

All things considered, **the first-past-the-post system (FPTP)**, in a truly democratic political landscape, is reasonable, if not superior to other systems, especially in its “rationalized” form.

**FPTP results in majorities** consistent with public opinion reflected in the election results and then in the party placed in power. Although sometimes there are “exaggerations,” these are almost always reduced or corrected by rationalization.

Compared to proportional systems, **it provides greater stability**, most often producing majority governments (3 out of 5 times federally, but for 78% of the time), without excluding the possibility of minority governments, closely reflecting public opinion, itself divided. The desire for majority governments is anchored in the political psychology of truly democratic peoples, since they clearly identify who is responsible for good or bad governance, unlike under proportional systems, which often turn the decision-making process into a “free for all,” with the politicians unable to come to a decision, often in critical situations.

It is true that almost **all proportional systems** now have safeguards that **limit the number of parties** and aim to provide governments with greater stability. In this respect, the rationalized FPTP system is simpler and more interesting.

First, it allows a greater number of small parties, which themselves are also smaller, to be represented in the legislative assembly, without imposing a quorum (minimum threshold) of a percentage of votes, such as in the Italian and mixed German systems. Second, it does not depend on any artificial mechanisms to give the government party a majority of members, as does **Italy, which gives members to the governing party** (sic!), or Germany, which manufactures its majorities through coalitions.

In contrast, rationalization does not depend on any of these mechanisms. Members are “added” based on **historical ratios to correct variances** in the results of an election when the **ratios of % of MPs to % of votes received by a party are considered**. Furthermore, these additions are made within **an unused margin of % of MPs** provided by the system and by legislation: each party is entitled to its historical ratio (0.8 or 0.5) based on its role when the electoral results give them a lower ratio, through an insufficient number of members.

In fact, rationalized FPTP is simpler. **Voting is structured and conducted as it is currently**; rationalization is performed afterward based on a purely mathematical process. It also does not require a run-off, as the weighting of decision-making factors, such as party platforms and other considerations, are taken care of “naturally” by the voters (the actual voting population), without requiring a run-off to force majorities to emerge, a process that removes a number of options from the parliamentary landscape.

Jean Rémillard, LL.M (Paris University-2), B. Poli.Sc. (UQAM)

## Summary of the Rationalized FPTP Electoral System

Source of figures: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Canadian\\_federal\\_election,\\_2015](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Canadian_federal_election,_2015)  
(based on Elections Canada data)

Year: 2015 Parties	Number of Candidates	Elected ( / 338 )			Votes (/17,559,353)		Ratios →+MPs		diff. (pts)
		Number	%	Role*	Number	%			
Liberal	338	<b>184</b>	<b>54.44%</b>	<b>PG</b>	6,930,136	39.47%	1.38 See Note		+20.56%
Conservative	338	<b>99</b>	<b>29.29%</b>	<b>POO</b>	5,600,496	31.89%	0.92 (R>0.8)	0	-7.73%
New Democrat	338	<b>44</b>	<b>13.02%</b>	<b>TP1</b>	3,461,262	19.71%	0.66 (R>0.5)	0	10.92%
Bloc Québécois	78	<b>10</b>	<b>2.96%</b>	<b>TP2</b>	818,652	4.66%	0.63 (R>0.5)	0	-1.38%
Green	336	<b>1</b>	<b>0.3%</b>	<b>TP3</b>	<u>605,864</u>	<u>3.45%</u>	<u>0.09</u> <u>≡ 5</u>	<b>+4</b>	-0.46%
Libertarian	72	0			37,407	0.21%	0 +0.3	→ 0	+0.17%
Other:	18	0			Each < 0.081%			+0	—
Independent and non-aligned	80	0			49,905	0.28%			
<b>Total</b>	<b>17 92</b>				<b>17,559,353</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>+4 MP</b>	<b>to TP3</b>

### Simulations under the German system

Note: “Cdn %” = “% of MPs of a party in the Parliament of Canada”

German system: Cdn % \***338** seats; Lib: 184; Con: 107; NDP: 66 BQ: 15; Green: 1; Other: 0.

Rationalized system [MPs + R]:            184 (86) 99            53            10            5

**Difference:** Rationalized German system:    0            +8            +13            +5            -4

German system: Cdn % \***676** seats; Lib: 368; Con: 215; NDP: 133 BQ: 31 Green: 1; Other: 0

Rationalized system ([MPs + R] × 2):    368            172            66            15; Green: 4; Other: 0

**Difference:** Rationalized German system:    0            +43            +67            +16; Green: -4;    0

Note: Majority MP numbers are locked in, even if they go over the “allowed” % of MPs.

### **Canada, 2015-1963 general elections, results and rationalization**

**GP** = government party, determined by the greatest number of seats won by a party; **OOP** = official opposition party, determined by the results of a simple majority in a general election; **TPs** = third parties: first, second, third ranked.

The ratios are the % of MPs / % of votes; the ones used for adding MPs, based on historical data, are: **OOP: 0.8**; all **TPs, 0.5**. They are multiplied by the % of votes for each party and the number of seats in Parliament; the result is used for adding MPs if it is higher than the number of MPs elected.

**Results of additions by rationalization:** The averages: A- per occurrence; B- for the 17 elections.

**OOP:** 23 (in 1984) = **23**; averages: A:  $23/\underline{1} = 23$ ; B:  $23/17 = 1.35$ .

**TP1:** 4 (1974) + 2 (1965) = **6**; averages: A:  $6/\underline{2} = 3$ ; B:  $6/17 = 0.35$ .

**TP2:** 5 (2011) + 5 (2004) + 1 (1993) + 3 (1988) + 1 (1984) + 2 (1980) = **17**; averages: A:  $17/\underline{6} = 2.8$ ;

B:  $17/17 = 1$ .

**TP3:** 4 (2015) + 5 (2011) + 10 (2008) + 10 (2006) + 6 (2004) + 21 (1993) + 1 (1988) + 1 (1980) = **58**; averages: A:  $58/\underline{8} = 7.25$ ; B:  $58/17 = 3.4$ .

**Other:** 4 (2000) + 2 (1993) + 1 (1968) = **7**; A:  $7/\underline{3} = 2.3$ ;  $7/17 = 4.1$ .

**Maximum:** 25 (1984) followed by 24 (1993); **minimum:** 1 (1968).

**Total:** 111; averages: for 14 occurrences: **8**; for 17 elections: 6.5 additional MPs.

### *Analysis of federal electoral results in Canada (cont'd)*

Once the rationalized FPTP system is applied to the results of the 2015 to 1963 federal elections, followed by the German mixed member proportional system, their results are compared. The “+” symbols show the seats provided by the mixed member system more than under the rationalized system

Note: the 3 majority members needed so as to have more MPs than under the proportional system do not change in Canada’s Parliament, because  $3 \times 338/229 = 3.4 \rightarrow 3$ .

**Totals and averages, based on “Differences: Rationalized German system” of the actual Parliament.**

Year:	GP	OOP	TP1	TP2	TP3	Other	No. of seats in Parliament
1963:	0	0	+16	+18	0	0	265
1965:	0	0	+24	0	0	0	265
1968:	0	0	+22	0	-1	0	264
1972:	0	0	+24	+4	0	0	264
1974:	0	0	-20	+2	0	0	264
1979:	0	0	+25	0	0	0	282
1980:	0	0	+28	-2	-1	0	282
1984:	0	+16	+11	-1	0	0	282
1988:	0	+19	+12	-3	-1	0	295
1993:	0	0	+11	+10	+24	0	295
1997:	0	-1	0	+8	+36	0	301
2000:	0	+15	0	+12	+18	-1	308
2004:	0	0	0	+24	-6	0	308
2008:	0	+17	0	+28	+10	0	308
2011:	0	0	+10	+9	-5	0	308
2015:	0	+8	+13	+5	-4	0	338
<b>Final:</b>	5+; 1-(1)	11+; 1-(20)	10+; 3-(6);	4+; 6-(18)			
<b>TOTAL:</b>	+75/6=12.5	+196/12=14.8	+120/13=9.2	+70/109=7			