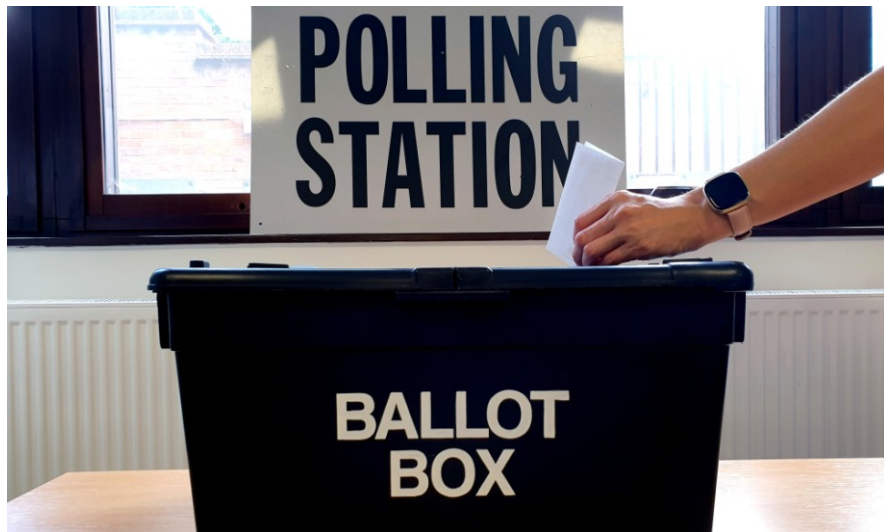


# Introduction to Electoral Systems. The Principles of Majority.

PMCb1012 Elections and campaigning

# Are Elections Necessary?



# Elections

- A necessary but not a sufficient condition for democracies
- Various benefits:
  - Accountability
  - Representation
  - Legitimacy
  - A peaceful transfer of power (unlike a military coup)
  - Civic mobilization
- Only free and fair elections fulfil this role

# Norway

# 100

/100

FREE

<u>Political Rights</u>	40 /40
<u>Civil Liberties</u>	60 /60

# Iran

# 12

/100

NOT FREE

<u>Political Rights</u>	4 /40
<u>Civil Liberties</u>	8 /60

# Benin

# 59

/100

PARTLY FREE

<u>Political Rights</u>	17 /40
<u>Civil Liberties</u>	42 /60



FREEDOM IN THE WORLD 2023

# Hungary

# 66

/100

PARTLY FREE

<u>Political Rights</u>	24 /40
<u>Civil Liberties</u>	42 /60

# Italy

# 90

/100

FREE

<u>Political Rights</u>	36 /40
<u>Civil Liberties</u>	54 /60

# Russia

# 16

/100

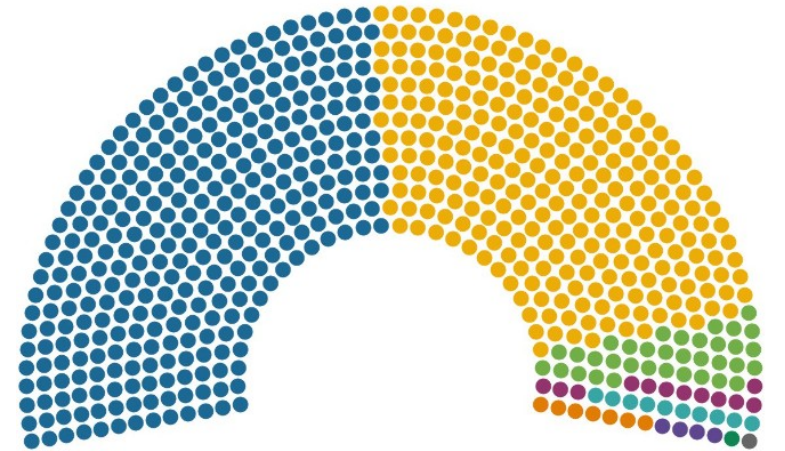
NOT FREE

<u>Political Rights</u>	5 /40
<u>Civil Liberties</u>	11 /60

# What to Do with the Votes?



Electoral  
Systems



# Electoral Systems

- Set of rules and procedures based on which elections are held
- Main role – transformation of votes to seats
- Various types and consequences
- Fairness and ‘fairness’

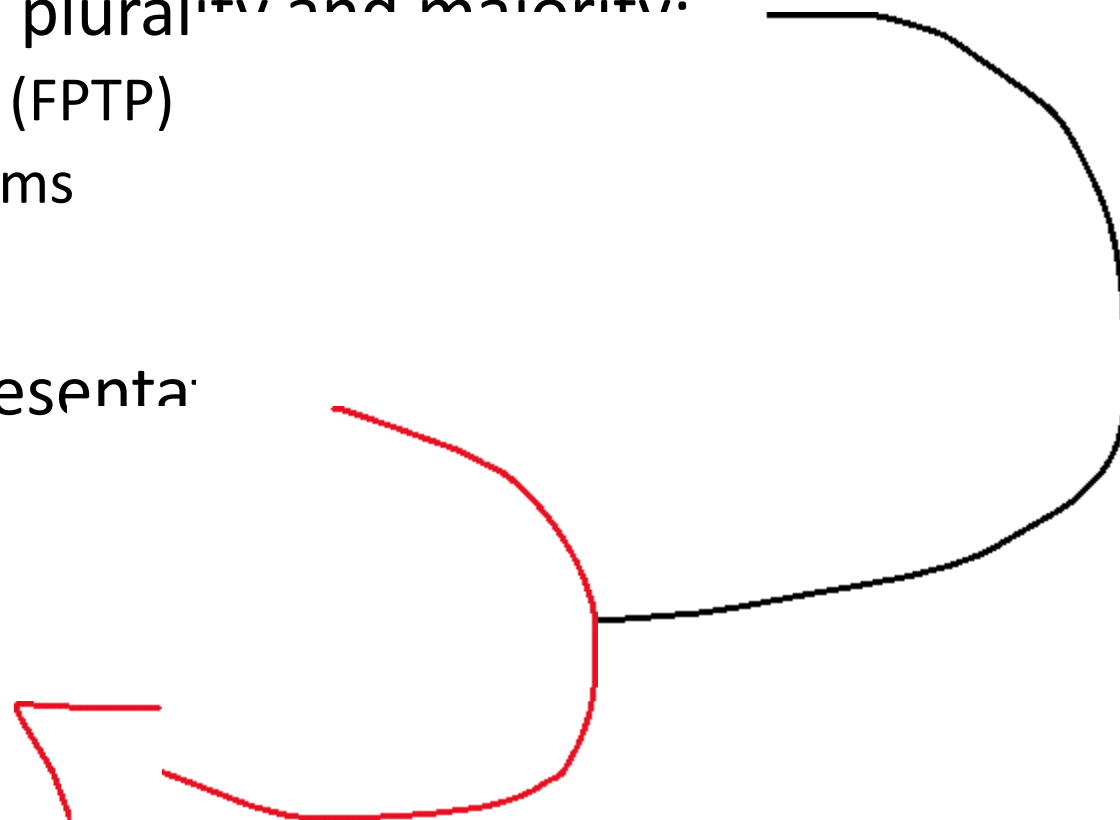
# Main Electoral Systems (not all included)

## 1) Systems based on plurality and majority:

- First past the post (FPTP)
- Majoritarian systems

## 2) Proportional representation:

## 3) Mixed systems



# FPTP and Majoritarian Systems

- *'Winner takes all'*
- Usable for election of:
  - Individual representatives (presidents, mayors)
  - Collective bodies (parliaments, assemblies)
- Based on single-member constituencies
  - Each party nominates only one candidate to a constituency
  - Independent candidates are typically allowed
  - One winner in each constituency
- They differ in victory conditions

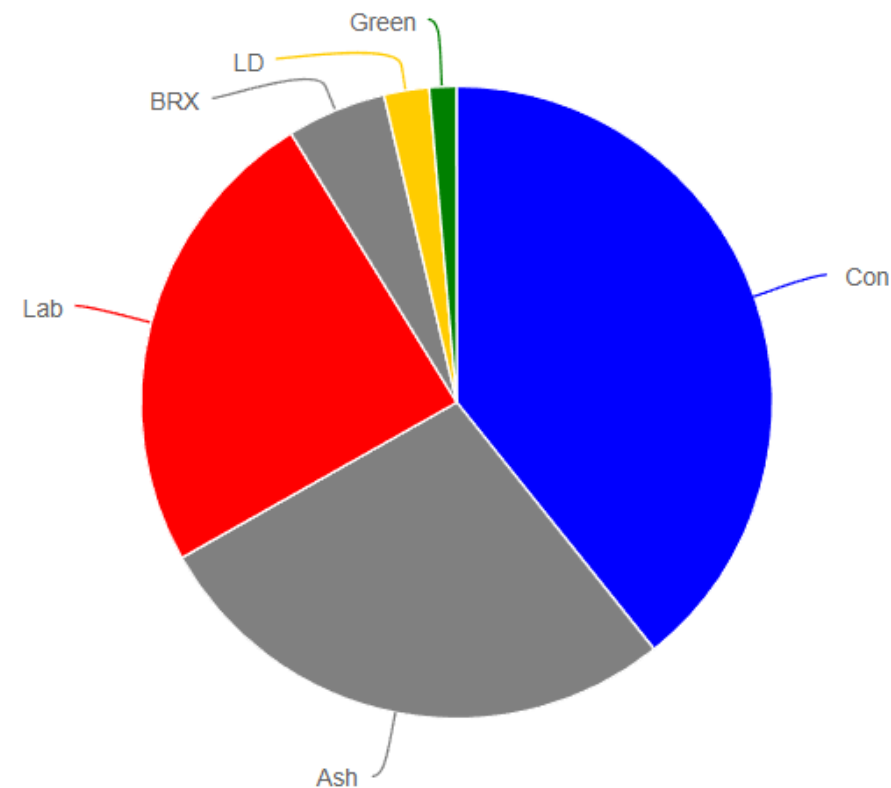


# First Past the Post

- Voters cast single vote for a candidate in a constituency
- Victory condition – **plurality**
  - The candidate who obtains the most votes wins
  - Plurality does not require majority of votes
- Examples – UK, USA, Canada

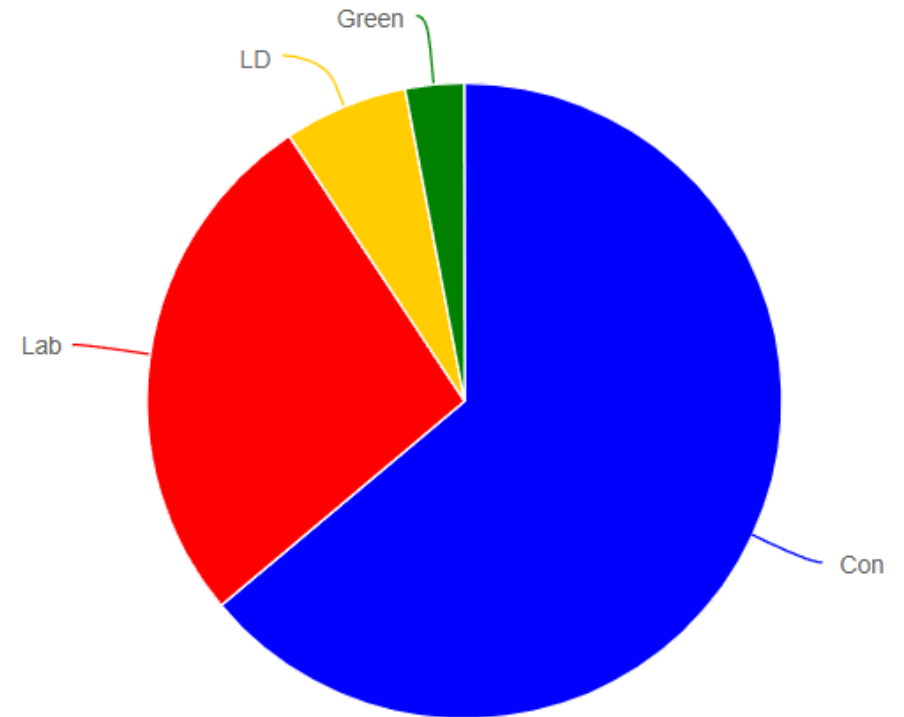
# UK General Elections – Ashfield (2019)

Candidate	Party	Votes	Vote (%)
Lee Anderson	Con	19,231	27.6
Jason Zadrozny	Ash	13,498	24.4
Natalie Fleet	Lab	11,971	5.1
Martin Daubney	BRX	2,501	2.3
Rebecca Wain *	LD	1,105	1.4
Rose Woods *	Green	674	1.4



# UK General Elections – Amber Valley (2019)

Candidate	Party	Votes	Vote (%)
<b>Nigel Mills</b>	Con	29,096	46.9
<b>Adam Thompson</b>	Lab	12,210	26.8
<b>Kate Smith</b>	LD	2,873	6.3
<b>Lian Pizzey *</b>	Green	1,388	3.0



# Majoritarian Systems

- Voters cast single vote for a candidate in a constituency
- Victory condition – **majority**
  - The candidate who obtains 50+ percent of votes wins
- Examples – France, Australia, many presidential elections around the world

What if no candidate obtains  
majority?

# Runoff

- Second round of elections
- Typically only a limited number of candidates
  - Two best from the first round
  - France – two best + all with 12.5+ percent of votes of all registered voters
- The candidate who receives **plurality** wins
- If only two candidates are allowed **plurality** always equals **majority**

# Czech Presidential Election 2023

Candidate	Party affiliation	First round votes	First round %	Second round votes	Second round %
Pavel Fischer	Independent	376,707	6.8		
Jaroslav Bašta	SPD	248,375	4.5		
Petr Pavel	Independent	1,975,156		3,359,301	
Tomáš Zima	Independent	30,769	0.6		
Danuše Nerudová	Independent	777,080	13.9		
Andrej Babiš	ANO	1,952,214		2,399,898	41.7
Karel Diviš	Independent	75,476	1.4		
Marek Hilšer	MHS	142,912	2.6		

# Alternative Vote (Instant Runoff)

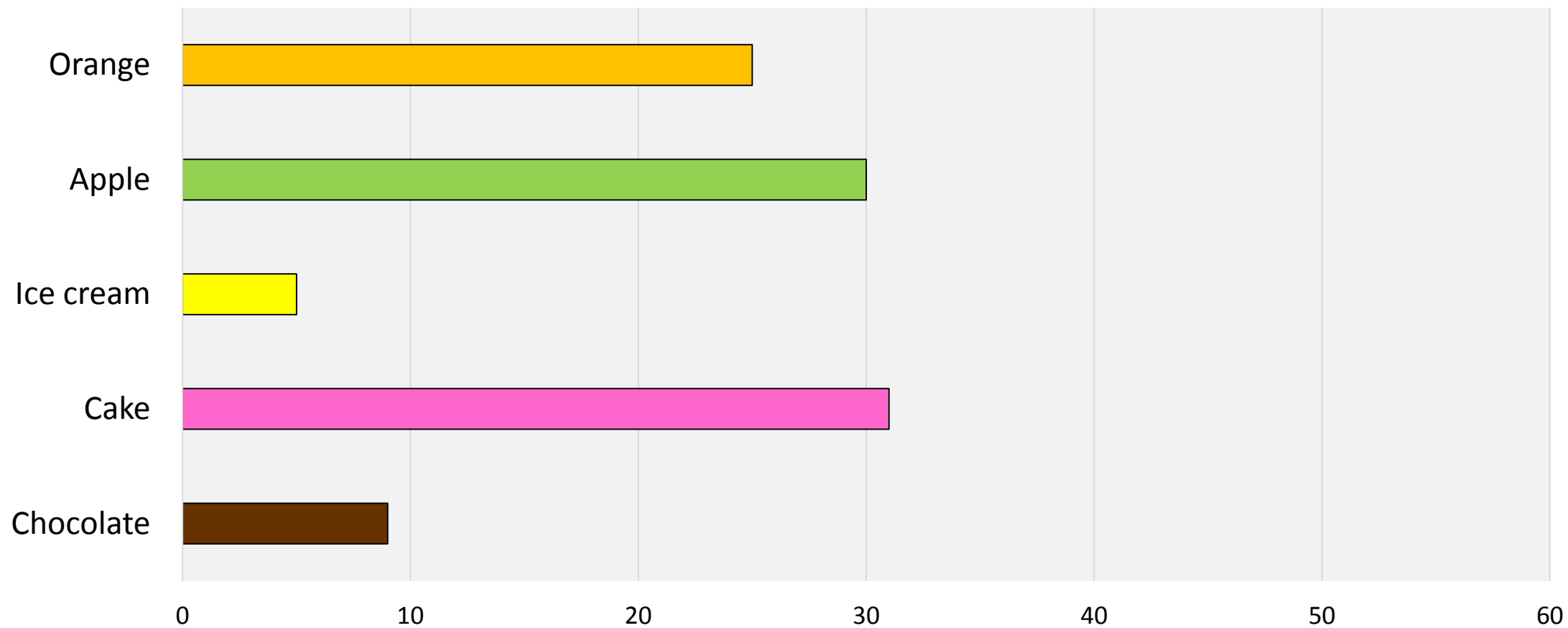
- Ensures a winner with majority of votes in a single round
- Voters do not cast only a single vote but they rank candidates according to their preferences (1, 2, 3 etc.)
- Initially, first preferences are counted – victory requires majority
- If nobody has majority, the last candidate is eliminated and their second preferences are given to the others
- This process is repeated until one of candidates has majority



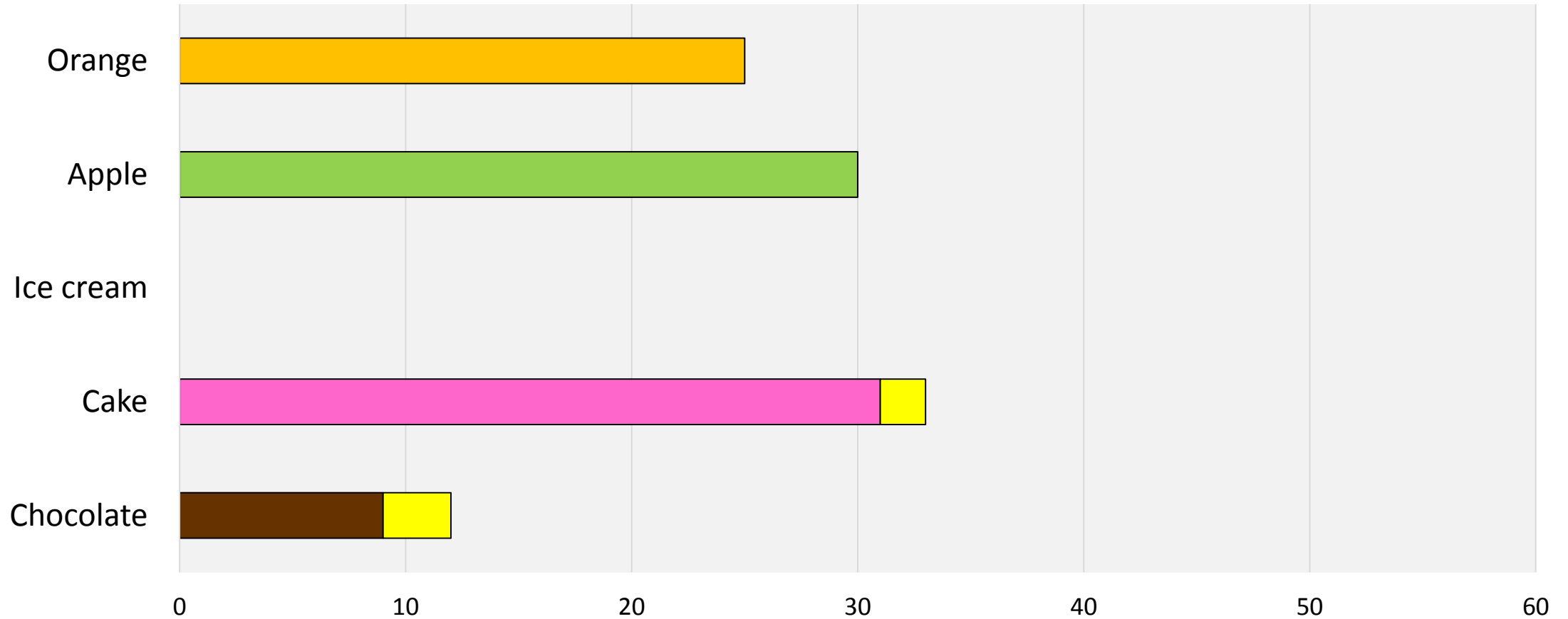
# Alternative Vote - Example

- Food selection
- Five options – orange, apple, ice cream, cake, chocolate
- Elections decide what to eat
- Each voter ranks all choices with 1-5 (1 to the most preferred food, 5 to the least preferred food)

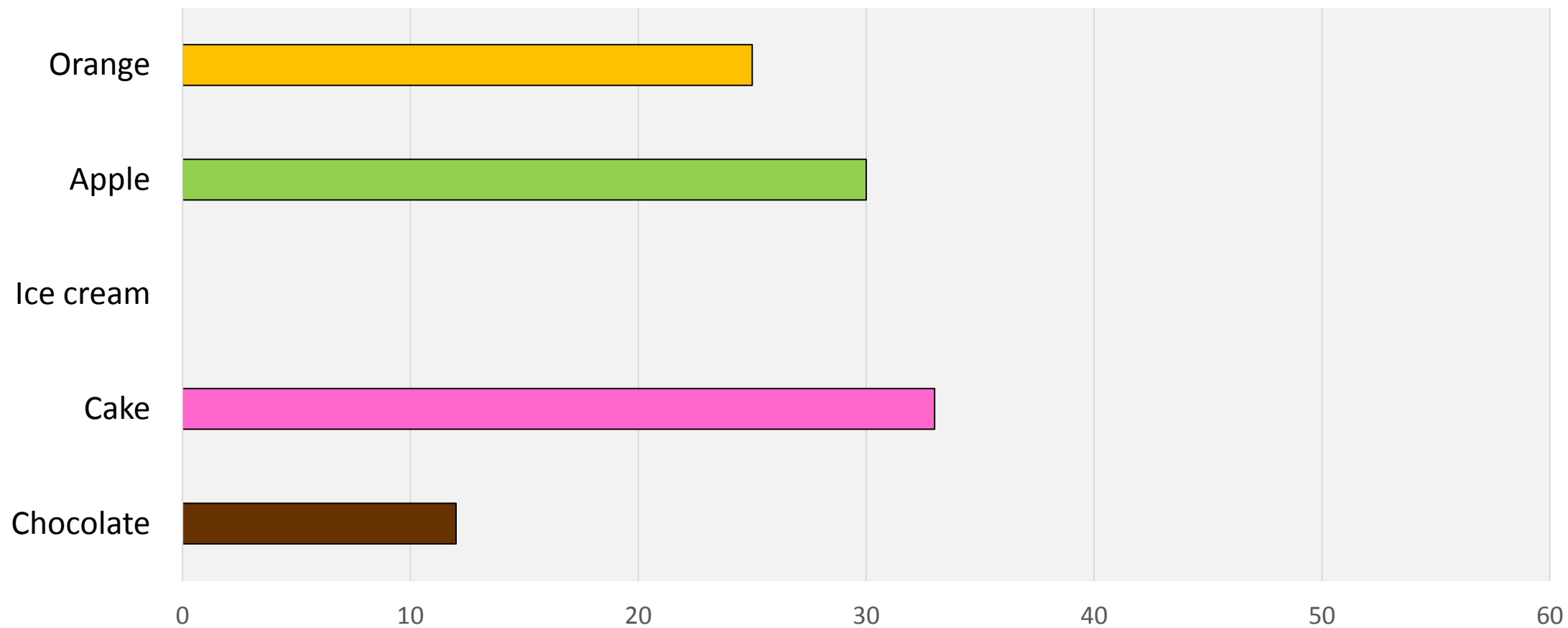
# First Preferences Counted



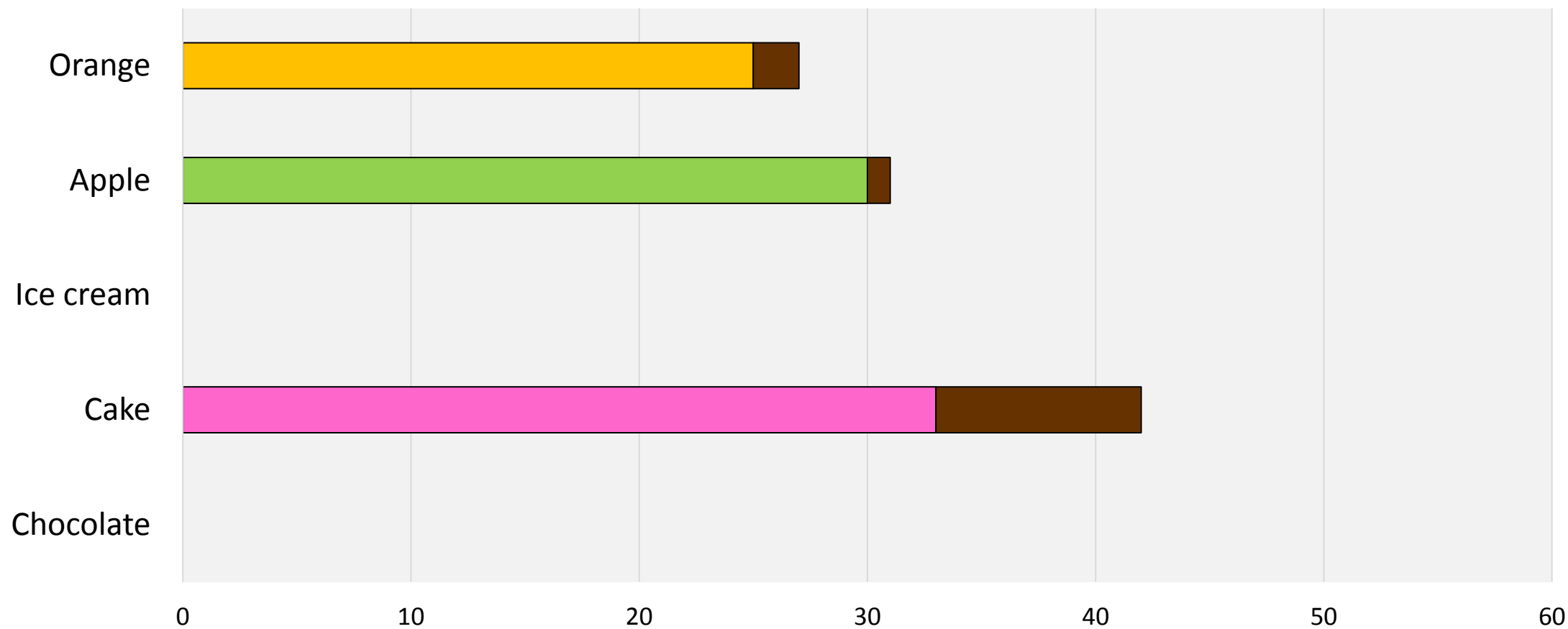
# Ice Cream is Eliminated



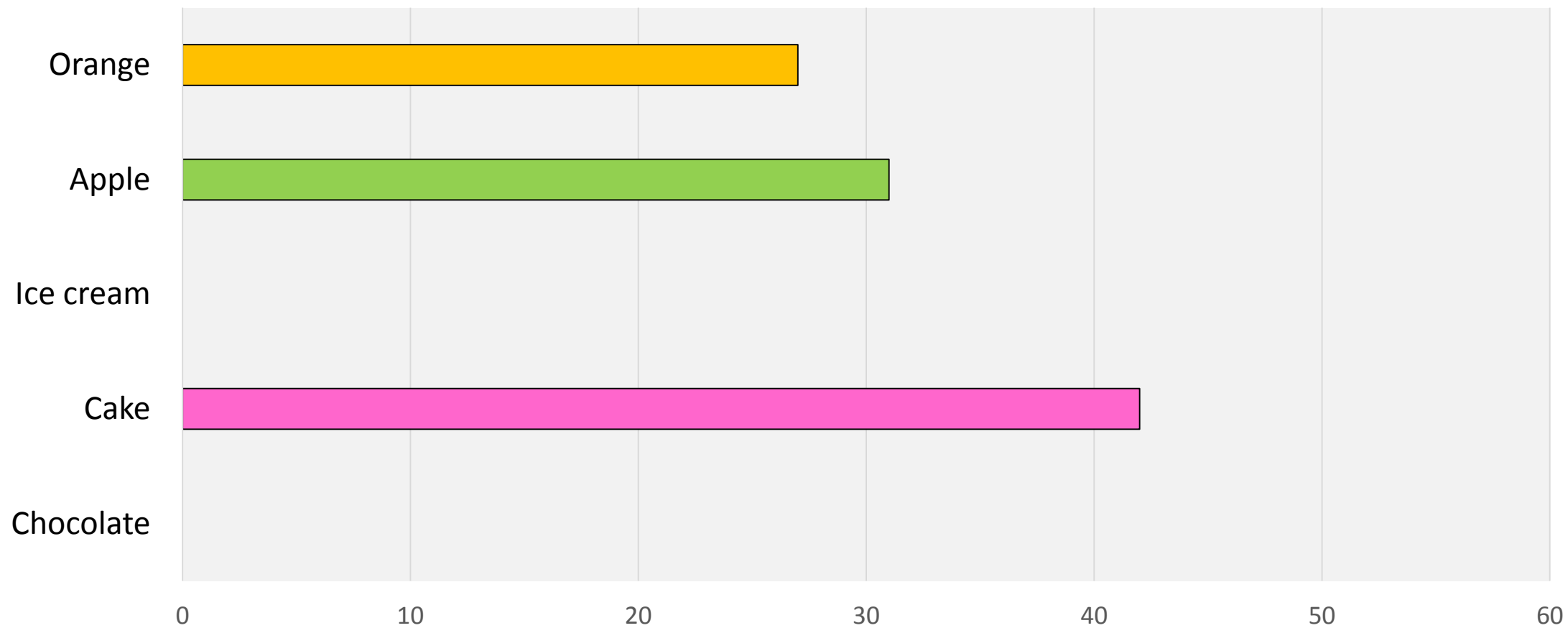
# Still no Majority



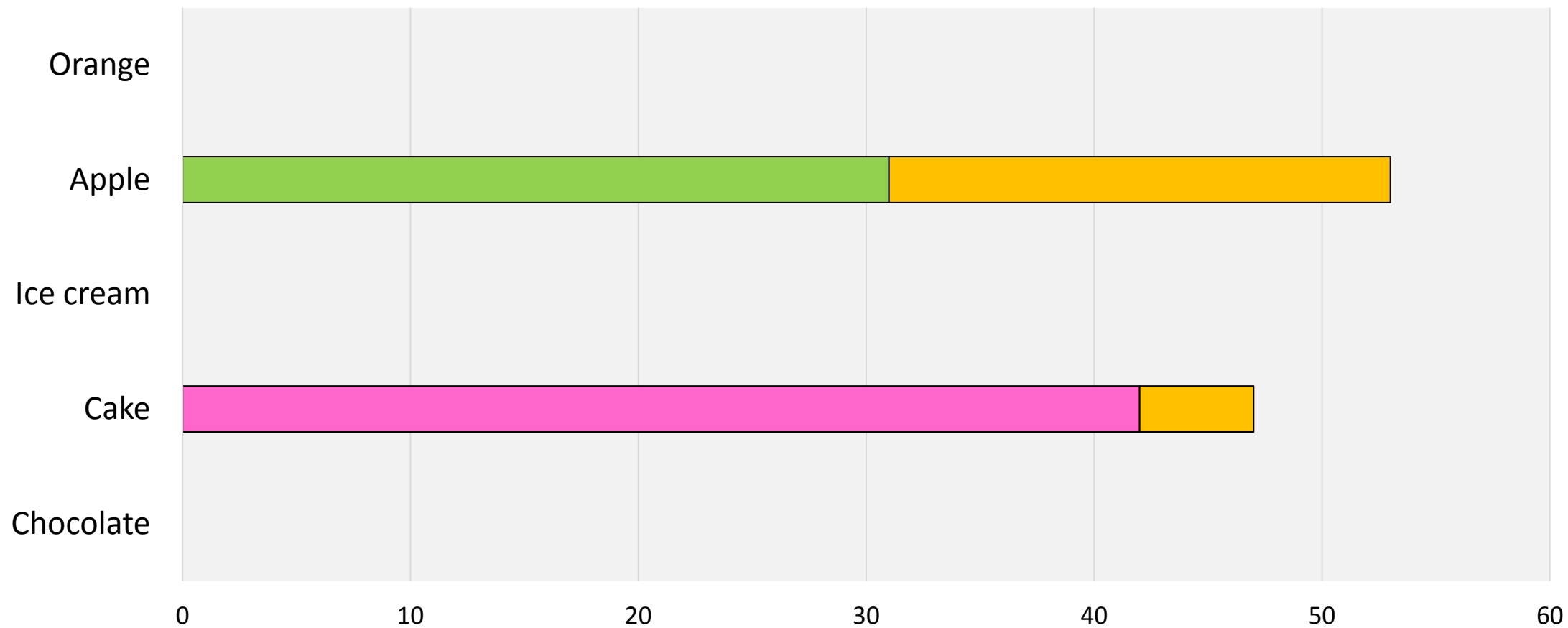
# Chocolate is Eliminated



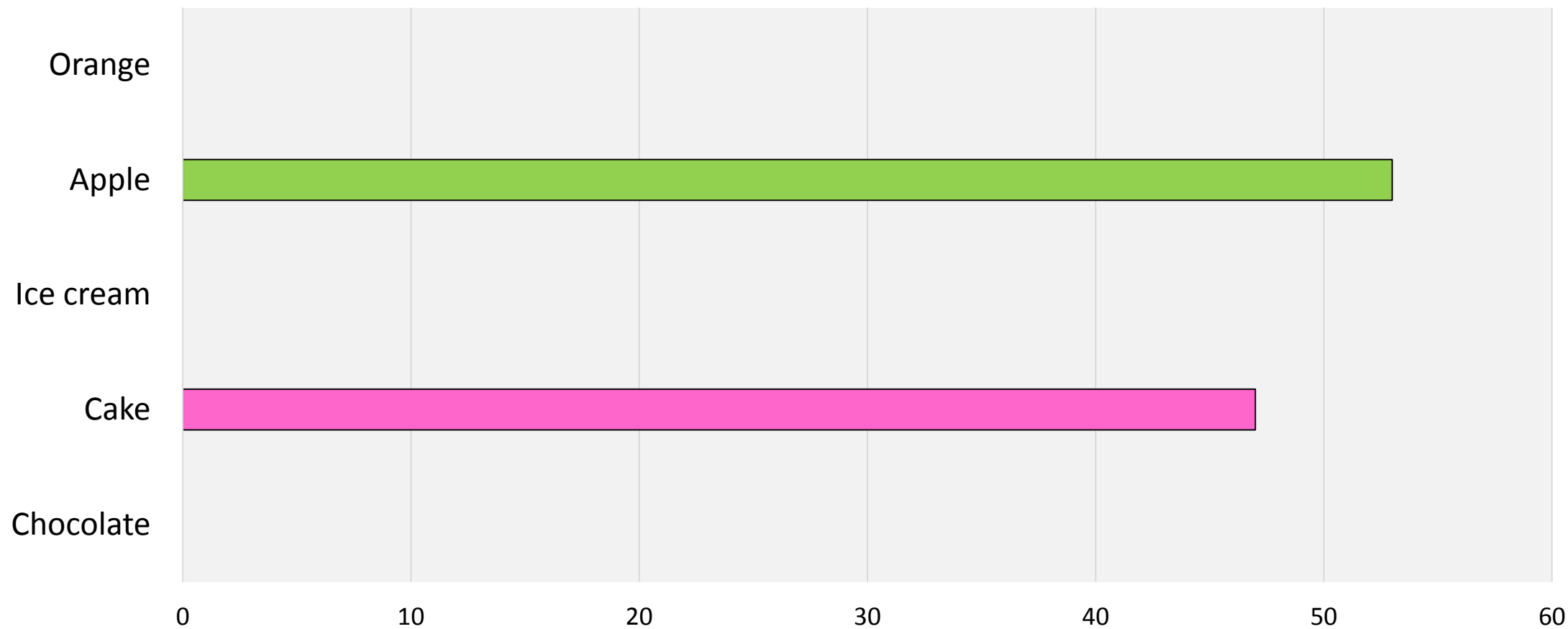
# Still no Majority



# Orange is Eliminated



# Majority Obtained – Apple is the Winner





# Consequences

- Similar impact of FPTP and majoritarian systems
- Advantage for large parties (disadvantage for small parties)
- Clear selection of winners
- Wasted votes
- Penalty for extreme parties and candidates
- Winner does not necessarily needs to obtain most votes among all

# Advantage for Large Parties

- Plurality/majority hardly achievable for small parties
  - Mechanical and psychological effects
  - Strategic behaviour of voters (*why to support small parties?*)
- reduction of number of parties in the system

# Example with plurality

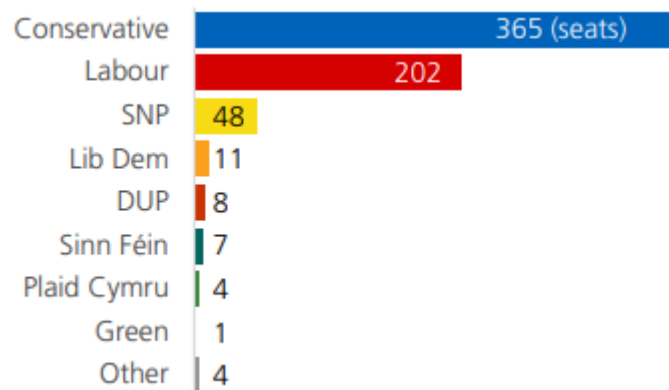
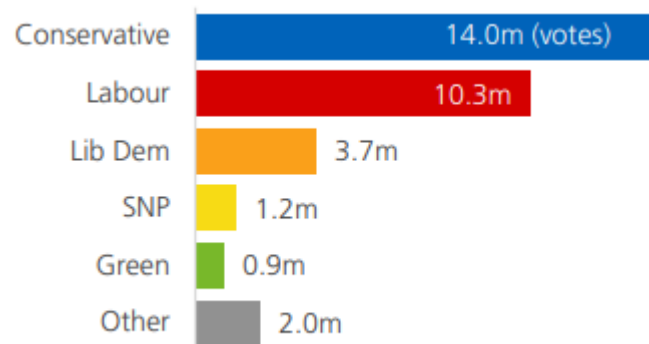
District	Party A	Party B	Party C	Party D
1	45	28	21	6
2	32	51	8	9
3	44	33	19	4
4	29	61	3	7
5	64	33	2	1
6	39	43	10	8
7	55	39	2	4
8	51	42	4	3
<b>Seats</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

# Advantage for Large Parties

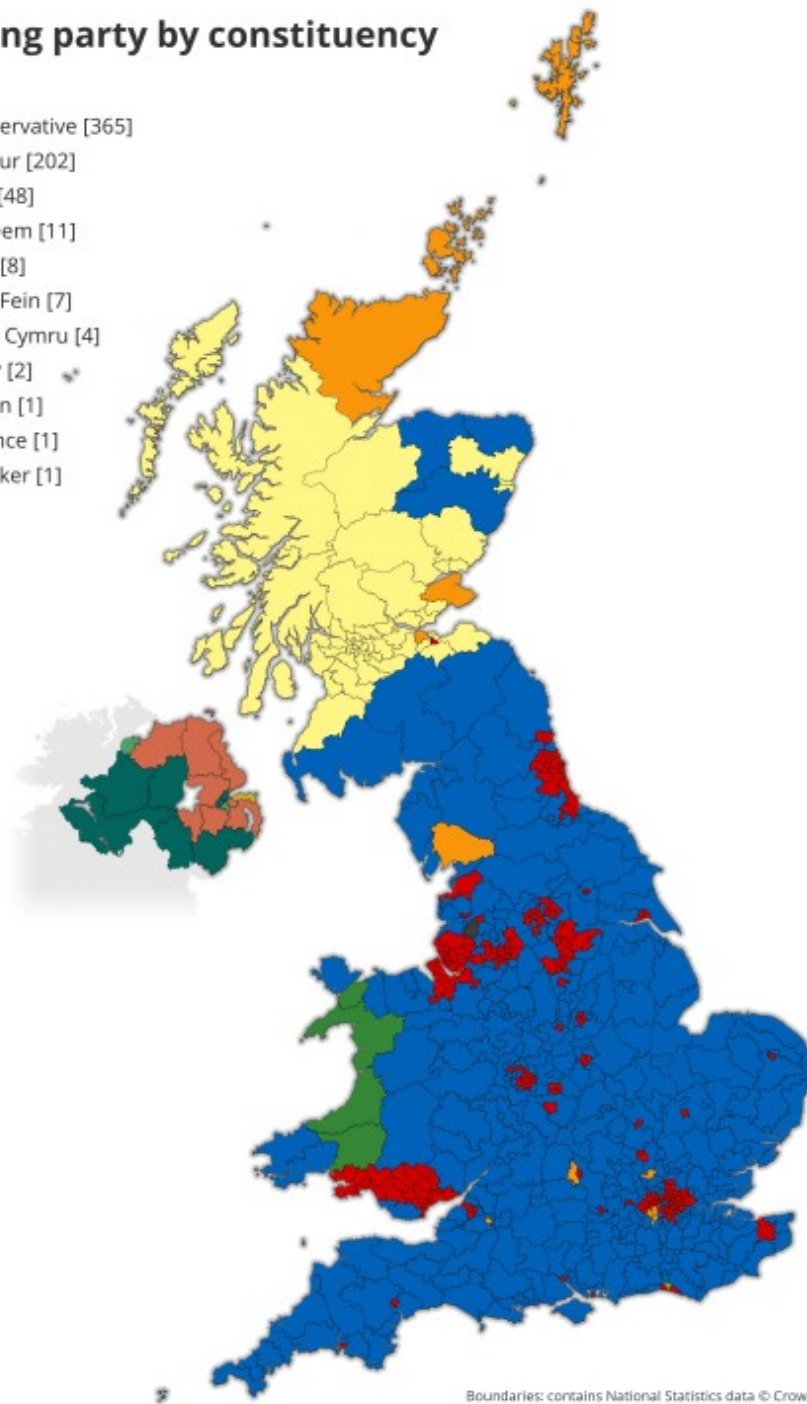
- Exemption from this rule
- Small parties with concentrated territorial support
- Small nationally v. large locally
- Scottish National Party



# UK election 2019



## Winning party by constituency



# Penalty for Radical and Extreme Parties

- Partly based on penalty for small parties
- Stronger penalty in majoritarian system
  - Runoff – extreme candidates do not attract support of others
  - Alternative vote – extreme candidates either obtain first preference (from their supporters) or the last one
- Works only if radicals do not grow into large parties

# French general elections (FN/RN)

Election	Votes %	Seats (out of 577)
1997	14.9	1
2002	11.3	0
2007	4.3	0
2012	13.6	2
2017	13.2	8
2022	18.7	89

# Winner Does not Need to be First

- Plurality/majority is about winning the most seats
- Highest national gain of votes is secondary (although helpful)
- Opens questions leading to mechanisms affecting fairness of elections
  - see the lecture on (un)fairness



District	Party A	Party B
1	51	49
2	51	49
3	51	49
4	51	49
5	51	49
6	10	90
7	10	90
8	10	90
9	10	90
<b>Votes nationally</b>	<b>295</b>	<b>605</b>
<b>Seats</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>

