On the Origins of Electoral Systems and Political Parties

The Role of Elections in Multi-Member Districts

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Abstract

The old, understudied electoral system composed of multi-member districts, open ballot and plurality rule is presented as the most remote scene of the origin of both political parties and new electoral systems. A survey of the uses of this set of electoral rules in different parts of the world during remote and recent periods shows its wide spread. A model of voting by this electoral system demonstrates that, while it can produce varied and pluralistic representation, it also provides incentives to form factional or partisan candidacies. Famous negative reactions to the emergence of factions and political parties during the 18th and 19th centuries are reinterpreted in this context. Many electoral rules and procedures invented since the second half of the 19th century, including the Australian ballot, single-member districts, limited and cumulative ballots, and proportional representation rules, derived from the search to reduce the effects of the 'originating' multi-member district system in favor of a single party sweep. The general relations between political parties and electoral systems are restated to account for the foundational stage here discussed.

Keywords : Political parties, electoral systems, multimember districts.

<u>Introduction</u>

Political parties and electoral systems have been analyzed both as a cause and as a consequence of each other. First, a long tradition of empirical studies has focused on the consequences of electoral systems on party systems. Maurice Duverger postulates that "old" political parties were created internally in elected (and also in non-elected) assemblies and parliamentary groups (Duverger 1951; see also LaPalombara and Weiner 1966). In a social choice perspective, the origin of political parties is also found in an endogenous process in elected legislatures embodying incentives to form enduring voting coalitions (Schwartz 1989, Aldrich 1995). Empirical analyses of the numbers of political parties and their relations, typically focusing on democratic regimes during the second half of the 20th century, usually assume that political parties derive from elections and electoral systems that are given and can be taken as the independent variable in the explanatory framework. (Duverger 1951, Rae 1967, Lijphart 1994).

An alternative approach has upside down this relationship by postulating that it is the parties that choose electoral systems and manipulate the rules of elections. According to this approach, the origin of the invention and adoption of different electoral rules and procedures, especially during the 19th and early 20th centuries, should be found in the incentives created by political party competition. In this approach it is assumed, thus, that it is the political parties that can be taken as given and work as the independent variable to explain the emergence of different electoral rules. (Grumm 1958, Boix 1999, Colomer 2004a, 2005).

The present paper tries to disentangle this discussion by specifying the type of assembly and electoral conditions that can be placed in the most remote origins of the

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creation of political parties. Specifically, I emphasize the role of traditional elections in multi-member districts, with open ballot and plurality rule, in the initial creation of political parties. This understudied, 'originating' electoral system was used very widely in local and national assemblies in pre-democratic or early democratic periods before and during the 19th century; it is still probably the most common procedure in small community, condominium, school, university, and union assemblies and elections; and it has also been adopted in a few new democracies in recent times. This set of electoral rules appears indeed as almost 'natural' and 'spontaneous' to many communities when they have to choose a procedure of collective decision-making based on votes, especially because it permits a varied representation of the community.

The important point to be remarked here is that these traditional electoral rules, while being able to produce fair representation, they also create strong incentives for the formation of 'factional' candidacies or voting coalitions, in another word 'parties'. Under the 'originating' electoral system, factions or parties tend to induce 'voting in bloc' for a list of candidates, which may change election results radically. On some crucial cases, it was mostly as a consequence of this type of experience that different political leaders, candidates and parties began to seek for alternative, less intuitive or 'spontaneous' electoral rules able to produce less advantage for the faction or party best organized. This opened the way in more recent times for parties and politically motivated scholars to invent and choose new electoral systems.

The structure of the paper is the following. First, the 'originating' electoral system based on multi-member districts, open ballot and plurality rule is defined and discussed. Second, a survey of the uses of this set of electoral rules and some of its variants in political elections in different parts of the world during remote and recent periods shows its wide spread. Third, a simple model of voting under this type of

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electoral system demonstrates the incentives to form factional or partisan candidacies. Fourth, a number of prominent, mostly negative reactions to the emergence of political parties during the 18th and 19th centuries are collected and reinterpreted in the light of this discussion. Fifth, a great variety of electoral rules and procedures invented since the second half of the 19th century is presented as directly derived from the 'originating' system in the intention to reduce its effects in favor of a single party. In the conclusion, the general relations between political parties and electoral systems are restated to account for the foundational stage here discussed.

1. The 'originating' electoral system

The originating electoral system here analyzed has been widely used, especially in relatively simple elections with rather homogeneous electorates, particularly at the beginning of modern suffrage regulations and for small-size local governments. Specifically, with some variants, it was used from the 13th century on in English town meetings and shire (county) courts (Bishop 1893), German and Swiss communes and cantons (Lloyd 1907), Italian communes (Brucker 1983, Guidi 1992, Hyde 1973, Waley 1988), French municipalities, and from the 15th century on, also in provincial Estates and the Estates-General (Babeau 1882, 1894, Baker 1987, Cadart 1952). During the 17th and 18th centuries it was also adopted in the British colonies in North America (Sydnor 1962, Pole 1971), as well as, by early 19th century, in Juntas and Cortes elections in Spain and in the Spanish and Portuguese colonies in the Americas (Annino 1995, Graham 1990).

This is basically the same type of electoral system that is typically used in many meetings and assemblies of modern housing condominiums, neighborhood associations, school and university boards and delegates, professional organizations, corporation boards, and students' and workers' unions. In these as well as in many of the traditional communities mentioned in the previous paragraph, individual representation was well suited to contexts of high economic and ethnic homogeneity in which it was relatively easy to identify common interests and priority public goods to be provided by the elect. As will be detailed in the next section, the 'originating' system rules have also been widely used in larger-scale national and local political elections with limited suffrage rights or in new democratic experiments in more recent times.

The essential elements of this electoral system are the following:

* Multi-member districts (M > 1).

* Open ballot (V $\leq$ M).

* Plurality or majority rule.

Where:

M: District magnitude or number of seats to be filled;

V: Number of votes per voter.

The first element, multi-member districts, has been understudied in the recent political science literature on elections. Well established empirical 'tendencies' in the relation between electoral systems and party systems consider two basic types of electoral systems: one combining single-member districts with majoritarian rules (which are associated to bipartism) and another combining multi-member districts with proportional representation rules (corresponding to multipartism). In contrast, the

combination of multi-member districts with majoritarian rules has attracted much less attention. Indeed this type of electoral system would be difficult to fit into the mentioned relationships since it permits an individual candidate-based, highly pluralistic representation which is characteristic of none of the other two types of electoral system mentioned (respectively associated to individual representation and to pluralistic representation, but not the two together). Variants of multi-member district elections include both direct voting (like in the old German communes and the English and North-American local assemblies) and indirect elections of delegates in several stages (more traditional in France, Italy, Spain and Latin America in remote periods).

The second element, open ballot, permits voters to choose individual candidates, not a partisan list. This is compatible with voting by both raising hands (like in traditional Swiss communes or English counties) and oral vote (like in colonial Virginia, for instance), even if this requires voting separately for a candidate for each seat. Voting separately for individual candidates by raising hands or by oral vote, as well as the request of a second or further rounds for each seat, are procedures favoring this type of elections to be hold in an assembly of voters, where successive voting rounds can be held comfortably. An assembly of voters can also proceed with secret ballot (including early forms like typical English poll-books with the names of the candidates over and against which were set down the votes, or written ballots, already used in some North-American colonies since the 17th century). Distributing groups of voters among different booths within the same multi-member district, which may facilitate secret ballot, is also compatible with this type of system (as in most at-large local or state elections in the United States). Thus, all these alternative formulas –oral or written ballot, assembly or booth voting, second or further round rules— are compatible with the essentials of the electoral system here to be discussed.

An interesting variant refers to the number of candidates each voter can vote for. While in some cases the voter must vote for as many candidates as seats to be filled ($V = M$), an alternative common rule permits the voter to vote for <u>up to</u> as many candidates as seats ($V \leq M$), which is a limited form of approval voting (already used, for instance, in medieval England boroughs and in Italian communes, see Lines 1980). Voting for fewer candidates than seats has been called 'plumper', 'partial abstention' and other names, but 'limited approval' voting seems more in tune with well-established precise definitions and categories in modern electoral studies.

[Note: In contrast, standard approval voting permits to vote for up to all candidates but one, as presented in Brams and Fishburn 1978, 1983, Weber 1995, Colomer and McLean 1998. Interestingly, while an abundant literature exists on approval voting for single-winner elections, apparently nobody has studied approval voting for multi-winner elections, a variety much more widely used, as demonstrated in the present article].

Other variants may imply a series of successive, 'staggered' single-seat elections or, as mentioned, may require voters in a multi-seat election to choose one candidate for each seat, typically among the corresponding subset of candidates previously allocated to each seat (a procedure sometimes called 'place' system in certain state and local elections in the United States). In spite of certain contrary interpretations, none of these procedures is equivalent to a series or a collection of single-member district elections. While in single-member district elections the voter elect only one seat, in the variants of multi-member district elections now considered each voter still elects multiple seats.

In staggered successive elections for a single seat each, voters can choose their preferred candidates, if they run again and again, in the same way as they can do it in a multi-member ballot. Remember that the system here identified implies no closed party

lists of candidates, but individual-candidate votes. Even if parties present candidacies, the voters can choose candidates from different parties at successive single-seat elections in a similar way as they can do it in a multi-seat election with no party lists. A prominent example in present times is the United States Senate, in which two-member districts with staggered single-seat elections permit the election of senators from two different parties in each district, as happens with high and increasing frequency (Brunell and Grofman 1998). In 'place' systems forcing the voters to choose for each seat from a different subset of candidates, the margin of choice may be more limited. But if the voters' preferred candidates they would vote for in a multi-seat election are running for different seats, they can choose them as well. In any case, the voter can vote for candidates from different parties for different seats. (See discussion with alternative interpretations in Cox 1984, Richardson and Cooper 2003).

Regarding the third element, plurality rule is most common in this type of system, but absolute majority rule can also be used. Variants of the latter include a second or a third round by simple plurality or between the two or the three most voted candidates at the previous round (like in Ancient regime France). For several-round rules, the procedure may require the voter to vote separately for one candidate for each seat, but this may not alter substantially the expected consequences of the election on the variety of elected representatives, as discussed above.

2. Very wide-spread electoral rules

In the following paragraphs I present a broad although surely incomplete survey of modern and current uses of the 'originating' electoral system in national and local political elections. The survey starts in Europe, including England, France, Spain and other countries, then it goes to the United States and Latin America, and it ends with a few notes on Russia and a few Asian and African countries.

England

Two-member districts were largely used in English shires, towns and boroughs from the 13th century on. Still in 1867 three fourths of the English districts for the House of Commons elected two members, while the rest were either single- or four-member districts. The proportion of multi-member districts was dramatically reduced to less than 10 percent in 1885, but some survived still until 1949. In two-member districts the voter could use either two votes or only one. According to historians, during the period 1688-1866 borough elections were dominated by a desire to secure effective representation of the public or corporate interest, while there is contemporary evidence of a considerable degree of hostility towards parties and partisanship. The presence of political 'tendencies' was elusive and partial and included many labels –Radical, Whig, Liberal, Tory, Conservative, Peelite, Protectionist—rather than a few compact parties. (Mitchell 1976, O'Gorman 1989, Phillips 1992, Plumb 1969, Taylor 1997).

Multi-member districts and to some extent nonpartisan candidacies have survived in English local elections. According to the rules enforced from 2003 on, still about 60 percent of local councils are elected in two- or three-member electoral districts, usually called wards or divisions. They include 36 metropolitan councils in

Manchester, Merseyside, South and West Yorkshire, Tyne and Wear, West Midlands, as well as the London boroughs, a number of unitary, borough, district and parish/town councils, as well as a recently increasing number of urban areas in county councils. A few districts use mixed systems of single- and multi-member constituencies. Nowadays nation-wide political parties dominate local politics, but in 2000 still about 12 percent of elected local councilors were independent. (Electoral Commission 2004).

France

In France, the tradition of using multi-member districts in indirect elections for medieval Estates was maintained for post-revolutionary national assemblies during most of the 19th century. From 1789 to 1819, canton or arrondissement assemblies elected delegates to department assemblies, which in turn chose deputies. At least at the highest level, majority rule was established with three rounds of voting. Direct elections were introduced since 1848. Until 1873 and again in 1885, voters still met in departmental assemblies and used limited approval voting in a written ballot. Party lists were increasingly relevant, but individual-candidate voting was always feasible. (Campbell 1965, Cole and Campbell 1989).

The 'originating' system has survived in French small municipalities with less than 3,500 inhabitants, where the local councils are elected in a single multi-member municipal district with individual-candidate voting and majority runoff rule. For recently established regional councils, one fourth of councilors are also elected in a single regional district by majority runoff rule, but now using closed lists that produce a single-party overrepresentation. (Dupoirier 2001, Patriat 2001).

Spain

Also in Spain multi-member districts were used for indirect elections to anti-French-invasion Juntas in 1810 and for constitutional elections from 1812 to 1834. Parish- or judicial party-juntas chose electors, which in turn chose deputies (or, in the earliest regulations, groups of candidates further selected by lots). Voting was usually separate for each seat by majority runoff. Direct elections were held since 1837. In several elections until 1865, voters still met at district juntas to elect deputies by limited approval voting in a written ballot and majority rule. Mixed systems of single- and multi-member districts, the latter with limited approval voting, were used from 1878 to 1936. Since 1977, multi-member districts with individual-candidate ballot are used for the Spanish Senate, as well as in local elections for small municipalities with less than 250 inhabitants. (Rueda 1998, Colomer 2004b).

Rest of Europe

In the rest of Europe, experiences of nation-wide political elections in multi-member districts with majoritarian rules include the following. Indirect elections with this type of electoral system were held in Norway, with an average magnitude of three seats, from 1815 to 1903; in Portugal during most of the 19th century; in Sweden from 1866 to 1908, in all these cases with plurality rule; as well as in Switzerland from 1848 to 1917 with majority runoff rules. Direct elections to the national lower chamber with this type of electoral system were held in Belgium, with very high district magnitudes up to 37 seats and majority runoff rule, from 1831 to 1898; in Greece, with either majority or plurality rules, from 1844 to 1923, as well as on two isolated occasions as late as 1933 and 1952; Netherlands used two-member districts and majority runoff rule during all the second half of the 19th century. (Carstairs 1980; see collections of historical data in Colomer 2004a).

While local elections in most European countries are currently held by proportional representation rules, still a few use the 'originating' electoral system. In Belgium, municipal elections are held in multi-member districts, although voters can choose individual candidates only from within a party list. In Hungary, towns and villages with less than 10,000 inhabitants use a single municipal multi-member district, limited approval vote and plurality rule. Individual candidates not officially linked to a party are more successful in these districts than in mixed or proportional representation systems used in larger municipalities and counties (Benoit 2001). In Norway, multi-member local districts use individual-candidate ballots, although three-fourths of the chosen candidates must be from the same party list. In Switzerland, multi-member districts are used in seven cantons for the election of either the cantonal assembly or the cantonal government or both. (Council of Europe 1999).

United States

The English model of multi-member districts, individual vote and plurality rule was adopted in all the British colonies in North America for the lower houses of their legislatures. Since its inception in 1619, the House of Burgesses in Virginia used English-style two-member districts, later enlarged to up to eight seats. All the other colonies also used, for their assemblies, two-, three-, four- or six-member districts, while South Carolina and New Jersey had districts with up to 10 and 20 members respectively. Government by town meeting was typical in New England, while parish and county districts were more usual in the South. From the 1720s on, the lower houses consolidated their position in the colonial governments and acquired greater autonomy. According to historians, a vast majority of legislators, who were elected on individual

bases, exhibited habits of consensus not dissimilar to those of the independent members of the British parliament. (Dinkin 1993, Greene 1993).

With independence, state congresses were made larger than the colonial assemblies. Eight new state constitutions established congressional elections in multi-member districts, while five adopted this formula for most of the districts but also introduced a few single-member districts. The U.S. Presidential College was elected mostly in state-wide districts since 1828. The House of Representatives was also initially elected mostly in either state-wide 'at-large' districts or in smaller multi-member districts. From 1824 on state-level political parties began to emerge. They promoted voting 'in bloc' for a list of party candidates or the 'general ticket', which tended to create state single-party representation. In defensive reaction, the Whigs achieved to approve single-member districts as the general norm for electing the House across all the United States territory since 1842. But at least 16 states still used at-large districts during some periods between the 1840s and the 1960s. (Calabrese 2000, Engstrom 2004, Flores 2000, Klain 1955, Wood 1969).

At state and local levels, most representatives have been elected in multi-member districts most of the time. At state level the peak was reached in 1962, when 41 of the 50 states elected more than half of total state legislators in the country in multi-member districts. In 2000, 15 state lower chambers and four state senates employ some multi-member districts, encompassing in total over 25 percent of all state legislators (Jewell and Morehouse 2001).

At municipal level, the progressive-oriented National Municipal League recommended in 1899 the adoption of at-large districts to insulate local elections from the influence of state and national party politics, a recommendation largely followed, together with a non-partisan ballot, especially in the West and the South. In 1970, over

60 percent of the cities and over 30 percent of the counties elected their representatives in a single 'at-large' district (Cox 1984, Niemi, Hill and Grofman 1985). In the 1980s, at-large districts were used in 84 percent of the largest central cities (Engstrom and McDonald 1986, Weaver 1984). It has been estimated that in about two-thirds of U.S. municipal elections, candidates run for office without party label (Cassel 1986).

The capability of at-large districts to produce a single-party "sweep" in the disadvantage of political, ethnic and gender minorities has been broadly discussed. Against traditional assumptions, it has been found that, at state level, multi-member district lower chambers provide representation more proportional to the ethnic minority population than either single-member districts lower chambers or single-member district upper chambers in their own states. Multi-member districts have also favored female representation during some periods. (Adams 1996, Niemi, Hill and Grofman 1985, Grofman, Migalski and Noviello 1986, Richardson and Cooper 2003).

Latin America

The election of Juntas and new Spanish Cortes in 1810-1812, above mentioned, was extended to the Spanish colonies in North and South America with the same type of traditional electoral rules as in the metropolis. In particular, in New Spain (today's Mexico), for the election of representatives to both the Spanish Cortes and provincial councils, multi-member districts were defined as corresponding to traditional parishes and the preserved Indian republics. Similar experiences took place in Argentina in 1811 and, at the Portuguese Crown's call, in Brazil in 1821. After independence, multi-member districts for the election of the lower chamber of the new congresses were widely, generally by plurality rule. Cases include Argentina, with two- to 20-member districts in 1826 and again during the period 1853-1908; Brazil, with districts up to 20

and 37 seats from 1824 on, from 1860 on, and in 1890; Chile from 1833 on; Colombia from 1857 on; Costa Rica with a mixed system of two-member districts by plurality and others by proportional representation during the period 1913-1948; and Honduras with an average of tree-member districts during the period 1879-1954. (Colomer 2004c).

Russia

The first democratic election in Russia, in February 1917, was held according to the traditional system above referred to, in districts with magnitudes from one to 15 seats, approval vote, and majority rule with third-round plurality. During the Soviet era, the same type of elections in multi-member districts was held, but with the dictatorial rule of accepting only one candidate per office. In post-soviet Russia, starting in 1993, at least 24 regional democratic assemblies hold elections with multi-member districts, approval vote and plurality rule (in front to 114 regions with mostly single-member districts). In the majority of regions, electoral competition is dominated by independent individual candidates. But, according to the argument above mentioned which will be developed in the next section, it has been found that multi-member districts create incentives for the formation of coalition and political party candidacies more than single-member districts (Golosov 2003).

Asia and Africa

Both the colonial British legacy and the United States influence contributed to the adoption of multi-member district elections by plurality rule in a number of countries in Asia and the Pacific. New Zealand maintained a few tree-member districts during the period 1890-1905; the Philippines used also some multi-member districts in 1935 and 1949; in India about 90 districts (out of 400) elected two or three representatives each

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from 1950 to 1957; in Thailand a number of multi-member districts are also used since 1978. Probably under French influence, also Lebanon used multi-member districts, together with majority runoff rule, during the period 1943-1951, and again, with plurality rule, since 1953. Turkey used approval voting, in large districts with up to 27 seats, during the period 1946-1957. (Hicken and Kasuya 2003, Hicken 2004).

A few countries in Africa have also adopted electoral rules including multi-member districts and majoritarian rules. They include a few recent democracies: Mali and Senegal, both since 1992. (Mozaffar and Vengroff 2002, Mozaffar 2004).

3. Endogenous party formation

The 'originating' electoral system above reviewed is able to produce a varied individual representation of the community. But at the same time it creates incentives for the coordination of candidacies and voting. Forming or joining a coordinated candidacy, usually called 'faction' or 'party', may increase the prospects of winning additional votes and seats. 'Party' is, thus, here defined in a minimalist way that is not substantially different from traditional meanings of 'faction' in early periods of voting and elections. The distinction between faction and party can make more sense only in a further process of organization and development of policy programs and ideology.

---------------- Table 1 about here

Let us present a simple model in which an election is hold by a two-member district, individual-candidate voting, and simple plurality rule. Let us assume that there

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are four groups of voters, A, B, C and D, with different preferences over four candidates, W, X, Y and Z, as in Table 1. In Table 1.1, the distribution of voters' preferences is relatively consensual because the 'intermediate' groups, B and C, encompass 70 out of 90 voters, but in Table 1.2 the distribution is more polarized because it is the 'extreme' groups, A and D, that now encompass 70 voters (90 is taken in the example as the total number of voters to facilitate a majority of 50 without ties). If all voters vote for two candidates according to their first and second preferences, the total number of votes received by each candidate makes the intermediate candidates X and Y the winners, as presented in Column 2. Observe that, although with different numbers of votes, this result is valid for the two distributions of voters, the consensual and the polarized ones. Every group of voters elects at least one of the candidates it has voted for; specifically, the voters of the 'intermediate' groups elect the two candidates they have voted for while the members of the 'extreme' groups elect their second most preferred candidate. Thus, none of the voters' groups is a total loser.

In the third column it is assumed, alternatively, that a 'party' is formed by candidates W and X. Let us assume that all voters vote now for all the candidates of the party including their first preference, that is, all voters preferring either W or X as the first preference vote now 'in bloc' for W and X, even if some of them would have preferred another candidate as second preference (Y in the example). The result is that now W and X become the winners –the party 'sweep'. Only three groups of voters elect now some candidate they have voted for; specifically, the members of the 'extreme' group A elect all the candidates they have voted for, the members of the 'intermediate' group B elect only their first preference, and the members of the other 'intermediate' group C elect only their second preference; in contrast, the members of group D do not elect now any of the candidates they have voted for.

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It is important to remark that, in order to attain a party-sweep, it is not necessary that all voters –like in the model— or even most or many of them follow the advice of factional leaders to vote for all and only for the members of a list of candidates. It may be sufficient that a few people do it, since, even if they are few, they can make a difference, especially under simple plurality rule not requiring any specific threshold of votes to win.

The party sweep result might be more satisfactory than the previous individual-candidate result for some voters in a polarized distribution (depending on how voters evaluate their relative satisfaction with their first and second preferences), but it is exclusionary for those members of the electorate who become total losers. Certainly, the party-sweep result is less collective satisfactory than the individual-candidate result in the consensual distribution, which, as noted above, is more typical of small local, early national, and professional communities having traditionally used this electoral system.

A logical reaction to the party sweep can be the formation of another 'party', say in this example with Y and Z, also able to make the voters voting in bloc for all the candidates of the party if they include their first preference. The fourth column in the Table shows the results of a two-party election. In this example, the winners are still W and X, but the losers are now closer to the winners in numbers of votes, which may make them persevere in their party candidacy in further elections in the expectation to turn over a few more votes and win in bloc. Similar results can be obtained if we assume somewhat different distributions of voters' preferences, voting by majority runoff rule, or other variations the reader may be interested to explore.

This stylized model may account for the endogenous formation of parties, initially conceived only as enduring candidacy and voting coalitions, in early elections

and assemblies using the 'originating' electoral system. The model also suggests that the emergence of parties may produce sentiments of dissatisfaction and disappointment in comparison with previous experiences of voting for individual candidates, especially in largely consensual societies in which the formation of party candidacies may introduce political polarization.

Note again that, in historical terms, voting 'in bloc' was not an institutionally-induced behavior, but a party strategy-induced behavior. In the old fashion way, certain men more or less distinguished for their professional or other activities were announced as eligible by newspapers or offered themselves as candidates. Gradually, elected representatives turned to organize their supporters and present lists or tickets of candidates. The success of this new way may lie in the fact that 'party' candidacies and labels provide the voters very cheap information about their candidates, which may be more difficult to obtain about those candidates who are not labeled, especially in mass elections and relatively complex electorates. This may move voters to vote in bloc rather than for individuals weighed separately.

However, party inducements to voting in bloc were also crucially helped in some countries and periods by the form of ballot, which is of course an institutional feature of elections. In the earliest times above surveyed, oral voting or handwritten ballots facilitated to the voter the choice of individual candidates independently from their possible grouping or factional allegiance. At some moment, which can be roughly located around the 1830s and 1840s for Britain, the United States and a few countries in Western Europe, the parties began to print their own ballots, listing only their own candidates. The voter needed only to cast the paper in the ballot box without marking any candidate to vote for the entire list (the 'general ticket'). Typically the party ballots

were of various sizes, colors, and shapes, and thus distinguishable to the election officials, the candidates, the party organizers and the rest of voters.

Still, splitting the vote between candidates from different parties was possible by crossing out and writing in names or by turning in multiple party ballots with votes marked on each. In fact, in 19th century England, about half of districts with two seats rendered 'split' representation of two different groupings (Cox 1984). But in the United States before 1890, a single party swept all the seats in almost 90 percent of elections in multi-member districts (Calabrese 2000). Criticisms of party ballot were persistent. In particular, the National Municipal League of the U. S., already mentioned above, defended non-partisan ballots in local government. In the words of one of its founders, with party candidacies "a small, but well-disciplined, energetic and unscrupulous minority can generally defeat the honorable and patriotic majority". If people are forced to vote in bloc, "while many voters find sentiments which they disapprove in each platform, they can see no alternative but to cast their ballots for one or the other, and thus seem to endorse and support ideas to which they are really opposed" (Richardson 1892, in Scarrow 2002).

The so-called 'Australian ballot' made again non-partisan voting for individual candidates relatively easier. The new ballot, which was now printed and distributed by the electoral authority, listed the candidates of all parties instead of only one. As its name tells, this new form of ballot was first introduced in the British colonies in Australia since 1856, as well as in New Zealand in 1870; it was adopted in Britain in 1872, Canada in 1874, Belgium in 1877, several states in the U.S. since 1888, and later in most other countries with democratic experience (Markoff 1999, Mackie 2000, Lehoucq 2003).

Under multi-member elections, the Australian ballot ensures secret vote if the procedure did include a booth where the voter could mark the ballot unobserved, but it also facilitates the choice of individual candidates independently from their party affiliation. In some cases, the ballot requires the voters to vote for each candidate they wanted to vote for; but in others it is also possible to vote for all candidates from a party with a single mark, which still favors bloc voting.

4. Against factions

The emergence of factions and parties from within largely consensual elections and assemblies increased polarization, made representation more biased, and in general decreased voters' satisfaction with political outcomes, as suggested by the formal model above discussed. In communities holding elections with the 'originating' system during the 18th and 19th centuries, reactions against factions and political parties were loudly and widely voiced, as will be reviewed below. Initially, factions tended to be loose and fluctuating groupings of individuals who joined together to support a particular leader or policy, but from the beginning they were viewed with suspicion as destroyers of previously existing unity and consensus. Gradually, a tension was developing between the recurring suspicion of partisan divisions and the seeming inevitability of partisan organization. Parties were eventually conceived as "unavoidable evils". But, as summarized by Susan Scarrow in her survey of critical perspectives on political parties, "even many avowed democrats were not favorably disposed toward the evolving realities of organized parties … while political experience may have convinced many

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people of parties' inevitability and expediency, it was and is less effective in persuading everyone of their desirability" (Scarrow 2002: 4).

A number of early, prominent analyses and statements along this line can be re-interpreted in the light of the discussion presented in this article. In general, in classical political literature 'faction' is usually associated to bad intentions, in the disadvantage of general or at least broad collective interests. David Hume, in particular, early considered that "sects and factions [should] be detested and hated… [because they] subvert government, render law impotent, and beget the fiercest animosities" (Hume 1741). Later on, however, he pondered that "to abolish all distinctions of party may not be practicable, perhaps not desirable, in a free government". Interestingly, when in the further period Hume had to face the undesirable but perhaps unavoidable existence of political parties, he turned to wish that government were in hands not of a single party but of multiple-party coalitions in order "to prevent all unreasonable insult and triumph of the one party over the other, to encourage moderate opinions, to find the proper medium in all disputes, to persuade each that its antagonist may possibly be sometimes in the right, and to keep a balance in the praise and blame, which we bestow on either side" (Hume 1758).

Perhaps it was Jean-Jacques Rousseau who better realized and anticipated the dramatic influence of factions in elections held in multi-member districts by plurality rule –as used in his natal Geneva. "When factions arise –he observed in a rather well-known but diversely interpreted passage--, and partial associations are formed at the expense of the great association, the will of each of these associations becomes general in relation to its members, while it remains particular in relation to the community: it may then be said that there are no longer as many votes as there are men, but only as many as there are associations… Lastly, when one of these associations is so great as to

prevail over all the rest, the result is no longer a sum of small differences, but a single difference; in this case there is no longer a general will, and the opinion which prevails is purely particular". Highly remarkably, also Rousseau pondered that if factions of parties were unavoidable, that is, "if there are partial societies, it is best to have as many as possible and to prevent them from being unequal" (Rousseau 1762).

A similar evolution can be detected in James Madison –actually influenced by reading Hume-- who initially also condemned factions, but later on saw them as unavoidable and even a necessary evil. Madison perceptively noted that, with parties organized, in small communities there would likely be a single dominant party embedded in local prejudices and schemes of injustice --and "the smaller the number of individuals composing a majority, and the smaller the compass within which they are placed, the more easily will they concert and execute their plan of oppression". In contrast, greater political units would provide "the greater security afforded by a greater variety of parties, against the event of any one party being able to outnumber and oppress the rest... In an equal degree does the increased variety of parties comprised within the [large] Union increase this security" (Madison 1788, No. 10). Madison surely had in mind previous experiences in the House of Delegates in Virginia, of which he had been a member, as other prominent leaders of the newly emerging United States, when they turned to organize new political parties at national level, took references in traditional factions and personalized cliques in local and state institutions holding elections with the 'originating' system. (Main 1973, Aldrich 1995).

The present analysis induces us to revise also an established interpretation of some statements by Honoré Gabriel Riqueti, Count de Mirabeau, in his address to the provincial Estate of Provence in 1789, on the edge of the events that would trigger the Revolution in France. It must be remarked that the subject under discussion on that

occasion was precisely the procedure to follow for the election of provincial representatives to the Estates-General. Mirabeau and his audience certainly had in mind the multi-member district, individual vote type of elections they were used to participate in at local and provincial levels. He famously declared that "the Estates-General <u>are</u> to the nation what a chart is to its physical configuration; in all its parts and as a whole the copy <u>should</u> at all times have the same proportions as the original". In another passage of the same speech, Mirabeau stated, "the nation is not there [in the Estates' assemblies] if those who call themselves its representatives have not been chosen in free and <u>individual</u> elections, if the representatives of groups of equal importance are not equal numerically and in voting power… In order to know the will of the nation, the votes must be collected in such a way so as to prevent the mistake of taking the will of an estate for one other, or the particular will of certain individuals for the general will". (Author's translation, with emphases added, from Mirabeau 1789, vol. 1: 7-8).

These statements have been often interpreted as an early pronouncement in favor of the principles of proportional representation (see, for example, Hoag and Hallett 1926, McLean 1991, Colomer 2001). However, we should acknowledge that no explicit reference to new electoral rules of proportional representation was ever made by Mirabeau and that the discussion about these principles as potentially operative for allocating seats on the basis of votes did not start until several decades later. Putting Mirabeau's contribution in context, it may appear rather obvious that he was referring to elections held in multi-member districts by an open ballot favoring the choice of individual candidates and majority rule. He was alluding to the peril to impose only votes in bloc for each of the estates in a way that the aristocracy and the clergy would prevail over the whole nation. But note that Mirabeau stated that the at the time really existing elected assemblies "are" like a chart of the nation, and that they "should" keep

being it. If they actually "were" like a chart is because they were elected in a way permitting such a representation (in the two senses of the word); that they "should" maintain that characteristic may be reasonably interpreted as a warning against the risk that they might cease being it and become partial, most likely as a consequence of voting in bloc for closed lists of candidates of each estate, grouping or faction.

The authors mentioned were among the most influential in constitution making and criticism in Britain, the emerging United States, revolutionary France, and indirectly in many other countries at the time. It is noteworthy to remark that they essentially coincided in the following observations.

* First, they valued positively traditional electoral systems based on multi-member districts and individual-candidate voting --what I call here the 'originating' system-- able to produce a faithful representation of the community, like "a mirror".

* Second, they realized that the formation of electoral factions or parties introduced more biased and partial representation than previous practices based on individual votes for individual candidates.

* Third, they eventually acknowledged that in mass elections in large societies, in which the homogeneity of interests and values which prevailed in small, simple communities during the previous eras was decreasing, the formation of political factions was unavoidable and perhaps even necessary to make the political representation of a diversity of groups possible.

* Finally, they considered that once parties had began to intervene in the electoral process, the existence of multiple parties was better than the concentration of power in the hands of a single party, in the sense of re-establishing to some extent the previous capacity of elections to become "a mirror" of the society by giving

representation to different groups. In other words, if parties were unavoidable, multi-partism was better than single-party dominance or two-party alternation.

5. Derived electoral systems

To the extent that parties and factionalization were unavoidable, the re-establishment of broad electoral representation required the invention and introduction of new electoral rules different from the traditional, now obsolete system based on multi-member districts and majoritarian rules. During the first few decades of the 20th century, as surveyed above, the 'originating' electoral system had generally been replaced with alternative formulas. Multi-member elections with majoritarian rules basically survived at local level elections, although they also reappeared in a number of cases of new democracies without previous experience of competitive elections. Virtually all the new electoral rules and procedures that were created since the 19th century can be understood as innovative variations of the 'originating' system –which can be called 'originating' precise for this. They can be classified in three groups, depending on whether they changed the district magnitude, the ballot, or the rule.

The first group of new electoral rules implied a change of the district magnitude from multi-member to single-member districts, of course keeping both individual-candidate voting and majoritarian rules. With smaller single-member districts a candidate that would have been defeated by a party sweep in a multi-member district may be elected. This system, thus, tends to produce more varied representation than multi-member districts with party closed lists, although less than multi-member districts with open ballot. In late 18th century, single-member districts were broadly introduced

in Scotland and Wales and in lower proportions in England, although they did not become the general norm for all Britain until 1885. In the U.S., single-member districts were introduced in the state of Vermont in 1793 and gradually expanded to the rest of the country, especially for the election of the House of Representatives since 1842, as mentioned. Also France replaced multi-member districts with single-member districts for first time in 1820, but re-established both formulas back and forth during the rest of the 19th century.

The second group of new electoral rules implied new forms of ballot favoring individual-candidate voting despite the existence of party candidacies, while maintaining the other two essential elements of the traditional system: multi-member districts and majoritarian rules. Two variants of limited vote (with either several votes or a single vote per voter) were already proposed during the French Revolutionary Convention of 1793 by Jean-Antoine-Nicolas de Caritat, Marquis de Condorcet, and Antoine-Louis-Leon de Saint-Just, on behalf of the Girondin and the Jacobin factions, respectively, as alternatives to the traditional system of multi-member districts with equal number of votes as seats, but they were never applied. By limited vote, one party can sweep as many seats as votes the voter can vote for, but it is likely that the rest of seats will be won by candidates of different political affiliation. The earliest experiences of limited vote in multi-member districts took place in Spain, first in the form of single-nontransferable vote, that is, with only one vote per voter, from 1865 on, and giving each voter two votes in three-seat districts from 1878 on. Limited vote was also early introduced in previously existing multi-member districts in Britain in 1868 and in Brazil in 1875. A different but related formula, the cumulative ballot, which permits the voter to give more than one vote to the same candidate, was also introduced in previously existing multi-member districts, first of all in the state of Illinois in 1869

and later in some Latin European and Latin American countries, as well as in a number of U.S. local elections.

Finally, the third group of new electoral rules implied the introduction of proportional representation (PR) formulas, which permit to maintain multi-member districts and in some variants also open or individual-candidate ballot. The first proposals for distributing seats among different parties in proportion to their votes were formulated, on the basis of a fixed amount or quota of votes worth a seat, by French mathematician Joseph-Diaz Gergonne in 1820, just when the old system based on multi-member districts was substantially revised in France for first time, and by Philadelphia's activist Thomas Gilpin in 1844, together with strong criticism of the uses of party lists in traditional multi-member districts. (Gergonne 1829, Gilpin 1844).

As is better known, another early formula usually considered to belong to the group of proportional representation rules is the single-transferable vote (STV), which was successively proposed by English school-teacher Thomas W. Hill in 1821, Danish politician Carl-Christopher-Georg Andrae in 1855, and English lawyer Thomas Hare from 1857 on. As the traditional 'originating' system, STV is used in multi-member districts with individual voting, although it requires each voter not only to select but to rank candidates. Another formula of proportional representation was presented by Belgian civil law professor Victor d'Hondt in 1878 and was initially adopted in Belgium in 1899. This and other PR formulas require, of course, multi-member districts and are also compatible with the another essential element of the 'originating' system: individual-candidate voting, as in open double vote, preferential voting and open ballot, the latter used in Switzerland since 1918.

Conclusion

In traditional analyses in political science, political parties have been presented as derived from previously existing assemblies, elections and electoral systems, rather than the other way round. The present article has documented this relationship, but it only appears to be valid in general terms for remote periods in which a very old electoral system based on multi-member districts, open ballot, and a majoritarian rule was used. This electoral system, while being able to produce a pluralistic representation, it did indeed create incentives for the formation of coordinated candidacies and voting coalitions, usually called 'factions', which were the most primitive form of political parties. However, once partisan candidacies, partisan voting in bloc and even partisan ballots emerged, political leaders, activists and politically motivated scholars began to search for alternative electoral systems able to reduce single-party sweeps and exclusionary victories. This new period started developing well advanced the 19th century. It can be hold that , from that moment on, it was the previously existing political parties that chose, manipulated and promoted the invention of new electoral rules, including the Australian ballot, single-member districts, limited and cumulative ballots, and proportional representation rules, rather than the other way round. This trend in favor of more pluralistic electoral rules was in some sense a re-establishment of the varied, "like a mirror" representation of the community which had been characteristic of the multi-member district-based set of rules that I have suggested to call the 'originating' electoral system.

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Table 1. Individual-candidate voting and party voting

Distribution of preferences				Results with different candidacies		
				Individuals	Party WX	WX vs. YZ

Table 1.1. Consensual society

Voters' groups:	A	B	C	D			
No. of voters:	10	40	30	10			

					Individuals	Party WX	WX vs. YZ
First preference	W	X	Y	Z	W: 10, *X: 80*	*W: 50*, *X: 60*	*W: 50*, *X: 50*
Second preference	X	Y	X	Y	*Y: 80*, Z: 10	Y: 40, Z: 30	Y: 40, Z: 40

Table 1.2. Polarized society

Voters' groups:	A	B	C	D			
No. of voters:	40	10	10	30			

					Individuals	Party WX	WX vs. YZ
First preference	W	X	Y	Z	W: 40, *X: 60*	*W: 50*, *X: 60*	*W: 50*, *X: 50*
Second preference	X	Y	X	Y	*Y: 50*, Z: 30	Y: 40, Z: 30	Y: 40, Z: 40

Note: This is a model of an election in a two-member district, with two votes per voter (M = V = 2), and plurality rule. The results in the second column with individual-candidate voting derive from the assumption that each group of voters vote for their two preferred individual candidates; in the third column, with party WX, voters vote 'in bloc' for W and X if they prefer any of the two as first preference; in the fourth column, with two parties WX and YZ, all voters vote 'in bloc' for the party including their first preference. The winners are underlined.