

Electoral Systems and Political Efficacy

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Abstract: One of the least disputed conclusions to emanate from the research on electoral systems and turnout is that countries with proportional representation (PR) have higher turnout. There is, however, disagreement over the mechanisms by which PR produces higher turnout. Some believe that PR helps to foster higher turnout by increasing a citizen's perception that his or her vote matters in an election. We examine this theory linking institutions to electoral participation across a diverse set of countries using data from the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES).

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Introduction

One of the least disputed conclusions to emanate from the research on electoral systems and turnout is that countries with proportional representation (PR) have higher turnout. Some estimate the turnout PR systems have a turnout advantage as high as 12 percent (Franklin 1996). There is, however, disagreement over the mechanisms by which PR produces higher turnout. Some believe that PR helps to foster higher turnout by increasing a citizen's perception that his or her vote matters in an election. Because plurality elections give all the spoils to the single candidate who receives the most votes, the potential decisiveness of a vote for a minor party or non-competitive candidate is largely minimized. On the other hand, in PR systems, where the proportion of votes gained by a party is more closely related to the share of seats that party receives, all votes could potentially be decisive in determining the number of seats a party gains in parliament. Past research has, therefore, assumed, that the disproportionality between seats and votes in plurality systems instills in voters a sense that their vote is wasted if not cast for a viable candidate. This lack of efficacy contributes to comparatively lower rates of participation in plurality systems than in PR systems.

Another view emphasizes the importance of political parties in offering voters a choice. Multi-party systems are more likely to occur under PR rules and in these systems there is a greater likelihood that parties will strive to distinguish themselves ideologically (see Katz 1980). If parties fail to offer a clear choice to voters, as they are hypothesized to do in two-party systems, voters are more likely to abstain (Downs 1957). Thus voters who have more options to choose from may display greater levels of political efficacy and may be more motivated to turn out than in cases where there is no perceived choice.

These explanations hinge on the role of efficacy. The extant comparative literature, however, has relied entirely on aggregate data to examine the influence of electoral systems

on political participation and, therefore, has never explicitly measured vote efficacy, the feeling that one's vote is potentially decisive. With the collection of cross-national election studies under the Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES), it is now possible to examine how attitudes are shaped by electoral rules.¹ In this paper we address three issues in the extant literature on efficacy and electoral systems: (1) the evidence regarding the influence of macro level factors (2) how proportional representation enhances efficacy, and (3) the role of political minorities. We then develop a model to examine the relationship between electoral systems and voter efficacy using the CSES data module.

(1) Macro-Level Factors

Most empirical studies that attempt to measure the impact of institutional arrangements on turnout do so by employing aggregate data across a number of countries with different electoral systems (see, for example, Blais and Dobrzynska 1998, Jackman 1987, Powell 1980, Franklin 2004). These studies find that disproportionality reduces turnout (Jackman 1987, Jackman and Miller 1995, Blais and Dobrsynska 1998) and this finding is consistent with the assumption that an unequal translation of votes into seats diminishes some people's sense of political efficacy leading them to abstain. Disproportionality may also influence participation in other ways. Disproportional outcomes may influence participation by shaping the strategies of parties and their candidates. Parties may campaign more actively when their chances of gaining representation improve (see Jackman 1987).

Another feature of the electoral system that has the potential to influence both efficacy and turnout is the nature of the party system. Multipartyism has been found to have both a negative (Jackman 1987, Jackman and Miller 1995) and positive (Ladner and Miller 1999) effect on turnout. Jackman (1987) infers that in multiparty systems where coalition governments are the norm, citizens are discouraged from voting when the formation of

government is decided by political elites rather than by election outcomes. Therefore, as the number of parties and likelihood of coalition governments increases, efficacy and the probability of voting will decline. On the other hand, a positive relationship between the number of parties and turnout is consistent with the expectation that parties increase turnout by mobilizing voters, strengthening partisan attachments and offering greater choice. These differing effects of multipartism indicate that a persuasive case can be made for both positive or negative effects. On the one hand, multipartism should promote efficacy and stimulate turnout by strengthening partisanship and offering voters more choice. Yet, voters may also feel less efficacious when coalitions are the norm and governments are determined by party elites.²

Multipartism can also positively influence turnout by affecting strength of partisan attachments. The larger number of parties and a tendency not to converge to the ideological center in PR systems should increase the options from which voters can choose and result in fewer abstentions. Moreover, voters are more likely to have strong attachments to parties that cater more specifically to their needs as opposed to catch-all parties that appeal to the median voter. Strength of partisan attachments has been found to be related to the electoral system. In systems that foster extreme parties, voters develop stronger attachments (Bowler, Lanoue, and Savoie 1994). Past research has also shown that voters with strong party attachments are more likely to be interested in politics and more likely to vote (Campbell et al. 1960; Verba, Nie and Kim 1978). Election returns from Swiss communes where majority and PR electoral systems are used suggest that part of the boost in turnout gained in PR systems is from the increased number of parties (Ladner and Milner 1999).

From these aggregate studies, however, it is not clear how the macro-level factors related to the electoral system (such as multipartism and disproportionality) influence political participation. Do more disproportional systems depress voter efficacy due to the

higher probability of wasted votes? Does multipartism increase turnout by increasing partisan attachments and efficacy? Or, alternatively, does multipartism reduce turnout by decreasing efficacy because of an increased likelihood of coalition governments and the lack of decisiveness of a vote in determining government composition?

(2) Electoral Systems and Efficacy

The assumption that macro-level factors associated with the electoral systems affect voters' sense of efficacy is largely consistent with the advantages cited by PR advocates. PR advocates often cite its potential for increasing citizen efficacy and engagement in politics as one of the fundamental benefits of PR over plurality or first past the post (FPP) systems. The explanation for why PR would increase efficacy and engagement has tended to focus on the fairness of the system. PR rules can be seen as more "fair" when compared to FPP systems because they reduce the proportion of voters who cast "wasted" votes. By increasing the effective impact of individual votes, PR rules might increase attachment to and trust in a political system (Amy 1993). Consequently, an electoral system that ensures that the fewest votes are wasted will presumably motivate more people to vote. Systems that distort the translation of votes into seats may alienate and discourage small or "minor" party supporters who are not fairly represented (Bowler, Lanoue, and Savoie 1994). Researchers using aggregate data have suggested that this alienation may result in a diminished sense of efficacy and depress turnout (Powell 1986; Jackman 1987, 1995; Blais and Carty 1990; Franklin 1996).

(3) Role of Political Minorities

Finally, there is little discussion in the literature about which voters will be advantaged or disadvantaged by the electoral arrangements; there may be a differential

impact both in terms of efficacy and participation. For example, large party supporters under plurality rules are not hypothesized to be discouraged from voting by the electoral system. However, it is difficult to distinguish between large and small party supporters in the absence of individual data. Anderson and Guillory (1997) suggest that the status as a political minority is an important variable when examining the influence of political institutions and satisfaction with democracy. Those supporting parties that were not in government were more likely to be satisfied with democracy in consensual systems that aim to restrain majority rule by requiring or encouraging the sharing of power between the majority and the minority (see Lijphart 1984). In contrast, in majoritarian systems, where power is concentrated in the hands of the majority, persons who recall voting for the losing party were more dissatisfied. The implementation of PR in New Zealand after a history of plurality elections also provides evidence that those supporting small parties were more likely to increase in efficacy (Banducci, Donovan and Karp 1999) and participation (Karp and Banducci 1999) after the transition to a proportional system. Thus we have reason to expect that the effects of the electoral system on political efficacy are likely to depend on whether a citizen is in the political minority.

Expectations

In sum, the findings from earlier studies suggest that PR should foster higher turnout but are not conclusive when it comes to explaining the mechanisms by which a voter's sense of efficacy may be altered or whose electoral participation is most likely to be affected by the electoral arrangements. When institutional rules make it more difficult for small parties to gain representation, we should expect those who prefer small parties to be more dissatisfied with the political system (i.e. have lower levels of efficacy) and, consequently, to be less likely to vote. Therefore, the effects of preferring a small party on a voter's sense of efficacy

will depend on the level of disproportionality that is produced by the electoral system and the difference in efficacy levels of small and large party supporters will be greatest in the most disproportional systems.

To reconcile the contradictory expectations about the effects of multipartism, we distinguish between the number of parties holding executive power in a coalition government and the number of parties gaining representation in parliament. On the one hand, if voters are sensitive to the potential effect of their vote on government formation, as the number of parties in government increases efficacy will be expected to decrease. On the other hand, increased numbers of parties represented in parliament should enhance efficacy.

The Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES)

Part of the difficulty in determining the relationship between electoral systems and turnout is the reliance on proxy variables and aggregate turnout to draw inferences about the interactions between institutions and individual behavior. While aggregate cross-national studies are useful, these hypotheses are best tested with individual-level data. But such an approach requires a sample large enough to include citizens living under different combinations of institutional arrangements. The data must also include relevant variables such as measures of party preference and efficacy that are collected in a comparable fashion. Although there have been several large cross-national surveys, none have contained the appropriate measures to examine voter participation. The World Values Surveys (1981-1984; 1990-1993) include a wealth of data from 45 countries measuring political attitudes and confidence in political institutions. The International Social Survey Program (ISSP) is another valuable source for cross-national data on political behavior and attitudes. However, since neither of these studies is conducted to coincide with an election, there is no direct measure of whether or not a citizen cast a ballot.³ Likewise, the Eurobarometer studies that

regularly sample citizens in member states of the European Union occasionally ask respondents who they voted for in the last election or who they intend to vote for in a future election.⁴ More direct measures of participation are available for the elections to the European Parliament but the electoral rules for electing MEPs do not vary substantially across member states.

The Comparative Study of Electoral Systems (CSES) overcomes these limitations by relying on indigenous teams of researchers to administer a common module of questions either before or directly after a national election. We rely on data primarily from Module 1 (1996-2001) and supplement available data from other countries participating only in Module 2 (2001-2006) to maximize the total number of countries that could be included for analysis.⁵ Our sample of countries along with their electoral systems are listed in Table 1. Each country's sample is based on the eligible population of voters except for Australia and New Zealand where enrolment is compulsory and the sample is based on registered voters. These unique data allow one to examine how institutions constrain individual behavior in ways not previously possible. The diverse sample of countries available in the CSES also offers an advantage over other studies that often rely on data from advanced industrial states. Not only is there greater variation in context but individual level factors such as socio-economic status will have a greater range of values (Nevitte et al. 2000).

The sample of countries can be divided into three general types of electoral systems: proportional representation, plurality or first-past-the-post, majoritarian (using the alternative vote) and mixed systems that combine plurality with PR in one chamber.⁶ Fourteen of the twenty two countries in our sample use PR to determine the overall partisan composition of the lower-house. Among these systems, the diversity in electoral arrangements results in substantial variation in the degree to which translation of votes into seats results in proportionality. Among the factors accounting for differences is district magnitude which can

have a strong impact on proportionality, with larger districts being associated with greater proportionality (Katz 1997, 134). Two of the countries, the Netherlands and Israel, have a single national constituency electing 150, and 120 members, respectively. Germany, New Zealand, and Mexico also have constituencies where about half of the members in parliament are selected by closed party lists to correct partisan imbalances resulting from the election of electorate candidates by plurality rules. Japan, Hungary and the Ukraine have non-corrective mixed systems, where some candidates are elected in single member districts by either majority (as in the case in Hungary) or plurality (as in the case of Japan) rules, while others in the same chamber are elected by PR. The difference is that the PR component is not used as a corrective.⁷

Some countries also employ thresholds; higher thresholds are designed to keep the smallest parties out of parliament and affect the proportionality of seats to votes. In some cases, the threshold varies depending on whether a single party is standing alone or together with other parties (as is the case in Czech republic and Poland). In other cases, the threshold is both local and national as is the case in Germany and New Zealand where parties can enter parliament by either winning a constituency seat or by winning more than five percent of the party vote. Electoral formulae can in theory affect proportionality within PR countries, with the *Sainte-Laguë* producing the most proportional outcome while the *d'Hondt* gives a bonus to larger parties (Blais and Massicotte 1996, 58-59). However, Katz (1997) finds that these formulae make little difference to proportionality.

Among the PR systems, Poland, Slovenia, the Czech Republic, and Spain produce the most disproportional outcomes. These countries have either higher thresholds or small district magnitudes. The small district magnitude in Spain has repeatedly allowed the winning party to get a majority of seats with a plurality of votes (Blais and Massicotte 1996, 57; see also Gunther 1989). Australia uses the alternative vote for the lower-house to achieve a majority.

Instead of casting a single vote for a candidate, voters rank their preferences. If no candidate receives a majority, the candidate who receives the smallest number of first preferences is eliminated and the second preferences are then transferred to the other candidates until one candidate receives a majority. In the 1996 election, the system produced more disproportional results than any of the countries with mixed or PR systems (with the exception of Poland), but was more proportional than any of the plurality systems.

Three countries in the sample held their first elections under a system that guarantees more proportional outcomes than the previous electoral system. The Ukraine, which previously had used a majoritarian system that required runoffs, adopted a mixed member system in which half the seats in the legislature are selected by PR and the other selected by plurality rules. New Zealand, which had previously been characterized as a “virtually perfect example of a Westminster system” adopted a mixed system where PR determines the overall partisan composition of parliament (see Vowles et al. 1998). Japan replaced its single non-transferable vote (SNTV) system, which severely disadvantaged small parties, with a mixed non-corrective system capable of producing more proportional outcomes (see Woodall 2000).⁸

Methods and Measurement

Our expectations about electoral system effects on turnout hinge on the role of efficacy as an intervening variables between the electoral system and the decision to vote. Since the introduction in the cross- national work on political culture and participation (Almond and Verba 1963), the measurement of political efficacy has been the subject of debate. Internal efficacy refers to an “individuals’ self-perceptions that they are capable of understanding politics and competent enough to participate in political act such as voting” (Miller, Miller and Schneider 1980; see also Niemi, Craig and Silver 1991). In contrast,

external efficacy refers to “expressed beliefs about political institutions” and the belief that leaders and institutions are responsive to the participation of individuals (Miller, Miller and Schneider 1980). If we intend to assess the extent of the psychological effect or how features of the electoral system affect efficacy, we are then interested in how the translation of seats to votes and elections affect the aspects of efficacy that are related to parties and elections.

Of the CSES items, the question that measures this aspect of efficacy is, “Some people say that no matter who people vote for, it won’t make any difference to what happens. Others say that who people vote for can make a difference to what happens.” The variable has a four point scale ranging from one to five with positive values indicating higher levels of efficacy.⁹ This question is the most direct measure of evaluations of the efficacy of a vote available and, thus, how the electoral system translates votes into seats. In terms of face validity, this question asks respondents to evaluate the meaningfulness of voting, a component of elections as an accountability mechanism, and, therefore, should be the most direct measure of the feelings of efficacy that can be attributed to the act of voting.

To verify that our indicator of efficacy from the CSES is indeed tapping into external efficacy and not internal efficacy, we can compare the question with other items that are intended to measure either internal or external efficacy. The deposited CSES data set does not include any of the traditional internal efficacy measures. However, if we use the original election studies that contain items tapping internal efficacy and other external efficacy items, we can compare the CSES item to these other questions. Of those election studies that participated in the CSES, Australia, the Netherlands, New Zealand, and the United States each included additional efficacy items necessary for this supplementary analysis. We have used the available items tapping internal and external efficacy in combination with the CSES item to test whether the CSES items fits with external or internal efficacy dimension. The results of a factor analysis performed on external and internal efficacy items from four

national election studies that were part of the CSES project are reported in the appendix. The findings are consistent with Acock, Clarke and Stewart (1985) who find that a two factor solution to the efficacy indicators fits across a number of countries. In all four election studies, the CSES item loaded most strongly with the other items measuring external efficacy. In New Zealand, the factor loading is not strong for the CSES item but it does load more strongly on the external efficacy dimension. Therefore, there is clear evidence that the CSES item measures an aspect of external efficacy.¹⁰

(Table 1 here)

If we are interested in distinguishing how disproportionality affects small party supporters differently than large party supporters, we also need an indication of party preferences. The CSES includes two measures designed to measure party preference. One measure asks respondents whether they think of themselves as being close to any political party and if so to identify that party (additional parties are coded only if the respondent volunteers). This question, however, presents a problem in classifying respondents as either small or large party supporter as just 45 percent of the sample responded that they were close to a political party. The other CSES measure consists of a series of items that measure evaluations of up to six parties employing a ten point scale ranging from strongly like to strongly dislike (see appendix for exact wording).¹¹ Using this series of party evaluations, the preferred party can be identified as the party that is most positively evaluated by the respondent. When this method is used to determine party preference, 67.6 percent of the sample evaluate one party more highly than another. About 28 of the sample evaluated more than one party equally while just under 4 percent said that they were unaware or did not know about any of the parties. Using the like-dislike scale allows to to classify a significantly larger proportion of the sample according to party preferences.

Strength of party preference can also be determined by using the value of the most preferred party. High values indicate a strong preference for a party (or parties) while lower values indicate a weaker preference. Less than one percent of the sample who evaluated at least one party failed to rank a single party above zero. Since the party likes and dislikes measure has the advantage of not only identifying the party preferences of more respondents than the party proximity measure but also measuring the strength of that preference, we rely on it for our analysis. If the preference is for one of the two largest parties, the respondent is identified as having a preference for a large party. Generally, parties that receive at least 20 percent of the vote are classified as large parties. For example, in Germany, the CDU and the SPD are classified as large parties, receiving 41 and 28 percent of the vote in 1998 respectively. In some countries, such as Canada, Norway, and the Ukraine, just one party received at least 20 percent of the vote. All others are coded as small parties (see Appendix A).

Differences in Efficacy by Party Preference and Electoral System

We first examine variations in strength of preference and efficacy by large and small party supporters. Table 2 shows the distribution of party preferences by country and electoral system.¹² Not surprisingly, in plurality and majoritarian systems more citizens prefer large parties than in PR and mixed systems. About a third of the electorate expresses a preference for small parties in PR and mixed systems compared to about one-fifth in plurality or majoritarian systems. Excluding Canada where only one party counted as a large party, around just 12 percent express a preference for small parties in the remaining plurality systems and Australia. In the mixed systems, more citizens prefer large to small parties though there is considerable variation across countries. In newer democracies that have mixed systems, there are smaller differences between the numbers preferring large and small

parties reflecting a less stable party system. PR and mixed systems also have the highest proportion without a single preference suggesting that these systems might encourage multiple party attachments.

As is evident also from Table 2, citizens in PR systems have the strongest preferences, while those in plurality systems have the weakest. In the table, those who gave his or her preferred party a ranking of 9 or 10 on a 10 point scale are coded as strongly liking the party while those who gave a 0 or 1 to their least preferred party are coded as strongly disliking. These measures indicate how strongly parties are liked or disliked. Almost 40 percent of those in PR countries strongly like their preferred party indicating strong preferences and suggesting greater affinity for a party. Only 30 percent in plurality/majority systems express this strong party preference. Together these findings are consistent with expectations that PR systems increase the options for which voters can choose which helps to foster stronger attachments to political parties.

(Table 2 here)

Figure 1 reports the proportion of citizens who reported having the highest level of vote efficacy and shows the influence of party preference on efficacy by electoral system. Despite the cultural differences between PR countries in our sample, they have far higher levels of efficacy than those found in plurality systems. While not shown in the figure, Canada has the lowest levels of efficacy of any country in the sample, with just 14 percent placing in the top category of efficacy. Importantly, the differences in levels of efficacy between large and small party supporters are more substantial in plurality systems. A closer examination of these differences within plurality and majority countries (not reported in the figure) indicates that the difference is largest in the United States and smallest in Canada. This difference is likely due to the fact that the small parties in Canada are regional parties that do gain representation. Nevertheless, those who prefer small parties in each of the

plurality and majority countries are less efficacious than those who prefer large parties which provides support for our initial hypothesis that these types of systems discourage those who prefer small parties. Lower levels of efficacy are also evident among those not having a single party preference (except in plurality/majority systems where efficacy is lowest for small party supporters).

(Figure 1)

Micro and Macro Determinants of Efficacy

Our initial examination of the data suggests some support for our expectations that the effect of electoral systems on a citizen's sense of efficacy is conditioned by whether or not that citizen supports a small party or large party. We now turn to a multivariate analysis to test whether the relationships observed in the bivariate analysis hold up when controlling for other factors. In this multivariate analysis, several measures are used to capture the effects of the electoral system. To estimate the psychological effect, a measure of the disproportionality of the system is included in the model.¹³ As a measure of inclusiveness, we include a measure of the number of parties in parliament gaining over two percent of the seats.¹⁴ To measure the effects of coalition government, we use the number of parties represented in government. Although increased representation of parties in parliament may lead to broader coalition governments, the two measures are only weakly correlated ($r=.20$). There is also a reason to believe that where the outcome is expected to be close citizens may feel more efficacious. Therefore, a control for the closeness of the election is included by taking the difference between the two top vote getters. Efficacy may also be influenced by whether citizens vote directly for candidates or vote for a party list.¹⁵ Finally political development may have a potential influence so a dummy variable is used to distinguish new and old democracies.

Since our expectation is that disproportionality is likely to disadvantage small party and more likely to adversely affect small party supporters, we include an interaction term

between small party preference and disproportionality. Other dummy variables are used to identify the nature of party preferences leaving those who prefer large parties in the referent category. We also include strength of party preference (as discussed above) which should be positively associated with both efficacy and turnout. For those with no preference, we set strength of preference to the neutral category.¹⁶ We expect those who are older as well as those with higher levels of education (ranging from one to eight) to be more efficacious and be more likely to vote. Age, gender, and education are also used in the model as controls.¹⁷

Testing the Effect of Macro and Micro Level Variables on Efficacy

The results of the model for efficacy are reported in Table 3.¹⁸ In response to the hypotheses set out earlier, there are two important points that should be noted about the results. First, the effects of disproportionality are substantial. Specifically, a citizen in a system that produces perfectly proportional results has a probability of .49 of having the highest level of efficacy. As the system becomes most disproportional, the probability decreases to .23. The negative interaction term between small party preference and disproportionality indicates that effect is somewhat greater for small parties. Figure 2 helps to illustrate these effects. As Figure 2 reveals, the negative effects of disproportionality are greatest for those who prefer small parties. In a system that produces the most disproportional results, a person preferring a small party has a probability of .18 of having the highest level of efficacy while a person preferring a large party has a probability of .24.

Second multipartism appears to have a negative and not a positive influence on efficacy. The number of parties represented in government has a negative impact on efficacy while the number of parties in parliament has no influence on efficacy. This finding is consistent with the expectation that voters will feel they have less influence on determining

who is in government when there are broad coalitions but there is no mobilizing influence on efficacy due to a greater number of parties.

We should also note that the strength of party preference has a large and significant effect on efficacy. Those with a greater affinity for a preferred party have a greater sense that their vote makes a difference. Indeed no other variable in the model has as large of an overall impact. Other individual level factors influencing efficacy are the level of formal education. As for the remaining macro level variables, candidate based systems appear to enhance efficacy while we find no significant differences in efficacy between new and old democracies or in elections where the outcome was closer.

(Table 3 and Figure 2 here)

Discussion

The implementation of the CSES project has allowed a test of some of the assumed links between macro level factors such as electoral systems and individual behavior such as electoral participation. This cross-national and collaborative project is an important step forward in allowing researchers to link these macro and micro level characteristics and recognizes that not only do a multitude of factors shape individual political behavior but that some of these factors stem from the context in which individual decisions are shaped or made. This paper has explored how voter efficacy is shaped by the electoral system. To date most evidence showing a link between electoral systems and turnout could only make assumptions about how electoral systems affected voter efficacy because they were based on aggregate, country level data.

Regarding the influence of electoral systems on efficacy, this paper contributes to our understanding of the effects of disproportionality and multipartism. PR systems are less likely to produce disproportionality in the translation of seats to votes. However, such systems are also more likely to produce coalition governments. Importantly, we find that not all voters are

equally adversely affected by disproportional outcomes. The efficacy of those citizens who support small parties (parties most likely to lose under electoral rules that produce disproportionality between seats and votes) is more adversely affected in plurality or majoritarian systems. On the other hand, as the number of parties that form government increases, efficacy declines. Therefore, PR systems enhance efficacy, most effectively among small party supporters by producing proportional outcomes. However, coalition governments which are also a consequence of PR systems tend to reduce voter efficacy particularly when the size of the coalition is broad.

That macro level variables can influence attitudes such as voter efficacy take us a step further in understanding how electoral systems influence voters turnout. We have long known that an individual's assessment of the meaningfulness of his or her voter shapes the decision to vote and that there is a correlation between proportionality and higher turnout. However, before the implementation of the CSES it has been difficult to examine how these macro and micro level relationships fit together.

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Endnotes

¹ In a study using the CSES data, Norris (2004) finds that efficacy increases the probability of voting. However, she does not examine whether efficacy varies across electoral systems and other institutional features related to the electoral system.

² Some inconsistencies with regard to the effect of the number of parties may result from how the number of parties is measured. Some studies (Jackman 1986, Jackman and Miller 1995) use the effective number of parties as an indicator of multipartism (see Laakso and Taagepera 1979). Blais and Dobrzenska (1998) use both the effective number of parties and the number of parties contesting an election and, while both have a negative relationship with turnout, they find that the number of parties contesting the election performs better than the effective number of parties. However, using the effective number of parties or the number of parties contesting an election as the one indicator of multipartism, meant capture both the effect on efficacy of the decisiveness of elections in government formation and the extent of party mobilization efforts, to may not reflect the dynamics of party system effects on efficacy and turnout. The effects of party systems on efficacy and mobilization may be better captured by two variables. First, a citizen's feeling of efficacy, that her vote was decisive in determining a government and policy, may vary by the actual number of parties in government rather than the effective number of parties. After all, the number of coalition partners is arguably a more familiar feature of the party system than the number of effective parties to voters. Additionally, the potential for policy change, which would highlight the effect of voting on policy, has been to decrease as the number of parties in coalition government increases (Tsebelis 1995). Second, the number of parties in parliament may directly influence turnout because as the number of parties increases there will be greater party mobilization efforts.

³ The World Values Survey asks which party citizens intend to vote for in the next election and includes a response for those intending not to vote. Given this design there is no measure for party preference for nonvoters.

⁴ These studies rarely if ever distinguish between voting and party preference.

⁵ This analysis relies on the August 4, 2003 version of Module 1 (1996-2001). To increase the number of countries, data from the June 29, 2005 version of Module 2 (2001-2006) have also been added. These countries include Belgium, Finland, and Ireland. Countries holding only presidential elections have been excluded. Other countries that were included in this release have been excluded because of missing values or incomplete information. For further information about the CSES see: <http://www.umich.edu/~nes/cses/cses.htm>.

⁶ At first glance, the CSES may appear to under-represent the number of plurality countries. The sample includes Canada, the United Kingdom, and the United States. There are, however, few other plurality countries that could have been included (ie. India and Jamaica).

⁷ Hungary also has a mixed system where 176 members are elected by majority in single member districts and 152 members are elected by PR. An additional 58 national seats are used to correct some of the distortions that remain (see Blais and Massicotte 66). Since it is not entirely corrective we classify it as a mixed system.

⁸ Nevertheless, the first election held in 1996 under the new system continued to produce disproportional results that exceeded that of other mixed systems (see Appendix) because few SMDs experienced bipolar competition (see Reed 1997).

⁹ About 3 percent of the total cases are missing of which less than half are coded as “don’t know”. These missing cases are not evenly distributed across countries. Some of these missing values correspond to missing values on other variables suggesting that the problem is not unique to this variable. Since we cannot be sure why these cases are missing, they have been dropped from the analysis.

¹⁰ We also performed a confirmatory factor analysis. The results indicate that a two factor solution fits the data well. Furthermore, the CSES measure is always on the same dimension as the other measures of external efficacy.

¹¹ Collaborators were instructed to ask about all parties represented or likely to be represented in the Parliament (or running in the presidential contest). In circumstances where there are more than six such parties, collaborators were instructed to ask at least about the six most relevant parties, in terms of likely size and importance in coalition formation. If parties only contest elections in part of the country, those parties need only be asked about in those parts of the country where they contest seats (Final report of the CSES).

¹² Given that we have only one country with a majoritarian system (Australia), we consider plurality and majority systems together since these systems represent one form of democracy while PR systems represent another (see Lijphart 1999).

¹³ This measure is based on the Gallagher index..

¹⁴ The number of parties gaining representation is correlated with disproportionality ($r=-.54$).

¹⁵ Australia, Britain, Canada, Ireland, and the United States are coded as candidate based systems.

¹⁶ The models were estimated with and without no preference (which account for less than five percent of the sample) to determine whether this influenced the effects for strength of preference. The effects remained the same.

¹⁷ Ethnicity is missing in about half of the countries. Therefore we have excluded it in the analysis.

¹⁸ Models have been estimated in Stata using the cluster option so that standard errors are adjusted for clustering at the country level.

Table 1: Factor Loadings for the CSES Measure and Other Items Measuring Political Efficacy

	Efficacy	
	External	Internal
<i>American National Election Study (1996)</i>		
CSES Measure	.61	.05
How much do you feel that having elections makes the government pay attention to what the people think	.79	-.15
Over the years, how much attention do you feel the government pays to what people think when it decides what to do?	.75	-.23
Public officials don't care much what people like me think	-.31	.68
Sometimes politics and government seem so complicated that a person like me can't really understand what's going on	.08	.76
People like me don't have any say about what the government does	-.31	.77
<i>Dutch Election Study (1998)</i>		
CSES Measure	.55	-.09
MPs do (not) care about opinions of people like me	.77	-.08
Parties only interested in my vote, not in my opinion	.72	-.11
People like me have no influence on politics	.70	-.15
So many people vote, my vote does not matter	.45	-.09
MPs quickly lose contact with citizens	.60	-.02
Consider myself qualified for politics	-.08	.77
Well informed about political problems	-.01	.76
Politics sometimes too complicated	.25	-.66
<i>New Zealand Election Study (1996)</i>		
CSES Measure	.33	-.12
Most Members of Parliament are out of touch with the rest of the country	.80	.15
People like me don't have any say about what the government does	.77	.06
I don't think politicians and public servants care much about what people like me think	.83	.03
Sometimes politics seems so complicated people like me can't understand what goes on	.50	-.61
I feel that I could do as good a job in public office as most people	.17	.86
<i>Australian Election Study (1998)</i>		
CSES Measure	.76	-.16
Some people say that Federal politicians know what ordinary people think. Others say that Federal politicians don't know...	-.73	-.15
I feel that I have a pretty good understanding of the important political issues facing Australia	-.20	.82
I feel that I could do as good a job in public office as most people	.19	.81

Note: Principal components analysis with varimax rotation

Table 2: Distribution of Party Preferences by Country and Electoral System

Most Preferred Party

		Most Preferred Party				
		Large Party	Small Party	No Single Preference	Don't Know	Strongly Like
Plurality/Majority Systems	Australia	56.3	12.6	29.6	1.5	43.5
	Canada	29.0	47.7	20.9	2.4	18.2
	Great Britain	59.9	18.8	17.9	3.4	36.0
	United States	73.8	6.0	18.9	1.3	21.3
	Total	54.8	21.1	21.9	2.1	29.9
Mixed Systems (non corrective)	Hungary	26.6	19.0	50.0	4.5	55.8
	Japan	38.6	20.5	31.1	9.9	12.2
	Korea	50.7	11.3	35.5	2.5	19.5
	Russia	45.4	25.8	24.6	4.3	52.5
	Ukraine	33.0	32.9	29.4	4.8	47.3
	Total	38.9	21.9	34.0	5.2	37.8
PR Systems	Belgium	...	73.6	23.8	2.6	23.5
	Czech	52.0	30.9	15.9	1.2	54.2
	Denmark	51.5	31.6	16.9	0.1	51.4
	Finland	38.1	31.4	27.3	3.2	26.0
	Germany	37.2	33.5	27.1	2.2	46.3
	Iceland	50.2	23.5	20.7	5.6	29.3
	Ireland	42.9	22.9	29.1	5.0	41.8
	Israel	47.3	21.6	26.8	4.3	50.7
	Mexico	36.9	35.2	22.0	5.9	41.4
	Netherlands	12.2	20.5	64.6	2.7	26.3
	New Zealand	43.9	26.8	26.5	2.8	43.0
	Norway	29.7	50.1	19.4	0.8	40.2
	Poland	43.4	26.2	22.2	8.1	51.2
	Portugal	49.9	19.1	26.9	4.1	39.2
	Slovenia	33.7	24.3	29.7	12.4	33.6
	Spain	58.7	17.6	22.3	1.4	26.4
	Sweden	48.6	28.0	21.1	2.3	37.9
	Switzerland	47.1	20.3	26.5	6.1	32.7
Total	40.2	29.9	26.0	4.0	38.6	
All		42.1	27	26.9	3.9	37.1

Note: Data are weighted to adjust for unequal sample size and over-reported vote. Each country's sample is approximately 1250. No single preference indicates those who gave the same score for two or more parties. Don't know indicates those who responded "don't know" to all parties.

Figure 1: Party Preferences and Efficacy

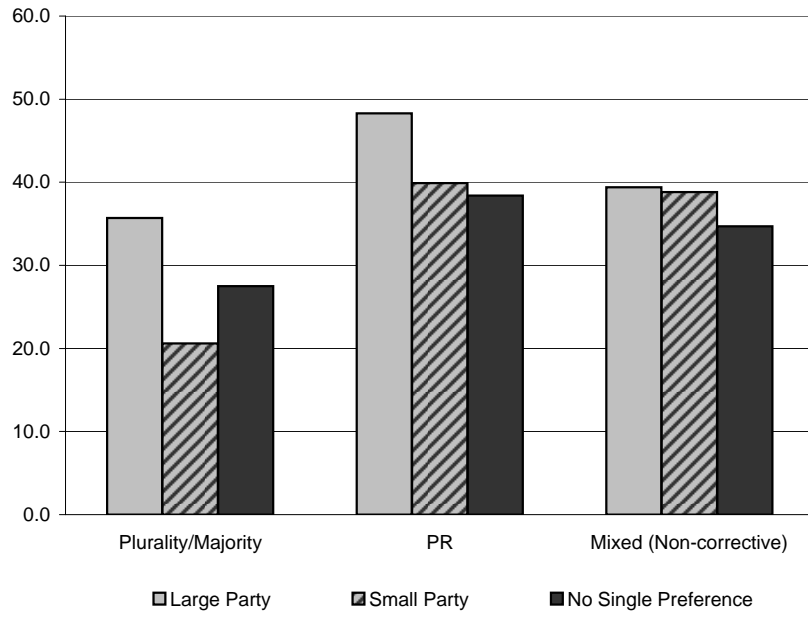
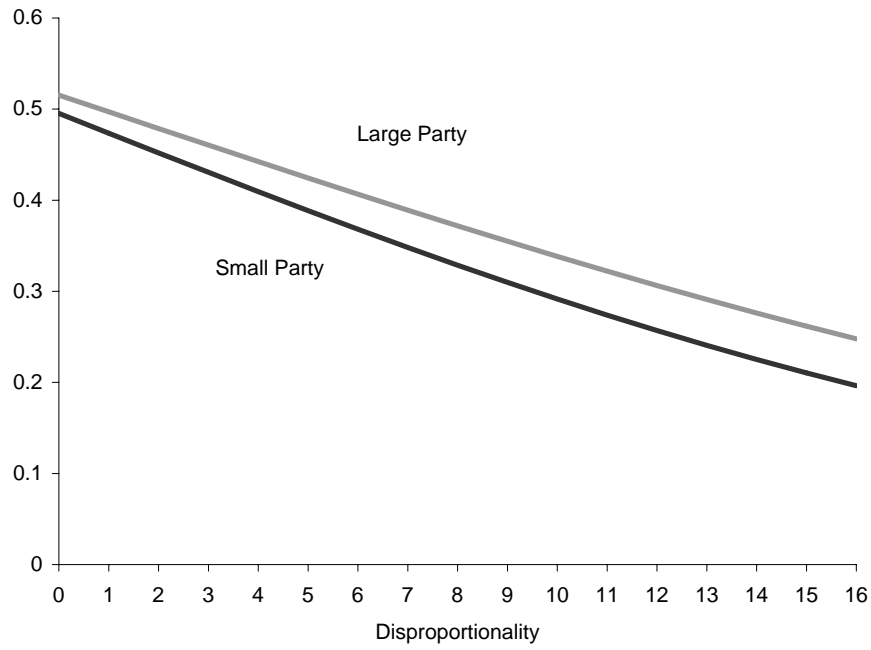


Table 3: Efficacy Model: Ordered Logit

	Coef.	Robust S.E.	Probability at Highest Category		
			Min.	Max	Difference
Small party preferred	-.08	(.06)	.40	.38	-.02
No single party	-.03	(.05)	.40	.39	-.01
No preference	-.16 *	(.09)	.40	.36	-.04
Strength of preference	2.03 ***	(.13)	.12	.52	.39
Age (in 10s)	.02	(.02)	.39	.42	.03
Education	.37 ***	(.11)	.35	.44	.09
Female	-.03	(.02)	.40	.39	-.01
Parties in parliament	-.13	(.64)	.41	.39	-.02
Parties in government	-1.30 **	(.53)	.45	.22	-.23
Candidate based system	.34 *	(.19)	.38	.46	.08
New democracy	.10	(.21)	.39	.42	.03
Disproportionality	-.07 ***	(.02)	.49	.23	-.26
Disproportionality*small party	-.01 **	(.01)	.52	.19	-.33
Competition	.31	(.40)	.36	.43	.07
Constant 1	-1.47	(.45)			
Constant 2	-.64	(.47)			
Constant 3	.33	(.48)			
Constant 4	1.54	(.51)			
n	45,268				

**p<.01; *p<.05

Figure 2: Effects of Disproportionality on Efficacy by Party Preference



Estimates derived from Table 3.