

How the votes of the people can create a representative and democratic government

By: Daniel Adam, private citizen

A bit of history regarding how the 1V2V system was developed

During Arab Spring in 2011, following the political upheaval in Tunisia, I asked myself: “**What would be the best proposal for a democratic system that would maintain the proportionality of individual votes in a parliamentary vote**¹?” I thoroughly examined the “proportional” proposals under analysis as well as those that have already been implemented. In most cases, the main inconveniences involve the control exercised by the political parties to the detriment of the electoral votes. I have also tried to minimize changes to the Westminster system, as it is used in Canada and in several other parliaments. Based on an analysis of the Canadian parliamentary system, which I know relatively well, I have concluded that it suffers from a double majority, i.e. the election of MPs using a simple majority and the formation of a government using a simple majority of MPs, with or without a coalition.

This “One Voice, Two Votes” (1V2V) system stems from a simple and effective modification of the voting process within the Assembly AND, consequently, the voting process. Within the House of Commons, an MP elected with a simple majority, partisan or not, is therefore mandated by the voters in this riding to represent them. Furthermore, the riding seat to which the MP is assigned is associated with the percentage of partisan votes received in the election. During a House vote, the political parties having already stated their positions (for, against, abstaining), the MP's presence records the partisan and proportional votes of his/her seat. His/her absence would indicate the abstention of that riding's votes. Voters must therefore elect an MP as well as express their partisan inclinations by voting separately for a candidate AND a political party.

To some, it might seem interesting to convert the expression “proportional” with “partisan MPs” in the House as a percentage of the overall or regional votes received during the election instead of associating this partisan proportionality to the riding seat. In my humble opinion however, in a 1V2V system, it is preferable to increase the autonomy of the political parties by allocating the internal control of resources to them. In this way they are free to allocate their resources to government activities as well as to their pre-vote position, in the same way as a lobbyist registry, without bothering the voters.

To summarize, in this system, the riding seat in the House represents the percentage of votes to the various political parties and the seat MP represents the residents of the riding, expressing the partisan votes of the seat in each parliamentary vote.

Purpose of 1V2V

Question: How can the vote of each individual voter be expressed in Parliament:

¹ Parliamentary vote on a bill

- So that each Parliamentary vote does not suffer from the dilution caused by the double majority?
- So that each voice is expressed in parliamentary votes, without too much consideration of the partisan MP or the riding seat?

Answer: Disconnect the choice of MP candidate from the partisan orientation. This way:

- (a) **During an election**, voters can vote for an MP as their representative and vote for a political orientation for the seat, so that
- (b) **In parliamentary votes**, these political orientations can be tabulated in a proportional manner from the House seats as a whole.

Expressing your voice in two votes (1V2V), at one time in two moments

In an election:

Your voice is expressed by first voting for a political party. With this vote, you choose a party program, a strategic orientation, a tactical scenario, a specific action plan that has been put forth by a political party, without the need for a partisan MP in the riding. Each vote for a party is counted to determine the proportional composition of the riding seat in the House. What is important is that that this seat must represent the partisan votes in parliamentary votes, as a proportion of the votes received in the election. *One voice, one party! First vote!*

Your voice is also expressed by casting a second vote, this time for a candidate, on a partisan basis or not. With this vote, you choose the candidate who will represent you in Parliament and who will participate in parliamentary life. The MP is elected from the candidates by a simple majority vote by participating voters. This MP, partisan or not, is mandated to represent your riding before government bodies and be present for parliamentary votes. *One voice, one MP! Second vote!*

Furthermore, for a parliamentary vote:

Before the parliamentary vote itself, each political party expresses its preference, indicating their position as being “for”, “against” or “abstention”. The MP’s presence for the vote then means that the partisan votes of the riding seat, proportional to the votes expressed during the election, will be considered in accordance with the preferences previously expressed by the political parties.

This way, the “for/against/abstention” preference of each party receives the partisan votes of all the seats for which the MP is present. The final “for/against” is the sum total of the “for/against” votes for all the ridings. In order to eliminate the dilution of votes in Parliament, the results of the vote are not tabulated by riding, but rather from the House as a whole.

For example

If during the election, the “purple” party received 20% of the votes in a riding and that in a parliamentary vote the “purple” party is “for” a bill, the MP’s presence means that 20% of the

riding is in favour of the bill. This 20% gets added to the other seats for which the MPs were present and in the end determines if the House is “for” or “against” the bill.

| | | Currently | Deputation <<==1V2V==>> | Partisan |
|-----------------------|---------------|--|---|--|
| During the election | On the ballot | One voice gives one vote to a partisan candidate | One voice gives one vote to a candidate, partisan or not | One voice gives one vote to a party, that has a candidate or not |
| | Vote counting | The majority candidate becomes the MP along with his/her party | The majority candidate becomes the MP for this seat | The proportional partisan votes are associated with the seat, not the MP |
| In the House | During a vote | The partisan MP casts a vote based on the party line | The MP’s presence engages the participation of the seat’s partisan votes in the parliamentary vote 2↓ | The parties vote “for/against” a bill before the parliamentary vote ←1 |
| | Vote counting | The bill is adopted/rejected based on the majority of partisan MPs | Each partisan vote from each riding becomes “for/against” based on the choice of the parties, a proportional vote 3→ | The bill is adopted/rejected by calculating the overall sum of “for/against” votes from the overall seats in the House |
| <i>Inconveniences</i> | | Double partisan majority | | |
| <i>Benefits</i> | | | The MP represents the riding. He/she is accountable for his/her presence. Each vote is converted into “for/against” based on the choice of the parties. | Partisan votes are proportional and are part of the riding. Each vote counts for the adoption/rejection. |

1V2V, During an Election

| | |
|---------------|--------------|
| Français | English |
| Candidats | Candidate |
| Majorité | Majority |
| Député | MP |
| Électeurs | Voters |
| Votes | Votes |
| Partis | Parties |
| Proportionnel | Proportional |
| Partis % | Party % |

1V2V, In a Parliamentary Vote

| | |
|---|--|
| Français | English |
| Députés | MPs |
| Présences | Presence |
| Partis % | Party % |
| Électeurs | Voters |
| Conversion de Partis % en Pours / Contres | Conversion of Party % into for/against votes |
| Majorité de l'Assemblée | House majority |
| Pour/Contre | For/Against |
| Partis | Parties |
| Prise de positions | Position |
| Pours/Contres | For/Against |

Frequently Asked Questions

General:

Is 1V2V doable and functional given the strong likelihood of creating a minority government or a coalition?

The Westminster parliamentary system currently has a sufficient number of parliamentary procedures for dealing with such conditions.

Is the strong likelihood of a minority government or coalition a disadvantage for 1V2V?

Not any more than it is currently.

Would the process of allocating seats in the House be altered?

There would be no changes. The organization of the governmental team, the official opposition, independent MPs, etc. would remain the same.

Would the roles, parliamentary life as well as participation in commissions, committees and others be changed for the MPs?

The only change would be the MP's presence for a vote and the calculation of the final results based on the partisan votes of all the ridings as a whole.

Would an MP's partisanship interfere with the expression of partisan votes?

Partisan votes are dismissed only when the MP is not present for a parliamentary vote or when the party has been dissolved or absorbed as part of a merger.

In what way is 1V2V different from other proportional representation systems?

1V2V not only modifies the modalities on a ballot, by creating an expression for proportional partisan votes that are separate from the deputation, but also the expression of partisan votes during a parliamentary vote.

During an election:

What happens when an MP swears allegiance to a political party?

The partisan votes of the voters remain unchanged since they belong to the riding seat and not the MP. The position of the riding seat in the House can change.

What happens if there is no candidate representing a registered political party?

Partisan votes are associated with the riding seat. The MP is elected by a simple majority from among the proposed candidates.

What are the benefits and inconveniences of a party's non-obligation to present a candidate in a riding?

The political parties can devote their efforts to promoting their programs rather than parachuting in "star" or "ghost" candidates. A party can however parachute in a candidate, a friend of the party, or other aspirant. In such cases, there is a disassociation of the partisan votes and deputation votes.

During parliamentary votes:

What happens if an MP is not present?

There is an abstention of all partisan votes for the riding. Obviously, since the MP is mandated to represent the constituents of the riding, the MP is accountable for this decision.

Will my partisan vote be accounted for, based on the choice of party chosen, at all times?

Yes, if the MP is present for the vote. Otherwise, it is deemed an abstention.

During the mandate:

What happens when an MP changes allegiance?

The partisan votes of the voters remain unchanged since they belong to the riding seat and not the MP. The position of the riding seat in the House can change.

What happens if a political party changes orientation or leader?

The partisan votes will remain unchanged until the next election.

If a political party is dissolved or merges with another, what happens to the partisan votes?

The partisan votes for this party will be deemed abstentions.

About the Author

Daniel Adam holds a bachelor of physics, with a specialization in electronics and computer science. He has worked in IT as a developer, solutions architect, integrating architect, development project manager, technological orientation advisor, etc. In addition to a certificate in administration, he has a master's degree in business administration (MBA) with a specialization in SME management.

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