Electoral systems

Lesson 4

1. Types of electoral systems

Electoral System

- District magnitude: representatives per district

- Ballot structure: individual or party

- Type of vote: choice of one, several, or ranking

- Electoral formula: votes => seats

Plurality System

- aka First-Past-the-Post, Winner-Take-All or Single Member Districts (SMDs)
- Formula: most votes wins seats
- Why does district magnitude usually = 1?
  - What happens when district magnitude > 1?
- A few problems:
  - Drawing district boundaries: gerrymandering
  - Few choices
  - Can win with minority of votes
  - All politics is local

VOTE FOR ONE CANDIDATE ONLY

1	**GRIFFIN** Theresa Griffin of 16 Dovedale Road, Liverpool L18 1DW Labour Party	
2	**MORRIS** Richard James Morris of 46 Croxteth Road, Liverpool L8 3SQ Liverpool Green Party	
3	**MUIES** Gabriel Muies of 26 Loudon Grove, Liverpool L8 8AT Independent	
4	**PRIDDIE** Hulbert Llewelyn Priddie of 10 Lesseps Road, Liverpool L8 0RD Liberal Democrat	
5	**ZSIGMOND** Carol Ann Zsigmond of 43 Rodney Street, Liverpool L1 9EW Conservative Party Candidate	

Figure 2.1   A British SMP ballot paper

Majority System

- Two round system
- Only certain candidates move on to second round
  - Either top two or all with > certain % of vote
- Common in presidential elections. Why?
- What can go wrong?

France, 2002

First Round	
Chirac	20%
Le Pen	17%
Jospin	16%
Bayroux	7%
Lagullier	6%
Many others	…

Second Round	
Chirac	82%
Le Pen	18%

Proportional Representation

- Formula: Assign seats to parties based on vote percentages

- Therefore district magnitude > 1. Why?
  - Chilean system, DM = 2. How does it work?

- Therefore usually vote for parties not individuals

BALLOT PAPER

Party	Abbr.	
PAN AFRICANIST CONGRESS OF AZANIA	PAC	
SPORTS ORGANISATION FOR COLLECTIVE CONTRIBUTIONS AND EQUAL RIGHTS	SOCCER	
THE KEEP IT STRAIGHT AND SIMPLE PARTY	KISS	
VRYHEIDSFRONT - FREEDOM FRONT	VF-FF	
WOMEN'S RIGHTS PEACE PARTY	WRPP	
WORKERS' LIST PARTY	WLP	
XIMOKO PROGRESSIVE PARTY	XPP	
AFRICA MUSLIM PARTY	AMP	
AFRICAN CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY	ACDP	
AFRICAN DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT	ADM	
AFRICAN MODERATES CONGRESS PARTY	AMCP	
AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS	ANC	
DEMOCRATIC PARTY - DEMOKRATIESE PARTY	DP	
DIKWANKWETLA PARTY OF SOUTH AFRICA	DPSA	
FEDERAL PARTY	FP	
LUSO - SOUTH AFRICAN PARTY	LUSAP	
MINORITY FRONT	MF	
NATIONAL PARTY - NASIONALE PARTY	NP	
INKATHA FREEDOM PARTY - IQEMBU LENKATHA YENKULULEKO	IFP	

Presented by the Voter Education Programme of the Independent Electoral Commission.

Figure 4.2   A South African PR list ballot paper

Variations on PR

- District size = # of elected officials/district
  - Larger districts => more proportional. Why?
- Formulas for votes => seats
- Thresholds: only parties with > X% of votes get seats
- Open/Closed List
  - Closed List: can only vote for party
  - Open List: can also choose candidate

Poland and thresholds

- 1991 elections – 1st fully free
  - 20 parties get seats
  - Smallest gets 0.5% of vote and 1 seat (largest around 15%)
  - Includes Party X, Friends of Beer Party
- 1993 elections (5% threshold)
  - 6 parties get seats
  - 35% of votes to parties with less than 5%
- Later elections: voters learn

1

SIGLE

Vertbois	○
Dubois	○
Amman	○

2

Colin	○
Delval, Jan	○
Uytereist	○
Mabille	○
Nelson	○
Nick	○
Pepin	○
Geiris	○
SUPPLEANT	
Vermon	○

3

Maenhout	○
Ducange	○
Hermand	○
Jacques	○
Linsack	○
Delcampe	○
Niemand	○
SUPPLEANTS	
Xhoffer	○
Tliquin	○
Van Dienst	○
Robin	○

4

| Nicolas |

5

Delval, Pieter	○
SUPPLEANT	
Van Loy	○

6

Dalton	○
SUPPLEANT	
Hommen	○

Figure 4.3   A Belgian PR list ballot paper

Worries with PR

- Extremism
- Reifies divisions
- Weaker governments?
- Less accountability of MPs

Mixed Electoral Systems

- Combine majoritarian and PR
- Mixed-member proportional - PR half determines total allocation (eg, Germany)
- Mixed-member parallel – each half separate

Sie haben 2 Stimmen

hier 1 Stimme
für die Wahl
eines Wahlkreisabgeordneten
(Erststimme)

hier 1 Stimme
für die Wahl
einer Landesliste (Partei)
(Zweitstimme)

1	**Dr. Kreutzmann, Heinz** Parl. Staatssekretär Borken (Hessen) **SPD** Sozialdemo- Kellerwaldstraße 7 kratische Partei Deutschlands	◯
2	**Jagoda, Bernhard** Obersekretär a. D. Schwalmstadt-Treysa **CDU** Christlich Demo- Am Weißen Stein 31 kratische Union Deutschlands	◯
3	**Wilke, Otto** Elektromeister Diemelsee-Adorf **F.D.P.** Freie Bredelarer Straße 1 Demokratische Partei	◯
4	**Funk, Peter** Werkzeugmacher Baunatal 6 **DKP** Deutsche Triftweg 6 Kommunistische Partei	◯
5	**Keller, Gerhard** Zivildienstleistender DIE GRÜNEN Frielendorf 2 **GRÜNE** Friedhofsweg 30	◯

◯	**SPD**	Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands Leber, Matthöfer, Jahn, Frau Dr. Timm, Zander
◯	**CDU**	Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands Dr. Dregger, Zink, Dr. Schwarz-Schilling, Frau Geier, Haase
◯	**F.D.P.**	Freie Demokratische Partei Mischnick, von Schoeler, Hölfie, Wurbs, Dr. Prinz zu Solms-Hohensolms-Lich
◯	**DKP**	Deutsche Kommunistisch Partei Mayer, Knopf, Frau Dr. Weber, Funk, Frau Schuster
◯	**GRÜNE**	DIE GRÜNEN Frau Ibbeken, Hecker, Horacek, Kerschgens, Kuhnert
◯	**EAP**	Europäische Arbeiterpartei Frau Liebig, Haßmann, Stalleiche Frau Kaesiner, Stalla
◯	**KBW**	Kommunistischer Bund Westdeutschland Schmierer, Frau Monich, Frau Eckardt, Dresler, Lang
◯	**NPD**	Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands Philipp, Brandt, Sturtz, Lauck, Bauer
◯	**V**	VOLKSFRONT Götz, Taufertshofer, König, Hiebe, Frau Weißert

Figure 5.1   A German MMP ballot paper

Preference Voting

- Rank candidates in order of preference – first, second, third…

- Forces parties to seek support from supporters of other parties

- Plurality version: alternative vote (instant runoff)

- Proportional version: single transferable vote

Alternative Vote

- If one candidate gets a majority of first preferences, then wins
- If not, then eliminate candidate with fewest and redistribute their second preferences
- What sort of incentives?
  - Also a PR version, single-transferable vote (STV)
- How do voters need to be distributed?

BALLOT PAPER
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

ELECTORAL DIVISION OF
MOORE

Number the boxes from 1 to 5 in the order of your choice.

☐   LLOYD, Alan R
      AUSTRALIAN DEMOCRATS

☐   WATSON, Mark
      GREY POWER

☐   FILING, Paul
      LIBERAL

☐   STEELS, Brian
      THE GREENS (W.A.)

☐   BLANCHARD, Allen
      AUSTRALIAN LABOR PARTY (ALP)

Remember...number _every_ box to make your vote count.
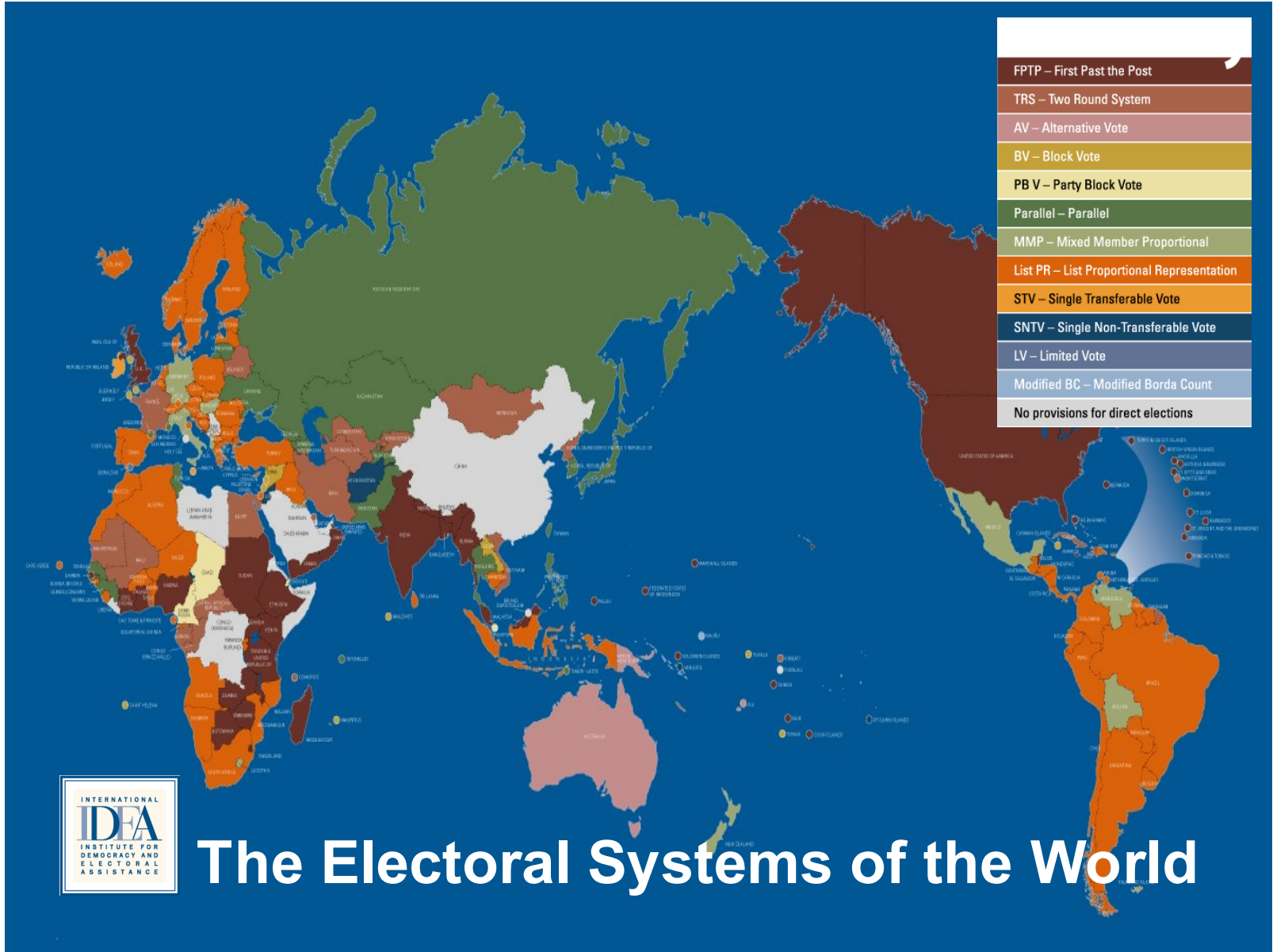
Australian Electoral Commission /AEC

Figure 3.2   An Australian alternative vote ballot paper

Crazy electoral systems?

- Electoral systems don't take into account the intensity of preferences
    - Quadratic voting: you can buy as many votes as you want, but price rises quadratically & money collected is returned to everyone
- What about pros and cons of election by lottery?

Ensuring minority/female representation

- PR systems
  - Quotas
  - But be careful of details
- Plurality systems
  - Reserved seats
  - Majority/minority districts
  - But often seen as undemocratic

The Electoral Systems of the World

Legend:
- FPTP – First Past the Post
- TRS – Two Round System
- AV – Alternative Vote
- BV – Block Vote
- PB V – Party Block Vote
- Parallel – Parallel
- MMP – Mixed Member Proportional
- List PR – List Proportional Representation
- STV – Single Transferable Vote
- SNTV – Single Non-Transferable Vote
- LV – Limited Vote
- Modified BC – Modified Borda Count
- No provisions for direct elections

INTERNATIONAL IDEA
INSTITUTE FOR DEMOCRACY AND ELECTORAL ASSISTANCE

Distribution of electoral systems

- Most common
  - List PR: 65 countries (Europe, LA)
  - Plurality: 41 (North America/Caribbean)
  - Mixed: 33
  - Two rounds: 21
  - Other: 17

2. Effects of Electoral Systems

Effects of Electoral System

- Number of parties
- Fairness
- Ideological complexion
- Representation
- Relation between politicians and voters
- National/local centered politics
- Party strength

Duverger's Law

- Plurality elections lead to 2 party systems
- PR allows multiparty systems
- If true, means only way we can get more/fewer parties is to change electoral system

Plurality and two-party system

- Mechanical Effect
  - Translation of votes into seats rewards large parties and punishes small parties
- Strategic Voting
  - don't waste your vote
- Strategic Entry
  - don't waste your time forming a party

But only applies at district level

- Two party competition in each district
- But not necessarily the same two parties
- What unites the districts?

EARTH CAPITAL

PR and multiparty system

- Permissive: allows social divisions to be expressed
- Number of parties depends on:
  - District Size: bigger => more parties
  - Threshold: lower => more parties

Was Duverger Right?

Country	Type of System	ENP
New Zealand	Plurality	1.96
UK	Plurality	2.11
Canada	Plurality	2.37
Austria	PR	2.48
Germany	Mixed	2.93
Sweden	PR	3.33
India	Plurality	4.11
Belgium	PR	4.32
Israel	PR	4.55
Italy	PR	4.91

Exceptions

- PR systems with few parties: Austria
- Plurality systems with multiple parties: India, Canada, UK
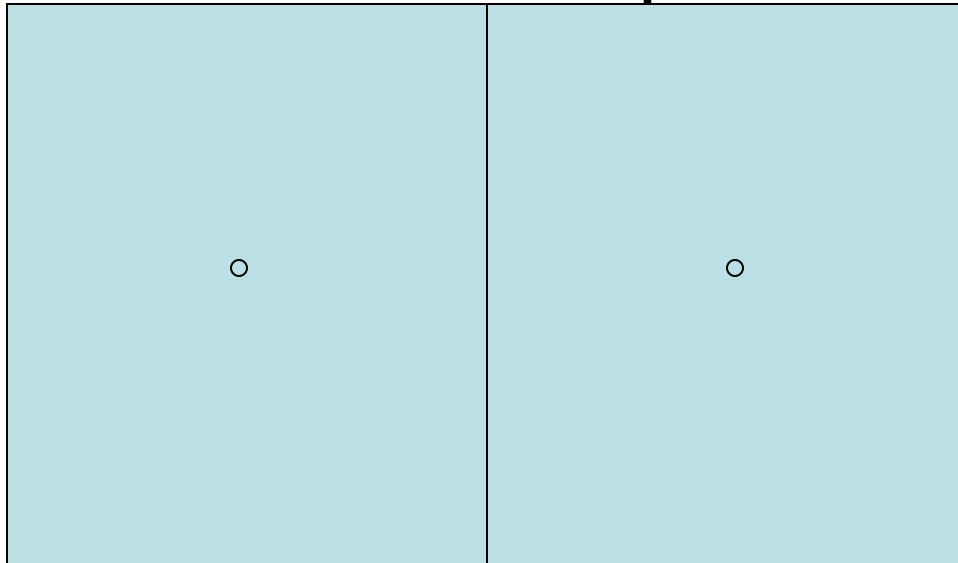- How to explain?

Electoral law puzzle

	Plurality	PR
Homogeneous society	2 parties (US)	Few parties (Austria)
Heterogeneous society	> 2 parties (India)	Many parties (Belgium)

Hotelling and Ice Cream Sellers

- Beach with two ice cream sellers

- Everyone goes to seller closest to them

- Where do sellers end up?

Median voter is king

- In 2 party system, parties should move to center to win

- What prevents this from happening?

Disproportionality

- Relationship between seats and votes
- Should plurality system have higher disproportionality?
- Why is it high in CZ?
- Is this only idea of fairness?

PR & representation of women

- With multiple candidates can appeal to sub-sectors of population versus simple head-to-head

- Internal party politics: don't want to displace entrenched males who have personal vote

- Nominating mechanisms: usually local in majoritarian, hard to balance; national in PR, easier to balance

- Easier to implement quotas in PR

Other Considerations

- Relation between citizens and politicians
  - Plurality: you know representative and can monitor
  - PR: often only know party
- Nationally/locally centered politics
  - Plurality: all politics is local. Why?
  - PR: can get broader interest

3. How to study effects of electoral systems

Cross-tabulations

Electoral system	Percentage of women in lower house
Majoritarian	8.5
Mixed	11.3
PR	15.2

- Is this persuasive?
- What are the problems?
- How do we fix them?

Regressions

- Women percentage = a * electoral system + b * measure of culture + c * economic/ social structure
- Look at all countries in the world cca. 2010
- What are the problems here?
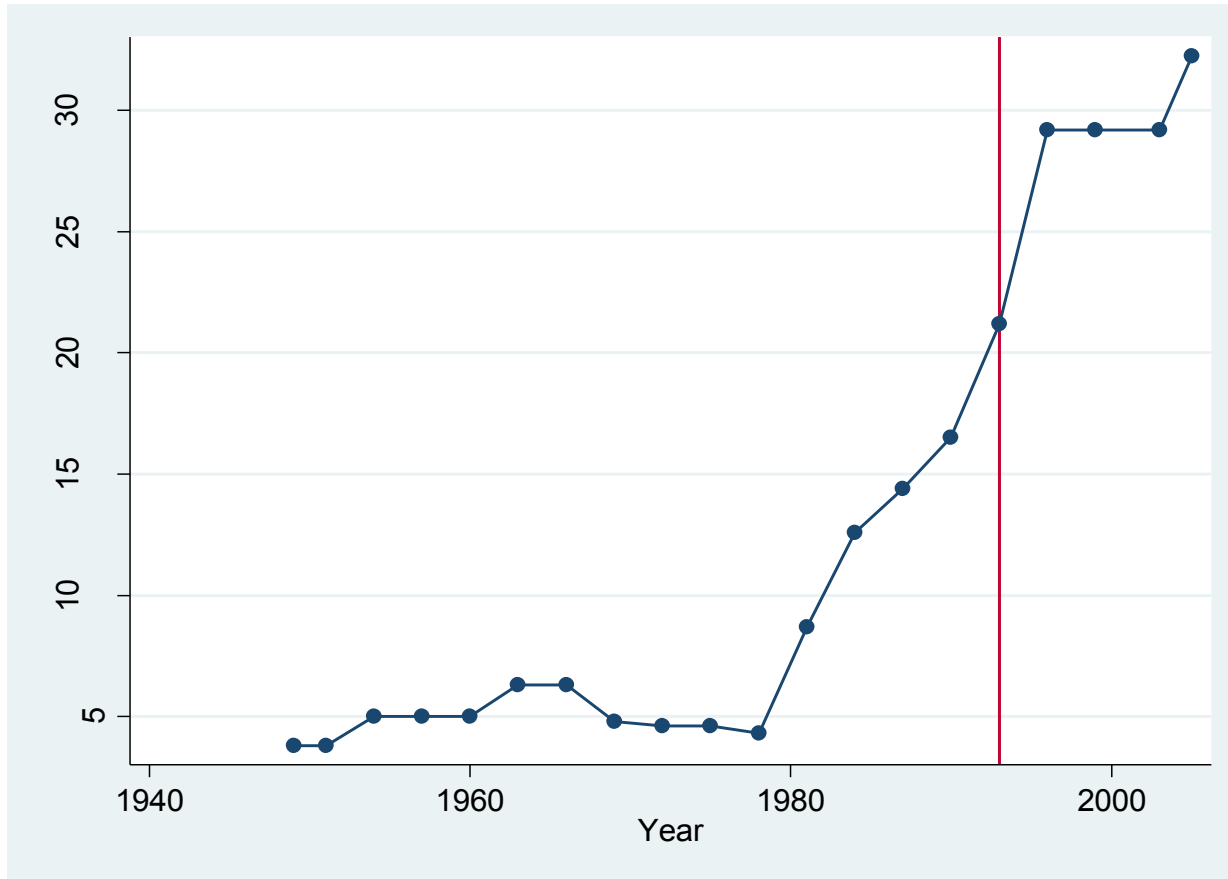- How could we fix them?

Problems with regression

- Endogeneity: electoral systems are not exogeneous; they are chosen for particular reasons related to outcomes

- Omitted variables: often hard to measure – eg, culture

- Time trends: women's representation changing over time

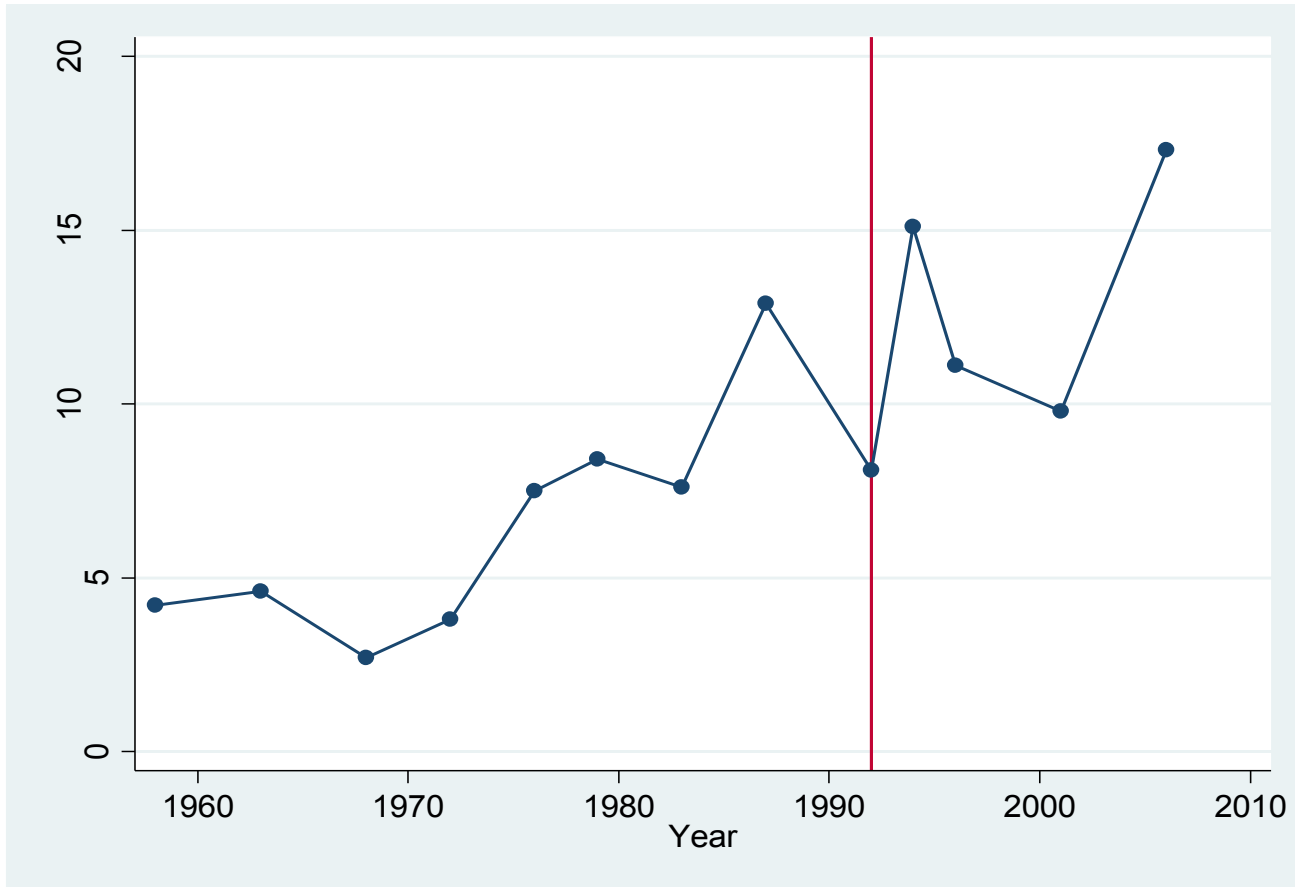- Causal heterogeneity: OLS measures only average effects

Better techniques

- Electoral system changes
  - Account for time trend, control for most other causes, closest to policy recommendation
- Bicameral systems or mixed electoral systems
  - Control for other causes, endogeneity
- Matching methods
  - Deal with endogeneity, possible causal heterogeneity
- 2SLS: model choice of electoral system
- Experimental methods (or natural experiments)
  - India randomly assigns reserved seats for women

New Zealand

Italy

Percentage women vs. Year. Panels for Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Czech, Dominican Rep, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Paraguay, Philippines, Poland, Romania, Spain, Switzerland, Uruguay, Venezuela. Legend: Lower House (solid line), Upper House (dashed line).
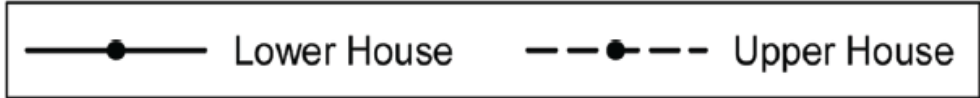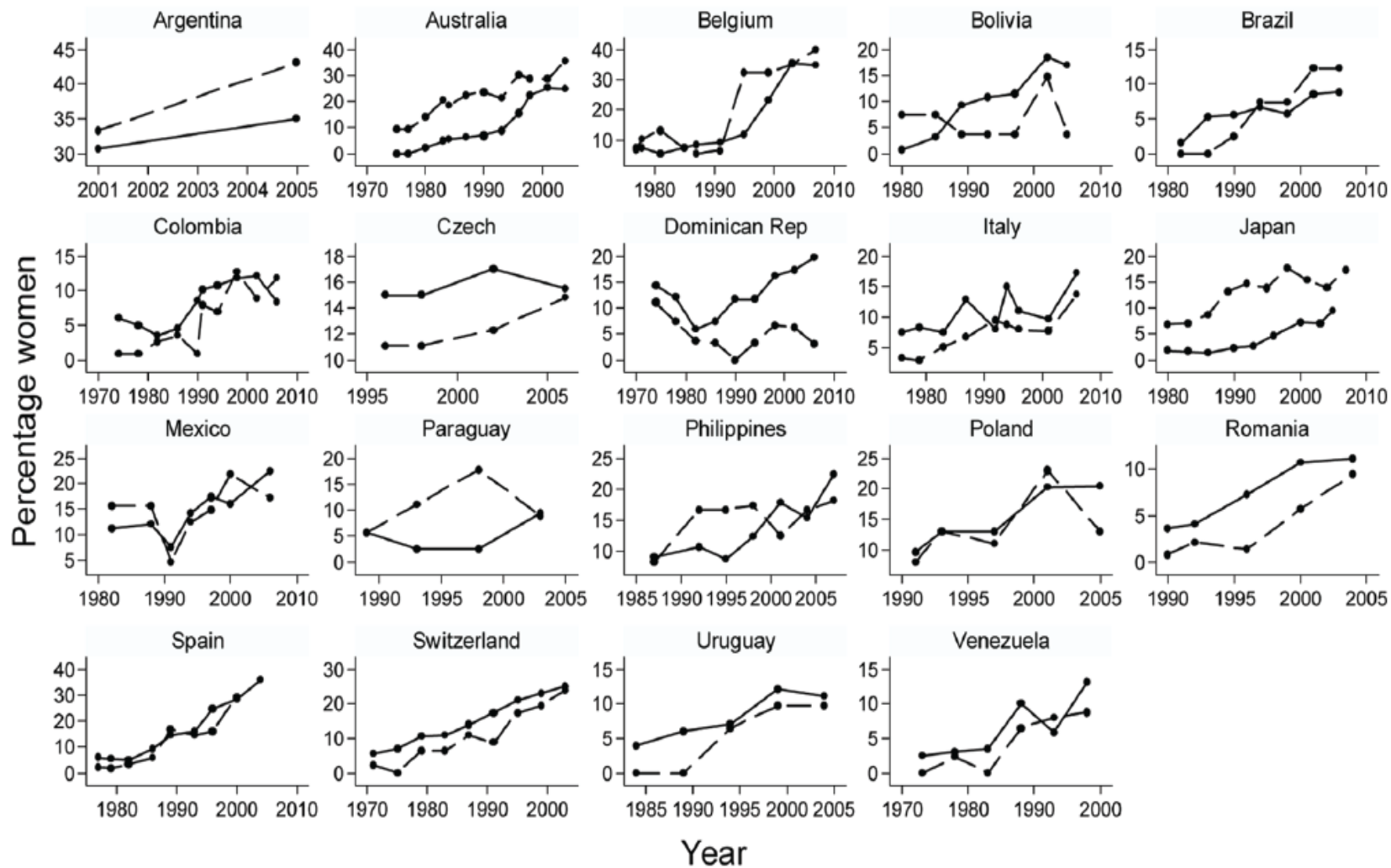
Matching analysis

- Compare countries who should have same electoral rule, but in fact do not

  - Apples and apples versus apples and oranges

- Account for self-selection into electoral rules

- Also for possible causal heterogeneity

- Finding: PR has very small effects

Statistics and lies

- How robust is the result: do different datasets, techniques yield same result?
- Statistical versus substantive significance
- Individual findings aren't right or wrong – should simply shift your views
- Correlation is not causation
- Gold standard is randomized experiment

4. Choosing an electoral system

What do you want?

- Representation

- Moderation

- Stable and efficient government

- Government accountability

- Individual accountability

- Interethnic cooperation

- Encourage political parties

- Turnout

- Legitimacy/satisfaction

- Ease of administration

Cost and administration

- Drawing electoral boundaries
- Voter registration
- Ballot design and production
- Voter education
- Number of polling days
- By-elections
- Counting votes

	Drawing Electoral Boundaries	Voter Registration	Ballot Paper Design and Production	Voter Education	Number of Polling Days	By-elections	The Count
FPTP	High	High	Low	Low	Low	High	Low
BV	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Low	High	Medium
TRS	High	High	High	Medium	High	High	Medium
AV	High	High	Low	High	Low	High	Medium
PBV	Medium	Medium	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low
List PR	Low	High	Medium	Medium	Low	Low	Low
STV	Medium	Medium	Medium	High	Low	High	High
Parallel	Medium	High	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	High
MMP	Medium	High	Medium	High	Medium	Medium	High
BC	Medium	High	Medium	High	Low	High	Medium
SNTV	Medium	Medium	Medium	Low	Low	High	Low
LV	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Low	High	Medium

Key: 🙂 = Low cost and complexity; 😐 = Medium cost and complexity; ☹️ = High cost and complexity.