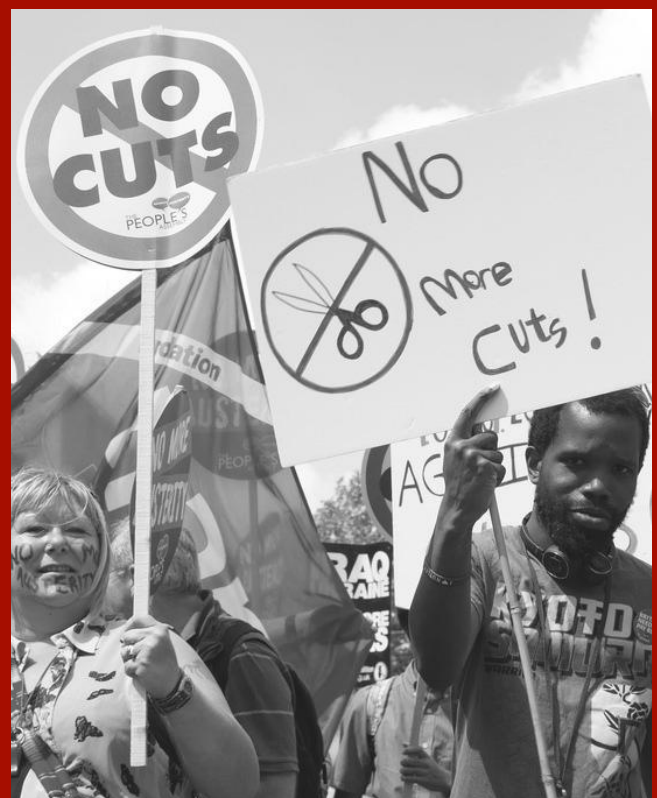



THE MANY, NOT THE FEW

PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION
& LABOUR IN THE 21st CENTURY



LCER
Labour Campaign for Electoral Reform

**MAKE
VOTES
MATTER**



"Democracy is not just a means to an end. Democracy is a value in itself. And if we treasure that value, we need to provide a more democratic system for the centrepiece of our own political structure."

- Robin Cook

The Labour Campaign for Electoral Reform (LCER) is an organisation of like-minded Labour members formed with the aim of changing Labour Party policy to support Proportional Representation and wider electoral reform.

Make Votes Matter (MVM) is the cross-party campaign to introduce Proportional Representation for the House of Commons, led by democratically-organised activists in a united movement for electoral reform.

Make Votes Matter does not endorse or support any party or alliance of parties, but aims to encourage all parties, organisations and individuals to support the use of a proportional voting system for General Elections so that Parliament reflects the voters.

This report is based on literature review and research carried out by MVM and LCER activists who are Labour Party members, in order to make arguments for Proportional Representation of particular relevance to the Labour movement and to proponents of left wing or progressive political ideologies. The report does not represent an endorsement of these or any other political ideology on the part of Make Votes Matter.

Acknowledgements

Many thanks to Mary Southcott and Martin Linton, in particular for allowing the liberal use of their writing on this issue, particularly with regards to the second section: First Past the Post is bad for Labour and bad for Democracy. A special thanks to Joe Sousek for his work.

Many thanks also to John Denham, Lewis Baston, Anne Campbell, Jo Dungey, Mary Honeyball, Patrick Vernon, Graham Allen, Richard Kuper, Jonathan Hopkins and Fair Vote Canada - all of whose work has been vital to the writing of this report.

Make Votes Matter would like to thank the Joseph Rowntree Reform Trust, Network for Social Change, Mark and Marian Tucker, George Ferguson, John Cochrane, Ian Merricks, and all of the supporters and activists who make the campaign possible.



THE MANY, NOT THE FEW

Proportional Representation
& Labour in the 21st Century

CONTENTS

- 03 Foreword by Cat Smith, Shadow Minister for Voter Engagement & Youth Affairs, and Parliamentary colleagues
- 05 Executive Summary
- 09 First Past the Post has become indefensible
- 11 FPTP is bad for Labour and bad for democracy
- 15 The answer is Proportional Representation
- 19 Proportional Representation will strengthen progressive politics
- 23 Proportional Representation will enable us to build a good society
- 29 The time is now

FOREWORD

“...by the strength of our common endeavour we achieve more than we achieve alone, so as to create for each of us the means to realise our true potential and for all of us a community in which power, wealth and opportunity are in the hands of the many, not the few.”

- Clause IV, Aims and Values of the Labour Party

It is impossible to explain the outbreak of democracy in 20th Century Britain without discussing the rise of the Labour Party. We sometimes imagine the United Kingdom as an ancient and pioneering democracy, but until relatively recently the country was nothing we would today recognise as democratic. Until 1918, most of the adult population were not allowed to vote, and no women were. The House of Commons was an instrument for managing the population, not a means of representing it.

Things changed. Just three and a half million propertied men could vote in the 1900 General Election, which returned two Labour MPs. Forty-five years later, more than twenty-five million men and women had the right to vote, and they elected the Labour Government that created the NHS, established the welfare state, built a million new homes and enshrined workers' rights that are now taken for granted.

The Labour movement achieved this by reappropriating the Parliamentary system

that had until then been used only by the privileged few. By representing the newly-enfranchised masses it was able to reshape British society in the interests of the many, not the few.

But the pre-democratic voting system was never properly reformed. Today, a great deal of the Many have found themselves all but excluded from political decision-making by an electoral system designed for the 19th Century.

76% of Labour voters now say we should commit to changing our voting system to Proportional Representation.

New polling of Labour voters has found that an overwhelming majority would support replacing our current First Past the Post system with a form of Proportional Representation. 76% of Labour voters said we should commit to making this change, with just 5% opposing. In fact, a majority of supporters of every major political party believe we should switch to PR.

This report sets out the reasons why the Labour Party must listen to the wisdom of this majority and commit to Proportional Representation in our manifesto.

The most obvious of these reasons are to do with the way our voting system denies most people a real say about who represents them and how they are governed. By limiting voter choice and distorting representation at local, regional and national levels, the system forces voters and parties alike to put tactics before principles. This inevitably breeds cynicism and alienation, and it produces Parliaments that don't reflect the people.

Countries which use PR are much more likely to be the kind of social democracies that we in the Labour Party want to create

What is less well-known is that there's a substantial body of evidence showing that countries which use PR are much more likely to be the kind of social democracies that we in the Labour Party want to create. They have significantly better income equality than countries with systems like our own. They are more likely to be welfare states, more likely to share out public goods equally, and are more likely to take action on climate change.

Workers, activists, parties and trade unions all have to fight for these things, wherever they are in the world. But it is becoming increasingly clear that those who fight for justice and equality in proportional

democracies find that their efforts bear greater fruit than those who do so under winner-takes-all systems like ours.

It is no exaggeration to say that in the 21st Century, Proportional Representation is a prerequisite of a properly-functioning democracy in which power, wealth and opportunity are in the hands of the many, not the few.

It once again falls to the Labour Party to play a crucial role in transforming the terms on which democracy is conducted by supporting this historic change. In doing so, Labour will find an electorate re-enfranchised. It will find activists and members across the country re-empowered to organise and use political power to shape a good society. We will find ourselves welcomed by allies, thanked by voters, and lauded by history.

We hope you will consider the arguments and evidence in this report and we look forward to the debate.

Signed

Cat Smith MP, Shadow Minister for Voter Engagement and Youth Affairs

Richard Burden MP, Shadow Minister for Transport

Jon Cruddas MP

Paul Flynn MP

Mary Honeyball MEP

Stephen Kinnock MP

Clive Lewis MP

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

FIRST PAST THE POST HAS BECOME INDEFENSIBLE

A critical review of First Past the Post reveals that it fails to perform even the most basic tasks expected of a voting system. It is, for example, unable to guarantee that a party receiving the most votes wins the most seats. In our elections major parties routinely *gain votes but lose seats* or *lose votes but gain seats*, meaning that political power is divorced from public support.

Our parliaments and governments have become less and less representative, as an electorate that has long voted for a growing number of parties collides with a voting system that can only adequately accommodate two. The present Conservative government won less than 37 per cent of the vote, meaning it has the worst mandate of any majority government in the OECD. Meanwhile a quarter of all votes in 2015 went to parties that now *share* just 1.5 per cent of MPs between them.

FPTP has become indefensible because it fails to ensure that representatives reflect the choices of the electorate at a local, regional or national level.

FPTP IS BAD FOR LABOUR AND BAD FOR DEMOCRACY

Winning General Elections under FPTP requires the targeting of swing voters in marginal constituencies. The logic of this targeting harms every aspect of democratic and political life in the UK.

Ignoring unwinnable seats demoralises Constituency Labour Parties and gives them no reason to campaign. De-prioritising unwinnable and safe seats disillusion voters who have neither incentive nor encouragement to vote for us or for anyone. Labour supporters in many regions resort to voting tactically for parties they do not believe in, artificially depressing Labour's vote share. Exaggerated, polarised heartlands develop, encouraging parties to become complacent and unresponsive in the areas in which they are strongest.

This cycle cannot be broken without abolishing FPTP, because while it remains the marginal targeting strategy is the only way that elections can be won.

THE ANSWER IS PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION

PR simply means that *seats match votes*, and that *every vote matters*. This is how most countries do democracy. At least 80 per cent of the thirty-five OECD nations use some form of PR [1], and this percentage is growing over time as countries become more democratic.

With PR, the irrational effects of FPTP disappear, as does the distinction between marginal seats and safe seats. The problems associated with the marginal targeting strategy would therefore be neutralised and a broader approach that values every voter and every party member equally could be adopted in its place.

PR countries consistently achieve better gender balance in politics, and encourage fairer BAME representation. There is

consensus that PR increases voter turnout and engagement. Citizens of PR countries are more satisfied with their democracies, and independent assessments that identify the world's most democratic countries find that the vast majority of top performers use PR, including all of the world's top five democracies.

PR WILL STRENGTHEN PROGRESSIVE POLITICS

Not only is PR healthier for our democracy, it actually enables the development of strong progressive politics. Evidence suggests that FPTP has a tendency to produce right-wing governments, while PR tends to produce progressive, left-leaning governments more often.

Political scientists attribute this effect of FPTP to the necessity it creates of managing and appealing to a diverse range of lower and middle income groups from a single left-wing electoral platform. Under PR, diverse progressive groups are represented in proportion to their support whether they unite before an election or after one, and the representatives of the lower and middle income groups will ordinarily have a mutual interest in working together to defend their voters from the higher income group's interests.

KEY FINDINGS OF THIS REPORT

- At least 80 per cent of OECD nations use some form of PR [1]; this percentage is growing over time.
- PR enables better gender and BAME representation in politics; every country with more than 40% women in its main legislative chamber uses PR.
- Countries with proportional systems experience higher turnout and political engagement, and the world's best performing democracies all use PR.
- PR enables progressive politics. Evidence shows that FPTP countries tend to have right-wing governments for most of the time, while PR tends to produce more progressive, left-leaning governments.
- A majority voted for parties to the left of the Conservatives in thirteen of the last sixteen UK General Elections, yet we have had Conservative majority governments for most of this period.
- PR will enable us to build a good society; evidence suggests a causal relationship between proportional voting systems and many progressive and socialist outcomes.
- There is a causal link between PR voting systems and low income inequality.
- Countries with PR are more likely to be welfare states, commit almost five per cent more to social expenditure, have higher scores on metrics of human development, and a more equitable distribution of public goods.
- Countries with PR have better environmental laws and more effective action on climate change.
- Proportional democracies outperform majoritarian democracies when it comes to decisiveness and long-term policy-making.
- Democracies with FPTP are significantly more likely to go to war than those with PR.

When we look back to past UK elections we discover that a majority voted for parties to the left of the Conservatives in thirteen of the last sixteen General Elections. Yet we have had Conservative majority governments for most of this time. With PR, past governments would have been more progressive and the Thatcher era, for example, simply could not have happened.

PR WILL ENABLE US TO BUILD A GOOD SOCIETY

The vast majority of those societies with features that Labour would wish to emulate in the UK use systems of PR, and a body of evidence suggests a causal relationship between proportional voting systems and many of the progressive and socialist principles that we value.

Research identifies a specific causal link between PR voting systems and low income inequality, explaining it in terms of taxation and redistribution policies following from wider public access to the political power required to put them in place. Countries with PR are more likely to be welfare states, have almost five per cent more social expenditure, have higher scores on metrics of human development, and a more equitable distribution of public goods. This can be illustrated by comparing the UK and management of its now depleted oil wealth with the approach taken by proportional Norway. The former used its oil windfall to temporarily reduce taxes; the latter established the world's largest sovereign wealth fund under public ownership.

Countries with PR have better environmental protections and more effective action on climate change. In the UK, for years FPTP stopped the Green Party from seriously threatening Labour's Parliamentary seats, despite drawing votes away from us across the country, so Labour governments have had no *electoral* incentive to implement effective climate change policies.

On the basis of these findings, we conclude that proportional democracies in fact outperform majoritarian countries when it comes to decisiveness and long-term policy-making.

Finally, we note that developed democracies with FPTP are significantly more likely to go to war. PR countries require broader consensus before they may be lead into conflict by the executive.

THE TIME IS NOW

Our support for Proportional Representation is now vital if we are to show we are serious about democratising our society and putting trust in the voters. It would change the landscape of British politics for the better in the long-term, and offer voters the chance to vote for this important change in the coming General Election.



FIRST PAST THE POST HAS BECOME INDEFENSIBLE

Under our current First Past the Post voting system the country is divided into constituencies, each of which elects one MP. Voters put a cross next to their preferred candidate. The votes are counted, and the single candidate with the largest number of votes is elected to the House of Commons.

FPTP arguably performs adequately when there are just two candidates standing in each constituency. The winner will receive more than half of the votes cast.

But as soon as you add a third candidate, this changes. Instead of needing half the votes plus one to win, it is possible for a candidate to win with just one third of the vote plus one. When four candidates stand for a seat, the minimum winning threshold drops further: to 25 per cent plus one vote. When there are five candidates, it drops to 20 per cent plus one vote, and so on.

In the 2015 General Election, an average of 6.1 candidates stood in each constituency, from seven major political parties in Great Britain alone.

As a result, most MPs received a minority of votes cast in their constituency. For example, the Belfast South MP received just 24.5 per cent, with over three quarters of those who turned out to vote represented by someone they did not vote for.

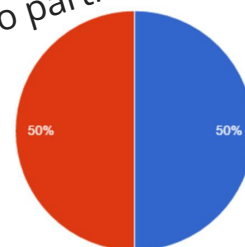
This is not a criticism of individual MPs. It is simply the collision of an increasingly diverse electorate with a voting system that is mathematically incapable of ensuring their views are accurately represented in Parliament.

MPs may do a fine job of helping constituents with personal problems, regardless of how they voted. They can speak for the community when defending a local industry or expressing grief after a tragedy. But MPs cannot represent the view of all their constituents on national issues, because they represent people who hold diverse and contradictory views.

The Conservative Party received 36.9 per cent of the vote, the weakest democratic mandate of any majority government in the OECD.

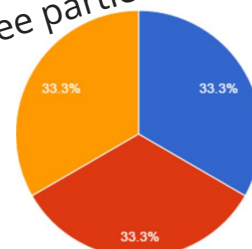
The minimum needed to win a seat falls as the number of parties grows

Two parties



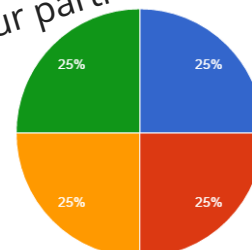
50% + 1 vote needed to win

Three parties



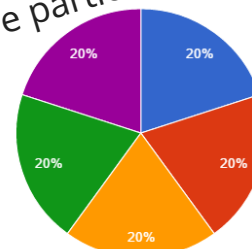
33.3% + 1 vote to win

Four parties



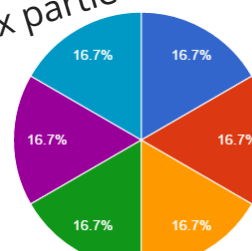
25% + 1 vote to win

Five parties



20% + 1 vote to win

Six parties



16.7% + 1 vote to win

On a national level, the representation of parties is grossly distorted. The Conservative Party received 36.9 per cent of the vote in 2015. This is the weakest democratic mandate of any majority government among the thirty-five OECD nations. Yet they have effectively 100 per cent of the power.

In the same election, the SNP won half the vote in Scotland, but won 95 per cent of the seats. Likewise on a regional level, 51 per cent voted Conservative in South East England, but 93 per cent of the MPs are now Conservatives.

Meanwhile, the Greens, Liberal Democrats and UKIP received 24.4 per cent of the vote between them. Yet they shared 1.5 per cent of seats. Consequently, votes are dramatically different in value.

In fact, FPTP severs the link between changes in public support for a party and the amount of power that party wields. In most General Elections since World War II, one of the three largest parties has either *gained votes but lost seats* or *lost votes but gained seats*.

For example, in the 1983 election the Conservatives' vote share dropped by 1.5 per

cent. But FPTP rewarded them with a "landslide victory", with their Parliamentary majority increasing by 38 seats.

Contrast this with 2015, when Labour gained 1.5 per cent of the vote, only to lose 26 seats! In the same election, the Conservatives increased their vote share by just 0.8 per cent. But instead of losing 26 seats, they *gained* 28!

These are not the features of a functioning democratic system. They are features of a system that is woefully unfit for purpose.

FPTP cannot even ensure the correct side wins. The UK and Canada have each had two General Elections since WWII in which the party that won most seats did not win the most votes. Two such "wrong winner" elections happened consecutively in New Zealand before it scrapped FPTP for a system of PR.

The electoral college in the US Presidential elections shares the same weakness, which is why Donald Trump is now President despite receiving almost three million fewer votes than Hillary Clinton.

All of these problems are getting worse, because people are voting for more and more

parties. It is not pessimism or party-political point scoring to make this observation. It is simply the unmistakable long-term trend since the post-war era.

In 1955, Labour and the Conservatives received over 96 per cent of all votes between them, and won almost 99 per cent of the seats. The combined vote share has since fallen to as little as 65 per cent, while still holding 87 per cent of the seats. As we saw earlier, the more parties there are, the more the vote can be split, the worse the disproportionate and irrational effects become. FPTP has become indefensible and it is past time that our party acknowledged this.

But in several ways, FPTP causes damage that is much deeper than mere "unfair" election results. On the one hand, it fundamentally skews the behaviour of political parties in a way that polarises politics, marginalises voters, and demoralises activists. On the other, it reduces the likelihood of progressive government and the development of an egalitarian society.

We turn now to the impact of the voting system on parties, activists and voters.

FPTP IS BAD FOR LABOUR AND BAD FOR DEMOCRACY

The targeting necessary to win elections under our current voting system is destroying our politics and creating unnecessary polarisation, disillusion and lack of engagement. At the root of this is the clear demarcation between safe seats and marginal seats that occurs under First Past the Post.

Safe seats are those in which only one party has a realistic chance of winning the largest share of the vote. Around 400 of the UK's 650 constituency seats are considered safe. In fact, the average seat has not changed hands since the 1960s.

On the other hand, a much smaller number of constituencies are *marginal seats*. These are those in which victories are likely to be narrow. There may be three or even four significant parties in some of these seats, but the voting system pushes them towards having just two contenders over time.

Under FPTP, parties have no direct electoral incentive to maximise their share of the vote across the entire country. What matters is winning seats,

and it is immediately obvious that the marginal seats that might change hands are where any rational party must focus if it is to win elections under this system. An inexorable logic follows. As John Denham has explained:

"The logic of the key seats and super marginal strategy is that you construct a politics around the interests of a relatively small number of swing voters in those key seats. Under First Past the Post, it is logical."

"You employ staff and election organisers to win you general elections and they will tell you that is what you need to do. You want to win the election, these are the two thousand people and these are their characteristics in each of your 40 key seats that will win you the election. In one sense you are daft to ignore them."

"I'm not suggesting that there is something corrupt about it. But it can narrow the political appeal you make. It can narrow it so much that you say "who cares who lives in Woking?" Or "let's not look too much at the core Labour vote" because they've not been identified as the swing voters."

Put another way, if Labour (or indeed the Conservatives) adopted the honourable approach of spreading our resources evenly across the country, giving every voter in every constituency an equal share of our attention, it would severely harm our chances of winning the most seats. Every pound spent reaching voters in Liverpool or Surrey is a pound diverted away from super marginals like Chester.

Furthermore, the proportion of seats that are marginal has rapidly fallen throughout the modern era. With just 31 key marginals - with majorities of fewer than 1,000 votes - among the 650 constituencies, it means 95 per cent of the electorate live in constituencies where their vote makes no difference and where parties are unlikely to make much of an effort. The effects are extremely negative all round.

THE MEMBERSHIP

Keeping up the morale of Labour Party members in a constituency where there is no possibility of winning is difficult. There is little point in local parties knocking on doors and people putting up posters.

The central party does very little to support local branches in rural Hampshire in comparison to the marginals, and in fact activists from Conservative majority seats are frequently bussed to the nearest marginal where their efforts may have an impact.

This de-prioritisation of no-hope constituencies inevitably leads to demoralisation among party activists. “The effect on the Labour Party membership of targeting super marginals has been quite devastating”, writes Anne Campbell. “In active well supported constituencies, members are much more likely to feel valued and useful and much more likely to remain members.”

In contrast, constituency parties in unwinnable seats can become intellectual debating societies where even members who put Labour posters in their windows may vote tactically. In some areas they gradually lose members, leaving a hard core who have little contact with Labour voters or grasp of the policies needed to attract them. Some of them do not even support the reform of the voting system, which is the real author of their misfortunes.

THE VOTERS

The targeting strategy made necessary by FPTP means that in safe seats there is less incentive for voters to vote and less encouragement to do so from the parties. They are not made to feel valued because, electorally speaking, their votes are of significantly lower value. These vast electoral deserts now extend across swathes of rural England, and indeed across areas of Labour-held cities, where there is no influence on a Conservative government.

In our own majority seats, Labour voters become disillusioned, passive, used to seeing Labour only at election times, if then. One of the perverse effects of FPTP is that it encourages parties to take their strongest heartlands for granted. If a constituency is expected to vote Labour come what may, there is no strategic benefit in listening to the constituents’ concerns and responding to them. In the past it seemed better to focus on doing this in the constituencies that could go either way.

The effect is that people are turned off from voting. Safe Labour seats have had lower turnouts than marginals in every election since 1950, but

this statistic does not capture the hopelessness with which millions of ordinary, decent people have come to view our democratic process. Campaigners for electoral reform hear time and time again from people who have voted in every General Election in their lifetime, yet whose vote has never made the slightest difference to the way they are represented and how they are governed.

Neglecting core supporters is not sustainable. Many Labour heartlands have seen majorities steadily eroded over decades, and there comes a point, as in the Copeland by election or across Scotland in 2015, when a safe seat is suddenly anything but safe.

This leads to disillusionment, which is the perfect breeding ground for the far right. For a discussion of the implications of PR for the far right, see the box below.

TACTICALISATION

At the time of writing, in the early stages of campaigning in for the 2017 General Election, tactical voting is being discussed as a significant theme in newspaper headlines and televised political debates. There are at least four major

tactical voting initiatives in support of progressive, centrist, pro-Europe or pro-Brexit candidates.

Tactical voting, which means voting for a candidate you do not really want to win to avoid letting in a candidate you strongly oppose, appears to be more attractive than ever. But

it is by no means new. In seats where Labour has no realistic chance, in third or fourth place, Labour supporters have escaped from the futility of voting Labour by voting tactically. The consequence is an artificial depression of Labour's vote share. The tactical unwind in 2015 in Liberal Democrat-

Conservative seats because of the Conservative-led coalition ironically produced even more Conservative MPs.

These observations paid to the claim made by supporters of FPTP, that their system gives voters a clear choice between the effective contenders for government. In much of the

FIRST PAST THE POST, PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION, AND THE FAR RIGHT

As Chuka Umunna said during the LCER/MVM rally at Labour Party Conference 2016, "you beat UKIP and you beat the BNP by beating them in argument. You don't beat them by avoiding having the argument at all". The reasons for this are pragmatic as well as principled. Depriving right-wing voters of any participation in public life is a sure way to increase resentment. The lack of political activity and low turnout in Labour heartlands has provided open terrain for the far right.

That winner-takes-all elections are protection against extremism has always been false, but recent events have provided us with a stark reminder. Donald Trump is US President despite getting almost three million fewer votes than Hillary Clinton. The alienation that led people to vote for him has all the hallmarks of a disenfranchised and unrepresented population.

Compare this to "rise of the right" in proportional Holland. Geert Wilders' party came second, winning 13 per cent of the votes and seats in their recent General Election. Before the vote, it was clear he would get nowhere near power. All the other parties had already ruled out a coalition deal



with him. So Wilders goes no further. Unless he is able to quadruple his vote he has no prospect of seizing power as Trump has done and for as long as his views are deemed extreme by most people, no parties will deal with him.

Indeed, when the far right wins representation it often exposes itself as unaligned with the interests of its voters, incompetent, or both. The BNP held two seats in the EU Parliament for a single term, but rather than gaining a foothold they were thrown out by the voters at the next election.

FPTP is the only voting system that consistently hands total power to the representatives of a minority. No party in the UK is a great danger if its power is proportional to its support. But history suggests that any party can behave dangerously when handed total power. PR is our best defence against the risk of domination by extreme or right-wing voices.

country, voters simply have no way of expressing a choice between Labour and Conservative. Their only meaningful choice is between Conservative and Liberal Democrat, SNP and Green, and so on, if they are lucky enough to live somewhere their vote matters at all.

POLARISATION

FPTP has been said to lead to what is sometimes called a north/south polarisation, but that is not entirely accurate. Rural areas, even in the North of England, have become more Conservative. The most accurate description is that it is a polarisation into areas in which each party is predominant. As a rule, predominantly Labour areas have become more Labour and predominantly Conservative areas more Conservative - with some notable exceptions.

FPTP does not cause this regional cleavage, but it exaggerates it. In predominantly Conservative areas in the south, Labour supporters see no point in voting for candidates who have no chance of success. They switch to supporting a closer contender, who in turn gains further prominence. Labour falls further behind

and loses credibility as a serious contender for the seat.

This peculiar bias produced by FPTP means that party decision-makers, MPs and Shadow Cabinets almost all come from safe seats in Labour heartlands and cities. For Labour this used to include Scotland too, but no longer. The party may try to compensate for this, but the positions of power are usually held by MPs representing safe seats and these will inevitably see issues through the prism of their constituents' interests. The Conservatives are the mirror image of this. We consequently tend to get swings in policy favouring our regions when we are in power and favouring the rural and suburban south when the Conservatives are.

THE PARTY

The effect on the party is destructive. As Lewis Baston commented: *"By fighting on a narrower and narrower front, Labour has moved once again from representing the people - broadly defined - to ignoring millions of them because they live in suburban Surrey or inner city Manchester. The electoral system is failing the Labour Party in its traditional mission of building an equal society, and the modernisers' mission of building a genuine people's party with broad and deep electoral support."*

If the danger in Conservative safe seats is that we are absent, in our own safe seats the danger is complacency. For years Labour members have become accustomed to winning some elections with very little effort and it is inevitable that winning too easily will lead some to complacency or arrogance. Scotland is the prime example of what can happen if this goes unchecked. The 2014 Independence referendum was the catalyst, but Labour was unable to hold its seats because it had unengaged from many of the local voters.

Little of practical value can be done to address this within the current system. A national party that is serious about winning under FPTP must identify and ruthlessly target the marginal seats to the detriment of those it does not deem to be targets. The only long term solution to this imbalance is to change the system so that votes matter equally wherever they are cast.

On the other hand, we almost certainly underestimate our support both in traditional Labour areas and in areas we doubt we can win. Switching to PR would create the opportunity for parties, members and voters to play a far more positive role in political life.

THE ANSWER IS PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION

Proportional Representation means that Parliament is a reflection of the votes cast by the people. The share of seats a party wins reflects the share of the vote they receive.

There are a number of ways in which this can be achieved (see systems and constituency links). These options have been designed, implemented, trialed and adjusted in many other countries for over a hundred years. There are tried-and-tested systems that maintain a strong constituency link, that allow voters to vote for candidates rather than parties, and that give voters vastly greater choice when casting their votes. What they all have in common is that they **make seats match votes**, and in doing so they **make all votes matter equally**.

It is worth taking a moment to reflect that this is the normal way the developed world does democracy. Among the thirty-five nations of the OECD, at least 80 per cent use some form of PR. Of those countries that do not, just three use First Past the Post, two of which are ex-colonies of the UK.

The international trend is for countries to move away from

disproportional systems and towards increasingly proportional ones, with the following countries scrapping FPTP for a form of PR: Belgium (1899), the Netherlands (1917), Germany (1918), Denmark (1920), Ireland (1921), Malta (1921), Cyprus (1981), New Zealand (1996) and South Africa (1994). The Scottish Parliament and Welsh Assembly have both used systems of PR since their creation in 1999, as has the Northern Ireland Assembly in its current and previous forms.

This is the normal way the developed world does democracy. Among the thirty-five nations of the OECD, at least 80 per cent use some form of PR.

The Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA) found that 31 countries had changed their electoral system over a 20 year period. Of these, 27 increased the level of proportionality, while just one (Madagascar) reduced it. World-wide, the move towards greater proportionality of electoral systems is as unmistakable as the trend toward the extension of the franchise to women and minority groups.

It is, in short, progress.

With any such system of PR, the gross disproportionality and irrationality we see in our own Parliament would instantly disappear. Parties receiving a large minority of the vote will not be handed the power of a Parliamentary majority; nor will those who vote for smaller parties be denied representation. Every vote would be equal. If a party increases its share of the vote, it will be guaranteed an increased share of the seats, and likewise it would lose seats when it loses votes. For the first time in British electoral history, we could say with certainty that whichever party gets most votes in a General Election would win the largest number of seats.

It is equally easy to see how this solves all at once the problems we detailed in the previous section. When every vote matters, safe seats and marginals no longer factor into election campaigning. Parties would be incentivised to campaign everywhere and for everyone's support. The activism of Labour Party members in Somerset would have identical value to the same work in Chester. As a

result, constituency parties would be reinvigorated. We would need to keep all our core voters happy in our heartlands, or risk taking a smaller share of the votes and therefore of the power.

With PR, voters would not find themselves having to calculate who can realistically win and vote tactically for the lesser of two evils. The country would no longer be polarised into Labour and Conservative areas. Voters for minority parties in those areas would be represented in proportion to their votes.

There is strong evidence that PR enhances democracy in a host of other respects.

Eight academic studies of which we are aware identify a trend for countries with PR to produce a **better gender balance in politics** [2]. On the other hand, FPTP has been described by the Electoral Reform Society as “the world’s worst system for achieving gender balance”. Just 30 per cent of British MPs are women. Of countries with a higher share of women than us in their primary legislature than we have, 85 per cent use a system of PR, as does every single country with more than 40 per cent female MPs. Kuper

explains: *“the moment there is more than one place to be filled, parties can nominate candidates who complement each other by appealing to different sections of the electorate. Indeed failing to do so is likely to lose them support from any significant group which considers itself neglected.”*

The same logic applies to **BAME representation**. Patrick Vernon suggests in particular that the marginal targeting strategy, *“also helps explain why there is not the confidence to field more BAME candidates in safe and increasingly marginal seats... the current voting system means that*

SYSTEMS AND CONSTITUENCY LINKS

Under FPTP, everyone has a single local MP - but for millions of people this is someone they profoundly disagree with. In Cornwall, for example, 57 per cent of people did not vote Conservative in 2015. But everyone in Cornwall is represented by a Conservative MP.

Systems of PR use multi-member constituencies as well as (or instead of) the current single-member constituencies, so that several representatives are elected to reflect the balance of opinion in a region. In Cornwall, Labour and other parties would have MPs in proportion to their vote, so most voters would have an MP who shares their values and views.

PR can keep the current one-to-one link so every constituency is represented by a single MP, with “top-up lists” used to make sure seats match votes across a region. This is called the Additional Member System and is used in Scotland, Wales and the London Assembly, Germany and New Zealand.

Other forms systems of PR use only multi-member constituencies, including the Single Transferable Vote (used in Ireland, Northern Ireland, and local elections in Scotland), and open-list systems (Austria, Denmark, Norway).

These are systems of PR because seats match votes. This is something that cannot be said of the Alternative Vote (AV), on which the UK had a referendum in 2011. AV is neither a form of PR, nor is it even more proportional than our current system. Analysis by the Electoral Reform Society shows that if AV had been used in the 2015 General Election, the Conservatives would have won an even bigger majority on the same share of the vote.

white middle class men are perceived as a 'safe pair of hands'. Under PR there would be a greater focus on selecting candidates based on an equality and diversity perspective along the spectrum of candidates with the right skill mix to be a politician."

Labour has become better at fielding BAME and women candidates, but PR would help us go further and would mean that all parties are incentivised by the electoral system to do the same. We would expect to see a more representative Parliament as a result.

It is well established that PR leads to increased **voter turnout** - for reasons that are obvious when you consider that many votes under FPTP have no practical value. Countries with PR experience 7.5 per cent higher turnouts on average, once other contextual factors are taken into account, according to Lijphart. Pilon estimates a turnout bonus of 7-8 per cent. Norris derived a more conservative estimate of 5 per cent bonus to turnout under PR systems. IDEA used actual global turnout statistics from 1945 and 2002 to calculate that list PR turnouts

are 6 per cent higher than FPTP, while Single Transferable Vote (STV) turnouts have been 13 per cent higher than those in FPTP systems.

Labour should be particularly interested in increasing turnout, not only as democrats but because the demographics in which we poll the strongest are those in which turnout is at its lowest. In 2015, the social groups that reported the strongest support for us were precisely those in which turnout was lowest: young people, those of lower social class, the BAME community, private and social renters [3].

Lijphart finds that citizens in countries with PR have been found to be more satisfied with the performance of their country's democratic institutions, even when the party they voted for is not in power, and the countries topping the Economist's Democracy Index (which takes no account of proportionality) finds that the top five countries all use PR. Thirteen of the fifteen countries to appear above the UK use PR; one (Australia) uses PR for its upper House, and just one uses FPTP (Canada, ranked 9).

*"Consensus democracies", which use PR, "do clearly outperform the majoritarian democracies with regard to the quality of democracy and democratic representation", found Arend Lijphart in his study, *Patterns of Democracy*.*

But what would PR mean for the Labour and the left?





PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION WILL STRENGTHEN PROGRESSIVE POLITICS

It is possible to acknowledge that First Past the Post is unacceptable in a modern democracy, but nonetheless worry that a change to Proportional Representation would harm Labour's chances of electoral success. Could PR tip the balance of political power to the right?

This is a reasonable question to ask, since if PR were to put the left in general and the Labour Party in particular further from power, we will be less able to defend the things we value and change society for the better.

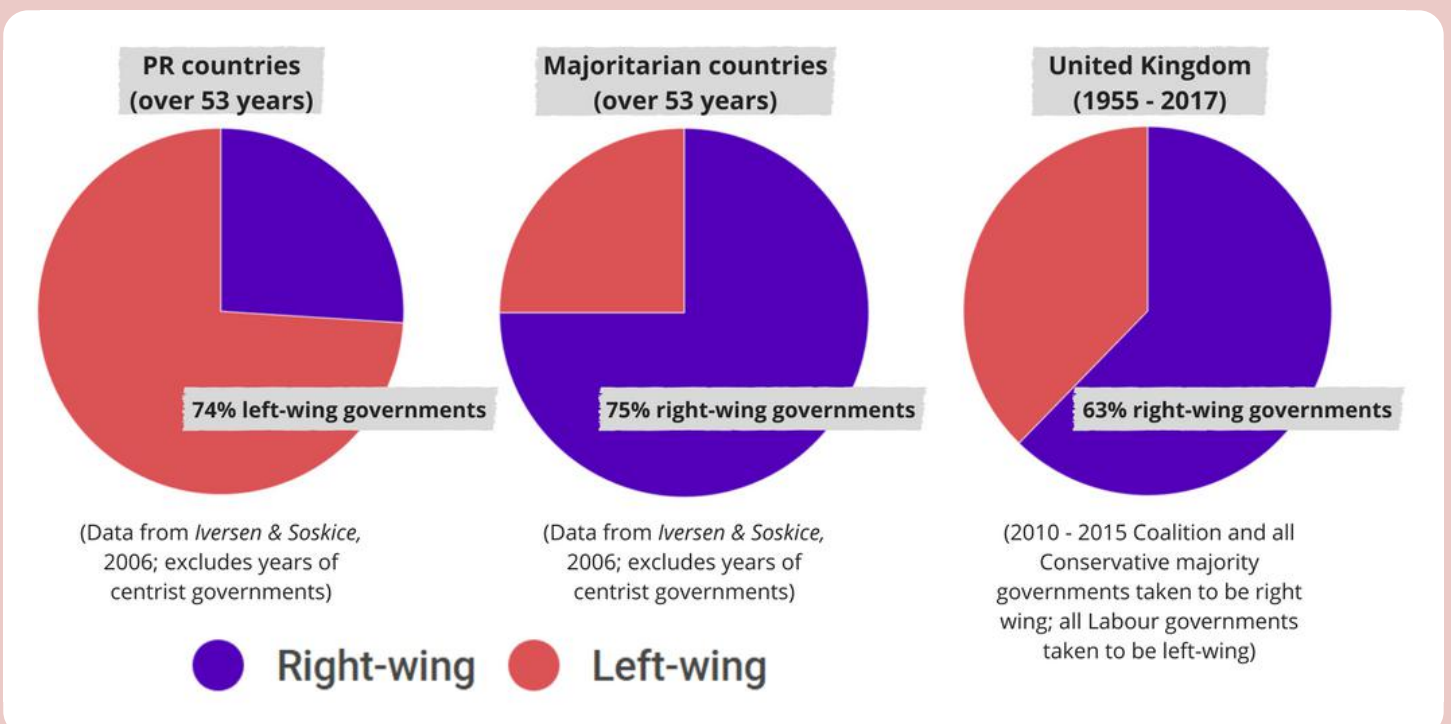
However, political scientists

relationship between types of electoral system and political leaning of the governments they tend to elect. The evidence is that it is FPTP and other majoritarian systems, rather than PR, that advantage the right.

Countries with majoritarian systems have been found to be significantly more likely to have right-wing governments, whereas those with systems of PR are significantly more likely to have left-wing governments [4], with a study published in 2017 confirming "that majoritarian systems have a substantive conservative bias, whereas countries with PR show more differentiated

patterns" [5]. Studies which reviewed the experience of seventeen advanced democracies over a fifty-three year period found that proportional democracies were governed by left-leaning governments on average for 74 per cent of the time, while majoritarian democracies (which includes those with FPTP) were governed by right-leaning governments for 75 per cent of the time [6].

Torben Iversen (Harvard) and David Soskice (LSE) provide a compelling explanation of why such a strong relationship should arise. This imagines an unequal society in which there



are three equally-sized social groups - high income, middle income and low income. The middle and low income have a shared interest in allying to form a majority, and applying tax and welfare policies that redistribute some of the high income group's wealth.

Jonathan Hopkins summarises their explanation in a piece he wrote for Compass, *Electoral Reform and the Left*:

"In a PR system, each group can form a political party which will enjoy a share of parliamentary representation roughly equivalent to the size of the group - here, 33 per cent each. Low and Middle together have 66 per cent of the votes in parliament, and can establish a government which would redistribute resources from High. They can bargain about how to distribute these resources among themselves, in the knowledge that if one group seeks an unfair advantage, the coalition would break down and both sides would lose out. As a result, redistribution is the likely outcome.

"In a majoritarian system, the electoral rules tend to favour two large parties (as is evident in the US and UK), not three. So, in order to act jointly to achieve redistribution, Low and Middle must form a political party

jointly. But, although Low and Middle have a joint interest in redistribution, they have divergent interests when it comes to distributing these resources amongst themselves. The Middle income group, in particular, may be concerned that the Low group could take control of the party and redistribute not only from the High income group, but also from the Middle. So in order to head off this possibility, Middle may choose instead to ally with High, and keep its income to itself."

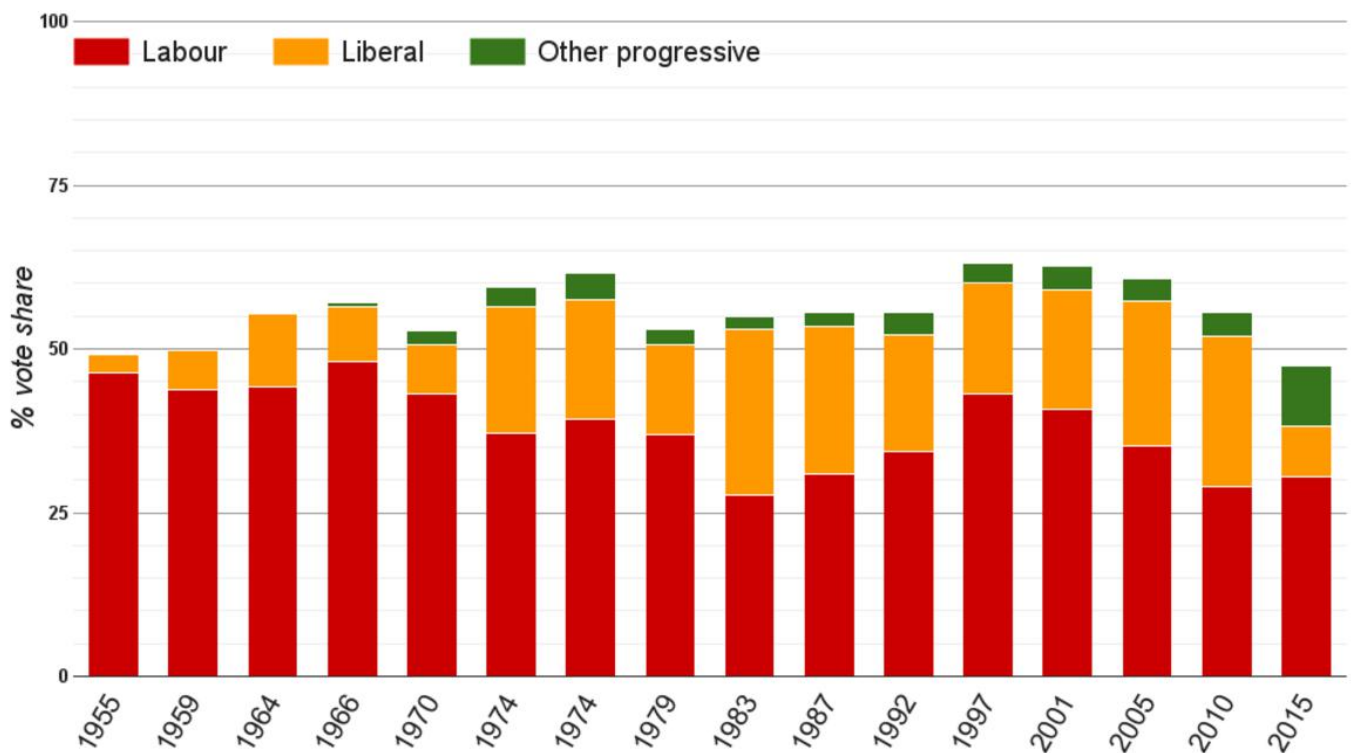
Under FPTP, only one progressive party (in the UK, the Labour Party) has a realistic prospect of winning power, but in order to do so it must attract the support of a dauntingly broad range of social and political groups all at the same time. To retain power, it must continually manage and mediate between their competing interests - who might otherwise vote Green, Liberal Democrat, UKIP or even Conservative. Failing to satisfy all of these constituent parts results in a loss of power for Labour and, consequently, for the only potential left-leaning government in the UK. The Higher income group (the Conservatives) typically resumes power.

On the other hand, PR makes progressive government more likely because it removes these artificial barriers to forming and maintaining the broad social and political alliances that must be in place in order for progressive government to exist.

For a more concrete idea of what a move to PR might mean for Labour, we can examine how past UK General Elections would have looked under PR. We must, however, do so with caution. Electoral systems change the way parties campaign, the way people vote, and indeed whether people vote.

Nonetheless, past election results indicate broad trends in public attitudes and can be used to illustrate how a proportional House of Commons might have looked over the years.

The graph below shows the percentage vote share of "progressive" parties for every General Election since 1955. The "Liberal" bar refers to the prevalent liberal party of the time - variously the Liberal Party, SDP-Liberal Alliance and the Liberal Democrats. The "other progressive" bar only includes parties which received at least 0.4 per cent



of the national vote in a particular election [7]. These are the Green Party (1992, 2001-2015), Plaid Cymru (1970-2015), SDLP (1974-2010), SNP (1966-2015) and Unity (1970).

What we find is that in thirteen of the last sixteen elections, a majority of voters voted for parties to the left of the Conservatives. In reality, eight of these sixteen elections returned Conservative majority governments. We had Conservative majority government for 54.3 per cent of the duration since 1955 - despite the Conservatives never once winning a majority of the national vote. This has often been under the leadership of the most

extreme Conservative voices: under Thatcher and now May.

In thirteen of the last sixteen General Elections, a majority voted for parties to the left of the Conservatives, yet the Conservatives have governed as a majority most of the time.

Under PR, it seems beyond doubt modern British history would have been very different. The Thatcher era of unmoderated right-wing government simply could not have happened.

The worst possible outcome during the entire Thatcher era - from Labour's point of view -

would have been a Conservative-SDP-Liberal Alliance. We know what a Conservative-Liberal Alliance looks like, because we had one from 2010 to 2015. It is not progressive, but it is a far cry from the extremes of Conservative majority government. Furthermore, FPTP ensured that the balance of power within the 2010 Coalition was decisively weighted towards to Conservatives: 20 per cent Liberal Democrat and 80 per cent Conservative. Under PR, it would have been 40 per cent Liberal Democrat and 60 per cent Conservative, and greater moderation of Conservative policy would logically follow.

On the other hand, there would have been every possibility of a genuinely left-leaning government throughout the seventies and eighties. The point here is not that a Labour-Liberal coalition would be exactly the same as a Labour majority government, but that it would be incomparably better and more representative of British voters than the actual outcome: nearly two decades of Thatcherism.

Yes, the Liberal Democrats chose to go into Coalition with the Conservatives in 2010. But the Liberal Democrats had a

fairly progressive manifesto (scrapping tuition fees, action on climate change, greater banking regulation) and it is only because of our disproportional voting system that Labour and the Liberal Democrats did not have enough seats between them to form a majority Coalition. It is, again, difficult to doubt that a Liberal Democrat-Labour Coalition would have been better than the Conservative-Liberal Democrat one actually formed. Furthermore, we can expect the Liberal Democrats to remember what happens when they abandon progressive promises in

coalitions with Conservatives: a catastrophic collapse in their vote share at the next election.

The evidence from political science suggests that an inbuilt advantage to the right is found in majoritarian electoral systems. This chimes with our own experience, in which a Conservative minority have frequently governed the UK almost by default. Looking at historical electoral trends, it is rational to conclude that the UK would have had significantly more progressive and less conservative government if we had used PR throughout the modern era.



PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION WILL ENABLE US TO BUILD A GOOD SOCIETY

So PR is not only healthier for democracy and for politics, it also is likely to lead to more years of progressive or left-leaning governments. But we are not in politics to seek power for power's sake; our project is to put power, wealth and opportunity in the hands of the many, not the few. Regardless of who is likely to be in power, we need to know that PR is consistent with the kind of equal and egalitarian society we want.

Again, this is a subject on which political science has much to say. The world has provided a large sample of proportional and majoritarian countries, and academics have been able to use this to draw some robust comparisons of their performance. By looking at their findings with respect to issues we in the Labour Party are interested in, we can find out whether PR is likely to help or hinder the building of a good society.

INCOME EQUALITY

The evidence

There is a body of evidence showing that countries with proportional electoral systems have considerably lower income inequality than those with majoritarian systems like First Past the Post [8]. Based on the evidence, political scientists have concluded that there is a causal relationship at work: "consensual political institutions [which use PR] tend to reduce income inequalities whereas majoritarian institutions have the opposite effect" [9] and that when the degree of proportionality of a system increases, income inequality decreases [10]. Analysis has found these effects to be highly significant, with PR accounting for 51 per cent of the variance of income inequality among countries [11].

The Gini Coefficient is a metric used to quantify income equality - with lower scores indicating better income equality. The table below shows the thirty-five OECD nations (the advanced democracies) ranked in order of Gini Coefficient, using the most recent data available for each country.

This powerfully illustrates the relationship established by political science. The top 14

in terms of income equality all use PR. The UK and US, with FPTP, are right down at the bottom with the likes of Israel, Turkey and Mexico - countries which face notably different challenges from our more comparable peers.

Explanation

Birchfield and Crepaz explain these results as follows: "The more widespread the access to political institutions, and the more representative the political system, the more citizens will take part in the political process to change it in their favour which will manifest itself, among other things, in lower income inequality. Such consensual political institutions make the government more responsive to the demands of a wider range of citizens". This should ring true to us as democratic socialists. As Tony Benn put it, "democracy is the most revolutionary thing in the world, because if you have power you use it to meet the needs of you and your community." We are unsurprised that democratic countries have better income equality than authoritarian states, because with democracy the general population has the political power to seek to rebalance wealth. A *more representative* democracy provides better income equality than a *less representative* democracy for exactly the same reason.

Rank	Country	Income equality index
1	Iceland	0.244
2	Norway	0.252
3	Denmark	0.254
4	Slovenia	0.255
5	Finland	0.257
6	Czech Republic	0.262
7	Belgium	0.268
8	Slovak Republic	0.269
9	Austria	0.280
10	Sweden	0.281
11	Luxembourg	0.281
12	Netherlands	0.283
13	Hungary	0.288
14	Germany	0.292
15	France	0.294
16	Switzerland	0.295
17	Poland	0.300
18	Korea	0.302
19	Ireland	0.309
20	Canada	0.322
21	Italy	0.325
22	Japan	0.330
23	New Zealand	0.333
24	Australia	0.337
25	Portugal	0.342
26	Greece	0.343
27	Spain	0.346
28	Latvia	0.352
29	United Kingdom	0.358
30	Estonia	0.361
31	Israel	0.365
32	Turkey	0.393
33	United States	0.394
34	Mexico	0.459
35	Chile	0.465

Key

Use First Past the Post

Use another majoritarian system

Use some form of Proportional Representation

WELFARE AND SHARING OF PUBLIC GOODS

The evidence

There is a similar relationship between electoral systems and the sharing of public goods. Arend Lijphart found that “consensus democracies”, which use proportional electoral systems, demonstrate “kinder, gentler qualities” in a number of ways; including that “they are more likely to be welfare states”. He found that they spent an average of 4.75 per cent more on social expenditures than majoritarian democracies, describing this relationship as “strongly positive and statistically significant”.

In a 2009 study, Carey and Hix looked at 610 elections over 60 years in 81 countries and found that PR countries garnered higher scores on the United Nations Index of Human Development, which incorporates health, education and standard of living indicators. Carey and Hix consider the Index to provide “a reasonable overall indicator of government performance in the delivery of public goods and human welfare.”

Explanation

The better performance of PR countries as social democracies can be explained in a similar way to their improved income equality. When a general population has better access to political power, governments are more likely to act in the interest of the whole of that population.

As an illustration of this, we can compare the way that British and Norwegian governments have managed the proceeds of our respective North Sea oil and gas resources. The discoveries occurred around the same time, were of roughly comparable size, and were significant enough to place both countries among the most important oil producers in the late 20th and early 21st Centuries. While the UK uses FPTP, Norway uses PR and is usually governed by coalitions.

By now, most North Sea oil has gone and production is in decline. In Norway, the legacy of exploiting this huge natural resource is that the Norwegian people own the world’s largest sovereign wealth fund. This \$900 billion fund owns on average 1.3 per cent of every publicly listed company in the world.

In contrast, the UK has no such fund. John Hawksworth, PricewaterhouseCoopers, made what he called a conservative estimate, that if UK oil profits had been set aside in the same way it would have been worth £450bn by 2008, with Professor Sukhdev Johal, University of London, estimating as much as £850bn [12]. Not only was this not done, but the extra tax revenue raised over the oil-producing era does not register as an increase in public investment or expenditure. Hawksworth’s conclusion: “The logical answer is that the oil money enabled non-oil taxes to be kept lower”. Canada, also with FPTP, has followed the same model as the UK.

The UK and Norway faced a very similar opportunity. Norway now has a vast public asset, while the UK has little to show for it. This is clearly due to the decisions made by successive governments in Norway and the UK. But the evidence suggests that the electoral system influences both the composition and decisions of those governments.

Periods of centre and centre-right government have passed in Norway (1997-2005; 2013-present) without the oil fund being abolished, plundered or privatised. It is striking that in majoritarian UK, saving up oil profits under public ownership has been politically unthinkable; whereas in proportional Norway, it is ceasing to do so that is unthinkable.

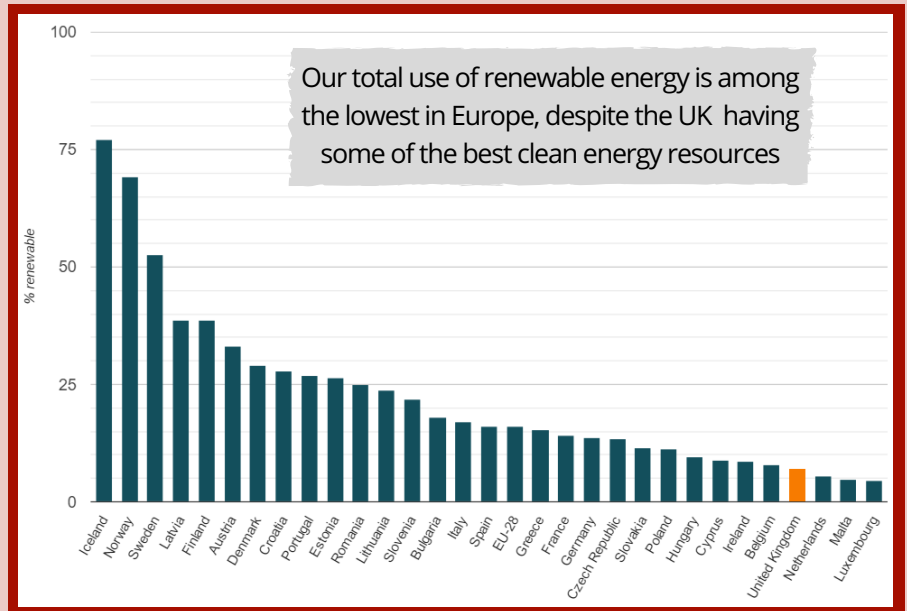
We cannot be certain that Norway would have squandered its oil wealth if it used FPTP for its General Elections, or that the UK would have treated its responsibly if it used PR. But these are the kind of effects that political science leads us to expect each of these electoral systems to have on their societies, and in this instance these expectations appear to hold true.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES

The evidence

Studies have found that countries using proportional systems set stricter environmental policies [13] and were faster to ratify the Kyoto protocol [14]. On environmental performance, Lijphart and Orellana [15] found that countries with PR scored six points higher on the Yale Environmental Performance Index, which measures ten policy areas, including environmental health, air quality, resource management, biodiversity and habitat, forestry, fisheries, agriculture and climate change.

Using data from the International Energy Agency, Orellana found that between 1990 and 2007, when carbon emissions were rising everywhere, the statistically predicted increase was significantly lower in countries with fully proportional systems, at 9.5 per cent, compared to 45.5 per cent in countries using winner-take-all systems. Orellana found use of renewable energy to be 117 percent higher in countries with fully proportional systems.



Explanation

The UK has historically lagged behind its European peers when it comes to action on climate change and uptake of renewable energy. Depressingly, this is despite having by far the best offshore wind and marine energy potential in Europe. Successive governments have at best taken relatively limited action to move away from fossil fuels and reduce emissions, or at worst have actively resisted such progress (with the current government determined begin shale gas production despite overwhelming opposition from both local communities [16] and the general public [17]).

In his 1990 book, *Electing for Democracy*, Richard Kuper offers an explanation for this which remains true to this day. “Were the Greens”, he writes, “in a position to obtain representation in proportion to their vote, it is inconceivable that Labour would not already have in place a coherent and much strengthened range of environmental policies in order to head off the challenge.”

Because a vote for the Green Party remains a wasted vote in almost every constituency, we in the Labour Party have little electoral incentive to worry about winning those voters back by competing with the Greens on environmental credentials. On the contrary, since the swing voters in marginal seats may not be keen on the idea of a wind turbine at the bottom of their garden, an electoral agent may well advise us not to make too much of a fuss about climate change.

LONG-TERMISM AND DECISIVENESS

The preceding three issues all point to a fundamental flaw with FPTP: the exaggerated incentive to focus on short-term issues. Because electoral victory is all-or-nothing and a Parliamentary majority is paramount, parties do not have the luxury of coming together to find solutions to long-term problems. Decisions which need to be made, but which might prove unpopular, are routinely deferred until after the next election - often repeatedly.

It has been suggested that this is a contributing factor to the UK's housing crisis since a proper response would mean building on some of the green belt, much of which lies in marginal constituencies where the cities meet the countryside. Further research would be required in order to test this hypothesis.

However, the evidence on the issues discussed above also exposes the myth sometimes repeated by proponents of FPTP, that coalition governments formed under PR are "weak", "indecisive" or "unable to get anything done". The idea

that greater economic equality, fairer distribution of public goods and effective action on climate change are symptoms of weakness or indecision is clearly an absurd one. In the UK, the so-called "strong" and "decisive" FPTP system has coincided with some of the worst inequality in Europe, the absence of an effective housing policy for many decades, and inadequate action on climate change.

Indeed, Arend Lijphart's Patterns of Democracy found that "majoritarian democracies do not outperform the consensus democracies [which use PR] on effective government and effective policy-making - in fact, the consensus democracies have the better record" [18].

The so-called "strong" and "decisive" FPTP system has coincided with some of the worst inequality in Europe, the absence of an effective housing policy for many decades, and inadequate action on climate change.

WAR AND CONFLICT

The Evidence

Leblang and Chan found that the electoral system is the most important institutional predictor of a democracy's involvement in war. Established democracies with systems of PR tend to have significantly less involvement in armed conflict. They found, "a proportionate-representation system turns out to be consistently significant in dampening war involvement in all three meanings we have operationalized in this context."

The three meanings of "war" referred to are: 1) likelihood of being the first to enter into war; 2) likelihood of joining a multinational coalition in an ongoing war, and 3) likelihood of remaining in a war it is already involved in.

Separately, Orellana found that the predicted level of military expenditure for countries with majoritarian systems was more than twice as high as for countries with fully proportional systems.

Explanation

Leblang and Chan comment: "What is it about the nature of a PR system that discourages foreign belligerence? ... Instead of supposing that only competitive politics can restrain war involvement, an informal culture and a traditional practise of consensual politics may serve as an equally and perhaps even more effective barrier to such involvement ...European countries with a PR system tend to have parliamentary majorities based on an oversized coalition with participation from several parties. Even where there is one dominant party, they tend to offer a more encompassing coalition with institutionalized representation of various sectoral interests. Their political process acknowledges multiple veto groups and promotes regular consultation to develop consensual policy."

In short, when the people are fairly represented in Parliament, more of those groups who may object to any potential war have the access to the political power that is necessary to prevent it. In a proportional democracy, war - like other national decisions - generally requires the consent of the majority.

THE TIME IS NOW

It is no exaggeration to say that in the 21st Century, Proportional Representation is a prerequisite of a properly-functioning democracy in which power, wealth and opportunity are in the hands of the many, not the few.

By recognising this and committing to reforming our voting system, we would take an overdue step to empower our voters and members. We would be putting our trust in the voters and showing them we are serious about democratizing the UK.

It would mean that the default setting of British politics would never again be Conservative majority government, but government determined by the wisdom of the progressive majority that has almost always existed in the UK throughout modern times.

And to many voters - who are more diverse and less tribal than ever - it would offer an important change to vote for in the coming election.

GET INVOLVED



www.LabourCampaignForElectoralReform.org.uk
 @Labour4PR www.facebook.com/lc4er



www.makevotesmatter.org.uk
 @makevotesmatter
www.facebook.com/makevotesmatter
www.facebook.com/groups/votingreformteam

END NOTES

[1] The electoral systems of the OECD nations can be broken down as follows: 21 List PR; 2 List PR with plurality bonus; 2 Additional Member System; 1 Single Transferable Vote; 4 Supplementary Member; 3 First Past the Post; 2 other majoritarian.

"List PR with plurality bonus" includes Greece and Italy, which use PR but award a bonus to the largest minority in a way that usually results in a majority government. "Supplementary Member" systems use plurality and majoritarian systems for elections to a single legislature simultaneously, resulting in partially proportional results. We judge that Hungary's unique system most resembles SM and have categorised it as such. All of the systems ensure that everyone has a vote that has some influence on the outcomes except for First Past the Post.

[2] Norris (1985); Matland (1998); Reynolds (1999); Kenworthy and Malami (1999); Siaroff (2000); Moser (2001); Salmond (2006); Lijphart (2012)

[3] See <https://www.ipsos-mori.com/researchpublications/researcharchive/3575/>

[4] Cusack and Engelhardt (2002); Cusack and Fuchs (2002); Powell (2002); Doring and Manow (2017)

[5] Doring and Manow (2017)

[6] Cusack and Engelhardt (2002); Cusack and Fuchs (2002)

[7] Among parties who have won at least 0.4 per cent of the vote in at least one election during this period, the following are excluded from the "Other Progressives" category: Sinn Féin (not sitting in Westminster); Referendum Party (single issue); BNP, DUP, National Front, UKIP and UUP (not progressive).

[8] Lijphart (2012: 282); Birchfield and Crepaz (1998); Vincenzo Verardi (2005)

[9] Birchfield and Crepaz (1998)

[10] Verardi (2005)

[11] Birchfield and Crepaz (1998)

[12] Aditya Chakraborty, Guardian (2014)

[13] Fredriksson and Millimet (2004)

[14] Cohen (2010)

[15] Orellana (2014)

[16] www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/fracking-lancashire-cuadrilla-sajid-javid-planning-permission-overturned-a7347576.html

[17] www.theguardian.com/environment/2016/oct/13/british-public-support-for-fracking-sinks-to-lowest-ever-level

[18] Lijphart (2012)

PHOTO CREDITS

David B Young - London Austerity Protest June 2014 - www.flickr.com/photos/david0287/16298651041

UK Parliament - House of Commons Chamber - portrait - <https://flic.kr/p/57BNqF>

Gage Skidmore - Donald Trump - www.flickr.com/photos/gageskidmore/25927626806

David Holt - Refugees Welcome Demo - <https://www.flickr.com/photos/zongo/21178395279>

Alex Lee - Voting in Hackney - https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/1/17/Voting_in_Hackney.jpg

Maina Kiai - Oliver Cromwell "decorated" with a gas mask - www.flickr.com/photos/mainakiai/26419618832

REFERENCES

- Allen, Graham. (1995) *Reinventing Democracy*. London: Features Unlimited.
- Birchfield, Vicki and Crepaz, Markus (1998). "The Impact of Constitutional Structures and Collective and Competitive Veto Points on Income Inequality in Industrialized Democracies. *European Journal of Political Research* 34: 175–200. www.people.fas.harvard.edu/~iversen/PDFfiles/Birchfield&Crepaz1998.pdf
- Economist Intelligence Unit. (2017). *Democracy Index 2017*. Available at: www.eiu.com/public/topical_report.aspx?campaignid=DemocracyIndex2016 [Accessed 30 April 2017]
- Carey, John M. and Hix, Simon (2009). "The Electoral Sweet Spot: Low-magnitude Proportional Electoral Systems." PSPE Working Paper 01-2009. Department of Government, London School of Economics and Political Science, London, UK.
- Chakraborty, Aditya. (2014). *Dude, where's my North Sea oil money?* Available at: www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/jan/13/north-sea-oil-money-uk-norwegians-fund [Accessed 30 April 2017]
- Cohen, Darcie (2010). "Do Political Preconditions Affect Environmental Outcomes? Exploring the Linkages Between Proportional Representation, Green parties and the Kyoto Protocol." Simon Fraser University. <http://summit.sfu.ca/item/10084>
- Curtice, Cusack, Thomas R., and Lutz Engelhardt. 2002. "The PGL File Collection: File Structures and Procedures." Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin für Sozialforschung.
- Cusack, Thomas R., and Susanne Fuchs. 2002. "Documentation Notes for Parties, Governments, and Legislatures Data Set." Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin für Sozialforschung.
- Döring, H., & Manow, P. (2017). Is Proportional Representation More Favourable to the Left? Electoral Rules and Their Impact on Elections, Parliaments and the Formation of Cabinets. *British Journal of Political Science*, 47(1), 149-164. Doi: 10.1017/S0007123415000290
- Fredriksson, P.G., & Millimet, D.L. (2004). Electoral rules and environmental policy. *Economics Letters*, 84(2), 237-44.
- Georgiou, Mary & Linton, Martin. (1993). *Labour's road to electoral reform*. Labour Campaign for Electoral Reform.
- Hopkins, Jonathan. (2009) *Electoral reform and the left*. Compass. Retrieved from www.compassonline.org.uk/publications/electoral-reform-and-the-left/
- Ipsos Mori. (2015). *How Britain voted in 2015*. Available at: www.ipsos-mori.com/researchpublications/researcharchive/3575/How-Britain-voted-in-2015.aspx [Accessed 30 April 2017]
- Iverson, Torben & Soskice, David (2006). *Electoral Institutions and the Politics of Coalitions: Why Some Democracies Redistribute More Than Others*. Available at: www.people.fas.harvard.edu/~iversen/PDFfiles/Iverson-Soskice2005.pdf [Accessed 30 April 2017]
- Kuper, Richard. (1990) *Electing for democracy: Proportional Representation and the left*. Worcester: Socialist Society.
- Leblang, D., & Chan, S. (2003). Explaining wars fought by established democracies: do institutional constraints matter? *Political Research Quarterly*, 56(4), 385–400.
- Lijphart, Arend (2012). *Patterns of Democracy: Government forms and performance in thirty-six countries*. New Haven, CT: Yale Press.
- Linton, Martin & Southcott, Mary. (1997) *Making votes count: the case for electoral reform*. London: Profile Books.
- OECD. (2017). *Income inequality*. Available at: <https://data.oecd.org/inequality/income-inequality.htm> [Accessed 30 April 2017]
- Orellana, Saloman (2014). *Electoral Systems and Governance: How Diversity Can Improve Policy Making*. New York: Routledge Press (summarized by Fair Vote Canada: <http://tinyurl.com/gmjtg2t>)
- Pilon, Dennis. (2007). *The Politics of Voting: Reforming Canada's Electoral System*. Toronto: Emond Montgomery.
- Powell, Bingham. 2002. "PR, the Median Voter, and Economic Policy: An Exploration." Paper presented at the 2002 Meetings of the American Political Science Association, Boston.
- Vaughan, Adam. (2016). *British public support for fracking sinks to lowest ever level*. Available at: www.theguardian.com/environment/2016/oct/13/british-public-support-for-fracking-sinks-to-lowest-ever-level [Accessed 30 April 2017]
- Various. (2007) *Reversing Labour Retreat: the challenge and change of electoral reform*. London: Labour Campaign for Electoral Reform.

www.makevotesmatter.org.uk

As the 2017 General Election approaches, this new report by Make Votes Matter and the Labour Campaign for Electoral Reform argues that Labour must now back Proportional Representation for the House of Commons.

Not only is electoral reform desperately needed to revitalise democracy in the UK; it is increasingly clear that PR is an essential feature of the modern social democracies around the world that the Labour Party would wish to emulate here in the United Kingdom.

It is no exaggeration to say that in the 21st Century, Proportional Representation is a prerequisite of a democracy in which power, wealth and opportunity are in the hands of the many, not the few.

www.labourcampaignforelectoralreform.org.uk