



The Proportional Electoral Systems in the Western Balkans Countries: A Comparative Approach

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Abstract

Representative democracy is closely related to elections and voting. Electoral systems can shape not only the electoral success of minority candidates but also the tactics employed by majority parties to engage with or marginalize minority voter groups, as well as the degree of inclusivity in the composition of candidate slates. Electoral systems can be defined and categorized concerning - How many representatives are elected from each constituency? Does the electoral system employ a plurality, majority, or a form of proportional representation? What is the required threshold for parties and candidates to secure representation? These elements determine the seats in the parliament and the winning parties. This paper does not intend to provide an exhaustive exploration of the broad subject of electoral systems. Rather, its objective is to offer an overview of the electoral systems in the Western Balkans, with a particular focus on examining the key features of proportional representation systems employed in these countries. Proportional representation systems are applied in the countries under consideration, therefore analytical and comparative research will be the focus of the paper. From the short comparative analysis of this paper on the electoral systems in the countries of the Western Balkans, similarities and differences between them are observed. As a result, we will try to understand which of the criteria and formulas used provides better representation and governance for these countries.

Keywords: electoral systems, proportional representation, Balkan countries, thresholds, open/close lists

1. Introduction

Electoral democracy was made possible by the "democratization of the vote", as a result of the solution to the "participation crisis", which was dictated by the "social and political mobilization of employees". At the same time, the electoral system was institutionalized. With it, norms, rules, and practices are sanctioned in a constitutional way such as participation based on the right to vote, the division of electoral areas, the management of the voting process, and the ways of translating votes into seats in the parliament.¹

The design of electoral institutions has important consequences for the quality of democracy. Ever since John Stuart Mill's (1861) seminal works on democratic representation, scholars of political science have explored the myriad ways electoral systems shape electoral competition (Duverger, 1954), incentives of parties and candidates to campaign (Iaryczow and Mattozzi, 2013), political selection (Carey and Shugart, 1995; Besley, 2005; Galasso and Nannicini,

¹ Llambro Filo, Alketa Marku (2014), *Institucionet politike ne sistemet e qeverisjes*, Tirane, UFO Press, p. 117

2011; Meyerson, 2014), and electoral outcomes (Blais and Carty, 1990; Cox and Shugart, 1996; Herrera et al., 2014)².

According to Gallagher and Mitchell, the electoral system determines how votes are cast in elections and how these votes are converted into parliamentary mandates. According to this definition, the electoral system plays a crucial role in determining the composition of the legislature or any representative body elected through popular vote. This composition, in turn, indirectly influences the formation of the executive and contributes to enhancing the predictability of political decision-making and processes within a country. Moreover, the electoral rules stipulate the specific parameters of the electoral process, including the administration of elections, voter eligibility, the method of casting votes (such as single or multiple candidate selection, or the use of open or closed lists), as well as ensuring transparency in the vote counting process and other procedural aspects³.

Representative democracy is closely related to elections and voting. It is synthesized with the content of the minimal or simple meaning of democracy argued by J. Schumpeter, as "government by political elites competing for popular votes", in regular and planned electoral elections⁴. Contextual factors have influenced the definition of the types of electoral systems, especially social stratification and political culture with its special features. However, the preferences of the political parties, especially the big parties, or the winning parties, have had a much greater impact. This is explained by the fact that "electoral systems have a decisive influence on the party's performance" and especially on their opportunities to win elections and share power. Therefore, as A. Heywood writes, it would be useless to deny that the attitudes towards the electoral system are formed mainly by the party advantage. Also, a general tendency appears in the big parties "to weaken and eliminate the small parties"⁵.

For this reason, the selection of the electoral system is one of the most important institutional decisions for any democracy. However, it is not easy to choose an ideal electoral system. Often the selection is random, the result of an unusual combination of circumstances, or the history of the country⁶. Different democratic states apply different systems for the election of representative institutions such as parliament. The way a state translates citizens' votes into parliamentary mandates is determined by various factors that are related to the specifics of the country: the nature of the state, traditions, demographic composition, regional divisions, etc. However, the decisive factor in the selection of a country's electoral system is often not the general public interest or the assessment that a certain system best suits the needs of a country⁷.

The countries of the Western Balkans also have defined their electoral systems, based on the Constitution and electoral codes and laws. Through this research, we will focus on and analyze the commonalities and differences in the electoral system that these countries use.

2. Types and Characteristics of Electoral Systems

Two primary approaches to electoral systems exist: the proportional system and the majority system. A third variant, known as the mixed electoral system, incorporates and combines elements from both of these principal systems.

The majority system is one of the most straightforward electoral systems, grounded in the principle that the candidate who secures the highest number of votes within an electoral district is declared the winner.

The primary objective of the majority system is the establishment of an effective government. The underlying 'winner-takes-all' principle emphasizes the creation of a clear, robust, and stable set of representatives and governance structures, rather than reflecting the demographic composition of the broader population. As majoritarian systems tend to disproportionately benefit larger parties at the expense of smaller ones, the dominant party typically does not need to form a coalition in order to establish a government.

The one-party government is of course stronger and distanced from the problems that may arise from being

² Hangartner, Dominik and Ruiz, Nelson and Tukiainen, Janne and Tukiainen, Janne, *Open or Closed? How List Type Affects Electoral Performance, Candidate Selection, and Campaign Effort* (July 12, 2019). VATT Institute for Economic Research Working Papers 120, 2019.

³ Michael Gallagher, Paul Mitchell (2008) *Introduction to Electoral Systems*, in Michael Gallagher and Paul Mitchell (eds.): *The Politics of Electoral Systems*, New York.

⁴ Llambro Filo, Alketa Marku., *Institucionet politike ne sistemet e qeverisjes*, cit. p. 117

⁵ Andrew Heywood, (2009) *Politika*, Dudaj, Tirane, p. 255-256

⁶ Donika Shala, (2019) *SISTEMI ZGJEDHOR. Theses and Dissertations*. 341. <https://knowledgecenter.ubt-uni.net/etd/341>

⁷ Agon Maliqi et al., (2011) *Studim. Krahasim i sistemeve zgjedhore në rajon, INSTITUTI KOSOVAR PËR KËRKIME DHE ZHVILLIM TË POLITIKAVE*, Prishtine, p.4. http://www.kipred.org/repository/docs/Krahasim%C2%A0i%C2%A0sistemeve%C2%A0zgjedhore%C2%A0n%C3%AB%C2%A0rajon_697108.pdf

included in a coalition. The government is formed immediately and is widely united; policies are followed without problem as cannot be done in a coalition where a partner party can ask for political concessions; ministerial portfolios can be distributed without fear, etc.⁸.

The principle of proportional representation dictates that seats within a constituency are allocated in accordance with the number of votes received by party lists. However, there are variations in its implementation across different systems. Party lists may be open, allowing voters to indicate preferences for specific candidates within the list, or closed, where voters can only vote for a party, with the ranking of candidates predetermined by the party prior to the election. Additionally, party lists may be national, where the entire country functions as a single constituency, or regional, where the country is divided into multiple constituencies, each electing representatives⁹. This system makes an almost entirely fair representation of the political will of the voter, gives the possibility of wide participation of competitive political alternatives, politically forces the relevant political parties to build post-election governing coalitions, prevents the centralization and verticalization of the exercise of power due to political necessity for consensus, etc.¹⁰. A negative aspect of closed lists is that voters have no role in determining who will be the representative of their party, and they also bear no responsibility for any changes that may occur¹¹.

A variety of systems exist that attempt to balance the features of majoritarian and proportional representation systems, typically classified under the umbrella term "Mixed Systems." These systems can be broadly categorized into two main types: first, those that combine elements of both majoritarian and proportional systems in a single seat-distribution mechanism, striving to capture the advantages of each, yet often resulting in a system that leans more heavily towards one model or the other; and second, systems that employ majoritarian and proportional mechanisms at different stages of the electoral process¹². The application of the mixed electoral system, among other things, increases the accountability of the deputy, and gives the possibility of direct representation of the respective communities, or national minorities, since the candidate for deputy is selected concerning the territory defined as the electoral area, etc.¹³

Electoral systems also have electoral thresholds of representation. An electoral threshold for seat allocation refers to the minimum percentage of votes that a political party or coalition must secure in order to be eligible for representation in the legislative assembly. Such thresholds are designed to strike a balance between governability and representativeness by promoting the formation of stable majorities while mitigating the risk of excessive fragmentation within the legislative body. Thresholds in some cases are set by law, but in its absence, they may be the result of the size of the electoral zone and the relevant electoral law that determines the division of mandates between electoral zones¹⁴.

Proportional representation and the development of parties made it necessary to draw up mathematical methods for the allocation of seats. Proportional representation list systems are primarily divided into two types: larger remainder systems, or 'quota methods' (e.g., Hare and Droop methods), which use subtraction, and highest average systems, which apply divisors (e.g., d'Hondt and Sainte-Laguë methods).¹⁵ The d'Hondt method is the most common election formula used. This formula allocates seats by dividing the number of votes cast for each party by the number of seats they have already secured, plus one. Consequently, after a party wins one seat, the number of votes is divided by two; after securing two seats, the votes are divided by three, and so on. Several rounds are held during the count, with the party with the highest total in each round winning the seat.

D'Hondt's biggest competitor is the Sainte-Laguë method. The Sainte-Laguë method operates similarly to the d'Hondt method, with the key difference being that the number of votes is divided by twice the number of seats a party has already won, plus one. As a result, the divisors are 1, 3, 5, and so on, rather than 1, 2, 3, etc. This adjustment tends

⁸ www.stevendroper.com/elect_system Electoral Systems in Europe: An Overview - Steven D. Roper, http://www.stevendroper.com/elect_system.html

⁹ Ruel, Teresa. (2010) "Electoral systems in Southern European Countries – Portugal, Spain, Italy and Greece – an introductory approach to the quality of democracy." Lisbon, p. 4.

¹⁰ Majority Voting Systems and Plurality Voting Systems. <https://followmyvote.com/majority-voting-systems/>

¹¹ <https://aceproject.org/main/english/es/esg03.htm>

¹² http://www.stevendroper.com/elect_system.html

¹³ Aurela Anastasi, Luan Omari, (2008) "E drejta kushtetuese", Shtëpia botuese "ABC", p. 270.

¹⁴ Micaela Del Monte, Maria Díaz Crego and Silvia Kotanidis Electoral thresholds in European Parliament elections, BRIEFING European elections 2024, EPRS | European Parliamentary Research Service [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2023/749770/EPRS_BRI\(2023\)749770_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2023/749770/EPRS_BRI(2023)749770_EN.pdf)

¹⁵ EPRS | European Parliamentary Research Service Author: Silvia Kotanidis Members' Research Service June 2019 Understanding the d'Hondt method. [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2019/637966/EPRS_BRI\(2019\)637966_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2019/637966/EPRS_BRI(2019)637966_EN.pdf)

to enhance proportionality between parties and is more advantageous to smaller parties¹⁶. One other electoral formula that is used is the Hare method. Unlike the d'Hondt or Sainte-Laguë methods, which are divisor-based, the Hare method operates on a quota-based system. In this approach, parties are allocated seats based on the number of times their vote total exceeds the Hare quota, which is calculated by dividing the total number of votes by the total number of seats. As this process typically does not result in the full allocation of seats, the remaining seats are subsequently distributed among the parties that have the highest number of votes remaining. This ensures a proportionate representation, although it may require additional steps to handle any surplus or unallocated seats.¹⁷

3. Analysis of the Proportional Electoral System in the Six Countries of the Western Balkans

In the context of electoral systems, the commonality of the countries of the Western Balkans is that all 6 countries apply the proportional system with electoral zones, where each zone wins a certain number of deputies in the Parliament. Some countries use open lists and some closed lists, while the translation of the percentages won by the parties in parliamentary mandates is done through different formulas. Let's analyze briefly the main elements of the electoral system in each of the countries.

3.1 Bosnia and Herzegovina

Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) has a very complex political system and this is reflected both in the structure of the parliament and in the parliamentary administration. The political structure of Bosnia and Herzegovina is characterized by a highly decentralized federal system. The state is divided into two primary sub-national entities, each endowed with considerable political autonomy. These are the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBiH), which occupies the central and western regions of the country and is predominantly inhabited by Muslim Bosniaks and Catholic Croats, and the Republika Srpska (RS), located in the northern and eastern parts, with a majority population of Orthodox Serbs. Additionally, the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina is subdivided into ten cantons, further reflecting the complex and fragmented governance structure within the state.¹⁸

The country employs a bicameral parliamentary system, consisting of two distinct chambers. One chamber is elected through proportional representation, ensuring that the composition of the legislature mirrors the political preferences of the electorate. The other chamber is constituted through appointments made by subnational units, thereby incorporating a regional and ethnic dimension into the representation process. This structural design is intended to reflect the country's territorial and ethnic diversity. Furthermore, the parliament is among the smallest national parliaments globally, both in terms of its membership and legislative scope, underscoring its distinctive approach to governance.¹⁹ Bosnia and Herzegovina's electoral system combines open-list proportional representation for legislative elections at national, subnational, and local levels, with first-past-the-post voting for the direct election of national and subnational presidents, as well as mayors. At the electoral district level, a 3% electoral threshold is applied with seats allocated using the Sainte-Laguë method, applied to subnational and local elections under the 2022 Election Law of Bosnia and Herzegovina, features a low electoral threshold and seat distribution system that benefits smaller and regional parties, leading to a fragmented legislature.²⁰

The national government operates with limited competencies and features a directly elected three-member presidency, comprising one Serb representative from the Republika Srpska (RS), one Bosniak, and one Croat representative from the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBiH). Candidates contesting for these positions run on separate ethnic lists, which marginalizes citizens who do not identify with one of these three ethnic groups, effectively

¹⁶ <https://www.electoral-reform.org.uk/what-is-the-difference-between-dhondt-sainte-lague-and-hare/>

¹⁷ *Ibidem*

¹⁸ Edward Atkinson et al., (2017) "Elections in the Western Balkans: Fragile Progress in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Serbia", Princeton University, p. 9

<https://spia.princeton.edu/sites/default/files/content/WWS%20591b%20Elections%20in%20the%20Western%20Balkans%20-%20022217%20FINAL.pdf>

¹⁹ Damir Kapidži, Lejla Tafro-Sefi. (2023), *Bosnia and Herzegovina's Parliamentary Administration from The Routledge Handbook of Parliamentary Administrations* Routledge

²⁰ Damir Kapidžić, (2022) *General elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina*, 2 October 2022, at *Electoral Bulletin of the European Union Elections in Europe*.

https://geopolitique.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/BLUE_3_en.pdf

excluding them from candidacy. In the RS, the ballot exclusively lists Serb candidates, with the winner determined by a simple majority. Meanwhile, the Bosniak and Croat candidates are presented on a shared ballot, divided into two ethnic lists, with voters permitted only one vote.

The winner is decided by a simple majority on each list. The bicameral parliament of BiH consists of a 15-member House of the People, whose members are equally distributed among the three ethnic groups and appointed by sub-national parliaments, and a 42-member House of Representatives, whose members are elected from eight districts with many members. Through open-list PR, only 30 members are directly elected, with a district size varying from three to six members, while the remaining 12 seats are compensating seats awarded at the entity level to ensure proportionality of the vote and representation of parties whose support is dispersed²¹. Bosnia and Herzegovina's constitution grants political privileges to the three "constituent peoples"—Bosniaks, Croats, and Serbs—ensuring their equal representation in the 15-seat House of Peoples and the tripartite Presidency. Citizens not affiliated with these groups are excluded from eligibility for these institutions. The territorial composition of the country also determines the rights of voters. The right to elect Bosnian and Croat members to the House of the People and the Presidency is held only by those who live in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, while Serbian members are elected by the residents of Republika Srpska, where ethnic Serbs constitute the majority²².

3.2 Serbia

Serbia is a Parliamentary Republic and the National Assembly consists of 250 deputies, who are elected by direct election by secret ballot, by the law²³. The president is elected for a five-year term, up to two terms. To be elected in the first round, a candidate must receive more than 50 percent (the majority) of the votes cast. Otherwise, within 15 days, a second round between the two candidates who received the highest number of votes²⁴. In the case of elections, the Republic of Serbia functions as a single electoral unit. Deputies are elected through the proportional system, with voting for the electoral lists and with the allocation of the mandates of the deputies concerning the number of votes received by the lists.

In the Republic of Serbia, the elections are conducted using a proportional representation system within a single nationwide constituency, where closed party-list representation is employed, and mandates are allocated based on the vote share each party-list receives. Only electoral lists which have passed the threshold shall take part in the distribution of the seats²⁵. Before the 2020 parliamentary elections, the threshold for candidate lists to participate in the distribution of mandates was lowered from five percent to three percent of votes cast. Lists representing national minorities are exempted from this threshold requirement²⁶

3.3 Montenegro

Montenegro has a unicameral assembly (Skupština). The Assembly consists of 81 members who are directly elected by proportional representation vote in a nationwide constituency. Members serve 4-year terms. The president is directly elected by an absolute majority of votes up to two rounds. The President may serve up to two 5-year terms²⁷.

The applied electoral system is proportional to closed party lists. Political parties (independent or in coalitions) or groups of citizens present a single electoral list.²⁸

21 Damir Kapidžić, Olivera Komar, (2022). *Segmental Volatility in Ethnically Divided Societies: (Re)Assessing Party System Stability in Southeast Europe*. Nationalities Papers,

22 <https://www.euronews.com/my-europe/2023/08/29/bosnia-and-herzegovina-elections-undemocratic-amplify-ethnic-divisions-human-rights-court>

23 Constitution of The Republic of Serbia. Neni 100.

http://www.parlament.gov.rs/upload/documents/Constitution_%20of_Serbia_pdf.pdf

24 Law on the Election of the President, Article 1, 21, 22.

25 <https://www.rik.parlament.gov.rs/tekst/en/269/parliamentary-elections.php>

26 Technical Election Assessment Mission in Serbia, IFES, March 2021. https://www.ifes.org/sites/default/files/technical_election_assessment_mission_in_serbia_march_2021.pdf.

27 <https://www.electionguide.org/elections/id/4126/>

28 Inter-Parliamentary Union. Montenegro Skupština (Parliament)

http://archive.ipu.org/parline-e/reports/2385_B.htm

Seats are distributed based on the highest average method, employing the d'Hondt formula. Regarding the electoral threshold at the national level, parties or groups that receive at least 3% of the total valid votes have the right to parliamentary representation.²⁹

Montenegro applies special thresholds for minority groups or communities³⁰:

- Electoral lists representing specific minority groups or communities may win up to three mandates if they each secure at least 0.7% of valid votes, even if they do not surpass the 3% threshold. This provision applies to lists representing minorities constituting up to 15% of the total population, as determined by the most recent census.
- Electoral lists representing Croatians in Montenegro can secure a mandate if the most successful list receives at least 0.35% of valid votes, even if no list individually surpasses the 3% threshold or achieves 0.7% of the valid votes.

3.4 North Macedonia

North Macedonia's Constitution states that members of parliament are citizen representatives who should vote their conscience (Article 62). Representation of citizens is a cornerstone of representative parliamentary democracy, as provided by the Constitution. The parliament is a unicameral body consisting of 120 to 123 members, directly elected for a four-year term through a closed-list proportional representation system.

Since the 2002 parliamentary elections, North Macedonia has used a party-list proportional representation system to elect Members of Parliament (MPs). A total of 120 MPs are elected across six electoral districts, with 20 MPs selected from each district, using the d'Hondt formula to calculate the results. In 2016, the three overseas electoral districts were merged into a single district, electing three MPs through the proportional representation system. The election of these MPs requires securing a minimum number of votes, equivalent to the threshold needed for MPs to be elected in the six domestic districts. There is no electoral threshold.

3.5 Kosovo

Kosovo is the Parliamentary Republic, where voters elect members of parliament directly through a secret ballot every four years. Legislative authority in Kosovo is centralized in the Assembly, which comprises 120 Members of Parliament directly elected by citizens for four-year terms. The Assembly is responsible for electing the President, appointing the Prime Minister and the Cabinet, as well as selecting all judicial appointments, including court justices. The 120 MPs of the Republic of Kosovo are elected based on open lists, based on the Sainte-Laguë formula.

In addition to the proportional allocation of the 120 Assembly seats based on votes, 20 seats are reserved for Kosovo's minority groups: 10 for Kosovar Serbs and 10 for Bosniaks, Turks, Ashkali, Egyptians, Gorani, and Roma. Moreover, there is a 30% gender quota to ensure the appointment of female MPs. The electoral threshold for parties, coalitions, and independent candidates is 5% of the total valid votes, while for parties representing national minorities, there is no electoral threshold.

3.6 Albania

The Constitution of Albania affirms the democratic principles of the election system, establishing a "free, equal, general and periodic" election system. Albania is a parliamentary republic, with legislative power held by the Parliament and executive power vested in the Council of Ministers. The country uses a closed-list proportional representation system, divided into 12 multi-member constituencies corresponding to its 12 administrative regions.

The most obvious feature of the electoral systems implemented in Albania over these 20 years is their systematic change. With the changes made in 2008, as amended, the electoral system changed to a proportional system with multiple electoral districts with closed lists.

On July 30, 2020, preferential voting was introduced with the constitutional amendments. This determined that the party list is flexible and voters can vote not only for a party or a coalition but also for the preferred candidate on the

²⁹ Article 94. Law on Election of Councillors and Members of Parliament as amended in 2020. [https://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/default.aspx?pdffile=CDL-REF\(2020\)031-e](https://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/default.aspx?pdffile=CDL-REF(2020)031-e)

³⁰ *Ibidem*

list. To alter the position on the list, a candidate must obtain a greater number of preferential votes than the average number of votes typically received by their political party or coalition in the corresponding electoral district during previous terms.

After subsequent changes on October 5, the Electoral Code replaced the regional threshold for the qualification of electoral subjects for obtaining mandates with a national threshold of 1 percent (from the previous 5%) , a minimum number of candidates on party lists is required, and political party leaders are permitted to run in up to four constituencies.

In 2021, all 140 members of the Assembly are elected for a four-year term through a regional proportional representation system where voters can vote for their preferred candidates (open lists) in all 12 districts from multi-name lists of candidates. Referring to Article 61 of the Constitution of the Republic of Albania, deputies are elected through a regional proportional electoral system based on the d'Hont formula, multi-name list, and national threshold .

4. Analysis and Conclusions

A brief comparative analysis of the electoral systems in the Western Balkan countries reveals both similarities and differences among them.

What all the researched countries have in common is that they all use systems proportional to electoral zones, where each zone sends a certain number of Parliament deputies.

The analysis shows that most of the countries included in the study use the d'Hondt formula and closed lists- Serbia, Montenegro, North Macedonia, and Albania; while Kosovo and Bosnia Herzegovina use the Sainte-Laguë formula and opened lists.

Regarding the electoral threshold in the selected countries, it turns out that it varies from 1% to 5%. In Albania, the electoral threshold is 1%, in Kosovo 5%, in Serbia, Montenegro, and Bosnia and Herzegovina 3%, while in North Macedonia there is no electoral threshold.

Based on this data, can we determine which of the criteria and formulas used provides better representation and governance for these countries?

As any electoral system is a compromise between proportionality, voter choice, and local representation, there is no simple way to choose the best electoral formula.

But referring to the studies, we can allude to which has a more positive approach and leads to an improvement of the electoral and democratic system.

Previous studies argue that the direct link between individual performance and reappointment created by open lists incentivizes good governance . An open-list system gives voters greater influence not only over which parties gain seats but also in shaping the composition of a party's parliamentary group, potentially resulting in either progressive or conservative outcomes.

Open-list systems foster competition among candidates within the same party, encouraging them to promote the party's platform against other parties. However, there is a risk that candidates may target each other within the party, leading to a focus on personal campaigns rather than party platforms and ideas. Closed-list systems are proportional but non-preferential, prioritizing political parties and granting them control over how votes are converted into seats. These systems allow parties to protect their leaders and determine candidate rankings, ideally through a democratic internal process.

Electoral thresholds are a common feature in proportional systems, which generally encourage multiparty representation. Thresholds can be problematic as they may restrict the representation of regional parties and ethnic or linguistic minorities, for instance, low magnitudes and high thresholds have the same effect in reducing the proportionality and opportunities for representation of small parties in the parliament .

Studies indicate that the d'Hondt method results in a less proportional seat allocation compared to other formulas like Hare/Niemeyer or Sainte-Laguë/Schepers (modified d'Hondt). It generally benefits electoral lists with more votes, disadvantaging those with fewer votes. However, it is important to note that all seat allocation methods inherently involve some degree of disproportionality, as not all votes contribute to mandate distribution. .The d'Hondt formula tends to favor larger parties, limiting the chances of smaller parties securing legislative seats. In contrast, the Sainte-Laguë method diminishes the advantage for large parties and typically benefits medium-sized parties over both large and small ones. There have been suggestions to use fractional divisions of lists (e.g., 1.4, 2.5) instead of integers to achieve a more proportional outcome. The proportional system with a single constituency and the Sainte-Laguë formula is particularly advantageous for minorities and small parties. It seeks to enhance proportionality, promote the emergence of new

political parties, and increase the representation of minority communities.

If the goal is to align seat allocation with societal support and minimize wasted votes, the most effective approach would involve a single electoral district nationwide, no electoral threshold, and the use of the Sainte-Laguë formula or Hare quota for seat allocation. However, if the aim is to create a stable majority capable of passing decisions efficiently, a single electoral district with a 5% national threshold and the d'Hondt formula would be the most suitable combination..

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