                                |                                  |                                  |                                    |                                  |
| Changes of Prime Minister    | <b>0.199</b><br><b>(0.399)</b> | <b>1.363***</b><br><b>(0.468)</b> | <b>1.201***</b><br><b>(0.394)</b> | <b>0.285</b><br><b>(0.56)</b>  |                                  |                                  |                                    |                                  |
| Legislative Success Rates    |                                |                                   |                                   |                                | <b>-0.032*</b><br><b>(0.017)</b> | <b>-0.025</b><br><b>(0.022)</b>  | <b>-0.046***</b><br><b>(0.017)</b> | <b>-0.002</b><br><b>(0.0209)</b> |
| Electoral Disproportionality | -0.053<br>(0.045)              | -0.031<br>(0.046)                 | -0.064<br>(0.055)                 | -0.052<br>(0.045)              | -0.358**<br>(0.15)               | -0.258<br>(0.281)                | -0.430**<br>(0.195)                | -0.428*<br>(0.228)               |
| Electoral Volatility         | 0.048***<br>(0.014)            | 0.0507***<br>(0.015)              | 0.052***<br>(0.015)               | 0.048***<br>(0.014)            | 0.0504*<br>(0.026)               | 0.051**<br>(0.025)               | 0.081<br>(0.064)                   | 0.0505<br>(0.035)                |

|                              |           |                 |                  |                |           |                |                 |                  |
|------------------------------|-----------|-----------------|------------------|----------------|-----------|----------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Democratic Age(logged)       | 0.083     | 0.046           | 0.063            | 0.101          | -1.620*** | -1.644***      | -1.301***       | -0.507           |
|                              | (0.507)   | (0.509)         | (0.497)          | (0.522)        | (0.555)   | (0.55)         | (0.409)         | (0.778)          |
| Changes of Prime Minister*   |           | <b>-0.335**</b> |                  |                |           |                |                 |                  |
| Electoral Disproportionality |           | <b>(0.133)</b>  |                  |                |           |                |                 |                  |
| Changes of Prime Minister*   |           |                 | <b>-0.044***</b> |                |           |                |                 |                  |
| Electoral Volatility         |           |                 | <b>(0.011)</b>   |                |           |                |                 |                  |
| Changes of Prime Minister*   |           |                 |                  | <b>-0.001</b>  |           |                |                 |                  |
| Democratic Age(logged)       |           |                 |                  | <b>(0.004)</b> |           |                |                 |                  |
| Legislative Success Rates*   |           |                 |                  |                |           | <b>-0.001</b>  |                 |                  |
| Electoral Disproportionality |           |                 |                  |                |           | <b>(0.002)</b> |                 |                  |
| Legislative Success Rates*   |           |                 |                  |                |           |                | <b>-0.00003</b> |                  |
| Electoral Volatility         |           |                 |                  |                |           |                | <b>(0.0008)</b> |                  |
| Legislative Success Rates*   |           |                 |                  |                |           |                |                 | <b>-0.001***</b> |
| Democratic Age(logged)       |           |                 |                  |                |           |                |                 | <b>(0.0005)</b>  |
| Constant                     | -5.371*** | -5.422***       | -5.029***        | -5.402***      | 1.434     | 1              | 0.781           | -1.755           |
|                              | (1.625)   | (1.557)         | (1.652)          | (1.645)        | (1.481)   | (1.852)        | (2.262)         | (2.324)          |
| N (Observations)             | 1,102     | 1,102           | 1,004            | 1,102          | 852       | 852            | 662             | 852              |
| Chi <sup>2</sup>             | 72.60***  | 87.28***        | 91.69***         | 73.73***       | 122.34*** | 140.14***      | 147.27***       | 133.82***        |
| Pseudo-R <sup>2</sup>        | 0.08      | 0.09            | 0.11             | 0.08           | 0.21      | 0.21           | 0.22            | 0.24             |

*Note:* The dependent variable takes value 0 if there is no reform or the reform that takes place has an ambiguous impact in the interparty dimension; 1 if it is supposed to produce less disproportionality; and 2 if it is supposed to produce more disproportionality. Cluster standard errors by terms in parentheses. \* Significant at 0.10; \*\* Significant at 0.05; \*\*\* Significant at 0.01 (two-tailed tests). The counter of stability years and the cubic splines are included but not shown.

These two mechanisms are tested and results are displayed in Table 4.4. Accordingly to the negative findings regarding low party system fragmentation and permissive electoral reforms that we have seen in the previous section, I cannot reject the null hypothesis that very successful lawmakers and long-lived prime ministers are likely to implement permissive reforms in seven out of eight models. By contrast, legislative success rates and prime ministerial durability exert an impact on the likelihood of restrictive electoral system changes. More specifically, constant changes of prime minister lead politicians to adopt stronger rules of the game when either electoral disproportionality or volatility is equal to zero. Nevertheless, it is also important to notice that this relationship is less apparent as the values of these two variables go up. High legislative success rates are, in turn, less likely to produce restrictive electoral reforms, regardless of the levels of disproportionality or volatility observed in a given country. Of primary interest



here is the interaction capturing the modifying effect of democratic age. As can be seen in model 7, the interaction is negative and statistically significant, implying that for sufficiently long-lived democracies high legislative success rates decrease the probability of a restrictive electoral reform.

Finally, Sartori (2005 [1976]) argues that fragmentation only allows us to partially understand the structure of a party system. This is why a polarization index replaces the effective number of parties as the main explanatory factor in Table A2.6 of Appendix 2. This new variable measures the maximum ideological distance between the executive party and the four main parties of the legislature (Keefer and Stasavage 2003). My findings here suggest that parties have fewer incentives to enact a permissive reform the bigger the difference between the chief executive's party's value and the values of the three largest government parties and the largest opposition party.

#### **4.6. Conclusion**

Building on previous research, this chapter provides evidence that party system fragmentation is necessary for explaining electoral reform. However, I hope to have illustrated that the existing literature does not provide an adequate answer to the question of whether (and how) the number of parties affect the likelihood of changing the electoral system. Many other studies find that party system size has a positive effect on permissive reforms. Nevertheless, most of them limit their scope to a particular region of the world (Best 2011; Harfst 2013; Remmer 2008; Smyth 2005), or employ a very restrictive definition of electoral reform (Colomer 2004b and 2005). By using a new dataset which includes electoral reforms between 1945 and 2010 in 60 democratic countries, I provide several contributions to the current state of the art. One is to show that restrictive electoral system changes (i.e., movements towards less inclusive rules) are more likely to occur when the number of electoral parties is high. By contrast, I do not find any significant effect regarding the impact of party system size on the probability of observing permissive switches in electoral institutions. Future research should evaluate the determinants of this other type of reform. In the meantime, my results suggest that the effect of the number of parties is not

completely symmetrical and actors do not adopt more inclusive rules when party system fragmentation decreases (see, for example, the Spanish case).

Another important finding is the recognition that party system fragmentation, on the one hand, and electoral disproportionality and volatility, and democratic age, on the other hand, interact to shape actors' incentives to reform the rules of the game. Hence, my claims are that the number of parties will increase the likelihood of observing a restrictive electoral system change only when the correspondence between vote and seat shares of parties or the stability of political competition are sufficiently high, or the current democratic period of time has been long enough. But the latter is also true for permissive reforms, and this might seem surprising. One possible explanation could be my failure to distinguish between different types of new democracies. For example, it might be the case that party system size has a negative effect on permissive reforms only in those young democracies where accountability works (i.e., where rulers lose office independently of their performance) and political actors have long-term horizons. Unfortunately, the analysis presented here (and in all previous studies) has not found any way to take this into account.

Despite these uncertainties, one very clear conclusion can be derived from my study: Electoral reforms are complex phenomena, results of many different elements that reinforce or diminish each other. In this regard, there is clearly more to it than just seat-maximization based on the current level of party system fragmentation, as the dominant literature suggests. In other words, the conventional wisdom captures only a small fraction of the reality since it simply focuses on parties' desire to maximize their parliamentary representation. However, parties' willingness to change the electoral system is also determined by their policy and office-seeking goals (Müller and Strøm 1999). Moreover, as we will see in Chapter 8, a party that ignores a popular desire for reform to suit its own private interests may be punished by voters at the ballot box (Shugart 2008).

To sum up, a combination of several theoretical approaches provides a comprehensive answer to the question of why a reform in the interparty dimension of the electoral system takes place in contemporary democracies. A key feature of this chapter is to add nuance to traditional

explanations for the occurrence of electoral reforms in the interparty dimension. In addition, by dwelling on the specific case of electoral reform, my results can contribute to studies in two different fields: legislative-coalition building and political manipulation. However, even though my investigation has highlighted the importance of party system fragmentation for the occurrence of electoral reforms in the interparty dimension, several questions still need to be addressed in order to better understand the workings of the relationship between the party system size and the permissiveness of the electoral rules. Future research should test the several possible mechanisms at work, as well as provide explanations for the adoption of inclusive electoral reforms. Moreover, it would be important to know whether the modifying effect of disproportionality and volatility vary for different kinds of democracies. Is there a heterogeneous effect depending on democratic age or political freedom? Is it indeed the case that established and developing party systems operate differently? Finally, politicians' values (for example, their ideology) may be a key factor in promoting electoral reform. I hope that my chapter will spur the interest necessary to address some of these questions and improve our understanding of how the number of parties affects the fates of electoral rules.



## **Chapter 5. “The more things change, the more they stay the same”: The determinants of electoral reforms in the intraparty dimension**

Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose.  
(Jean-Baptiste Alphonse Karr, Les Guêpes 1849)

La salud de las democracias, cualquiera que sean su tipo y su grado, depende de un mísero detalle técnico: el procedimiento electoral. Todo lo demás es secundario.

(José Ortega y Gasset 1993 [1930]: 201)

### **5.1. Introduction**

As I have shown above, reforms are not uncommon in the interparty dimension of electoral systems. Sitting governments may rapidly become interested in changing the electoral rules that affect the translation of votes into seats for competing political parties, and the overall nature of the party system. Modifications of the electoral formula, district magnitude or legal threshold occurred in established democracies during the 1990s and early 2000s (e.g., Belgium, Germany or Norway), and became prominent in the early stages of democratization in Eastern Europe (Bielasiak 2006). This is perhaps not surprising considering that insider parties in all democracies are facing important challenges for their own survival in recent times (Mair et al. 2004). However, a similar pattern seems to have emerged in the intraparty dimension of electoral systems, as parties in office appear to have altered on several occasions within the last two decades what voters are asked to do in the act of voting, and which is the impact of their vote upon the election outcome and on the identity of the candidate who is finally elected (Renwick and Pilet 2011). From a static point of view, studies of electoral systems have highlighted the extent to which the rules of the game encourage or discourage candidates' incentives to cultivate a personal vote (Carey and Shugart 1995). However, there is not really a body of theoretically driven comparative work on why a candidate-centred electoral system is chosen over a party-centred one (or the other way around).

In the current context, one would expect the old bias towards party-centeredness in electoral systems to diminish over time with the process of increasingly personalization of world politics. This development has occurred in some Western European democracies, for example, where the role of prime ministers in parliamentary systems increased steadily from the late 1960s to the point where their influence over present day politics leads to some authors to coin the term “presidentialization” of political parties (Poguntke and Webb 2005).<sup>163</sup> The same phenomenon has been observed within governments (Blondel and Thiébaud 2010). The personalization of voting behaviour (Aarts et al. 2013; Bittner 2011) and media coverage (Mughan 2000) has also attracted growing scholarly attention. However, in some advanced industrialized democracies like the United Kingdom, Sweden, and mainly Germany, there has not been a clear and pervasive trend towards more personalization (Karvonen 2010). Moreover, the empirical evidence concerning the personalization of national election campaigns in six Western European countries is, at best, mixed (Kriesi forthcoming). To sum up, the decline in cleavage politics (Franklin et al. 1992)<sup>164</sup> and voters’ turnout (Franklin 2004), the growing postmaterialism (Inglehart 1971; van Deth 1996) and scepticism towards institutions and politicians (Dalton 2004), the erosion of party identifications (Dalton 2000) and memberships (van Biezen et al. 2011), and the increase in electoral volatility (Mair 2011) require first that we clarify whether there is a tendency towards a rising personalization of electoral systems and second that we develop our understanding of how various mechanisms drive this change.<sup>165</sup>

Previous studies of electoral institutions have mainly thought of election outcomes in purely partisan terms, and have practically overlooked the questions relating to intraparty preference voting (Karvonen 2004; Katz 1986; Marsh 1985). The unsurprising result that derives from the considerable lack of research in this area is that the intraparty aspect of the rules of the game can be considered “the neglected dimension of electoral systems” (Colomer 2011). In

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<sup>163</sup> Even when it is in quotation marks, “presidentialization” of PMs in parliamentary systems should not really go without qualification. Using evidence from France and Israel, Samuels and Shugart (2010) show that the long-term structural factors that Poguntke and Webb (2005) indicate cannot explain party presidentialization there, and propose an institutional account of this phenomenon. In broader terms, they think what is generally meant in the literature that uses this term would be better referred as personalization.

<sup>164</sup> In the edited book by Evans (1999), leading scholars argue that the class basis of political competition has to some degree evolved, but not declined.

<sup>165</sup> For the context of my work, it is important to note that most of this literature refers to leadership personalization and I focus on legislator (legislative candidate) personalization. Whether (and how) the two forms of personalization are related remains unclear.

terms of electoral reform, the core of the literature has focused on examinations of the causes of the changes that affect the proportionality of the outcomes (Renwick and Pilet 2011: 3). Likewise, Lijphart's well known criteria for determining the occurrence of a reform only refer to elements that can be expected to have an effect on the number of parties and how proportional the allocation of seats is among them (Lijphart 1994: 13). And, finally, seat-maximization calculations of parties provide the standard explanation of this type of institutional modifications (e.g., Benoit 2004; Boix 1999; Colomer 2004b). As a consequence of all this, there has been no systematic attempt to investigate what kinds of factors commonly contribute to the continuity and change in the intraparty dimension of electoral systems. Moreover, although there are good reasons to expect an increasing personalization, a clear empirical prediction about the dynamics of the relative importance of candidates and parties in the institutional architecture is also missing from the orthodox accounts of electoral reform. In conclusion, the field of comparative electoral systems research has not mirrored the growing interest in the personalization of politics observed in other areas of work (McAllister 2007).

In this chapter I will address the following interrelated questions: What motivates the changes in the intraparty dimension of electoral systems in contemporary democracies, and why does the degree of institutional stability in this regard vary across countries and over time? Are countries with higher levels of citizens' dissatisfaction with the way democracy works,<sup>166</sup> party system nationalization and/or electoral volatility more likely to adopt reforms? If individual politicians are becoming increasingly important in many political aspects all over the world, why do we observe party-centred reforms in some countries?

In order to do so, I propose a theoretical framework to explain reform of the intraparty dimension of electoral systems in contemporary democracies that takes as its independent variable the average citizens' dissatisfaction with the way democracy works in their country. Specifically, I argue that the perceived value of a reform for current legislators will be greater where there is a high public discontent towards the current working of political institutions. This system-level variable can affect the narrow interest in political survival operating at the party-

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<sup>166</sup> *Political dissatisfaction, political discontent and lack of satisfaction with the way democracy works* will be used in an exchangeable way in this chapter.

level. In fact, and despite the pervasiveness of statements that link growing erosion of satisfaction with democracy and increasing personalization of electoral systems in contemporary democracies, our knowledge about it is certainly far from systematic and is almost always confined to anecdotal evidence. Public outrage about the functioning of the electoral system that tends to lower legislators' incentives to keep party-centred rules (as happened in Venezuela in the late 1980s or Bolivia in the early 1990s) might also decrease the perceived benefits of maintaining candidate-centred institutions (as happened in Italy or Japan in the 1990s); and some other institutional factors within which political competition takes place (e.g., party system nationalization and electoral volatility) might also affect elites' calculations regardless of how widespread citizens' disaffection is. All in all, citizens' disenchantment with the *statu quo* should diminish the value of the current system and encourage parties to favour electoral reform in spite of the direction of the proposed change as long as it does not threaten other party's priorities in terms of office-seeking and policy goals.

Yet, before proceeding with the rest of the chapter, two “caveat emptors” have never been more apt. As can be seen below, what I am doing is to use a single independent variable (i.e., dissatisfaction with the way democracy works) to explain a variety of reforms. I decided to use this variable because it is available for an extraordinary number of countries and years. However, dissatisfaction with democracy is measuring different kinds of dissatisfaction in different circumstances. Moreover, I am also making two additional assumptions when using it: first, the wrong operation of the electoral system is mainly responsible for the widespread dissatisfaction with the way democracy works within the electorate; and, second, both respondents and reformers know (and agree about) what is not right when satisfaction with democracy is low. This is somewhat remarkable and tells us something about voters and elites' sophistication that is impressive in itself.

The second “caveat emptor” refers to the absence, notable compared to the inclusion of the effective number of parties and disproportionality in the regressions of the previous chapter, of some other variables about the intraparty effects of the existing rules of the game. The reason for not including them is mainly pragmatic and lies in the continuing difficulty of developing useful indicators beyond dichotomous classifications on the intraparty dimension. Presumably,



highly candidate-centred systems should be unlikely to be made more candidate-centred, and likewise we probably would not see highly party-centred made more so. However, this notion of compensating is not a theme of my hypotheses on the intraparty dimension in a manner that it is for the interparty. Politicians change the electoral system when satisfaction with democracy is low because they expect to benefit from the very act of voting for reform (act-contingent reasons), and, hence, “extremism” in terms of an exaggerated relationship between how many incentives a candidate has to cultivate a personal vote and how valuable is the exhibition of a particular party brand does not belong to the logic of reform here.<sup>167</sup>

I test my theory by employing my own dataset of electoral systems employed in 60 democracies around the world since 1945, and find that the likelihood of adopting a candidate-centred reform increases in contexts of widespread dissatisfaction with the way democracy works in a country. As we will see, although party-centred electoral system changes are more likely as the overall level of satisfaction with democracy goes down, the same is not in general true with regard to candidate-centred electoral reforms. More importantly, the modifying effect of party system inflation, electoral volatility and the length of the current democratic period on the likelihood of observing an electoral system change in the intraparty dimension is itself indicative of the need of a more comprehensive theoretical framework to understand the occurrence of this type of institutional modifications in democratic countries. In this regard, I find that high satisfaction with the way democracy works only impedes candidate-centred and party-centred reforms when party system inflation and electoral volatility are sufficiently low. Finally, a last interactive model shows that dissatisfaction with democracy is particularly helpful to understand reforms in the intraparty dimension in democracies that have reached a certain age.

The rest of the chapter is structured as follows. In the next section, I introduce a theoretical framework for understanding the causes of electoral system changes in the intraparty dimension. I then elaborate a series of working hypotheses that describe the conditions under

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<sup>167</sup> Ideally, I would have been able to identify the sources of low satisfaction with democracy (i.e., either an extremely candidate-centred or an extremely party-centred electoral system), and to predict which direction the reform would take. Unfortunately, this was not possible without resembling a tautology: A candidate-centred electoral system is more likely to be reformed into a party-centred, and the other way around. One would need to come up with some sort of factor (like party system fragmentation for the interparty dimension) that, for example, implied the adoption of candidate-centred reforms when the value of this variable is low, and vice versa. However, I could not find such a variable.

which these electoral reforms are more likely to occur. In the fourth and fifth section, I present my methods and data, and conduct the corresponding empirical tests. Finally, section six concludes.

## **5.2. Personalization of electoral systems and political discontent in contemporary democracies**

Why would the intraparty dimension of an electoral system change? Much of the literature on electoral reform has taken the interests-driven explanation as the main theoretical perspective regarding the adoption and modification of the rules of the game. This view “assumes that politicians control the choice of electoral system and that they are motivated to maximize their power” (Renwick 2010: 7-9); and is specified most precisely by Kenneth Benoit (2004), but also underlies the work of Carles Boix (1999) and Josep Maria Colomer (2004b), among others. These studies often stress politicians’ interest in maximizing their seat shares when changing the electoral system. Despite the widespread acceptance of this seat-maximization model, some serious problems emerge with its potential use to explain electoral reform in the intraparty dimension. First and foremost, even if politicians are mainly seat-maximizers, tinkering with the intraparty dimension of the electoral rules does not emerge as an obvious path to achieve it. In this regard, the intraparty dimension of the electoral system only affects the concentration or dispersion of authority within parties (Shugart 2001 and 2005). Hence, the basic distinction with regard to it refers to the degree to which candidates for legislative office can profitably cultivate a “personal” or a “partisan vote”.

*A personal vote* is generally defined as that portion of the vote derived from a politician’s personal reputation, while a *partisan vote* represents the return to the candidate from his or her party affiliation (Cain et al. 1987; Carey and Shugart 1995). The extent to which candidates have an incentive to cultivate a personal vote, and the extent to which parties have an incentive to nominate candidates with diverse characteristics and profiles that appeal to constituent subgroups, is expected to vary with specific institutional variables on the intraparty dimension of electoral systems. In general, we would expect that voters are encouraged to focus on individual candidates rather than on political parties and, hence, basically cast a personal vote under the so-

called *candidate-centred rules*. By contrast, *party-centred systems* would give individual candidates more ability to rely on the popularity of the party label in order to be elected.

The reason that the seat-maximization is not important for the explanation of reform in the intraparty perspective lies in the different ways in which the two dimensions of electoral rules tend to affect the allocation of seats. Unlike its interparty counterpart, the intraparty dimension does not affect the translation of votes into seats for competing political parties. The seat share of each party is a function both of the elements of the interparty dimension of the electoral system, a concept borrowed from Matthew Shugart in several pieces (2001 and 2005), and of its vote share. Briefly, when a party receives few votes, a restrictive electoral formula, a low district magnitude or a high legal threshold contribute to reduce its parliamentary representation. By contrast, large parties usually obtain considerably more legislative seats than their proportionate vote share under majoritarian features of the electoral system. This is advancement in that it isolates the parts of the electoral system responsible for producing the number of parties and how proportional the allocation of seats is among them. Moreover, it means that the intraparty dimension of the electoral system is not pulling any weight in the seats-votes relationships among parties. Although some of the variables on the intraparty dimension of electoral systems are the same as those on the more familiar interparty dimension (e.g., the classical distinction between single-seat district plurality systems and multi-seat district proportional representation systems), variations in the former are essentially inconsequential for parties' seat shares. This is why electoral reforms in this second dimension cannot be driven, at least directly, by parties' search of seat-maximization.<sup>168</sup>

In principle, a candidate-centred reform is a good that represents a return to the candidates that have and subsequently advertise their own qualifications for election or reelection irrespective of the party they belong to, while a party-centred electoral system change is a good shared by all the candidates who bear the "right" party label; and it should be noted that these effects exist independently of the size of the party. Hence, the implication of this argument is that two deputies from the same party might, in fact, have quite different institutional preferences on

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<sup>168</sup> As we will partially see in Chapter 8, parties might obviously gain votes (and hence seats) by adopting a popular reform.

the intraparty dimension of the electoral system. More importantly, we cannot build without such assumption of parties as unitary actors any aprioristic expectations about the patterns of change in the intraparty dimension of the electoral rules. Thus, redressing the relative absence of systematic effect of classic factors such as party system fragmentation or electoral disproportionality for those reforms that entail intraparty modifications force us to come up with an entirely new account of institutional change.<sup>169</sup> Spelling how these variations in electoral systems are more or less instrumental in political actors' pursuit of vote-maximization will serve this purpose.

A shortcoming of traditional studies of electoral system change is that they often analyze determinants of electoral reform without the proper consideration of “the costs of voter affect” (Quintal 1970). However, the fact that “voters are not fools” (Key 1966) suggests that passing reforms that voters do not like or failing to enact those that voters are keen on could cost politicians votes and thus power (Renwick and Pilet 2011). If citizens' demands on institutional engineering are related to the hypothetical existence of an electoral reward or punishment, then one would expect to see at least some attempts to change the electoral system among established parties in response to voters' demands. Hence, *act-contingent* motivations for electoral reform would be present when politicians expect to benefit from the very act of voting for them (Shugart 2008). According to Alan Renwick (2010), the 1993 reforms in Italy and New Zealand seem to illustrate these points: in a context of “public outrage” (Katz 2005: 69) and “growing distrust” (Dalton 2004: 29-30; 181), electoral system changes were supported by most politicians that feared punishment at the ballot box. Even more importantly, what these two cases show is that we should not expect all electoral reforms to trend uniformly over time.

Among the recent profound changes in the political system that might contribute to electoral reform, the lack of satisfaction with the current rules of the game is arguably the most consequential. The fact that there is cross-national variation in the proportion of citizens that are discontent with the way these rules work could imply that there is also variation in the demand for electoral reform. Likewise, the stability of electoral systems in some countries might be

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<sup>169</sup> As will be pointed out in the very next paragraph, this is only true when compared to conventional explanations of interparty reform because the new account offered here needs not be conceptually different from Shugart's inherent /contingent conditions theory.

associated with greater satisfaction with the way democracy works there. According to Seymour Lipset (1963: 64), legitimacy “involves the capacity of a political system to engender and maintain the belief that existing political institutions are the most appropriate and proper ones for the society”. And *political legitimacy* is the foundation of stable democratic institutions (Eckstein 1961). Both the civic culture (Almond and Verba 1963) and the systemic (Easton 1979 [1965]) approaches have theorized regarding the relationship between the political structure (system) and what the citizens want (support). Only if citizens support democracy it is predictable that a democratic system will endure. However, I prefer to use the concept *political discontent*.

According to Richard Gunther and José Ramón Montero (2006: 48-49, original italics), “*political discontent* is based on ‘peoples’ judgments about the day-to-day actions of political leaders and the operation of governmental institutions and processes”. In this case, only if citizens support the way democracy works it is likely that electoral rules will persist. My main point here is that the electorate can become dissatisfied with the operation of the intraparty dimension of an electoral system because it generates too many or too few incentives to cultivate a personal vote and, hence, becomes *extreme* in Shugart’s (2001) terminology.<sup>170</sup> As I will show below, this is why a widespread dissatisfaction with the way democracy works among the citizenry may lead to party-centred or candidate-centred electoral reforms. And, in fact, several descriptive case studies (e.g., Denmark 2001; Katz 2001; Reed and Thies 2001) suggest that it is plausible that public discontent is a major factor catalyzing political pressures for electoral system change.

The Italian electoral reform of the mid-1990s (as in Japan or in New Zealand at the same time or in Colombia a little bit later) points to the need for further thought on the inevitability of the trend towards more personalization.<sup>171</sup> In this regard, Lauri Karvonen (2010) identifies three major aspects of the personalization of politics that are pervasive in contemporary politics:

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<sup>170</sup> This scholar argues that the two forms of *extreme* deviations from the *efficient* ideal in the intraparty dimension are the so-called *hyper-personalistic* systems, such as when intraparty dimension becomes more salient than interparty dimension (e.g., pre-reform Japan), and the *hyper-centralized* systems, such as when legislators’ incentives are to campaign for a higher position on a party list rather than for the approbation of voters (e.g., pre-reform Venezuela).

<sup>171</sup> For an example of a candidate-centred reform, see Mikkel and Pettai’s (2004) on post-independence electoral system changes in Estonia.

empowerment of political leaders, growing importance of candidates, and increasing media coverage of individual politicians. However, when he looks at the evolution of electoral systems in Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Israel, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Malta, New Zealand and Sweden in order to evaluate whether there is a trend towards more candidate-centeredness, he concludes that the evidence is at best mixed. Hence, contrary to what others suggest (Renwick and Pilet 2011), the fertile ground for institutional reform that seems to be generated by public discontent with the state of a democracy does not necessarily crystallize into more personalized electoral systems.

### **5.3. Hypotheses**

The theoretical antecedents reported on the previous section lead me to build the following specific hypotheses. First of all, the relationship between the overall satisfaction with democracy and the likelihood of electoral reform constitutes the basis for my first hypothesis. In the past, several authors argued that a given electoral system may generate some basic conditions for a high level of satisfaction with democracy. The problem lay in identifying what were those conditions. On the one hand, Arend Lijphart (1999) believed that consensual democracies – with proportional electoral systems – engendered higher levels of satisfaction. On the other hand, Pippa Norris (1999) claimed the relationship to be the opposite, with majoritarian systems producing higher levels of satisfaction with the way democracy works in a given country. In my view, Ola Listhaug et al. (2009) provide the most thoughtful position suggesting that this is still an empirically open question. In fact, the empirical results in the literature also seem to support this judicious stance: while evidence provided by Christopher Anderson and Christine Guillory (1997) speaks to the satisfying impact of proportional representation, Francis Castles (1994), and Kees Aarts and Jacques Thomassen (2008) find the opposite effects. Finally, John Curtice and Phil Shively (2009) conclude that there is little difference between single and multi-member districts with regard to the achievement of the best linkage between representatives and represented.

The aforementioned studies focused on the interparty dimension of electoral systems. However, several pieces in recent times examine the impact of the intraparty dimension on

satisfaction with democracy. For example, David Farrell and Ian McAllister (2006) show that preferential votes in candidate-centred systems promote a greater sense of fairness about election outcomes among citizens, which in turn leads to higher public's satisfaction with the performance of the democratic system. By contrast, Agustí Bosch and Lluís Orriols (2010) do not find a clear linear association between the degree of ballot openness and the level of satisfaction with democracy. Despite these latter negative results, I seek to demonstrate here that electoral reforms in the intraparty dimension can be interpreted as a reaction to pervasive discontent regarding the way democracy works. The importance of dynamics of public opinion for explaining instances of electoral reform have been extensively documented in several case-studies on New Zealand (Banducci and Karp 1999), Japan (Shiratori 1995) and Italy (Baldini 2011).<sup>172</sup> However, the number of comparative analyses on this issue is still scarce.<sup>173</sup> In short, the question is one of balance between a more open political system in which individual representatives can stand apart from the parties of which they are member, and a too open one in which parties are not able to deliver and fulfil campaign promises. So, too democracy at the level of individual representatives may threaten democratic accountability and responsiveness of political parties. This is why I put forward the following hypothesis: *Public dissatisfaction with the way the existing democratic system works has a positive effect on the probability of reforms in the intraparty dimension of electoral systems* (H<sub>1</sub>).

Before testing the impact of citizens' satisfaction with democracy, I first turn to other factors that may explain the occurrence of electoral reforms, and that could be formulated as supplementary hypotheses. The first variable that is expected to play a role is the level of party system nationalization. The likelihood of changes in the intraparty dimension of the electoral system is predicted to vary according to the degree of homogeneity of parties' vote shares across districts. In recent times, the study of the nationalization of the party system, defined as the

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<sup>172</sup> In the same vein, Mayorga (2001: 201) illustrates the serious shortcomings concerning the intraparty dimension of the pre-1994 electoral system in Bolivia by showing that a majority of interviewed persons during the 1990s in that country thought that politicians were not concerned with the people's problems, and parties did not keep the promises they made (see also Auersperger Matic [2000] and Mikkel and Pettai [2004] for the Slovenian and Estonian cases, respectively).

<sup>173</sup> In one of the few comparative studies I am aware of, Norris (2011) proves that democratic aspirations, measured by support for democratic ideals among the citizens, are the strongest and most significant predictors of the subsequent adoption of electoral reforms. I take a very different approach because she only monitors major electoral reforms and she does so from a cross-national perspective.

extent to which parties are uniformly successful in winning votes across districts, has become very pressing (e.g., Alemán and Kellam 2008; Bochsler 2010a and b; Caramani 2004; Castaneda-Angarita forthcoming; Chhibber and Kollman 2004; Cox 1999a; Crisp et al. 2013; Harbers 2010; Hicken et al. 2008; Jones and Mainwaring 2003; Kasuya and Moenius 2008; Lago 2011; Lago and Montero 2010; Lago-Peñas and Lago-Peñas 2009; Morgenstern et al. 2009; Rodden and Wibbels 2011; Schakel 2013; Simón Cosano 2011). In spite of these recent developments, there has not been so far, at least to my knowledge, an attempt to link this feature of the party system with the likelihood of reforming electoral rules. In my view, and this is an original idea, in poorly-nationalized party systems the likelihood of reelection of MPs usually depends on their capacity to oppose the branches of the party that run in other parts of the territory. And doing this is easier under electoral rules that provide incentives to cultivate a personal vote. In other words, such institutional framework allows them to increase their chances of being re-elected by giving them the opportunity to run local campaigns and deliver local promises. This is why MPs in poorly-nationalized party systems have an interest-based and, more specifically, an outcome-contingent reason in adopting more candidate-centred electoral rules based on their micro-level preferences.<sup>174</sup>

Bearing this in mind, I argue that legislators should not respond to widespread dissatisfaction with democracy with the same institutional strategies across different levels of party system nationalization. Citizens' dissatisfaction with democracy can reduce, increase or have no effect on electoral reform in the intraparty dimension depending on the level of party system nationalization. For this reason, an unconditional model specification that did not take into account the modifying impact of the level of party system nationalization would misleadingly suggest that widespread public discontent always leads to an increase in the likelihood of an intraparty reform. However, this is not true in two senses. On the one hand, I expect the positive effect of citizens' dissatisfaction with democracy on the likelihood of candidate-centred electoral reforms to be exacerbated when party system nationalization is

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<sup>174</sup> As disproportionality and volatility on the interparty dimension, nationalization does not play an efficiency role here. Instead, it looks more like an intraparty version of the micro-mega rule: Adapting the rules to existing patterns in political competition. I would like to thank Matthew Shugart for having raised this very last point.



low.<sup>175</sup> In the end, MPs are not political kamikazes and they are interested in political survival. Hence, in case of high dissatisfaction with the way democracy works and low party system nationalization two forces simultaneously push them to reform the system in a candidate-centred direction. First of all, people are politically discontent and for this reason they want changes in the rules of the game. Second, voters behave differently across districts and, as a result, legislators would appreciate an electoral reform that brings them closer to their constituents (i.e., a candidate-centred system change).

To the contrary, the positive impact of citizens' dissatisfaction with democracy on the likelihood of party-centred electoral reforms would tend to be mitigated in contexts of important differences of party vote shares across districts (i.e., in case of low party system nationalization). As stated above, the process of electoral reform is driven by cross-district variations in the electoral preferences of citizens faced by politicians able to control the reform process. And, arguably, these preferences are more different across districts when party system nationalization is low. In this case, we are in front of two forces of opposite direction. On the one hand, we have seen that high dissatisfaction with democracy should lead to party-centred changes in the intraparty dimension of electoral systems. On the other hand, the fact that party system nationalization is low makes parties reluctant to adopt party-centred changes in the rules of the game. In such scenario, local elites would not appreciate such reforms.

To sum up, I hypothesize that *public dissatisfaction with the way the existing democratic system works has a positive effect on the probability of candidate-centred electoral reforms that gets stronger as party system nationalization decreases; and the opposite is true for the expected positive effect on party-centred reforms as party system nationalization decreases* (H<sub>2</sub>). In other words, the marginal effect of public's dissatisfaction with the way democracy works on the probability of electoral reforms in the intraparty dimension is positive when party system nationalization is at its lowest level. The magnitude of this effect on the likelihood of party-centred reforms decreases as party system nationalization goes up. At some value of party

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<sup>175</sup> My claims are agnostic about the effect of party system nationalization on how satisfied are citizens with the way democracy works in a country. According to Lago and Montero (2010), Greece and Sweden have one of the lowest and highest nationalized party systems in Western Europe, respectively. However, as Karp et al. (2003) show, citizens on average are more satisfied with the way democracy works in the latter rather than in the former.

system nationalization, dissatisfaction with democracy has no effect on the probability of this kind of electoral reforms. As party system nationalization rises further, the initially positive effect of public discontent on party-centred electoral reforms becomes negative and strengthens in magnitude as party system nationalization increases. And the effect is the opposite for candidate-centred reforms.

The second complementary hypothesis is another interest-based (outcome-contingent) explanation, and also slightly modifies the idea that only overall dissatisfaction with democracy creates increasing pressures for existing winners to change the intraparty dimension of the electoral system. This is that electoral volatility, defined as the net change within the party system resulting from individual vote transfers over elections (Gómez Martínez 2012; Pedersen 1979), affects parties' calculations and increases uncertainty about their electoral prospects (Mainwaring and Zoco 2007), creating incentives for a party-centred reform. High electoral volatility means that existing winners today (i.e., those actors with enough parliamentary muscle to change the electoral system) have a high chance of becoming losers tomorrow and, hence, are interested in the adoption of less risky rules that protect them against the reactions of a highly instable electorate (Bielasiak 2006; Geddes 1996; Lijphart 1992; Przeworski 1991; Remmer 2008). But why more party-centred electoral institutions are safer for incumbents? In order to illustrate this point, let's imagine, for example, some quite candidate-centred electoral rules (for example, an open-list PR system with large districts) in a high-volatile political scenario. Voters tend to throw the rascals out election after election and current MPs exceptionally collude to *close* the lists. Under a closed-list PR system, voters have no longer influence on changing the party-supplied order of candidates. Despite the parties' risk of being decimated after the following election, party leaders guarantee their own survival by placing themselves in the top positions of the closed list recently adopted. This is why they have incentives to enact one electoral reform of such characteristics.

Thus, the marginal effect of overall satisfaction with democracy on the probability of both types of electoral reforms in the intraparty dimension is negative when electoral volatility is at its lowest level. However, these effects change as electoral volatility increases. At some value of electoral volatility, mean satisfaction with democracy has no effect on the probability of party-

centred electoral reforms. As electoral volatility is even higher, the initially negative effect of political satisfaction on this kind of electoral system changes becomes positive and strengthens in magnitude as electoral volatility increases. By contrast, the effect is the opposite with regard to candidate-centred reforms. In other words, high levels of electoral volatility reinforce the negative effect of the overall satisfaction with democracy on the likelihood of observing a candidate-centred electoral reform. Summing up, I hypothesize that *public dissatisfaction with the way the existing democratic system works has a positive effect on the probability of candidate-centred electoral reforms that gets weaker as electoral volatility increases; and the opposite is true for the expected positive effect on party-centred reforms as electoral volatility increases* (H<sub>3</sub>).

Finally, substantial differences between old and young democracies are expected with regard to the impact of satisfaction with democracy on electoral reform. The willingness of parties to recognize and act upon situations in which preserving the same electoral system leads to a less desirable outcome heavily depends on the age of democracy. The main causal mechanisms that explain why actors in recently democratized countries behave differently when deciding to change or to keep the electoral system are several (Benoit 2007). On the one hand, uncertainty, lack of reliable information, and imperfect understanding of electoral rules and their effects often feature prominently in many transitional contexts and can make politicians reluctant to change the rules of the game. On the other hand, the high volatility that characterized the first decades of democratic elections in Eastern Europe and Latin America complicated the task of designing the right institutions to achieve the desired goals, introducing some doses of additional institutional instability in those political contexts. A third, but also important, consideration in new democratic contexts is the perceived legitimacy of the institutions chosen. For instance, Birch et al. (2002) conclude in their study of post communist electoral systems that the achievement of collective fairness was considered to be particularly important during the first democratic decades in those countries. So, the need to keep quite party-centred rules after a long autocratic period characterized by quite personalistic electoral institutions could be an additional reason that explains the low explanatory power of overall satisfaction with democracy in Eastern Europe. Finally, the process by which governments are chosen in young democracies is often full of illustrations of how badly mechanisms of electoral accountability perform there (Rose and

Shin 1999). Parties in power can easily circumvent the control of voters, and many of them may feel free to keep the same electoral rules even in contexts of high political discontent. On this basis, we could expect a poorer effect of the overall level of satisfaction with democracy on electoral reform in recently democratized countries.

Yet, the temporal prolongation of the current democratic period involves the existence of a learning process based on the acquisition of experience and knowledge over the course of increasingly numerous elections. As a result, uncertainty about the consequences of electoral reform declines. Further, the initially high levels of electoral volatility are overcome as democracies mature and, moreover, instrumentally rational voters are progressively more likely to attach weight to the positions adopted by parties in the processes of institutional change. Hence, the negative effect of the overall satisfaction with democracy on the probability of electoral reforms in the intraparty dimension when democratic age is at its lowest level should increase in magnitude as democracies aged and become an even more statistically significant predictor of electoral reforms in the intraparty dimension. In short, I put forward the following hypothesis: *Levels of public dissatisfaction with democracy has a positive effect on the probability of electoral reforms in the intraparty dimension that gets stronger as democratic age increases (H<sub>4</sub>).*

## **5.4. Data and research design**

### **5.4.1. Dependent variable**

My dependent variable is the existence (or absence) of an electoral reform, and its different types. For an extensive definition and typology of electoral reform, see Chapter 3.<sup>176</sup> The identification of a case of electoral reform without specifying the direction in which the rules of the game change is clearly insufficient. On this basis, it is very useful to distinguish between *party-centred* and *candidate-centred* reforms, which decrease and increase the amount of

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<sup>176</sup> *Sources:* Birch (2003), Birch et al. (2002), Bowler and Grofman (2000), Colomer (2004a), Gallagher and Mitchell (2005a), Golder (2004), Grofman et al. (1999), Grofman and Lijphart (2007 [2002]), the Inter-Parliamentary Union (n.d.), Johnson and Wallack (2010 [2003]), Jones (1995 and 1997), Lijphart (1994), Lundell and Karvonen (2003), Negretto (2009), Payne (2007), Remmer (2008), Renwick (2011), Shugart and Wattenberg (2001), Shvetsova (1999), Wills Otero and Pérez-Liñán (2005), Zovatto and Orozco Henríquez (2008), and electoral laws of each country.

candidates' incentives to cultivate a personal vote, respectively. In general, incentives to cultivate a personal vote can be conceptualized as "the portion of a candidate's electoral support which originates in his or her personal qualities, qualifications, activities, and record" (Cain et al. 1987: 9). Hence, voters in party-centred systems "vote on the basis of broad policy options rather than on the basis of promised particularistic benefits" (Carey and Shugart 1995: 433). Further details of all the episodes of electoral reform identified are given in the Appendix 1 to this thesis.

#### **5.4.2. Independent variables**

The main independent variable is the mean satisfaction with democracy among the citizenry of each country in any given point in time. For the purpose of this chapter, the following question in several surveys is used as an indicator of *political discontent* at the level we need: "On the whole, are you not at all satisfied, not very satisfied, not very satisfied, or not at all satisfied with the way democracy works in [country]?" This question clearly asks for a general evaluation of the performance of democratic institutions. I take the lagged mean (by one year) on a 4-point scale, running from 1 (not at all satisfied) to 4 (very satisfied).<sup>177</sup> This measure considerably improves the merits of other measures of *political discontent* because it is comparable across very diverse country cases.

I also include as explanatory factor the Johannes Moenius and Yuko Kasuya's Weighted Party System Inflation Score (2004). It builds upon Gary Cox's measure (1997 and 1999) and provides an estimation of party system inflation on a percentage basis. As *Inflation (I)* gets larger, the nationalization of party systems is worse. If for instance *I* is 20, then about 20 percent of the overall size of the national party system can be attributed to different parties obtaining votes in different sub-units of the country, and 80 percent to the average size of the local party systems (Cox 1999a: 155-156). But, given that district size is not a constant in most countries,

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<sup>177</sup> Sources: The Mannheim Eurobarometer Trend File, 1970-2002 (ICPSR 4357); Eurobarometer 60.1 (ICPSR 3991); Eurobarometer 62.0 (ICPSR 4289); Eurobarometer 63.4 (ICPSR 4564); Eurobarometer 65.2 (ICPSR 20322); Eurobarometer 68.1 (ICPSR 23368); Eurobarometer 72.4 (ICPSR 30461); Eurobarometer 73.4 (ICPSR 34384); Central and Eastern Eurobarometer 1990-1997: Trends (ICPSR 4153); Candidate countries eurobarometer 2002-2004; Comparative study of electoral systems modules 1-3; Latinobarometer 1995-2009; 1998, 2001 and 2010 Australia Election Studies; 1993, 2000 and 2008 Canada Election Studies; 1995, 1999 and 2003 Croatia Election Studies; 1999 and 2009 Israel Election Studies; 1999 and 2005 New Zealand Election Studies; and 2009 Norway Election Studies.

Moenius and Kasuya (2004: 550) (see also Kasuya and Moenius 2008: 130) introduce a weighted measure that is calculated according to the following formula:

$$I_w = \left( \frac{vot_{nat} * ENP_{nat}}{\sum_{i=1}^n ENP_i * vot_i} - 1 \right) * 100,$$

where  $vot_{nat}$  is the total number of votes cast at the national level;  $vot_i$  is the total number of votes cast in district  $i$ ;  $ENP_{nat}$  is the effective number of electoral parties at the national level; and  $ENP_i$  is the effective number of electoral parties in district  $i$ .<sup>178</sup> In mixed member systems, the figures are based on district and total votes in the nominal tier. Figures for France are based on first-round votes.

The third independent variable of interest is *electoral volatility*, which is measured on the basis of the Pedersen's Index in the current term (Pedersen 1979). This index is created by adding the net difference (i.e., in absolute terms) in the percentage of votes obtained by each of the parties in a given pair of elections and dividing it by two, and ranges from 0 to 100.<sup>179</sup> Scott Mainwaring, Peter Mair and Joshua Tucker kindly shared their data on electoral volatility with me.<sup>180</sup>

To sum up, I do not examine the long-term effect of any of these variables on electoral reform. In fact, it could be argued that the effect of these explanatory factors occur mostly over a series of two or three elections. However, this issue is far from having been completely demonstrated in the literature. Moreover, the way in which satisfaction with democracy, party system nationalization and electoral volatility could be theorized and calculated to affect the likelihood of electoral system change in the long-term (e.g., averaging their value in the last

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<sup>178</sup> Sources: Bochsler (2010), Caramani (2000), Constituency Level Electoral Archive (CLEA) from the University of Michigan and the Constituency Level Elections (CLE) dataset from Washington University at St. Louis.

<sup>179</sup> To be more precise, electoral volatility is calculated according to the following formula:

$$TV = \frac{1}{2} \sum |\Delta p_i|,$$

where the variation in vote share for each party is  $\Delta p_i = p_i(t+1) - p_i(t)$ ,  $i = 1, \dots, n$ .

<sup>180</sup> Ideally, the amount of available voters in Bartolini and Mair's sense (1990) would have been proxied by some other more precise measure (i.e., the proportion of non-identified citizens with a party). However, the lack of appropriate data in this respect has led me to employ Pedersen's Index as a second best option.

years or elections, respectively) and the limited data availability lead me to exclude this idea from the empirical analysis.

Finally, I also include in the models as an additional independent variable the *duration of the current democratic period*. A regime qualifies as democratic if all of the following conditions are met: one, direct or indirect election of the effective executive; two, election of the legislature; three, multiple parties are legally allowed; four, existence of parties outside of the ruling coalition; five, the alternation rule is not violated; and six, at no time during their current tenure in office the incumbent (person, party, military or hierarchy) unconstitutionally closed the lower house of the national legislature nor rewrote the rules in their favour.<sup>181</sup>

### **5.4.3. Control variables**

I use the following three controls: Henisz's Political Constraints Index, the real GDP per capita (in 1,000s), and the ideology of the government. For an exhaustive discussion of the rationale behind their inclusion and their exact operationalization, see Section 4.4.3.

### **5.4.4. Econometric technique**

With regard to the econometric technique, the detail does not need to be repeated here, given that it is introduced in section 4.4.4 of the previous chapter.

## **5.5. Empirical results**

Before the multivariate evidence, the effect of democratic experience on electoral reform is evident in the differences between old and young democracies displayed in Table 5.1. Drawing on comparisons across all the democracies included in the sample, the data indicate that the probability of adopting a new electoral system in the intraparty dimension is directly related to the level of democratic experience. The second interesting finding is that the movement towards electoral systems that increase the incentives to cultivate a personal vote described in the literature is very weak and is only observable in old democracies. The number of candidate-centred and party-centred reforms in young democracies is almost exactly the same. Hence, the

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<sup>181</sup> *Source:* Cheibub et al. (2009).

**Table 5.1. Democratic age and the types of electoral reforms in the intraparty dimension, 1945-2010**

|                       |              | <b>No reform</b> | <b>Party-Centred Reform</b> | <b>Ambiguous Reform</b> | <b>Candidate-Centred Reform</b> | <b>Total</b>   |
|-----------------------|--------------|------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------|
| <b>Democratic Age</b> | <b>Old</b>   | 368<br>(87.61)   | 13<br>(3.09)                | 21<br>(5)               | 18<br>(4.28)                    | 420<br>(63.54) |
|                       | <b>Young</b> | 164<br>(68.04)   | 25<br>(10.37)               | 29<br>(12.03)           | 23<br>(9.54)                    | 241<br>(36.45) |
|                       | <b>Total</b> | 532<br>(80.48)   | 38<br>(5.74)                | 50<br>(7.56)            | 41<br>(6.2)                     | 661<br>(100)   |

*Note:* Row percentages in parentheses. *Source:* Own elaboration.

evidence does not fit John Carey's (2008) statement about the existence of a general drift towards more personalistic electoral rules.

Table 5.2 includes the descriptive statistics of the variables used in the analyses; and Table 5.3 shows the results of the multivariate regression analysis for seven separate models. Model 1 only measures the effect of the overall satisfaction with democracy, while Models 2-4 introduce sequentially party system nationalization, electoral volatility and democratic age. Models 5-7 test the validity of the interactive hypotheses, and Figures 5.1-5.4 show the marginal effects of satisfaction with democracy on candidate-centred reforms as electoral volatility changes, on candidate-centred reforms as democracy ages, and on party-centred reforms as democracy ages, respectively. According to Thomas Brambor et al. (2006) and Cindy Kam and Robert Franzese (2007), the effect of an interaction term cannot be evaluated through the p-value shown in the regression table. Thus, it is necessary to graphically illustrate the marginal effect of the overall satisfaction with democracy on the likelihood of electoral reform in the intraparty dimension as the value of the modifying variable changes.

Although the overall lack of satisfaction with democracy among the citizenry is a good predictor that the current electoral system will be replaced by a *more party-centred* one in the first and second models, this is no longer the case as the public discontent with how democracy works in a given country goes up once we control for either the level of electoral volatility or the length of the current democratic period (Models 3 and 4). In overall terms, the likelihood of



**Table 5.2. Descriptive statistics**

| <b>Variable</b>                | <b>Mean</b> | <b>Std. Dev.</b> | <b>Min.</b> | <b>Max.</b> | <b>N</b> |
|--------------------------------|-------------|------------------|-------------|-------------|----------|
| Satisfaction with Democracy    | 2.505       | 0.32             | 1.53        | 3.17        | 690      |
| Party System Inflation         | 17.46       | 25.46            | -0.1        | 154.2       | 690      |
| Electoral Volatility           | 17.97       | 15.1             | 0.9         | 73.08       | 690      |
| Democratic Age(logged)         | 3.66        | 0.94             | 0           | 4.94        | 690      |
| Time                           | 24.6        | 17.02            | 1           | 62          | 690      |
| Political Constraints Index    | 0.44        | 0.13             | 0.09        | 0.708       | 689      |
| Real GDP per Capita(in 1,000s) | 19.58       | 93.68            | 3.06        | 59.29       | 637      |
| Colour of the Government       | 2.07        | 0.91             | 1           | 3           | 637      |
| Corruption                     | -0.74       | 1.02             | -2.6        | 1.03        | 406      |

candidate-centred reforms seems to be initially unaffected by the overall satisfaction with democracy. Moreover, the additive models tell us that neither party system inflation, electoral volatility nor democratic age shape politicians' incentives to adopt electoral system changes in the intraparty dimension.

Next, I explore the role of party system nationalization, electoral volatility, and democratic age more in depth. Specifically, I aim to investigate the extent to which they modify the negative effect of satisfaction with democracy on intraparty electoral reform. I do this by re-estimating Models 2-4 but including as additional independent variables the following interaction terms: *Satisfaction with Democracy\*Party System Inflation Index*, *Satisfaction with Democracy\*Electoral Volatility Index* and *Satisfaction with Democracy\*Democratic Age*. Party system inflation and electoral volatility are effective at changing the negative effect of satisfaction with democracy on candidate-centred and party-centred reforms, respectively. Finally, the estimates for the last of the interactions suggest that dissatisfaction with democracy only explains party-centred reforms in democracies that have reached a certain age. The first two results indicate that political actors lack incentives to enact candidate-centred and party-centred electoral reforms when satisfaction with democracy increases only if party system inflation at the national level and electoral volatility are low enough, respectively. Moreover, the positive

**Table 5.3. Determinants of electoral reform in the intraparty dimension: Discrete time duration models/Binary times-series cross-section models**

| VARIABLES                    | Model 1                   | Model 2                   | Model 3                  | Model 4                  | Model 5                   | Model 6                   | Model 7                   |
|------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Candidate-Centred Reform     | coefficient<br>(se)       | coefficient<br>(se)       | coefficient<br>(se)      | coefficient<br>(se)      | coefficient<br>(se)       | coefficient<br>(se)       | coefficient<br>(se)       |
| Satisfaction with Democracy  | <b>-0.802</b><br>(0.55)   | <b>-1.044</b><br>(1.162)  | <b>-0.6</b><br>(0.758)   | <b>-0.749</b><br>(0.688) | <b>-2.663*</b><br>(1.366) | <b>-2.513</b><br>(1.728)  | <b>0.438</b><br>(2.817)   |
| Party System Inflation       |                           | -0.976<br>(1.707)         |                          |                          | <b>-35.65*</b><br>(19.87) | -3.726<br>(2.458)         | -3.434<br>(2.267)         |
| Electoral Volatility         |                           |                           | 0.014<br>(0.0207)        |                          | -0.017<br>(0.027)         | -0.15<br>(0.198)          | -0.017<br>(0.026)         |
| Democratic Age(logged)       |                           |                           |                          | -0.0404<br>(0.325)       | 0.603<br>(0.518)          | 0.65<br>(0.527)           | 1.958<br>(2.131)          |
| Satisfaction with Democracy* |                           |                           |                          |                          | <b>13.39*</b>             |                           |                           |
| Party System Inflation       |                           |                           |                          |                          | <b>(8.122)</b>            |                           |                           |
| Satisfaction with Democracy* |                           |                           |                          |                          |                           | <b>0.057</b>              |                           |
| Electoral Volatility         |                           |                           |                          |                          |                           | <b>(0.079)</b>            |                           |
| Satisfaction with Democracy* |                           |                           |                          |                          |                           |                           | <b>-0.585</b>             |
| Democratic Age(logged)       |                           |                           |                          |                          |                           |                           | <b>(0.918)</b>            |
| Constant                     | -2.120*<br>(1.286)        | -1.124<br>(2.707)         | -3.449<br>(2.329)        | -2.133*<br>(1.296)       | 1.772<br>(3.381)          | 1.309<br>(4.401)          | -5.468<br>(5.872)         |
| <b>Party-Centred Reform</b>  |                           |                           |                          |                          |                           |                           |                           |
| Satisfaction with Democracy  | <b>-1.626*</b><br>(0.902) | <b>-3.042*</b><br>(1.561) | <b>-1.159</b><br>(1.184) | <b>-1.43</b><br>(1.209)  | <b>-3.563</b><br>(2.899)  | <b>-5.775*</b><br>(3.431) | <b>37.37**</b><br>(18.78) |
| Party System Inflation       |                           | -0.251<br>(0.87)          |                          |                          | -1.204<br>(7.955)         | -1.212<br>(1.207)         | -2.503**<br>(1.073)       |
| Electoral Volatility         |                           |                           | 0.0207<br>(0.015)        |                          | 0.051<br>(0.035)          | -0.143<br>(0.11)          | 0.0806**<br>(0.034)       |
| Democratic Age(logged)       |                           |                           |                          | -0.165<br>(0.385)        | 1.193<br>(1.33)           | 1.491<br>(1.514)          | 29.27**<br>(12.76)        |
| Satisfaction with Democracy* |                           |                           |                          |                          | <b>0.172</b>              |                           |                           |
| Party System Inflation       |                           |                           |                          |                          | <b>(3.842)</b>            |                           |                           |
| Satisfaction with Democracy* |                           |                           |                          |                          |                           | <b>0.0902*</b>            |                           |
| Electoral Volatility         |                           |                           |                          |                          |                           | <b>(0.054)</b>            |                           |
| Satisfaction with Democracy* |                           |                           |                          |                          |                           |                           | <b>-11.42**</b>           |
| Democratic Age(logged)       |                           |                           |                          |                          |                           |                           | <b>(5.126)</b>            |
| Constant                     | 0.097<br>(1.966)          | 2.841<br>(3.378)          | -2.161<br>(2.813)        | 0.057<br>(2.077)         | -1.513<br>(3.957)         | 2.502<br>(4.94)           | -103.2**<br>(47.24)       |

|                       |          |          |          |          |          |          |           |
|-----------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|
| N (Observations)      | 1,166    | 679      | 1,123    | 1,166    | 690      | 658      | 690       |
| Chi <sup>2</sup>      | 23.70*** | 31.73*** | 30.46*** | 25.13*** | 61.14*** | 51.77*** | 120.11*** |
| Pseudo-R <sup>2</sup> | 0.05     | 0.10     | 0.04     | 0.05     | 0.13     | 0.14     | 0.201     |

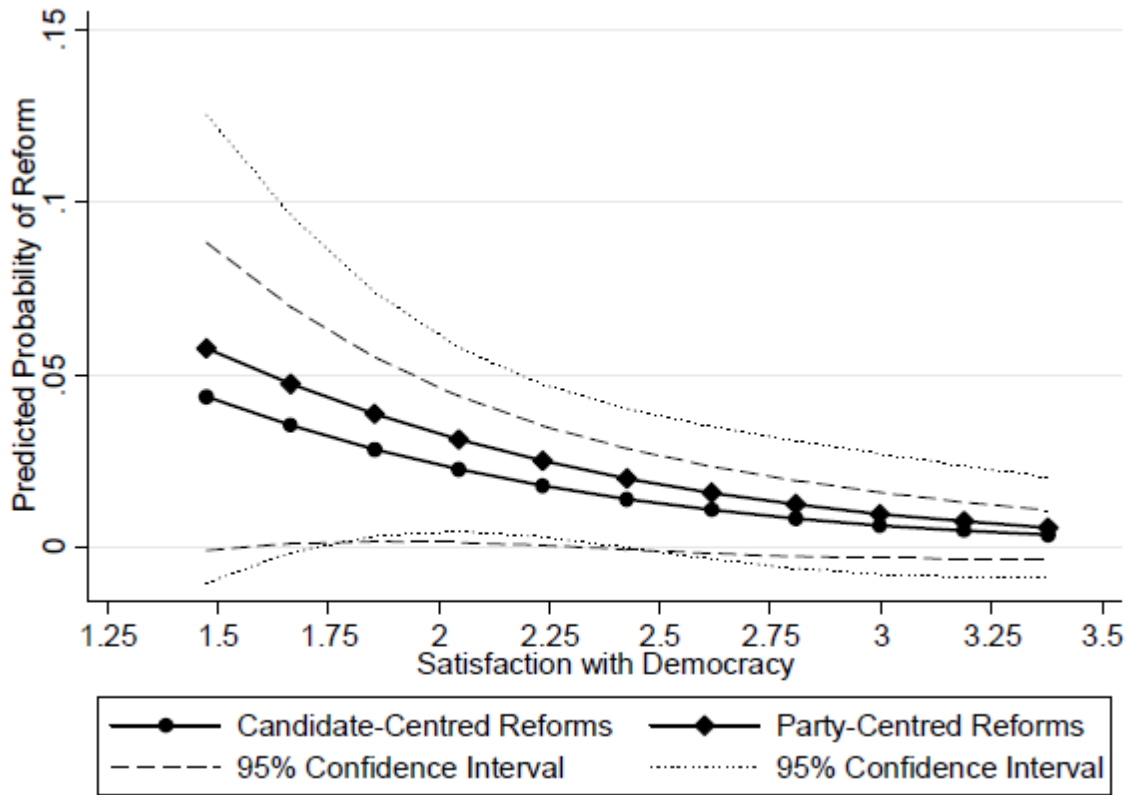
*Note:* The dependent variable takes value 0 if there is no reform or the reform that takes place has an ambiguous impact in the intraparty dimension; 1 if it is supposed to produce more incentives to cultivate a personal vote; and 2 if it is supposed to produce fewer incentives to cultivate a personal vote. Cluster standard errors by terms in parentheses. \* Significant at 0.10; \*\* Significant at 0.05; \*\*\* Significant at 0.01 (two-tailed tests). The counter of stability years and the cubic splines are included but not shown.

estimates of the interaction terms also suggest that public satisfaction towards politics could lead to intraparty reforms as party system nationalization and/or electoral volatility increases.

By contrast, the results regarding democratic age are puzzling and deserve future research. In this regard, the evidence provided in Model 7 suggests, first of all, that satisfaction with democracy increases the likelihood of movements towards more party-centeredness in new democracies (i.e., when democratic age is equal to zero the coefficient of *Satisfaction with Democracy* is positive and statistically significant at the 5 percent level). However, this positive effect declines as the number of years under democracy increases. In fact, as will be seen below, satisfaction with democracy stops having a statistically significant positive effect on the likelihood of party-centred reforms beyond a particular democratic age. This indicates that an unconditional model specification that did not take account of the modifying impact of the number of democratic years would misleadingly suggest that a citizenry that is dissatisfied in overall terms with how democracy works in a given country always finds itself facing a increase in the likelihood of a party-centred reform.

Simulations using the CLARIFY software (King et al. 2000; Tomz et al. 2003) and reported in Figures 5.1-5.4 facilitate the interpretation of the marginal effect of the main independent variables. While the information provided in Table 5.3 is informative, it remains somewhat limited. First of all, since these are in the end multinomial logistic regressions, the magnitude of the effects cannot be assessed just by looking at the coefficients. Second, the results in the interactive models do not indicate after all whether satisfaction with democracy has a statistically significant impact on electoral reform when the value of the modifying independent variables is greater than zero. As a result, I graphically illustrate the probability of a

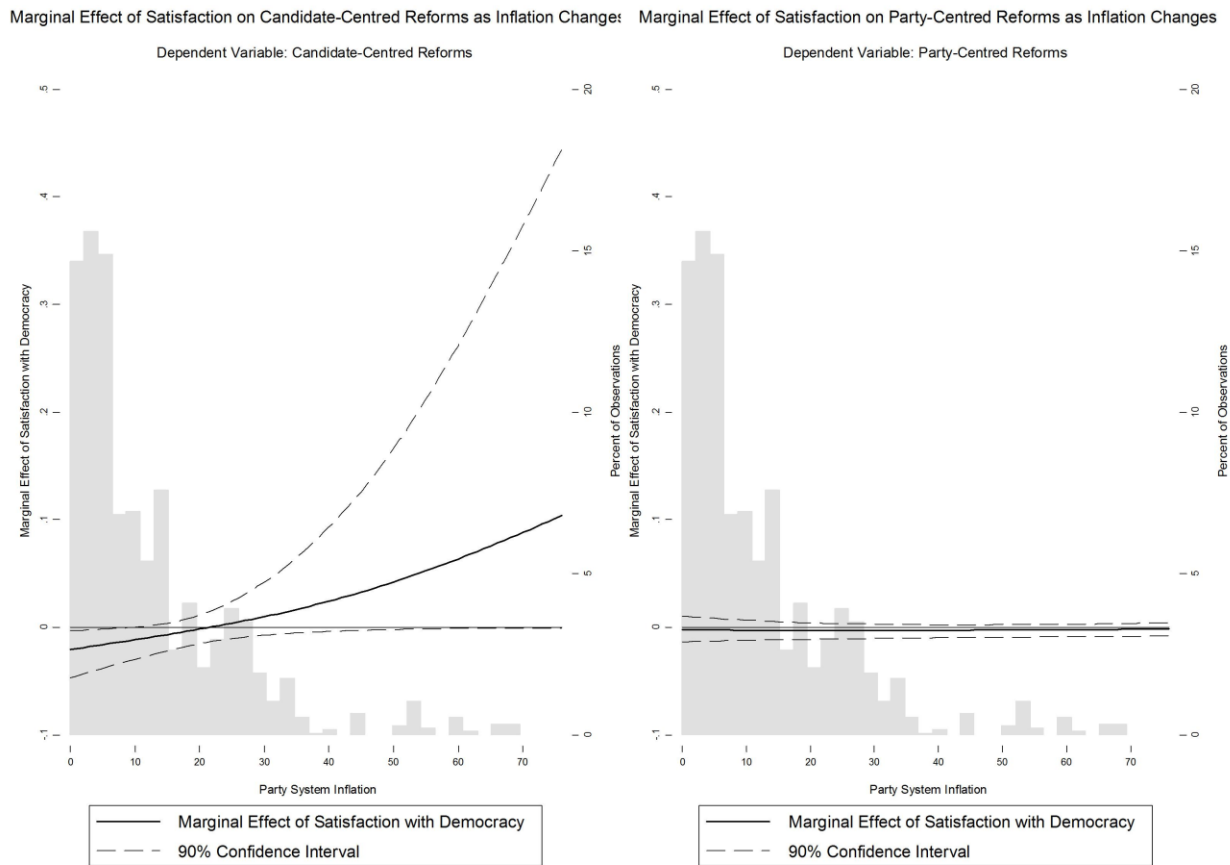
**Figure 5.1. Probability of electoral reform in the intraparty dimension as satisfaction with democracy changes**



*Note:* Results are derived from Table 5.3, Model 1.

given electoral reform to happen according to the variation of satisfaction with democracy (Figure 5.1), and the marginal effect of the overall level of satisfaction with democracy on the likelihood of institutional change across the observed range of party system nationalization, electoral volatility and democratic age (Figures 5.2-5.4). The solid sloping line in this second group of figures indicates how the marginal effect of satisfaction with democracy changes as the value of the conditioning independent variable increases. One can see whether this effect is statistically significant by considering the two-tailed 90% confidence intervals that are drawn around it (i.e., the dashed lines). The effect of satisfaction with democracy is distinguishable from zero whenever the upper and lower bounds of the confidence interval are both above (or below) the zero line. Superimposed over the marginal effect plot is a histogram portraying the frequency distribution for the modifying variables (i.e., party system nationalization, electoral

**Figure 5.2. Marginal effect of satisfaction with democracy on electoral reform in the intraparty dimension as party system inflation changes**

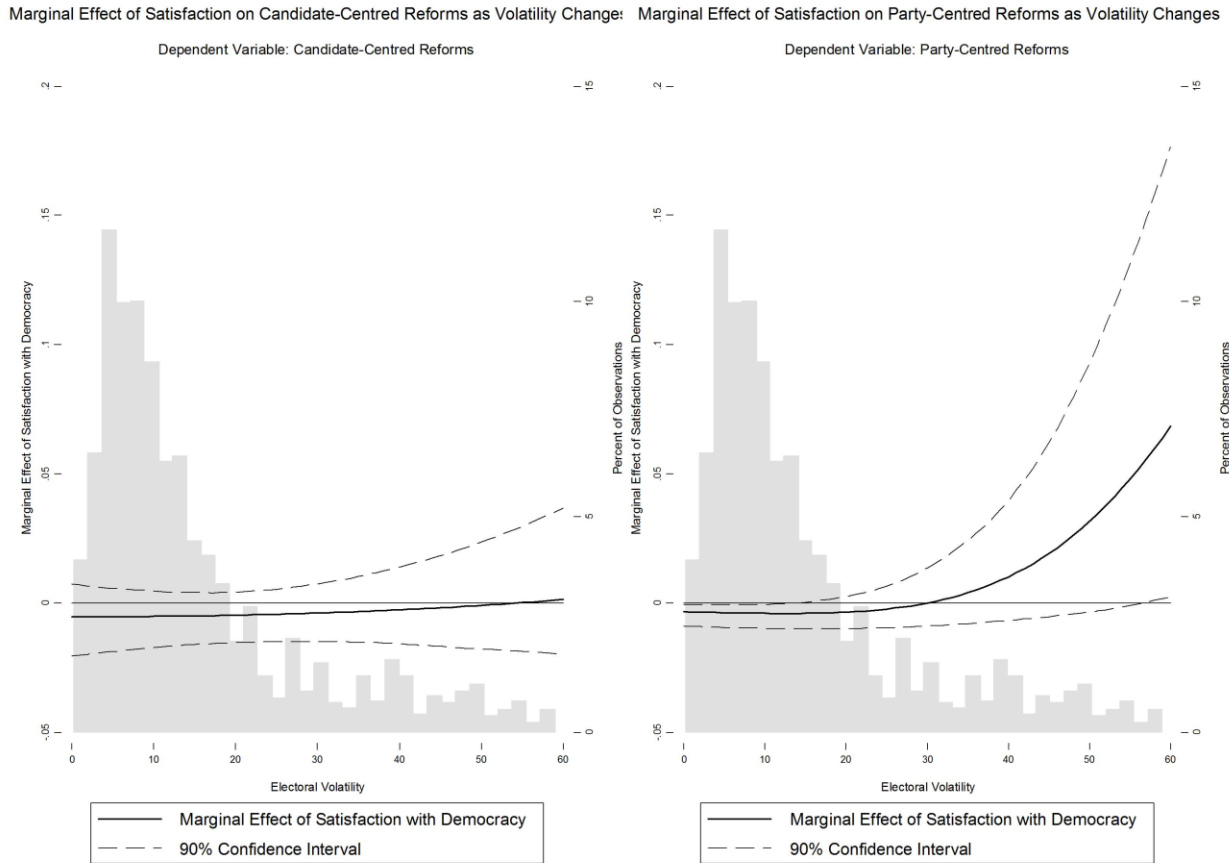


*Note:* Results are derived from Table 5.3, Model 5.

volatility and democratic age). In the four figures, the observation is at the mean of all other variables included in the model.

The first important conclusion derived from the probability calculus plotted in Figure 5.1, based on Model 1, is that satisfaction with democracy shows a stronger effect on the likelihood of party-centred reforms than when predicting candidate-centred reforms. This is so because of the lack of statistical significance of the *satisfaction with democracy* term regarding the occurrence of candidate-centred reforms reported in Table 5.3, showing once again an asymmetric effect of my main explanatory factor on the occurrence of different types of electoral reform.

**Figure 5.3. Marginal effect of satisfaction with democracy on electoral reform in the intraparty dimension as electoral volatility changes**

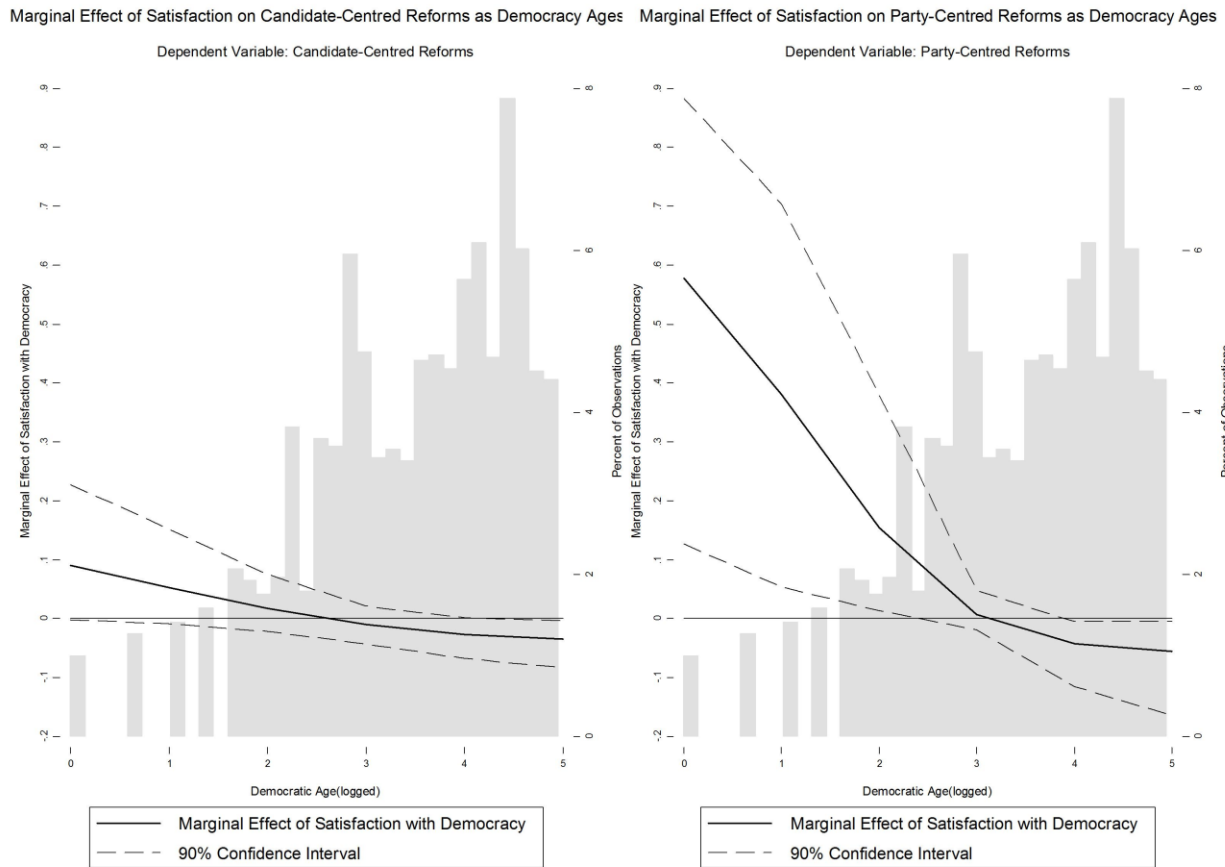


*Note:* Results are derived from Table 5.3, Model 6.

Figure 5.2, based on Model 5, indicates that satisfaction with democracy can decrease the likelihood of candidate-centred reforms as long as we do not move beyond a given threshold of party system inflation –Moenius and Kasuya’s Index  $\leq 0.1$ .<sup>182</sup> Hence, this figure provides somewhat weak evidence in support of Hypothesis 2. This last result is perhaps not too surprising given that the interaction between satisfaction with democracy and party system inflation was positive and statistically significant in Model 5 when predicting candidate-centred reforms. Political parties may simply have incentives to keep the same electoral system when public satisfaction towards the way democracy works increases in contexts of low party system inflation, thereby bringing about these results.

<sup>182</sup> I am grateful to Matt Golder for kindly providing in his *web* page the STATA codes to graph the marginal effects of the multiplicative models used in Brambor et al. (2006).

**Figure 5.4. Marginal effect of satisfaction with democracy on electoral reform in the intraparty dimension as democracy ages**



*Note:* Results are derived from Table 5.3, Model 7.

As predicted by the third hypothesis, satisfaction with democracy has a negative effect on party-centred reforms when electoral volatility is low (Figure 5.3). However, this effect disappears as party competition becomes more instable. In fact, satisfaction with democracy stops having a statistically significant effect on the likelihood of institutional change once Pedersen’s Volatility Index is more than 15. Roughly more than 50 per cent of legislative elections in the sample have produced a volatility lower than this. Hence, the results presented here clearly indicate that satisfaction with democracy only has a statistically significant effect on the likelihood of party-centred reform when volatility is low. By contrast, it is interesting to note that this variable does actually have no impact if the value of the volatility index is sufficiently high. Moreover, this variable fails to have any distinguishable effect from zero on movements

towards more candidate-centeredness (i.e., those reforms that increase candidates' incentives to cultivate a personal vote).

Finally, what about the effect of democratic age? Figure 5.4 plots the marginal effects of the overall satisfaction with democracy on reforms in the intraparty dimension as democracies get older. On the one hand, it should be clear that satisfaction with democracy does not have any effect on the likelihood of observing a candidate-centred reform in the intraparty dimension when the democracy is young. However, this null effect becomes negative and statistically significant as the number of years under democracy increases. Satisfaction with democracy starts having a noticeable negative effect on the likelihood of adopting a candidate-centred reform once the level of democratic experience becomes sufficiently high. On the other hand, Figure 5.4 shows that satisfaction with democracy will also decrease the likelihood of party-centred reforms after 70 years of democracy. However, contrary to my expectations, satisfaction with democracy has a strong positive effect on the likelihood of party-centred reforms in young democracies. Hence, there is some evidence to support the hypothesis that the likelihood of popular electoral reforms, as measured by electoral system changes in the intraparty dimension when satisfaction with democracy is low, significantly increases once the country goes beyond the first decades of democracy.

As robustness checks, it needs to be noticed that the findings regarding the interactive hypotheses remain very similar (although a bit weaker) when a bunch of control variables are included in the models (see Table A3.1 in Appendix 3). By contrast, the significant coefficient regarding the interaction between satisfaction with democracy and party system inflation on the likelihood of candidate-centred reforms disappears when “extreme” electoral systems are excluded from the analyses (see Table A3.2 in Appendix 3). Single non-transferable vote systems and closed-list PR systems with multi-member districts are deemed to be “extreme”.<sup>183</sup> However, satisfaction with democracy has for the first time a statistically significant effect on the likelihood of candidate-centred reforms in the bivariate regression (Model 1).

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<sup>183</sup> More specifically, the cases excluded from this part of the analysis are: Japan (before 1996), Colombia (before 2006), Argentina, Bolivia (before 1997), Bulgaria (except for 1990 and 2009), Costa Rica, Dominican Republic (before 2002), Ecuador (before 1998), El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras (before 2005), Israel, Moldova, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Portugal, Romania (before 2008), Spain, Ukraine (between 1998 and 2006), and Venezuela (before 1993).



Table A3.3 in Appendix 3 shows the results of the Cox models displayed as coefficients rather than hazard ratios. Results are even a bit worse in this last set of econometric tests. Satisfaction with democracy only has success in explaining candidate-centred reform when introduced without any other main independent variable (see Model 1). Contrary to expectations, electoral volatility fosters the occurrence of candidate-centred reforms in one specification (see Model 3). Moreover, the levels of neither party system nationalization nor electoral volatility are significant modifying factors of the effect of satisfaction with democracy (see Models 5 and 6, respectively). Party system inflation increases the likelihood of candidate-centred reforms in three out of four models (all but Model 6). Finally, the initial (and counterintuitive) positive effect of satisfaction with democracy on party-centred reforms decreases as democratic time goes by (see Model 7).

Finally, when temporal dependence is modelled by including time, time<sup>2</sup> and time<sup>3</sup> in the regressions, the main results are slightly weaker (see Table A3.4 in Appendix 3). Bearing this in mind, and trying to disentangle the mechanism that leads politicians to change the intraparty dimension of the electoral rules when satisfaction with democracy is low, I have included in Table A3.5 of Appendix 3 the results of a last group of specifications in which the main independent variable is political corruption.<sup>184</sup> For example, reducing the levels of corruption was one of the goals a Japanese party or politician tended to appeal to when arguing in favour of electoral reform in 1993 (Reed 2005). Likewise, decreasing opportunities for corruption in the electoral process is one of the ambitions that underlaid the 1993 reform in Italy (Gambetta and Warner 2004). Unfortunately, crossnational data on political corruption are only available from 1996 onwards. For this reason, we should be careful about the interpretation of the results. In either case, they are still informative and suggest that politicians are more likely to adopt a party-centred reform when the perceptions of the extent to which public power is exercised for private gain are widely spread.

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<sup>184</sup> *Source:* Worldwide Governance Indicators of the World Bank (Kaufmann and Kraay 2002).

## 5.6. Conclusion

Building on previous research, this chapter provides evidence that overall dissatisfaction with the way democracy works in a given country is very important for explaining electoral reform in the intraparty dimension. In a nutshell, I hope to have illustrated that the existing literature does not provide an adequate answer to the question of whether (and how) this independent variable affects the likelihood of changing the intraparty dimension of electoral systems. Many other studies argue that widespread dissatisfaction with democracy has a positive effect on these types of electoral reforms. Nevertheless, most of them either limit their scope to a particular region of the world or time span, employ an excessively restrictive definition of electoral reform that only pays attention to major changes (Norris 2011) or only take into consideration candidate-centred reforms (Renwick and Pilet 2011). By employing a new dataset which includes electoral reforms between 1945 and 2010 in 60 democratic countries, I provide several contributions to the current state of the art. One is to show that party-centred electoral system changes (i.e., movements towards rules that generate more incentives to cultivate a personal vote) are more likely to occur when the overall satisfaction with democracy among the citizens is low. By contrast, I do not find any significant linear effect regarding the impact of satisfaction with democracy on the probability of observing a candidate-centred change in electoral institutions. Future research should evaluate the determinants of this other type of reform. In the meantime, my results suggest that the effect of public dissatisfaction is not completely symmetrical and political actors only adopt more party-centred rules when satisfaction with democracy is low. Italy in 1993, when the voters not only accepted but also demanded an electoral system that would deprive them of intraparty choice, is the clear example of this (D'Alimonte 2005). In other words, high dissatisfaction with the way democracy works provokes party-centred reforms but not the other way around.

Yet, another important finding is the recognition that satisfaction with democracy, on the one hand, and party system nationalization, electoral volatility, and democratic age, on the other hand, interact to shape actors' incentives to reform the rules of the game in a party-centred direction. Hence, my claims are that satisfaction with democracy can decrease the likelihood of observing a candidate-centred and a party-centred electoral system change when the uniformity

of parties' vote shares across districts and the stability of political competition are sufficiently high in turn (i.e., in case of high party system nationalization and low electoral volatility, respectively). Moreover, I have also found that satisfaction with democracy contributes to decrease the likelihood of electoral reform in the intraparty dimension when the current democratic period of time has been long enough.

Bearing these considerations in mind, one very clear conclusion can be derived from my study: Electoral reforms are complex phenomena, results of many different elements that reinforce or diminish each other. In this regard, there is clearly more to it than just a linear effect of vote-maximization based on the current voters' disengagement from and distrust of current democratic working, as the dominant literature suggests. In other words, the conventional wisdom captures only a small fraction of the reality since it simply focuses on parties' desire to maximize their vote shares. However, parties' willingness to change the electoral system is also determined by their cross-district linkages (party system nationalization) or the level of stability of the electoral context (electoral volatility). Finally, results in the chapter suggest that general dissatisfaction with the way democracy works leads to electoral reforms in the intraparty dimension but only in the case of established democracies. This finding might entail that a party in a democracy that has been in place long enough might be punished by voters at the ballot box if it ignores a widespread dissatisfaction with the current operation of democracy and, thus, a popular desire for reform (Shugart 2008).<sup>185</sup>

In conclusion, a combination of several theoretical approaches arrives, ultimately, at a comprehensive answer to the question of why a reform in the intraparty dimension of the electoral system takes place in contemporary democracies. However, even though my investigation has highlighted the importance of dissatisfaction with democracy for the occurrence of electoral reforms, several questions still need to be addressed in order to better understand the workings of the relationship between this independent variable and the incentives to cultivate a personal vote generated by the electoral rules. Future research should test the

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<sup>185</sup> This is only an implication of my argument that I would like to test in the future. The reforms might also be due to current dissatisfaction with democracy that allows elite reformers taking advantage of a permissive public opinion. That would be a major finding as well but the analysis in this chapter cannot distinguish between the two interpretations.

several possible mechanisms at work, as well as provide more general explanations for the adoption of intraparty electoral reforms. Moreover, it would be important to know whether the modifying effect of party system nationalization and electoral volatility vary for different kinds of democracies; is there a heterogeneous effect depending on democratic age or political freedom? Is it indeed the case that established and developing party systems operate differently? Finally, politicians' values (for example, their ideology) may be a key factor in promoting electoral reform. I hope that this chapter will spur the interest necessary to address some of these questions and improve our understanding of how public disquiet about the operation of democracy in a country affects the fates of its electoral rules.

### **Part Three**

*The occurrence of electoral reforms and its consequences at different levels*



## Chapter 6. “Robbing from the poor and giving to the rich”: The impact of reforms in the interparty dimension at the macro-level (I). The case of electoral disproportionality<sup>186</sup>

### 6.1. Introduction

Disproportionality is of course one of the main consequences of electoral systems. For this reason, it has been at the core of an increasing literature which has measured it, has identified some of its main determinants, and has discussed its consequences for different political institutions such as party systems, parliaments, or governments. In the last century, Douglas W. Rae (1971 [1967]: 86), arguably one of the founding fathers of the science of electoral systems, emphasized the relevance of disproportionality as the main consequence of the rules of game, graphically depicting them as the Sheriff of Nottingham, “apt to steal from the poor and give to the rich: strong parties usually obtain more than their proportionate share of legislative seats while weak parties receive less than their proportionate share of seats”. And, as he argued later (Rae 1971 [1967]: Chapter 9), while most electoral systems share the same *directional* pattern of redistribution, there are still very important differences in its *strength* or *degree*.

In most of the literature on electoral systems, indices of disproportionality have been expressed as averages over a given number of elections, and their longitudinal evolution from one election to the next has been utterly overlooked.<sup>187</sup> Its fluctuations, however, are anything but negligible in countries that have reformed at least some of the components of the electoral system. For instance, disproportionality reached a historical minimum in the 1996 New Zealand general election by dropping from 18.19 per cent in 1993 down to 3.43 per cent three years later. This drastic reduction was largely caused by the adoption of a mixed-member proportional (MMP) electoral system (Vowles 2008). The most striking contrasting case is the 1991 Polish parliamentary election. With 29 parties having won seats in the Parliament after the first fully democratic election and a quite remarkable effective number of almost 11 legislative parties, in early 1993 the ruling centre-right parties passed a new electoral law that sought to decrease its considerable permissiveness (Benoit and Hayden 2004). As a result, disproportionality in the

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<sup>186</sup> Some of the main findings in this chapter are accepted for publication in *Party Politics*.

<sup>187</sup> For an exception, see Shugart (1992).

1993 election reached a considerable 17.81 per cent, that is, about 14 points more than two years previously.

Do electoral system changes always generate the theoretically expected outcomes? While most electoral reforms might likely have some consequences for disproportionality, under what circumstances do they have larger effects? In other words, are there any contexts that increase or decrease their potential impact? In this chapter, I seek to establish whether electoral reforms produce changes in the levels of electoral disproportionality, and to identify which type of institutional and competitive setting is most likely to enlarge this impact. Although electoral reforms are messy processes and reformers seldom have a clear expectation about how they will change the structure of the party system (Pilet 2007; Rahat 2011; Renwick 2010), I analyze whether electoral system changes influence the degree of disproportionality in the translation of votes into seats and argue that the status of established democracies is particularly critical to shaping voters' levels of information about the functioning of the new electoral system but also to *immunizing* them against the effects of particular sorts of institutional change. In other words, political actors' reactions to the changes in the structure of incentives brought about by the new electoral rules will depend on the age of democracy. Finally, I also aim at demonstrating that the size of the electoral reform conditions its impact on the levels of disproportionality.

This chapter is thus an attempt to fill some of the gaps in the literature by considering evidence from 59 democracies with a total of 644 elections carried out under various rules. By focusing on a large and diverse sample of democracies, the chapter also highlights the advantage of moving beyond country-specific explanations. Some years ago, Arend Lijphart (1994: Chapter 5) and Dag Anckar (1997) did analyze the determinants of electoral disproportionality with a mixture of interesting and problematic results (see for instance Penadés 1997). My chapter extends the research design employed by those scholars by adding new observations and covariates. Moreover, it will employ appropriate econometric techniques to examine electoral disproportionality under different institutional set ups across countries and over time.

The rest of the chapter is structured as follows. I discuss in the next section the analytical literature that defines and explains variations in electoral disproportionality, and elaborate a



series of working hypotheses that describe its main determinants. I then present my research design and conduct the corresponding empirical tests. Finally, section five concludes.

## **6.2. The effect of electoral reform on disproportionality**

Electoral disproportionality has been defined by Lijphart as “the deviation of parties’ seat shares from their vote shares, [a] (...) prima facie (...) simple and straightforward concept”.<sup>188</sup> In other words, and following now Michael Gallagher and Paul Mitchell (2005: 602), “unless every party and independent candidate wins exactly the same share of the seats as they won of the votes - which of course never happens in the real life- there exists a degree of disproportionality”. By contrast, Gary W. Cox and Matthew S. Shugart (1991: 350) focus on a slightly different aspect, arguing that electoral disproportionality is related to “the extent to which different methods of PR favour large parties over small”.<sup>189</sup>

Which factors determine electoral disproportionality? As expected, the permissiveness of the electoral system emerges as the most potentially important predictor among them. It is well established that electoral systems have an impact on the number of parties that receive votes or get into the Parliament (Cox 1997; Duverger 1964 [1954]; Lijphart 1994; Rae 1971 [1967]; Sartori 1997 [1994]; Taagepera and Shugart 1989). However, the number of studies examining the effect of the rules of the game on electoral disproportionality is not very large.<sup>190</sup> Lijphart’s contribution (1994) constitutes one remarkable exception to this gap as he finds that categorical ballots, explicit or implicit *apparentement* provisions, proportional formulas, and large assemblies decrease electoral disproportionality. Moreover, and above all, he argues that the levels of electoral disproportionality respond very sensitively to the variations in the effective threshold. Likewise, district magnitude is recognized as the decisive factor by Rein Taagepera and Matthew S. Shugart (1989: 124) and John Carey and Simon Hix (2011: 395). By contrast, Kenneth Benoit (2000: 382) finds evidence for a strong effect of the electoral formula. Finally,

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<sup>188</sup> In the same vein, see Taagepera and Shugart (1989: 104).

<sup>189</sup> See Benoit (2000: 382) against this conceptualization.

<sup>190</sup> For instance, Gallagher (1991: 43) limits himself to make an elementary list including the electoral formula, the district magnitude, the degree of malapportionment, the legal threshold, and the distribution of votes among parties; while Cox and Shugart (1991: 350) highlight the role played by compensatory seats, thresholds, malapportionment and the geographical distribution of party support.

Anckar's empirical analyses (1997) reveal that the Gallagher's Index of Electoral Disproportionality is mainly affected by district magnitude and the effective threshold. These findings are by no means surprising if we take into account the fact that the effective threshold is mainly based on district magnitude (Gallagher and Mitchell 2005c: 607).<sup>191</sup>

Building on these contributions, my expectation is that episodes of electoral system change will have an impact on levels of disproportionality. Evidence for the existence of this kind of relationship is not negligible (e.g., Anckar 1997; Lijphart 1994), but it is primarily focused on consolidated democracies.<sup>192</sup> As it is well known at least since Maurice Duverger's (1964 [1954]) seminal contribution, the negative consequences of restrictive electoral rules on party system fragmentation result from two sorts of mechanisms. First, minor parties are typically awarded a much smaller seat share than the share of votes they receive due to the operation of a *mechanical* effect (or *proximal*, according to Rae [1971 [1967]: 67]). Second, electoral restrictiveness is expected to decrease the number of parties by generating incentives for strategic entry on the part of political entrepreneurs and tactical voting on the part of voters (Cox 1997). Duverger (1964 [1954]) and Rae (1971 [1967]: 68) coin the terms *psychological* and *distal* effects for these behavioural consequences of non-permissive electoral laws (primarily, a higher preference and, hence, propensity to vote for large parties).

The relationship between the number of parties and the levels of electoral disproportionality constitute the basis for my first hypothesis. Following Duverger (1964 [1954]), I will argue that electoral reforms may provoke changes in the levels of disproportionality because they operate on party system fragmentation at the electoral and the legislative level through different means and, most importantly, at different points in time. The mechanical effect of electoral systems will decrease the effective number of parliamentary

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<sup>191</sup> Electoral thresholds capture the percentage of votes needed to elect one representative from a district. This can be established by law or determined in practice by the number of MPs elected from that district, the so-called *effective threshold*, according to the following formula:

$$t = \frac{75\%}{(m+1)}$$

where  $t$  refers to the effective threshold and  $m$  to the district magnitude (Lijphart 1994: 25-29; Taagepera and Shugart 1989: 126-141).

<sup>192</sup> To the best of my knowledge, Benoit's paper (2000) is one of the few exceptions to this pattern because he uses local election data from Hungary. My study aims to illuminate several important facets obscured in this previous investigation by using data from national elections in a heterogeneous group of countries that simultaneously include old and new democracies.

parties just after a restrictive<sup>193</sup> reform through the automatic application of the change in the electoral rules; and the reverse will be true for permissive reforms. By contrast, the psychological effect comes from the reactions of political actors to the expected consequences of the electoral reform. What I suggest is that this latter effect is slower than the former and, as a consequence, the levels of electoral disproportionality change over the course of successive elections following an electoral reform. To sum up, I posit that *levels of disproportionality will get higher in countries where a restrictive electoral reform is adopted; and lower in the case of permissive reforms* (H<sub>1</sub>). Part of this impact stems from the fact that party system fragmentation is more elastic at the legislative than the electoral level.

The second feature that is predicted to affect the levels of disproportionality is the size of the electoral reform. Consistent with the literature on electoral systems, I expect major rather than minor changes in the rules of the game to exercise a larger impact on the degree of deviation from perfect proportionality. It is well known that major reforms of national electoral systems remain quite rare (Birch et al. 2002; Gallagher 2005; Katz 2005; Lijphart 1994; Nohlen 1984b; Norris 1995; Taagepera 2007b).<sup>194</sup> If one takes into account the fact that only major reforms can change the whole format of the party system, as I argue here, and that this type of institutional changes needs the support of the party or coalition of parties in power to be passed, it is understandable that they are far from common. By contrast, mere fine-tuning of the components of the electoral system would give a smaller opportunity to politicians to change the levels of disproportionality even if they modified a decisive factor of the electoral rules such as the district magnitude. For this reason, it might occur more frequently. In short, I hypothesize that *the effect of electoral reforms on the levels of disproportionality will be higher in case of major changes of the electoral system; and lower in the case of minor reforms* (H<sub>2</sub>).

Finally, substantial differences between established and young democracies are expected, and not only with regard to the levels of disproportionality but also the impact of electoral reforms. Students on this field have claimed that the critical element in observing political consequences of electoral laws is the availability of good information about the operation of the

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<sup>193</sup> As I mention above, the terms *proportional, permissive, inclusive or weak*, on the hand, and *majoritarian, restrictive, exclusive or strong* are used interchangeably.

<sup>194</sup> Against this, see Colomer (2001a).

rules; and this kind of information is arguably less available in young democracies (Cox 1997; Duverger 1964 [1954]; Moser and Scheiner 2012). Thus, the ability of citizens to recognize and act upon situations where voting for one's sincere preference leads to a less desirable outcome – wasting their vote – heavily depends on the age of democracy (Horowitz and Browne 2005; Queralt 2009). Voters' (and elites') inexperience with both the operation of the rules and the nature of party systems gives rise to expectations of a smaller psychological effect and, hence, a larger impact on disproportionality of electoral reforms in new democracies (Benoit 2002). This predicted pattern would erode as the democracy matured (Dawisha and Deets 2006; Duch and Palmer 2002; Kostadinova 2006; Tavits and Annus 2006). However, this is only part of the story.

Voting in a given election is on its own self-reinforcing (Dinas 2010: 13). By repeating the act of voting, as Cees van der Eijk and Mark Franklin put it (2009: 179), citizens get locked into particular voting patterns. This idea of habit formation (Franklin 2004) might hamper the psychological or distal effects of electoral reforms in old democracies. People under stable electoral rules acquire, over time, a "habit of voting" (Franklin and Hobolt 2011). Once such a habit has been obtained it is not easily lost, so the psychological effect of a change in electoral rules will be felt in the first instance only by those who have not yet acquired that habit –mostly, younger voters. More importantly, what I am arguing here is that voters in young democracies might be much more sensitive to electoral reforms because their process of partisan anchoring is not yet complete. This lack of habituation could counteract the aforementioned effect derived from voters' (and elites') political inexperience and poor information and leads one to expect a smaller impact of electoral system change on disproportionality in new democracies.

In order to illustrate these points, let's imagine, for example, two countries that adopt a more permissive electoral system. Country *A* and *B* are a young and a consolidated democracy, respectively. As a consequence of the straightforward application of the new electoral rules to convert votes into seats, some parties –almost always the large ones– will be less “over-represented” than they were, receiving a smaller proportion of seats than they did before the reform; and the opposite will hold for the small parties. This result will be common to both countries. But I expect that the dynamics at the electoral level will diverge to some extent in the two countries. While leaders of small parties and their potential supporters in both types of

democracies will realize that the new rules provide incentives to run alone and vote for them, respectively, the time needed to elapse before they fully understand those new rules may be shorter in established democracies. On this basis, we should see a quicker adjustment of the behaviour of all political actors to the new electoral arrangements and, as a result, a smaller impact of institutional change on the levels of disproportionality in longer-lived democracies. However, this effect should be the opposite according to the potentially competing hypothesis of habituation. Citizens in old democracies are anchored to particular voting patterns. For this reason, we should expect lower rates of party switching among them and, hence, a more considerable reduction in the levels of disproportionality as a result of permissive electoral system changes.<sup>195</sup> Summing up, if the first explanation about the role of political information/sophistication was right, *electoral reforms should have their largest impact on electoral disproportionality in recently-democratized countries; this effect would get smaller with increasing democratic age* (H<sub>3a</sub>). By contrast, if partisan anchoring was the main mechanism driving the modifying effect of democratic experience, *electoral reforms should have their smallest impact on electoral disproportionality in recently-democratized countries; this effect would get larger with increasing democratic age* (H<sub>3b</sub>).

### **6.3. Data and methods**

This section discusses my data and some methodological issues. I start describing the sample and then introduce Gallagher's Least Squares Index in detail. Next, I justify the choice and operationalization of the other variables. Finally, this section addresses estimation issues.

#### **6.3.1. Sample**

The dataset includes over 600 observations in 59 countries between 1945 and 2010, with more than ten elections on average per country. The sample only includes democracies according to Adam Przeworski et al.'s (2000: 54) definition<sup>196</sup> and the cases analyzed vary widely in the number of elections conducted and electoral reforms adopted, and the amount of variation that

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<sup>195</sup> The permissive reform makes votes for small parties more attractive and reduces the attractiveness of votes for large parties. But this only affects disproportionality to the extent that voting patterns change. To the extent that people keep voting for the same parties as before the reform has less effect.

<sup>196</sup> In these scholars' view, democracy is a system in which "incumbents lose elections and leave office when the rules so dictate"; the most important feature of his coding is the use of a dichotomous measure.

needs to be explained.<sup>197</sup> And while the levels of disproportionality are basically explained by the type of electoral system, the dispersion is a function of at least three factors: the mean, the number of elections, and the frequency of electoral reforms. Moreover, the structure of the data is cross-sectional time-series, but the units are elections rather than years. Finally, one could argue that electoral disproportionality should be studied with disaggregated data because national patterns of this phenomenon (like party system fragmentation) derive from district-level outcomes (Cox 1997). However, I think the lack of disaggregated data is not a problem for my research design as long as the mean disproportionality at the district-level, contrary to what often happens with party system fragmentation, represents an upper bound for countrywide values of this variable. Hence, the difficulties generated by the aggregation of the different local party systems do not arise here, and electoral disproportionality at the national level is at most equal to mean electoral disproportionality at the district-level.<sup>198</sup>

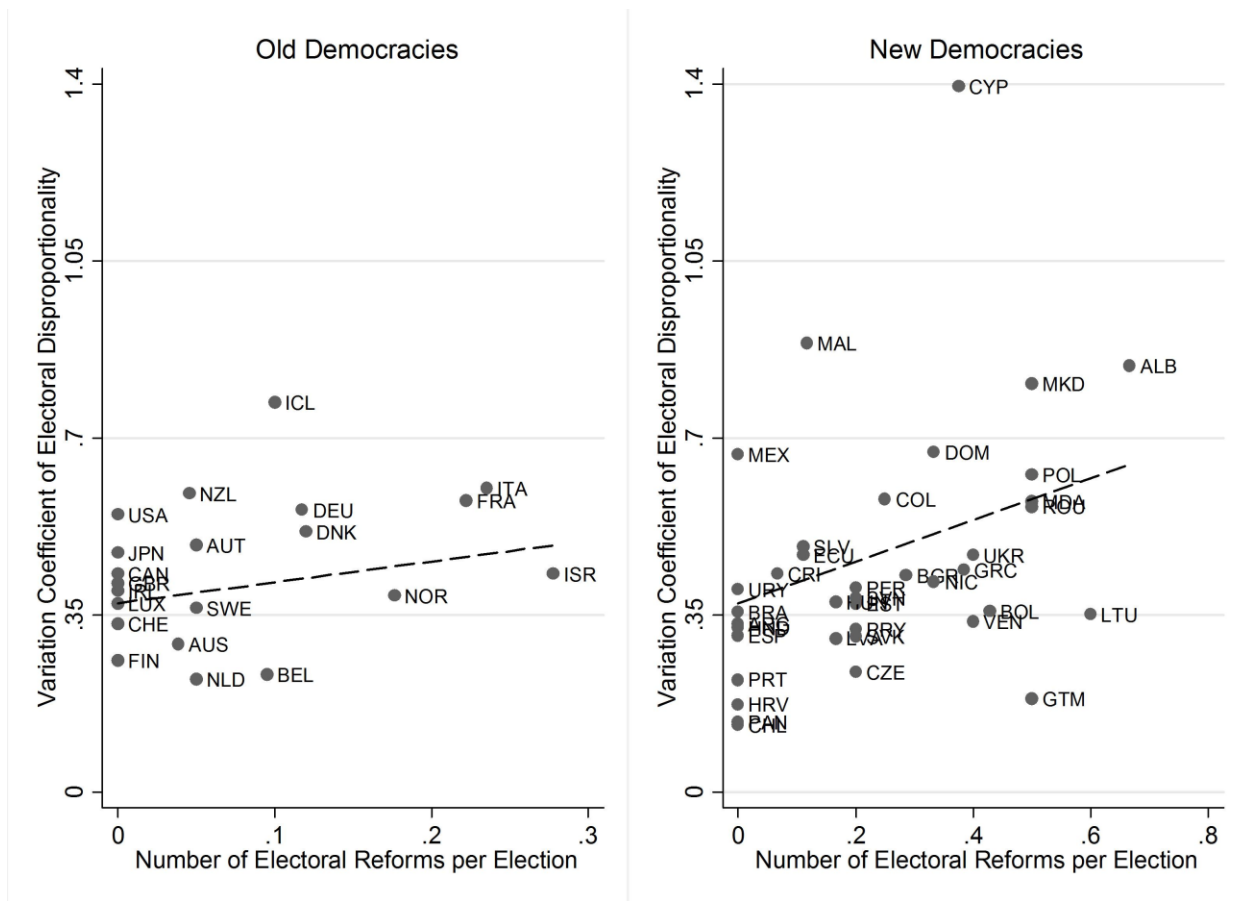
Before getting into the multivariate regression models, I tested whether I can infer the proposed association between electoral reform and changes in disproportionality using simple bivariate tools. I first computed the coefficient of variation of electoral disproportionality in old and new democracies and plotted these against the number of electoral reforms per election for the period 1945-2010. Figure 6.1 shows the result and adds a line for the predicted values of an

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<sup>197</sup> These countries fit in two main groups -namely, established democracies that belong to the OECD and new democracies from Latin America and Eastern and Southern Europe- and include: Albania, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bolivia, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Macedonia, Malta, Mexico, Moldova, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States, Uruguay and Venezuela. Unfortunately, data for Armenia are not available.

<sup>198</sup> In order to illustrate these points, let's imagine, first, one country with two equal-sized single-member districts whose party system is extremely poorly nationalized because party A only wins votes in district 1 whilst party B only wins votes in district 2. Hence, the effective number of electoral parties at the national level is two although there is only one party at each district and, as result, the mean score of this index at that level is also one. More in general, the national effective number of parties can only be more than or equal to the mean of this index at the district-level. Turning to disproportionality, let's imagine that in the same country party A wins the two seats because it obtains one more vote than party B in each district. Hence, the electoral system causes maximum disproportionality (i.e., close to 100 per cent) at both levels (i.e., national and district-level). By contrast, maximum disproportionality would be registered only at the district-level (national disproportionality would be zero) if one different party wins in each district by only one vote. Hence, these numbers show that electoral disproportionality at the national level, in contrast to party system fragmentation, is at most equal to electoral disproportionality at the district-level. For example, in the 2010 Catalan elections the values of the Gallagher's index for the four districts (i.e., Barcelona [M = 85], Girona [M = 17], Lleida [M = 15] and Tarragona [M = 18]) are 16.7%, 28.8%, 39% and 34%. The overall disproportionality is 19.5% and is always higher than the mean disproportionality at the district-level irrespective of calculating the latter as a weighted (DI = 22.99%) or a non-weighted average (DI = 29.6%).

**Figure 6.1. Dispersion in electoral disproportionality and electoral reform**



*Notes:* The y-axis shows the coefficient of variation in Gallagher's Least Squares Index of electoral disproportionality between 1945 and 2010 in established and new democracies. The x-axis displays the number of electoral reforms implemented per election.

OLS regression of the dispersion in Gallagher's Least Squares Index on the institutional instability measure. This simple bivariate model returns a positive value for the number of reforms per election that is statistically significant at the 5 per cent level. This finding is consistent with the first hypothesis that argued that electoral reforms changed the levels of disproportionality observed in a given country: despite substantial variation around the regression line, disproportionality tends to have varied more in countries with a large number of electoral reforms.

### 6.3.2. Measuring electoral disproportionality

My dependent variable is the change in Gallagher's Index of Electoral Disproportionality.<sup>199</sup> The number of indices used for measuring electoral disproportionality has been remarkably high in comparative research. Most of them share similar conceptual traits despite the quite different ways in which deviations have been operationalized. The abundance of indices has made the measurement of disproportionality a more difficult and controversial issue than the quantification of other standard political indicators (Lijphart 1994: 57).<sup>200</sup> In any case, the canonical index in the literature is that of least squares.<sup>201</sup> Created by Gallagher (1991), it is the best in measuring the disproportionality of election results. According to Gallagher and Mitchell (2005: 602), "the rationale of the least squares index is that it takes account not only the total amount of vote-seat disparity but also the way in which that disparity came about, regarding one large disparity (say, 8 per cent) as more significant than several small ones (e.g. four each of 2 per cent)". It is the index preferred by Arend Lijphart (1994: 62) for its sensitivity and faithful reflection of the deviation of seats from vote shares, and also the index that scored first in the evaluation of 19 measures of electoral disproportionality performed according to 12 criteria by Rein Taagepera and Bernard Grofman (2003).<sup>202</sup> Since many methods of seat allocation generate their own measure of disproportionality (Gallagher 1991: 38), a definitive answer to the question about which index should be taken as the best one will finally hinge on which electoral formula is under scrutiny. But the fact that the least squares index takes into account both the total amount of vote-seat disparity and its size, together with my concern with how different electoral systems affect the distribution of seats amongst parties (Borisjuk et al. 2004: 60), lead me to choose it over the *zoo* of other indices (Van Puyenbroeck 2008: 498).

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<sup>199</sup> The main source for this data is Michael Gallagher's dataset ([www.tcd.ie/Political\\_Science/Staff/Michael.Gallagher/ElSystems/index.php](http://www.tcd.ie/Political_Science/Staff/Michael.Gallagher/ElSystems/index.php)). When completing it, I have followed Gallagher and Mitchell's (2005c: 605) recommendations regarding calculation of the least squares index when a number of parties are lumped together as "others". Therefore, I (i) applied Taagepera's least components approach; (ii) disregarded others; and (iii) took the average of (i) and (ii).

<sup>200</sup> Incidentally, almost all the measures employ the term *disproportionality*, rather than the contrary, because their values increase with increasing disproportionality (Lijphart 1994: 58).

<sup>201</sup> This measure is calculated according to the following formula:

$$DI = \sqrt[2]{\left(\frac{1}{2} \sum (v_i^2 - s_i^2)^2\right)}$$

where  $v_i$  is the percentage of vote obtained by party  $i$  and  $s_i$  is the percentage of seats obtained by party  $i$ . This index has a range from 0 to 100 (Gallagher 1991). Against its use, see Urdánoz Ganuza's (2006).

<sup>202</sup> The two most commonly used indices of disproportionality before the 1990s were those proposed by Rae (1971 [1967]: 8) and Loosemore and Hanby (1971). However, researchers became reluctant to use them after the invention of the least squares index because of their over-sensitivity to the number of parties participating in an election (mainly, if they were small).



### 6.3.3. Defining electoral reforms

My main independent variable is the existence (or absence) of an electoral reform, and is coded in terms of its different types. For an extensive definition and typology of electoral reform, see Chapter 3.<sup>203</sup> The identification of a case of electoral reform without specifying the direction in which the rules of the game change is clearly insufficient. On this basis, I deem it necessary to distinguish between *permissive* and *restrictive* reforms, which are expected to respectively increase and decrease the “hospitality” of the electoral system to small parties (Taagepera 1998: 415). Given that the underrepresentation of these parties is the main source of disproportionality, making easier or more difficult their access to the assemblies and raising or reducing their seat share should have an impact on it. Further details of all the episodes of electoral reform identified are given in the Appendix 1 to this thesis.

### 6.3.4. Other independent variables

I use Richard Katz’s (2005: 58) stringent rules to limit the meaning of “major reforms of national electoral systems’ to the wholesale replacement of the electoral formula through which a strong president, or the chamber of parliament to which the national government is responsible, is elected”.<sup>204</sup> Accordingly, I consider *major* reforms those that concern the adoption of proportional, mixed member, or majoritarian systems when the electoral rules that were in use before the change belonged to the other two big families. Otherwise, I code the reform as *minor*. As predicted by H<sub>2</sub>, major reforms are expected to amplify the negative (positive) impact on electoral disproportionality of permissive (restrictive) reforms. In order to test this effect, I introduce two interactions, *PermissiveReform\*MajorReform* and *RestrictiveReform\*MajorReform*. The coefficient for them should be negative and positive, respectively.

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<sup>203</sup> *Sources*: Birch (2003), Birch et al. (2002), Bowler and Grofman (2000), Colomer (2004a), Gallagher and Mitchell (2005a), Golder (2004), Grofman et al. (1999), Grofman and Lijphart (2007 [2002]), the Inter-Parliamentary Union (n.d.), Johnson and Wallack (2010 [2003]), Jones (1995 and 1997), Lijphart (1994), Lundell and Karvonen (2003), Negretto (2009), Payne (2007), Remmer (2008), Renwick (2011), Shugart and Wattenberg (2001), Shvetsova (1999), Wills Otero and Pérez-Liñán (2005), Zovatto and Orozco Henríquez (2008), and electoral laws of each country.

<sup>204</sup> If we focus only on established democracies, the list of major reforms since 1950 that meet this criterion only includes 14 cases.

I also create the variable *DemocraticAge* (*logged*), which is equal to the number of years since the transition to democracy.<sup>205</sup> I do not have any clear expectation about the sign of the coefficient for this variable taken alone because it corresponds to its effect on changes in electoral disproportionality when there is no reform.<sup>206</sup> Finally, I also include two additional interaction terms in the regression models, *PermissiveReform\*DemocraticAge* and *RestrictiveReform\*DemocraticAge*, in order to test the third hypotheses.<sup>207</sup> I do not have clear expectations about these coefficients either. On the one hand, the lack of information in new democracies discussed above suggests that reforms will have a larger effect on electoral disproportionality there. Thus, the coefficients for the first of these interactions should be positive, whereas for the second should be negative. However, according to the habituation hypothesis, I expect a negative and a positive coefficient, respectively, for these interaction terms since I predict that a permissive reform will have a larger negative effect on electoral disproportionality as the democracy matures;<sup>208</sup> and the reverse is expected for a restrictive reform.

### 6.3.5. Estimation issues

As far as the estimation technique is concerned, I prefer to avoid employing panel corrected standard errors (PCSEs). If I implemented them, I would implicitly assume that the observations are contemporaneously correlated *across* units (Beck 2008), which seems inappropriate given the dependent variable under consideration: why would disproportionality in elections celebrated in the same year have to be correlated across countries? For this reason, I assume that electoral

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<sup>205</sup> *Source*: Cheibub et al. (2009).

<sup>206</sup> I take the natural logarithm because I expect the relationship between them and my dependent variable to be non-linear.

<sup>207</sup> In a supplementary analysis, I also test the effect of the level of democratic age by including a dummy variable, *EstablishedDemocracy*, which is first coded as “1” for those countries that have remained democratic since the end of World War II and “0” otherwise; and then is coded as “1” for the first three elections since the end of the autocratic rules and “0” otherwise. Results are not shown, but corroborate those using the more elaborate measure of *DemocraticAge*.

<sup>208</sup> A third different possibility would be that the two effects might cancel each other out. It would be really nice to be able to measure them separately, which you could do if you could discover the proportion of each electorate facing one of its first three elections, since an interaction with such a variable would pick up the habituation effect, allowing the un-interacted variable to pick up the other effect, if any.

disproportionality is correlated *within* countries. Accordingly, the models are estimated using random effects.<sup>209</sup>

There is a second technical reason to circumvent the use of PCSEs, and it relates to the asymptotic behaviour of the generalized least squares (GLSs) estimators. As is probably known, the use of PCSEs entails that the elements in the variances-covariances matrix are estimated over time for each panel (country). Therefore, they become efficient only as the repeated observations in time approach infinity. Nathaniel Beck and Jonathan N. Katz (1995) consider  $T > 15$  as the minimum acceptable threshold to achieve such properties. Unfortunately, the number of elections held since the abandonment of dictatorial rule is still small in new democracies. By contrast, the maximum-likelihood estimators used here achieve their asymptotic behaviour as the number of panels approach infinity. In this sample,  $J = 59$ . This fact implies that there are sufficient units to achieve the desired behaviour (Gelman and Hill 2006), and that PCSEs with GLSs estimators will be outperformed.

Finally, to estimate models with such a structure requires specific attention to time-series dependencies – i.e., autocorrelation – and possible problems of unit root (non-stationarity). In order to account for the first problem, I have followed the strategy advocated by Beck and Katz (1995 and 1996) and added a lagged dependent variable to the right-hand side of the equation (see also Keele and Kelly 2006). With regard to the latter, I refrain from using any solution because the plot of the data suggests a process of unit root does not exist, and, moreover, I am already using a differenced variable as dependent.<sup>210</sup>

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<sup>209</sup> I do this in order to model unit heterogeneity. Random-effects models assume that  $Cov(x_{it}, \mu_i) = 0$ ; that is, there is no correlation between the unobserved heterogeneity and the explanatory variables. The Hausman test confirmed this condition was fulfilled in all the models. In such a case, random-intercepts models were implemented because they provided more efficient estimators than fixed effects, without losing consistency.

<sup>210</sup> Using the level of disproportionality instead of the change is not an option because it could involve a problem of endogeneity: if high disproportionality leads to permissive reforms and it is relatively resistant to electoral system change we could end up with a result that leads us to wrongly conclude that permissive reforms increase rather than decrease the disproportionality of electoral outcomes.

## 6.4. Results

In this section, I first assess the validity of my hypotheses linking electoral reform and electoral disproportionality. Afterwards, I explore the mechanics that lie behind the aforementioned relationship by examining the fluctuations in the levels of disproportionality over time.

### 6.4.1. The institutional determinants of electoral disproportionality

Table 6.1 includes the descriptive statistics of the variables used; and Table 6.2 displays the results of five econometric models with changes in Gallagher's Index as dependent variable.<sup>211</sup>

The most general finding from the specifications is that electoral reforms explain pretty well the fluctuations observed in the levels of electoral disproportionality. This overall impression bolsters the view of electoral engineers emphasizing the role of institutional change in accounting for variations in the degree of correspondence between vote and seat shares of parties. Finally, the R-squared are not very high given the inclusion of a lagged dependent variable in the right hand side of the regression equation.<sup>212</sup> However, the low  $R^2$  is a result of using differences in disproportionality as dependent variable and, hence, is not particularly indicative of a poor goodness of fit of the model.

More in depth, I receive broad support for the proposition that a permissive reform has a negative and statistically significant effect on electoral disproportionality ( $p < 0.01$ ). My models also yield a statistically significant positive effect, albeit weaker, of restrictive reforms on electoral disproportionality. In contrast to permissive modifications of the rules of the game, the coefficient for restrictive electoral system changes loses statistical significance in the interactive models. What do these estimates mean in substantive terms? Taking the coefficients from models 1, 2 and 4, a permissive reform decreases electoral disproportionality by about 3 per cent. This effect is however remarkable if we consider that the estimated coefficients for restrictive reforms vary from 1.573 to 1.988. Hence, like in Matthew Shugart's (2008) work on electoral reforms, I find that the impact of a switch from majoritarian to proportional is bigger than the impact of a

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<sup>211</sup> Overall, the coefficient of the lagged dependent variable is negative and statistically significant. In other words, positive changes in the levels of disproportionality in the previous election lead to negative fluctuations in the current one, holding all the other variables constant. In addition, this suggests "regression to the mean" where "random fluctuations" in one direction are likely to be followed by a lesser or even opposite fluctuation at the following time point. More importantly, such coefficients are quite incompatible with a unit root.

<sup>212</sup> The amount of explained variance should improve and, hence, the  $R^2$  are expected to be high when a lagged dependent variable is one of the regressors.

**Table 6.1. Descriptive statistics**

| <b>Variable</b>                           | <b>Mean</b> | <b>Std. Dev.</b> | <b>Min.</b> | <b>Max.</b> | <b>N</b> |
|---|-------------|------------------|-------------|-------------|----------|
| $\Delta$ Disproportionality               | -0.12       | 3.89             | -22.9       | 22.1        | 644      |
| Permissive Reform                         | 0.07        | 0.27             | 0           | 1           | 644      |
| Restrictive Reform                        | 0.06        | 0.24             | 0           | 1           | 644      |
| Major Reform                              | 0.04        | 0.21             | 0           | 1           | 644      |
| Democratic Age(logged)                    | 3.301       | 1.23             | 0           | 4.94        | 644      |
| Age of the Electoral System(logged)       | 1.36        | 0.94             | 0           | 3.46        | 644      |
| Age of the Major Electoral System(logged) | 1.59        | 0.91             | 0           | 3.46        | 644      |
| Candidate-Centred Reform                  | 0.02        | 0.16             | 0           | 1           | 644      |
| Party-Centred Reform                      | 0.007       | 0.08             | 0           | 1           | 644      |

switch in the opposite direction. In either case, I conclude that electoral engineering substantially influences levels of disproportionality.

My estimates partially support hypothesis 2 that predicts a positive association between the size of the reform and its impact on electoral disproportionality. The coefficient estimated for the interaction term *Permissive\*Major* has the expected negative sign and is statistically significant at the 10 per cent level. By contrast, I do not obtain a statistically significant coefficient for the other interaction term (*Restrictive\*Major*). Taking the estimated effect for permissive reforms, an increase in the size of the institutional change decreases electoral disproportionality by about 3.5 percentage points.<sup>213</sup> Moreover, and relying now on the magnitude of the constitutive term, I infer a maximum effect of almost 6 percentage points. To illustrate it, model 3 predicts electoral disproportionality in Ukraine in 1998 to decrease between 5 and 6 percentage points after the introduction of a mixed-member majoritarian system in 1997; and, in fact, it almost did because it went from 15.1 percentage points in 1994 to 8.4 percentage points four years later.

<sup>213</sup> Following Brambor et al. (2006), I have calculated substantively meaningful marginal effects and standard errors in order to see if this effect is statistically significant. I come up with a standard error of 1.85 and a t-value of 2.98. Hence, the marginal effect of the interaction term is statistically significant at the 0.01 level. When we do the same for major restrictive reforms, we end up with a standard error of 1.93 and a t-value of 1.99 that is statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

**Table 6.2. Determinants of changes in electoral disproportionality, new and established democracies (1945-2010)**

|                                    | <b>Model 1</b>                     | <b>Model 2</b>                     | <b>Model 3</b>                     | <b>Model 4</b>                     | <b>Model 5</b>                     |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <b>Independent Variables</b>       | <b>coefficient</b>                 | <b>coefficient</b>                 | <b>coefficient</b>                 | <b>coefficient</b>                 | <b>coefficient</b>                 |
|                                    | <b>(se)</b>                        | <b>(se)</b>                        | <b>(se)</b>                        | <b>(se)</b>                        | <b>(se)</b>                        |
| $\Delta$ Disprop. (t-1)            | -0.379***<br>(0.034)               | -0.382***<br>(0.034)               | -0.377***<br>(0.034)               | -0.384***<br>(0.034)               | -0.386***<br>(0.034)               |
| Permissive Reform                  | <b>-3.150***</b><br><b>(0.512)</b> | <b>-2.796***</b><br><b>(0.549)</b> | <b>-2.009***</b><br><b>(0.587)</b> | <b>-2.896***</b><br><b>(0.518)</b> | <b>-5.626***</b><br><b>(1.625)</b> |
| Restrictive Reform                 | <b>1.573**</b><br><b>(0.634)</b>   | <b>1.988***</b><br><b>(0.674)</b>  | <b>0.81</b><br><b>(0.752)</b>      | <b>1.781***</b><br><b>(0.634)</b>  | <b>-2.104</b><br><b>(2.141)</b>    |
| Major Reform                       |                                    | -1.333*<br>(0.751)                 | -0.677<br>(1.615)                  |                                    |                                    |
| Permissive*Major                   |                                    |                                    | <b>-3.531*</b><br><b>(1.948)</b>   |                                    |                                    |
| Restrictive*Major                  |                                    |                                    | <b>3.044</b><br><b>(2.076)</b>     |                                    |                                    |
| Democratic Age(logged)             |                                    |                                    |                                    | 0.386***<br>(0.139)                | 0.259*<br>(0.148)                  |
| Permissive*Democratic Age(logged)  |                                    |                                    |                                    |                                    | <b>0.904*</b><br><b>(0.517)</b>    |
| Restrictive*Democratic Age(logged) |                                    |                                    |                                    |                                    | <b>1.256*</b><br><b>(0.668)</b>    |
| Constant                           | -0.092<br>(0.144)                  | -0.082<br>(0.144)                  | -0.087<br>(0.143)                  | -1.477***<br>(0.519)               | -1.021*<br>(0.55)                  |
| N (Observations)                   | 585                                | 585                                | 585                                | 585                                | 585                                |
| J (Countries)                      | 59                                 | 59                                 | 59                                 | 59                                 | 59                                 |
| R <sup>2</sup>                     | 0.22                               | 0.23                               | 0.25                               | 0.23                               | 0.24                               |

*Note:* The dependent variable is the change in the Gallagher's Index of electoral disproportionality; all models are random effects with clustered standard errors by country in parentheses; \*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1 (two-tailed tests).

Model 5 from Table 6.2 shows the results for the third hypotheses. In brief, this last specification demonstrates the existence of clear differences between old and new democracies.

However, simply breaking down the sampled countries in these two groups is not enough to demonstrate the impact of democratic age on the levels of electoral disproportionality. In this regard, the coefficient of *DemocraticAge* is positive and statistically significant. This is interesting because it means that consolidated democracies do not create by themselves less electoral disproportionality once I control for electoral system change and continuity. The absence of conditions favourable to electoral proportionality in new democracies (like a large number of lists) might be either overridden by the presence of permissive rules there or concealed by the high correlation between democratic age and the emergence of new small parties.

Considering the interactions now in detail, I find some initial support for the idea that the effect of permissive reforms is higher in recently democratized countries. In this regard, the coefficient of *Permissive* is negative and statistically significant in Model 5 ( $p < 0.01$ ), indicating that permissive reforms in contexts of new democracies have relatively strong effects on electoral disproportionality. However, this result seems not to be particularly robust over time as the interaction term is positive and reaches statistical significance. Moreover, my findings for restrictive reforms are in line with the habituation hypothesis. First of all, this type of institutional change seems not to be consequential for electoral disproportionality in new democracies. Second, the positive effect of restrictive reforms emerges as the number of years under democracy increases. Hence, this latter finding returns at least partial evidence in favour of the partisan anchoring hypothesis, according to which electoral reforms leads to more variation in the levels of disproportionality in established democracies. Nevertheless, these in principle favourable results will have to be confirmed below by calculating substantively meaningful marginal effects and standard errors.

In effect, according to Thomas Brambor et al. (2006) and Cindy Kam and Robert Franzese (2007), the statistical significance of an interaction term cannot be evaluated through the  $p$ -value shown in the regression table. For this reason, it is necessary to graphically illustrate the marginal effect of my main independent variable (that is, electoral reform) on the levels of

disproportionality over time.<sup>214</sup> Figure 6.2 plots the conditional effect of the different types of reforms on the levels of disproportionality for a range of values of the modifying variable (i.e., the length of democratic rule when the reform is adopted). The graph on the left shows that the expected marginal effect of a permissive reform in a recently-democratized country (that is, when the years of democracy are equal to zero) is huge (almost six percentage points) and negative.<sup>215</sup> However, this effect, as predicted by the informational hypothesis, tends to drop towards zero as democracy matures, and does not produce any statistically significant change in the levels of disproportionality after about 100 years of democracy.<sup>216</sup>

If we now turn to restrictive reforms, the graph on the right supports the habituation hypothesis that expects a positive association between the size of the effect of this type of institutional change and the number of years under democracy.<sup>217</sup> As predicted, the adoption of these new electoral rules does not significantly increase the levels of disproportionality when the reform takes place in the first democratic decades. Resistance to changing voting behaviour in either direction should be less for younger (less habit-bound) democracies, enlarging the impact of the electoral reform on disproportionality. Nevertheless, it can also be seen that restrictive changes in the rules of the game do significantly increase electoral disproportionality when the democracy has been in place long enough. Hence, this graph demonstrates that the extent to which the impact of constraining reforms is actually translated into higher levels of disproportionality depends on the presence of the level of anchoring that is only likely to be found on mature democracies. To sum up, lack of habituation serves to make difficult voters' responsiveness to restrictive reforms in old democracies but not in new ones. The socialization

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<sup>214</sup> To show the statistical significance of the coefficients, I will represent in the vertical axis of a graph the magnitude of the marginal effect of the reform, and on the horizontal axis, the different values of the modifying variable. The continuous line represents the changes of such effect as contextual conditions are modified. The discontinuous lines represent the confidence intervals that will indicate when is the marginal effect statistically significant ( $p < 0.05$ ); this will be the case when the two confidence intervals are simultaneously above or below 0. I am grateful to Matt Golder for kindly providing in his *web* page the STATA codes to graph the marginal effects of the multiplicative models used in Brambor et al. (2006).

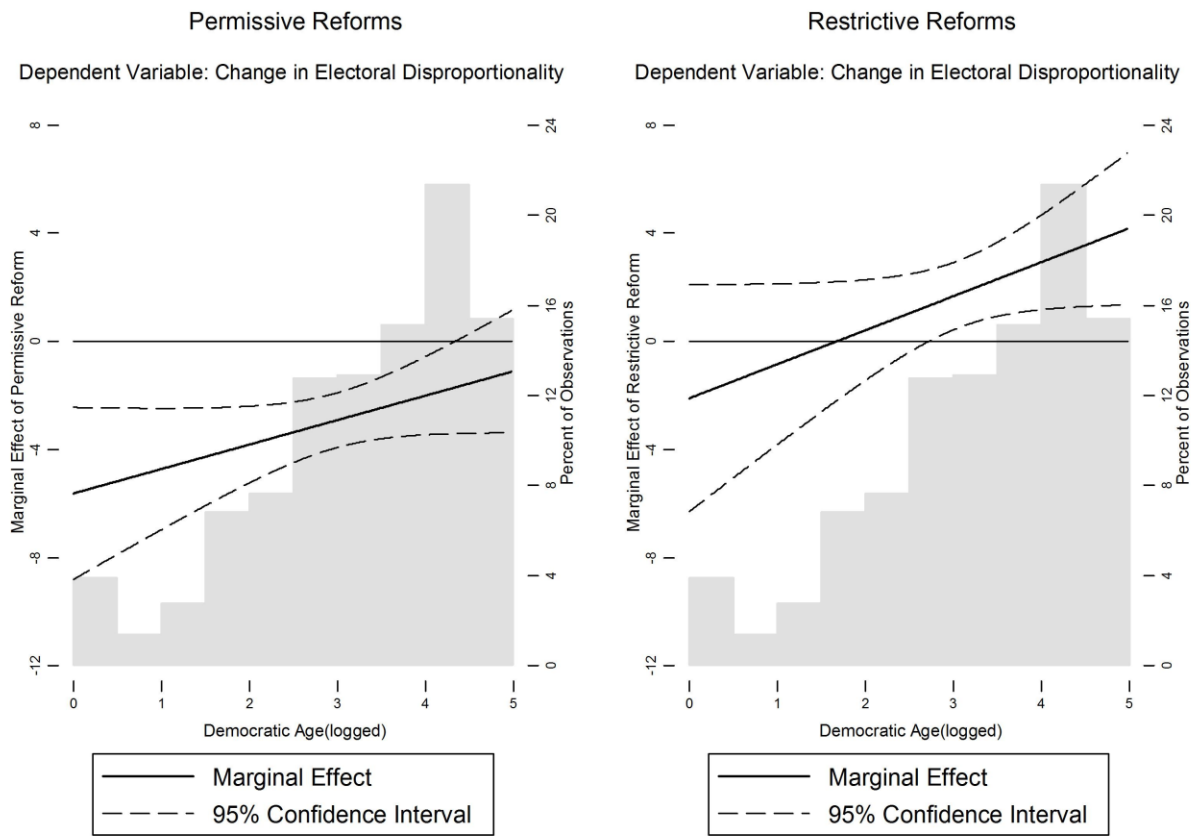
<sup>215</sup> I recognize that this situation is a bit unrealistic because it assumes that two elections take place in the first democratic year, and a more permissive system is adopted in the meantime.

<sup>216</sup> Keep in mind that the modifying variable has been logged. So, in order to get interpretable results, we have to re-exponentiate it.

<sup>217</sup> The habituation hypothesis expected that older democracies should see stronger habituation, less responsiveness to reform among the electorate and more elasticity in the disproportionality indices as a final outcome.



**Figure 6.2. Marginal effect of electoral reform on electoral disproportionality over democratic age**



Notes: Results are derived from Table 6.2, Model 5.

hypothesis dominates for democracies undertaking restrictive reforms but the sophistication ("information") hypothesis dominates for democracies undertaking permissive reforms.

Finally, all the models are retested in Table 6.3 using as main independent variables the electoral reforms in the intraparty dimension. This group of models provides a sort of placebo test of my argument as changes in how the rules of the game affect the distribution of power within parties should not affect all else equal the levels of electoral disproportionality. However, the absence of any relationship between these two variables is hard to assume easily. For example, Carey and Shugart (1995) suggest that changing the district magnitude might have an impact on candidates' incentives to cultivate a personal vote. Once we exclude the latter from my

**Table 6.3. Effects of electoral reforms in the intraparty dimension on electoral disproportionality, new and established democracies (1945-2010)**

| Independent Variables                    | Model 1                         | Model 2                        | Model 3                         | Model 4                         | Model 5                         |
|--|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
|  | coefficient<br>(se)             | coefficient<br>(se)            | coefficient<br>(se)             | coefficient<br>(se)             | coefficient<br>(se)             |
| $\Delta$ Disprop. (t-1)                  | -0.400***<br>(0.036)            | -0.401***<br>(0.035)           | -0.403***<br>(0.035)            | -0.405***<br>(0.035)            | -0.405***<br>(0.035)            |
| Candidate-Centred Reform                 | <b>0.052</b><br><b>(0.92)</b>   | <b>0.243</b><br><b>(0.916)</b> | <b>0.173</b><br><b>(0.987)</b>  | <b>0.035</b><br><b>(0.913)</b>  | <b>1.079</b><br><b>(3.749)</b>  |
| Party-Centred Reform                     | <b>-0.223</b><br><b>(1.961)</b> | <b>0.406</b><br><b>(1.962)</b> | <b>-0.722</b><br><b>(2.389)</b> | <b>-0.237</b><br><b>(1.945)</b> | <b>2.832</b><br><b>(7.433)</b>  |
| Major Reform                             |                                 | -1.962***<br>(0.699)           | -2.114***<br>(0.739)            |                                 |                                 |
| Candidate-Centred*Major                  |                                 |                                | <b>0.628</b><br><b>(2.691)</b>  |                                 |                                 |
| Party-Centred*Major                      |                                 |                                | <b>3.496</b><br><b>(4.199)</b>  |                                 |                                 |
| Democratic Age(logged)                   |                                 |                                |                                 | 0.527***<br>(0.163)             | 0.542***<br>(0.167)             |
| Candidate-Centred*Democratic Age(logged) |                                 |                                |                                 |                                 | <b>-0.307</b><br><b>(1.062)</b> |
| Party-Centred*Democratic Age(logged)     |                                 |                                |                                 |                                 | <b>-0.875</b><br><b>(2.037)</b> |
| Constant                                 | -0.344*<br>(0.177)              | -0.229<br>(0.163)              | -0.232<br>(0.167)               | -2.123***<br>(0.576)            | -2.177***<br>(0.59)             |
| N (Observations)                         | 585                             | 585                            | 585                             | 585                             | 585                             |
| J (Countries)                            | 59                              | 59                             | 59                              | 59                              | 59                              |
| R <sup>2</sup>                           | 0.16                            | 0.17                           | 0.17                            | 0.18                            | 0.18                            |

*Note:* The dependent variable is the change in Gallagher's Index of electoral disproportionality; all models are random effects with standard errors in parentheses; \*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1 (two-tailed tests).

definition of intraparty reforms, my expectations are confirmed by the placebo tests since none of the coefficients reaches statistical significance.

#### 6.4.2. The effect of electoral reforms over time

In order to answer the question about the mechanisms, I finally present some additional models in Table 6.4 that show that the link between electoral reforms and changes in disproportionality is caused by the different time of reaction the mechanical and the psychological effects have after a change in the rules of the game.<sup>218</sup> The dependent variable is the change in Gallagher's Index again and the main independent variables are two interactions between the reforms and the number of elections (logged) after them. The reported results demonstrate that the adoption of a new electoral system immediately affects the mechanical translation of votes into seats, but actors (i.e., the psychological effect) need some time to find out how the new rules work and how to adapt their behaviours to this new institutional environment. Hence, what is crucial in a reform process is what happens in the immediately following election after it. In fact, the statistical significance of all the constitutive terms of the interactions regarding reforms suggest that it is only at that moment (i.e., when *Time (logged)* = 0) that their effect on disproportionality is noticeable. Beyond that point in time, none of these institutional changes have an effect different from zero at the 0.05 level.<sup>219</sup>

#### 6.5. Conclusion

Do electoral reforms in the interparty dimension always have the theoretically expected impact on the degree of disproportionality in the translation of votes into seats? It is well established that electoral systems evidently favour larger and more concentrated social groups at the expense of smaller and more dispersed ones. In other words, the rules of the game generally help parties that are already rich in votes, as the Sheriff of Nottingham favoured individuals already rich in power and wealth. Although the variables explaining party system fragmentation have been investigated extensively, considerably less is known about the determinants of electoral disproportionality.

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<sup>218</sup> Following the suggestion of one reviewer, I include as independent variable the effective number of electoral parties. *Source:* Golder (2005) complemented by Gallagher's dataset ([www.tcd.ie/Political\\_Science/Staff/Michael.Gallagher/ElSystems/index.php](http://www.tcd.ie/Political_Science/Staff/Michael.Gallagher/ElSystems/index.php)).

<sup>219</sup> For example, according to Model 3, the marginal effect of restrictive reforms is not statistically significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) at the second election after the reform because the upper and the lower bounds of the 95 per cent confidence intervals are above and below zero, respectively, when the modifying variable (i.e., the number of elections after the change [logged]) is equal to 0.693 (i.e., the natural logarithm of 2).

**Table 6.4. Effects of electoral reforms on electoral disproportionality over time, new and established democracies (1945-2010)**

| Independent Variables           | Model 1              | Model 2                          | Model 3                           | Model 4                            | Model 5                            |
|---------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
|                                 | coefficient<br>(se)  | coefficient<br>(se)              | coefficient<br>(se)               | coefficient<br>(se)                | coefficient<br>(se)                |
| $\Delta$ Disprop. (t-1)         | -0.400***<br>(0.035) | -0.405***<br>(0.035)             | -0.404***<br>(0.035)              | -0.414***<br>(0.035)               | -0.415***<br>(0.034)               |
| Time after Reform(logged)       | 0.513***<br>(0.168)  | 0.575***<br>(0.183)              | 0.205<br>(0.284)                  |                                    |                                    |
| Permissive Reform               |                      | <b>-0.632*</b><br><b>(0.358)</b> | <b>-2.067***</b><br><b>(0.7)</b>  |                                    |                                    |
| Restrictive Reform              |                      | <b>0.826*</b><br><b>(0.452)</b>  | <b>1.578*</b><br><b>(0.805)</b>   |                                    |                                    |
| Permissive*Time(logged)         |                      |                                  | <b>1.019***</b><br><b>(0.374)</b> |                                    |                                    |
| Restrictive*Time(logged)        |                      |                                  | <b>-1.290**</b><br><b>(0.598)</b> |                                    |                                    |
| Time after Major Reform(logged) |                      |                                  |                                   | <b>0.718***</b><br><b>(0.197)</b>  | <b>0.552**</b><br><b>(0.222)</b>   |
| Major Permissive Reform         |                      |                                  |                                   | <b>-1.346***</b><br><b>(0.512)</b> | <b>-3.358***</b><br><b>(0.845)</b> |
| Major Restrictive Reform        |                      |                                  |                                   | <b>1.926***</b><br><b>(0.603)</b>  | <b>3.555***</b><br><b>(0.963)</b>  |
| Major Permissive*Time(logged)   |                      |                                  |                                   |                                    | <b>1.598***</b><br><b>(0.522)</b>  |
| Major Restrictive*Time(logged)  |                      |                                  |                                   |                                    | <b>-2.383***</b><br><b>(0.899)</b> |
| Constant                        | -1.055***<br>(0.291) | -1.059**<br>(0.416)              | -0.37<br>(0.584)                  | -1.555***<br>(0.402)               | -1.252***<br>(0.441)               |
| N (Observations)                | 585                  | 585                              | 585                               | 585                                | 585                                |
| J (Countries)                   | 59                   | 59                               | 59                                | 59                                 | 59                                 |
| R <sup>2</sup>                  | 0.18                 | 0.19                             | 0.22                              | 0.2                                | 0.23                               |

*Note:* The dependent variable is the change in Gallagher's Index of electoral disproportionality; all models are random effects with standard errors in parentheses; \*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1 (two-tailed tests).

And this gap is particularly surprising giving the ubiquity of this phenomenon across different electoral systems. In fact, the effects of electoral laws upon the parliamentary representation of political parties behave as the Matthew's Principle, producing a persistent bias in favour of strong and against weak competitors (Rae 1971 [1967]: 134).<sup>220</sup>

Taking advantage of the relatively widespread implementation of electoral reforms during recent decades, and their huge heterogeneity in terms of the components of the rules that were modified and the countries in which they were adopted, I have shown in this chapter that changes in the institutional features of the electoral systems generate fluctuations in the disproportionality of electoral outcomes. In particular, while permissive electoral system changes improve the overall correspondence between the vote and the seat shares that each party obtains, restrictive reforms worsen it. In general, the former have a stronger effect than the latter. The higher elasticity of party system fragmentation at the parliamentary level seems to explain this asymmetric effect. Moreover, these results are also driven by what happens in the first election after the reform.

This study also shows the modifying effect of the size of the electoral reform and the number of years of democratic rule. Therefore, this chapter questions the validity of analyses that treat the effect of institutional change as essentially linear. Specifically, I have first provided evidence that major permissive reforms are more strongly related to variations in the levels of disproportionality than minor inclusive electoral system changes. My findings, however, are less clear regarding major restrictive reforms: while the estimated coefficient has the expected sign, it is not significant at traditional levels of statistical significance.

One of the main results of the chapter lies in the interaction I found between electoral reforms and democratic age. When permissive reforms are adopted in young democracies, the combination of the lack of information about the exact working of the new rules and the relative weakness of parties render voters less likely to electorally react to the new incentives generated

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<sup>220</sup> Rae (1971 [1967]: 134) himself includes Mathew 13:12: "For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath".

by them.<sup>221</sup> However, this pattern changes markedly over time. For example, in countries which have been democratic for more than 100 years, citizens, elites or both immediately update their behaviour after a permissive reform and subsequently minimize the effect of the electoral system change.

Building on the “habit of voting” theory, I have also found that the positive impact of restrictive reforms on electoral disproportionality is primarily observed in old democracies. Hence, this type of institutional change widens the gap between the vote and seat shares of parties when it is adopted in consolidated democracies but not when the country in question has recently become democratic. Moreover, these results suggest that reforms in new democracies that should theoretically increase the disproportionality of the rules of the game will fail to achieve it.

Obviously, some of these unusual electoral system effects that we see in new democracies are not necessarily a direct result of their “newness”. Young democracies maintain some main characteristics –such as poorly institutionalized party systems and high electoral volatility- that distinguish them from most consolidated democracies. But there are many other features –for example, high levels of social turmoil- that are also characteristic of new democracies. In fact, it is reasonable to think that institutions can only shape politics and, hence, really work in the direction theory predicts when society is quite stable. And even though social turmoil is more common in new democracies, we see periods of “social unrest” in some consolidated democracies as well. Thus, should the “new democracy” category be extended to established democracies that have experienced periods of important political change? Although I do not have a clear answer to this question, the expected impact on disproportionality of the major (and restrictive) reforms of France in the 1950s and Japan and Italy in the early 1990s lead me to think that the key variable is the age of democracy. However, this is an element of reflection that perhaps deserves more attention in the future.

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<sup>221</sup> Let me remind the reader once again that perhaps a bit counter-intuitively reforms have effects on disproportionality when they do not affect parties and voters’ behaviour because they only bring about changes in the *mechanical* consequences of electoral laws but not in their *psychological* ones. By contrast, disproportionality does not change after a reform when the mechanical and psychological consequences of the electoral system change go hand in hand.

The relevance of these results seems to contradict those who claim, as Shugart (2005: 51) did, “that the agenda of proportionality and number of parties is largely closed (...)” and that there would only be room for some fine-tuning. By contrast, I think that my theoretical discussion and empirical evidence open up a further research agenda on how these episodes of electoral engineering are linked to fluctuations in the levels of disproportionality. Besides its intrinsic paramount relevance for the field of electoral systems, the establishment of the conditions that affect electoral disproportionality has important practical implications. For instance, and just to mention a few of them, the emergence of inaccuracies in the transformation of votes into seat shares can entail the election of legislators that lack ideological congruence with their constituents (Blais and Bodet 2006; Budge and McDonald 2005; Colomer 2001b; Golder and Stramski 2010; Huber and Powell 1994; McDonald and Budge 2007; Powell 2000 and 2009; Powell and Vanberg 2000). Further, if rules repeatedly fail to produce a close correspondence between the amounts of votes and seats that each party obtains, considerable segments of citizens may increase their distance from the political system and stop participating in electoral politics (Franklin 2004), feel less politically efficacious (Banducci and Karp 2009: 127), or simply experience less satisfaction with the democratic process (Listhaug et al. 2009).<sup>222</sup> And there is also the stream of arguments which have been used in the normative debates on the advantages and disadvantages of electoral disproportionality. In this regard, while some scholars consider that proportionality is a desirable goal of electoral systems and a major criterion by which they should be judged (Lijphart 1994: 140), others have been traditionally emphasizing the convenience of mitigating it (Hermens 1972 [1941]).<sup>223</sup> In either case, my findings are good news from the point of view of normative democratic theory because they suggest that changes at the institutional level can have an impact on the levels of electoral disproportionality.

Finally, the findings presented in this chapter are not in and of themselves sufficient to provide a robust theory of the causes of changes in electoral disproportionality. Even reforms that have been designed to constrain the overall permissiveness of the electoral rules, such as

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<sup>222</sup> In the same vein, Golder (2006) and Persson and Tabellini (2005) examine the impact of electoral disproportionality on the likelihood of pre-electoral coalitions and fiscal policies, respectively.

<sup>223</sup> I have decided to cite this author as the main historical advocate of the two-party system and one-party governments of the British FPTP system despite the fact I do not believe, unlike him, the Weimar PR system propelled the rise of Adolf Hitler.

many of those adopted in the last two decades in Israel<sup>224</sup> or the one passed in 2000 in Slovenia, have not managed to produce the desired outcome.<sup>225</sup> Hence, these two last examples highlight the inherent limitations of electoral engineers in fulfilling their objectives for institutional change. Although electoral reforms tend to be particularly successful at having proximal effects like the ones examined here (Scheiner 2008), the fact that electoral rules are not sufficient explanations of anything (Duverger 1964 [1954]: 228) and the impact of the electoral system change process itself usually prevent electoral reforms from creating their expected outcomes. For the same vein, we know that voter coordination is more difficult when a large number of parties contest elections (Cox 1997). In this regard, what looks like erratic behaviour on the part of voters may really be driven by the actions of parties (Tavits and Annus 2006). Additionally, without a way to randomly assign electoral reform, its effect cannot be distinguished from the potential –if any– impact of other variables leading to its adoption. Classical cross-national analysis in political science which examines the effects of institutions has to deal with the impact of a number of unobserved factors on the dependent variable. In many cases, controlling for all these unknown but possibly influential factors becomes difficult, if not impossible (Lijphart 1971). Thus, future comparative studies are needed in order to better specify the causal path between electoral reforms and levels of disproportionality and address this potential problem of endogeneity.

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<sup>224</sup> This refers to the introduction of the direct election of the prime minister, and the progressive implementation of several higher legal thresholds despite the former reform was widely derided -Giovanni Sartori called it “the most incredibly stupid electoral system ever designed” (quoted in Hazan 2001: 351)- and was repealed in 2001 (Scheiner 2008).

<sup>225</sup> In the same vein, D’Alimonte (2005: 272) shows that there was not a significant increase in the average cabinet duration after the 1993 electoral reform in Italy.



## Chapter 7. “One for all, all for one”: The impact of reforms in the intraparty dimension at the macro-level. The case of party system nationalization

### 7.1. Introduction

One of the fundamental matters for democracy is the trade-off between local and national representation. It is undeniable that national parties help to solve collective action problems and reduce transaction costs in the electoral arena, acting as *brand names* based on voters’ party identification, the state of the economy, or the government’s legislative record in office (Kiewiet and McCubbins 1991: 39); and party-centred electoral systems seem to reinforce the benefits that citizens extract from parties as the main agents of national and programmatic representation. Unfortunately, this kind of electoral rules forces us to pay the price of less local representation (Shugart et al. 2005), and even the election of unpopular candidates (Riera 2011). Moreover, and in spite of a burgeoning literature on the consequences of variations in the intraparty dimension of electoral systems, comparative politics has generally overlooked the linkage between electoral institutions and one particular feature of party systems: their levels of nationalization. Why do some countries (e.g., Lithuania) have several local party systems rather than a single national party system?<sup>226</sup> Why do other countries (e.g., Costa Rica) feature the same parties competing on much the same terms in all their districts? In this chapter, I aim to establish a negative relationship between the levels of candidate-centeredness of electoral reforms and party system nationalization. By candidate-centred electoral system changes I mean those that foster the incentives of candidates to cultivate a personal vote.<sup>227</sup>

Stein Rokkan was arguably one of the fathers of the field of comparative politics of the last century. One of his chief contributions deals with the formation of national party systems, and can be summarized with the idea of “‘politicization’ by which national organized parties broke the traditional rules of local elites through the entry into municipal elections” (Rokkan

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<sup>226</sup> This occurs when the number of parties seriously contesting elections and obtaining decent vote shares at the district level is low, but a very different picture arises when we nationally aggregate votes, and calculate the effective number of parties at the national level because different parties gain significant vote shares in different parts of the country.

<sup>227</sup> According to an already classic definition, *personal vote* can be conceptualized as “the portion of a candidate’s electoral support which originates in his or her personal qualities, qualifications, activities, and record” (Cain et al. 1987: 9).

2009 [1970: 227]). A few years earlier, V.O. Key (1949) had started to be influential in this regard with his study of state-level party systems in the United States. And while most scholars who addressed this issue mainly shared the same focus and concerns, there were still important differences in the way they defined and operationalized this pattern. A short list of political scientists that dealt with nationalization during the 1960s would include prominent figures such as Elmer E. Schattschneider, who coined the term “nationalization of electoral forces” (1960: ch. 5); Donald E. Stokes, interested in examining the “proportion of district-level electoral variance explained by national level forces” (1967: 182-202); and Hans Daalder, who argued that “the ‘permeation’ of the party system which may lead to a far-reaching homogenization between parties at the centre and in regional areas” (1966: 64). In any case, and despite these early developments, party system nationalization suffered from “a conflation of terms and imprecise, if not ambiguous, definitions” (Morgenstern and Potthoff 2005: 18), and, even more importantly, a scarcity of theories that could derive national-level patterns from district-level outcomes (Cox 1997; Grofman et al. 2009). In other words, Maurice Duverger’s statements about the size of party systems (1964 [1954]) remained for decades as a typical example of black-box explanation because of the absence of mechanisms linking the local and national levels (Leys 1959; Wildavsky 1959).

Richard Katz (1973: 817) was the first scholar to identify two dimensions of nationalization. On the one hand, Morgenstern et al. (2009: 1322) coin the term *static/distributional* nationalization (or vote homogeneity in Caramani [2004], and Jones and Mainwaring’s [2003] words) to refer to the degree to which there is an equal distribution of party votes across different districts at a single point in time. On the other hand, what the same scholars call *dynamic* nationalization considers the degree to which a party’s vote in the various districts changes uniformly over time. In other words, the key difference lies in the *configuration* of the electorate as opposed to its *movement* (Alemán and Kellam 2008: 2-3). Although there is no consensus about the dimension of study to prioritize (Schattschneider [1960] addresses the static component and Stokes [1965 and 1967] deals with the dynamic, just to name two), in this chapter I only consider the former dimension for two different types of reasons. First, and from the substantive point of view, the nationalization of party systems understood as an outcome and not as a process (Lago and Montero 2010: 4) is closer to what should refer this concept (i.e., the

structure of party systems) and to what should bother us (i.e., its political consequences). Secondly, and from a methodological perspective, most of the empirical measures of nationalization are focused on its distributional component. In addition, if I focused on its dynamic dimension, I would analyze changes in changes and, as a consequence, I would lose one more legislative term for my empirical analyses.<sup>228</sup>

This chapter is thus an attempt to open up the black box of party system nationalization by considering evidence from 44 democracies with different levels of party system institutionalization and a total of more than 300 elections carried under diverse rules. Given the various ways of measuring party system nationalization, two different indices are used. First of all, I employ the score devised by Mark Jones and Scott Mainwaring (2003). As can be seen below, this is an index based on the Gini coefficient of inequality in vote shares across constituencies. To calculate it, we take its inverse so that party system nationalization increases as the values of the index increase. Secondly, I utilize the score proposed by Johannes Moenius and Yuko Kasuya (2004). This second index has the advantage of weighing the contribution of each district to party system inflation. In contrast to the former, party system nationalization decreases as the values of the index increase.<sup>229</sup>

By dwelling on a long and diverse sample of countries, this chapter moves beyond country-specific explanations of party system nationalization. During the first decade of the twenty-first century, a couple of studies analyzed the determinants of this phenomenon (e.g., Bochsler 2010b; Cox and Knoll 2003; Harbers 2010; Morgenstern et al. 2009). This piece extends the works undertaken by these scholars by adding new observations and covariates. Methodologically speaking, it is highly advisable to examine party system nationalization under different institutional set ups in order to incorporate variability in the sample, and do it employing accurate econometric tests. Finally, and not less importantly, the reported findings

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<sup>228</sup> Finally, this chapter does not make any contribution to the study of the nationalization of party organization, manifestos and legislative voting nor the homogenization of public budgets across sub-national units (Jones and Mainwaring 2003: 142). As I point out in the conclusions section, the study of these patterns constitutes a promising avenue for further research (see, for example, Alonso Sáenz de Oger and Gómez Fortes [2011] for nationalization of party manifestos in the case of Spain). Unfortunately, the almost general lack of comparative data makes very difficult the development of a project with such amount of countries.

<sup>229</sup> Despite the focus on the *nationalization of party systems*, *party linkage* and *party aggregation* will be used interchangeably during the whole chapter as antonyms of *party system inflation*.

reinforce the need to consider the type of institutional and competitive setting in which the electoral reform is adopted. As I will show below, the levels of ethnic fragmentation and political decentralization are particularly critical for shaping elites and citizens' electoral incentives; and so the lack of either of these two factors generates a formidable obstacle to the aforementioned expected negative impact of a candidate-centred reform on party system nationalization.

Aside from establishing the factors that affect party system nationalization, the extent to which electoral forces are nationalized has also important practical implications for the governability and political representation of a democracy. Firstly, the existence of inaccuracies in the projection of local party systems into the national one can jeopardize the survival of democracy (Stepan 2001; Jones and Mainwaring 2003). In this regard, Richard Rose and Derek Urwin (1975: 46) provide us with a possible explanation of this relationship by noting that geographically narrow parties are frequently accompanied by separatist goals, whereas parties with broad geographic support will tend to have an integrating impact on the state and thus provide for a level of political stability that would be absent without their presence (see also Bochsler 2010a: 1). Further, if electoral rules repeatedly fail to produce a nationalized party system, weaker bonds will exist among members of the legislative party (Alemán and Kellam 2008; Cox and McCubbins 1993; Stokes 1967), generating, therefore, less party discipline (Jones and Mainwaring 2003) and more difficulty in keeping campaign promises.

Thirdly, some scholars argue that uniform parties' support across the country is positively correlated with "policies of nationwide concerns" (Kasuya and Moenius 2008: 127) at the prize of representing "the national centre of the political organization instead of the local community" (Caramani 2000: 68). By contrast, political competition at the national level between parties whose support base lies in a particular geographic region can lead to "an oversupply of pork-barrel policies and an undersupply of nationally-focused public services" (Hicken et al. 2008). Finally, Ignacio Lago-Peñas and Santiago Lago-Peñas (2009) warn us about the risk of establishing spurious relationships by pointing out that the composition of public expenditure will not be geared towards higher transfer expenditure as nationalization goes up. In fact, according to these authors, party linkage only affects discernibly the composition of public expenditure by turning it stickier the less the national party system resembles the local ones. To

sum up, an increasing cottage industry on the nationalization of party systems has characterized this pattern as the prime cause of several political outcomes. While it seems to me at best dubious whether nationalization is the cause or simply a mere consequence of all these phenomena, they are still clearly important and worthy of investigation.

Do changes in the intraparty dimension of electoral systems generate the expected outcomes? At first sight, the answer seems to be affirmative. For example, in the 1998 Swedish general election the nationalization of the party system reached a historical minimum in that country by declining from 0.83 in the previous election in 1994 to 0.774 four years later.<sup>230</sup> This fact was probably due to the introduction of flexible lists in 1997 (Möller 1999). By contrast, the change in party system nationalization in the early 1980s in Greece was exactly the opposite. PASOK came to power in 1981 promising to abolish preferential voting (the “cross” in Greek), as it was supposed to favour political patronage (Dimitras 1985). This step was successfully voted upon in the autumn of 1982. As a result, the nationalization of the party system in the following election in 1985 increased by almost half decimal (from 0.849 to 0.876).

Why do we observe this variation in the levels of party system nationalization within countries over time? If electoral systems rarely change significantly, and neither do other classic determinants of party system nationalization like ethnic fragmentation, how can fluctuations in this variable be explained? That is, which factors do explain “endogenous” (i.e., without electoral reform) changes in party system nationalization? Finally, while there are probably consequences for party system nationalization after almost all electoral reforms, we need to know under what circumstances electoral reforms have a larger effect. To put it in a slightly different way, in this chapter I am also concerned with which contexts increase the potential impact of reforms.

The rest of the chapter proceeds as follows. In the next section, I discuss the analytical literature that define and offer several ways of measuring and explaining variation in party system nationalization. I then elaborate a series of theoretical propositions that describe under what conditions electoral reforms would be more likely to have an impact on levels of party

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<sup>230</sup> These values correspond to Jones and Mainwaring’s (2003) score of party system nationalization.

system nationalization. In the fourth and fifth section, I explain the research design that I follow and conduct empirical tests on electoral data from a variety of countries. Finally, section six concludes.

## **7.2. Theoretical framework**

In spite of the increasing interest in the nationalization of party systems observed during the last decade, there is no an established definition of this phenomenon yet (Kasuya and Moenius 2008: 127). In fact, there is even disagreement about how to name this concept, and, as we will see below, this is probably a consequence of disagreements about what is (or should be) the object of study. In this regard, while some authors employ the expression “nationalized party system” to refer to that constellation of parties in which parties’ respective vote shares do not differ much from one sub-national territorial unit to the other (Caramani 2000 and 2004; Jones and Mainwaring 2003), other scholars prefer to stress the process through which the members of the various local party systems *link* to each other in national parties (Cox 1997 and 1999; Moenius and Kasuya 2004). Gary Cox himself also likes to use the expression *coordination* to describe the behaviour of politicians seeking election to the national legislature from different districts and running under a common party label (Cox 1997: 186). By contrast, the national party system of a country is *inflated* when each local party system is not a microcosm of the whole (Cox 1999a: 155-156). Cox’s focus on the supply side of the political market is likewise shared by Pradeep Chhibber and Ken Kollman (1998 and 2004), whose main goal is to explain the causes of *party aggregation* in single-member districts with plurality rule (see also Lago and Montero 2010). Other labels to refer to nationalization are “district homogeneity” (Morgenstern and Potthoff 2005: 21) and “party system congruence” (Thorlakson 2007: 69). All in all, and despite this abundance of labels, I follow Daniel Bochsler (2010a: 1) in this respect and define the nationalization of the party system as a whole as “an aggregated measure for the territorial homogeneity of support of all the parties included in the system” (see also Kasuya and Moenius 2008: 126).

Similarly, the number of indices used to measure party system nationalization in comparative research has been remarkably high. Although most of them share similar conceptual

traits, it is important to distinguish between four main ways to operationalize this variable: frequency, variance, distribution and inflation (Bochsler 2010a). This fourfold basic classification corresponds to a large extent to the different definitions of party system nationalization we have seen above.

Some of the first scholars that examined party system nationalization like Rose and Urwin (1975) used indices of frequency (or competition indices) that calculated the number of uncontested seats.<sup>231</sup> The Rose and Urwin's measure (1975) of uncontested districts would touch on Stokes' conception of nationalized electoral forces since an uncontested district cannot partake in any national swing. In this regard, it is worth mentioning some recent scholarship that builds on Stokes' measure by Larry Bartels (1998). In a comprehensive study of voting patterns between 1868 and 1996 in the United States, this author confirms that a significant nationalizing trend began at the end of the nineteenth century and continued throughout the twentieth. This particular measure has become in recent times the territorial coverage indices designed by Daniele Caramani (2004) and captures "the homogeneity of the supply of parties across districts" (Lago and Montero 2010: 26).

The second and third families of indicators identified by Bochslers (2010a) compare, on the one hand, the electoral support of political parties across territorial units and, on the other, their actual number of votes (variance indices) and the expected vote shares (distribution coefficients) at the national level. For this reason, the family of distribution coefficients and their most frequently employed measure (i.e., the Gini coefficient) can be seen as a particular case of the indices of variance: although they take as starting point two different measures of electoral support at the district-level, specifically the vote share and the number of votes, they are based in the end on some sort of calculated deviation. Examples of indices of variance employed in the literature include the mean absolute deviation of regional electoral results from the national ones (Rose and Urwin 1975) and the mean coefficient of variation of parties' electoral returns across districts (Caramani 2000). By contrast, Jones and Mainwaring (2003) and Imke Harbers (2010) take the complement of the Gini coefficient to measure the uneven distribution of vote shares

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<sup>231</sup> The number of uncontested seats is not an option here because it is a phenomenon practically confined to majoritarian systems in the past.

across territorial units, and Bochsler (2010a) proposes a new standardized party system nationalization score that relies on a transformation of it.

Finally, the inflation measures compare the number of parties at the national and local level, and refer to the extent to which the average size of the party systems across districts goes up over the country as a whole as a result of local variations. Hence, a slightly different concept of party system nationalization lies behind this group of measures (Kasuya and Moenius 2008: 127). It is important to note that some of the most influential scholars in the field like Cox (1997 and 1999), Chhibber and Kollman (1998 and 2004) and Moenius and Kasuya (2004) employ some form of inflation measure. Likewise, Lori Thorlakson (2007) proposes a slightly different version by measuring party system nationalization with the standard deviation of the effective number of parties across local party systems.

I close this section by briefly examining the determinants of party system nationalization. In general, the incentives for the nationalization of party systems can be institutional and sociological. According to Cox (1997 and 1999), institutional incentives pertain to economies of scale and have the following general form: some political group from one district seeks to induce a number of legislative candidates or members of Parliament from other constituencies to participate in a larger organization to accomplish a task that requires their help. Different versions of linkage emerge because the task can broadly range: from securing more seats and vote to increasing the likelihood of passing legislative packages through the improvement of the chances of winning the presidency or controlling the government. For example, the existence of upper tiers and national thresholds, or the requirement of qualified majorities, all promote the nationalization of party systems.

The nationalization of party systems should also be positively correlated with the value of the prize parties pursue when they develop strategies of cross-district coordination. However, the only effect in this respect that is well established concerns the degree of political and fiscal decentralization: as we will see below, under increasing decentralization, there will be greater dissimilarities in party systems across different levels of vote aggregation (Chhibber and Kollman 1998: 329) because there is more at stake in lower-level elections and elites and voters



behave accordingly.<sup>232</sup> Finally, nationalization of party systems is by no means surprisingly affected by the extent to which social cleavages exist in a country and cross cut or coincide with geographical divisions (Epstein 1980; Lijphart 1977: 87-103; Sartori 1986). In other words, the importance of minorities in a society and their territorial concentration emerge as a powerful obstacle to nationalization.

### **7.3. Working hypotheses**

Building on these contributions, my expectation is that episodes of reform in the intraparty dimension of the electoral system will have an impact on the degree of party system nationalization. To be more specific, I argue that the extent to which local party systems resemble the national one will depend on the amount of incentives electoral systems offer to candidates to cultivate a personal vote (Carey and Shugart 1995). The more important the personal reputation (or the less important the party labels), the lower the nationalization becomes. And, accordingly, all else equal, an unvarying degree of nationalization should be found on those countries not changing the incentives electoral systems generate to cultivate a personal vote.

In spite of the findings of Scott Morgenstern and Stephen Swindle about the poor job of electoral system variables in explaining the differing levels of localism (2005: 145), I argue that the nationalization of the party system will be seriously affected as the intraparty dimension of electoral rules changes. On the supply side, the presence of candidate-centred rules introduces a new source of heterogeneity in district-level political competition. Relevant factors for the electoral decision like societal cleavages, economic variables or the quality of the local candidates do not tend to be uniformly distributed within one country. Hence, parties' vote share would differ across districts even though electoral rules were not candidate-centred. What I suggest here is that the effect of one of the sources of this district-level heterogeneity, the quality of local candidates, becomes more important as electoral institutions become less party-

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<sup>232</sup> The other effects that remain untested refer to bicameralism and presidentialism.

centred.<sup>233</sup> In sum, my first hypothesis is as follows: *Levels of nationalization of the party system will get higher in countries where a party-centred electoral reform is adopted; and the reverse will happen when a candidate-centred reform is adopted (H<sub>1</sub>).*

Substantial differences between ethnically-fragmented and homogenous societies are expected not only with regard to the levels of nationalization of the party system (Bardi and Mair 2008; Caramani 2004; Thorlakson 2007) but also concerning the impact of electoral reforms. Experts in comparative politics have argued that one of the critical elements in observing party system fragmentation is the presence of a large number of ethnic groups (Amorim Neto and Cox 1997; Golder 2006; Mozaffar et al. 2003; Ordeshook and Shvetsova 1994; Taagepera 1999); and this positive effect is arguably taking place at the national and the district-level simultaneously. Thus, the ability of a heterogeneous population to recognize and express differences across districts will heavily depend on the incentives generated by the electoral system to cultivate a personal vote, that is, its degree of candidate-centeredness (Morgenstern et al. 2009: 1328).

For example, let's imagine two countries that adopt a more candidate-centred electoral system. Country A is an ethnic fragmented society, while country B is more homogenous. As a consequence of the straightforward application of the new electoral rules, agents of representation will get more dependent on personal reputation, decreasing the degree to which the party system is nationalized. This result will be common to both countries. However, the actual impact of the reform will diverge to some extent in them: while candidates/parties (voters) in both types of democracies will recognize the change in the incentives to cultivate (cast) a personal vote, local electoral campaigns and candidates will deviate more from a somehow *national* pattern in ethnically fragmented scenarios. Before the electoral system change, the presence of party-centred rules constrained the attempts of narrow political interests only present in some parts of the national territory to run exclusively local campaigns and field merely autonomous candidates. But once these institutional incentives decline or cease to exist, locally-concentrated parties are free to follow these electoral strategies in order to maximize their votes. On this basis, I expect a larger adjustment of the behaviour of all the political actors to the new

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<sup>233</sup> At this point, I will not deal with the exact mechanisms (campaigns specially tailored to suit sub national constituencies, local dignitaries not joining statewide parties or different salience of issues, just to name a few) that could explain this outcome.

electoral arrangements in fragmented societies and, as a result, a bigger impact of institutional change on the nationalization of the party system. Summing up, I hypothesize that *the positive effect of party-centred electoral reforms on the nationalization of the party system will get lower as ethnic fragmentation increases* (H<sub>2</sub>). By contrast, *the negative effect of candidate-centred electoral reforms on the nationalization of the party system will get even higher as ethnic fragmentation increases*.

The last feature that is predicted to modify the size of the effect of the electoral system change is the level of political decentralization. Consistent with the literature on nationalization, I expect electoral support of parties and, subsequently, the format of the local party systems to differ more across districts in federal countries (Cox 1999a; Jones and Mainwaring 2003). Following Jonathan Rodden (2004: 482), I define decentralization as “a shift of authority towards local governments and away from central governments, with total government authority over society and economy imagined as fixed”. Stokes (1967: 196-98) was the first scholar that documented the existence of a relationship between these two variables when he argued that the nationalization of congressional politics in the United States was largely driven by “the enormously increased salience of the federal government and the presidency in the period of Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal”. This finding was extended later on to other federations like Canada, India and the United Kingdom (Chhibber and Kollman 2004); Australia, Austria, Germany and Switzerland (Thorlakson 2007), Argentina (Calvo and Escolar 2005) or Brazil (Samuels 2003). Although case studies or small-N analyses focused on systems with single-member districts have predominated, it is certainly possible to study these effects simultaneously in more than a few proportional representation systems (Chhibber and Kollman (1998: 340). For example, Dawn Brancati (2008) and Harbers (2010) successfully test the effect of decentralization on the nationalization of party systems in 37 and 16 democracies, respectively. However, all these ideas about the impact of devolution assume its linearity. Only Pablo Simón (2013), in a recently published piece, argues that the impact of decentralization on the nationalization of party systems is conditional on the extent to which electoral law encourages personal voting. And this is what I intend to argue here.

In my last explanation of the existence of cross-district linkage of legislators, high-quality candidates from one district, who are the ones that will be elected under electoral rules that generate personal votes, will find it useful to promote alliances with high-quality candidates from other districts when authority is concentrated. And the higher the value of the national office, the smaller the deterrent effect of candidate-centred rules on nationalization is. By contrast, the negative impact of this kind of rules on nationalization will be particularly strong in those democracies that have decided to delegate powers from central states down to sub-national governments. In other words, I believe that *the positive effect of party-centred electoral reforms on the nationalization of the party system will get lower as political decentralization is greater* (H<sub>3</sub>). By contrast, *the negative effect of candidate-centred electoral reforms on the nationalization of the party system will get even higher as the level of political decentralization increases*.

#### 7.4. Research design: Variables, data and technique

My first dependent variable is the change in the Jones and Mainwaring's (2003) Party System Nationalization Score.<sup>234</sup> It is calculated according to the following formula:

$$PSNS = \sum PNS_i * p_i,$$

where *PNS* is a measure of the nationalization of each party, based on the Gini coefficient of inequality (*G<sub>i</sub>*) in vote shares across constituencies; and *p<sub>i</sub>* is the party's share of the national vote. To calculate it, I take the inverse of the Gini coefficient:

$$PNS = 1 - G_i.$$

The Stata program *INEDQDECO* (Jenkins 2010) was used to create the Gini coefficient. Parties that received less than a five percent share of the vote at the national level are excluded from this analysis.<sup>235</sup>

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<sup>234</sup> Sources: Bochsler (2010), Caramani (2000), Constituency Level Electoral Archive (CLEA) from the University of Michigan and the Constituency Level Elections (CLE) dataset from Washington University at St. Louis. Figures for two-round systems (like in France) are based on first-round votes.

<sup>235</sup> In mixed member systems, the figures are based on district and total votes in the nominal tier. In the prototypical mixed-member system, half of the seats in a legislative chamber (the nominal tier) are elected in single-seat districts and the other half (the list tier) are elected from party lists allocated by proportional representation (Shugart and Watenberg 2001).

Alternatively, I use Moenius and Kasuya's Party System Inflation Index (2004). It builds upon Cox's measure (1997 and 1999) and provides an estimation of party system inflation on a percentage basis.<sup>236</sup> Hence, as *Inflation (I)* gets larger, the nationalization of party systems is lower. If for instance *I* is 20, then about 20 percent of the overall size of the national party system can be attributed to different parties obtaining votes in different sub-units of the country, and 80 percent to the average size of the local party systems (Cox 1999a: 155-156). But, given that district size is not a constant in most countries, Moenius and Kasuya (2004: 550) (see also Kasuya and Moenius 2008: 130) introduce a weighted measure that is calculated according to the following formula:

$$I_w = \left( \frac{vot_{nat} * ENP_{nat}}{\sum_{i=1}^n ENP_i * vot_i} - 1 \right) * 100,$$

where  $vot_{nat}$  is the total number of votes cast at the national level;  $vot_i$  is the number of votes cast in district  $i$ ;  $ENP_{nat}$  is the effective number of electoral parties at the national level; and  $ENP_i$  is the effective number of electoral parties in district  $i$ .<sup>237</sup>

Finally, all the models are retested using as dependent variable the average effective number of electoral parties at the district-level.<sup>238</sup> This third group of models provide a sort of placebo test of my argument as changes in the intraparty dimension should not affect all else equal the mean party size at the sub-national level.<sup>239</sup> Another possible placebo test would have involved employing reforms in the interparty dimension as predictors of changes in the nationalization of party systems. However, assuming the absence of any relationship between

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<sup>236</sup> *Sources:* Bochsler (2010), Caramani (2000), Constituency Level Electoral Archive (CLEA) from the University of Michigan and the Constituency Level Elections (CLE) dataset from Washington University at St. Louis. Figures for two-round systems (like in France) are based on first-round votes.

<sup>237</sup> In mixed member systems, the figures are based on district and total votes in the nominal tier. In the prototypical mixed-member system, half of the seats in a legislative chamber (the nominal tier) are elected in single-seat districts and the other half (the list tier) are elected from party lists allocated by proportional representation (Shugart and Watenberg 2001).

<sup>238</sup> *Sources:* Bochsler (2010), Caramani (2000), Constituency Level Electoral Archive (CLEA) from the University of Michigan and the Constituency Level Elections (CLE) dataset from Washington University at St. Louis. Figures for two-round systems (like in France) are based on first-round votes.

<sup>239</sup> In mixed member systems, the figures are based on district and total votes in the nominal tier. In the prototypical mixed-member system, half of the seats in a legislative chamber (the nominal tier) are elected in single-seat districts and the other half (the list tier) are elected from party lists allocated by proportional representation (Shugart and Watenberg 2001).

these two variables is far from straightforward. In this regard, Cox (1999a) suggests that the presence of upper tiers and national thresholds seems to encourage nationalization, while low district magnitude seems to discourage it.

My main independent variable is the existence (or absence) of an electoral reform, and its different types. For an extensive definition and typology of electoral reform, see Chapter 3.<sup>240</sup> The identification of a case of electoral reform without specifying the direction in which the rules of the game change is clearly insufficient. On this basis, it is very useful to distinguish between candidate-centred reforms (dummy variable *Candidate-Centred Reforms* = 1), that increase the candidates' incentives to cultivate a personal vote, and party-centred (dummy variable *Party-Centred Reforms* = 1), that decrease them (Carey and Shugart 1995). In general, personal vote can be conceptualized as “the portion of a candidate's electoral support which originates in his or her personal qualities, qualifications, activities, and record” (Cain et al. 1987: 9).<sup>241</sup> Further details of all the episodes of electoral reform identified are given in the Appendix 1 to this thesis.

I also use *Ethnic Fragmentation* as explanatory factor. This variable reflects the probability that two randomly selected people from a given country will not belong to the same ethno linguistic group.<sup>242</sup> Although the data was originally collected in 1985, this should not entail a problem because the ethnic composition of a country is usually constant over time.<sup>243</sup> Hence, I have entered the same value for all elections in each country, which means that my coding of this variable only varies across countries and not within them.<sup>244</sup> Finally, I use as independent variable *Political Decentralization*, which is equal to the Regional Authority Index

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<sup>240</sup> Sources: Birch (2003), Birch et al. (2002), Bowler and Grofman (2000), Colomer (2004a), Gallagher and Mitchell (2005a), Golder (2004), Grofman et al. (1999), Grofman and Lijphart (2007 [2002]), the Inter-Parliamentary Union (n.d.), Johnson and Wallack (2010 [2003]), Jones (1995 and 1997), Lijphart (1994), Lundell and Karvonen (2003), Negretto (2009), Payne (2007), Remmer (2008), Renwick (2011), Shugart and Wattenberg (2001), Shvetsova (1999), Wills Otero and Pérez-Liñán (2005), Zovatto and Orozco Henríquez (2008), and electoral laws of each country.

<sup>241</sup> The reference category is no reform, or reform that does not change the incentives to cultivate a personal vote.

<sup>242</sup> To be more precise, it is calculated as:

$$EF = 1 - \sum g_i^2,$$

where  $g_i$  is the percentage of the population comprised by the  $i^{\text{th}}$  ethnic group.

<sup>243</sup> By contrast, Stoll (2013) leverages changing ethnic composition of the Israelian electorate to probe the limits of electoral system explanations on ethnic mobilization.

<sup>244</sup> Source: Roeder (2001). For original sources, check there. Robustness checks using Alesina et al. (2003) and Fearon's (2003) data clearly showed that the findings are not source-specific.

designed by Gary Marks et al. (2008). This index is a summary of the authority exercised by a regional government or its representatives in the country as a whole, and the authority exercised by a regional government over those who live in the region. I do not have any clear expectation about the sign of the coefficient for these variables taken alone because they correspond to their effects on changes in party system nationalization when there is no reform.

I also include four interaction terms in the regression models, *Candidate-CentredReform\*EthnicFragmentation*, *Party-CentredReform\*Ethnic Fragmentation*, *Candidate-CentredReform\*Political Decentralization*, and *Party-CentredReform\*Political Decentralization* in order to test the second and third hypotheses. I expect negative coefficients for these interaction terms in the regressions that take party system nationalization as dependent variable since I predict that ethnic fragmentation and political decentralization will tend to boost (offset) the negative (positive) effect of a candidate-centred (party-centred) reform on party system nationalization. By contrast, the reverse is true for the regressions that take party system inflation as dependent variable.

With regard to case selection, the sample only includes democracies according to Adam Przeworski et al.'s definition<sup>245</sup> (2000: 54). In spite of this constraint, the countries analyzed vary widely in the number of contests conducted, the number of electoral reforms adopted, and the levels and amount of variation that needs to be explained. Specifically, the number of elections examined ranges from 31 in the United States to 2 in Hungary and Paraguay. Moreover, although I do not include any African country, my sample is made up of a number of quite heterogeneous democracies in terms of stability of their electoral institutions. On the one hand, I examine quite a lot of countries with no electoral reforms at all such as Argentina, Hungary and the United States. On the other hand, I have for instance Dominican Republic (four changes in 10 elections), Venezuela (three changes in four elections), Lithuania (three changes in three elections), Italy (three changes in 14 elections) Guatemala (three changes in three elections) and Austria (three changes in 20 elections) with relatively unstable electoral systems. Finally, with regard to the mean and the standard deviation of party system nationalization in each country, I combine

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<sup>245</sup> According to these authors' dictum, democracy is a system in which "incumbents lose elections and leave office when the rules so dictate". The most important feature of their coding is the use of a dichotomous measure.

democracies in which party system nationalization is high (like Israel and the Netherlands) with countries in which it is low (like Lithuania and Switzerland), and democracies where party system nationalization varies a lot (like Lithuania and Italy) with countries where party system nationalization stays practically constant (like El Salvador and Nicaragua). And while the levels are basically explained by the type of electoral system, the standard deviation is a function of at least three factors: the mean, the number of elections, and the frequency of electoral reforms. Summing up, the dataset includes well over 300 observations in 44 countries between 1945 and 2010.

Before getting into the multivariate regression models, I tested whether I could infer the proposed association between electoral reform and change in party system nationalization using simple bivariate tools. I first computed the coefficient of variation of party system nationalization for old and new democracies and plotted these against the number of electoral reforms per election for the period 1945-2010. Figure 7.1 shows the result and adds a line for the predicted values of an OLS regression of the dispersion in Jones and Mainwaring's party system nationalization score on the institutional instability measure. This simple bivariate model returns a positive value for the number of reforms per election that is not however statistically significant at traditional confidence levels. This finding should not be taken as inconsistent with the first hypothesis that argued that electoral reforms changed the levels of party system nationalization observed in a given country, though: the relatively small number of cases in each category makes me think that I could be committing a type II error if I wrongly accept the null hypothesis.

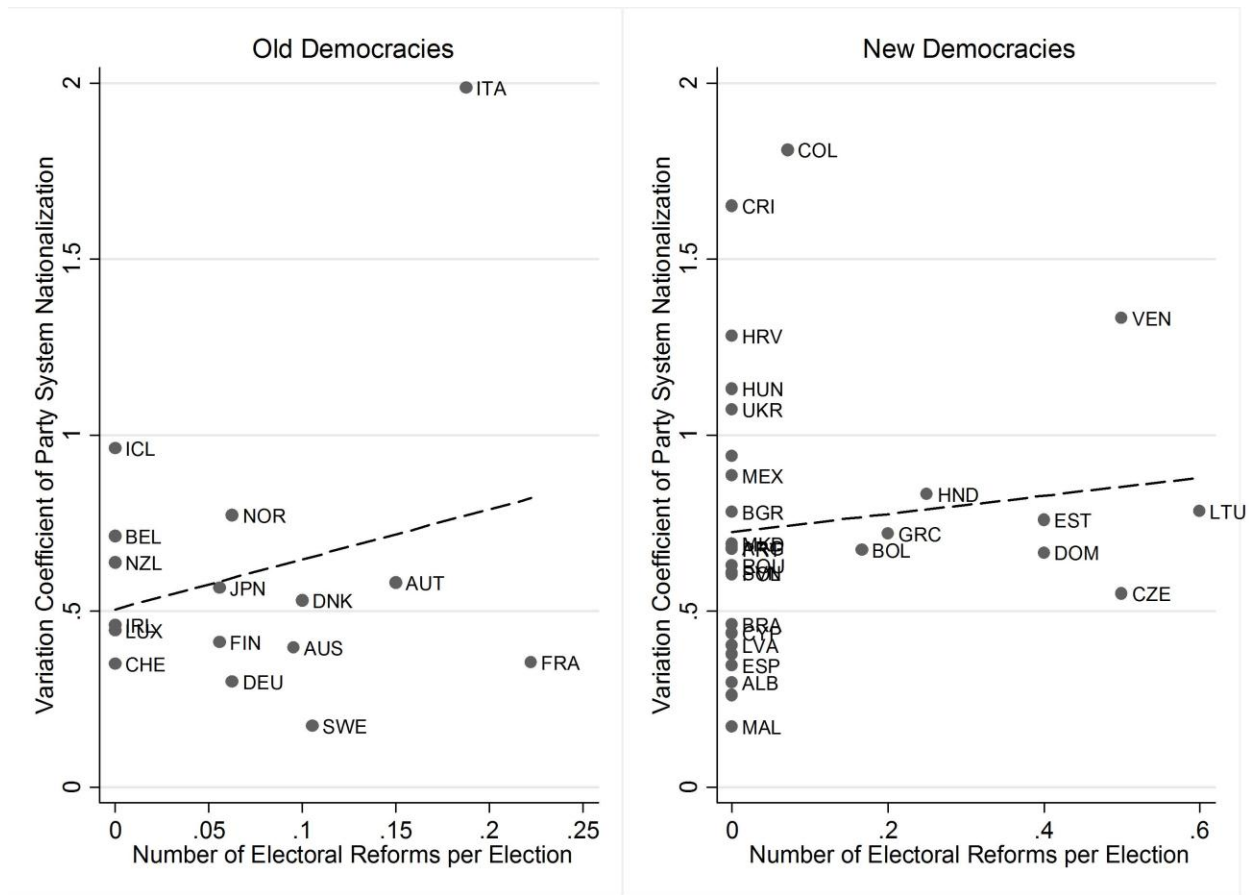
As far as the estimation technique is concerned, the detail does not need to be repeated here given that it is introduced in section 6.3.5 of the previous chapter.

## **7.5. Results**

Table 7.1 includes the descriptive statistics of the variables used. And Table 7.2 displays the results of five econometric models where the dependent variable is the change in Jones and Mainwaring's Index of party system nationalization. Almost all my theoretical expectations bear



**Figure 7.1. Dispersion in party system nationalization and electoral reform**



Notes: The y-axis shows the coefficient of variation in Jones and Mainwaring's Index of party system nationalization between 1945 and 2010 in established and new democracies. The x-axis displays the number of electoral reforms implemented per election.

out. First of all, the coefficient on the lagged dependent variable is always negative and statistically significant. In other words, positive changes in the levels of party system nationalization in the previous election lead to negative fluctuations in the current one. Indeed, holding all the other variables constant, the results suggest that an increase of 1 point in my nationalization index in the previous elections will produce a decrease of at least 0.2 points in the current one. In addition, we find clear evidence for the first hypothesis in the case of candidate-centred reforms but not when a more party-centred electoral system is adopted. In other words, the coefficient of *Candidate-Centred Reform* is negative and statistically significant at the traditionally levels of confidence in models 1 and 2, indicating that the values of the Jones and

**Table 7.1. Descriptive statistics**

| <b>Variable</b>                | <b>Mean</b> | <b>Std. Dev.</b> | <b>Min.</b> | <b>Max.</b> | <b>N</b> |
|--------------------------------|-------------|------------------|-------------|-------------|----------|
| Δ Party System Nationalization | -0.0003     | 0.0701           | -0.407      | 0.35        | 375      |
| Δ Party System Inflation       | 0.006       | 0.16             | -1.008      | 1.38        | 375      |
| Δ Average ENEP District-Level  | 0.03        | 0.71             | 0.03        | 0.71        | 375      |
| Party-Centred Reform           | 0.04        | 0.19             | 0           | 1           | 375      |
| Candidate-Centred Reform       | 0.04        | 0.208            | 0           | 1           | 375      |
| Ethnic Fragmentation           | 0.26        | 0.21             | 0.007       | 0.74        | 375      |
| Political Decentralization     | 11.79       | 8.49             | 0           | 32.1        | 301      |

Mainwaring's index after one of these institutional changes will tend to decrease; but the opposite is in general not true for *Party-Centred Reforms*.

In a similar vein, clear differences between ethnically fragmented and homogenous societies on the one hand, and centralized and decentralized democracies on the other emerge. However, simply breaking down the sampled countries in two groups is not enough to demonstrate the impact of these variables on party system nationalization. In this regard, the coefficient of *Ethnic Fragmentation* is negative and statistically significant in Models 2 and 3. This is a bit surprising because it means that ethnic heterogeneity by itself still creates fewer opportunities for party system nationalization once we control for electoral system change and continuity and we take a differenced dependent variable. In addition, the coefficient of *Candidate-Centred\*Ethnic Fragmentation* is negative and statistically significant in Model 3 ( $p < 0.05$ ), indicating that the negative effect of a candidate-centred reform on the nationalization of the party system tends to be bigger in countries whose society is more diverse. In other words, these results slightly imply that candidate-centred reforms in contexts of ethnic heterogeneity have relatively stronger effects. By contrast, the absence of conditions favourable to party system nationalization in fragmented social contexts might not be overridden by the presence of party-centred reforms.

I also find evidence for the last hypothesis on decentralization. This theoretical expectation suggested that the negative effect of candidate-centred reforms on party system nationalization will be low in politically centralized scenarios, but will tend to increase as the

**Table 7.2. Determinants of changes in party system nationalization, new and established democracies (1945-2010)**

| Independent Variables                       | Model 1                           | Model 2                           | Model 3                           | Model 4                          | Model 5                           |
|---|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
|   | coefficient<br>(se)               | coefficient<br>(se)               | coefficient<br>(se)               | coefficient<br>(se)              | coefficient<br>(se)               |
| $\Delta$ Party System Nationalization (t-1) | -0.278***<br>(0.0508)             | -0.407***<br>(0.118)              | -0.407***<br>(0.121)              | -0.201**<br>(0.073)              | -0.201**<br>(0.073)               |
| Party-Centred Reform                        | <b>-0.018</b><br><b>(0.039)</b>   | <b>-0.045</b><br><b>(0.042)</b>   | <b>-0.049</b><br><b>(0.079)</b>   | <b>-0.032</b><br><b>-0.047</b>   | <b>0.027</b><br><b>(0.028)</b>    |
| Candidate-Centred Reform                    | <b>-0.025**</b><br><b>(0.009)</b> | <b>-0.034**</b><br><b>(0.015)</b> | <b>0.008</b><br><b>(0.015)</b>    | <b>-0.012*</b><br><b>(0.006)</b> | <b>0.014*</b><br><b>(0.007)</b>   |
| Ethnic Fragmentation                        |                                   | -0.032*<br>(0.017)                | -0.0239*<br>(0.012)               |                                  |                                   |
| Party-Centred*Ethnic                        |                                   |                                   | <b>0.012</b><br><b>(0.209)</b>    |                                  |                                   |
| Candidate-Centred*Ethnic                    |                                   |                                   | <b>-0.138**</b><br><b>(0.066)</b> |                                  |                                   |
| Political Decentralization                  |                                   |                                   |                                   | -0.001<br>(0.001)                | -0.0005<br>(0.001)                |
| Party-Centred*Decentralization              |                                   |                                   |                                   |                                  | <b>-0.005</b><br><b>(0.005)</b>   |
| Candidate-Centred*Decentralization          |                                   |                                   |                                   |                                  | <b>-0.002**</b><br><b>(0.001)</b> |
| Constant                                    | -0.001<br>(0.001)                 | 0.009**<br>(0.004)                | 0.007*<br>(0.003)                 | 0.014<br>(0.023)                 | 0.007<br>(0.017)                  |
| N (Observations)                            | 347                               | 347                               | 347                               | 270                              | 270                               |
| J (Countries)                               | 44                                | 44                                | 44                                | 27                               | 27                                |
| R <sup>2</sup>                              | 0.092                             |                                   |                                   | 0.062                            | 0.089                             |

*Note:* The dependent variable is the change in Jones and Mainwaring's Index of party system nationalization; specifications in the first, fourth and fifth columns are fixed effects models; specifications in the second and third columns are random effects models; all of them have clustered standard errors by country in parentheses; \*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1 (two-tailed tests).

central authority starts to delegate its powers to sub-national units. Indeed, the coefficient on *Candidate-Centred Reform* is positive, indicating higher values of the Jones and Mainwaring's Index when an electoral system of this type is adopted in centralized countries. However, when this kind of institutional change and the level of political decentralization are interacted, the effect becomes negative and statistically significant. This result fits my theoretical expectation

**Table 7.3. Determinants of changes in party system inflation, new and established democracies (1945-2010)**

| Independent Variables                 | Model 1                          | Model 2                        | Model 3                          | Model 4                        | Model 5                          |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|
|                                       | coefficient<br>(se)              | coefficient<br>(se)            | coefficient<br>(se)              | coefficient<br>(se)            | coefficient<br>(se)              |
| $\Delta$ Party System Inflation (t-1) | -0.647***<br>(0.105)             | -0.602***<br>(0.113)           | -0.602***<br>(0.116)             | -0.436***<br>(0.072)           | -0.439***<br>(0.069)             |
| Party-Centred Reform                  | <b>0.086</b><br><b>(0.117)</b>   | <b>0.102</b><br><b>(0.108)</b> | <b>0.105</b><br><b>(0.211)</b>   | <b>0.105</b><br><b>(0.136)</b> | <b>-0.097*</b><br><b>(0.056)</b> |
| Candidate-Centred Reform              | <b>0.035**</b><br><b>(0.016)</b> | <b>0.021</b><br><b>(0.018)</b> | <b>-0.0256</b><br><b>(0.021)</b> | <b>0.021</b><br><b>(0.014)</b> | <b>0.015</b><br><b>(0.022)</b>   |
| Ethnic Fragmentation                  |                                  | 0.036<br>(0.028)               | 0.0303<br>(0.025)                |                                |                                  |
| Party-Centred*Ethnic                  |                                  |                                | <b>-0.012</b><br><b>(0.515)</b>  |                                |                                  |
| Candidate-Centred*Ethnic              |                                  |                                | <b>0.176**</b><br><b>(0.089)</b> |                                |                                  |
| Political Decentralization            |                                  |                                |                                  | 0.0003<br>(0.004)              | -0.0009<br>(0.003)               |
| Party-Centred*Decentralization        |                                  |                                |                                  |                                | <b>0.021</b><br><b>(0.017)</b>   |
| Candidate-Centred*Decentralization    |                                  |                                |                                  |                                | <b>0.0007</b><br><b>(0.002)</b>  |
| Constant                              | 0.007*<br>(0.004)                | -0.002<br>(0.008)              | -0.001<br>(0.007)                | -0.002<br>(0.054)              | 0.012<br>(0.043)                 |
| N (Observations)                      | 374                              | 374                            | 374                              | 317                            | 317                              |
| J (Countries)                         | 40                               | 40                             | 40                               | 29                             | 29                               |
| R <sup>2</sup>                        | 0.371                            |                                |                                  | 0.195                          | 0.254                            |

*Note:* The dependent variable is the change in Moenius and Kasuya's Weighted Index of party system inflation; models 1, 4 and 5 are fixed effects with clustered standard errors by country in parentheses; models 2 and 3 are random effects with clustered standard errors by country in parentheses; \*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1 (two-tailed tests).

because it would mean that candidate-centred reforms decrease the level of party system nationalization in case of decentralized countries.

The coefficient estimates of Table 7.3 show slightly weaker evidence for the aforementioned hypotheses. More specifically, for each candidate-centred reform registered the

**Table 7.4. Determinants of changes in the average effective number of electoral parties at the district-level, new and established democracies (1945-2010)**

| Independent Variables              | Model 1                         | Model 2                         | Model 3                          | Model 4                         | Model 5                         |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
|                                    | coefficient<br>(se)             | coefficient<br>(se)             | coefficient<br>(se)              | coefficient<br>(se)             | coefficient<br>(se)             |
| $\Delta$ Average ENEP (t-1)        | -0.380***<br>(0.063)            | -0.352***<br>(0.069)            | -0.324***<br>(0.079)             | -0.326***<br>(0.062)            | -0.322***<br>(0.062)            |
| Party-Centred Reform               | <b>-0.267</b><br><b>(0.247)</b> | <b>-0.418</b><br><b>(0.331)</b> | <b>-0.911*</b><br><b>(0.479)</b> | <b>-0.301</b><br><b>(0.273)</b> | <b>-0.092</b><br><b>(0.081)</b> |
| Candidate-Centred Reform           | <b>0.425</b><br><b>(0.255)</b>  | <b>0.22</b><br><b>(0.262)</b>   | <b>0.608</b><br><b>-0.409</b>    | <b>0.348</b><br><b>(0.339)</b>  | <b>-0.171</b><br><b>(0.491)</b> |
| Ethnic Fragmentation               |                                 | 0.216<br>(0.283)                | 0.15<br>(0.19)                   |                                 |                                 |
| Party-Centred*Ethnic               |                                 |                                 | <b>1.371</b><br><b>(1.151)</b>   |                                 |                                 |
| Candidate-Centred*Ethnic           |                                 |                                 | <b>-1.424</b><br><b>(1.141)</b>  |                                 |                                 |
| Political Decentralization         |                                 |                                 |                                  | 0.003<br>(0.0105)               | 0.002<br>(0.0109)               |
| Party-Centred*Decentralization     |                                 |                                 |                                  |                                 | <b>0.017</b><br><b>(0.023)</b>  |
| Candidate-Centred*Decentralization |                                 |                                 |                                  |                                 | <b>0.044</b><br><b>(0.045)</b>  |
| Constant                           | 0.081***<br>(0.008)             | 0.017<br>(0.052)                | 0.044<br>(0.035)                 | -0.007<br>(0.128)               | 0.005<br>(0.133)                |
| N (Observations)                   | 317                             | 317                             | 317                              | 268                             | 268                             |
| J (Countries)                      | 35                              | 35                              | 35                               | 26                              | 26                              |
| R <sup>2</sup>                     | 0.156                           |                                 |                                  | 0.133                           | 0.14                            |

*Note:* The dependent variable is the change in the average Laakso and Taagepera's effective number of electoral parties at the district-level; models 1, 4 and 5 are fixed effects with clustered standard errors by country in parentheses; models 2 and 3 are random effects with clustered standard errors by country in parentheses; \*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1 (two-tailed tests).

inflation of the party system at the national level increases by about 3.5% (see Model 1). This effect is significant at the 5% level. Thus, the analysis gives empirical credence to the idea that institutional change matters for changes in the levels of party system nationalization. Indeed, contrary to what one may think, this effect is huge. Most of these reforms involve tiny modifications of some of the features of the electoral system. Hence, finding any significant

effect of them on party system nationalization constitutes a quite remarkable result. With regard to the interactive hypotheses, it is first of all worth mentioning that there are not much many positive changes in the inflation of the national party system in ethnic heterogeneous rather than homogenous countries. According to Model 3, the second quite remarkable pattern is that the positive effect of candidate-centred reforms on party system inflation only gets statistically significant in sufficiently ethnically fragmented countries. Hence, not all the candidate-centred reforms have the expected expansive impact on inflation of the national party system. Finally, all these effects lose statistical significance when are controlled for the relevant variables regarding the level of political decentralization.

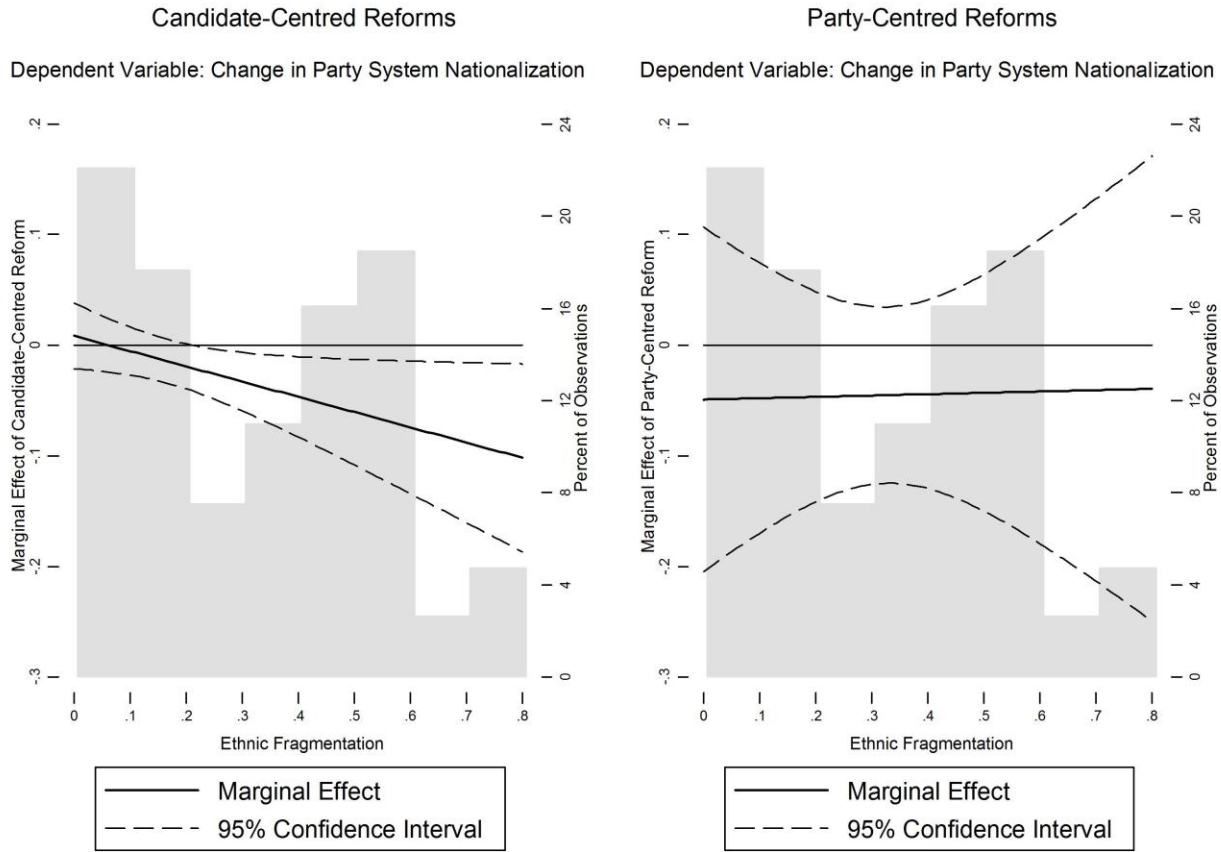
The negative findings with regard to the placebo test mentioned earlier seem to cross-validate some of my main claims, as shown in Table 7.4. The almost complete lack of statistical significance of the main predictors appears to indicate that reforms in the intraparty dimension of the electoral system affect coordination across rather than within districts. According to Model 3, party-centred electoral system changes in totally homogenous countries from the ethnic point of view decrease the average effective number of electoral parties at the district-level. However, this effect is not robust across specifications. Moreover, the absence of absolute ethnic uniformity among the democracies studied here casts some doubts on the relevance of this effect.

Finally, I plot in Figures 7.2 and 7.3 the conditional effect of the different types of reforms on the levels of party system nationalization for a reasonable range of values of the modifying variables (the degree of ethnic fragmentation and political decentralization, respectively). According to Thomas Brambor et al. (2006) and Cindy Kam and Robert Franzese (2007), the effect of an interaction term cannot be evaluated through the  $p$ -value shown in the regression table. Thus, it is necessary to graphically illustrate the marginal effect of our main independent variable (that is, electoral reform) on the nationalization of the party system over ethnic heterogeneity and political decentralization.<sup>246</sup> As predicted in the hypotheses section, the

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<sup>246</sup> To appreciate the statistical significance, I will represent in the vertical axis of a graph the magnitude of the marginal effect of the reform, and on the horizontal axis, the different values of the modifying variable. The continuous line represents the changes of such effect as contextual conditions are modified. The discontinuous lines represent the confidence intervals that will indicate when is the marginal effect statistically significant ( $p < 0.01$ ); this will be the case when the two confidence intervals are simultaneously above or below 0. I am grateful to Matt

**Figure 7.2. Marginal effect of electoral reform on party system nationalization over ethnic fragmentation**



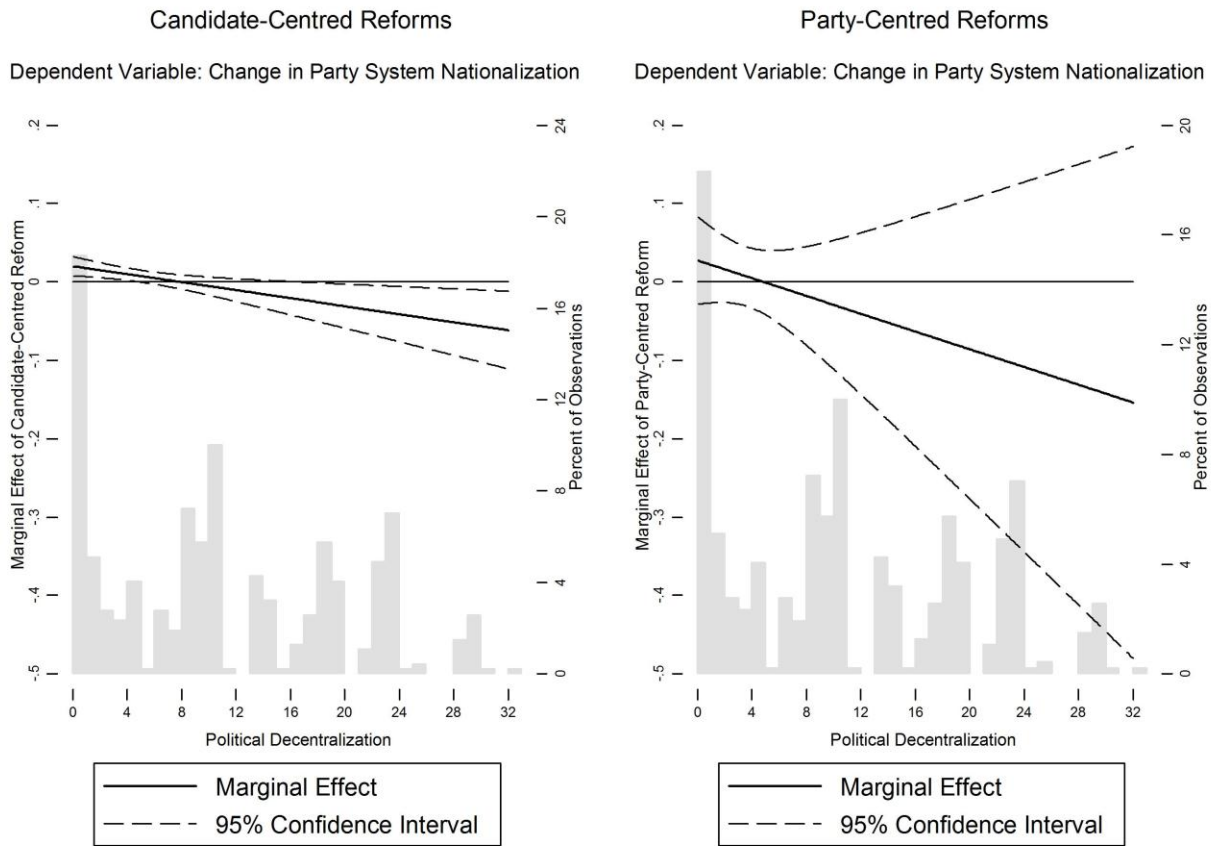
*Note:* Results are derived from Table 7.2, Model 3.

presence of a candidate-centred reform has a strong constraining effect on party system nationalization in heterogeneous societies. However, Figure 7.2 also shows that this impact stops having a statistically significant effect once social heterogeneity drops beyond a certain point (less than 0.2). Hence, the results presented here clearly indicate that candidate-centred reforms can be expected to have a null impact on the nationalization of party systems when the degree of ethnic heterogeneity is low enough (like in Japan or Portugal, among others). Likewise, we can see in Figure 7.3 that the expected marginal effect of candidate-centred reform in a relatively-centralized country (that is, when the value of the regional authority index is lower than 5) is

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Golder for kindly providing in his *web* page the STATA codes to graph the marginal effects of the multiplicative models used in Brambor et al. (2006).

**Figure 7.3. Marginal effect of electoral reform on party system nationalization over political decentralization**



*Note:* Results are derived from Table 7.2, Model 5.

positive. I still do not know why in countries where political authority is quite centralized and a candidate-centred reform is adopted (for example, in Estonia or Iceland in the 1990s) findings run to counter my expectations. However, this effect, as hypothesized, tends to disappear as countries become decentralized. In fact, a candidate-centred reform produces a statistically significant negative change in party system nationalization of about 7 points when the modifying variable reaches its maximum value (as in the case of Germany or Belgium after the 1990s).<sup>247</sup>

<sup>247</sup> I also tried a triple interaction between each type of electoral reform, ethnic fragmentation and political decentralization but it did not reach statistical significance at the traditional confidence levels.



## 7.6. Conclusion

Although the variables explaining party system fragmentation have been investigated extensively, considerably less is known about the determinants of party system nationalization (Cox 1999a; Grofman et al. 2009). And this gap is particularly surprising giving the huge variation of this phenomenon across different political systems, and its important impact on the governability and survival of democracies (Jones and Mainwaring 2003).

Because of the relatively wide spread of electoral reforms during recent decades, and their large heterogeneity in terms of the components of the systems that were modified and the countries in which the changes were adopted, I have argued in this chapter that modifications in the features of the electoral systems generate fluctuations in the levels of party system nationalization. To be more specific, in this chapter I have tried to show that electoral reforms matter for the uniformity in vote shares of parties across districts, and to examine to what degree do the levels of ethnic fragmentation and political decentralization modify the impact of these episodes of electoral engineering.

The results of this study support the proposition that electoral reforms generate levels of party system nationalization that differ from those generally observed in scenarios of institutional continuity. In particular, I have shown that candidate-centred electoral system changes decrease party system nationalization. For example, my results point to a novel implication of the 2002 electoral reform in Belgium: the reduced impact of the list vote passed that year there not only enhanced the personalization of campaigns, undermining the parties' programmatic debates (De Winter 2005: 431), but also contributed to deepen the lack of nationalization of their party system. By contrast, party-centred reforms do not increase it. Again as in Chapter 6, what I think I have here is an asymmetry in the difficulty found in adapting to reforms in one direction rather than the other. Reactions to candidate-centred reforms are easy to achieve since local candidates are pressing for these reactions and they are closer to the voters than national parties per se are. A reform in the other direction will be counteracted by candidates attempting to vitiate the purposes of the reform, and national leaders will find it hard to get their message through about the new voters' need to vote for parties rather than candidates. Moreover, that argument could be a hard sell in countries used to candidate-centred elections.

Some of the main results of the chapter precisely lie in the interactions between electoral reforms and ethnic heterogeneity on the one hand and political decentralization on the other. When candidate-centred electoral system changes are adopted in ethnically fragmented societies, the combination of the institutional incentives generated by the new rules and the relative weakness of national parties render political elites and voters more likely to behave differently across districts. And this pattern is similar in the districts of politically decentralized countries. By contrast, in democracies centralized enough (i.e., those that score less than five in Marks et al.'s [2008] index) either citizens, politicians or both seem to react in an unexpected way, and party system nationalization increases when a candidate-centred reform is adopted. Hence, the new incentives for personal vote created by these electoral reforms are swamped by other factors (in this case, political centralization) and do not necessarily translate into actual behaviour (Morgenstern and Swindle 2005: 165).

The findings presented in this chapter are not in and of themselves sufficient to provide a robust theory of the causes of changes in party system nationalization. For example, we know that electoral reforms are more likely to happen in some given contexts (see Chapter 5 for more on this). So, I have not identified the causal effect of these contexts on the nationalization of party systems and what looks like the impact of institutional engineering may really be driven by its own determinants. Without a way to randomly assign electoral reform, its effect cannot be distinguished from the potential – if any – impact of other variables leading to its adoption. Hence, I do not deny the possibility that party systems cause electoral reforms, not the other way around. In fact, the data from the sampled countries suggest that party system fluctuations occur prior to electoral reforms. To sum up, future comparative studies are necessary in order to address this potential problem of endogeneity and clearly specify the causal path.

Finally, my research points to further analyses that should deal with the effects of reforms in the intraparty dimension of electoral system on other political variables that go beyond the strict electoral arena like the centralization of parties' organization, the homogenization of manifestos or the nationalization of budgets. Moreover, I am completely agnostic about the positive and negative externalities nationalization of party systems can involve. All I am saying

is that the convergence and divergence of electoral forces across territorial units are coherent with different modes of representation.



## Chapter 8. “Is it safe?” The consequences of electoral reforms at the meso-level. The case of parties’ electoral performance<sup>248</sup>

### 8.1. Introduction

Are electoral reforms damaging for parties’ electoral performance? This has been a largely neglected topic in the discipline so far. We know that several factors (cleavages, party identification, government’s performance, and so on) have an impact on vote decisions; but we do not have yet a body of comparative work on how institutional stances of parties influence their vote shares. In the last two decades, there has been a heightened scholarly interest in trying to understand why one electoral system is used rather than another (e.g., Blais 2008; Colomer 2004a; Gallagher and Mitchell 2005a; Renwick 2010). These studies attempt to explain the origins of electoral rules or determine whether changes in party systems parallel changes in electoral institutions. However, the effectiveness of modifying the rules of the game as a tool for winning votes is not well understood: we have no information on whether and when electoral reforms have the desired effect of adding to votes totals for those parties that support the electoral system change.

Uncovering how voters react to electoral reforms is interesting not simply from the point of view of party strategies but also as it enhances our general knowledge of the functioning of the representational process. In other words, it sheds light on voters' choices and their preferences about electoral systems and on party strategies for survival in the electoral game. So, studying the electoral consequences of institutional engineering also contributes to several central themes in the discipline, including why one electoral system is used rather than another (Shugart 2005), the extent of elite responsiveness to the public in the institutional domain (Cain et al. 2006), and the role of electoral accountability as the basis of political representation (Przeworski et al. 1999).

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<sup>248</sup> After two chapters in which I have examined the consequences of electoral reforms at the macro (i.e., country) level, I intend to do so at the meso (i.e., party) level in this one.

The arguments presented in the existing literature do not provide any hint about the potential impact of the positions adopted by parties in processes of institutional change on their subsequent electoral performance. On the one hand, it is argued that risk-averse parties seek to maximize their seat shares when implementing an electoral reform (Benoit 2004). Within this framework, voters might penalize incumbents that pursue their own interest at will by blatantly manipulating the rules of the game (Katz 2005). On the other hand, a couple of studies argue that act-contingent motivations also play an important role in electoral reform processes (Reed and Thies 2001; Shugart 2008). In other words, parties are not necessarily seat-maximizers; they also have incentives to pay attention to voters' preferences on electoral reform in the hope of gaining votes. Both arguments essentially rest on the assumption that parties behave according to what is electorally most beneficial. However, the arguments disagree on the definition of electoral benefits: according to the former it is beneficial to maximize seats while according to the latter it is beneficial to maximize votes. Which of these arguments is empirically valid?

In this chapter, I argue that whether electoral reforms are damaging or rewarding in terms of votes depends on the type of new rules that are enacted, the way in which the electoral reform process is publicly framed and passed in Parliament by the ruling elites and the party system context in which they are implemented. First of all, I differentiate between permissive and restrictive changes in the interparty dimension of the electoral systems. I then argue that in situations of high party system fragmentation voters view restrictive electoral reforms more favourably regardless of their general ideological placement. Improving cabinet durability and increasing the legislative passage rate are examples of pragmatic concerns that lead voters to judge positively such reforms in these contexts. Given that high party system fragmentation can be perceived as responsible for these shortcomings, voters are more likely to reward parties that support restrictive electoral system shifts when there are lots of parties. By contrast, increasing the permissiveness of the rules rather than keeping the system unchanged or trying to make it more restrictive may be counterproductive in a context of high party system fragmentation.

In situations where party system fragmentation is relatively low, support for permissive electoral reform may be perceived as enhancing democracy (Blais et al. 2005), improving the electoral appeal of the party. This willingness *to open up the system* is likely to be rewarded at

the polling booth when there are few parties. Fostering the representation of women or ethnic minorities might also be two positive by-products of increasing the overall permissiveness of the system.

Measuring the main independent variable in the analysis requires information on the positions taken by political parties regarding electoral reform processes. There is no existing comprehensive dataset that provides such information on a comparative basis. For this reason, we (i.e., Damien Bol and I) have created an original dataset. Compared to other datasets, the one employed here has two main advantages. First of all, it focuses on electoral reform processes, and not only instances in which an electoral system change was actually enacted. As has been previously noticed, episodes of real electoral reform are rare. Hence, relying only on the cases of successful electoral system change implies an important loss of information. Moreover, this design allows me to test whether the electoral impact of parties' positions is greater in those processes where the reform was finally enacted. Second, in taking parties and not only governments into account, the dataset offers more precise information. Once again, the actual preference of a government (or the opposition) is a poor estimator of the positions of the political parties that compose them; and, in the end, parties within the government rather than the government as such are those held accountable by the electorate.<sup>249</sup>

The arguments are tested with data from 20 (old and new) democracies across 30 processes of electoral reform. The findings show that support for restrictive reforms in contexts of high party system size is associated with vote gains, as is advocacy of permissive reforms in systems with relatively low fragmentation. These findings bring novel insights to our knowledge regarding the limits of political manipulation of the rules of the game. Moreover, they alert us to the need to take into account the previous level of party system fragmentation in understanding electoral results after an institutional change. The results also suggest, contrary to conventional wisdom, that seat-maximization is not necessarily the key to parties' preferences on electoral reform.

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<sup>249</sup> To illustrate this point, let's take for example the case of the 2010 referendum on electoral reform in the United Kingdom. The Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats (both in government) were totally against and totally in favour of the electoral reform, respectively. If we took the government as a unit of analysis instead of the parties that form part of it, we would conclude that the cabinet as a whole was neither in favour nor against the institutional change proposed.

## 8.2. The determinants of electoral system changes

It is generally assumed that electoral reforms are minor and infrequent (Birch et al. 2002; Gallagher 2005; Lijphart 1994; Nohlen 1984b; Norris 1995; Taagepera 2007b).<sup>250</sup> Several explanations have been proposed for why this is the case. First, electoral system changes may be discouraged because they require incumbents to change the rules of the game they are winning (Katz 2005; Leyenaar and Hazan 2011). Self-interested parties in government should be better off if they kept the rules that put them in power. Second, it is also argued that instances of electoral reform will be limited because of the presence of a large number of veto players (Tsebelis 2002). Attempts at electoral reform require the support of all the veto players in a given democracy to be successfully passed. Moreover, constant electoral reforms may also threaten the survival of the democratic regime itself by generating alienation in the electorate, and hampering successful coordination at the parties/candidates and voters' levels (Cox 1997).

Some studies argue explicitly that there are few electoral reforms because only a combination of some *inherent conditions* together with a *triggering event or events* - contingencies- leads politicians to change the rules under which they were elected (Shugart 2008). Seat-maximization motivations may be useful in explaining certain instances of electoral reform, but they do not provide information as to whether the support of a party for electoral system change will affect its vote share. This suggests that the link between being in favour of a given reform and the number of seats additionally gained is not necessarily straightforward. In any event, the arguments presented in these studies would also lead one to believe that parties' willingness to support some particular electoral reforms could be inhibited by the potential threat of a loss of votes, whatever its promised benefits in terms of the translation of those votes into seats. And this is, in fact, what Shugart's theory seems to imply.

According to him, *act-contingent* motivations for electoral reform are present when politicians expect to benefit (in terms of popular support) from the very act of voting for reform. Whether or not they sincerely prefer an alternative electoral system, the concept of 'reform' is

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<sup>250</sup> Against this, see Colomer (2001a).



itself popular and leads them to support the electoral reform. When might party leaders take the plunge and publicly advocate electoral reform? There is no easy answer to this question. In fact, this is where the whole theory of electoral reform developed in a previous chapter comes in. Briefly speaking, there is some evidence that parties do change the interparty dimension of the electoral rules in a restrictive way to respond to high levels of party system fragmentation. In such contexts, cabinet instability is high and legislative productivity is low; and politicians fear electoral losses if they do not fix these problems and please the electorate by adopting a new system. Hence, parties' positions on electoral reform heavily hinge on the overall level of party system fragmentation produced by the current rules.

At the same time, there is also some evidence that parties change the rules of the game to respond to some movements in the electoral arena that could jeopardize their political survival in the near future (Colomer 2004b). That is, parties are in constant search of more beneficial institutional arrangements, and their strategies in the electoral engineering domain are guided by previous (and anticipated) vote shares. This line of reasoning paints a picture of an unstable and dynamic institutional arena when party system fragmentation increases -a picture according to which the proliferation of small parties in the legislature is reflected in a widespread preference for permissive electoral institutions able to keep all of them in. In a similar vein, Kenneth Benoit (2004: 373-4) argues that that "a change in electoral institutions will occur when a political party or coalition of political parties supports an alternative which will bring it more seats than the statu quo electoral system". And, analogously, Carles Boix (1999) explains the introduction of proportional representation (PR) as a damage-limitation strategy by right-wing parties in the face of a rising electoral threat from the left.

Finally, there is still a third strand of research that suggests that governments implement reforms to assuage public opinion (Dalton 2004). Using data from the World Values Survey, Norris (2011) demonstrates that *democratic aspirations*, measured as support to democratic ideals, are a strong, significant, and robust predictor of the occurrence of subsequent electoral reforms. Similarly, a recent paper by Alan Renwick and Jean-Benoit Pilet (2011) suggests there is an impact of citizens' *dissatisfaction with democracy* on the likelihood of electoral reform. This study, as most empirical studies on electoral reform to date, however, concentrates on the

determinants of institutional change. Furthermore, it lacks more precise information on actors' positions disaggregated at least to the party-level. Whether democratic aspirations and dissatisfaction with democracy are associated or not, being perceived by voters as reformist actors could be in itself a valuable electoral asset in this context. For this reason, incumbent parties would be interested in enacting electoral reforms as a way of pleasing a corpus of *critical citizens* (Norris 1999).

To sum up, these three sets of studies provide somewhat different predictions as to whether (and which) electoral reforms are potentially beneficial from an electoral point of view. Yet, we still lack empirical evidence about whether (and when) electoral reforms lead to vote gains. Looking beyond the causes of the reform and incorporating information on parties' stances may provide a fuller picture of the dynamics of electoral systems.

### **8.3. Redistributive versus efficient electoral reforms**

The theoretical argument in this chapter is based on two assumptions. First, I argue that electoral reforms can be divided into two groups: electoral system changes which are more electorate-friendly in essence versus those that are less popular. Second, I believe that voter utility is different for each type of modification of the rules of the game. In particular, I consider that restrictive reforms in case of high party system fragmentation are efficient and, hence, electorate-friendly.

That voters may use institutional-related considerations in their decision making is apparent in the comparison of the efficient versus redistributive nature of electoral reforms (Tsebelis 1990). Institutional changes are *efficient* "if they improve ... the condition of all (or almost all) individuals or groups in society." By contrast, *redistributive* electoral reforms typically concern the improvement of "the conditions of one group of society at the expense of another" (pp. 104-106). Although electoral systems are in many ways archetypical *redistributive* institutions -that is, zero sum games where the seats that a party wins under an alternative status quo are lost by another party-, there are circumstances in which efficient aspects of the electoral system come to the fore (Renwick 2010: 11). For example, Sarah Birch et al. (2002) argue that

designers of founding electoral systems in Eastern Europe were focused on the long-term collective good, and tried to ensure fair outcomes by extensively adopting proportional representation. Similarly, other students of electoral systems have recognized that parties might also rank alternative institutions according to their capacity to balance representation against governability, encouraging conciliation and conflict management between rival, possibly violent, groups in society, or making elections accessible and meaningful (Benoit 2007). Given that people focus on these contrasting considerations in the case of electoral reforms, it is also likely that their voting behaviour reacts to the different parties' positions on this issue. In other words, a direct implication of these arguments is that popular reactions should also reward parties that engage in processes of *efficient* electoral reform.

Consider then the changes in the interparty dimension of the electoral systems. High party system fragmentation requires institutional action if it is to be "fixed". A lack of change in this context or, even worse, a proportional reform is likely to be seen as a sign of unresponsiveness and self-interest; and a rational voter should reject an unresponsive party. Small party system size, on the other hand, gives opportunities for opening the system to new entrants. Supporting a restrictive modification of the electoral law in this type of scenario is therefore likely to be perceived as blatant manipulation, and rational voters should not vote for a party that advocates such a reform.

By contrast, proposing restrictive electoral reforms in case of high party system fragmentation serves the purpose of building a reputation of commitment to the general interest although the fact that the party in question is large devalues to some extent such a proposal. If voters were concerned about the general lack of efficiency of the system in these contexts, it would be important to know where a party stands in the field of institutional engineering once we control for other usual determinants of electoral behaviour. The expression of a particular party's position in an electoral reform process may not be about achieving pragmatic solutions; rather, it may be a commitment to the general good organization of the institutional structure of a country. Either pushing for a restrictive reform when party system fragmentation is low or advocating a permissive institutional change when the number of parties is high will very likely provoke discomfort among the electorate and undermine the credibility and commitment of the party to

an efficient solution of institutional problems. Furthermore, just as parties are likely to be as more credible and committed when they attempt to deal with a malfunctioning electoral system, so they are likely to be seen as exhibiting extra doses of credibility and to appear specially committed when they advocate a reform that in principle goes against their strictly electoral self-interest (e.g., a small party pursuing a restrictive electoral system change in case of high party system fragmentation). Such counter-intuitive institutional strategies may, thus, not only ensure the vote of existing supporters but are also likely to appeal to potential new voters.

How supporting the “right” electoral reform can matter is illustrated vividly by the final election in New Zealand under the former first-past-the-post (FPTP) system. Much of the political competition between the parties in 1993 there revolved around the issue of electoral reform. While the Alliance strongly and publicly favoured mixed-member proportional (MMP), Labour was formally opposed to MMP but informally split on the issue, and New Zealand First’s leader Winston Peters privately favoured the reform although the party did not take any formal stance, National was the only party that vociferously opposed the change in the rules (Denemark 2001). In the end, the fact that the National Party suffered at the polls (losing almost 13 points) may also have been due, at least partially, to its support of an unpopular electoral system -not only throughout several past decades but also during the 1993 binding referendum campaign on electoral reform.<sup>251</sup>

The example of the 1993 New Zealand election, although anecdotal, serves the purpose of illustrating how voters may prefer proportionality over majoritarianism in the case of low party system fragmentation. And this preference for a more proportional system was reinforced when twice in a row in the early 1980s the victory in seat shares went to the party that received fewer votes. Given these preferences of voters on institutional alternatives, support for FPTP was

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<sup>251</sup> While plausible, the attribution of the swing against the National Party to its stance on the electoral reform referendum should not go without qualification. According to Levine and Roberts (1994), those most likely when likely in the election to stop supporting the National Party were those most angry about the government’s record but also those most upset about the operation of an allegedly unjust system that considerably privileged the two major parties. Hence, it could be argued that the opposition to change the electoral system mostly apparent among National Party legislators contributed to the strong vote against it.

likely to undermine the electoral performance of the party and lead to loss of voter support – as it actually did.<sup>252</sup>

#### **8.4. Research design and measurement**

If this theoretical argument was valid, the following implications should hold: first, voters should be aware of parties' positions in the electoral reform processes; and second, they should take into consideration these stances when casting their vote.<sup>253</sup> *Since according to Duverger electoral reforms may have effects on parties' vote totals only in the case of successful attempts to change the rules of the game, there should be no clear predictions about the electoral consequences of advocating institutional modifications when they are not finally implemented. By contrast, following my "theory" we should observe a positive impact of supporting the "right" electoral reform on parties' vote totals even in the case of no actual electoral system change.* In order to test these observable implications, I look at several processes of electoral reform in Western and Eastern Europe from 1956 to 2008. The unit of analysis is a political party at a given election and the data are organized as party panels.

Before I move to the main body of this research, a note on case selection needs to be made. First, I study processes in which major rules that shape electoral outcomes at the national level are at stake. I limit the meaning of *major reform* of national electoral systems to the wholesale replacement of the electoral formula (Katz 2005). I prefer to confine my analysis to such relatively small number of cases because my argument requires electoral reform to be a salient issue in the political arena; and this is better ensured when the wholesale replacement of the electoral formula is at stake, as it is directly related to the principle of representation in place in the country (Nohlen 1984a). Obviously, parties are freer to do what they like for less salient

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<sup>252</sup> Another typical example of how parties' positions regarding reform may affect their subsequent electoral performance is the 1953 Italian election. The losses then of all four centrist parties (i.e., Democrazia Cristiana, Partito Socialista Democratico Italiano, Partito Liberale Italiano and Partito Repubblicano Italiano) were perceived as directly attributable to the *legge truffa* (LaPalombara 1953: 686).

<sup>253</sup> Both these two requirements are clearly associated with the question of whether the issue of electoral system change is salient to the general public. Given that I will focus on major electoral reforms, I do not believe this is a problem.

reforms (for example, raising a legal threshold). For this reason, we don't expect responsive (or responsible) behavior from parties in the absence of salience.

Yet, the identification of a case of electoral reform without specifying the direction in which the rules of the game change is clearly insufficient. On this basis, it is very useful to distinguish between permissive and restrictive reforms, which are expected to decrease and increase the overall disproportionality produced by the electoral rules, respectively (Taagepera and Shugart 1989). In general, disproportionality can be defined as “the deviation of parties’ seat shares from their vote shares” (Lijphart 1994: 57). An electoral reform is coded as *permissive* when politicians consider switching from a majoritarian to either a mixed or a proportional formula, or when they think about replacing a mixed system with a proportional one. Moreover, the replacement of first past the post by a majority runoff system is expected to create less deviation of parties’ seat shares from their vote shares and, as a result, is considered to be a permissive reform. And the reverse holds for *restrictive* reforms.

In order to guarantee saliency again, I follow Matthew Shugart (2008) in only considering those processes that are at least arms length from the government and its parliamentary majority, because a certain threshold of seriousness has been crossed when a government allows a body outside its direct control to study the electoral system and make a formal recommendation for a new system. Furthermore, the dataset does not only gather information on successful electoral reforms. As long as the research question is whether parties’ positions on electoral reform have an impact on their future vote totals, all the processes of major electoral reform that cross this threshold of seriousness and for which data are available are considered. Moreover, combining failed and successful attempts of electoral reform allows me to see whether the impact of parties’ positions on vote totals is larger in the latter. Finally, the dataset used to conduct the analysis is particularly suitable for a comparative study of the impact of parties’ positions in electoral reform processes on their subsequent performance at the polls because it includes a numerous and heterogeneous list of cases that offer a substantial amount of variation.

Because the main hypothesis is addressed through a hierarchical analysis comprising two levels of interest (party and process), multilevel modelling is the most appropriate technique to assess the effects of my independent variables. In addition, the hypothesis concerning the effect of parties' positions across different levels of party system fragmentation implies the implementation of a random-intercepts model, and the specification of a cross-level interaction between one level-1 and one level-2 contextual variable whereby the marginal effect of this main independent variable (i.e., parties' positions) varies across parties within the same election. Third, when analyzing the impact of level-1 variables across different contextual units, a multilevel analysis is a better choice for technical reasons such as avoiding the truncation of the variance and correcting the standard errors (Steenbergen and Jones 2002).

The dependent variable, *Vote Change*, is operationalized as the change in the percentage of votes received by a given party across two consecutive national legislative elections. Negative values on this variable indicate the vote share lost while positive values indicate the vote share gained by the party.

#### **8.4.1. The independent variable**

The preferences of parties have been coded by national experts (one per country) who were asked about the degree of support for the proposal of electoral reform by each parliamentary party at the beginning of the process. Table 8.1 reports some relevant information about the electoral reform processes examined. Experts were told to only rely on official and public materials such as discourses, manifestos or legislative votes. The coding scheme is fourfold and ranges from “fully against the proposal” to “fully in favour of it”, with “somehow against” and “somehow in favour” in the middle.<sup>254</sup> The “fully” positions were attributed to parties that expressed an unconditional support or opposition to the proposal and that were unified on the subject. The “somehow” positions were given to parties with a more balanced view, either because they were internally divided or because they did not support the implementation of the reform unconditionally.<sup>255</sup>

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<sup>254</sup> The intermediate categories would make more sense as “somewhat for (or against)” but I prefer to stick to the original wording of the expert survey.

<sup>255</sup> The processes of electoral reform analyzed include: Albania 2003, Albania 2008, Austria 1989, Belgium 2000, Bolivia 1993, Canada 1989, Colombia 2002, Czech Republic 1998, France 1985, France 1986, France 2007, Ireland

**Table 8.1. Description of the electoral reform processes**

| <b>Country</b> | <b>Year</b> | <b>Electoral Rules</b> | <b>Electoral Reform</b> | <b>Direction</b> | <b>Outcome</b> | <b>Expert</b>             |
|----------------|-------------|------------------------|-------------------------|------------------|----------------|---------------------------|
| Albania        | 2003        | FPTP                   | 2RS                     | Proportional     | Adopted        | Fisnik Korenica/Dren Doli |
| Albania        | 2008        | Mixed                  | List PR                 | Proportional     | Adopted        | Fisnik Korenica/Dren Doli |
| Austria        | 1989        | List PR                | Mixed                   | Majoritarian     | Non-adopted    | Wolfgang C. Müller        |
| Belgium        | 2000        | List PR                | Mixed                   | Majoritarian     | Non-adopted    | Jean-Benoit Pilet         |
| Bolivia        | 1994        | List PR                | Mixed                   | Majoritarian     | Adopted        | Miguel Centellas          |
| Canada         | 1989        | FPTP                   | Mixed                   | Proportional     | Non-adopted    | Louis Massicotte          |
| Colombia       | 2003        | “SNTV”                 | List PR                 | Majoritarian     | Adopted        | Matthew Shugart           |
| Czech R.       | 1998        | List PR                | Mixed                   | Majoritarian     | Non-adopted    | Sean Hanley               |
| France         | 1985        | 2RS                    | List PR                 | Proportional     | Adopted        | Pierre Martin             |
| France         | 1986        | List PR                | 2RS                     | Majoritarian     | Non-adopted    | Pierre Martin             |
| France         | 2007        | 2RS                    | Mixed                   | Proportional     | Non-adopted    | Pierre Martin             |
| Ireland        | 1959        | STV                    | FPTP                    | Majoritarian     | Non-adopted    | Conor Little              |
| Ireland        | 1968        | STV                    | FPTP                    | Majoritarian     | Non-adopted    | Conor Little              |
| Israel         | 1992        | List PR                | Mixed                   | Majoritarian     | Adopted        | Gideon Rahat              |
| Israel         | 2001        | Mixed                  | List PR                 | Proportional     | Adopted        | Gideon Rahat              |
| Italy          | 1993        | List PR                | Mixed                   | Majoritarian     | Adopted        | Caterina Paolucci         |
| Italy          | 2005        | Mixed                  | List PR + bonus         | Proportional     | Adopted        | Caterina Paolucci         |
| Japan          | 1955        | SNTV                   | FPTP                    | Majoritarian     | Non-adopted    | Kuni Nemoto               |
| Japan          | 1994        | SNTV                   | Mixed                   | Majoritarian     | Adopted        | Kuni Nemoto               |
| Lithuania      | 2000        | 2RS                    | FPTP                    | Majoritarian     | Adopted        | Algis Krupavicius         |
| Lithuania      | 2004        | FPTP                   | 2RS                     | Proportional     | Adopted        | Algis Krupavicius         |
| Macedonia      | 1998        | FPTP                   | Mixed                   | Proportional     | Adopted        | Trajche Panov             |
| Macedonia      | 2002        | Mixed                  | List PR                 | Proportional     | Adopted        | Trajche Panov             |
| Netherlands    | 2002        | List PR                | Mixed                   | Majoritarian     | Non-adopted    | Henk van der Kolk         |
| New Zealand    | 1992        | FPTP                   | Mixed                   | Proportional     | Adopted        | Stephen Levine            |
| Romania        | 2004        | List PR                | Mixed                   | Majoritarian     | Non-adopted    | Alexandra Ionascu         |
| Romania        | 2008        | List PR                | Mixed                   | Majoritarian     | Adopted        | Daniela Vintila           |
| Ukraine        | 2005        | Mixed                  | List PR                 | Proportional     | Adopted        | Erik Herron               |
| U. Kingdom     | 1997        | FPTP                   | Mixed                   | Proportional     | Non-adopted    | Alan Renwick              |
| Venezuela      | 1993        | List PR                | Mixed                   | Majoritarian     | Adopted        | Brian Crisp               |

The extent of support for change, however, is not in itself a useful indicator for testing the hypothesis because the “theory” only takes into account the expected impact of the proposed change on the party system size. Thus, parties’ positions were re-coded according to this latter

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1959, Ireland 1968, Israel 1992, Israel 2001, Italy 1993, Italy 2005, Japan 1955, Japan 1994, Lithuania 2000, Lithuania 2004, Macedonia 1998, Macedonia 2002, Netherlands 2002, New Zealand 1992, Romania 2004, Romania 2008, Ukraine 2005, United Kingdom 1997 and Venezuela 1993. The date indicates the year in which the proposal formally entered the government’s agenda. I would like to specially thank Damien Bol for having kindly shared his dataset with me. I am currently in the process of including new electoral reform processes (for example, Spain 2008). Table 8.1 reports the formula that was intended to be replaced, the proposed formula to do it, the expected impact of the change in terms of proportionality, whether the new electoral system was finally adopted, and the name of the national expert that helped me or us to code the parties’ positions.



consideration. The resulting variable provides a measure for the disproportionality-proportionality position of a party, and takes value 0 if it is “totally against” implementing a proportional reform, 1 if it is “somehow against”, 2 if it is “somehow in favour” and 3 if it is “totally in favour”. Positions are coded in the opposed direction when a majoritarian reform is discussed.

Finally, it is important to make a point on party system fragmentation. As can be seen in the previous sections, the entire chapter revolves around the idea that the number of parties highly determines the impact of parties’ positions in electoral reform processes on their subsequent vote totals. In other words, *parties’ stances in favour of a more restrictive system have a positive effect on their subsequent electoral performance when electoral party system fragmentation is high; and the reverse is expected when fragmentation is low*. For this reason, the key independent variable is an interaction between the stance of each party in the reform process and the level of party system fragmentation, which is captured by the effective number of electoral parties (ENEP). This index was first introduced by Markku Laakso and Rein Taagepera in 1979, and indicates “the number of hypothetical *equal*-size parties that would have the same total *effect* on fractionalization of the system as have the actual parties of *unequal* size” (p. 4). Its exact operationalization corresponds to the inverse of the sum of the square of all parties’ vote shares, and ranges from 1 to infinity (in fact, to the number of parties that obtain at least one vote).<sup>256</sup> In the past two decades, the effective number of parties “has become the most widely used measure” of party system size (Lijphart 1994: 70) because it considerably improves on earlier measures of party system fragmentation. First, it is comparable across very diverse countries. Moreover, it weights the count of parties by their relative electoral strength, and, hence, takes into account their “coalition” and “blackmail” power (Sartori 2005 [1976]). Maurice Duverger (1964 [1954]: 207-208) clearly had the concept of effective parties in mind when discussing party systems (see also Clark and Golder 2006: 680). However, using it also entails potential problems that cannot be ignored.<sup>257</sup>

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<sup>256</sup> Source: Golder (2005) complemented by Gallagher’s dataset ([www.tcd.ie/Political\\_Science/Staff/Michael.Gallagher/ElSystems/index.php](http://www.tcd.ie/Political_Science/Staff/Michael.Gallagher/ElSystems/index.php)).

<sup>257</sup> One such potential problem corresponds to the “other” and “independent” categories. In this chapter, I correct the effective number of electoral parties by using the least component method of bounds suggested by Taagepera (1997). This operation essentially requires calculating the effective number of electoral parties treating both categories as a single party (smallest effective number of parties), then recalculating the effective number of parties

### 8.4.2. Control variables

In order to reliably estimate whether parties' positions on electoral reform make them gain or lose votes, it is also necessary to control for several other variables potentially influencing parties' vote shares. First, it has long been observed that parties in government tend to lose votes, i.e., bear the "cost of ruling" (Mackie and Rose 1983). Thus, if an existing party belonged to a governing coalition before a given election was held, then their vote loss might be greater regardless of any electoral reform. Government incumbent is measured by a dummy variable coded 1 if a party was in office and 0 otherwise (Müller and Strøm 2000). Further, poor economic performance may trigger overall vote shifts (Anderson 1995). This effect is captured by a change in the real GDP per capita (1990 International Geary-Khamis dollars, divided by 1000).<sup>258</sup> Alternatively, I also use the mean three-year GDP growth (two years prior to election year + election year),<sup>259</sup> the unemployment<sup>260</sup> and the inflation rate (measured by the annual growth rate of the GDP implicit deflator)<sup>261</sup> of the election year. These measures of economic performance are interacted with the incumbency variable because I expect to see government parties performing worse in hard economic times. Finally, turnout change is measured by a difference in voter turnout between the previous and the current elections.<sup>262</sup> I include this control because the question of whether higher turnout would benefit some particular parties is still an empirically open question (Lavezzolo Pérez and Riera Sagrera 2008; Lutz and Marsh 2006). Descriptive statistics for all variables are presented in Table 8.2. The actual number of cases each country or process provides depends on the number of parliamentary parties. It is important to note that there is neither country nor process that supplies more than 9 per cent of the total number of cases in any of the analyses presented below.

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as if every vote in the "other" and "independent" categories belonged to a different party (largest effective number of parties) and taking the mean. The incidence of independent candidacies is only high in Russia and Ukraine.

<sup>258</sup> *Source:* Bolt and van Zanden (2013).

<sup>259</sup> Calculated from data in Bolt and van Zanden (2013).

<sup>260</sup> *Source:* Year Book of Labour Statistics, International Labour Office.

<sup>261</sup> *Source:* [www.worldbank.org](http://www.worldbank.org).

<sup>262</sup> *Sources:* [www.idea.int](http://www.idea.int) and author's calculations.

**Table 8.2. Descriptive statistics**

| <b>Variable</b>                | <b>Mean</b> | <b>Std. Dev.</b> | <b>Min.</b> | <b>Max.</b> | <b>N</b> |
|--------------------------------|-------------|------------------|-------------|-------------|----------|
| $\Delta$ Votes                 | -0.69       | 8.42             | -32.5       | 32.48       | 174      |
| Support PR                     | 1.65        | 1.28             | 0           | 3           | 174      |
| Support Change                 | 1.72        | 1.27             | 0           | 3           | 174      |
| ENEP                           | 5.84        | 2.34             | 2.72        | 10.46       | 174      |
| Adopted                        | 0.51        | 0.501            | 0           | 1           | 174      |
| Incumbent                      | 0.31        | 0.46             | 0           | 1           | 174      |
| Real GDP per Capita(in 1,000s) | 11.86       | 6.85             | 2.28        | 21.77       | 174      |
| $\Delta$ Turnout               | -3.03       | 9.107            | -21.65      | 24.14       | 174      |
| Seats/Votes Ratio              | 0.98        | 0.63             | 0           | 5.86        | 173      |
| Ideology                       | 0.12        | 0.93             | -3.74       | 2.43        | 75       |

## 8.5. Analysis

### 8.5.1. Benchmark models

The regression results reported in Table 8.3 confirm that the positions parties take on electoral reform have a different effect on vote share according to the level of party system fragmentation. Model 1 only uses the control variables as explanatory factors. Model 2 adds parties' positions on electoral reform and shows that parties that have supported a proportional electoral reform are not more likely to gain votes than parties that have advocated a restrictive change in the rules of the game. Model 3 introduces the common effective number of electoral parties that will be used in interactions that capture the role of party system size. The variable reaches statistical significance, indicating that fragmented party systems have a positive effect on votes gained by the parties. These two first results hold when the variables are used together (Model 4). When the relevant interaction effects are added, however (Model 5), we see a different story. In a barely fragmented party system, parties that have supported a proportional reform are more likely to gain votes than parties that have advocated a restrictive change in the rules of the game; the effect of the variable *Support PR* is positive and highly significant. By contrast, as party system fragmentation increases, support for a permissive electoral reform becomes damaging: the effect of the interaction *Effective Number of Electoral Parties\*Support PR* is statistically significant and negative, indicating that parties that have supported a permissive electoral system change in

**Table 8.3. Regression analysis of vote share gained or lost by parties, hierarchical linear models**

|                                | <b>Model 1</b>       | <b>Model 2</b>                 | <b>Model 3</b>                  | <b>Model 4</b>                  | <b>Model 5</b>                     |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <b>Independent Variables</b>   | <b>coefficient</b>   | <b>coefficient</b>             | <b>coefficient</b>              | <b>coefficient</b>              | <b>coefficient</b>                 |
|                                | <b>(se)</b>          | <b>(se)</b>                    | <b>(se)</b>                     | <b>(se)</b>                     | <b>(se)</b>                        |
| Incumbent                      | -12.26***<br>(2.656) | -12.59***<br>(2.666)           | -12.20***<br>(2.638)            | -12.55***<br>(2.646)            | -12.46***<br>(2.511)               |
| Real GDP per Capita(in 1,000s) | -0.094<br>(0.106)    | -0.0874<br>(0.106)             | -0.109<br>(0.105)               | -0.102<br>(0.105)               | -0.135<br>(0.1)                    |
| Incumbent*Real GDP per Capita  | 0.536***<br>(0.19)   | 0.542***<br>(0.19)             | 0.502***<br>(0.19)              | 0.507***<br>(0.189)             | 0.541***<br>(0.18)                 |
| Δ Turnout                      | 0.047<br>(0.066)     | 0.059<br>(0.066)               | 0.053<br>(0.065)                | 0.065<br>(0.066)                | 0.064<br>(0.063)                   |
| Support PR                     |                      | <b>-0.59</b><br><b>(0.476)</b> |                                 | <b>-0.625</b><br><b>(0.473)</b> | <b>4.357***</b><br><b>(1.216)</b>  |
| ENEP                           |                      |                                | <b>0.478*</b><br><b>(0.262)</b> | <b>0.491*</b><br><b>(0.262)</b> | <b>1.984***</b><br><b>(0.42)</b>   |
| Support PR*ENEP                |                      |                                |                                 |                                 | <b>-0.845***</b><br><b>(0.192)</b> |
| Constant                       | 2.303<br>(1.445)     | 3.282**<br>(1.645)             | -0.189<br>(1.982)               | 0.778<br>(2.109)                | -7.742***<br>(2.781)               |
| Intercept Variance at Level 1  | 26.06***<br>(4.478)  | 20.44***<br>(3.655)            | 21.13***<br>(3.939)             | 22.40***<br>(3.642)             | 23.57***<br>(1.838)                |
| Intercept Variance at Level 2  | 2.067***<br>(0.054)  | 2.065***<br>(0.054)            | 2.060***<br>(0.054)             | 2.058***<br>(0.054)             | 2.005***<br>(0.054)                |
| Log Likelihood                 | -606.48              | -605.54                        | -605.25                         | -604.21                         | -595.69                            |
| AIC                            | 1226.97              | 1227.08                        | 1226.508                        | 1226.42                         | 1211.39                            |
| BIC                            | 1249.08              | 1252.35                        | 1251.78                         | 1254.85                         | 1242.98                            |
| N (Observations)               | 174                  | 174                            | 174                             | 174                             | 174                                |
| J (Processes)                  | 30                   | 30                             | 30                              | 30                              | 30                                 |

Note: The dependent variable is *Vote Change*; \*p<0.1; \*\*p<0.05; \*\*\*p<0.01 (two-tailed tests); Standard errors in parentheses; Hierarchical linear models are specified.

a context of high party system fragmentation are more likely to lose votes than parties that were in favour of a restrictive reform. For example, Austrian parties in 1989 (i.e., in a barely fragmented party system) that decreased their support for the proposed majoritarian reform by one point on my scale were expected to have a positive change in the vote share from the 1986 to the 1990 election of about 2.07 per cent ( $4.35 - 0.84 * 2.72$ ).<sup>263</sup> By contrast, Belgian parties in 2000 (i.e., in a highly fragmented party system) that increased their support for keeping the extremely proportional electoral system then in force by one point on my scale tended to lose 4.28 per cent of votes in the 2003 elections ( $4.35 - 0.84 * 10.28$ ).<sup>264</sup> Given that the median absolute change in vote share for the parties and elections under consideration is 5.60 per cent, supporting the “right” electoral system is a consequential decision for any political party.

In addition to the variables measuring parties’ positions on electoral reform, government membership and economic performance have statistically significant effects on changes in vote shares. Compared to opposition parties, parties in government lose about 12 per cent more of their votes.<sup>265</sup> The result indicates that there are significant costs of ruling, in line with the negative incumbency advantage suggested by Kaare Strøm et al. (2008). Also, when economy is doing well, the likelihood that any given party in government will lose votes is lower.<sup>266</sup> This effect most likely reflects economic voting dynamic: in case of good economic times, i.e., when the economy grows at fast rates, citizens will reward the incumbent. By contrast, when the economic growth is equal to zero, the parties that are in government will suffer important

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<sup>263</sup> The case selected is Austria 1989 because it has the lowest effective number of electoral parties (i.e., 2.72) among the sampled countries. There, the Freedom Party, that was completely against the restrictive electoral reform proposed, made substantial gains (+6.91 percent) while the Christian Democrats, that were somewhat in favour, were down more than 9 percentage points. Finally, the Greens, that were fully against, and the Socialists, that were somewhat in favour, managed to hold their 1986 positions.

<sup>264</sup> Analogously, the case selected is Belgium 2000 because of its very high effective number of electoral parties (i.e., 10.28). There, the two Green parties, for example, strongly opposed to a restrictive reform and suffered severe losses in the 2003 elections (i.e., -4.44 percent for the Flemish *Agalev* and -3.33 percent for the Francophone *ECOLO*) while the two parties that were slightly in favour of the reform proposed (i.e., *Vlaams Liberale Democraten*, VLD, and *Parti Réformateur Libéral*, PRL) made some electoral gains (1.15 per cent and 1.17 per cent, respectively).

<sup>265</sup> This coefficient corresponds to the effect of ruling when economic growth is equal to zero. When the variable *incumbency* is included in the models in a linear way, the effect is smaller but still statistically significant.

<sup>266</sup> The use of unemployment rates as robustness checks regarding these points (not reported) did not change the results at all and showed clearly that the findings are not economic growth-specific.

electoral loses.<sup>267</sup> Finally, turnout does not exert any significant effect on parties' vote shares, and results are remarkably robust to its inclusion or exclusion.

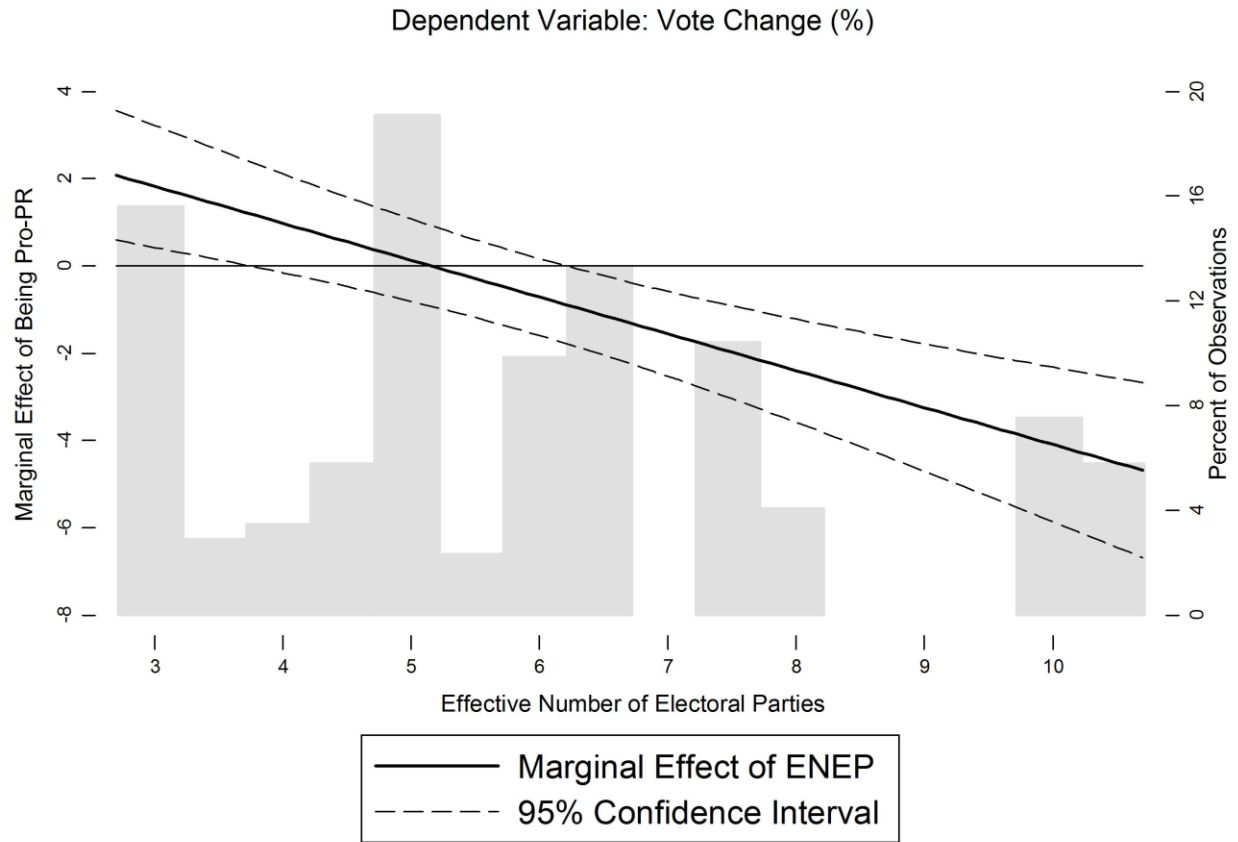
I plot then in Figure 8.1 the conditional effect for parties' support of a more inclusive formula on their vote totals in the following election for a reasonable range of values of the effective number of electoral parties. According to Thomas Brambor et al. (2006) and Cindy Kam and Robert Franzese (2007), the effect of an interaction term cannot be evaluated through the p-value shown in the regression table. Thus, it is necessary to graphically illustrate the marginal effect of the main explanatory factor on parties' electoral performance over different values of the modifying variable. As predicted in the hypotheses section, supporting a permissive electoral reform has a strong reductive effect on a party's vote totals when party system fragmentation is sufficiently high (i.e., when the effective number of electoral parties is higher than 6 or so) but not when it is lower than that threshold. Moreover, Figure 8.1 corroborates my hypothesis in a second sense because it shows positive statistically significant effects at low values of party system fragmentation (less than 3.5). Finally, Figure 8.1 clearly shows that the type of reform advocated by the party does not have any statistically significant effect on its vote totals at the following election when the effective number of electoral parties is between 3.5 and 6. To sum up, the results presented here clearly indicate that parties that support a proportional reform should expect to be punished by the electorate only when the effective number of parties is already high.

As a final matter of illustration, Figure 8.2 shows the relationship between the estimates of the support for a more permissive system with the level of party system fragmentation. As argues in my hypothesis and shown in the models above, there is a pattern of association according to which the strength (or slope) of the support for more PR decreases as the effective number of electoral parties goes up. This graph permits us to visualize clearly the exact dynamics of this conditional effect and to underline the existence of outliers. For example, despite the

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<sup>267</sup> This clear result is in contrast to the inconclusive findings found in much of the extant economic voting literature (Lewis-Beck and Paldam 2000). One reason for this will be the fact that my model focuses on parties rather than governments, as advocated by van der Brug et al. (2007). Another is the fact that this model controls for what must have been a major omitted variable in previous work -effects of support for or opposition to electoral reforms of different types.

**Figure 8.1. Marginal effect of pro-PR on vote change as effective number of electoral parties increases, hierarchical linear models**



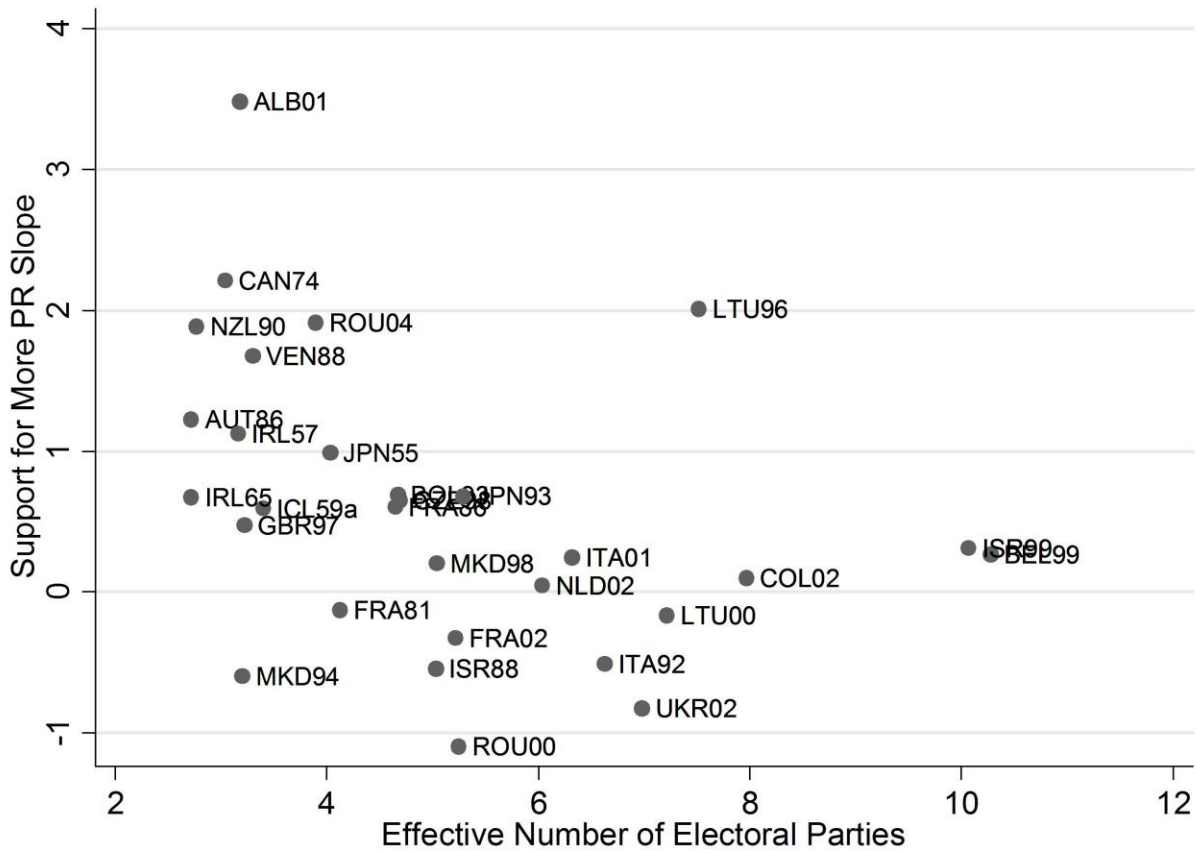
*Note:* Results are derived from Table 8.3, Model 5.

considerable party system fragmentation brought about by the 1999 Israeli elections, parties did not benefit for advocating the preservation of the direct election of the Prime Minister (i.e., the theoretically more restrictive system). The fact that this clause, employed for the first time in 1996, did not help to curb the extraordinarily high party system fragmentation registered in that country could be the reason (Hazan 2001).

### 8.5.2. Additional tests

Thus far, support for electoral reforms has been treated as exogenous. This provides the most direct test of the theoretical argument, which does not directly relate the expected change in vote shares to a party's position on electoral reform. It is, however, also interesting to explore whether

**Figure 8.2. Support for more PR slope and party system fragmentation at the electoral level**



*Note:* The fitted model from which this estimate is calculated is a random slopes model that contains only one independent variable (the position of the party regarding increasing the permissiveness of the electoral system), and whose dependent variable is the change in vote share.

the potential endogeneity of the “treatment” matters. In terms of electoral reforms, the general expectation is that as parties’ electoral prospects get worse their incentives to modify the rules of the game increase. Hence, it is unreasonable to expect parties’ positions on electoral reform to be randomly assigned (e.g., Colomer 2004b). Rather, some pre-treatment variables (e.g., parties’ foreseen electoral fortunes) are likely to have an effect on the support of the party for electoral system change. To address this identification problem, it will be important to find a way to instrument parties’ positions on electoral reform so that their impact on future vote totals are not confounded by parties’ expected change in vote shares. But before getting into that, the following variables had to be coded.



First, I constructed an indicator to measure whether the electoral reform was finally adopted. In order to get an indicator for the degree of reformism of a party with regard to the electoral system, I used the original answers from the national experts' survey about its degree of support for the reform. I then included one interaction term in the regression models - *Adopted\*ProChange*- in order to see whether the electoral benefit of a party that supports an electoral reform depends on the actual implementation of the institutional change. Thus, the alternative hypothesis that needs to be tested is the following: *parties' institutional preferences on electoral reform that correspond with actual changes in electoral legislation are associated with changes in vote totals*. Yet, as seen above, it is reasonable to expect endogeneity problems to begin to arise when testing such a hypothesis. How can we make parties' preferences for electoral system change exogenous to their electoral prospects? In this section I address this issue through the use of parties' ideology together with seats/votes ratio under the current electoral rules as instruments of actual positions on reform.<sup>268</sup>

The goal of this last analysis is to examine whether those parties that support the electoral reform would be more likely to electorally benefit from it under the counterfactual situation of not supporting it. Following the conventional terminology in the Neyman-Rubin framework of causal inference (Neyman 1990 [1923]; Rubin 1974 and 2006; Angrist et al. 1996; see for a review Sekhon 2009), this effect is the Average Treatment Effect on the Treated (ATT, where treated here are those supporting the electoral system change). To be sure, by using ideology and seats/votes ratio as instrumental variables of actual support in order to account for the selection problem, the treatment effect parameter becomes what is known as the Local Average Treatment Effect (LATE). To get an unbiased estimate of the LATE, however, the instruments need to satisfy two critical criteria (Abadie 2003): the exclusionary restriction and the non-zero causal effect of the instrument on the treatment.<sup>269</sup> Regarding the latter, suffice it to say that several previous studies have found significant effects of both instruments on politicians' preferences for electoral reform (Bol 2011; Bowler et al. 2006; Pilet and Bol 2011). Moreover, ideology and seats/votes ratio help to predict attitudes towards electoral reform in this case: bivariate

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<sup>268</sup> Sources: Manifesto Project Database (<https://manifestoproject.wzb.eu/>) and author's calculations, respectively.

<sup>269</sup> The list is longer, but for the sake of simplicity I have decided to focus on these two assumptions.

correlations confirm that the four variables are reliably related.<sup>270</sup> I later provide more evidence on how these relationships hold even when pre-treatment characteristics are taken into account.

The second assumption requires more scrutiny. Exclusion postulates that if let's say left-wing parties are fundamentally different from right-wing parties in various respects related to subsequent electoral performance, the instrumental variable could have an impact on parties' vote shares irrespective of whether the party supported the electoral system change or not. In other words, to function as a satisfactory instrument ideological position must not be systematically related to electoral performance. Otherwise left parties would always gain (or always lose). In practice this happens about half the time. So if we see ideological position as a randomizing device for distinguishing between pro- and anti-PR parties, it has face validity as such a tool. Hence, exclusion depends merely on how well ideology and seats-votes ratio work as randomization devices in distinguishing between the two groups.

The effects of these additional propositions are presented below, and the results confirm my expectations. First, I present several additional “naïve” models in Table 8.4 which include parties' positions towards electoral change system (first linearly [i.e., not interacted with anything] and then interacted with *Adopted*) as predictors of change in vote totals and some interesting patterns emerge. As can be seen in Models 1 and 3, parties do not gain additional votes due to the mere act of supporting any kind of electoral reform. However, Models 4 and 5 indicate that those parties that support an electoral system change that is finally adopted (whatever impact it is expected to have on the party system) do perform significantly worse in the following elections. These findings provide new insights for our current understanding of the consequences of electoral system design. The results here show that, despite the unprecedented erosion of political support observed in Western Europe in the last two decades (Dalton 2004), crediting “reformist” parties may not be automatic. In theory, citizens who are critical about the way democracy works should electorally reward a party that advocates an electoral system

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<sup>270</sup> The correlation between *Support PR* and *Seats-Votes Ratio* is -0.263 (statistically significant at the 1 per cent level); the correlation between *Support PR* and *Ideology* is -0.409 (statistically significant at the 1 per cent level); and the correlation between *ProChange* and *Seats-Votes Ratio* is -0.211 (statistically significant at the 1 per cent level). All these correlations are a bit low, significance lvl notwithstanding, and can create problems because they can badly bias the estimate.

**Table 8.4. Regression analysis of vote share gained or lost by parties, hierarchical linear models (II)**

|                                | <b>Model 1</b>                   | <b>Model 2</b>                  | <b>Model 3</b>                   | <b>Model 4</b>                     | <b>Model 5</b>                     |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <b>Independent Variables</b>   | <b>coefficient</b>               | <b>coefficient</b>              | <b>coefficient</b>               | <b>coefficient</b>                 | <b>coefficient</b>                 |
|                                | <b>(se)</b>                      | <b>(se)</b>                     | <b>(se)</b>                      | <b>(se)</b>                        | <b>(se)</b>                        |
| Incumbent                      | -11.38***<br>(2.685)             | -12.25***<br>(2.661)            | -11.40***<br>(2.695)             | -12.50***<br>(2.64)                | -12.77***<br>(2.615)               |
| Real GDP per Capita(in 1,000s) | -0.114<br>(0.106)                | -0.111<br>(0.11)                | -0.117<br>(0.109)                | -0.178*<br>(0.108)                 | -0.200*<br>(0.107)                 |
| Incumbent*Real GDP per Capita  | 0.484**<br>(0.191)               | 0.532***<br>(0.191)             | 0.484**<br>(0.192)               | 0.599***<br>(0.19)                 | 0.560***<br>(0.188)                |
| Δ Turnout                      | 0.042<br>(0.066)                 | 0.051<br>(0.066)                | 0.043<br>(0.066)                 | 0.075<br>(0.065)                   | 0.096<br>(0.065)                   |
| Support Change                 | <b>-0.871*</b><br><b>(0.488)</b> |                                 | <b>-0.852*</b><br><b>(0.506)</b> | <b>0.669</b><br><b>(0.674)</b>     | <b>0.647</b><br><b>(0.68)</b>      |
| Adopted                        |                                  | <b>-0.753</b><br><b>(1.281)</b> | <b>-0.189</b><br><b>(1.318)</b>  | <b>5.376**</b><br><b>(2.117)</b>   | <b>4.701**</b><br><b>(2.169)</b>   |
| Support Change*Adopted         |                                  |                                 |                                  | <b>-3.271***</b><br><b>(0.991)</b> | <b>-3.226***</b><br><b>(0.994)</b> |
| Support PR                     |                                  |                                 |                                  |                                    | -0.622<br>(0.482)                  |
| ENEP                           |                                  |                                 |                                  |                                    | 0.540**<br>(0.255)                 |
| Constant                       | 3.951**<br>(1.707)               | 2.915<br>(1.784)                | 4.070**<br>(1.902)               | 2.819<br>(1.887)                   | 1.54<br>(2.569)                    |
| Intercept Variance at Level 1  | 24.2***<br>(3.885)               | 26.97***<br>(4.623)             | 18.22***<br>(4.602)              | 17.80***<br>(3.674)                | 24.81***<br>(4.29)                 |
| Intercept Variance at Level 2  | 2.060***<br>(0.054)              | 2.069***<br>(0.054)             | 2.063***<br>(0.054)              | 2.035***<br>(0.054)                | 2.023***<br>(0.055)                |
| Log Likelihood                 | -604.69                          | -605.14                         | -603.49                          | -597.28                            | -594.58                            |
| AIC                            | 1225.4                           | 1226.29                         | 1224.99                          | 1214.56                            | 1213.17                            |
| BIC                            | 1250.67                          | 1251.56                         | 1253.42                          | 1246.15                            | 1251.08                            |
| N (Observations)               | 174                              | 174                             | 174                              | 174                                | 174                                |

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|               |    |    |    |    |    |
|---------------|----|----|----|----|----|
| J (Processes) | 30 | 30 | 30 | 30 | 30 |
|---------------|----|----|----|----|----|

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*Note:* The dependent variable is *Vote Change*; \*p<0.1; \*\*p<0.05; \*\*\*p<0.01 (two-tailed tests); Standard errors in parentheses; Hierarchical linear models are specified.

change (Norris 1999). However, this expectation extracted from the literature is not corroborated by the empirical analyses. There are two basic reasons that might explain these negative findings.

First of all, voters should expect parties to pursue the adoption of the system that best serves their interests. Parties' attempts to change the rules of the game can be perceived by voters as a blatant manipulation, and, as a result, they will opt for another party.<sup>271</sup> Moreover, support for reforms is not randomly assigned to the parties of interest in at least a second important sense: established parties that are sinking ships have incentives to change the electoral system so that they minimize the losses they will face at the following election. Hence, what is essentially needed is to reverse the direction of causality and to specify models in which preferences for electoral reform are used as outcomes rather than predictors because there are good reasons to think that negative changes in vote totals lead parties to adopt reformist positions on electoral reform and not the other way around.

Models in Table 8.5 replicate the analysis presented in previous tables using ideology and the seats/votes ratio as instruments for support of electoral reforms. The results confirm that the original findings about the modifying effect of party system size on the relationship between support of a permissive electoral reform and change in vote totals also hold when I address the endogeneity problems. Hence, this new evidence increases the credibility of the previous analysis and seems to corroborate the story mentioned above: the commitment to the general interest by parties that support a restrictive reform when the number of parties is high is rewarded by voters at ensuing elections.

First of all, the assumption regarding the power of the instruments holds in all the tests. As is shown in the first and third columns, knowing the ideology or the seats-votes ratio of a

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<sup>271</sup> The sample only includes cases from the last three decades and, nowadays, many citizens lack a party identification and become swing voters. Hence, the interests of parties are not necessarily the interests of their voters in one election.

**Table 8.5. Regression analysis of vote share gained or lost by parties, hierarchical linear and two-stage least squares models**

| Independent Variables          | 1 <sup>st</sup> -stage       | 2SLS                         | 1 <sup>st</sup> -stage       | 2SLS                         |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
|                                | coefficient<br>(se)          | coefficient<br>(se)          | coefficient<br>(se)          | coefficient<br>(se)          |
| Incumbent                      |                              | -11.11**<br>(5.016)          |                              | -12.88***<br>(2.351)         |
| Real GDP per Capita(in 1,000s) |                              | -0.174<br>(0.19)             |                              | -0.074<br>(0.093)            |
| Incumbent*Real GDP per Capita  |                              | 0.412<br>(0.282)             |                              | 0.567***<br>(0.168)          |
| Δ Turnout                      |                              | -0.170*<br>(0.095)           |                              | 0.036<br>(0.058)             |
| Ideology                       | <b>-0.533***<br/>(0.141)</b> |                              |                              |                              |
| Support PR                     |                              | <b>12.02***<br/>(4.486)</b>  |                              | <b>18.96***<br/>(6.726)</b>  |
| ENEP                           |                              | <b>4.483***<br/>(1.459)</b>  |                              | <b>6.016***<br/>(1.284)</b>  |
| Support PR*ENEP                |                              | <b>-2.256***<br/>(0.814)</b> |                              | <b>-3.622***<br/>(0.797)</b> |
| Seats/Votes Ratio              |                              |                              | <b>-0.455***<br/>(0.148)</b> |                              |
| Constant                       | 1.619***<br>(0.161)          | -20.45**<br>(8.37)           | 2.042***<br>(0.198)          | -30.01***<br>(10.97)         |
| Intercept Variance at Level 1  | 0.082<br>(0.088)             | 1.512***<br>(0.086)          | 0.154***<br>(0.058)          | 1.935***<br>(0.055)          |
| Intercept Variance at Level 2  | 1.044**<br>(0.506)           | 21.57***<br>(6.114)          | 0.705***<br>(0.26)           | 17.65***<br>(4.231)          |
| Log Likelihood                 | -116.58                      | -216.08                      | -283.45                      | -577.61                      |
| AIC                            | 241.17                       | 452.17                       | 574.906                      | 1175.22                      |
| BIC                            | 250.44                       | 475.35                       | 587.51                       | 1206.75                      |
| N (Observations)               | 75                           | 75                           | 173                          | 173                          |

| J (Processes) | 14 | 14 | 30 | 30 |
|---------------|----|----|----|----|
|---------------|----|----|----|----|

*Note:* Entries are hierarchical linear coefficients; \* $p < 0.1$ ; \*\* $p < 0.05$ ; \*\*\* $p < 0.01$  (two-tailed tests); Standard errors in parentheses.

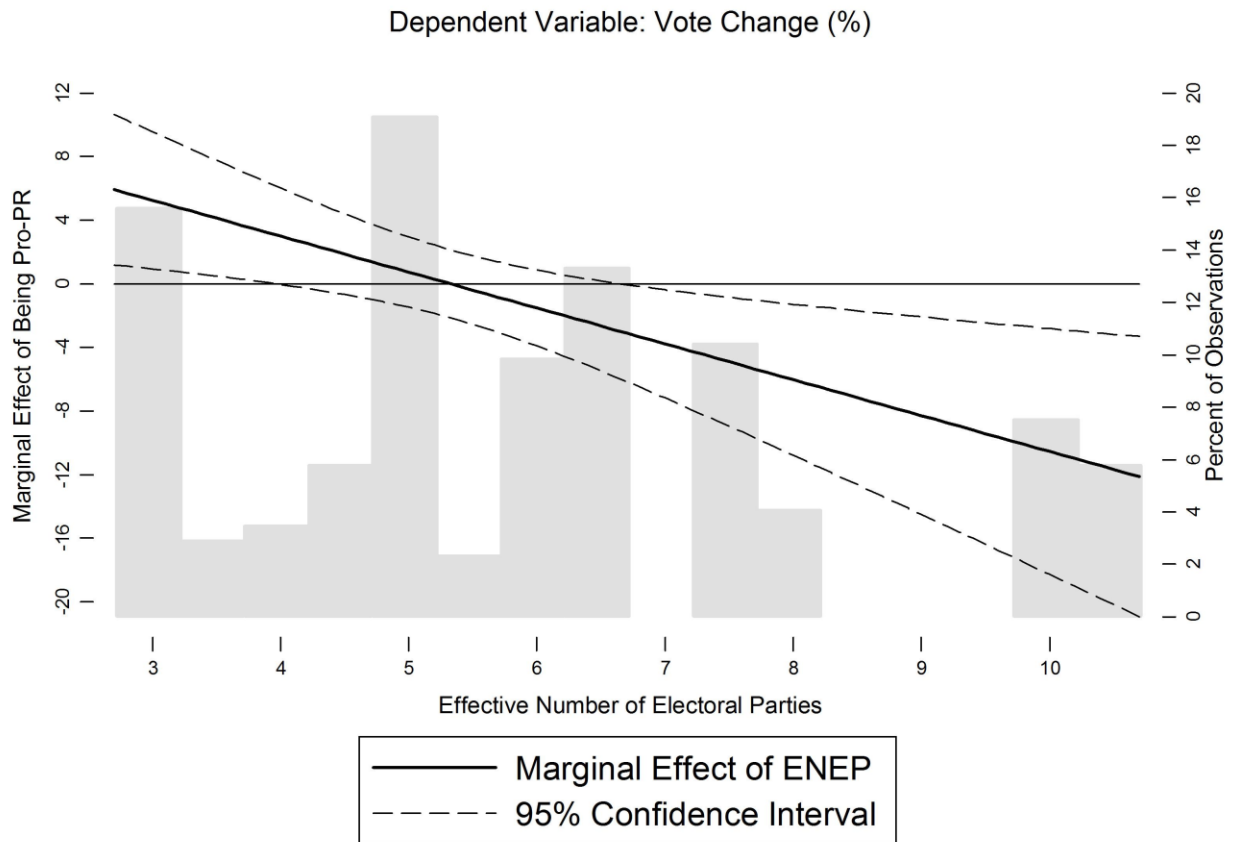
party helps us to predict whether it will support an electoral reform. The estimate comes from an OLS regression and hence it represents the marginal effect of moving the position of a party towards the right pole of the ideological scale or increasing its seats-votes ratio on its support to a more permissive electoral system. Both instruments appear to decrease the level of support of the party to the reform. The results of the two-stage least squares estimations (2SLS) appear in the second and fourth columns. More specifically, the second column shows that being one point more in favour of a permissive reform (instrumented by the ideology of the party) increases the vote share at the following election by 12.3 per cent when the effective number of parties is equal to zero (i.e., an impossible situation). However, this positive effect marginally declines by 2.2 per cent as the number of parties increases. This effect is slightly larger when we use seats/votes ratio as instrument in the fourth column. In this latter model, I find that support for a permissive reform (instrumented by the seats/votes ratio of the party) increases its vote share in the subsequent election by more than 18 percentage points ( $p < 0.01$ ) when the effective number of electoral parties is zero; this positive effect tends to decline by 3.6 percentage points as party system fragmentation marginally increases.

Finally, Figure 8.3 shows that the hypothesized conditional effect between support for a more permissive electoral system and party system fragmentation at the electoral level is significant in case of quite low and quite high effective numbers of parties, when I make parties' positions with regard to electoral reform exogenous. This means that parties that support more permissive and restrictive electoral rules in case of low and high party system fragmentation, respectively, are rewarded by the citizens in the subsequent electoral contest.

## 8.6. Conclusion

There is an increasing interest in whether and how established parties institutionally respond to challenges from newly mobilized political alternatives (Katz and Mair 1995). The common

**Figure 8.3. Marginal effect of pro-PR on vote change as effective number of electoral parties increases, hierarchical linear and two-stage least squares models**



*Note:* Results are derived from the first model in Table 8.5. Left-Right ideology is used as an IV of being Pro-PR in predicting vote change.

assumption in the studies that take electoral systems as endogenous is that parties are seat maximizers—a goal that becomes a driving force behind the willingness to tinker with the electoral rules. The results of the current chapter make an important contribution to this evolving literature and, more broadly, to the huge literature on representation theory. More specifically, the study tackles the yet unanswered question of whether parties’ positions on electoral reform, assumed to have been undertaken to maximize one’s seat share, actually have an impact on vote shares. The results indicate that parties’ positions on this issue do have an impact on vote totals, but this effect differs according to whether the number of parties is at the moment high or low. In the case of the former, supporting a restrictive reform is associated with increased vote totals, while supporting a permissive electoral system change is associated with decreased vote totals;

and the reverse holds for situations of low party system fragmentation. Additional analysis showed that, perhaps surprisingly, parties are not rewarded for advocating a reform that is finally implemented. This finding implies that being on the winning side by itself, independent of the direction of the institutional change, does not improve the electoral prospects of a party. Future studies are necessary in order to examine whether this result is driven by actors' extraordinary myopia or it is caused by the already very dark electoral prospects of actual reformers.

Although the distinction between fragmented and concentrated party systems is present in many different studies, its potentially profound modifying effect on the electoral consequences of parties' preferences for institutional change has not been sufficiently recognized. This chapter puts this distinction at the centre of its theoretical argument. By doing so, it has been able to provide novel contributions to the study of parties' electoral fortunes. First, previous research has generated contradictory expectations about the incentives of parties to reform the electoral system either in a permissive or a restrictive direction. Both courses of action may lead to higher levels of electoral success. Distinguishing between the two aforementioned contexts has helped me to better understand the contradictory incentives that parties face.

The striking contrast in fragmented versus concentrated party systems and their consequences for electoral competition further illuminate the complex nature of voter-party linkages, thus contributing to the literature on representation. The findings in this chapter imply, contrary to the conventional wisdom in electoral systems literature, that obtaining electoral benefits may not always require the eventual adoption of the reform. Even more importantly, the preferred electoral reform in some cases entails the reduction of the overall proportionality produced by the current electoral system. In fragmented party systems scenarios, the accepted logic of increasing the proportionality of the rules may prove electorally damaging as in these contexts voters may have considerations other than (or at least in addition to) the permissiveness of the system.

Future research might examine further how other contextual factors (e.g., the level of electoral disproportionality or the proportion of wasted votes) modify the impact of parties' institutional preferences on their subsequent electoral performance. An individual-level analysis



of voting decisions after electoral reform processes would be an especially desirable and fruitful avenue for future research. Electoral system changes are not simply vote-winning tactics in the hands of political parties but have important consequences for electoral volatility and party system instability. These reforms and their electoral effects can provide valuable insights about both political representation and competition.



## Chapter 9. Conclusion

The Principal of my Reform is to prevent the necessity of revolution... I am reforming to  
preserve, not to overthrow.

(Earl Grey's speaking in the 1831 parliamentary debate on extending suffrage)

Louie, I think this is the beginning of a beautiful friendship.

(Humphrey Bogart as Rick in Casablanca 1942)

### 9.1. Introduction

From pre-Socratic philosophers in Ancient Greece like Heraclitus of Ephesus or Parmenides of Elea to some of the key physicists of the scientific revolution like Galileo Galilei and Isaac Newton, the study of the dynamics of continuity and change of any material body – in my case a political institution, the electoral system – has always prompted the interest of thinkers around the world. However, this is a topic that can be hardly confined to the past. At the time of writing this conclusion, a new Israeli government based on an agreement that included a commitment to raise the electoral threshold from 2% to 4% had just formed. Why do electoral reforms sometimes take place? And do they affect aggregate party systems and citizens' voting behaviour? These are the two main questions I have addressed in this dissertation. By developing various analyses on several datasets concerning the occurrence of electoral reforms, I have provided a fairly comprehensive answer to both questions.

In this concluding chapter, I first summarize the main results of my analyses. In order to do so, I briefly discuss the main theoretical expectations specified in this dissertation, and assess their validity against the empirical evidence included in it. I then list the limitations of this study, and elaborate on the theoretical and practical implications of the findings. Before concluding the chapter, I introduce several possible avenues for further research.

## 9.2. Main findings

In this dissertation, I make two groups of propositions about the occurrence of electoral reforms. A first set of propositions concerns the determinants of electoral system changes. Parties modify the rules of the game on the basis of a combination of vote, office and policy-maximizing reasons. The difference between cases in which an electoral reform is adopted and cases in which it is not lies not only in the characteristics of the proposed electoral system change, but also in other political factors. First, the higher the effective number of electoral parties the more likely it is that a restrictive reform will be adopted. Second, the higher the overall dissatisfaction with the way a democracy works, the more likely it is that a party-centred reform will be adopted. Parties clearly take these two pragmatic considerations into account in deciding whether to change or not to change a particular set of electoral rules, calculating the chances of vote and/or seat gains or losses and perhaps even the prospect of exclusion from the political game should the reform be adopted.

This is not the whole story, however. In this dissertation, I have found profound differences between old and new democracies with regard to the likelihood of electoral reform. This result implies that, in their decision to change an electoral system or not, parties are also taking into account the implications of at least three pieces of information: (1) the number of parties that will compete in future elections; (2) the distribution of voters' preferences over these parties; and (3) the effects of electoral rules themselves (Andrews and Jackman 2005). There are no *a priori* reasons to distrust politicians who claim that their attempts to change the electoral system are due to their genuine commitment to the *right* operation of the political system. Yet, such commitments seem more prevalent when they face a sufficiently established electorate. Moreover, whether the option of changing the rules of the game is appealing to parties also crucially depends on the apparent willingness of voters to reward efficient changes in the rules of the game. In other words, as can be seen below more in depth, it is the voters themselves who hold the key to electoral reform.

A last but certainly important result from the findings in Chapters 4 and 5 goes back to the idea of how politicians change the electoral system on the basis of maximizing a combination of votes, seats, office and policy. One of the modest goals of Chapter 4 was to show that the

effect of party system fragmentation on electoral reforms in the interparty dimension is essentially contingent on the values of other explanatory factors. The results demonstrate that parties are willing to adopt a restrictive electoral reform with high party system fragmentation as long as electoral disproportionality and/or volatility are relatively low. With regard to reforms in the intraparty dimension, I have shown that party system inflation at the national level and electoral volatility contribute to modify the negative impact of satisfaction with democracy on the likelihood of implementing a new electoral system that change the incentives to cultivate a personal vote. Widespread satisfaction among the electorate towards the way the political system works in a country does only have the expected negative effect on the likelihood of candidate-centred and party-centred reforms when political competition at the country level occurs between parties that represent broad national instead of specific local constituencies (i.e., in case of high party system nationalization), and voters' behaviour remain stable over time (i.e., in case of low electoral volatility), respectively.

A second group of propositions concerns the impact of electoral reforms on several political outcomes. In this sense, the results of aggregate-level analyses suggest that electoral system changes in both the interparty and the intraparty dimensions affect the disproportionality of electoral outcomes and the level of party system nationalization, respectively. On the one hand, the overall degree of correspondence between parties' vote and seat shares changes because the adoption of a new electoral system immediately affects the mechanical translation of votes into seats, but actors need some time to find out how the new rules work and how to adapt their behaviours to this new institutional environment. Hence, one crucial factor in a reform process can be the gradual adaptation of actors to the change in the structure of incentives brought about by the new rules. Although the size of some of the electoral reforms examined is, *a priori*, small, this finding nonetheless suggests that an electoral reform can create incentives for political actors to change their electoral strategies by turning the whole system more or less permissive. Thus, electoral engineering in the interparty dimension seems to be a powerful device in the hands of parties to modify the structure of party systems. Note, in addition, that a systematic difference has been found with regard to this point between old and new democracies. Permissive reforms tend to be more influential in new democracies, whereas restrictive reforms have a larger impact in old democracies.

There is one remarkable exception to the rule that democratic age modifies the effect of other variables in determining the occurrence of electoral reforms or explaining their consequences. In contexts where actors adopt candidate-centred reforms, party system nationalization gets worse; but the size of this effect does not depend on the length of the current democratic rule. By contrast, my findings suggest that the negative effect of candidate-centred reforms on party system nationalization is magnified by the degree of ethnic fragmentation and the level of political decentralization.

Finally, a systematic difference has been found with regard to performance in the following elections between parties that support efficient electoral reforms and parties that advocate redistributive changes in the rules of the game. Parties that promote permissive reforms in contexts of low party system fragmentation tend to be rewarded by the citizenry in the following elections, whereas parties that endorse this type of institutional change when the effective number of electoral parties is high are badly punished by the electorate. In view of the fact that parties' positions on electoral reform is already likely to be endogenous to a series of other variables that could also drive their performance in the polling booth, I adopted an instrumental approach to address this potential problem of endogeneity. The similarities between effects in both types of analyses give me confidence in the robustness and generalizability of my findings.

### **9.3. Contributions**

As explained in Chapter 1, the contribution of this dissertation is basically threefold: first, it addresses the essential paradox entailed by incumbents who change the rules of the game they are winning (Katz 2005); second, it addresses the lack of a body of theoretically driven comparative work on why one electoral system is chosen over another (Shugart 2005; Taagepera 2007a); and, third, it evaluates the long list of effects the literature attributes to electoral rules. With regard to the first, I have argued that the paradox is demystified when we take account of the rising proportion of parties in office that do not get re-elected (Müller and Strøm 2000), and the diversity of goals (votes, seats, office and policy) that parties pursue (Müller and Strøm

1999). With regard to the second and third, I have sought to fill the void in the literature that takes electoral systems as the dependent variable by offering an empirical and theoretically grounded explanation of why an electoral reform happens in contemporary democracies. Hence, the contribution of the thesis could be summarized as follows: *better theory* (by combining several theoretical frameworks), *better data* (by assembling my own dataset of electoral reforms), and *better methods* (by offering sophisticated quantitative evidence supporting my arguments). In short, I have, first of all, re-addressed what electoral reform comprises by expanding the scope of the enterprise beyond “major” electoral system changes and seat-maximization motivations (Leyenaar and Hazan 2011). Secondly, I have created my own database that includes, among others, cases of electoral reform, party preferences about electoral system change and updated information on party system fragmentation, electoral disproportionality and volatility. And, thirdly, I have systematically analyzed, using the proper econometric techniques (i.e., cross-sectional time series and event history analysis, hierarchical modelling and instrumental variables), the main determinants and consequences of electoral reforms. Bearing these innovations in mind have proved quite fruitful, I summarize in the following pages the main lessons that can be drawn from this study.

### **9.3.1. From the theoretical point of view**

This dissertation has aimed to make several contributions to the electoral systems literature. A first one is conceptual, bringing different types of electoral system changes in different countries and at different time points together in one category (that of *electoral reform*), which encompasses not only instances of actual change but also instances of attempted change, thus placing efforts at reform that bore fruit within the context of reform efforts in general. This more encompassing view of electoral reform has permitted me to build an impressive dataset for 60 democracies between 1945 and 2010. This dataset has allowed me to examine the electoral performance of parties that supported and opposed efforts to achieve electoral reform whether or not the institutional change in question was actually enacted, providing a larger N for investigating the causes and consequences of these party stances at ensuing elections and permitting me to distinguish effects of support and opposition from effects of the reform itself.

The thesis makes a second contribution to the existing literature in that it examines together changes in both the interparty and the intraparty dimensions of electoral systems. In particular, it shows that circumstances can lead to a modification in the rules that affect not only the proportionality but also the nature and degree of choice available to the voter. These dimensions had not been taken into account jointly in almost any previous comparative-empirical study of electoral systems (for an exception, see for example Shugart and Wattenberg 2001).

Thirdly, this dissertation enriches the extensive literature on the electoral success and failure of parties with an additional explanation. Although it has been mentioned several times in the existing literature that parties that blatantly manipulate the rules of the game could suffer important electoral losses, this had never systematically shown until now. In their regard, I do not only argue but also empirically demonstrate that voters pay attention to political parties' positions on electoral reform, and that this is a factor that should not be ignored when explaining pro-reform (and anti-reform) parties' electoral performance.

Furthermore, this dissertation offers a plausible explanation for the finding that high party system fragmentation increases the likelihood of restrictive electoral reforms. A currently permissive system that gives rise to a considerable number of parties in the electoral arena appears to be seen by both parties and voters as unattractive because of inefficiencies that render parties unable to enact the policies they propose and achieve the goals they pursue. It is in these cases that the *micro-mega rule* (Colomer 2004b and 2005) does not work. On top of this, parties become less interested in their own survival because of the effects that too permissive systems can have on cabinet stability or legislative productivity.

A fifth contribution lies in the fact that this dissertation integrates several different theories in a research field that remains largely unexplored.<sup>272</sup> Some of the 60 countries under study in this dissertation had never been subject to comparative-empirical analysis, presumably because of the modest size of the reforms or their infrequent occurrence. Seat-maximization arguments, for example, had typically been applied either to major electoral reforms in large-N

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<sup>272</sup> For example, just to name a few, the seat-maximization approach (Benoit 2004 and 2007), the micro-mega rule (Colomer 2004b and 2005) and the inherent and contingent framework (Shugart 2008).



studies, or to every tinkering with the rules in small-N studies. In order to be of use to us, however, these theories should work for any kind of *significant* electoral reform in any contemporary democracy. By testing them on *my own* dataset regarding electoral system changes in 60 countries between 1945 and 2010, this dissertation adds important information about the validity of these theories. For instance, it has turned out that the likelihood of electoral reform in the interparty dimension is highly influenced by the degree of party system fragmentation, although the effect is shown to be the opposite of what would have been expected according to the literature. In this regard, contrary to previous findings, my results suggest that large numbers of parties lead to more restrictive electoral systems. Moreover, I have also found that the more disproportional the current electoral outcomes are, or the more volatile the current political scenario is, the less powerful this relationship becomes. This defies the logic of standard mono-causal explanations of electoral reform that are typically assumed to have only one independent variable, yet it confirms a recent finding in the relevant literature (Renwick 2010).

Finally, the finding that the positive impact of restrictive reforms on electoral disproportionality is primarily observed in established democracies sheds new light on the notion of habitual voting,<sup>273</sup> which is key to turnout and political socialization models (Dinas 2010; Franklin 2004). The idea that citizens get locked into particular voting patterns has been widely developed since the seminal work by David Butler and Donald Stokes in 1974 (e.g., van der Eijk and Franklin 2009: 179). In line with the findings in this dissertation, it may be claimed that electoral reforms in some contexts fail at immediately changing the format of the party system because most of the voters are established and have a full prior electoral record under the previous system. Taking this into account would open new avenues for modelling the causes and consequences of electoral reform.

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<sup>273</sup> It is established democracies that see the greatest impact of restrictive reforms since that is where habit will be strongest. For this reason, it takes some elections after these kinds of electoral system changes to observe their *psychological effects* within the electorate (basically, vote switches from small to large parties). By contrast, the *mechanical effects* brought about by the new institutions (i.e., underrepresentation of small parties) emerge in the immediately first election after the reform, provoking a change in the levels of disproportionality. This is why habitual voting in established democracies makes increase the disproportionality of electoral outcomes after a restrictive system change.

### 9.3.2. From the applied point of view

My dissertation illustrates the two-step outcome prescriptive social sciences usually produce. First of all, there is the analysis of a phenomenon; and second, there is the potential use of research findings to influence new public policies. With regard to the former, suffice it to say that I hope to have improved on existing accounts of electoral reforms in contemporary democracies by developing an analytical, comprehensive, comparative, and longitudinal model that takes steps towards explaining why reforms take place and with what consequences. In a nutshell, I have applied to a considerable group of countries some of the arguments that have been traditionally used to explain institutional change keeping in mind that “science cannot confirm theories, it can only fail to prove them wrong” (Franklin 2004: 211). With regard to the potential implications of my research in the domain of public policies, the comparative study of recent experiences of institutional reform in these countries may help us to improve our attempts at electoral engineering in the democracies of the future. However, before doing all this we need to answer a couple of prior questions: Does this matter at all? And how does this matter?

First of all, my findings have shown that parties behave as if electoral reforms mattered for the effectiveness of democratic government. In this regard, we have seen that the likelihood of adopting a more restrictive electoral system is determined by the presence of a large number of parties at the electoral arena and parties’ interest in having electoral rules as much effective as possible. However, changing electoral institutions towards less permissiveness also implies constraining political competition by increasing the barriers of entrance for small parties. Hence, if a restrictive reform is actually *efficient* in the sense that it reduces all the parties’ obstacles for the maximization of office and policy, it could still be the case that it is *redistributive* because it particularly benefits some parties over others. This brings us to the questions of trade-offs between reducing fragmentation and restricting entry of new parties (Carey and Hix 2011), and the achievement of the golden mean in the realm of the interparty dimension of electoral systems as the desirable middle between two extremes, one of excessive and the other of deficient party system fragmentation (Aristotle [1975 [1934]]).

A second potential implication of this dissertation from the practical point of view relates to the consequences of electoral reforms. The repeated occurrence of electoral system changes is

theoretically expected to have alienating effects on voters in general – for whom institutional instability is a *de facto* restriction of their right to cast a well-informed vote and control the government – and on supporters of some specific parties in particular – those particularly damaged by the redistributive effects of the reforms. My analyses suggest a broad predictability of some of the consequences of reforms which have implications for electoral engineering more generally (Norris 2004). However, I also find that observing these effects is sometimes hard since they are frequently invisible in the first post-reform election, or when the electorate is particularly strongly locked into voting patterns. In such cases, the public is likely to go through “a period of enhanced surprise, disappointment, and frustration” (Taagepera and Shugart 1989: 218).

#### **9.4. Limitations**

When discussing the findings, we have to be aware of the limitations of this study. In terms of its scope (see Chapter 1), the analyses are confined to democracies from particular regions of the world, and to the time period between 1945 and 2010. In these contexts, only some specific modifications of electoral laws could be studied. Yet, the aim of the thesis is to draw valid inferences (or at least to try to do so) concerning any electoral reform in any contemporary democracy at any given time point. It is clear that the generalizability of my findings should be tested in future research. Results of the analyses in Chapters 4 to 7 suggest that the points in time in which electoral reforms take place matter for their causes and consequences. To be more specific, I conclude in most of these chapters that democratic age affects the causes and consequences of electoral reforms. However, future studies should concentrate on differences in the effects of my main independent variables caused by other types of modifying factors. Furthermore, my findings only hold to the extent that the assumptions that were made for this research, listed in the first chapter, hold as well. For example, the assumption that parties care about votes, seats, office and policy is not undisputed and my findings indicate that those who dispute it are wrong. Otherwise, I would have different findings. As another case in point, institutional strategies of parties are assumed to have an electoral impact, which is clearly a gross novelty that my findings validate.

Moreover, the thesis' results necessarily hinge upon assumed homogeneity of cases. For example, all the democracies under study are assumed to be equal (Przeworski et al.'s 2000) once we control for the length of the current democratic age. However, one could question the extent to which all the European democracies were alike once the Berlin Wall fell. Moreover, should the 'new democracy' category be extended to other countries that have experienced periods of strong social and political turmoil, like France in the 1950s, or perhaps New Zealand, Japan and Italy in the late 1980s and early 1990s? In order to minimize problems related to this, the democracies examined were made as homogenous as possible by including country fixed effects when possible. Nevertheless, the fact that electoral reforms do not take place in some countries meant that these countries could not contribute to my findings most of the times. In addition, there are data missing on some main independent variables for some observations. The suspicion that these data are not missing at random makes it even harder to assess how homogenous my group of countries really is.

In a similar vein, the institutional responses to inefficiencies of the political system are assumed to be homogenous across cases. In other words, the adoption of a mixed system in Italy in 1993 is assumed to be the same as the adoption of a mixed system in Bulgaria in 2009. It is difficult to assess, however, to what extent the Italian parties' approach to high party system fragmentation in the early 1990s was actually similar to that of Bulgarian parties in the late 2000s.

A limitation caused by the relatively small number of actual cases of reform and the multidimensionality of the concept of electoral system change is that it is operationalized as a categorical variable in this study (see Chapter 3). Each country-year (or country-term in Chapters 6 and 7) observation is coded as "non-reform" (or ambiguous reform), "permissive reform" or "restrictive reform" in the interparty dimension, and "non-reform" (or ambiguous reform), "candidate-centred reform" or "party-centred reform" in the intraparty dimension whereas it is obvious that the degree of permissiveness of the electoral rules and the amount of incentives they create to cultivate a personal vote are continua. The type of electoral reform is measured on the basis of the largest effect it is expected to have. But this is a possibly consequential simplification. It could be the case that, for example, there is a difference between a mere

formula shift from D'Hondt to Hare – as was the case of Germany in 1985 – or a major electoral reform from a two-round to a proportional representation (PR) system – e.g., the French case in 1985. These cases are both coded as “permissive reform”, however. The small number of observations prevents me from drawing valid inferences on these points. Other drawbacks of the operationalization of electoral system change used in this study include the difficulty in classifying bundles of reform (i.e., those changes that simultaneously affect more than one dimension of the system), and the somewhat arbitrariness of any threshold for continuous dimensions (i.e., 20% for number of districts, legal thresholds or assembly size following Lijphart [1994]). Finally, data availability problems also play a role when it comes to the classification of episodes of reform that are, in fact, side-effects of other larger transformation processes – e.g., the 1990 German reunification.

Problems related to the small number of observations plague the analyses on the determinants of electoral reform. This limits the number of variables that can be tested, and the way in which such tests can be conducted. Furthermore, one has to be aware of alternative hypotheses for the effects found. One of these several factors that have been left out of the analyses for practical reasons is the international diffusion of institutional change (Blais and Massicotte 1997; Lundell 2009). Parties in a given country could just imitate others' behaviour abroad. Although it is very difficult to study these effects in light of the small number of observations, Damien Bol, Jean-Benoit Pilet and I (2013) have recently examined whether cross-national diffusion exists in the adoption of mechanisms to temper PR in Europe between 1945 and 2010.

Several problems arise with the estimation of the effects of parties' positions regarding institutional change on their popular support in the following elections (Chapter 8). On a general note, the way of estimating the effects of interest assumes that these positions interact with the level of party system fragmentation. This is in accordance with the theoretical expectations on Chapter 4. However, models become very unstable due to the small number cases at the second-

level. It is certainly possible that my exclusive reliance on these 30 attempts (successful or not) of electoral reform affects my findings.<sup>274</sup>

At least two main problems relate to the whole methodological approach in this dissertation. First, hypotheses have been only tested with quantitative tools. Although I display robustness checks for almost all of them, and all the theoretical expectations have been formulated after a careful study of cases, it would certainly be important to trace the processes involved in a qualitative setting (Fearon and Laitin 2008). Moreover, actors' motivations regarding electoral reform have been inferred from the circumstances in which different electoral system changes take place, but they probably cannot be nailed down in the absence of appropriate survey data and/or focus group interviews. Hence, it could be argued that the extense discussion of the motivations of voters and party leaders included mostly in Chapter 4 but also in Chapter 5 has left them open to possible alternative interpretations. Second, the main independent variables were aggregate measures and calculated at the national level. However, some of the propositions refer to processes that involve individual voters or take place at the district-level. This is a possibly more consequential problem as it raises the spectre of potential ecological inference problems.

Alternative hypotheses for the causes of electoral reform could not all be addressed. More specifically, I would like to point out the ideological congruence between representatives and people. In this regard, it is possible that it is not either high cabinet stability or low passage rates but the presence of ideological distance between institutions and voters that may cause electoral reforms in the interparty dimension. When reviewing the most relevant academic works on electoral systems in Chapter 2 I noticed that there is a relatively huge literature examining the relationship between ideological congruence and electoral rules (Blais and Bodet 2006; Budge and McDonald 2005; Colomer 2001b; Golder and Stramski 2010; Huber and Powell 1994; McDonald and Budge 2007; Powell 2000 and 2009; Powell and Vanberg 2000). Thus, it would be interesting to examine whether attempts to foster more congruence lead to electoral system

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<sup>274</sup> The power for level 2 effects is dependent upon the number of groups (de Leeuw and Kreft 1998). To conduct research with enough power, sufficiently large sample sizes are required in multilevel models. However, the number of individual observations is not as important as the number of groups in a study. In order to detect cross-level interactions, recommendations have been made that at least 20 groups are needed. The fact that even with such small number of cases I get significant results gives me additional confidence in the reliability of the results.

changes in the interparty dimension. Checks based on the dataset analyzed in Chapter 4 suggest that the determinants were related to cabinet instability or lack of legislative productivity rather than to an ideological gap between voters and representatives but it is, however, possible that these initial null findings were caused by the lack of data.

Finally, and related to this, there are several other consequences that have been left out of the analyses for practical reasons (more on this in the next section). More specifically, the impact of electoral reform on cabinet stability, legislative passage rates and satisfaction with democracy has not been modelled in this study. However, most electoral system changes should be important to explain fluctuations in some of these variables. Especially when reforming towards more candidate-centeredness, voters should feel more satisfied about the way democracy works in their country (Renwick and Pilet 2011). Thus, one might want to model the effect of electoral reform in the intraparty dimension on public discontent about the operation of democracy. I will get back to these issues later on in this chapter.

Bearing all these general limitations in mind, the following avenues for further research can be sketched.

### **9.5. Avenues for further research**

As I have previously argued, it should be in the interest of all of us (not only political scientists but also citizens) to carefully investigate the origins as well as the consequences of the institutional measures that are taken by politicians (as justified as they may be) to safeguard the quality of democracy and guarantee its good working order. I consider this dissertation as a modest contribution to achieve these goals. However, I have not been able to address several empirical questions concerning electoral reforms in this dissertation because of space and time constraints. Some of them are pressing puzzles that future research should concentrate on. Other, equally pressing, matters are being already dealt with in some of my current work in progress (see, for example, Franklin and Riera 2013). Finally, some other topics like those concerning the consequences of electoral reforms in the intraparty dimension (Krauss et al. 2008) or the integrated examination of the impact of electoral institutions on party systems and voter

behaviour through the combination of content analysis, semi-directed interviews, internet panel surveys and a series of laboratory experiments (Blais 2010) are even now starting to be addressed in promising international comparative projects. Specifically, I would like to mention the following avenues for future research that start where the findings of this study leave off.

First, as discussed in Chapter 1, the attribution of any systemic-level effects to some of the main explanatory variables for the passage of electoral reform hinges on findings from a qualitative analysis that examines the exact mechanisms leading to electoral reform. The idea here would be to use narratives as a way of presenting empirical information (Büthe 2002). For this reason, I would follow a research strategy based on the “most-similar-systems” design (Przeworski and Teune 1970). The criteria of selection of the cases would be twofold: first, to ensure variability in the dependent variable (Geddes 1990); and second, to minimize variation in other factors derived from the literature that could explain the different outcome (Lijphart 1975). In particular, I would compare two pairs of cases in the near future: one, Lithuania and Ukraine; and two, Argentina and Venezuela.<sup>275</sup> Lithuania and Argentina would be my puzzling cases where theories of electoral reform predicted something (a change of the electoral system) that did not happen.<sup>276</sup> Appendix 4 to this thesis is devoted to preliminarily address the politics of electoral reform in these four countries.

Second, my findings suggest that the dynamics of party competition and voting behaviour are affected when an electoral reform is adopted. The results in Part 2 of this dissertation that the levels of electoral disproportionality become lower when a permissive electoral system change is implemented suggest that parties and voters do not immediately react to the change in incentives operated by the new rules. However, this particular institutional change increases the options a voter has in the polling station in the long-run and may, hence, reduce the initial impact of the electoral reform on the levels of disproportionality. Future research should focus on the causal mechanisms that explain this differential effect over time. In addition, the smaller impact of restrictive reforms on electoral disproportionality means that other mechanisms operate when the

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<sup>275</sup> Each combination of cases offers similar ecological traits (i.e., electoral system in use and its eventual inclusion in the Constitution, type of regime, dynamics of coalition bargaining, and turnover rate of the party in power).

<sup>276</sup> Following Mahoney and Goertz (2004), I have searched for “negative” cases.



new electoral system is supposed to produce a worse correspondence between parties' vote and seat shares. Obviously, it is important to carefully disentangle the exact mechanisms driving the effects of electoral reforms, as practitioners' opinions on the utility of a particular institutional change are likely to depend on how fast they are in changing political outcomes. Appendix 5 to this thesis is devoted to examine some initial analyses regarding the causal mechanisms driving the consequences of electoral reforms.

A second way to examine how electoral reform plays a role in voting behaviour change would be made possible by the existence of rich survey data going back to the time of the institutional change in two established democracies. These would be Italy and New Zealand. Unfortunately, I will only focus on New Zealand in the Appendix 6 to this thesis. In this other potential avenue for further research, I would try to show that incoming cohorts and established voters relatively immune to the operation of the former electoral system are particularly responsive to changes in the rules of game, being at the forefront of modifications in party system patterns. For most analyses of the New Zealand part, I would use panel data from the 1990, 1993 and 1996 waves of the New Zealand Election Studies.<sup>277</sup>

Third, electoral reforms do not only have an impact on electoral disproportionality, party system nationalization or parties' electoral fortunes. As mentioned in Chapter 2, electoral systems are thought to have a long list of consequences that are hard to confine to these three outcomes. For example, the rules of the game tend to have an impact on how long governments last or how often they pass their laws. In the same vein, electoral reform is likely to produce changes in the way citizens evaluate the operation of democracy in a given country (Bosch and Orriols 2011; Farrell and McAllister 2006). Moreover, candidate quality, legislative organization, or parties' appointments may matter more under some institutional frameworks than others (see Krauss et al. 2008). Or, finally, while the analyses in this thesis found a clear impact of reforms in the interparty dimension on electoral disproportionality, this might be very well due to changes in the allocation of seats that mainly happen at the sub-national level. These are empirically observable consequences of (my theory of) electoral reforms that could be tested elsewhere.

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<sup>277</sup> Details about the data can be found on its website ([www.nzes.org](http://www.nzes.org)).

A fourth question that arises from the results is whether the effects found of party system fragmentation and satisfaction with democracy on the one hand, and electoral reforms on the other are really causal or simply an artefact of some other exogenous variable. In order to address this potential problem of endogeneity, I would like first to think about alternative research designs that turned the allocation of the main determinants of electoral reforms as good as random. Second, and with regard to the consequences of electoral reforms, I would like to collect data of votes on proposals of electoral reform made in the legislatures and compare episodes slightly successful with those that only marginally failed to be passed in order to see how actual institutional change has an effect on political outcomes. Moreover, building on an idea of Alberto Abadie and Javier Gardeazabal (2001), I would like to investigate the party system and voting behaviour effects of electoral reform using the 1993 permissive electoral reform in New Zealand as a case study and constructing a comparable synthetic control case.<sup>278</sup>

Finally, the 2008 economic crisis resulted in deeply unpopular austerity measures and bank rescue actions in many countries (Kriesi 2013). Confronted with a dramatic increase in the public's dissatisfaction with the way democracy works in general and government popularity in particular, it crucially remains to be seen to what extent politicians (and incumbents) try to improve their approval and increase their chances of survival by introducing electoral reforms that boost citizens' involvement in the electoral choice (i.e., by passing candidate-centred reforms) or decrease their chances of becoming absolute losers (i.e., by passing permissive reforms). What seems clear is that the economic crisis has so far triggered a wave of proposed legislation pursuing the reduction of assembly sizes (Jacobs 2013). This trend is also observable at the subnational level in some countries.<sup>279</sup> I wish to investigate the causes and motivations, the nature and extent and the (potential) consequences of this group of reforms by determining if they seek to gratify the electorate (i.e., they are *crowd-pleasers*) or draw away citizens' attention from tough changes such as budget cuts (i.e., they are *key janglers*).<sup>280</sup>

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<sup>278</sup> I intentionally use the word "case" instead of "country" because I am afraid I will have to employ subnational jurisdictions in order to obtain the control unit.

<sup>279</sup> On the Spanish case, see Riera and Montero (2013).

<sup>280</sup> This is the terminology adopted by Jacobs and Farrell in the call for papers of a Workshop on 'Crowd-pleasers or key janglers? The impact of drops in political legitimacy on democratic reform and their consequences' that was part

## 9.6. Conclusion

To conclude, can only seat-maximization strategies explain electoral reforms? In some idealized models, electoral reform can appear as an effective way in obtaining the highest number possible of seats for a party in power. However, unless a party holds an absolute majority of seats in parliament, its ability to change the electoral system largely depends on the willingness of one or several other parties to cooperate. This is why an electoral reform process can sometimes be depicted as a positive-sum game.

As we saw in Chapters 4 and 5, parties are not only interested in maximizing seats, but also votes, office and policy (Müller and Strøm 1999). In the electoral arena, the level of party system fragmentation and the overall satisfaction with democracy determine the usefulness of the strategic changes of the electoral system. In countries that display either a high cabinet instability or a low legislative productivity, advocating a restrictive electoral reform may mean higher vote shares for parties. By contrast, in settings where the public discontent towards the operation of democracy is broad, supporting a reform in the intraparty dimension is likely to become electorally successful. Moreover, the evidence provided in Chapter 8 seems to preliminarily support the idea that not only *act-contingent* reasons are present when politicians vote for reform (Shugart 2008), but that they also electorally benefit for doing so.

It can thus be concluded that, when applied under the right circumstances (i.e., high or low party system fragmentation and high discontent with the way democracy works), the strategy of altering the electoral system is in the interest of reforming parties, that enact a restrictive or a permissive reform and an electoral system change in the intraparty dimension to address a current malfunctioning of the political system that provokes the emergence within the electorate of negative attitudes towards the operation of democratic institutions and processes. By adopting a particular and/or appropriate new set of electoral institutions in a given context, parties can increase cabinet stability, legislative productivity and overall satisfaction with democracy. This

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of a wider conference on ‘Political Legitimacy and the Paradox of Regulation’ (University of Leiden, January 24-25, 2013), although I would prefer a different labelling.

makes electoral reform a powerful tool in the hands of these parties that want to change the party system while still performing well in the following elections.

## Appendix 1. Episodes of electoral reforms

**Table A1.1. Electoral reforms in the interparty dimension, 1945-2010**

| Country            | Term      | Reform   | Disproportionality |
|--------------------|-----------|--|--------------------|
| Albania            | 1992-1996 | Change from MMP to MMM and decreased number of upper seats;<br>U: introduction of a legal threshold for coalitions                                       | Up                 |
| Albania            | 1996-1997 | Increased number of upper seats; U: decreased legal threshold for parties  | Down               |
| Albania            | 1997-2001 | Change from MMM to MMP; U: increased legal threshold for parties   | Down               |
| Albania            | 2001-2005 | L: formula shift from majority runoff to plurality   | Up                 |
| Albania            | 2005-2009 | Change from MMP to PR and increased legal threshold for parties  | Down               |
| Armenia            | 1995-1999 | L: decreased number of districts and change from majority runoff to plurality  | Mixed              |
| Armenia            | 1999-2003 | L: decreased number of districts   | Down               |
| Armenia            | 2003-2007 | L: decreased number of districts   | Down               |
| Australia          | 1946-1949 | Increased number of districts  | Down               |
| Austria            | 1970-1971 | L: decreased number of districts and formula shift from Droop to Hare;<br>U: decreased number of districts   | Down               |
| Austria            | 1990-1994 | Increased number of tiers; L: increased number of districts; U <sub>1</sub> : it resembles previous L; U <sub>2</sub> :<br>decreased number of districts | Mixed              |
| Belgium            | 1991-1995 | Decreased assembly size; L: decreased number of districts  | Mixed              |
| Belgium            | 1999-2003 | Decreased number of tiers; decreased number of districts; introduction of a legal threshold  | Up                 |
| Bolivia            | 1985-1989 | Increased legal threshold  | Up                 |
| Bolivia            | 1989-1993 | Formula shift from Hare to St. Laguë and decreased legal threshold   | Mixed              |
| Bolivia            | 1993-1997 | Change from PR to MMP  | Ambiguous          |
| Bulgaria           | 1990-1991 | Change from MMM to PR and decreased assembly size  | Mixed              |
| Bulgaria           | 2005-2009 | Change from PR to MMM  | Up                 |
| Colombia           | 1958-1960 | Increased assembly size  | Down               |
| Colombia           | 1968-1970 | Decreased legal threshold  | Down               |
| Colombia           | 1990-1991 | Decreased assembly size and increased number of districts  | Up                 |
| Colombia           | 2002-2006 | Formula shift from Hare to D'Hondt   | Up                 |
| Costa Rica         | 1958-1962 | Increased assembly size  | Down               |
| Croatia            | 1992-1995 | Increased number of upper seats; U: increased legal threshold for parties and introduction of<br>one for coalitions; L: decreased number of districts    | Mixed              |
| Croatia            | 1995-2000 | Change from MMM to PR  | Down               |
| Cyprus             | 1976-1981 | Change from FPTP to reinforced PR  | Down               |
| Cyprus             | 1981-1985 | Increased assembly size  | Down               |
| Cyprus             | 1991-1996 | Decreased legal threshold  | Down               |
| Czech Republic     | 1998-2002 | Decreased number of tiers and increased number of districts  | Up                 |
| Denmark            | 1947-1950 | Increased number of upper seats  | Down               |
| Denmark            | 1953      | Increased assembly size and decreased number of upper seats;<br>L: formula shift from D'Hondt to modified St. Laguë; U: increased legal threshold        | Mixed              |
| Denmark            | 1960-1964 | U: decreased legal threshold   | Down               |
| Denmark            | 1968-1971 | L: decreased number of districts   | Down               |
| Denmark            | 2005-2007 | L: formula shift from modified St. Laguë to D'Hondt; U: decreased number of districts  | Mixed              |
| Dominican Republic | 1970-1974 | Increased assembly size  | Down               |
| Dominican Republic | 1978-1982 | Increased assembly size  | Down               |

| Country            | Term      | Reform   | Disproportionality |
|--------------------|-----------|--|--------------------|
| Dominican Republic | 1994-1998 | Increased assembly size  | Down               |
| Dominican Republic | 1998-2002 | Increased number of districts  | Up                 |
| Ecuador            | 1996-1998 | Change from PR to "MNTV"; increased assembly size and increased number of upper seats                                  | Mixed              |
| Ecuador            | 1998-2002 | Change from "MNTV" to PR   | Down               |
| Ecuador            | 2002-2006 | Change from PR to "MMM"  | Up                 |
| Ecuador            | 2006-2009 | Increased assembly size  | Down               |
| El Salvador        | 1988-1991 | Increased assembly size and number of tiers  | Down               |
| El Salvador        | 2003-2006 | Decreased number of tiers  | Up                 |
| France             | 1946-1951 | Change from PR to "MMM"  | Up                 |
| France             | 1956-1958 | Change from "MMM" to majority runoff   | Up                 |
| France             | 1981-1986 | Change from majority runoff to PR  | Down               |
| France             | 1986-1988 | Change from PR to majority runoff  | Up                 |
| Germany            | 1949-1953 | Increased assembly size; increased number of upper seats; increased number of votes; U: increased legal threshold      | Mixed              |
| Germany            | 1953-1957 | U: increased legal threshold   | Up                 |
| Germany            | 1983-1987 | U: formula shift from D'Hondt to Hare  | Down               |
| Germany            | 1987-1990 | Increased assembly size; U: decreased legal threshold  | Down               |
| Germany            | 2005-2009 | U: formula shift from Hare to St. Laguë  | Ambiguous          |
| Greece             | 1974-1977 | L: formula shift from Hare to Droop  | Up                 |
| Greece             | 1981-1985 | U <sub>1</sub> : elimination of the legal threshold  | Down               |
| Greece             | 1985-1989 | Decreased number of tiers and introduction of guaranteed seats for small parties provided they cross a given threshold | Down               |
| Greece             | 1990-1993 | Introduction of a legal threshold  | Up                 |
| Greece             | 2000-2004 | Decreased plurality-vote bonus   | Down               |
| Greece             | 2007-2009 | Increased plurality-vote bonus   | Up                 |
| Guatemala          | 1990-1994 | Decreased assembly size  | Up                 |
| Guatemala          | 1995-1999 | Increased assembly size  | Down               |
| Guatemala          | 1999-2003 | Increased assembly size  | Down               |
| Hungary            | 1990-1994 | U: increased legal threshold   | Up                 |
| Iceland            | 1959      | Change from MMM to PR  | Down               |
| Iceland            | 1983-1987 | Formula shift from D'Hondt to Hare   | Down               |
| Iceland            | 1999-2003 | Increased number of upper seats; U: introduction of a legal threshold; L: decreased number of districts                | Mixed              |
| Israel             | 1949-1951 | Formula shift from D'Hondt to Hare and increased legal threshold   | Mixed              |
| Israel             | 1969-1973 | Formula shift from Hare to D'Hondt and increased legal threshold   | Up                 |
| Israel             | 1988-1992 | Change from PR to "MMM"  | Up                 |
| Israel             | 1999-2003 | Change from "MMM" to PR  | Down               |
| Israel             | 2003-2006 | Increased legal threshold  | Up                 |
| Italy              | 1946-1948 | L: formula shift from Imperiali to reinforced Imperiali  | Up                 |
| Italy              | 1948-1953 | Change from PR to "MMM"  | Up                 |
| Italy              | 1953-1958 | Change from "MMM" to PR  | Down               |
| Italy              | 1992-1994 | Change from PR to MMM  | Up                 |
| Italy              | 2001-2006 | Change from MMM to bonus-PR  | Down               |
| Japan              | 1993-1996 | Change from SNTV to MMM  | Up                 |

| Country     | Term      | Reform   | Disproportionality |
|-------------|-----------|--|--------------------|
| Latvia      | 1993-1995 | Increased legal threshold  | Up                 |
| Lithuania   | 1992-1996 | U: increased legal threshold   | Up                 |
| Lithuania   | 1996-2000 | L: formula shift from majority runoff to plurality   | Up                 |
| Lithuania   | 2000-2004 | L: formula shift from plurality to majority runoff   | Down               |
| Macedonia   | 1994-1998 | Change from FPTP to MMM  | Down               |
| Macedonia   | 1998-2002 | Change from MMM to PR  | Down               |
| Malta       | 1981-1987 | Introduction of the majority-vote guarantee  | Down               |
| Malta       | 1992-1996 | Introduction of the plurality-vote guarantee   | Ambiguous          |
| Moldova     | 1998-2001 | Increased legal threshold  | Up                 |
| Moldova     | 2009      | Decreased legal threshold  | Down               |
| Moldova     | 2009-2010 | Decreased legal threshold  | Down               |
| Netherlands | 1952-1956 | Increased assembly size  | Down               |
| New Zealand | 1993-1996 | Change from FPTP to MMP  | Down               |
| Nicaragua   | 1984-1990 | Decreased number of tiers  | Up                 |
| Nicaragua   | 1990-1996 | Increased number of tiers; L: increased number of districts  | Mixed              |
| Norway      | 1949-1953 | Decreased number of districts and formula shift from D'Hondt to modified St. Laguë   | Down               |
| Norway      | 1985-1989 | Increased number of tiers  | Down               |
| Norway      | 2001-2005 | Increased number of upper seats  | Down               |
| Panama      | 1989-1994 | Decreased legal threshold  | Down               |
| Paraguay    | 1989-1993 | Change from PR-bonus to PR and increased number of districts   | Down               |
| Peru        | 2001-2006 | Introduction of a legal threshold  | Up                 |
| Poland      | 1991-1993 | U: formula shift from modified St. Laguë to D'Hondt; increased legal threshold;<br>L: formula shift from Hare to D'Hondt; increased number of districts; new legal threshold | Up                 |
| Poland      | 1997-2001 | Reduction of the number of tiers and formula shift from D'Hondt to St. Laguë   | Down               |
| Poland      | 2001-2005 | Formula shift from modified St. Laguë to D'Hondt   | Up                 |
| Romania     | 1990-1992 | Introduction of a legal threshold  | Up                 |
| Romania     | 1996-2000 | Increased legal threshold  | Up                 |
| Romania     | 2004-2008 | Change from PR to MMP  | Ambiguous          |
| Slovakia    | 1994-1998 | Decreased number of tiers and districts; increased legal threshold for coalitions  | Down               |
| Slovakia    | 1998-2002 | Decreased legal threshold for coalitions   | Down               |
| Slovenia    | 1996-2000 | Formula shift from Hare to Droop and increased legal threshold   | Up                 |
| Sweden      | 1948-1952 | Formula shift from D'Hondt to modified St. Laguë   | Down               |
| Sweden      | 1968-1970 | Increased assembly size and introduction of an upper tier; L: decreased number of districts  | Down               |
| Ukraine     | 1994-1998 | Change from FPTP to MMM  | Down               |
| Ukraine     | 2002-2006 | Change from MMM to PR  | Down               |
| Venezuela   | 1963-1968 | Increased assembly size  | Down               |
| Venezuela   | 1988-1993 | Change from PR to MMP  | Ambiguous          |
| Venezuela   | 1993-1998 | Increased number of lower seats  | Up                 |
| Venezuela   | 1998-2000 | Decreased assembly size and increased number of lower seats  | Up                 |
| Venezuela   | 2005-2010 | Change from MMP to MMM   | Up                 |

*Notes:* FPTP (first past the post); MMM (mixed-member majoritarian); MMP (mixed-member proportional); PR (proportional representation); SNTV (single non-transferable vote). *Sources:* Birch (2003), Birch et al. (2002), Bowler and Grofman (2000), Colomer (2004a), Gallagher and Mitchell (2005a), Golder (2004), Grofman et al. (1999), Grofman and Lijphart (2007 [2002]), the Inter-Parliamentary Union (n.d.), Johnson and Wallack (2010 [2003]), Jones (1995 and 1997), Lijphart (1994), Lundell and Karvonen (2003), Negretto (2009), Payne (2007), Remmer (2008),

Renwick (2011), Shugart and Wattenberg (2001), Shvetsova (1999), Wills Otero and Pérez-Liñán (2005), Zovatto and Orozco Henríquez (2008), and electoral laws of each country.



**Table A1.2. Electoral reforms in the intraparty dimension, 1945-2010**

| Country            | Term      | Reform  | Incentives to Cultivate a Personal Vote |
|--------------------|-----------|---|---|
| Albania            | 1992-1996 | Decreased number of upper seats   | Up                                      |
| Albania            | 1996-1997 | Increased number of upper seats   | Down                                    |
| Albania            | 1997-2001 | Decreased number of upper seats   | Up                                      |
| Albania            | 2001-2005 | L: formula shift from majority runoff to plurality  | Down                                    |
| Albania            | 2005-2009 | Change from MMP to closed-list PR   | Down                                    |
| Armenia            | 1995-1999 | L: decreased number of districts and change from majority runoff to plurality   | Down                                    |
| Armenia            | 1999-2003 | L: decreased number of districts  | Down                                    |
| Armenia            | 2003-2007 | L: decreased number of districts  | Down                                    |
| Australia          | 1946-1949 | Change from preferential block to alternative vote  | Down                                    |
| Australia          | 1983-1984 | Introduction of the above line option   | Down                                    |
| Austria            | 1945-1949 | Introduction of flexible lists  | Up                                      |
| Austria            | 1970-1971 | Instead of deleting and ranking, the voters could hereafter cast a preferential vote for a candidate  | Down                                    |
| Austria            | 1990-1994 | Increased number of tiers; L: increased number of districts; U <sub>1</sub> : it resembles previous L; U <sub>2</sub> : decreased number of districts; Strengthening of the preferential system | Up                                      |
| Belgium            | 1999-2003 | Reduction of the significance of the list order   | Up                                      |
| Bolivia            | 1993-1997 | Change from closed-list PR to MMP   | Up                                      |
| Bulgaria           | 1990-1991 | Change from MMM to closed-list PR   | Down                                    |
| Bulgaria           | 2005-2009 | Change from closed-list PR to MMM   | Up                                      |
| Colombia           | 2002-2006 | Change from "SNTV" to closed-list PR  | Down                                    |
| Croatia            | 1992-1995 | Increased number of upper seats; L: decreased number of districts   | Down                                    |
| Croatia            | 1995-2000 | Change from MMM to closed-list PR   | Down                                    |
| Cyprus             | 1976-1981 | Change from FPTP to closed-list PR  | Down                                    |
| Czech Republic     | 1998-2002 | Decrease in the number of preferential votes and decrease in the threshold to change the list order   | Up                                      |
| Czech Republic     | 2006-2010 | Increase in the number of preferential votes and decrease in the threshold to change the list order   | Mixed                                   |
| Denmark            | 1953      | Increased assembly size   | Up                                      |
| Denmark            | 1968-1971 | L: decreased number of districts  | Up                                      |
| Dominican Republic | 1970-1974 | Increased assembly size   | Down                                    |
| Dominican Republic | 1978-1982 | Increased assembly size   | Down                                    |
| Dominican Republic | 1994-1998 | Increased assembly size   | Down                                    |
| Dominican Republic | 1998-2002 | Introduction of preferential voting   | Up                                      |
| Ecuador            | 1996-1998 | Change from closed-list PR to "MNTV"; increased assembly size   | Up                                      |
| Ecuador            | 1998-2002 | Change from "MNTV" to open-list PR  | Down                                    |
| Ecuador            | 2002-2006 | Change from open-list PR to "MMM"   | Ambiguous                               |
| Ecuador            | 2006-2009 | Increased assembly size   | Up                                      |
| Estonia            | 1992-1995 | L: Limitation of vote pooling to only some particular candidates  | Up                                      |
| Estonia            | 1999-2003 | U: Introduction of preferential vote  | Up                                      |
| Finland            | 1951-1954 | Change from multiple lists to open lists  | Up                                      |
| France             | 1956-1958 | Change from "MMM" to majority runoff  | Up                                      |

| Country     | Term      | Reform  | Incentives to Cultivate a Personal Vote |
|-------------|-----------|---|---|
| France      | 1981-1986 | Change from majority runoff to closed-list PR   | Down                                    |
| France      | 1986-1988 | Change from closed-list PR to majority runoff   | Up                                      |
| Germany     | 1949-1953 | Introduction of a second vote   | Up                                      |
| Greece      | 1981-1985 | Elimination of the preferential vote  | Down                                    |
| Greece      | 1985-1989 | Re-introduction of the preferential vote  | Up                                      |
| Guatemala   | 1990-1994 | Decreased assembly size   | Up                                      |
| Guatemala   | 1995-1999 | Increased assembly size   | Down                                    |
| Guatemala   | 1999-2003 | Increased assembly size   | Down                                    |
| Honduras    | 2001-2005 | Change from closed-list PR to open-list PR  | Up                                      |
| Iceland     | 1959      | Change from MMM to closed-list PR   | Down                                    |
| Iceland     | 1999-2003 | Strengthening of the preferential system  | Up                                      |
| Israel      | 1988-1992 | Change from closed-list PR to "MMM"   | Up                                      |
| Israel      | 1999-2003 | Change from "MMM" to closed-list PR   | Down                                    |
| Italy       | 1946-1948 | Reduction of the number of seats allocated in the national pool                                     | Up                                      |
| Italy       | 1987-1992 | Decreased number of preferences   | Up                                      |
| Italy       | 1992-1994 | Change from open-list PR to MMM   | Down                                    |
| Italy       | 2001-2006 | Change from MMM to closed-list PR   | Down                                    |
| Japan       | 1993-1996 | Change from SNTV to MMM   | Down                                    |
| Lithuania   | 1992-1996 | U: Introduction of flexible lists   | Up                                      |
| Lithuania   | 1996-2000 | L: formula shift from majority runoff to plurality  | Down                                    |
| Lithuania   | 2000-2004 | L: formula shift from plurality to majority runoff  | Up                                      |
| Lithuania   | 2004-2008 | U: Change from flexible to open lists   | Up                                      |
| Macedonia   | 1994-1998 | Change from FPTP to MMM   | Down                                    |
| Macedonia   | 1998-2002 | Change from MMM to closed-list PR   | Down                                    |
| Netherlands | 1952-1956 | Increased assembly size   | Up                                      |
| Netherlands | 1986-1990 | Introduction of the possibility that one candidate pool all his or her votes from various districts | Up                                      |
| Netherlands | 1994-1998 | Reduction of the eligibility threshold  | Up                                      |
| New Zealand | 1993-1996 | Change from FPTP to MMP   | Down                                    |
| Nicaragua   | 1990-1996 | L: increased number of districts  | Up                                      |
| Norway      | 1949-1953 | Decreased number of districts   | Down                                    |
| Paraguay    | 1989-1993 | Increased number of districts   | Up                                      |
| Poland      | 1991-1993 | L: increased number of districts  | Down                                    |
| Romania     | 2004-2008 | Change from PR to MMP   | Up                                      |
| Slovakia    | 1994-1998 | Decreased number of districts   | Up                                      |
| Slovakia    | 2002-2006 | Decreased eligibility threshold   | Up                                      |
| Slovenia    | 1996-2000 | Elimination of the national lists   | Up                                      |
| Sweden      | 1968-1970 | Increased assembly size; L: decreased number of districts   | Down                                    |
| Sweden      | 1994-1998 | Introduction of flexible lists  | Up                                      |
| Ukraine     | 1994-1998 | Change from FPTP to MMM   | Down                                    |
| Ukraine     | 2002-2006 | Change from MMM to PR   | Down                                    |
| Venezuela   | 1963-1968 | Increased assembly size   | Down                                    |

| Country   | Term      | Reform                          | Incentives to Cultivate a Personal Vote |
|-----------|-----------|---------------------------------|---|
| Venezuela | 1988-1993 | Change from PR to MMP           | Up                                      |
| Venezuela | 1993-1998 | Increased number of lower seats | Up                                      |
| Venezuela | 1998-2000 | Increased number of lower seats | Up                                      |

*Notes:* FPTP (first past the post); MMM (mixed-member majoritarian); MMP (mixed-member proportional); PR (proportional representation); SNTV (single non-transferable vote). *Sources:* Birch (2003), Birch et al. (2002), Bowler and Grofman (2000), Colomer (2004a), Gallagher and Mitchell (2005a), Golder (2004), Grofman et al. (1999), Grofman and Lijphart (2007 [2002]), the Inter-Parliamentary Union (n.d.), Johnson and Wallack (2010 [2003]), Jones (1995 and 1997), Lijphart (1994), Lundell and Karvonen (2003), Negretto (2009), Payne (2007), Remmer (2008), Renwick (2011), Shugart and Wattenberg (2001), Shvetsova (1999), Wills Otero and Pérez-Liñán (2005), Zovatto and Orozco Henríquez (2008), and electoral laws of each country.

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<sup>281</sup> This supplementary list of references provides additional sources regarding the identification and classification of cases of electoral system change for Tables A1.1 and A1.2.

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## Appendix 2. The determinants of reforms in the interparty dimension

**Table A2.1. Determinants of electoral reform in the interparty dimension: Discrete time duration models/Binary times-series cross-section models (II)**

| VARIABLES   | Model 1                           | Model 2                           | Model 3                         | Model 4                           | Model 5                         | Model 6                          | Model 7                          |
|---|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Permissive Reform   | coefficient<br>(se)               | coefficient<br>(se)               | coefficient<br>(se)             | coefficient<br>(se)               | coefficient<br>(se)             | coefficient<br>(se)              | coefficient<br>(se)              |
| Party System Fragmentation<br>(Legislative Level)           | <b>-0.122</b><br><b>(0.126)</b>   | <b>-0.088</b><br><b>(0.118)</b>   | <b>-0.127</b><br><b>(0.123)</b> | <b>-0.102</b><br><b>(0.122)</b>   | <b>0.072</b><br><b>(0.169)</b>  | <b>-0.075</b><br><b>(0.209)</b>  | <b>-0.690**</b><br><b>(0.34)</b> |
| Electoral Disproportionality                                |                                   | 0.084***<br>(0.015)               |                                 |                                   | 0.126***<br>(0.046)             | 0.013<br>(0.037)                 | 0.058***<br>(0.021)              |
| Electoral Volatility  |                                   |                                   | 0.027***<br>(0.006)             |                                   | 0.018**<br>-0.00794             | 0.023<br>(0.021)                 | 0.018**<br>(0.008)               |
| Democratic Age(logged)                                      |                                   |                                   |                                 | -0.361***<br>(0.125)              | -0.298*<br>(0.166)              | -0.221<br>(0.257)                | -0.946***<br>(0.364)             |
| Party System Fragmentation*<br>Electoral Disproportionality |                                   |                                   |                                 |                                   | <b>-0.027</b><br><b>(0.019)</b> |                                  |                                  |
| Party System Fragmentation*<br>Electoral Volatility         |                                   |                                   |                                 |                                   |                                 | <b>0.0004</b><br><b>(0.005)</b>  |                                  |
| Party System Fragmentation*<br>Democratic Age(logged)       |                                   |                                   |                                 |                                   |                                 |                                  | <b>0.200*</b><br><b>-0.106</b>   |
| Constant  | -3.015***<br>(0.488)              | -3.942***<br>(0.565)              | -4.024***<br>(0.593)            | -2.367***<br>(0.547)              | -4.149***<br>(0.838)            | -3.741***<br>(1.226)             | -1.873*<br>(1.088)               |
| <b>Restrictive Reform</b>                                   |                                   |                                   |                                 |                                   |                                 |                                  |                                  |
| Party System Fragmentation<br>(Legislative Level)           | <b>0.241***</b><br><b>(0.073)</b> | <b>0.271***</b><br><b>(0.073)</b> | <b>0.187*</b><br><b>(0.096)</b> | <b>0.248***</b><br><b>(0.069)</b> | <b>0.266*</b><br><b>(0.159)</b> | <b>0.522**</b><br><b>(0.258)</b> | <b>-0.287</b><br><b>(0.241)</b>  |
| Electoral Disproportionality                                |                                   | 0.028<br>(0.025)                  |                                 |                                   | -0.004<br>(0.075)               | -0.079<br>(0.054)                | -0.038<br>(0.032)                |
| Electoral Volatility  |                                   |                                   | 0.031***<br>(0.008)             |                                   | 0.0290***<br>(0.008)            | 0.0809***<br>(0.031)             | 0.0310***<br>(0.008)             |
| Democratic Age(logged)                                      |                                   |                                   |                                 | -0.553***<br>(0.184)              | -0.478*<br>(0.266)              | -0.225<br>(0.429)                | -1.135***<br>(0.36)              |
| Party System Fragmentation*<br>Electoral Disproportionality |                                   |                                   |                                 |                                   | <b>-0.011</b><br><b>(0.022)</b> |                                  |                                  |
| Party System Fragmentation*<br>Electoral Volatility         |                                   |                                   |                                 |                                   |                                 | <b>-0.008</b><br><b>(0.006)</b>  |                                  |
| Party System Fragmentation*<br>Democratic Age(logged)       |                                   |                                   |                                 |                                   |                                 |                                  | <b>0.169**</b><br><b>(0.083)</b> |

|                       |                      |                      |                      |                      |                      |                     |                      |
|-----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| Constant              | -4.512***<br>(0.457) | -4.823***<br>(0.538) | -5.769***<br>(0.694) | -3.487***<br>(0.508) | -4.574***<br>(1.005) | -6.385***<br>(1.86) | -2.624***<br>(0.914) |
| N (Observations)      | 2,895                | 2,853                | 2,709                | 2,895                | 2,679                | 1,722               | 2,679                |
| Chi <sup>2</sup>      | 50.25***             | 97.54***             | 82.60***             | 94.66***             | 112.14***            | 86.81***            | 108.99***            |
| Pseudo-R <sup>2</sup> | 0.05                 | 0.06                 | 0.08                 | 0.06                 | 0.09                 | 0.11                | 0.09                 |

*Note:* The dependent variable takes value 0 if there is no reform or the reform that takes place has an ambiguous impact in the interparty dimension; 1 if it is supposed to produce less disproportionality; and 2 if it is supposed to produce more disproportionality. Cluster standard errors by terms in parentheses. \* Significant at 0.10; \*\* Significant at 0.05; \*\*\* Significant at 0.01 (two-tailed tests). The counter of stability years and the cubic splines are included but not shown.

**Table A2.2. Determinants of electoral reform in the interparty dimension: Discrete time duration models/Binary times-series cross-section models (III)**

| VARIABLES                                       | Model 1                          | Model 2                           | Model 3                        | Model 4                           | Model 5                           | Model 6                         | Model 7                           |
|---|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Permissive Reform                               | coefficient<br>(se)              | coefficient<br>(se)               | coefficient<br>(se)            | coefficient<br>(se)               | coefficient<br>(se)               | coefficient<br>(se)             | coefficient<br>(se)               |
| Party System Fragmentation<br>(Electoral Level) | <b>-0.039</b><br><b>(0.095)</b>  | <b>-0.129</b><br><b>(0.106)</b>   | <b>-0.117</b><br><b>(0.11)</b> | <b>-0.052</b><br><b>(0.103)</b>   | <b>0.146</b><br><b>(0.186)</b>    | <b>-0.533</b><br><b>(0.373)</b> | <b>-0.691**</b><br><b>(0.298)</b> |
| Electoral Disproportionality                    |                                  | 0.107***<br>(0.019)               |                                |                                   | 0.213***<br>(0.056)               | 0.059*<br>(0.032)               | 0.089***<br>(0.023)               |
| Electoral Volatility                            |                                  |                                   | 0.037***<br>(0.012)            |                                   | 0.022<br>(0.014)                  | -0.011<br>(0.0408)              | 0.025*<br>(0.015)                 |
| Democratic Age(logged)                          |                                  |                                   |                                | -0.629***<br>(0.239)              | -0.629**<br>(0.306)               | -0.885*<br>(0.493)              | -1.469***<br>(0.468)              |
| Party System Fragmentation*                     |                                  |                                   |                                |                                   | <b>-0.027**</b>                   |                                 |                                   |
| Electoral Disproportionality                    |                                  |                                   |                                |                                   | <b>(0.011)</b>                    |                                 |                                   |
| Party System Fragmentation*                     |                                  |                                   |                                |                                   |                                   | <b>0.0109</b>                   |                                   |
| Electoral Volatility                            |                                  |                                   |                                |                                   |                                   | <b>(0.009)</b>                  |                                   |
| Party System Fragmentation*                     |                                  |                                   |                                |                                   |                                   |                                 | <b>0.204**</b>                    |
| Democratic Age(logged)                          |                                  |                                   |                                |                                   |                                   |                                 | <b>(0.102)</b>                    |
| Political Constraints Index                     | -1.51<br>(1.113)                 | -1.206<br>(1.382)                 | -2.439**<br>(1.183)            | -1.394<br>(1.077)                 | -2.132<br>(1.306)                 | -3.031<br>(2.248)               | -1.752<br>(1.24)                  |
| Real GDP per Capita(in 1,000s)                  | -0.014<br>(0.023)                | 0.0006<br>(0.023)                 | 0.031<br>(0.028)               | 0.027<br>(0.033)                  | 0.068*<br>(0.037)                 | 0.158**<br>(0.069)              | 0.059<br>(0.037)                  |
| Ideology of Government                          | 0.158<br>(0.198)                 | 0.213<br>(0.191)                  | 0.181<br>(0.211)               | 0.151<br>(0.202)                  | 0.183<br>(0.208)                  | 0.043<br>(0.293)                | 0.144<br>(0.211)                  |
| Constant  | -2.795***<br>(0.902)             | -3.868***<br>(0.954)              | -4.045***<br>(1.135)           | -2.004**<br>(0.971)               | -4.782***<br>(1.603)              | -2.243<br>(2.028)               | -1.407<br>(1.478)                 |
| <b>Restrictive Reform</b>                       |                                  |                                   |                                |                                   |                                   |                                 |                                   |
| Party System Fragmentation<br>(Electoral Level) | <b>0.185**</b><br><b>(0.079)</b> | <b>0.201**</b><br><b>(0.0801)</b> | <b>0.105</b><br><b>(0.108)</b> | <b>0.178**</b><br><b>(0.0806)</b> | <b>0.480***</b><br><b>(0.179)</b> | <b>0.535</b><br><b>(0.343)</b>  | <b>-0.357</b><br><b>(0.293)</b>   |
| Electoral Disproportionality                    |                                  | -0.034<br>(0.036)                 |                                |                                   | 0.192*<br>(0.109)                 | -0.146*<br>(0.082)              | -0.076*<br>(0.044)                |
| Electoral Volatility                            |                                  |                                   | 0.031***<br>(0.011)            |                                   | 0.036***<br>(0.012)               | 0.123*<br>(0.062)               | 0.0401***<br>(0.0108)             |
| Democratic Age(logged)                          |                                  |                                   |                                | -0.365<br>(0.365)                 | -0.162<br>(0.372)                 | -0.383<br>(0.498)               | -0.921*<br>(0.492)                |
| Party System Fragmentation*                     |                                  |                                   |                                |                                   | <b>-0.065**</b>                   |                                 |                                   |
| Electoral Disproportionality                    |                                  |                                   |                                |                                   | <b>(0.028)</b>                    |                                 |                                   |

|                                |           |           |           |           |           |                |                |
|--------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------------|----------------|
| Party System Fragmentation*    |           |           |           |           |           | <b>-0.014</b>  |                |
| Electoral Volatility           |           |           |           |           |           | <b>(0.009)</b> |                |
| Party System Fragmentation*    |           |           |           |           |           |                | <b>0.172*</b>  |
| Democratic Age(logged)         |           |           |           |           |           |                | <b>(0.102)</b> |
| Political Constraints Index    | 0.204     | 0.063     | -1.039    | 0.207     | -1.527    | -1.631         | -1.245         |
|                                | (1.321)   | (1.246)   | (1.471)   | (1.315)   | (1.275)   | (1.519)        | (1.23)         |
| Real GDP per Capita(in 1,000s) | -0.051*   | -0.056*   | -0.012    | -0.029    | -0.018    | 0.025          | -0.014         |
|                                | (0.0306)  | (0.0305)  | (0.028)   | (0.033)   | (0.032)   | (0.056)        | (0.0304)       |
| Ideology of Government         | -0.202    | -0.225    | -0.193    | -0.204    | -0.235    | -0.379         | -0.285         |
|                                | (0.225)   | (0.225)   | (0.237)   | (0.225)   | (0.234)   | (0.3)          | (0.247)        |
| Constant                       | -3.554*** | -3.172*** | -4.484*** | -3.074*** | -4.856*** | -4.875         | -1.516         |
|                                | (1.064)   | (1.049)   | (1.373)   | (1.099)   | (1.551)   | (3.097)        | (1.24)         |
| N (Observations)               | 1,598     | 1,594     | 1,546     | 1,598     | 1,543     | 1,072          | 1,543          |
| Chi <sup>2</sup>               | 51.56***  | 85.38***  | 65.20***  | 61.03***  | 126.85*** | 104.20***      | 128.00***      |
| Pseudo-R <sup>2</sup>          | 0.06      | 0.09      | 0.08      | 0.07      | 0.12      | 0.15           | 0.12           |

*Note:* The dependent variable takes value 0 if there is no reform or the reform that takes place has an ambiguous impact in the interparty dimension; 1 if it is supposed to produce less disproportionality; and 2 if it is supposed to produce more disproportionality. Cluster standard errors by terms in parentheses. \* Significant at 0.10; \*\* Significant at 0.05; \*\*\* Significant at 0.01 (two-tailed tests). The counter of stability years and the cubic splines are included but not shown.

**Table A2.3. Determinants of electoral reform in the interparty dimension: Discrete time duration models/Binary times-series cross-section models (IV)**

| VARIABLES   | Model 1                          | Model 2                           | Model 3                         | Model 4                          | Model 5                          | Model 6                          | Model 7                           |
|---|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Permissive Reform   | coefficient<br>(se)              | coefficient<br>(se)               | coefficient<br>(se)             | coefficient<br>(se)              | coefficient<br>(se)              | coefficient<br>(se)              | coefficient<br>(se)               |
| Party System Fragmentation<br>(Electoral Level)             | <b>-0.065</b><br><b>(0.083)</b>  | <b>-0.157**</b><br><b>(0.079)</b> | <b>-0.098</b><br><b>-0.081</b>  | <b>-0.066</b><br><b>(0.081)</b>  | <b>-0.121</b><br><b>(0.126)</b>  | <b>-0.243</b><br><b>(0.217)</b>  | <b>-0.443**</b><br><b>(0.221)</b> |
| Electoral Disproportionality                                |                                  | 0.103***<br>(0.018)               |                                 |                                  | 0.101***<br>(0.036)              | -0.0006<br>(-0.0651)             | 0.0840***<br>(0.02)               |
| Electoral Volatility  |                                  |                                   | 0.028***<br>(0.007)             |                                  | 0.0200**<br>(0.008)              | 0.013<br>(0.026)                 | 0.021**<br>(0.008)                |
| Democratic Age(logged)                                      |                                  |                                   |                                 | -0.339**<br>(0.136)              | -0.307*<br>(0.183)               | -0.111<br>(0.269)                | -0.767**<br>(0.385)               |
| Party System Fragmentation*<br>Electoral Disproportionality |                                  |                                   |                                 |                                  | <b>-0.002</b><br><b>(0.008)</b>  |                                  |                                   |
| Party System Fragmentation*<br>Electoral Volatility         |                                  |                                   |                                 |                                  |                                  | <b>0.003</b><br><b>(0.004)</b>   |                                   |
| Party System Fragmentation*<br>Democratic Age(logged)       |                                  |                                   |                                 |                                  |                                  |                                  | <b>0.112</b><br><b>(0.0807)</b>   |
| Constant  | -3.158***<br>(0.469)             | -3.704***<br>(0.49)               | -4.032***<br>(0.578)            | -2.503***<br>(0.537)             | -3.819***<br>(0.853)             | -3.112**<br>(1.401)              | -2.534***<br>(0.94)               |
| <b>Restrictive Reform</b>                                   |                                  |                                   |                                 |                                  |                                  |                                  |                                   |
| Party System Fragmentation<br>(Electoral Level)             | <b>0.165**</b><br><b>(0.064)</b> | <b>0.181***</b><br><b>(0.063)</b> | <b>0.0609</b><br><b>(0.096)</b> | <b>0.143**</b><br><b>(0.059)</b> | <b>0.351**</b><br><b>(0.171)</b> | <b>0.451**</b><br><b>(0.218)</b> | <b>-0.297</b><br><b>(0.214)</b>   |
| Electoral Disproportionality                                |                                  | -0.002<br>(0.0302)                |                                 |                                  | 0.122<br>(0.088)                 | -0.086<br>(0.065)                | -0.046<br>(0.042)                 |
| Electoral Volatility  |                                  |                                   | 0.027***<br>(0.009)             |                                  | 0.023**<br>(0.009)               | 0.0909***<br>(0.033)             | 0.027***<br>(0.009)               |
| Democratic Age(logged)                                      |                                  |                                   |                                 | -0.538***<br>(0.2)               | -0.479*<br>(0.272)               | -0.194<br>(0.401)                | -1.165***<br>(0.363)              |
| Party System Fragmentation*<br>Electoral Disproportionality |                                  |                                   |                                 |                                  | <b>-0.037*</b><br><b>(0.022)</b> |                                  |                                   |
| Party System Fragmentation*<br>Electoral Volatility         |                                  |                                   |                                 |                                  |                                  | <b>-0.009*</b><br><b>(0.005)</b> |                                   |
| Party System Fragmentation*<br>Democratic Age(logged)       |                                  |                                   |                                 |                                  |                                  |                                  | <b>0.155*</b><br><b>(0.079)</b>   |
| Constant  | -4.225***<br>(0.509)             | -4.244***<br>(0.524)              | -4.978***<br>(0.753)            | -3.191***<br>(0.532)             | -4.742***<br>(1.108)             | -6.291***<br>(1.87)              | -2.048**<br>(0.894)               |

|                       |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |
|-----------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| N (Observations)      | 2,344    | 2,314    | 2,187    | 2,344    | 2,166    | 1,362    | 2,166    |
| Chi <sup>2</sup>      | 39.07*** | 74.89*** | 52.95*** | 67.30*** | 95.56*** | 46.60*** | 92.46*** |
| Pseudo-R <sup>2</sup> | 0.04     | 0.06     | 0.06     | 0.05     | 0.09     | 0.09     | 0.09     |

*Note:* The dependent variable takes value 0 if there is no reform or the reform that takes place has an ambiguous impact in the interparty dimension; 1 if it is supposed to produce less disproportionality; and 2 if it is supposed to produce more disproportionality. Cluster standard errors by terms in parentheses. \* Significant at 0.10; \*\* Significant at 0.05; \*\*\* Significant at 0.01 (two-tailed tests). The counter of stability years and the cubic splines are included but not shown.



**Table A2.4. Determinants of electoral reform in the interparty dimension: Semiparametric duration models/Cox models**

| VARIABLES                                       | Model 1                  |                           | Model 2                  |                           | Model 3                   |                         | Model 4                  |                         | Model 5                  |                         | Model 6                  |                         | Model 7                    |                          |
|---|--------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|
|   | Permissive               | Restrictive               | Permissive               | Restrictive               | Permissive                | Restrictive             | Permissive               | Restrictive             | Permissive               | Restrictive             | Permissive               | Restrictive             | Permissive                 | Restrictive              |
| Party System Fragmentation<br>(Electoral Level) | <b>-0.095</b><br>(0.078) | <b>0.137**</b><br>(0.067) | <b>-0.124</b><br>(0.078) | <b>0.137**</b><br>(0.067) | <b>-0.153*</b><br>(0.088) | <b>0.036</b><br>(0.087) | <b>-0.115</b><br>(0.077) | <b>0.108</b><br>(0.066) | <b>-0.095</b><br>(0.128) | <b>0.139</b><br>(0.145) | <b>-0.156</b><br>(0.166) | <b>0.154</b><br>(0.141) | <b>-0.285**</b><br>(0.125) | <b>-0.119</b><br>(0.139) |
| Electoral Disproportionality                    |                          |                           | 0.094***<br>(0.019)      | -0.004<br>(0.032)         |                           |                         |                          |                         | 0.094**<br>(0.046)       | 0.005<br>(0.118)        | 0.075***<br>(0.022)      | -0.066<br>(0.0505)      | 0.0805***<br>(-0.021)      | -0.056<br>(0.049)        |
| Electoral Volatility                            |                          |                           |                          |                           | 0.028***<br>(0.006)       | 0.023***<br>(0.008)     |                          |                         | 0.008<br>(0.008)         | 0.019**<br>(0.009)      | 0.006<br>(0.018)         | 0.036<br>(0.022)        | 0.009<br>(0.008)           | 0.0204**<br>(0.009)      |
| Democratic Age(logged)                          |                          |                           |                          |                           |                           |                         | -0.020***<br>(0.005)     | -0.020***<br>(0.006)    | -0.014**<br>(0.005)      | -0.011*<br>(0.006)      | -0.014**<br>(0.005)      | -0.0107<br>(0.006)      | -0.037**<br>(0.014)        | -0.037**<br>(0.017)      |
| Party System Fragmentation*                     |                          |                           |                          |                           |                           |                         |                          |                         | <b>-0.003</b>            | <b>-0.015</b>           |                          |                         |                            |                          |
| Electoral Disproportionality                    |                          |                           |                          |                           |                           |                         |                          |                         | <b>(0.008)</b>           | <b>(0.022)</b>          |                          |                         |                            |                          |
| Party System Fragmentation*                     |                          |                           |                          |                           |                           |                         |                          |                         |                          |                         | <b>0.000521</b>          | <b>-0.003</b>           |                            |                          |
| Electoral Volatility                            |                          |                           |                          |                           |                           |                         |                          |                         |                          |                         | <b>(0.00364)</b>         | <b>(0.004)</b>          |                            |                          |
| Party System Fragmentation*                     |                          |                           |                          |                           |                           |                         |                          |                         |                          |                         |                          |                         | <b>0.005*</b>              | <b>0.005*</b>            |
| Democratic Age(logged)                          |                          |                           |                          |                           |                           |                         |                          |                         |                          |                         |                          |                         | <b>(0.002)</b>             | <b>(0.002)</b>           |
| Ln(L)   | -303.36                  | -231.5                    | -288.96                  | -231.33                   | -258.39                   | -180.95                 | -293.64                  | -223.96                 | -246.18                  | -177.8                  | -246.27                  | -177.72                 | -244.73                    | -176.62                  |
| Number of Observations                          | 718                      | 718                       | 716                      | 716                       | 661                       | 661                     | 707                      | 707                     | 660                      | 660                     | 660                      | 660                     | 660                        | 660                      |
| Number of Failures                              | 64                       | 53                        | 63                       | 53                        | 47                        | 34                      | 53                       | 42                      | 46                       | 34                      | 46                       | 34                      | 46                         | 34                       |

*Note:* The dependent variable takes value 0 if there is no reform or the reform that takes place has an ambiguous impact in the interparty dimension; 1 if it is supposed to produce less disproportionality; and 2 if it is supposed to produce more disproportionality. \* Significant at 0.10; \*\* Significant at 0.05; \*\*\* Significant at 0.01 (two-tailed tests).

**Table A2.5. Determinants of electoral reform in the interparty dimension: Discrete time duration models/Binary times-series cross-section models (V)**

| VARIABLES   | Model 1                           | Model 2                           | Model 3                          | Model 4                           | Model 5                          | Model 6                          | Model 7                            |
|---|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Permissive Reform   | coefficient<br>(se)               | coefficient<br>(se)               | coefficient<br>(se)              | coefficient<br>(se)               | coefficient<br>(se)              | coefficient<br>(se)              | coefficient<br>(se)                |
| Party System Fragmentation<br>(Electoral Level)             | <b>-0.009</b><br><b>(0.073)</b>   | <b>-0.07</b><br><b>(0.073)</b>    | <b>-0.0504</b><br><b>(0.077)</b> | <b>-0.015</b><br><b>(0.072)</b>   | <b>0.008</b><br><b>(0.129)</b>   | <b>-0.0905</b><br><b>(0.155)</b> | <b>-0.598***</b><br><b>(0.217)</b> |
| Electoral Disproportionality                                |                                   | 0.091***<br>(0.015)               |                                  |                                   | 0.108**<br>(0.048)               | 0.011<br>(0.032)                 | 0.071***<br>(0.018)                |
| Electoral Volatility  |                                   |                                   | 0.028***<br>(0.007)              |                                   | 0.019**<br>(0.007)               | 0.022<br>(0.021)                 | 0.022***<br>(0.008)                |
| Democratic Age(logged)                                      |                                   |                                   |                                  | -0.324**<br>(0.129)               | -0.25<br>(0.17)                  | -0.173<br>(0.255)                | -1.042***<br>(0.346)               |
| Party System Fragmentation*<br>Electoral Disproportionality |                                   |                                   |                                  |                                   | <b>-0.008</b><br><b>(0.0105)</b> |                                  |                                    |
| Party System Fragmentation*<br>Electoral Volatility         |                                   |                                   |                                  |                                   |                                  | <b>0.0008</b><br><b>(0.003)</b>  |                                    |
| Party System Fragmentation*<br>Democratic Age(logged)       |                                   |                                   |                                  |                                   |                                  |                                  | <b>0.188***</b><br><b>(0.072)</b>  |
| Constant  | -3.168***<br>(0.505)              | -3.843***<br>(0.542)              | -4.143***<br>(0.69)              | -2.568***<br>(0.571)              | -4.254***<br>(0.975)             | -3.412**<br>(1.429)              | -1.846**<br>(0.902)                |
| <b>Restrictive Reform</b>                                   |                                   |                                   |                                  |                                   |                                  |                                  |                                    |
| Party System Fragmentation<br>(Electoral Level)             | <b>0.197***</b><br><b>(0.056)</b> | <b>0.213***</b><br><b>(0.053)</b> | <b>0.097</b><br><b>(0.086)</b>   | <b>0.177***</b><br><b>(0.054)</b> | <b>0.318**</b><br><b>(0.145)</b> | <b>0.483**</b><br><b>(0.204)</b> | <b>-0.342*</b><br><b>(0.195)</b>   |
| Electoral Disproportionality                                |                                   | -0.009<br>(0.026)                 |                                  |                                   | 0.077<br>(0.0905)                | -0.0970*<br>(0.0502)             | -0.057<br>(0.035)                  |
| Electoral Volatility  |                                   |                                   | 0.029***<br>(0.009)              |                                   | 0.0290***<br>(0.009)             | 0.096***<br>(0.031)              | 0.032***<br>(0.009)                |
| Democratic Age(logged)                                      |                                   |                                   |                                  | -0.460**<br>(0.197)               | -0.386<br>(0.259)                | -0.127<br>(0.415)                | -1.196***<br>(0.333)               |
| Party System Fragmentation*<br>Electoral Disproportionality |                                   |                                   |                                  |                                   | <b>-0.0302</b><br><b>(0.019)</b> |                                  |                                    |
| Party System Fragmentation*<br>Electoral Volatility         |                                   |                                   |                                  |                                   |                                  | <b>-0.009*</b><br><b>(0.005)</b> |                                    |
| Party System Fragmentation*<br>Democratic Age(logged)       |                                   |                                   |                                  |                                   |                                  |                                  | <b>0.173***</b><br><b>(0.066)</b>  |
| Constant  | -4.137***<br>(0.545)              | -4.079***<br>(0.568)              | -5.099***<br>(0.947)             | -3.287***<br>(0.584)              | -4.632***<br>(1.22)              | -6.090***<br>(2.02)              | -1.832**<br>(0.926)                |

|                       |          |           |          |          |           |           |           |
|-----------------------|----------|-----------|----------|----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| N (Observations)      | 2,883    | 2,853     | 2,700    | 2,883    | 2,679     | 1,722     | 2,679     |
| Chi <sup>2</sup>      | 56.90*** | 117.23*** | 81.84*** | 85.87*** | 123.48*** | 103.80*** | 130.98*** |
| Pseudo-R <sup>2</sup> | 0.04     | 0.06      | 0.06     | 0.05     | 0.08      | 0.10      | 0.09      |

*Note:* The dependent variable takes value 0 if there is no reform or the reform that takes place has an ambiguous impact in the interparty dimension; 1 if it is supposed to produce less disproportionality; and 2 if it is supposed to produce more disproportionality. Cluster standard errors by terms in parentheses. \* Significant at 0.10; \*\* Significant at 0.05; \*\*\* Significant at 0.01 (two-tailed tests). I include  $t$ ,  $t^2$  and  $t^3$  but they are not shown.

**Table A2.6. Determinants of electoral reform in the interparty dimension: Discrete time duration models/Binary times-series cross-section models (VI)**

| <b>VARIABLES</b>             | <b>Model 1</b>                     | <b>Model 2</b>                    | <b>Model 3</b>                     | <b>Model 4</b>                    | <b>Model 5</b>                  | <b>Model 6</b>                  | <b>Model 7</b>                    |
|------------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <b>Permissive Reform</b>     | <b>coefficient<br/>(se)</b>        | <b>coefficient<br/>(se)</b>       | <b>coefficient<br/>(se)</b>        | <b>coefficient<br/>(se)</b>       | <b>coefficient<br/>(se)</b>     | <b>coefficient<br/>(se)</b>     | <b>coefficient<br/>(se)</b>       |
| Polarization                 | <b>-0.594***</b><br><b>(0.201)</b> | <b>-0.444**</b><br><b>(0.204)</b> | <b>-0.641***</b><br><b>(0.223)</b> | <b>-0.509**</b><br><b>(0.201)</b> | <b>-0.376</b><br><b>(0.363)</b> | <b>-0.149</b><br><b>(0.509)</b> | <b>-1.610**</b><br><b>(0.681)</b> |
| Electoral Disproportionality |                                    | 0.0908***<br>(0.017)              |                                    |                                   | 0.0803***<br>(0.026)            | 0.044<br>(0.0305)               | 0.076***<br>(0.023)               |
| Electoral Volatility         |                                    |                                   | 0.023**<br>(0.009)                 |                                   | 0.009<br>(0.011)                | 0.019<br>(0.016)                | 0.009<br>(0.011)                  |
| Democratic Age(logged)       |                                    |                                   |                                    | -0.342**<br>(0.164)               | -0.285<br>(0.235)               | -0.119<br>(0.397)               | -0.493*<br>(0.276)                |
| Polarization*                |                                    |                                   |                                    |                                   | <b>-0.012</b><br><b>(0.039)</b> |                                 |                                   |
| Electoral Disproportionality |                                    |                                   |                                    |                                   |                                 | <b>-0.027</b><br><b>(0.028)</b> |                                   |
| Polarization*                |                                    |                                   |                                    |                                   |                                 |                                 | <b>0.363*</b><br><b>(0.193)</b>   |
| Electoral Volatility         |                                    |                                   |                                    |                                   |                                 |                                 |                                   |
| Polarization*                |                                    |                                   |                                    |                                   |                                 |                                 |                                   |
| Democratic Age(logged)       |                                    |                                   |                                    |                                   |                                 |                                 |                                   |
| Constant                     | -3.048***<br>(0.278)               | -3.832***<br>(0.373)              | -4.015***<br>(0.54)                | -2.427***<br>(0.397)              | -3.783***<br>(0.866)            | -4.230***<br>(1.381)            | -3.213***<br>(0.899)              |
| <b>Restrictive Reform</b>    |                                    |                                   |                                    |                                   |                                 |                                 |                                   |
| Polarization                 | <b>-0.298</b><br><b>(0.215)</b>    | <b>-0.268</b><br><b>(0.207)</b>   | <b>-0.103</b><br><b>(0.257)</b>    | <b>-0.197</b><br><b>(0.232)</b>   | <b>0.074</b><br><b>(0.424)</b>  | <b>-0.516</b><br><b>(0.643)</b> | <b>1.021*</b><br><b>(0.592)</b>   |
| Electoral Disproportionality |                                    | 0.005<br>(0.029)                  |                                    |                                   | -0.033<br>(0.042)               | -0.0704<br>(0.057)              | -0.056<br>(0.039)                 |
| Electoral Volatility         |                                    |                                   | 0.035***<br>(0.011)                |                                   | 0.037***<br>(0.0109)            | 0.037*<br>(0.019)               | 0.037***<br>(0.011)               |
| Democratic Age(logged)       |                                    |                                   |                                    | -0.425<br>(0.265)                 | -0.171<br>(0.339)               | -0.137<br>(0.49)                | 0.286<br>(0.337)                  |
| Polarization*                |                                    |                                   |                                    |                                   | <b>-0.029</b><br><b>(0.042)</b> |                                 |                                   |
| Electoral Disproportionality |                                    |                                   |                                    |                                   |                                 | <b>0.012</b><br><b>(0.015)</b>  |                                   |
| Polarization*                |                                    |                                   |                                    |                                   |                                 |                                 | <b>-0.408*</b><br><b>(0.214)</b>  |
| Electoral Volatility         |                                    |                                   |                                    |                                   |                                 |                                 |                                   |
| Polarization*                |                                    |                                   |                                    |                                   |                                 |                                 |                                   |
| Democratic Age(logged)       |                                    |                                   |                                    |                                   |                                 |                                 |                                   |
| Constant                     | -3.030***<br>(0.361)               | -3.318***<br>(0.446)              | -4.926***<br>(0.797)               | -2.319***<br>(0.449)              | -4.303***<br>(0.939)            | -3.942***<br>(1.386)            | -5.386***<br>(0.956)              |

|                       |          |          |          |          |           |           |           |
|-----------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| N (Observations)      | 1,821    | 1,790    | 1,462    | 1,821    | 1,728     | 1,073     | 1,728     |
| Chi <sup>2</sup>      | 44.44*** | 73.57*** | 76.28*** | 57.51*** | 114.55*** | 101.12*** | 105.25*** |
| Pseudo-R <sup>2</sup> | 0.06     | 0.08     | 0.08     | 0.07     | 0.10      | 0.12      | 0.11      |

*Note:* The dependent variable takes value 0 if there is no reform or the reform that takes place has an ambiguous impact in the interparty dimension; 1 if it is supposed to produce less disproportionality; and 2 if it is supposed to produce more disproportionality. Cluster standard errors by terms in parentheses. \* Significant at 0.10; \*\* Significant at 0.05; \*\*\* Significant at 0.01 (two-tailed tests). The counter of stability years and the cubic splines are included but not shown.



### Appendix 3. The determinants of reforms in the intraparty dimension

**Table A3.1. Determinants of electoral reform in the intraparty dimension: Discrete time duration models/Binary times-series cross-section models (II)**

| VARIABLES                       | Model 1                  | Model 2                  | Model 3                  | Model 4                 | Model 5                    | Model 6                     | Model 7                    |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
|                                 | coefficient<br>(se)      | coefficient<br>(se)      | coefficient<br>(se)      | coefficient<br>(se)     | coefficient<br>(se)        | coefficient<br>(se)         | coefficient<br>(se)        |
| <b>Candidate-Centred Reform</b> |                          |                          |                          |                         |                            |                             |                            |
| Satisfaction with Democracy     | <b>-0.998</b><br>(0.774) | <b>-1.732</b><br>(1.697) | <b>-1.067</b><br>(0.853) | <b>-0.96</b><br>(0.803) | <b>-2.727*</b><br>(1.623)  | <b>-3.161</b><br>(2.313)    | <b>-0.814</b><br>(4.52)    |
| Party System Inflation          |                          | -1.658<br>(1.484)        |                          |                         | <b>-44.99**</b><br>(20.53) | -3.664<br>(2.855)           | -3.899<br>(2.826)          |
| Electoral Volatility            |                          |                          | 0.001<br>(0.029)         |                         | -0.044<br>(0.028)          | -0.416<br>(0.328)           | <b>-0.0501*</b><br>(0.028) |
| Democratic Age(logged)          |                          |                          |                          | -0.0908<br>(0.483)      | 0.989<br>(0.872)           | 0.878<br>(0.848)            | 1.403<br>(3.516)           |
| Satisfaction with Democracy*    |                          |                          |                          |                         | <b>16.82**</b>             |                             |                            |
| Party System Inflation          |                          |                          |                          |                         | <b>(8.233)</b>             |                             |                            |
| Satisfaction with Democracy*    |                          |                          |                          |                         |                            | <b>0.15</b>                 |                            |
| Electoral Volatility            |                          |                          |                          |                         |                            | <b>(0.135)</b>              |                            |
| Satisfaction with Democracy*    |                          |                          |                          |                         |                            |                             | <b>-0.201</b>              |
| Democratic Age(logged)          |                          |                          |                          |                         |                            |                             | <b>(1.431)</b>             |
| Political Constraints Index     | -0.055<br>(0.321)        | 0.309<br>(0.5)           | -0.045<br>(0.36)         | -0.046<br>(0.33)        | -0.551<br>(0.389)          | -0.486<br>(0.407)           | -0.543<br>(0.389)          |
| Real GDP per Capita(in 1,000s)  | -0.003<br>(0.029)        | 0.009<br>(0.069)         | 0.008<br>(0.044)         | 0.001<br>(0.0409)       | -0.072<br>(0.065)          | -0.074<br>(0.067)           | -0.067<br>(0.07)           |
| Ideology of Government          | -1.553<br>(2.486)        | -4.958<br>(3.606)        | -0.255<br>(2.583)        | -1.6<br>(2.508)         | 2.076<br>(2.265)           | 1.901<br>(2.007)            | 1.769<br>(1.995)           |
| Constant                        | -0.706<br>(2.345)        | 2.587<br>(4.672)         | -1.782<br>(3.094)        | -0.611<br>(2.355)       | 1.695<br>(4.354)           | 3.419<br>(6.111)            | -2.626<br>(10.65)          |
| <b>Party-Centred Reform</b>     |                          |                          |                          |                         |                            |                             |                            |
| Satisfaction with Democracy     | <b>-1.396</b><br>(1.468) | <b>-2.86</b><br>(3.146)  | <b>-1.1</b><br>(1.603)   | <b>-1.44</b><br>(1.501) | <b>-5.009</b><br>(3.643)   | <b>-8.865***</b><br>(2.941) | <b>278.0**</b><br>(135.4)  |
| Party System Inflation          |                          | -1.315<br>(1.725)        |                          |                         | -14.38<br>(11.31)          | -1.133<br>(1.856)           | <b>-50.95*</b><br>(28.8)   |
| Electoral Volatility            |                          |                          | 0.003<br>(0.013)         |                         | 0.101<br>(0.0709)          | <b>-0.669**</b><br>(0.293)  | 0.279*<br>(0.169)          |
| Democratic Age(logged)          |                          |                          |                          | 0.233<br>(0.47)         | -0.563<br>(0.556)          | -0.762<br>(0.63)            | 211.4**<br>(103.1)         |

|                                |          |           |          |          |                |                 |                 |
|--------------------------------|----------|-----------|----------|----------|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Satisfaction with Democracy*   |          |           |          |          | <b>5.67</b>    |                 |                 |
| Party System Inflation         |          |           |          |          | <b>(4.983)</b> |                 |                 |
| Satisfaction with Democracy*   |          |           |          |          |                | <b>0.316***</b> |                 |
| Electoral Volatility           |          |           |          |          |                | <b>(0.107)</b>  |                 |
| Satisfaction with Democracy*   |          |           |          |          |                |                 | <b>-79.22**</b> |
| Democratic Age(logged)         |          |           |          |          |                |                 | <b>(38.18)</b>  |
| Political Constraints Index    | 0.365    | -0.362    | 0.449    | 0.351    | -0.521         | -0.387          | -0.012          |
|                                | (0.416)  | (0.829)   | (0.497)  | (0.436)  | (0.916)        | (1.307)         | (0.95)          |
| Real GDP per Capita(in 1,000s) | 0.014    | 0.131     | 0.023    | -0.004   | 0.378*         | 0.464**         | -0.297**        |
|                                | (0.057)  | (0.15)    | (0.063)  | (0.056)  | (0.212)        | (0.222)         | (0.149)         |
| Ideology of Government         | -2.131** | -4.579    | -2.235   | -2.035** | -10.25*        | -11.52*         | -42.90*         |
|                                | (1.041)  | (2.927)   | (1.406)  | (1.037)  | (5.27)         | (5.901)         | (23.15)         |
| Constant                       | -0.123   | 2.999     | -1.207   | -0.413   | 5.681          | 14.67***        | -735.1**        |
|                                | (3.182)  | (6.008)   | (3.625)  | (2.805)  | (4.934)        | (3.826)         | (360.7)         |
| N (Observations)               | 867      | 571       | 847      | 867      | 588            | 561             | 588             |
| Chi <sup>2</sup>               | 38.90*** | 101.32*** | 47.93*** | 39.42*** | 181.67***      | 196.51***       |                 |
| Pseudo-R <sup>2</sup>          | 0.07     | 0.21      | 0.06     | 0.07     | 0.22           | 0.24            | 0.36            |

*Note:* The dependent variable takes value 0 if there is no reform or the reform that takes place has an ambiguous impact in the intraparty dimension; 1 if it is supposed to produce more incentives to cultivate a personal vote; and 2 if it is supposed to produce fewer incentives to cultivate a personal vote. Cluster standard errors by terms in parentheses. \* Significant at 0.10; \*\* Significant at 0.05; \*\*\* Significant at 0.01 (two-tailed tests). The counter of stability years and the cubic splines are included but not shown.



**Table A3.2. Determinants of electoral reform in the intraparty dimension: Discrete time duration models/Binary times-series cross-section models (III)**

| VARIABLES                    | Model 1                    | Model 2                  | Model 3                  | Model 4                  | Model 5                  | Model 6                  | Model 7                    |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| Candidate-Centred Reform     | coefficient<br>(se)        | coefficient<br>(se)      | coefficient<br>(se)      | coefficient<br>(se)      | coefficient<br>(se)      | coefficient<br>(se)      | coefficient<br>(se)        |
| Satisfaction with Democracy  | <b>-1.301*</b><br>(0.735)  | <b>-1.056</b><br>(1.379) | <b>-0.864</b><br>(0.995) | <b>-1.08</b><br>(0.949)  | <b>-1.738</b><br>(1.462) | <b>-1.813</b><br>(1.68)  | <b>0.391</b><br>(3.872)    |
| Party System Inflation       |                            | -0.501<br>(1.361)        |                          |                          | -21.86<br>(18.31)        | -2.997<br>(2.169)        | -2.667<br>(2.058)          |
| Electoral Volatility         |                            |                          | 0.027<br>(0.024)         |                          | -0.011<br>(0.026)        | -0.113<br>(0.163)        | -0.0105<br>(0.023)         |
| Democratic Age(logged)       |                            |                          |                          | -0.155<br>(0.431)        | 0.307<br>(0.657)         | 0.421<br>(0.681)         | 1.259<br>(2.908)           |
| Satisfaction with Democracy* |                            |                          |                          |                          | <b>8.039</b><br>(8.008)  |                          |                            |
| Party System Inflation       |                            |                          |                          |                          |                          | <b>0.045</b><br>(0.068)  |                            |
| Satisfaction with Democracy* |                            |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          | <b>-0.401</b><br>(1.207)   |
| Electoral Volatility         |                            |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                            |
| Satisfaction with Democracy* |                            |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                            |
| Democratic Age(logged)       |                            |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                            |
| Constant                     | -1.161<br>(1.738)          | -1.51<br>(3.329)         | -3.905<br>(3.068)        | -1.291<br>(1.792)        | -0.146<br>(3.751)        | -0.301<br>(4.013)        | -5.256<br>(8.885)          |
| <b>Party-Centred Reform</b>  |                            |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                            |
| Satisfaction with Democracy  | <b>-1.857**</b><br>(0.935) | <b>-1.788</b><br>(1.82)  | <b>-1.121</b><br>(1.445) | <b>-1.292</b><br>(1.431) | <b>-2.506</b><br>(4.316) | <b>-4.116</b><br>(4.191) | <b>126.3**</b><br>(49.36)  |
| Party System Inflation       |                            | 0.016<br>(1.441)         |                          |                          | -5.905<br>(11.59)        | -0.703<br>(2.895)        | -3.896<br>(3.507)          |
| Electoral Volatility         |                            |                          | 0.019<br>(0.021)         |                          | 0.025<br>(0.033)         | -0.186<br>(0.139)        | 0.179**<br>(0.088)         |
| Democratic Age(logged)       |                            |                          |                          | -0.428<br>(0.529)        | 0.533<br>(1.747)         | 0.853<br>(1.759)         | 96.14**<br>(38.36)         |
| Satisfaction with Democracy* |                            |                          |                          |                          | <b>2.56</b><br>(5.478)   |                          |                            |
| Party System Inflation       |                            |                          |                          |                          |                          | <b>0.096*</b><br>(0.056) |                            |
| Satisfaction with Democracy* |                            |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                            |
| Electoral Volatility         |                            |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                            |
| Satisfaction with Democracy* |                            |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          | <b>-38.39**</b><br>(15.62) |
| Democratic Age(logged)       |                            |                          |                          |                          |                          |                          |                            |
| Constant                     | 0.32<br>(2.077)            | 0.164<br>(4.641)         | -2.88<br>(4.046)         | -0.047<br>(2.415)        | -0.809<br>(6.139)        | 1.794<br>(7.135)         | -338.4**<br>(132.1)        |

|                       |        |          |         |       |           |           |           |
|-----------------------|--------|----------|---------|-------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| N (Observations)      | 927    | 552      | 893     | 927   | 560       | 528       | 560       |
| Chi <sup>2</sup>      | 16.43* | 89.00*** | 22.92** | 17.76 | 119.75*** | 175.90*** | 415.82*** |
| Pseudo-R <sup>2</sup> | 0.07   | 0.15     | 0.07    | 0.07  | 0.15      | 0.16      | 0.29      |

*Note:* The dependent variable takes value 0 if there is no reform or the reform that takes place has an ambiguous impact in the intraparty dimension; 1 if it is supposed to produce more incentives to cultivate a personal vote; and 2 if it is supposed to produce fewer incentives to cultivate a personal vote. Cluster standard errors by terms in parentheses. \* Significant at 0.10; \*\* Significant at 0.05; \*\*\* Significant at 0.01 (two-tailed tests). The counter of stability years and the cubic splines are included but not shown.

**Table A3.3. Determinants of electoral reform in the intraparty dimension: Semiparametric duration models/Cox models**

| VARIABLES                    | Model 1                     |                          | Model 2                  |                          | Model 3                  |                       | Model 4                  |                         | Model 5                  |                         | Model 6                 |                          | Model 7                 |                            |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|
|                              | Candidate<br>-Centred       | Party-<br>Centred        | Candidate<br>-Centred    | Party-<br>Centred        | Candidate<br>-Centred    | Party-<br>Centred     | Candidate<br>-Centred    | Party-<br>Centred       | Candidate<br>-Centred    | Party-<br>Centred       | Candidate<br>-Centred   | Party-<br>Centred        | Candidate<br>-Centred   | Party-<br>Centred          |
| Satisfaction with Democracy  | <b>-1.875***</b><br>(0.657) | <b>-0.576</b><br>(0.865) | <b>-1.637</b><br>(1.122) | <b>-1.201</b><br>(1.455) | <b>-1.192</b><br>(0.771) | <b>0.6</b><br>(1.137) | <b>-1.336</b><br>(0.844) | <b>0.548</b><br>(0.986) | <b>-2.816</b><br>(1.742) | <b>-0.762</b><br>(2.13) | <b>-2.12</b><br>(2.433) | <b>-4.512</b><br>(3.687) | <b>-0.731</b><br>(2.28) | <b>15.26***</b><br>(7.097) |
| Party System Inflation       |                             | 1.121***<br>(0.423)      |                          | -1.352<br>(2.198)        |                          |                       |                          |                         | -6.518<br>(9.304)        | 8.46<br>(18.41)         | 1.183*<br>(0.615)       | -1.097<br>(1.966)        | 1.208**<br>(0.604)      | -6.038<br>(5.288)          |
| Electoral Volatility         |                             |                          |                          | 0.032***<br>(0.012)      | 0.019<br>(0.017)         |                       |                          |                         | 0.006<br>-0.026          | 0.021<br>-0.026         | 0.002<br>(0.269)        | -0.263<br>(0.26)         | 0.008<br>(0.026)        | 0.04<br>(0.044)            |
| Democratic Age(logged)       |                             |                          |                          |                          |                          |                       | -0.008<br>(0.008)        | -0.019*<br>(0.0108)     | 0.007<br>(0.011)         | 0.004<br>(0.016)        | 0.005<br>(0.011)        | 0.005<br>(0.016)         | 0.087<br>(0.099)        | 0.984***<br>(0.386)        |
| Satisfaction with Democracy* |                             |                          |                          |                          |                          |                       |                          |                         | <b>3.507</b>             | <b>-4.518</b>           |                         |                          |                         |                            |
| Party System Inflation       |                             |                          |                          |                          |                          |                       |                          |                         | <b>(4.217)</b>           | <b>(8.933)</b>          |                         |                          |                         |                            |
| Satisfaction with Democracy* |                             |                          |                          |                          |                          |                       |                          |                         |                          |                         | <b>0.001</b>            | <b>0.126</b>             |                         |                            |
| Electoral Volatility         |                             |                          |                          |                          |                          |                       |                          |                         |                          |                         | <b>(0.115)</b>          | <b>(0.114)</b>           |                         |                            |
| Satisfaction with Democracy* |                             |                          |                          |                          |                          |                       |                          |                         |                          |                         |                         |                          | <b>-0.031</b>           | <b>-0.401***</b>           |
| Democratic Age(logged)       |                             |                          |                          |                          |                          |                       |                          |                         |                          |                         |                         |                          | <b>(0.0377)</b>         | <b>(0.158)</b>             |
| Ln(L)                        | -130.49                     | -77.61                   | -49.51                   | -22.38                   | -115.94                  | -60.66                | -129.97                  | -75.51                  | -41.165                  | -21.69                  | -41.52                  | -21.18                   | -41.16                  | -15.86                     |
| Number of Observations       | 332                         | 332                      | 172                      | 172                      | 322                      | 322                   | 332                      | 332                     | 168                      | 168                     | 168                     | 168                      | 168                     | 168                        |
| Number of Failures           | 26                          | 17                       | 11                       | 6                        | 26                       | 14                    | 26                       | 17                      | 11                       | 6                       | 11                      | 6                        | 11                      | 6                          |

*Note:* The dependent variable takes value 0 if there is no reform or the reform that takes place has an ambiguous impact in the intraparty dimension; 1 if it is supposed to produce more incentives to cultivate a personal vote; and 2 if it is supposed to produce fewer incentives to cultivate a personal vote. \* Significant at 0.10; \*\* Significant at 0.05; \*\*\* Significant at 0.01 (two-tailed tests).

**Table A3.4. Determinants of electoral reform in the intraparty dimension: Discrete time duration models/Binary times-series cross-section models (IV)**

| VARIABLES                       | Model 1                          | Model 2                         | Model 3                         | Model 4                         | Model 5                          | Model 6                         | Model 7                          |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|
|                                 | coefficient<br>(se)              | coefficient<br>(se)             | coefficient<br>(se)             | coefficient<br>(se)             | coefficient<br>(se)              | coefficient<br>(se)             | coefficient<br>(se)              |
| <b>Candidate-Centred Reform</b> |                                  |                                 |                                 |                                 |                                  |                                 |                                  |
| Satisfaction with Democracy     | <b>-0.766</b><br><b>(0.564)</b>  | <b>-1.138</b><br><b>(1.195)</b> | <b>-0.663</b><br><b>(0.746)</b> | <b>-0.845</b><br><b>(0.691)</b> | <b>-2.444*</b><br><b>(1.331)</b> | <b>-2.498</b><br><b>(1.669)</b> | <b>0.864</b><br><b>(2.533)</b>   |
| Party System Inflation          |                                  | -1.431<br>(1.957)               |                                 |                                 | -34.54<br>(22.05)                | -3.995<br>(3.094)               | -3.809<br>(2.774)                |
| Electoral Volatility            |                                  |                                 | 0.011<br>(0.021)                |                                 | -0.007<br>(0.028)                | -0.17<br>(0.212)                | -0.006<br>(0.026)                |
| Democratic Age(logged)          |                                  |                                 |                                 | 0.0624<br>(0.325)               | 0.646<br>(0.451)                 | 0.62<br>(0.443)                 | 2.155<br>(1.871)                 |
| Satisfaction with Democracy*    |                                  |                                 |                                 |                                 | <b>12.72</b>                     |                                 |                                  |
| Party System Inflation          |                                  |                                 |                                 |                                 | <b>(9.036)</b>                   |                                 |                                  |
| Satisfaction with Democracy*    |                                  |                                 |                                 |                                 |                                  | <b>0.069</b>                    |                                  |
| Electoral Volatility            |                                  |                                 |                                 |                                 |                                  | <b>(0.083)</b>                  |                                  |
| Satisfaction with Democracy*    |                                  |                                 |                                 |                                 |                                  |                                 | <b>-0.645</b>                    |
| Democratic Age(logged)          |                                  |                                 |                                 |                                 |                                  |                                 | <b>(0.798)</b>                   |
| Constant                        | -1.411<br>(1.31)                 | 1<br>(2.807)                    | -2.299<br>(2.547)               | -1.375<br>(1.343)               | 2.241<br>(3.414)                 | 2.572<br>(4.078)                | -5.485<br>(5.512)                |
| <b>Party-Centred Reform</b>     |                                  |                                 |                                 |                                 |                                  |                                 |                                  |
| Satisfaction with Democracy     | <b>-1.515*</b><br><b>(0.854)</b> | <b>-2.869*</b><br><b>(1.47)</b> | <b>-0.958</b><br><b>(1.183)</b> | <b>-1.402</b><br><b>(1.17)</b>  | <b>-3.29</b><br><b>(2.993)</b>   | <b>-5.594</b><br><b>(3.646)</b> | <b>43.90**</b><br><b>(18.65)</b> |
| Party System Inflation          |                                  | -0.386<br>(0.847)               |                                 |                                 | -0.769<br>(7.74)                 | -1.138<br>(1.521)               | -1.942<br>(1.284)                |
| Electoral Volatility            |                                  |                                 | 0.026<br>(0.019)                |                                 | 0.063*<br>(0.035)                | -0.013<br>(0.104)               | 0.0840***<br>(0.025)             |
| Democratic Age(logged)          |                                  |                                 |                                 | -0.098<br>(0.394)               | 1.286<br>(1.278)                 | 1.607<br>(1.482)                | 34.30**<br>(13.67)               |
| Satisfaction with Democracy*    |                                  |                                 |                                 |                                 | <b>-0.064</b>                    |                                 |                                  |
| Party System Inflation          |                                  |                                 |                                 |                                 | <b>(3.776)</b>                   |                                 |                                  |
| Satisfaction with Democracy*    |                                  |                                 |                                 |                                 |                                  | <b>0.0901*</b>                  |                                  |
| Electoral Volatility            |                                  |                                 |                                 |                                 |                                  | <b>(0.053)</b>                  |                                  |
| Satisfaction with Democracy*    |                                  |                                 |                                 |                                 |                                  |                                 | <b>-13.66**</b>                  |
| Democratic Age(logged)          |                                  |                                 |                                 |                                 |                                  |                                 | <b>(5.861)</b>                   |
| Constant                        | 0.329<br>(2.105)                 | 2.838<br>(3.653)                | -2.845<br>(3.554)               | 0.281<br>(2.249)                | -2.435<br>(4.996)                | 1.467<br>(5.252)                | -120.0***<br>(45.7)              |

|                       |          |          |          |          |          |          |           |
|-----------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|
| N (Observations)      | 1,166    | 679      | 1,123    | 1,166    | 690      | 658      | 690       |
| Chi <sup>2</sup>      | 25.70*** | 53.86*** | 34.01*** | 29.31*** | 71.51*** | 62.56*** | 155.76*** |
| Pseudo-R <sup>2</sup> | 0.05     | 0.109    | 0.04     | 0.05     | 0.13     | 0.14     | 0.21      |

*Note:* The dependent variable takes value 0 if there is no reform or the reform that takes place has an ambiguous impact in the intraparty dimension; 1 if it is supposed to produce more incentives to cultivate a personal vote; and 2 if it is supposed to produce fewer incentives to cultivate a personal vote. Cluster standard errors by terms in parentheses. \* Significant at 0.10; \*\* Significant at 0.05; \*\*\* Significant at 0.01 (two-tailed tests). I include  $t$ ,  $t^2$  and  $t^3$  but they are not shown.

**Table A3.5. Determinants of electoral reform in the intraparty dimension: Discrete time duration models/Binary times-series cross-section models (V)**

| VARIABLES                   | Model 1                           | Model 2                           | Model 3                          | Model 4                           | Model 5                           | Model 6                           | Model 7                         |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Candidate-Centred Reform    | coefficient<br>(se)               | coefficient<br>(se)               | coefficient<br>(se)              | coefficient<br>(se)               | coefficient<br>(se)               | coefficient<br>(se)               | Coefficient<br>(se)             |
| Corruption                  | <b>0.334</b><br><b>(0.257)</b>    | <b>0.647</b><br><b>(0.53)</b>     | <b>0.024</b><br><b>(0.395)</b>   | <b>0.228</b><br><b>(0.37)</b>     | <b>1.062</b><br><b>(0.763)</b>    | <b>1.592</b><br><b>(1.06)</b>     | <b>-6.908</b><br><b>(4.48)</b>  |
| Party System Inflation      |                                   | -5.159<br>(4.579)                 |                                  |                                   | -9.237<br>(8.033)                 | -6.482<br>(5.289)                 | -6.738<br>(4.716)               |
| Electoral Volatility        |                                   |                                   | 0.031<br>(0.019)                 |                                   | -0.008<br>(0.0303)                | 0.004<br>(0.026)                  | 0.001<br>(0.026)                |
| Democratic Age(logged)      |                                   |                                   |                                  | -0.267<br>(0.345)                 | 0.083<br>(0.5)                    | 0.449<br>(0.48)                   | 0.957<br>(0.786)                |
| Corruption*                 |                                   |                                   |                                  |                                   | <b>-8.733</b><br><b>(6.477)</b>   |                                   |                                 |
| Party System Inflation      |                                   |                                   |                                  |                                   |                                   |                                   |                                 |
| Corruption*                 |                                   |                                   |                                  |                                   |                                   | <b>-0.035</b><br><b>(0.035)</b>   |                                 |
| Electoral Volatility        |                                   |                                   |                                  |                                   |                                   |                                   |                                 |
| Corruption*                 |                                   |                                   |                                  |                                   |                                   |                                   | <b>2.233*</b><br><b>(1.181)</b> |
| Democratic Age(logged)      |                                   |                                   |                                  |                                   |                                   |                                   |                                 |
| Constant                    | -3.704***<br>(0.466)              | -2.263***<br>(0.683)              | -5.289***<br>(1.21)              | -2.996***<br>(1.056)              | -1.993<br>(2.203)                 | -3.449*<br>(1.909)                | -5.419<br>(3.498)               |
| <b>Party-Centred Reform</b> |                                   |                                   |                                  |                                   |                                   |                                   |                                 |
| Corruption                  | <b>1.399***</b><br><b>(0.504)</b> | <b>3.836***</b><br><b>(0.696)</b> | <b>1.306**</b><br><b>(0.554)</b> | <b>1.378***</b><br><b>(0.502)</b> | <b>8.125**</b><br><b>(4.031)</b>  | <b>29.92***</b><br><b>(8.966)</b> | <b>-38.49</b><br><b>(33.31)</b> |
| Party System Inflation      |                                   | 0.613<br>(1.241)                  |                                  |                                   | 3.715**<br>(1.877)                | 2.144<br>(1.819)                  | 2.611<br>(1.835)                |
| Electoral Volatility        |                                   |                                   | 0.0502***<br>(0.018)             |                                   | 0.164***<br>(0.057)               | 0.480***<br>(0.12)                | 0.467*<br>(0.244)               |
| Democratic Age(logged)      |                                   |                                   |                                  | -0.136<br>(0.332)                 | -1.395<br>(1.089)                 | -4.574***<br>(1.382)              | -16.84<br>(11)                  |
| Corruption*                 |                                   |                                   |                                  |                                   | <b>-8.365**</b><br><b>(3.995)</b> |                                   |                                 |
| Party System Inflation      |                                   |                                   |                                  |                                   |                                   |                                   |                                 |
| Corruption*                 |                                   |                                   |                                  |                                   |                                   | <b>-0.328**</b><br><b>(0.132)</b> |                                 |
| Electoral Volatility        |                                   |                                   |                                  |                                   |                                   |                                   |                                 |
| Corruption*                 |                                   |                                   |                                  |                                   |                                   |                                   | <b>21.05</b><br><b>(15.34)</b>  |
| Democratic Age(logged)      |                                   |                                   |                                  |                                   |                                   |                                   |                                 |
| Constant                    | -4.183***<br>(0.518)              | -7.142***<br>(0.98)               | -6.785***<br>(1.327)             | -3.825***<br>(0.99)               | -20.13**<br>(8.267)               | -36.90***<br>(9.213)              | -22.92<br>(16.69)               |

|                       |          |           |          |          |           |           |           |
|-----------------------|----------|-----------|----------|----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| N (Observations)      | 937      | 406       | 917      | 937      | 406       | 391       | 406       |
| Chi <sup>2</sup>      | 25.40*** | 365.55*** | 34.47*** | 34.65*** | 263.80*** | 277.15*** | 365.14*** |
| Pseudo-R <sup>2</sup> | 0.07     | 0.25      | 0.12     | 0.07     | 0.36      | 0.39      | 0.42      |

*Note:* The dependent variable takes value 0 if there is no reform or the reform that takes place has an ambiguous impact in the intraparty dimension; 1 if it is supposed to produce more incentives to cultivate a personal vote; and 2 if it is supposed to produce fewer incentives to cultivate a personal vote. Cluster standard errors by terms in parentheses. \* Significant at 0.10; \*\* Significant at 0.05; \*\*\* Significant at 0.01 (two-tailed tests). The counter of stability years and the cubic splines are included but not shown.





#### **Appendix 4. The politics of electoral reform from a micro-perspective**

In the following paragraphs, I will describe more in depth each of these paired comparisons of cases. Table A4.1 offers some relevant data on the selected cases.

*Lithuania and Ukraine.* On March 2004, the Ukrainian Rada passed a new electoral law according to which all 450 members of parliament would be elected from party lists from then onwards (Hesli 2007). The system that had been in place during the two previous elections in Ukraine differed little from the mixed-member majoritarian (MMM) system used in Lithuania since its first democratic election in 1992 (Mikkel and Pettai 2004): one half of the seats is elected in single-member constituencies, and the other half is nationally allocated to parties. And although both former Soviet Union republics adopted a semi-presidential type of regime in the aftermath of the fall of communism (Elgie 1999), some of the differences in the institutional setting of these two countries were significant enough as to help to explain why the mixed electoral system only survived in Lithuania. To put it in few words, electoral rules were not able to structure the party system, and to enable more effective decision-making in Ukraine (Birch et al. 2002). This lack of efficiency was probably one of the factors at the heart of the progressive disappearance of single-member districts in the Ukrainian electoral system.<sup>282</sup> By contrast, the preservation of the mixed system in Lithuania seems to challenge the validity of seat-maximization accounts of electoral reforms: despite the facts that the ruling parties controlled a legislative majority during the first two democratic terms, and were expecting to suffer losses in the immediately following elections, they did not abandon the current electoral system, and pass a more permissive law.

*Argentina and Venezuela.* Since they became democratic for the last time in the twentieth century,<sup>283</sup> a system of closed-lists proportional representation with seats allocation by the D'Hondt formula had been used in these two Latin American countries (Golder 2004). They also

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<sup>282</sup> The mixed system whose abandonment I plan to explain in the future had replaced itself the pure majoritarian rules that had been used in the first democratic election.

<sup>283</sup> According to Cheibub et al. (2009), the last founding elections after an autocratic period took place in 1983 and 1963 in Argentina and Venezuela, respectively.

**Table A4.1. Electoral reforms from a micro-perspective**

| Country   | Year | Previous |           | Type of ER in the interparty dimension | Type of ER in the intraparty dimension |
|-----------|------|----------|-----------|--|--|
|           |      | ES       | New ES    |  |  |
| Ukraine   | 2002 | MMM      | CLPR      | Permissive?                            | Party-centred                          |
| Lithuania | 1992 | MMM      | No reform | X                                      | X                                      |
| Venezuela | 1988 | CLPR     | MMP       | Restrictive?                           | Candidate-centred                      |
| Argentina | 1999 | CLPR     | No reform | X                                      | X                                      |

have in common at least two additional traits: first, presidentialism (Mainwaring and Shugart 1997);<sup>284</sup> and second, the level of institutionalization of the party system (Mainwaring 1995).<sup>285</sup> Finally, the Venezuelan and the Argentinean political system and economy were in disarray by the late 1980s and 1990s, respectively (Crisp and Rey 2001; Negretto 2004). These big similarities notwithstanding, a mixed-member proportional (MMP) system was only adopted in Venezuela just before the 1993 election. Why did not Argentinean incumbents attempt to change electoral rules just like Venezuelan did?

<sup>284</sup> They significantly differ, however, in the constellations of presidential powers over legislation attributed by the Constitution because Argentinean heads of state are by far stronger than Venezuelan.

<sup>285</sup> In this scholars' view, we are in front of two relatively well-institutionalized party systems.

## **Appendix 5. Generational replacement or sophisticated learning? On the causal mechanisms explaining changes in voting behavior after an electoral reform**

In the near future, I plan to address this second set of questions adopting two different research designs. First of all, working with Mark Franklin, I will try to delve into the mechanism driving the effect of electoral reforms on the evolution of party systems and the change in voters' behaviour.<sup>286</sup> We will examine this impact particularly in terms of its timing in both the interparty and the intraparty dimensions of electoral systems.<sup>287</sup> We will do so by exploiting the data on electoral reforms in 60 contemporary democracies that I have already collected for this dissertation. If these effects are driven by generational replacement, their magnitude should augment linearly as the number of elections after the reform increases. If they reflect actors' learning about the operation of the new rules, they should cease to increase after a given quite small number of elections and should be decisively affected by the citizenry's average level of political knowledge.

Figure A5.1 shows the evolution of the effective number of electoral parties in two countries where a restrictive and a permissive electoral reform is adopted, respectively (i.e., France in 1958 and New Zealand in 1993). As can be seen, party system fragmentation at the electoral level sharply decreases as a result of the introduction of the majority two-round system in France in 1958 (Duverger 1986). By contrast, the adoption of the mixed-member proportional system does not have the expected positive impact on the effective number of electoral parties in New Zealand in 1993 (more on this case below). Conversely, Figure A5.2 shows exactly the opposite: electoral disproportionality behaves as expected after the New Zealand reform in the 1990s but not in France in the late 1950s. Figure A5.3 displays an idealized and simplified picture of the evolution over time of the effective number of electoral parties in response to the adoption of a permissive reform in a given country according to different theories; and, finally, Figure A5.4 illustrates the expected effect on this same index when a restrictive reform is adopted.

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<sup>286</sup> This paper will be presented in the upcoming annual meetings of the Midwest Political Science Association (Chicago, April 2013).

<sup>287</sup> In the next paragraphs, I will only focus on the interparty dimension.

**Figure A5.1. Party system fragmentation at the electoral level, France (1945-1981) and New Zealand (1946-2008)**

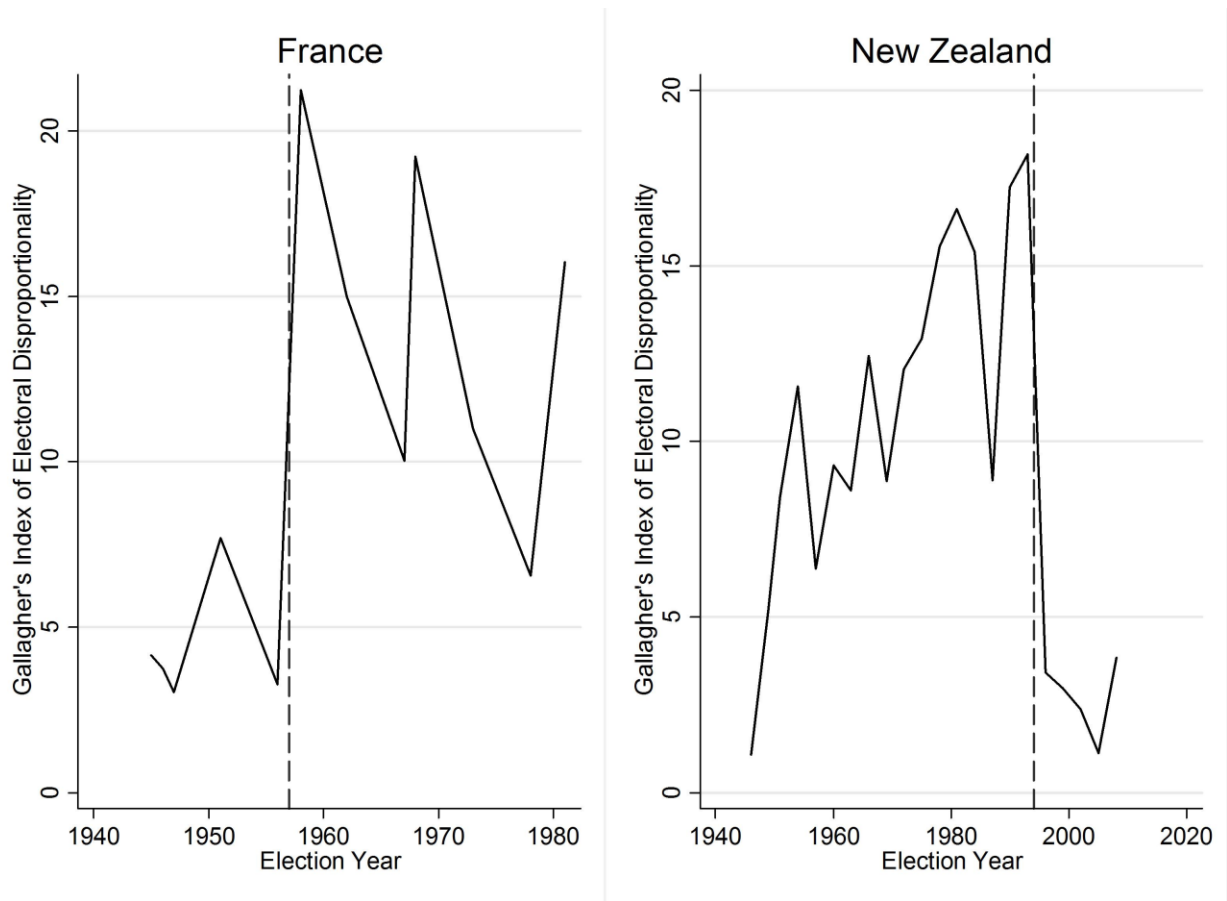


*Note:* A restrictive electoral reform takes place in France in 1958 and a permissive electoral reform takes place in New Zealand in 1993. Party system fragmentation at the electoral level is captured with Laakso and Taagepera's (1979) effective number of electoral parties. To be more precise, the formula is:

$$ENEP = \frac{1}{n \sum_{i=1} p_i^2}$$

where  $p_i$  is the percentage of votes obtained by party  $i$ . The *source* is Golder (2004) complemented by Gallagher's dataset ([www.tcd.ie/Political\\_Science/Staff/Michael.Gallagher/EISystems/index.php](http://www.tcd.ie/Political_Science/Staff/Michael.Gallagher/EISystems/index.php)).

**Figure A5.2. Electoral disproportionality, France (1945-1981) and New Zealand (1946-2008)**



*Note:* A restrictive electoral reform takes place in France in 1958 and a permissive electoral reform takes place in New Zealand in 1993. Electoral disproportionality is calculated according to the following formula:

*Disproportionality Index (DI)* =  $\sqrt{\frac{1}{2} \sum (v_i^2 - s_i^2)^2}$ , where  $v_i$  is the percentage of vote obtained by party  $i$  and  $s_i$  is the percentage of seats obtained by party  $i$ . This index can range from 0 to 100 (Gallagher 1991). The source is Gallagher's dataset ([www.tcd.ie/Political\\_Science/Staff/Michael.Gallagher/EISystems/index.php](http://www.tcd.ie/Political_Science/Staff/Michael.Gallagher/EISystems/index.php)).

**Figure A5.3. Expected long-term evolution of the effective number of electoral parties following a permissive electoral reform**

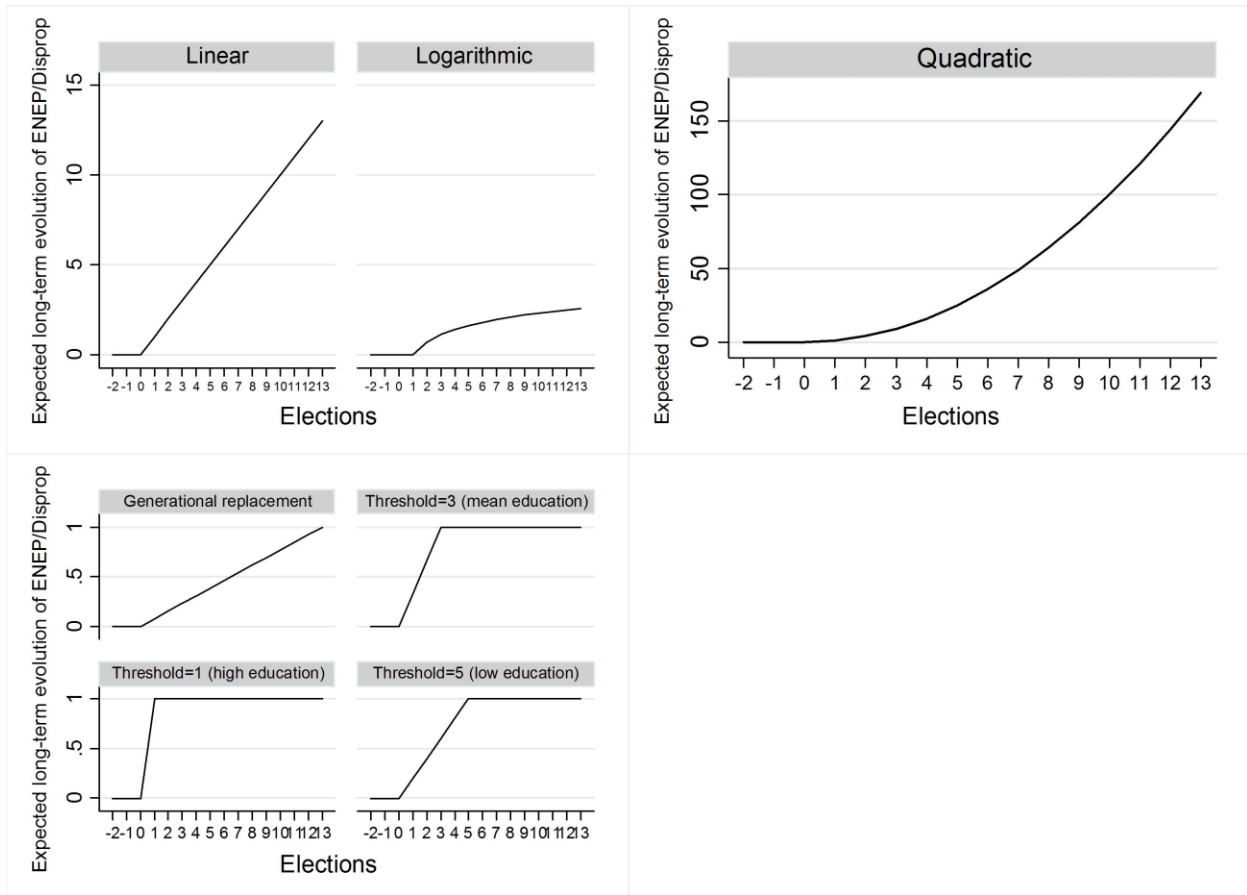
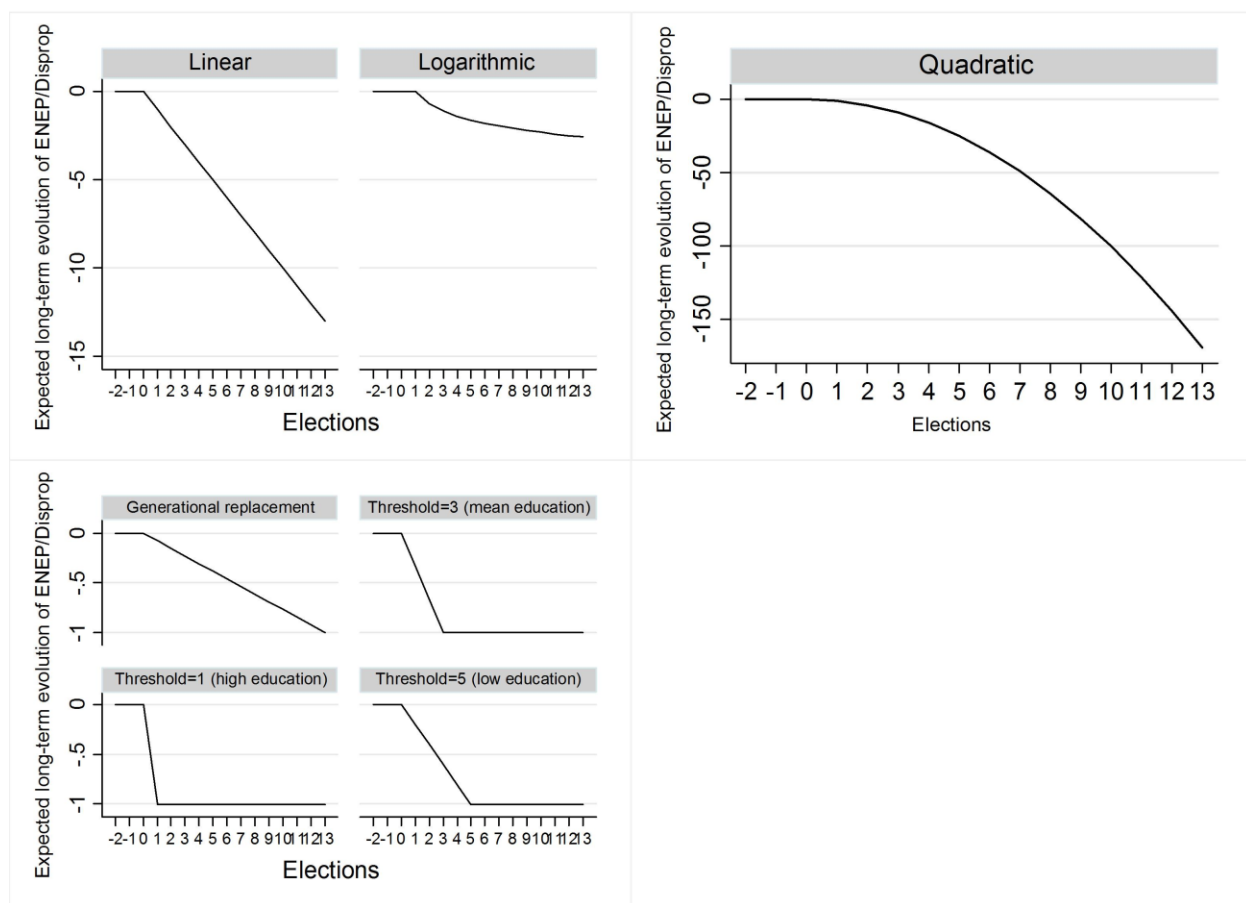


Table A5.1 contains six models showing the effects over time of electoral reforms on changes in the effective number of electoral parties. All of these models are corrected for time-series dependencies by bringing a lagged dependent variable into play and appear to vindicate the idea that incorporating a temporal dimension could help to understand the effects of electoral reforms. However, this is only true for restrictive electoral system changes. None of the coefficients regarding permissive reforms reaches significance at traditional levels of statistical confidence. Particularly interesting are the findings in the model concerning the generational replacement mechanism (i.e., model 6). In this model we see how restrictive reforms have the expected negative effect on the effective number of electoral parties only just after the institutional change (i.e., when the proportion of new electorate is zero or close to zero). The coefficient of the constitutive term *Restrictive Reform* is -0.492 and is statistically significant at

**Figure A5.4. Expected long-term evolution of the effective number of electoral parties following a restrictive electoral reform**



the 10% meaning by that that the effective number of electoral parties decreases by almost half a party in the immediately first election after the restrictive reform. This effect gets increasingly smaller until it becomes statistically insignificant as the cohorts socialized under the old electoral system are progressively replaced by new ones.

Models in Table A5.2 test whether the effects of reforms over time differ across levels of human development. In order to do so, I run the previous Models 1, 2 and 4 in low (new Models 1, 3 and 5) and high-developed (new Models 2, 4 and 6) cases.<sup>288</sup> With no exception, models that estimate the effects of reforms in high-developed countries are well behaved and vary over time.

<sup>288</sup> Those cases whose human development index is above the median are considered high-developed whereas those whose score is below the median are considered low-developed.

**Table A5.1. Effects of electoral reforms on party system fragmentation at the electoral level over time, new and established democracies (1945-2010)**

| Independent Variables            | Model 1                          | Model 2                         | Model 3                          | Model 4                       | Model 5                        | Model 6                        |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
|                                  | coefficient<br>(se)              | coefficient<br>(se)             | coefficient<br>(se)              | coefficient<br>(se)           | coefficient<br>(se)            | coefficient<br>(se)            |
| Δ ENEP (t-1)                     | -0.09<br>(0.05)                  | -0.09<br>(0.05)                 | -0.09<br>(0.06)                  | -0.09<br>(0.06)               | -0.09<br>(0.06)                | -0.19**<br>(0.08)              |
| Time after the Reform(logged)    | <b>0.07</b><br><b>(0.11)</b>     |                                 |                                  |                               |                                |                                |
| Time after the Reform            |                                  | <b>0.009</b><br><b>(0.01)</b>   |                                  |                               |                                |                                |
| Time after the Reform(quadratic) |                                  |                                 | <b>0.0002</b><br><b>(0.0004)</b> |                               |                                |                                |
| Threshold 3                      |                                  |                                 |                                  | <b>0.107</b><br><b>(0.14)</b> |                                |                                |
| Threshold 6                      |                                  |                                 |                                  |                               | <b>0.14</b><br><b>(0.14)</b>   |                                |
| Generation                       |                                  |                                 |                                  |                               |                                | <b>-0.13</b><br><b>(0.23)</b>  |
| Permissive Reform                | <b>-0.19</b><br><b>(0.27)</b>    | <b>-0.16</b><br><b>(0.17)</b>   | <b>-0.14</b><br><b>(0.14)</b>    | <b>-0.17</b><br><b>(0.19)</b> | <b>-0.106</b><br><b>(0.15)</b> | <b>-0.12</b><br><b>(0.201)</b> |
| Restrictive Reform               | <b>0.54</b><br><b>(0.37)</b>     | <b>0.4</b><br><b>(0.29)</b>     | <b>0.23</b><br><b>(0.23)</b>     | <b>0.22</b><br><b>(0.24)</b>  | <b>0.15</b><br><b>(0.21)</b>   | <b>-0.49*</b><br><b>(0.25)</b> |
| Permissive*Time(logged)          | <b>0.103</b><br><b>(0.13)</b>    |                                 |                                  |                               |                                |                                |
| Permissive*Time                  |                                  | <b>0.02</b><br><b>(0.02)</b>    |                                  |                               |                                |                                |
| Permissive*Time(quadratic)       |                                  |                                 | <b>0.001</b><br><b>(0.0009)</b>  |                               |                                |                                |
| Permissive*Threshold 3           |                                  |                                 |                                  | <b>0.18</b><br><b>(0.18)</b>  |                                |                                |
| Permissive*Threshold 6           |                                  |                                 |                                  |                               | <b>0.04</b><br><b>(0.18)</b>   |                                |
| Permissive*Generation            |                                  |                                 |                                  |                               |                                | <b>0.04</b><br><b>(0.33)</b>   |
| Restrictive*Time(logged)         | <b>-0.506**</b><br><b>(0.24)</b> |                                 |                                  |                               |                                |                                |
| Restrictive*Time                 |                                  | <b>-0.16**</b><br><b>(0.07)</b> |                                  |                               |                                |                                |
| Restrictive*Time(quadratic)      |                                  |                                 | <b>-0.02**</b><br><b>(0.01)</b>  |                               |                                |                                |



|                         |          |          |          |                |                |               |
|-------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------------|----------------|---------------|
| Restrictive*Threshold 3 |          |          |          | <b>-0.402</b>  |                |               |
|                         |          |          |          | <b>(0.303)</b> |                |               |
| Restrictive*Threshold 6 |          |          |          |                | <b>-0.69**</b> |               |
|                         |          |          |          |                | <b>(0.29)</b>  |               |
| Restrictive*Generation  |          |          |          |                |                | <b>0.64</b>   |
|                         |          |          |          |                |                | <b>(0.53)</b> |
| ENEP                    | -0.29*** | -0.29*** | -0.29*** | -0.28***       | -0.28***       |               |
|                         | (0.06)   | (0.06)   | (0.06)   | (0.06)         | (0.06)         |               |
| Constant                | 1.15***  | 1.24***  | 1.28***  | 1.18***        | 1.201***       | 0.21**        |
|                         | (0.35)   | (0.27)   | (0.26)   | (0.29)         | (0.27)         | (0.12)        |
| N (Observations)        | 585      | 585      | 585      | 585            | 585            | 532           |
| J (Countries)           | 59       | 59       | 59       | 59             | 59             | 57            |
| R <sup>2</sup>          | 0.11     | 0.11     | 0.11     | 0.11           | 0.11           | 0.04          |

*Note:* The dependent variable is the change in Laakso and Taagepera's effective number of electoral parties; all models are random effects with robust standard errors by country in parentheses; \*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1 (two-tailed tests).

To the contrary, the introduction of the number of elections after the occurrence of the reform does not appear to be associated with a modifying number of parties. In a pretty well-connected way, Duverger (1964 [1954]: 228) predicted that his theory would receive slightly less support among non-established democracies, where voters and elites are less likely to have coordinated their expectations about parties/candidates' viability.

**Table A5.2. Effects of electoral reforms on party system fragmentation at the electoral level over time by human development (1945-2010)**

| Independent Variables         | Model 1                       | Model 2                         | Model 3                        | Model 4                           | Model 5                        | Model 6                         |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|
|                               | coefficient<br>(se)           | coefficient<br>(se)             | coefficient<br>(se)            | coefficient<br>(se)               | coefficient<br>(se)            | coefficient<br>(se)             |
| Δ ENEP (t-1)                  | 0.03<br>(0.06)                | -0.18***<br>(0.06)              | 0.03<br>(0.06)                 | -0.18***<br>(0.06)                | 0.03<br>(0.06)                 | -0.21**<br>(0.08)               |
| Time after the Reform(logged) | <b>-0.27</b><br><b>(0.35)</b> | <b>-0.01</b><br><b>(0.17)</b>   |                                |                                   |                                |                                 |
| Time after the Reform         |                               |                                 | <b>-0.05</b><br><b>(0.06)</b>  | <b>-0.005</b><br><b>(0.01)</b>    |                                |                                 |
| Threshold 3                   |                               |                                 |                                |                                   | <b>0.02</b><br><b>(0.31)</b>   | <b>-0.02</b><br><b>(0.12)</b>   |
| Permissive Reform             | <b>-0.91</b><br><b>(0.83)</b> | <b>-0.02</b><br><b>(0.45)</b>   | <b>-0.69</b><br><b>(0.61)</b>  | <b>-0.07</b><br><b>(0.204)</b>    | <b>-0.42</b><br><b>(0.51)</b>  | <b>-0.003</b><br><b>(0.18)</b>  |
| Restrictive Reform            | <b>-0.54</b><br><b>(0.73)</b> | <b>0.46</b><br><b>(0.54)</b>    | <b>-0.42</b><br><b>(0.507)</b> | <b>0.39</b><br><b>(0.44)</b>      | <b>-0.29</b><br><b>(0.405)</b> | <b>0.25</b><br><b>(0.47)</b>    |
| Permissive*Time(logged)       | <b>0.34</b><br><b>(0.39)</b>  | <b>0.003</b><br><b>(0.19)</b>   |                                |                                   |                                |                                 |
| Permissive*Time               |                               |                                 | <b>0.05</b><br><b>(0.07)</b>   | <b>0.005</b><br><b>(0.01)</b>     |                                |                                 |
| Permissive*Threshold 3        |                               |                                 |                                |                                   | <b>0.09</b><br><b>(0.47)</b>   | <b>-0.006</b><br><b>(0.24)</b>  |
| Restrictive*Time(logged)      | <b>0.16</b><br><b>(0.44)</b>  | <b>-0.65**</b><br><b>(0.27)</b> |                                |                                   |                                |                                 |
| Restrictive*Time              |                               |                                 | <b>0.03</b><br><b>(0.11)</b>   | <b>-0.302***</b><br><b>(0.09)</b> |                                |                                 |
| Restrictive*Threshold 3       |                               |                                 |                                |                                   | <b>0.54</b><br><b>(0.64)</b>   | <b>-1.201*</b><br><b>(0.62)</b> |
| ENEP                          | -0.43***<br>(0.07)            | -0.09**<br>(0.04)               | -0.44***<br>(0.07)             | -0.09**<br>(0.04)                 | -0.42***<br>(0.07)             | -0.09**<br>(0.04)               |
| Constant                      | 2.53***<br>(0.85)             | 0.51<br>(0.49)                  | 2.39***<br>(0.66)              | 0.55*<br>(0.28)                   | 2.03***<br>(0.51)              | 0.47**<br>(0.208)               |
| N (Observations)              | 164                           | 163                             | 164                            | 163                               | 164                            | 163                             |
| J (Countries)                 | 48                            | 25                              | 48                             | 25                                | 48                             | 25                              |
| R <sup>2</sup>                | 0.17                          | 0.11                            | 0.17                           | 0.12                              | 0.17                           | 0.13                            |

*Note:* The dependent variable is the change in Laakso and Taagepera's effective number of electoral parties; all models are random effects with robust standard errors by country in parentheses; \*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1 (two-tailed tests).

## **Appendix 6. “Under Capricorn”: Generations, marginality, tactical voting and electoral reform in New Zealand**

After more than eight decades of having consistently used the British system of “first past the post” (FPTP) for parliamentary elections, New Zealand decided to adopt mixed-member proportional (MMP) rules for the 1996 elections. The former system had permanently favoured the two largest parties, since 1936 being National and Labour. The new electoral rules were in turn supposed to help the rest of the parties by fostering their vote shares and increasing the number of MPs they get; and, in fact, they partially did. As can be seen in Table A6.1, the minor parliamentary parties in 1993 (i.e., New Zealand First and Alliance) improved their legislative representation after the electoral system change. And two other new parties (i.e., Act and United Future) obtained seats for the first time. In spite of this considerable increase in the amount of parliamentary fragmentation, major parties kept most of their voters and they only lost about 8 per cent of their vote share. Moreover, if we examine the vote share of the two top parties in each district we will see that major parties almost lost no single vote at the constituency-level. As evidence shows, viable parties at the district-level (i.e., those ranked first and second) barely lost 1% between 1993 and 1996. These numbers suggest that all the changes registered in the New Zealand party system were taking place at the mechanical level. Why voters’ behaviour changed so little after such radical electoral reform? How can we explain the small increase in the appeal of minor parties among New Zealand voters in the 1996 elections? In this appendix, I will argue that the adoption of the MMP system had a small impact on voting behaviour at the aggregate level because only two particular groups of the electorate (i.e., young voters and citizens that lived in safe districts under the former rules) were affected by the reform.

Before going into the analyses, a particular feature of the data requires highlighting. In 1993 (i.e., the last election under the first-past-the-post [FPTP] system), 49 per cent of the youth sample (i.e., those between 18 and 24 years in 1996) were not eligible to vote. To minimize age differences I only focus on those individuals born between 1972 and 1978. In the 1996 general election, there was not voting-age restriction for any of the respondents, since all were older than 18. The interesting variation, however, comes in the 1993 election. Importantly, not all the young

**Table A6.1. 1993 and 1996 election results in New Zealand**

| Parties           | 1993        |           | 1996        |            |
|-------------------|-------------|-----------|-------------|------------|
|                   | Votes       | Seats     | Votes       | Seats      |
| National Party    | 35.05%      | 50        | 33.87%      | 44         |
| Labour Party      | 34.68%      | 45        | 28.19%      | 37         |
| Alliance          | 18.21%      | 2         | 10.10%      | 13         |
| New Zealand First | 8.40%       | 2         | 13.35%      | 17         |
| Other Parties     | 3.66%       | 0         | 7.54%       | 0          |
| Act               |             |           | 6.10%       | 8          |
| United            |             |           | 0.88%       | 1          |
| <b>Total</b>      | <b>100%</b> | <b>99</b> | <b>100%</b> | <b>120</b> |

Source: Electoral Commission website.

surveyed were eligible to vote in 1993. The pattern I exploit here is the fact that about half of them had not reached voting age at the time of that election. Since we have information about their electoral record as provided by the 1996 wave, we can examine the impact of the act of voting in 1993 by distinguishing between those who were eligible to vote in 1993 and those who were not.

This research design provides a very demanding test of the habitual voting theory because, even after a radical episode of electoral reform, the participation in a single given election lead voters to repeat the same behaviour in the following one (under a different electoral system). In effect, as pointed out above, a mixed-member proportional system was adopted in New Zealand in 1993; and Tables A6.2 and A6.3 and Figures A6.1 and A6.2 try to examine whether those young voters that were already eligible in the last election under the previous system are more prone in 1996 to: a) vote for a viable party at the district-level in 1993; b) vote for either the National or the Labour Party; c) or simply participate. Evidence in all of them is at best mixed. The first column in the first table presents the “naïve” model which includes 1993 vote of a viable party as a predictor of 1996 vote for this same party. Following Cox (1997), I consider as viable those parties that end either first or second at the district-level in the previous election. Ignoring unobserved heterogeneity, voting a viable party at the district-level in 1993 appears to exert a very strong impact on the likelihood to keep voting it in 1996.<sup>289</sup>

<sup>289</sup> Note that I do not distinguish between keep voting the same viable party than in 1993 or switch to the other.

**Table A6.2. Using 1993 eligibility as an instrumental variable of voting a major party in 1993 in predicting a vote for a major party in 1996**

| Independent Variables | The impact of 1993 viable on 1996 viable | The impact of 1993 turnout on 1996 viable | The impact of 1993 eligible on 1996 viable (logit) |
|-----------------------|--|---|--|
|                       | coefficient (se)                         | coefficient (se)                          | coefficient (se)                                   |
| Voted Viable 93       | 1.45***<br>(0.09)                        |   |  |
| Voted 93              |  | 0.25**<br>(0.11)                          |  |
| Eligible 93           |  |   | 0.16<br>(0.16)                                     |
| N                     | 3647                                     | 3647                                      | 3647   |

*Note:* Entries are unstandardized coefficients with standard errors in parentheses clustered at the district-level; \*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05 (two-tailed tests).

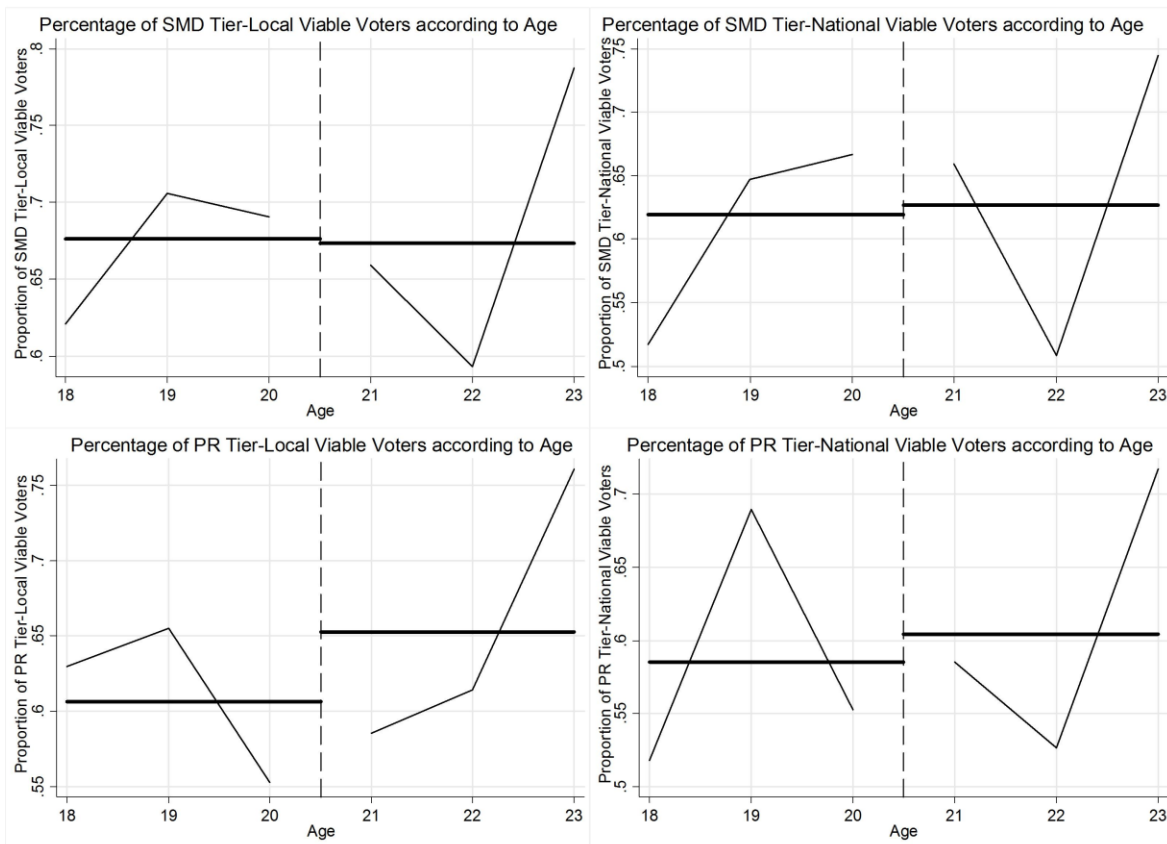
**Table A6.3. Using 1993 eligibility as an instrumental variable of voting a major party in 1993 in predicting a vote for a major party in 1996, restricted sample**

| Independent Variables   | Model 1          | Model 2          | Model 3          | Model 4          | Model 5           | Model 6           |
|-------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
|                         | coefficient (se) | coefficient (se) | coefficient (se) | coefficient (se) | coefficient (se)  | coefficient (se)  |
| Eligibility ( $t - 1$ ) | 0.34<br>(0.3)    | 0.39<br>(0.28)   | 0.14<br>(0.32)   | 0.34<br>(0.28)   | 0.81***<br>(0.28) | 0.83***<br>(0.21) |
| Constant                | 0.36<br>(0.25)   | 0.3<br>(0.23)    | 0.26<br>(0.27)   | 0.26<br>(0.25)   | 0.98<br>(0.24)    | 1.02***<br>(0.23) |
| N                       | 186              | 472              | 186              | 472              | 234               | 564               |
| AIC                     | 246.99           | 612.22           | 256.07           | 623.25           | 235.33            | 494.81            |
| BIC                     | 253.44           | 620.53           | 262.52           | 631.56           | 242.24            | 503.48            |

*Note:* Entries are unstandardized logit coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. The errors are clustered at the district-level. The dependent variable is voting at the PR tier in 1996 for either one of the two viable parties at the district-level in 1993 in the first two models; voting for National or Labour in the third and the fourth models; and just voting in the fifth and sixth models; \*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05 (two-tailed tests).

Unfortunately, the impact of 1993 turnout on 1996 vote for a viable party displayed in the second column is weaker although still statistically significant at the 5% level. Finally, the non-significant effect of 1993 eligibility on 1996 vote for a viable party at the district-level leads me to cast some important doubts about the properties of the research design chosen. Likewise, evidence in Table A6.4 suggests that only 1996 turnout (and not vote for any particular party) is associated with 1993 eligibility.

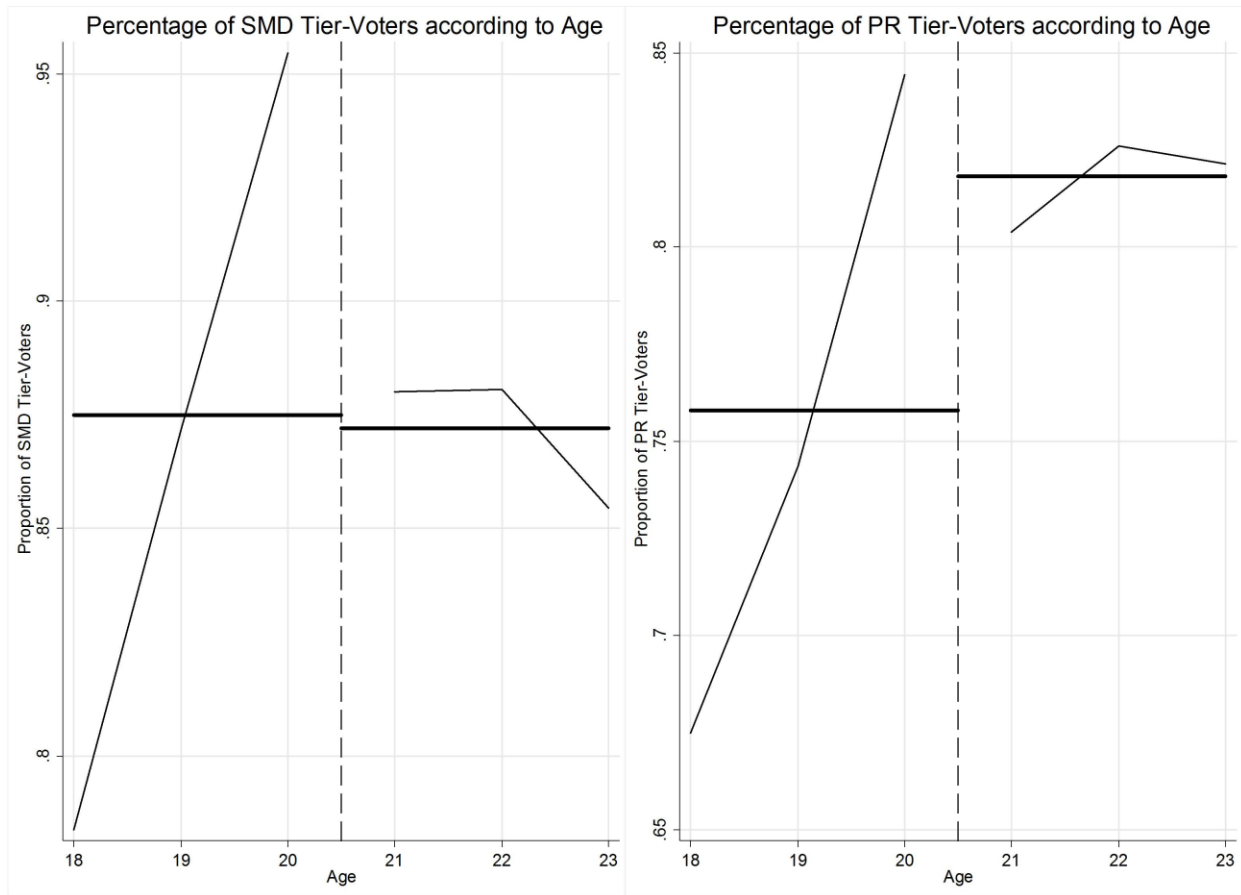
**Figure A6.1. Percentage of 1996 voters of major/viable parties according to age, restricted sample**



Source: 1996 New Zealand Election Studies.

Even more importantly, 80 per cent of the 1996 sample was registered in a safe district (more than 5% margin between the first and the second candidate in 1993). Since we have information about their subsequent voting behaviour, we can examine the impact of being relatively immunized from the operation of the previous electoral system on their vote choice in 1996 (i.e., under the new electoral system). Figures A6.3 and A6.4 plot the proportion of different groups of voters (i.e., of a viable party at the local-level, of either the National or the Labour Party, or of all sorts of participants) at the two 1996 tiers against district marginality in 1993. The simple bivariate associations displayed in the graphs seem to suggest that people are more prone in 1996 to vote and to do so for a viable party at the district-level when they are registered in districts that were marginal in 1993. In the same vein, the regression of district marginality at  $t - 1$  on vote for a formerly viable party at the district-level in Model 1 (logit with

**Figure A6.2. Percentage of 1996 participants according to age, restricted sample**



Source: 1996 New Zealand Election Studies.

clustered standard errors) and on participation in general in Models 5 and 6 (logit with clustered standard errors and multilevel logistic regression, respectively) yields the expected negative coefficients that are significant at traditional levels of statistical confidence.

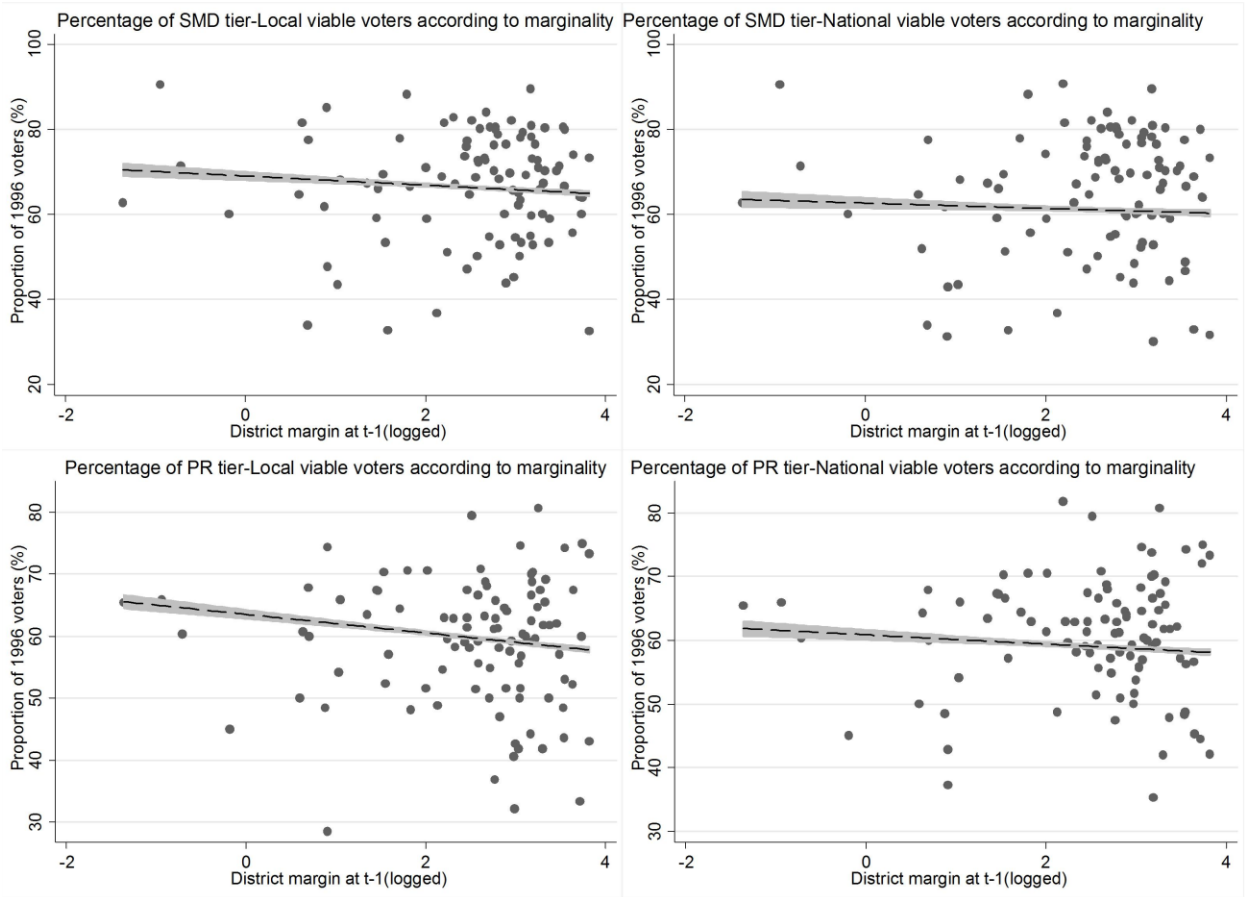
**Table A6.4. Using 1993 district marginality as an instrumental variable of voting a major party in 1993 in predicting a vote for a major party in 1996**

| <b>Independent variables</b>        | <b>Model 1</b>          | <b>Model 2</b>          | <b>Model 3</b>          | <b>Model 4</b>          | <b>Model 5</b>          | <b>Model 6</b>          |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
|                                     | <b>coefficient (se)</b> | <b>coefficient (se)</b> | <b>coefficient (se)</b> | <b>coefficient (se)</b> | <b>coefficient (se)</b> | <b>coefficient (se)</b> |
| District Margin at $t - 1$          |                         |                         |                         |                         | -1.57**<br>(0.71)       | -1.18*<br>(0.69)        |
| District Margin at $t - 1$ (logged) | -0.06*<br>(0.03)        | -0.01<br>(0.03)         | -0.03<br>(0.05)         | 0.008<br>(0.03)         |                         |                         |
| Constant                            | 0.25**<br>(0.1003)      | 0.34***<br>(0.09)       | 0.30006**<br>(0.12)     | 0.41***<br>(0.09)       | 3.21***<br>(0.18)       | 3.25***<br>(0.15)       |
| <i>N</i>                            | 4074                    | 4074                    | 4074                    | 4074                    | 4273                    | 4273                    |
| AIC                                 | 5497.87                 | 5477.34                 | 5514.66                 | 5471.71                 | 1723.91                 | 1714.805                |
| BIC                                 | 5510.5                  | 5496.28                 | 5527.29                 | 5490.65                 | 1736.63                 | 1733.88                 |

*Note:* Entries are unstandardized logit coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. The errors are clustered at the district-level in columns 1, 3 and 5. In the second, fourth and sixth columns, a multilevel logistic regression with random intercepts per district has been implemented. The dependent variable is voting at the PR tier in 1996 for either one of the two viable parties at the district-level in 1993 in the first two models; voting for National or Labour in the third and the fourth models; and just voting in the fifth and sixth models. \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$  (two-tailed tests).

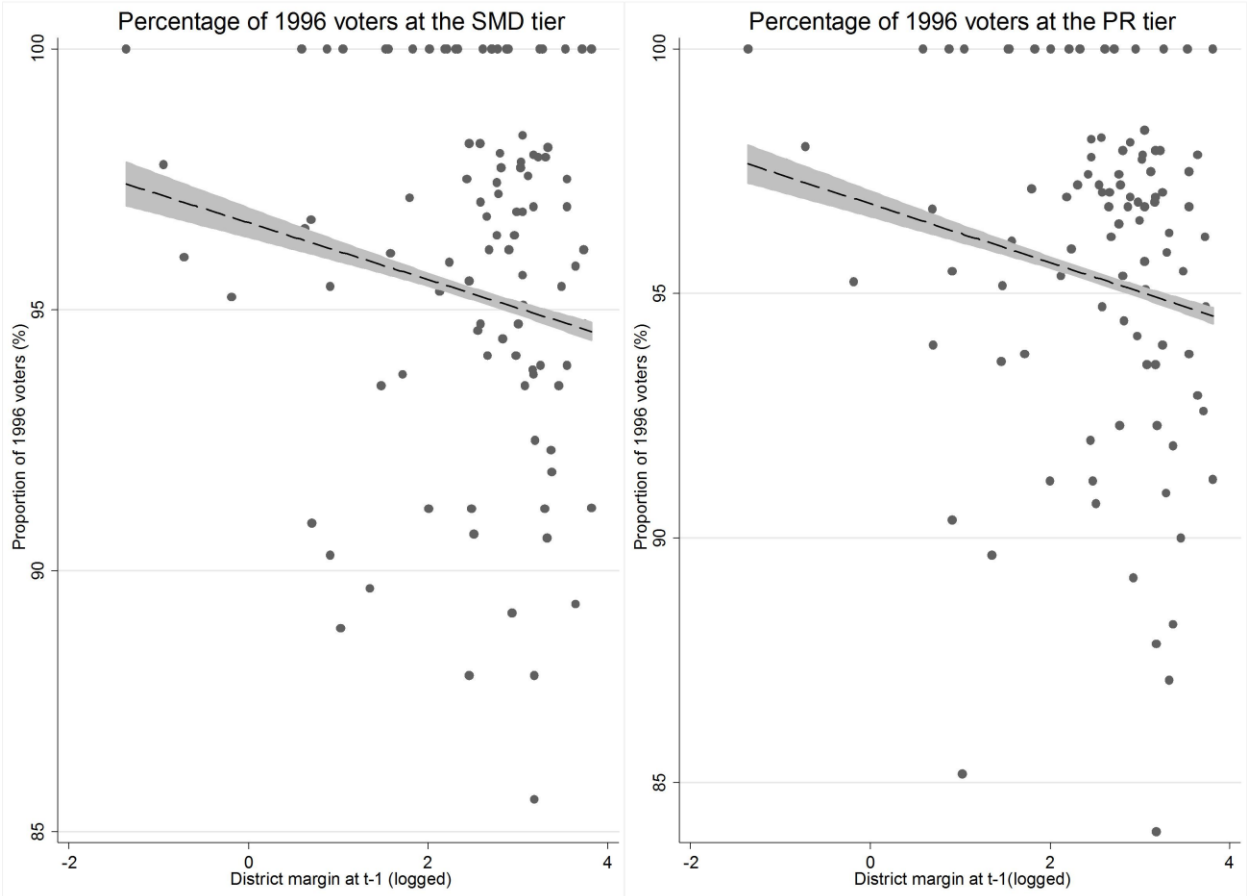


**Figure A6.3. Percentage of 1996 voters of major/viable parties according to 1993 district marginality**



Source: 1996 New Zealand Election Studies.

**Figure A6.4. Percentage of 1996 participants according to 1993 district marginality**



Source: 1996 New Zealand Election Studies.

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