### Resolved: The United States ought to adopt a proportional representation system for elections to the House of Representatives.

Notes:

The current U.S system to elect members to the House of Representatives is based on smaller districts with winner takes all elections. This is to say that every district elects one individual to represent that district. This often privileges larger parties over independents as an independent will never garner enough votes to outright win a district. This trend has led to a distinct cynicism in politics, people feel less connected to the candidates they elect and there is an entrenchment of Republicans and Democrats. Additionally, this has caused such problems as gerrymandering and a lack of representation among minority voters.

Seen as a potential solution to this problem, some have proposed a plan to adopt a proportional representation system. The concept behind this is that with redistricting and greater representation allotted to each district this problem might be solved.

This would look like such: districts would be quite a bit larger, perhaps even combining 10 current districts, and would have as many as 10-15 representatives allotted. Parties would be given seats based upon overall proportional percentage of the votes. For instance, assuming 10 seats available, if the GOP won 50% of the vote, they would get half of the seats. If democrats won 40%, they would get 4 seats. The last seat would be given to an independent or someone of a smaller party. Now, that party is represented in a way it had no chance of in the past.

A potential negative effect of this though, is that it would significantly increase gridlock and make political progress difficult. It would open the door for coalitional politics, in which various parties must choose to agree to make pacts that can pass policies. These, empirically in countries that use them, tend to fail and cause significant gridlock. Additionally, there are negative effects to opening the door to smaller parties garnering representation, such as more radical or problematic political groups. The KKK garnering seats in the house would of course present problems, just as it would with a communist party.

Overall there are many advantages and disadvantages to this type of voting, this debate will be asking you to question how access to voting is important, and how can progress be achieved in turmoil. Luckily, there are many examples in the world of both the status quo and potential PR elections, providing us with tons of empirical evidence to aid in an informed debate.

Further reading:

<https://www.fairvote.org/what_is_proportional_representation_and_why_do_we_need_this_reform>

<https://www.sightline.org/2018/11/15/8-things-proportional-representation-does-for-every-voter/>

<https://www.uk-engage.org/2013/08/what-are-the-advantages-and-disadvantages-of-using-a-proportional-representation-pr-electoral-system/>

<https://harvardpolitics.com/hprgument-posts/the-benefits-of-proportional-representation/>

<https://www.fairvote.org/common_criticisms_of_pr_and_responses_to_them>

<https://www.accuratedemocracy.com/d_anti.htm>

<https://radixuk.org/opinion/what-is-wrong-with-proportional-representation/>

<https://aceproject.org/ace-en/topics/es/esd/esd02/esd02e/default?set_language=en>

## AC

### Value/Criterion

#### We value voting equity, because creating equity in a currently unfair system gets at core topic questions

#### **Current trends in voting are increasingly unfair**

Amy 96

Douglas J. Amy, Professor of Politics at Mount Holyoke College., What is "proportional representation" and why do we need this reform?, Jan 12, 1996, https://www.fairvote.org/what\_is\_proportional\_representation\_and\_why\_do\_we\_need\_this\_reform)//LED

Americans continue to be disillusioned with politics. Cynicism about candidates and parties runs high and voter turnout is abysmally low. A number of proposals designed to revitalize American elections have been made, including term limits and campaign finance reform. But a new reform is also beginning to get some attention: replacing our present single-member district, winner-take-all election system with proportional representation (PR) elections. Political commentators writing in The Washington Post, The New Republic, The New Yorker, The Christian Science Monitor and USA Today have endorsed this reform. Grassroots groups in several states are now organizing to bring proportional representation to local elections. Leaders of most alternative parties, including the Libertarians, the Greens, and the New Party, are also pushing for a change to PR. And many in the voting rights community, including Harvard Law professor Lani Guinier, have concluded that proportional representation would be the best way to give minority voters fair representation. So why all this sudden interest in proportional representation? What exactly is PR, how does it work, and what are its advantages over our present system? Describing how it works is simple. Proportional representation systems come in several varieties, but they all share two basic characteristics. First, they use multi-member districts. Instead of electing one member of the legislature in each small district, PR uses much larger districts that elect several members at once, say five or ten. Second, which candidates win the seats in these multi-member districts is determined by the proportion of votes a party receives. If we have a ten-member PR district in which the Democratic candidates win 50% of the vote, they would receive five of those ten seats. With 30% of the vote, the Republicans would get three seats. And if a third party received the other 20% of the votes, it would get the remaining two seats. (For more information on the various types of PR systems, see How Does PR Work?.) At first glance, this voting process might seem a bit strange to many Americans. We are used to our single-member district system, in which we elect one candidate in each legislative district, with the winner being the candidate with the most votes. But while we view this winner-take-all system as "normal," in reality our approach to elections is increasingly at odds with the rest of the world. The vast majority of Western democracies see American-style elections as outmoded and unfair and have rejected them in favor of proportional representation. Most of Western Europe uses PR and a large majority of the emerging democracies of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union have chosen PR over our form of elections. The United States, Canada, and Great Britain are the only Western democracies that continue to cling to winner-take-all arrangements. The Problem with Single-Member District Elections The single-member district voting system has been on the wane worldwide because it has a number of serious drawbacks. It routinely denies representation to large numbers of voters, produces legislatures that fail to accurately reflect the views of the public, discriminates against third parties, and discourages voter turnout. All of these problems can be traced to a fundamental flaw in our system: only those who vote for the winning candidate get any representation. Everyone else -- who may make up 49% of the electorate in a district -- gets no representation. We are all familiar with this problem. If you are a Democrat in a predominately Republican district, or a Republican in a Democratic one, or an African-American in a white district, then you are shut out by our current election system. You might cast your vote, but it will be wasted on a candidate that can not win. In the 1994 elections for the U.S. House of Representatives, more than 26 million Americans wasted their votes on losing candidates, and so came away from the voting booth with no representation. Under single-member district rules we may have the right to vote, but we don't have the equally important right to be represented. To make matters worse, this denial of representation on the district level often produces distortions in representation in Congress and our state and local legislatures. Parties often receive far more (or far fewer) seats than they deserve. For example, in the 1996 elections for the U.S. House of Representatives, the Democrats won 66 percent of votes in Massachusetts, but received 100% of the states ten seats. The Republicans cast 33% of the vote, but they were all wasted and they received no representation. That same year in Oklahoma, Republican won 61% of the vote and won all six seats. The distortion of representation was even worse in Washington State, where the Republicans took second place with 47% of the vote, but won 67% (six out of nine) of the House seats. Americans have become used to this kind of political injustice, but citizens in most other democracies are not willing to put up with it.

#### Our criterion is a net benefits analysis, the judge should utilize a simple calculation to determine whether or not the affirmative improves voting rights

### Contention 1 is voting inequity

#### We can look to the success of local level PR to find solutions

Kella 19

Swathi Kella is a writer for the Harvard Political View, The Benefits of Proportional Representation, 11/4/19, https://harvardpolitics.com/hprgument-posts/the-benefits-of-proportional-representation/)//LED

As the Cambridge municipal elections approach, it’s important to consider not only the candidates who are being elected, but also how they are being elected. The city of Cambridge operates under a proportional representation system, ensuring that the makeup of the council reflects the political range of its constituency. It secures “minority representation with majority control,” protecting the constituency from tyranny of the majority. While this electoral method is currently commonplace in cities across the US, it was first implemented only about 100 years ago, during the Progressive wave that swept the nation in the early 1900s. The Progressive Movement saw proportional representation as a solution to the extensive corruption that often dominated local government. Most notably, Tammany Hall of New York City was overtaken by “party machines” led by “bosses” who took part in bribery and fraud to consolidate their power. These machines took advantage of winner-take-all elections and often swept almost all council seats based on only 50 to 60 percent of the vote, allowing for tyranny of the (bare) majority. Election systems based on proportional representation broke up these large blocks of power and allowed for greater representation of the electorate. This model has since been adopted by cities across the United States and is currently the system being used in the upcoming Cambridge elections. While Cambridge and other U.S. cities have maintained this model, proportional representation only ever seems to go as far as the local level. The electoral college is one of the most visible and contested winner-take-all systems, but all U.S. House elections are also based on single-member districts, as mandated by a 1967 federal law. However, state-by-state progress is slowly beginning to change the electoral landscape, as a few states have already begun adopting these systems in order to bolster minority representation. Maine and Nebraska currently allocate their presidential Electoral College votes proportionally. Additionally, The Center for Voting and Democracy, based in Washington, D.C., has created potential plans for North Carolina and Georgia that could lead to the adoption multi-member proportionally representative districts for House elections.

#### Creates the necessary system for minority empowerment in elections, change is desperately needed

EBERHARD and FAHEY 18

Kristin Eberhard, Director, Climate and Democracy, is a researcher, writer, speaker, lawyer and policy analyst who spearheads Sightline Institute’s work on democracy reform and on climate action, Anna Fahey, senior director, communications and campaigns, oversees Sightline’s communications and outreach team, coordinates Sightline’s cross-cutting campaign-like efforts, leads its messaging strategy program(descriptions from site), 8 THINGS PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION DOES FOR EVERY VOTER, 11/15/18, <https://www.sightline.org/2018/11/15/8-things-proportional-representation-does-for-every-voter/)//LED>

The United States and Canada haven’t upgraded their democratic systems in centuries, leading to some of the most unrepresentative legislative bodies and disenfranchised voters across the globe’s democracies. We can fix this by spreading the use of upgraded voting systems such as proportional representation, including multi-winner districts and ranked-choice voting. These improved systems are already in use in cities and states in the United States and in most successful democracies around the world. If US states replaced their single-winner districts with multi-winner proportional districts, elected representatives would mirror the political composition in their state. This more accurate balance would force lawmakers to be more accountable to voters instead of special interests. They could no longer afford to ignore voters in the minority or in safe districts. Here are just a handful of ways that electoral system upgrades, specifically proportional representation (ProRep), deliver better, more democratic results. 1. Proportional representation makes everyone’s vote matter. Proportional representation makes everyone’s vote matter. CC-licensed art by Kayla Jones Winner-take-all voting systems, like the ones we use in Canada and the United States, often leave half or more voters with no voice. With 51 percent of the vote (or less) a winner takes all the control in that district. Repeated across districts, one party can take control of the legislature. Proportional systems, by contrast, mean the number of seats reflects the proportion of votes. Twenty percent of the vote means 20 percent of the seats; 40 percent means 40 percent. ProRep ensures almost all voters—even those who support a minority party—can elect someone they like. Proportional systems give almost all voters an advocate at the policy table. In proportional systems, one winner doesn’t take control, but rather power is divided based on the share of votes each party receives. A minority of votes doesn’t mean total lock-out. Above a minimum threshold, it means a minority share of seats—but still seats at the table! This makes every vote matter. When everyone’s vote counts, candidates can’t take voters in the minority for granted. 2. Proportional representation empowers women and people of color. Proportional representation empowers women and people of color. CC-licensed art by Trina Merz Proportional representation has a history of putting more women in office. In countries that use proportional representation, women are almost twice as likely to get elected to office compared to winner-take-all systems. In a comparative study of 36 countries, the share of women elected to the legislature was 8 percentage points higher in proportional representation countries. All the ProRep countries in Western Europe have at least 20 percent women in parliament. And multi-winner districts with seats elected proportionally would mean that any group in the minority, no matter where they live within the district, would have a good chance of electing someone to represent them. For example, if Green Party voters comprise 20 percent of the vote, they could elect at least one of the five seats. Same for African-American voters, if they tend to vote together. More-proportional voting systems in hundreds of cities across the US have the election results to prove that electoral system reform is a more robust solution to the problem of underrepresentation of people of color than redistricting in single-winner districts.

#### **Key to challenging status quo systems that create injustice**

EBERHARD and FAHEY 18

Kristin Eberhard, Director, Climate and Democracy, is a researcher, writer, speaker, lawyer and policy analyst who spearheads Sightline Institute’s work on democracy reform and on climate action, Anna Fahey, senior director, communications and campaigns, oversees Sightline’s communications and outreach team, coordinates Sightline’s cross-cutting campaign-like efforts, leads its messaging strategy program(descriptions from site), 8 THINGS PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION DOES FOR EVERY VOTER, 11/15/18, <https://www.sightline.org/2018/11/15/8-things-proportional-representation-does-for-every-voter/)//LED>

Political scientists have known for nearly a century that plurality voting in single-winner districts leads to two-party domination. Two-party dominance leads to see-sawing between opposing sides, each of which might gain power in any given year with a minority of votes. Voters for the losing side (even if their side actually won more votes) feel locked out of government until the next election. Polarization and bitter partisanship are one result. Find this article interesting? Please consider making a gift to support our work. Despite the fact that more Americans identify as independent than Democrat or Republican, almost all American legislators are elected under the Democrat or Republican banner. Canada’s parliamentary system lends to more diversity than America’s system, but even so, two major parties still dominate and smaller parties suffer, as a direct result of winner-take-all ridings. In 2015, more than3 percent of Canadian voters voted for the Green Party, but the party won just 0.3 percent of seats in Parliament. The New Democratic Party won 20 percent of the vote but only 13 percent of seats. Legislatures in proportional systems end up with more parties, better representing a broader range of voter viewpoints. For example, in Ireland, voters who believe in “People before Profit” have six legislators representing them, independents have four legislators. In Australia, the Greens have nine representatives in the Senate. More diverse viewpoints and robust third parties foster innovative solutions. More parties competing for votes brings new ideas to political debates. Many ProRep countries adopted marriage equality faster than winner-take-all countries because smaller parties brought the then-radical idea into campaigns and political discussions. The idea worked its way into the mainstream. In the US, neither of the two major parties wanted to risk adopting a radical view, so it took much longer for Congress to take the topic seriously. More parties working together also creates more durably popular policies. Lawmakers have to consider many views instead of just steamrolling whichever party is not in power at the moment, then rolling back once the other party comes to power. 8. Proportional representation loosens Big Money’s grip on parties and policymaking. Proportional representation loosens Big Money’s grip on parties and policymaking Money Pig 2 by Kaptain Karrot used under CC BY-NC-ND 2.0 Most—93 percent—of American voters surveyed in a 2016 poll said they believe elected officials listen more to wealthy donors than regular voters. Majorities want to limit campaign contributions and get rid of Citizens United. When voters have more power to decide who gets into office and results are proportional, big money has less leverage over candidates. Proportional countries have greater success in adopting policies opposed by powerful economic interests. With more parties, voters discontented with one party can turn to another. Candidates need less money to campaign for a share of votes than they do for single-winner races, so money isn’t as powerful a factor in choosing winners and losers. Plus, lawmakers in proportional governments have to work together to build majorities to pass policies, meaning they can’t simply attack and tear down other lawmakers; they aren’t beholden to the Big Money fueling TV attack ads. Candidates and campaigns are motivated to focus more on issues—and longer-term solutions. When money is less decisive in a campaign, it is also less decisive in who moves up through leadership positions. Lawmakers can focus on being good at their jobs instead of being good at dialing for dollars.

#### Increases voter choice

Amy 96

Douglas J. Amy, Professor of Politics at Mount Holyoke College., What is "proportional representation" and why do we need this reform?, Jan 12, 1996, https://www.fairvote.org/what\_is\_proportional\_representation\_and\_why\_do\_we\_need\_this\_reform)//LED

Proportional representation has been widely adopted because it avoids an outcome in which some people win representation and the rest are left out. Under proportional representation rules, no significant groups are denied representation. Even political minorities, who may constitute only 10-20 per cent of the voters, are able to win some seats in these multi-member districts. In PR systems, nearly everyone's vote counts, with 80-90 per cent of the voters actually electing someone, compared to 50-60 per cent in most U.S. elections. Under PR, we can also be sure that our legislatures will accurately reflect the voting strength of the various parties. If a party receives 40 per cent of the vote, it will get 40 per cent of the seats, not 20 percent or 60 percent as can happen now with our system. More Choices for Voters The unfairness of winner-take-all elections and the advantages of proportional representation are particularly obvious when we consider the situation of third parties in the U.S. Voters are increasingly dissatisfied with the offerings of the two-major parties and recent surveys indicate that over 60 per cent of Americans would now like to see other parties emerge to challenge the Democrats and Republicans. Voters are showing increasing interest in alternatives such as the Reform party, the Libertarian party, the Greens, and the New Party.. But under our current rules, none of these parties stands a realistic chance of electing their candidates. Winner-take-all elections require candidates to receive a majority or plurality of the vote to win, and minor party candidates can rarely overcome that formidable barrier. This plurality barrier explains why even though we have had over a thousand minor parties started in the U.S. during the last two hundred years, virtually all have died out relatively quickly. Adopting PR would finally allow for free and fair competition between all political parties. Supporters of minor parties are forced to either waste their vote on a candidate who cannot win; vote for the lesser-of-two-evils among the major party candidates; or not vote at all. In short, single-member district elections are rigged against minor parties and serve to unfairly protect the major parties from competition. This problem would end under proportional representation, which is designed to ensure that all political groups, including minor party supporters, get their fair share of representation. Minor parties would need only 10 or 20 per cent of the vote to elect a candidate. Under PR, many minor parties would quickly become viable and we would have a truly competitive multi-party system. This would give American voters what they say they want: a much greater variety of choices at the polls. Offering voters more choices would also encourage higher levels of voting. People would have more reason to vote because they could more easily find a candidate or party they could support enthusiastically. Voters would also know that their vote would not be wasted, but would count to elect the candidate of their choice. Because of such inducements, voters in PR countries typically turnout at rates of 70-80 per cent, compared to 50 per cent or less in the U.S. Voting systems are not the only factor that affects turnout, but it can be a significant one. Voting systems scholars estimate that adopting PR in the U.S. would increase voter participation by 10-12%, which would translate into millions of more voters at the polls. A multi-party system would also ensure that our city, state, and federal legislatures represented the variety of political perspectives that exist in the electorate. Our society is becoming more politically heterogeneous, and yet our legislatures are made up of the same old Republican and Democratic politicians. Some of our widespread political malaise might disappear is we had policy-making bodies that reflected the diverse perspectives in the electorate. More representative legislatures would foster more exciting and wide-ranging political debate and inject new ideas into decision making.

#### Increases voting rights and solves gerrymandering

Amy 96

Douglas J. Amy, Professor of Politics at Mount Holyoke College., What is "proportional representation" and why do we need this reform?, Jan 12, 1996, https://www.fairvote.org/what\_is\_proportional\_representation\_and\_why\_do\_we\_need\_this\_reform)//LED

Solving our Voting Rights Problems Another major advantage of proportional representation is in the area of voting rights. Harvard Law professor Lani Guinier and others have argued that PR would be the best solution to the continuing problem of how to ensure fair representation for racial and ethnic minorities in the U.S. Currently, supporters of voting rights are facing a difficult dilemma. The Supreme Court has cast doubt on the constitutionality of creating special minority-dominated districts. These districts have been the main avenue by which minorities have increased their representation in Congress over the past few decades. But if we abandon this approach, how do we avoid going back to the old white-dominated districts, in which minority candidates have little or no chance of being elected? The way out of this situation is to realize that it exists only if we must use winner-take-all districts, where how the district lines are drawn determines whether whites or minorities will be represented in a particular district. The solution is to abandon single-member districts and use proportional representation. Then it wouldn't matter if minorities were submerged in majority white districts, they could still elect their own representatives. Assume, for example, that whites made up 80 percent of the voters in a five-seat PR district and blacks made up the remaining 20 percent. Even if everyone voted along racial lines, the African Americans would still be able to elect one representative. Studies have shown that in Cincinnati and other places where proportional representation have been used in the United States, they have produced fairer representation for racial and ethnic minorities. Proportional representation would ensure fair representation for both whites and minorities, and do so without creating special districts. (For more on this issue, see "Fair Representation for Racial Minorities: Is Proportional Representation the Answer?") Better Representation of Women Proportional representation also carries other significant political advantages. For example, PR can result in fairer representation for women. The United States continues to lag far behind many other Western democracies in the number of women elected to our national legislature. The percentage of women elected to the U.S. House of Representatives continues to hover around 13% while in many other countries that figure for their lower houses is 20%, 30% and even 40%. Many factors affect the number of women elected in a country, including such things as cultural attitudes toward the role of women in society and politics. But there is widespread agreement among scholars that voting methods are another key factor that affects the level of female representation in a political system. Experts note that the clearest demonstration of the effect of voting systems on women’s representation can be seen in countries like Germany and New Zealand that use the mixed-member form of proportional representation. Under this system, half of the members of the parliament are elected in single-member plurality districts and the other half chosen by party list proportional representation. (See How Does PR Work? for more details on this system.) In the 1994 German election, the percentage of women elected in the single-member districts was 13%--about the same as in the United States--while the number elected from the party list PR contests was 39%. In New Zealand in 1996, those numbers were 15% for single-member district contests and 45% for party list PR. What explains this effect? Scholars have found that many more women tend to be nominated in countries using PR voting; and the more women are nominated, the more they win office. Instead of nominating one person per district, a slate of candidates is nominated in these multi-member PR districts. In a five-member district, for example, each party nominates five candidates. If a party includes two women on their slate, and the party wins three seats, there is a good chance of at least one woman being elected. If a party were to put only men on their slate, that would immediately be noticed. The party would be inviting charges of sexism and would risk alienating the feminist vote. So with PR voting there is some inherent pressure on the parties to nominate more women for office. The adoption of PR in the U.S. would be one of the most effective ways to quickly increase the number of women in elected office. Eliminates Gerrymandering Another advantage of proportional representation is that it would greatly reduce or eliminate the problem of partisan gerrymandering -- one of the scourges of the single-member district system. Currently, districts lines are usually drawn to create district majorities that favor certain parties or incumbents -- a cynical exercise designed to cheat some parties out of their fair share of seats. However, as mentioned earlier, how district lines are drawn in PR systems usually has no significant impact on representation. If the multi-member PR districts are sufficiently large (five or more seats), it doesn't matter whether a party is a majority or a minority -- all parties receive their fair share of seats. So, under PR rules, the drawing of districts lines would no longer be a way of determining who gets represented or which party controls the legislature.

#### **Gerrymandering destroys participation and is incredibly unfair**

Tausanovitch 19

Alex Tausanovitch is the director of Campaign Finance and Electoral Reform at American Progress, The Impact of Partisan Gerrymandering, 10/1/19, https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/democracy/news/2019/10/01/475166/impact-partisan-gerrymandering/)//LED

Once a decade, every state redraws its electoral districts, determining which people will be represented by each politician. In many states, this means that politicians gather behind computer screens to figure out how they can manipulate the lines to box out their competition and maximize the power of their political party. While an increasing number of states employ independent commissions to draw district lines, the large majority still lack safeguards to prevent partisan favoritism in the redistricting process—also known as partisan gerrymandering. It has been almost a decade since the 2010 cycle of redistricting, and the country is still reckoning with the impact. Last May, the Center for American Progress published a report that found that unfairly drawn congressional districts shifted, on average, a whopping 59 seats in the U.S. House of Representatives during the 2012, 2014, and 2016 elections. That means that every other November, 59 politicians that would not have been elected based on statewide voter support for their party won anyway because the lines were drawn in their favor—often by their allies in the Republican or Democratic Party. To help put this number in perspective, a shift of 59 seats is slightly more than the total number of seats apportioned to the 22 smallest states by population. It is also more than the number of representatives for America’s largest state, California, which has 53 House members representing a population of nearly 40 million people. Of the 59 seats that were shifted per election due to partisan gerrymandering, 20 shifted in favor of Democrats while 39 shifted in favor of Republicans. This means that from 2012 to 2016, the net two-party impact amounted to an average gain of 19 Republican seats per election, which is still more than the number of seats in a dozen U.S. states. One can also look at the effects of gerrymandering in terms of population. The average congressional district has a population of slightly more than 700,000, which means that a total shift of 59 seats is equivalent to representation for approximately 42 million Americans. Moreover, the 19 net seats Republicans gained are equivalent to representation for about 13.5 million Americans. The inescapable conclusion is that gerrymandering is effectively disenfranchising millions of Americans. This should be considered a critical situation. If the voters of even one of the states above were excluded from the count, there would be a national outcry; with a net impact equivalent to the exclusion of 12 states, the urgent need to address gerrymandering should be clear.

## Block

Empirically proven success

Amy 96

Douglas J. Amy, Professor of Politics at Mount Holyoke College., What is "proportional representation" and why do we need this reform?, Jan 12, 1996, https://www.fairvote.org/what\_is\_proportional\_representation\_and\_why\_do\_we\_need\_this\_reform)//LED

PR Has a Proven Track Record But can we be sure that proportional representation would really result in all of these positive changes? The actual impacts of new political innovations are notoriously difficult to predict. However, PR is not a new and untried idea; it has a long track record in other Western democracies. Political scientists studying these countries have found that virtually all of them have enjoyed high voter turnout rates, vigorous multi-party competition, fair representation for political, ethnic and racial minorities, and practically no gerrymandering. And no serious movement exists in any of these countries to trade in PR for American-style elections. Proportional representation's record in other countries also serves to dispel the myth that adopting such a system would result in legislatures racked by conflict and plagued by deadlock. Most legislatures in countries using proportional representation are ruled by a coalition of parties, and some fear that these coalitions are liable to be unstable and to lead to weak and unproductive government. In reality, however, almost all PR countries have enjoyed stable coalition governments. In Scandinavia, for instance, some of these multi- party coalitions have lasted for decades. And these large coalitions have commonly passed legislation far more efficiently than our Congress does. A few countries, notably Italy and Israel, have had trouble with unstable coalitions. But both of these countries have used extreme forms of proportional representation. Israel, for example, allows any party that gets more than about 1 per cent of the vote to win seats in their parliament. At times this low threshold has resulted in over a dozen parties in the Knesset, which has complicated the task of governing. However, most other PR countries use more moderate forms of PR that have a higher threshold and fewer parties. Germany has a five per cent threshold that results in a workable legislature of 3-5 parties. This moderate PR is what proponents are advocating for the U.S. Worldwide Interest in Voting System Reform Given the many advantages of PR, it is not surprising that the general worldwide trend during the last 100 years has been away from winner-take-all voting systems and toward various forms of PR. That trend continues even today. As mentioned earlier, a vast majority of the emerging democracies in Eastern Europe, the former Soviet Union, and Africa have ended up rejecting American-style plurality voting in favor of various forms of proportional or semi-proportional voting systems. In addition, in the last few years a number of established democracies have debated voting system change and adopted PR systems. During the 1990s New Zealand abandoned single-member plurality elections for mixed-member proportional representation, and Japan changed from its unique single non-transferable vote system to a mixed system. Even Great Britain, the original home of our single-member district system, has seen an intense political discussion of voting system options. In 1998, a commission appointed by Prime Minister Tony Blair completed a study of voting systems, and recommended that a national referendum be held to choose between their traditional plurality voting system and a new system that included aspects of proportional representation. In fact, PR systems have already been introduced in some elections there. In 1999, when Scotland and Wales had elections for their newly created parliaments, they both chose to use forms of proportional representation instead of the traditional single-member plurality system. And in the most recent round of elections for representatives to the European Community, Great Britain switched to a PR voting system there as well. Given this general trend in voting system reform, it is not surprising that the issue of proportional representation is finally being raised in the United States. Implementing PR in the United States Here in the U.S., proportional representation would be easiest to acquire on the local level, where modifying a city charter is usually all that is necessary. For that reason, much of the grassroots political activity promoting PR has taken place on the local level. For example, in the 1990s, two large cities -- Cincinnati and San Francisco -- voted on referendums to adopt PR. Both efforts were narrowly defeated, with PR garnering the support of almost 45% of the voters in both cases. Proportional representation also is feasible for Congressional elections. The Center for Voting and Democracy in Washington, D.C. has developed plans for Georgia and North Carolina that demonstrate how easy it would be to create multi- member PR districts for U.S. House elections. Importantly, such plans would not require a constitutional amendment. All that would be needed is to repeal a 1967 federal law requiring single-member district elections for the House, and several bills have been introduced in Congress that would do just that. In fact, with the approval of the Department of Justice under the Voting Rights Act, some states already are using PR in local elections, and minorities are using this system to elect their fair share of representatives. The debate over proportional representation is just beginning in this country; but it is an idea whose time has come. If we want our elections to be fairer and more democratic, and if we want voting to become a more powerful and meaningful political act, then we should take a long and careful look at this reform.

#### Key to environmental reform

EBERHARD and FAHEY 18

Kristin Eberhard, Director, Climate and Democracy, is a researcher, writer, speaker, lawyer and policy analyst who spearheads Sightline Institute’s work on democracy reform and on climate action, Anna Fahey, senior director, communications and campaigns, oversees Sightline’s communications and outreach team, coordinates Sightline’s cross-cutting campaign-like efforts, leads its messaging strategy program(descriptions from site), 8 THINGS PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION DOES FOR EVERY VOTER, 11/15/18, <https://www.sightline.org/2018/11/15/8-things-proportional-representation-does-for-every-voter/)//LED>

No electoral system can guarantee certain outcomes, but the record shows that ProRep countries have stronger environmental protections. One reason: With ProRep, voters have more influence. When voters matter, the system has to be more responsive to the people than to moneyed interests. ProRep countries were quicker to ratify the Kyoto Protocol and have slowed their carbon dioxide emissions more than four times as quickly as winner-take-all countries. ProRep countries are more likely to have Green Party representation in their legislatures, too. Once they win seats, Green candidates can introduce innovative policy ideas, some of which steadily work their way into the mainstream. Often, Greens make coalition partners for bigger parties, helping set a pro-environment agenda.

#### Halts gerrymandering

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A supermajority of Americans wants the Supreme Court to rein in partisan gerrymandering, including 80 percent of Democrats, 68 percent of Independents and 65 percent of Republicans. Replacing single-winner districts with larger, multi-winner districts and proportional voting would largely bypass the gerrymandering mess. That switch would eliminate safe seats, diminish the power of cracking and packing, and render partisan redistricting battles irrelevant. It is difficult or impossible to gerrymander the lines in proportional districts. With winner-take-all districts, whoever holds the pen can draw districts based on party preferences. Even algorithms and independent commissions have trouble drawing fair lines. But when voters belong to much bigger districts and elect multiple candidates, one winner can’t take all the power. Instead, multiple candidates represent each district according to how many votes each gets. Even if 80 percent of voters in a district favor one party, the 20 percent minority electorate isn’t shut out—they still keep 20 percent of the power. No matter how the district lines are drawn and no matter how party voters are distributed among districts, almost all voters have a say in sending representatives they prefer to office.

#### Gerrymandering pushes minorities out of politics, the impact is failure to represent their needs

Soffen 16

Kim Soffen is a Harvard Graduate specializing in data analytics, How racial gerrymandering deprives black people of political power, 6/9/16, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2016/06/09/how-a-widespread-practice-to-politically-empower-african-americans-might-actually-harm-them/)//LED

Thirty years ago, the Supreme Court expanded the meaning of one of the most important civil rights laws in U.S. history — the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Among other things, the court prohibited a then-common practice among some states of spreading minorities across voting districts, leaving them too few in number in any given district to elect their preferred candidates. The practice became known as "racial gerrymandering." The court’s solution required that states create majority-minority districts — districts in which the majority of the voting-age population belonged to a single minority. With voting that occurred largely along racial lines, these districts allowed minority voters to elect their candidates of choice. But a fascinating development occurred in the years since. These districts, rather than giving African Americans more political power, might have actually started to deprive them of it. Majority-minority districts, by concentrating the minority vote in certain districts, have the unintended consequence of diluting their influence elsewhere. Experts say some Republican legislatures have capitalized on this new reality, redistricting in their political favor under the guise of majority-minority districts. “Typically the goal in [packing minorities into a district] is not to reduce minority representation in the adjacent districts; it’s to reduce Democrats’ representation in those districts," said Nicholas Stephanopoulos, a professor at the University of Chicago Law School. "They’ve been arguably using the racial demographics as a way to enact a Republican gerrymander.” The issue has gained new prominence thanks to Bethune-Hill v. Virginia Board of Elections, a case the Supreme Court agreed on Monday to hear. Virginia’s Republican-held state legislature drew its majority-minority districts to be 55 percent black. Golden Bethune-Hill, among other Virginian voters, sued the state’s Board of Elections, arguing that they used race as a primary factor in drawing district lines for the House of Delegates, which is unconstitutional under the equal protection clause of the 14th Amendment. The state contends the redistricting process occurred fairly and legally, with bipartisan support. Republicans have generally defended their redistricting practices as following a legal practice of drawing districts in politically favorable ways — just as Democrat-controlled legislatures do. Constitutional issues aside, what’s the practical consequence of the standard practice of "packing" districts with at least 50 percent African Americans? There are dozens of majority-minority congressional districts across the country, and many more state-level districts. They’re concentrated in the South, but can be found in states like New York and Ohio as well. Consider an example: Imagine the minority-favored candidate can win an election in a district if at least 30 percent of voters are minorities. What harm is done by the legislators packing the district up to 50 percent minority voters? Much like political gerrymandering, it limits black influence in surrounding districts. It would require the creation of, for instance, a 50 percent and a 10 percent black district, rather than two 30 percent black districts. In other words, the requirement would give black voters one representative of their choice rather than two. The process of redrawing district lines to give an advantage to one party over another is called "gerrymandering." Here's how it works. (Daron Taylor/The Washington Post) And even if it doesn’t decrease the number of representatives the black voters can elect, it can decrease their influence in white-dominated districts. As shown in the graphic below, in a hypothetical state with five districts, packing the minority voters in at 50 percent levels rather than 30 percent leads them to lose influence in two other districts, leaving them overwhelmingly white. In both scenarios, the minority is numerous enough to control the election in two districts. What differs is whether they have a political voice elsewhere in the state, which is ultimately necessary to pass state-wide legislation in their favor. Image without a caption You might be thinking that, if only 30 percent of a district's voters are black, it will be hard for African Americans to elect their preferred candidate. But that's increasingly not the case. The reason: the decline of racially polarized voting. Minority and white voting patterns used to be starkly divergent, but now, more whites vote for the minority-favored candidate, especially in primaries. This change came about as racial divisions, beginning with the decline of segregation and explicit racism, have faded (though obviously not disappeared), and the interests of politically like-minded blacks and whites have aligned. As a result, fewer minority voters are required for a district to elect their favored candidate. One 2002 paper found that from the 1960s to the 1980s, districts needed to be more than 50 — some in the South as much as 65 — percent African American for their favored candidate to win the election. But today, experts place the figure between 40 and 45 percent. Stephanopoulos says it’s “certainly below 50 percent” across the country. In majority-minority districts, minority voters are, by definition, packed beyond that threshold. Ultimately, this is detrimental to the minorities. David Canon, a professor of political science at the University of Wisconsin-Madison said, “If you have too high a percent African Americans in a House district, it does dilute the overall representation of African American interests.” Since the minority electorate leans liberal, packing minorities has the same effect as packing Democrats, causing the district map to favor Republicans in the same way it favors whites. This key correlation has made majority-minority districts popular among Republican-held state legislatures beyond Virginia. The partisanship is especially clear when seeing how the district lines change census-to-census. Stephanopoulos said Republican legislatures take districts "that were already electing minority representatives and pack more minority voters into them," and Democratic legislatures tend to "unpack ... minority districts." In Arizona, which has a Republican legislature but districting is done by an independent commission, "there was much less packing of minority voters than there was in the other states." States across the country, particularly in the South where legislatures tend to lean Republican and the Department of Justice historically had stronger control over voting rights, draw these districts. Though the court is more concerned with the inappropriate use of racial classifications rather than the deprivation of minority political power, its ruling could have implications for legislatures across the country. The Supreme Court will hear arguments in its next term beginning in October.

## NC

### Value/Criterion

#### We value stability, because stability is a necessary step in creating a secure society

#### **Affirmative creates governmental instability in pursuit of equality**

Miljan 18

Lydia Miljan is an Associate Professor of Political Science at the University of Windsor, and a Senior Fellow of the Fraser Institute, Proportional representation voting systems breed unstable governments, Published by Fraser 9/6/18, https://www.fraserinstitute.org/article/proportional-representation-voting-systems-breed-unstable-governments)//LED

Some see the upcoming referendum on electoral reform—specifically, whether or not British Columbia should switch to a proportional representation (PR) voting system—as a blatant attempt by the Green Party to secure more power. While it’s clear that under any form of PR, the Greens would theoretically increase their seat share, there would also be more single-issue parties vying for seats in the legislature. In B.C.’s current first-past-the-post voting system, it’s difficult for single-issue parties, and new parties, to garner enough support to get electoral seats. As a result, political actors tend to compromise and form coalitions within existing parties. Big tent parties such as the Liberals and NDP are basically coalitions of various interests. Because the threshold for securing seats is lower in PR systems (usually about five per cent of the popular vote), they result in more political parties competing for support. In other words, PR systems reduce the need to compromise within parties before an election. While there are currently 18 registered political parties in B.C., only three (Liberal, NDP and Green) have seats in the legislature. Consider this. Because new and single-issue parties have a greater chance of being elected under PR, an international measure known as the “effective number of parliamentary parties” (or ENPP), is higher in PR systems than in majority and plurality systems like we have in Canada. In countries worldwide, the average number of effective parties in first-past-the-post systems (again, like we currently have in B.C.) is 2.5—under PR systems, that number doubles to 4.5. And there’s a lot of variability depending on the country. For example, while PR systems in Portugal and Greece have similar ENPP as Canada, countries such as Israel (7.5) and Belgium (8) have higher ENPP. Crucially, the consequence of a higher ENPP is twofold—more coalition governments and more unstable governments. Of course, coalition governments can occur in any electoral system. Currently, B.C. essentially has a coalition government of the NDP and Greens. However, the likelihood of coalition increases significantly in PR systems. Between 2000 and 2017, 23 per cent of majority/plurality systems (including first-past-the-post) produced coalition governments compared to 87 per cent for PR systems. For mixed systems, which combine aspects of majority/plurality with aspects of PR, it was even higher at 95 per cent. PR systems also have more parties as part of government, averaging 3.3 parties compared to 2.6 for mixed and 2.3 for majority/plurality systems. Why is this a problem? Because more coalition governments mean more unstable governments and more uncertainty about the composition of those governments. Remember, coalition building is done after the votes are cast and it often takes a long time to work out deals between coalition partners. How long? Based on the research, it takes 32 days (on average) for a government coalition to emerge in mixed systems and 50 days for PR systems. After its 2010 election, it took Belgium 541 days to form government—the longest wait on record at the time. Germany went 161 days before forming government after its September 2017 election. And most recently, Northern Ireland is 590 days and counting without a government since the coalition Catholic-Protestant power-sharing administration collapsed in January 2017. Finally, some proponents of PR argue that this form of electoral system better represents the diverse views of voters. Their logic is that the negotiation of coalition governments allows for more viewpoints, and that this process produces policy closer to what the median voter wants. But negotiations after the vote are not based on popular will, but on whether a party can prop-up a government. More importantly, coalition governments make it difficult for voters to hold governments to account, as it becomes difficult for voters to clearly assign blame or credit. At the same time, voters are given limited options during elections and can only use their vote to punish or reward governments for their policy decisions. These findings suggest that, at the very least, debates surrounding electoral reform in B.C. must be expanded. And the current government and citizens should consider a broad set of evaluative criteria—much broader than the referendum ballot voters will receive in the fall—when determining whether we should change B.C.’s electoral system.

#### Our criterion is net benefits, we can determine whether PR is a good system on balance by weighing impacts

### Contention 1 is instability

#### **Creates instability in governments, especially in times of crises when they’re needed most**

Owen 8

Bernard Owen is the head of the Centre for the Comparative Studies of Elections (in Paris. Professor Owen participated in more than forty international electoral assistance and observation missions, reviewed or helped draft electoral laws of several nations, and participated in over forty international meetings and research conferences concerning elections(description from site), Bernard Owen on effects of electoral systems, Published by Skubi 9/08, http://www.skubi.net/owen3\_en.html)//LED

There has been a tendency to use proportional representation in new democracies. It's a non-committal attitude: people will say "proportional representation, there is no harm in it, it is used in Western Europe, so why not use it in these new democracies?" People are not used to making comparisons, they forget exactly how things work in Western Europe. You have a general good situation, but when you start getting into details, if you take ten of the old European democracies, then you see that things are not exactly as they should be. Some countries have very weak party systems, that is, there are maybe six, seven or eight political parties, so that governments can only be made by coalitions. Coalition governments are fine – why not have a coalition? But the trouble with coalitions is that once there are problems that occur in the country, whatever kind of problems, be they economical, social, political, the government collapses. So the country, when it most needs a government, just does not have a government, and they have what we call a caretaker government. That is dangerous for demacracies. Of course in Europe, since the 1945 war, extreme right parties, extreme left parties did exist and the fact is that communist parties were getting up to 25 or 30% of the seats in some countries. Extreme right parties are not dangerous. But these periods when you do not have a government are dangerous. They are especially dangerous if you look at it from an emerging democracies point of view. For example the Dutch can have periods of six months without a government. That is not an example to give to anyone. Belgium is in the same case. Usually, the periods when they only have what we call caretaker governments, that is, they do not have a majority in the assembly, are shorter. Same for Finland: Finns do not have what they call usually caretaking governments, they have technical governments. If you add together the periods that each of these three countries has been without a government (a normal government in a parliamentary system, that is, with a majority in the assembly), it adds up to somewhere around four years. Now four years from 1945 to nowadays without a government is not a good example to follow. There is another danger of course in proportional representation. It is that when you have more than just two parties, even three parties, then you should have barriers, like in a majority system, in favor of the leading party, that is, a party which attains, say, 45% of the votes could get 53 or 54% of the seats and form a majority one-party government. Proportional representation usually limits these barriers in favor of the main party, so that you find situations which can be dangerous.

#### **This instability creates economic stagnation and collapse**

Aisen and Veiga 11

Ari Aisen is a macroeconomist for The IMF, Francisco Jose Veiga is a writer for The IMF, How Does Political Instability Affect Economic Growth?, Published by the IMF Jan 2011, <https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/wp/2011/wp1112.pdf)//LED>

Political instability is regarded by economists as a serious malaise harmful to economic performance. Political instability is likely to shorten policymakers’ horizons leading to suboptimal short term macroeconomic policies. It may also lead to a more frequent switch of policies, creating volatility and thus, negatively affecting macroeconomic performance. Considering its damaging repercussions on economic performance the extent at which political instability is pervasive across countries and time is quite surprising. Political instability as measured by Cabinet Changes, that is, the number of times in a year in which a new premier is named and/or 50 percent or more of the cabinet posts are occupied by new ministers, is indeed globally widespread displaying remarkable regional differences (see Figure 1). The widespread phenomenon of political (and policy) instability in several countries across time and its negative effects on their economic performance has arisen the interest of several economists. As such, the profession produced an ample literature documenting the negative effects of political instability on a wide range of macroeconomic variables including, among others, GDP growth, private investment, and inflation. Alesina et al. (1996) use data on 113 countries from 1950 to 1982 to show that GDP growth is significantly lower in countries and time periods with a high propensity of government collapse. In a more recent paper, Jong-aPin (2009) also finds that higher degrees of political instability lead to lower economic growth.1 As regards to private investment, Alesina and Perotti (1996) show that socio-political instability generates an uncertain politico-economic environment, raising risks and reducing investment.2 Political instability also leads to higher inflation as shown in Aisen and Veiga (2006). Quite interestingly, the mechanisms at work to explain inflation in their paper resemble those affecting economic growth; namely that political instability shortens the horizons of governments, disrupting long term economic policies conducive to a better economic performance. This paper revisits the relationship between political instability and GDP growth. This is because we believe that, so far, the profession was unable to tackle some fundamental questions behind the negative relationship between political instability and GDP growth. What are the main transmission channels from political instability to economic growth? How quantitatively important are the effects of political instability on the main drivers of growth, namely, total factor productivity and physical and human capital accumulation?

#### **Conclusively destroys the economy**

Aisen and Veiga 11

Ari Aisen is a macroeconomist for The IMF, Francisco Jose Veiga is a writer for The IMF, How Does Political Instability Affect Economic Growth?, Published by the IMF Jan 2011, <https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/wp/2011/wp1112.pdf)//LED>

This paper analyzes the effects of political instability on growth. In line with the literature, we find that political instability significantly reduces economic growth, both statistically and economically. But, we go beyond the current state of the literature by quantitatively determining the importance of the transmission channels of political instability to economic growth. Using a dataset covering up to 169 countries in the period between 1960 and 2004, estimates from system-GMM regressions show that political instability is particularly harmful through its adverse effects on total factor productivity growth and, in a lesser scale, by discouraging physical and human capital accumulation. By identifying and quantitatively determining the main channels of transmission from political instability to economic growth, this paper contributes to a better understanding on how politics affects economic performance. Our results suggest that governments in politically fragmented countries with high degrees of political instability need to address its root causes and try to mitigate its effects on the design and implementation of economic policies. Only then, countries could have durable economic policies that may engender higher economic growth.

#### Massive Impact

**Liu 18** (Qian, writer for The World Economic Forum, The next economic crisis could cause a global conflict. Here's why, 9/13/18, https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2018/11/the-next-economic-crisis-could-cause-a-global-conflict-heres-why)//LED

The response to the 2008 economic crisis has relied far too much on monetary stimulus, in the form of quantitative easing and near-zero (or even negative) interest rates, and included far too little structural reform. This means that the next crisis could come soon – and pave the way for a large-scale military conflict. The next economic crisis is closer than you think. But what you should really worry about is what comes after: in the current social, political, and technological landscape, a prolonged economic crisis, combined with rising income inequality, could well escalate into a major global military conflict. The 2008-09 global financial crisis almost bankrupted governments and caused systemic collapse. Policymakers managed to pull the global economy back from the brink, using massive monetary stimulus, including quantitative easing and near-zero (or even negative) interest rates. Image: UN But monetary stimulus is like an adrenaline shot to jump-start an arrested heart; it can revive the patient, but it does nothing to cure the disease. Treating a sick economy requires structural reforms, which can cover everything from financial and labor markets to tax systems, fertility patterns, and education policies. Policymakers have utterly failed to pursue such reforms, despite promising to do so. Instead, they have remained preoccupied with politics. From Italy to Germany, forming and sustaining governments now seems to take more time than actual governing. And Greece, for example, has relied on money from international creditors to keep its head (barely) above water, rather than genuinely reforming its pension system or improving its business environment. The lack of structural reform has meant that the unprecedented excess liquidity that central banks injected into their economies was not allocated to its most efficient uses. Instead, it raised global asset prices to levels even higher than those prevailing before 2008. In the United States, housing prices are now 8% higher than they were at the peak of the property bubble in 2006, according to the property website Zillow. The price-to-earnings (CAPE) ratio, which measures whether stock-market prices are within a reasonable range, is now higher than it was both in 2008 and at the start of the Great Depression in 1929. As monetary tightening reveals the vulnerabilities in the real economy, the collapse of asset-price bubbles will trigger another economic crisis – one that could be even more severe than the last, because we have built up a tolerance to our strongest macroeconomic medications. A decade of regular adrenaline shots, in the form of ultra-low interest rates and unconventional monetary policies, has severely depleted their power to stabilize and stimulate the economy. If history is any guide, the consequences of this mistake could extend far beyond the economy. According to Harvard’s Benjamin Friedman, prolonged periods of economic distress have been characterized also by public antipathy toward minority groups or foreign countries – attitudes that can help to fuel unrest, terrorism, or even war. For example, during the Great Depression, US President Herbert Hoover signed the 1930 Smoot-Hawley Tariff Act, intended to protect American workers and farmers from foreign competition. In the subsequent five years, global trade shrank by two-thirds. Within a decade, World War II had begun. To be sure, WWII, like World War I, was caused by a multitude of factors; there is no standard path to war. But there is reason to believe that high levels of inequality can play a significant role in stoking conflict. According to research by the economist Thomas Piketty, a spike in income inequality is often followed by a great crisis. Income inequality then declines for a while, before rising again, until a new peak – and a new disaster. Though causality has yet to be proven, given the limited number of data points, this correlation should not be taken lightly, especially with wealth and income inequality at historically high levels. Have you read? How to prevent World War 3 How countries have recovered from the financial crisis and other top economic stories of the week Four things not to do in an economic crisis This is all the more worrying in view of the numerous other factors stoking social unrest and diplomatic tension, including technological disruption, a record-breaking migration crisis, anxiety over globalization, political polarization, and rising nationalism. All are symptoms of failed policies that could turn out to be trigger points for a future crisis. Voters have good reason to be frustrated, but the emotionally appealing populists to whom they are increasingly giving their support are offering ill-advised solutions that will only make matters worse. For example, despite the world’s unprecedented interconnectedness, multilateralism is increasingly being eschewed, as countries – most notably, Donald Trump’s US – pursue unilateral, isolationist policies. Meanwhile, proxy wars are raging in Syria and Yemen. Against this background, we must take seriously the possibility that the next economic crisis could lead to a large-scale military confrontation. By the logic of the political scientist Samuel Huntington , considering such a scenario could help us avoid it, because it would force us to take action. In this case, the key will be for policymakers to pursue the structural reforms that they have long promised, while replacing finger-pointing and antagonism with a sensible and respectful global dialogue. The alternative may well be global conflagration.

### Case

#### Various flaws

Gregory 19

Paul Gregory is an Essayist at various Think Tanks, WHAT IS WRONG WITH PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION, 3/22/19, https://radixuk.org/opinion/what-is-wrong-with-proportional-representation/)//LED

Proportional Representation (PR) is the favourite alternative to remedy the glaring defects of the First-Past-The-Post system of electing representatives (deputies, MPs). Discussion of second rounds (as in France) and voting by listing preferences (like the Alternative Vote, rejected in a UK referendum in 2011) has abated. Otherwise there is much popular (populist?) advocacy of so-called direct democracy, with frequent referenda, with the Swiss constitution as the template. In actual fact, the Swiss model is a blend of representative (or parliamentary) democracy with advisory referenda. Switzerland has a sophisticated electorate which has matured over many decades, and its system would not be rapidly transferable to electorates which exhibit an ingrained and widespread habit of not voting on the issue on the ballot paper but, instead, of abusing the vote to express opinions on quite disconnected issues. There are several – partially related – objections to PR. The first is that it depends on political parties, rather than individuals, as the sole vehicle of political opinion. Political parties aggregate thinking on disparate issues and present the electorate with a package or bundle (in Latin: Fasces). This aggregation facilitates group-think. A citizen who is dissatisfied with the composition of the package has the option, theoretically, of joining a party and influencing its policy choices. In actual fact, social dynamics are such that this involves engaging in what is diplomatically called compromise and, less diplomatically, horse-trading. It is time-consuming in the extreme, and the prospects of even minor success are remote. It is, in diverse and perverse ways, power that plays, not the force of reason or reflection. Pressure groups and lobbying come to the fore to distort policy. Hence citizens are normally deprived of precision in the voting booth. Often they must vote for the least bad party. A second objection relates to the thresholds regularly applied for representation under PR. This can be seen starkly in Germany, where no party winning less than five percent can obtain representation. It can be argued that it is this that has resulted in the dead-end (or consensual) politics characteristic of Germany since before unification. More gravely, similar considerations apply to the European Parliament. Under PR, each party is incentivised to maximise its share of the vote and is therefore bound to make itself nearly all things to nearly all men. This is a recipe for populism, understood as the gross simplification of issues and reduction of policy to just a very few issues (the economy, taxation, environment, immigration, crime, welfare). It is, incidentally, obvious that representation for these issues needs to be voted on separately, as advocated by Fuzzy Democracy. If there is to be PR, then the threshold rule needs to be exactly reversed – by not counting any votes over five percent. This way established parties have no incentive to pander to the electorate. They can advocate unpopular policies without fear of losing extra votes. This is not, of course, an adequate solution. The adequate solution is Fuzzy Democracy, as elucidated at www.fuzzydemocracy.eu. It will be objected that having a dozen or score of parties would lead to it being impossible to form an executive or “strong and stable” government. There is mostly no need for government to be unitary. Policy in one grand area of political concern seldom has much connection to that in others, and it is only the fixation on party “loyalty” that imagines otherwise. The demand for such unity leads to preposterous horse-trading. Of course, disallowing votes over the five percent as advocated above means disenfranchising some voters. But this is what happens already. Under FPTP, there is no voice for the losers. The “winner” wins only be accumulating more votes than the single runner-up, whether by many or only slightly more votes. And all those who voted for other candidates, however numerous – and they might well constitute a real majority – go empty-handed. It is not the case that their vote counts for rather less. It counts for zero. This is de facto disenfranchisement. Society is made up of minorities, not majorities. Hence democracy must not be the de facto suppression of minority voices in favour of an artificial majority. Such majorities are provisional and informal coalitions. Tiny minorities may be seen as trace elements, essential for the proper functioning of the body politic and, indeed, society. They are correctives and cures, like therapy and medicine, which does not mean that they should rule the roost.

#### **The Proportional Voting system is literally how Hitler took power, proves that it allows runaway radical takeovers**

Owen 8

Bernard Owen is thehead of the Centre for the Comparative Studies of Elections (in Paris. Professor Owen participated in more than forty international electoral assistance and observation missions, reviewed or helped draft electoral laws of several nations, and participated in over forty international meetings and research conferences concerning elections(description from site), Part I: How proportional representation brought Adolf Hitler to power, Published by Skubi 9/08, http://www.skubi.net/owen3\_en.html)//LED

The Weimar Republic (Germany, 1919-1933) had a very interesting proportional representation system. They had regional votes, but the transfer from votes into seats was at the national level. So it was quite proportional, when you look at the results, you compare them, you have practically identical results in votes and in seats. Now, there were great problems in Germany. The Nazi party really appeared in the election in 1923, but they only got 6% of the votes. The German mark almost disappeared, 10 000 marks were worth 1 dollar, and the population did not like inflation, it was a very bad sign for a country. So they voted against, they voted for this new Nazi party, which was not alone actually, there were two other right wing parties working with it on a proportional list. So the Germans got rid of the inflation, things got better organized, and at the end of 1923 a second election was held, and the Nazi party felt down to 3% of the votes. They lost half of their votes. Then Germans got organized, and for the 1928 elections the Nazi party only reached 2.6% of the votes, which is a very low percentage of votes for an extreme party when you have a very proportional system. So it was quite a success, Germany was on the way to recovery. Then in 1929 unfortunately the Wall Street crash happened. We can talk about it now, because it was a similar situation, but then it was even worse, especially in Germany, because Germany was very technically organized. The only really organized countries, from a mechanical point of view, were Germany, Belgium, Great Britain, and the United States. The United States had invested a lot in Germany, the country that was coming out of the war, and had the ways of dealing with mechanical things. So Americans invested huge sums of money. Siemens, for example, was bought by America. And when the crash came, Germany was hit just as hard as America. In France, with strong agriculture (about 60% of the population was in agriculture), the question was not a priority. Within Germany at the time, in 1929, with proportional representation, you had five political parties in government, plus one independent minister. Now, with five political parties, when such an event occured, that is, unemployment suddenly came up to a level of millions of people, the government collapsed. So Germany, when it really needed a strong government, had no government, and there was no alternative. What were the alternatives? There was this very small Nazi party, which only got 2.6% of the votes. There was the Communist party, that got a little more votes, but Germans were a little afraid of communism, the Bolsheviks. So, to everyone's surprise, in the 1930 elections, which were held to find some kind of government, you saw the Nazi party sudenly reach 18% of the votes. Nobody accepted it. Nobody thought it could be such a level. And remember, in 1928, 2.6% of the votes had been what they obtained. So we can say that in Germany there were 2.6% of the population which was extreme right. The 18% which came up suddenly in 1930, to everyone's surprise, was not ideological, but the Nazis were saying "we are in a mess, we will get rid of the problems, and Germany will be strong again". And then, from 1930 to 1932, the five ideologically moderate parties could not agree on what they should do. So there was no real government. There was a government made up of the 10% of votes obtained by the Catholic Party (Germany is not all Catholics, so it only reached 10%). There was a good prime minister. The president of the republic (Paul von Hindenburg), who had been previously for the Emperor, really played the game of the democracy, the Weimar democracy. He was able to govern for two years with what they call presidential decrees: the prime minister proposed measures, and the president made them into decrees. So during two years the Nazis, who now had 18% of the members of the Reichstag, could say: "you say that we are not democrats, but neither is the government, there is no democracy here; we will not be different from them, but we will know what to do, and we will make Germany into a large state, as it should be". Then of course in 1932 there were presidential elections, Hitler was one of the candidates, but was beaten by the incumbent Hindenburg. But in the following election, the Nazi party obtained over 30% of the votes. People say that proportional representation has nothing to do with it, that Germans, and especially Prussians, are warmongers. But people forget that Prussia was socialist, and the head of the Prussian region was called the "red tsar"; even once the Nazis took power in 1932, Prussia stayed socialist, and the Prussian police was actually going against the Nazi brown shirts. Other people will say that the army was Nazi. But von Seeckt, the head of the German army, who had won one of the last battles won by Germans in 1918, would not have any politics in the army. Von Seeckt was then replaced by Hindenburg, who had the same position. And any officers who were thought of being Nazi were thrown out, which happened twice as late as 1932. So ideology played a very small role in the political situation. Something very interesting happened in 1932. There were two elections: people were afraid of all these Nazis coming into the Reichstag, so a second election was held. Now the German people thought that Nazis were getting out of hand. They were getting scared of them. So now the Nazi vote dropped by about 3%, but, interestingly, the communist vote rose by the same level. That is, people wanted to vote against the republic, that was not functioning normally.

#### **Gives radicals a platform**

Linden-Fraser 17

ROSS LINDEN-FRASER is an Analyst at the Library of Parliament in Canada, Is Proportional Representation Good for Extremists?, Published by NAOC 3/29/17, <http://natoassociation.ca/is-proportional-representation-good-for-extremists/)//LED>

Geert Wilders is no ordinary politician. Leader and founder of the Netherlands’ Freedom Party, bouffant-haired and loudmouthed, he is a stridently anti-immigrant, anti-Muslim voice outside the mainstream of Dutch politics. He also controls the second-largest party in the country’s parliament. Part of that power comes from the uncertainty that has emboldened populist movements across Europe. For some critics, another part comes from a more mundane source: the Netherlands’ electoral system of proportional representation. A prominent critique of PR systems holds that they make it easier for fringe, extreme groups to win legislative power. This claim is not new, and it is not restricted to the Netherlands. Academics have examined these concerns for decades. If there’s anything new in the worries about PR, it’s a result of timing; a fitting concern for a world swept up in narratives of alt-right power and populist resurgence. The idea even has the currency to be invoked as a rationale for policy decisions. When Prime Minister Justin Trudeau’s government chose to put off promised electoral reforms in February 2017, it did so partly because of worries that PR would help give a platform to the far-right. This is a powerful claim, but it is also problematic—and the Dutch case can help explain why. The premise that PR can be good for fringe parties is based on a kernel of truth. In the Netherlands and elsewhere, PR helps extremist parties and radical ideas turn diffuse votes into seats in legislatures. A wide-ranging study from Professor Pippa Norris at the Harvard Kennedy School of Government confirmed that PR systems have historically benefitted extreme right-wing parties. These results contrasted with majoritarian or plural electoral systems, where elections are contested at a constituency level, making it harder for fringe groups to win seats. In some cases, as in France, changes to make electoral systems more proportional produced overnight benefits for right-wingers. Those changes were reversed by returning to a majoritarian system.

## Block

#### **Brings radicalism into the mainstream and gives power to right wing nationalists, creates inefficiency and unaccountability.**

Cavey 18

Tim Cavey, Politics writer for Medium, The Case Against Proportional Representation, 11/19/18 Published by Medium https://medium.com/@timcavey/the-case-against-proportional-representation-39a2c9598aee)//LED

Citizens in the Canadian province of British Columbia go to the polls (of a sort) this month. On the referendum ballot: whether or not to adopt an electoral system of proportional representation. This will be the province’s third such vote in 18 years. Though supporters of the smallest parties passionately promote this historical change, the reasons to vote no are too significant to ignore. Proportional representation (PR) rewards narrow agendas. In first-past-the-post (FPTP) systems, major parties must craft platforms that appeal to large portions of the population in order to hope to win seats. One-issue parties don’t thrive in FPTP systems, precisely because their narrow platforms are isolating; built around one cause or position, they don’t represent the majority well, and they have trouble earning the most votes in any one district as a result. Conversely, PR systems give parties the green light to ignore the views of the mainstream and pursue narrow, self-serving agendas. That’s not good for democracy. Proportional representation forms governments at their least efficient. When it takes a handful of parties to form government, you’ve got a similar handful of leaders, priorities, and loyalties on your hands. Infighting and defections are common and power is fragile in such governments, as Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu — currently holding a tenuous 61/120 Knesset seats in a 5-party coalition — will reluctantly tell you. Without a shared sense of mission, vision, and purpose, it’s more difficult for governments to get things done and govern effectively. And that serves no one’s interests at all. Proportional representation lowers accountability for governing parties. In FPTP systems, when bills are passed and policies go down that infuriate the citizenry, the public knows only too well who to blame. Next election, the guilty party is thrown unceremoniously out of office and another one voted in — an important democratic tradition worthy of celebrating. But when governments are formed by cobbling together five or six fledgeling parties, it’s harder to hold individual parties accountable for legislation (or the lack of it). Instead, it’s easier for parties to avoid the wrath of the populace and shift blame, and citizens are encouraged to faithfully vote their political dogmas rather than base their votes on actual performance. Proportional representation lowers accountability for individual candidates. In FPTP systems, each elected representative is tied to a particular district. They must work to promote themselves and earn the respect of their constituents using their platform and experience. If an elected member behaves badly as a citizen or demonstrates political incompetence in the public’s perception, they will bear the wrath of a very particular set of constituents in a very particular electoral district. But by removing this direct tie between candidate and constituency (for at least half of the elected members, depending on the model), PR makes it easier for party favorites to stick around indefinitely. No one constituency has the power to throw them out of office. And that’s not good for democracy. Proportional representation paves the way for extremist parties to enter government. No, this is not an exercise in fear mongering. Face it — if you’re a leader of a right-wing supremacist group, you’re definitely cheering for a system of proportional representation, because it’s the only way your group can gain any sort of legitimized political power. Under the current system, these groups are essentially locked out. And if you think such extremists will never gain a foothold in your backyard, consider Europe’s example. Far-right parties with openly racist policies have made deep inroads there in recent years — something that PR systems facilitate. FPTP systems lock these groups completely out of the political process because they can never meet the bar of earning the most votes in a single district. That’s what is known as a democratic check and balance. It protects our entire society and way of life. Proponents of proportional representation tout an increase in political engagement as one of the biggest blessings of proportional representation. Yet it’s hard to see how political engagement will increase under a complicated system that promotes narrow agendas, less efficiency, and less accountability. The first-past-the-post system is still a thing in British Columbia after all these years, largely because it’s simple and it works. Instead of redefining the rules of the game so that narrow agendas can gain more power, British Columbians should simply require their parties and candidates to serve the most citizens well.

#### White Supremacy accelerationism is growing, don’t give them a political platform

Byman 6/2/20

Daniel L. Byman is Senior Fellow - Foreign Policy, Center for Middle East Policy, Riots, white supremacy, and accelerationism, Published by The Brookings Institute, <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2020/06/02/riots-white-supremacy-and-accelerationism/)//LED>

White supremacists are gleeful as police violence and the resulting rioting tear apart cities. Even if the unrest ends in the weeks to come, they may look back at the violence as a win for their side. Some delight in the killing of George Floyd and in police violence against African Americans—“a knee is the new noose!!” exulted one sign held up by white supremacists during protests. It is unclear how much organized white supremacist groups are involved in the violence, and it is easy to use them as an excuse for much broader societal problems related to police violence and systemic racism. For now, any white supremacist involvement appears to be more individual than collective, but even if the violence declines it may bolster an increasingly important white supremacist concept — “accelerationism.” Some white supremacists already see the riots and broader polarization as vindication of this idea, and law enforcement and civil society activists concerned about the growth of extremism should watch to see if this idea takes further hold within white supremacist groups and organizations in the coming weeks and months. Daniel L. Byman Senior Fellow - Foreign Policy, Center for Middle East Policy dbyman Accelerationism is the idea that white supremacists should try to increase civil disorder — accelerate it — in order to foster polarization that will tear apart the current political order. The System (usually capitalized), they believe, has only a finite number of collaborators and lackeys to prop it up. Accelerationists hope to set off a series of chain reactions, with violence fomenting violence, and in the ensuing cycle more and more people join the fray. When confronted with extremes, so the theory goes, those in the middle will be forced off the fence and go to the side of the white supremacists. If violence can be increased sufficiently, the System will run out of lackeys and collapse, and the race war will commence. Neo-Nazi ideologue James Mason, one of the concept’s chief promoters, argued in the past that the goal is not just to kill minorities but, rather, “to FAN THE FLAMES!” Brenton Tarrant, who slaughtered 51 worshippers at mosques in New Zealand in 2019, took Mason’s words to heart and enthusiastically promoted the concept in his manifesto. John Earnest, who killed a worshipper at the Poway synagogue in 2019 and wounded three others, wrote, “I used a gun for the same reason that Brenton Tarrant used a gun. The goal is for the US government to start confiscating guns. People will defend their right to own a firearm—civil war has just started.” Related The Twitter application is seen on a phone screen August 3, 2017. REUTERS/Thomas White - RC15389E4A90 How misinformation spreads on social media—And what to do about it Supporters of al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden shout anti-American slogans, after the news of his death, during a rally in Quetta May 2, 2011. Bin Laden was killed in a U.S. helicopter raid on a mansion near the Pakistani capital Islamabad early on Monday, officials said, ending a nearly 10-year worldwide hunt for the mastermind of the Sept. 11 attacks. U.S. officials said bin Laden was found in the million-dollar compound in the military garrison town of Abbottabad, 60 km (35 miles) north of Islamabad. REUTERS/Naseer Ahmed (PAKISTAN - Tags: CIVIL UNREST CRIME LAW IMAGES OF THE DAY) - GM1E75300AX01 Al-Qaida today, 18 years after 9/11 Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and President Hassan Rouhani pray near the coffins of Iranian Major-General Qassem Soleimani, head of the elite Quds Force, and Iraqi militia commander Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, who were killed in an air strike at Baghdad airport, in Tehran, Iran January 6, 2020. Official Khamenei website/Handout via REUTERS ATTENTION EDITORS - THIS IMAGE WAS PROVIDED BY A THIRD PARTY. NO RESALES. NO ARCHIVES Trump’s reckless Middle East policy has brought the US to the brink of war Although the white supremacist embrace of acceleration is relatively recent, capitalizing on, or even creating, polarization is not a new strategy. Those who call for violence to create political change, regardless of ideology, are more likely to thrive when the traditional political system is not working, and such people often try to use bloodshed to further the perception that the system is broken. During the late 1960s and early 1970s, for example, right-wing (but not white supremacist) terrorists conducted dozens of attacks in Italy, several quite bloody, to sow fear and panic. In December 1969, a series of bombings shook Italy, including one on the Banca Nazionale dell’Agricoltura (National Agricultural Bank) that killed 17 people. Neo-fascists sought to discredit their rival left-wingers with “false flag” attacks and make the government seem powerless. Their hope was that as order collapsed, the people would demand an end to the chaos and thus support an authoritarian regime. This backfired. It soon became clear that the right had orchestrated many of the bombings and that some authorities were complicit. Public order indeed suffered, and Italians became even more skeptical of traditional political parties. Communist and socialist parties stepped into the void far more effectively than did authoritarian groups. Today’s white supremacists may find that the unrest helps their enemies on the far-left or African American organizations rather than leads to a broader public embrace of their cause. In addition to the possibility that the “wrong” side might win from acceleration, it’s also important to note that accelerationism is an admission of weakness, no matter how frightening the concept. Its proponents are recognizing that, on their own, they cannot foment the revolution they seek or use the system to achieve their ends. Nor are they able to use the political system to achieve their ends, as leaders of the alt-right would endorse. Instead, they must latch on to existing societal problems and try to shape and exploit them. Unfortunately, even when President Trump does not openly embrace the white supremacists’ cause, he is often their ally due to the polarization in which he revels. His efforts to claim that the legitimate protesters are all Antifa, blame “liberal Governors and Mayors” for the unrest, and declare that “when the looting starts, the shooting starts” all exacerbate tensions. Such statements are likely to provoke strong and divergent reactions from across the political spectrum rather than bring Americans together in outrage over George Floyd’s murder and the need to reject violence in favor of genuine reform. Related Books Cvr: China 2049 China 2049 Edited by David Dollar, Yiping Huang, and Yang Yao 2020 Cover: Know Your Price Know Your Price By Andre M. Perry 2020 Cvr: Citizenship and Its Discontents Citizenship and Its Discontents By Thanassis Cambanis and Michael Wahid Hanna 2019 Accelerationism relies on a spiral of violence, and law enforcement must redouble efforts to ensure that white supremacists do not fan the flames. This involves increased efforts to disrupt white supremacist networks, monitor their activities to the extent the law allows, and ensure that resources and legal authorities are sufficient to confront the danger. It also requires educating law enforcement officers about white supremacist groups and making sure that the public is aware that white supremacist violence will not be tolerated—an important step toward reassuring communities that see Floyd’s death as yet another sign that the police cannot be trusted. The task, however, goes beyond law enforcement. For accelerationism to succeed, traditional politics must fail. Dialogue, compromise, and steady (if often too slow) progress are its enemies. Part of the answer is political leadership at the top, but it’s not enough (nor realistic) to expect the current president to try to bring Americans together. Local leaders, civic organizations and ordinary citizens must reject extreme answers and recognize that although the parts of the system need to change, it does not need to be rejected completely. Such steps, both local and national, can choke out the flames that fan accelerationism.

#### **Economic collapse would be devastating, hurts the margins of society but also causes states to act irrationally**

Wealth Daily 18 ( Stock market and futures market newspaper, known for their predictive accuracy. Article quotes Gene Roddenberry. Surviving the Coming Economic Collapse, 11/13/18, https://www.wealthdaily.com/resources/surviving-the-coming-economic-collapse/51939)//LED

Surviving the Coming Economic Collapse Save Nuclear warfare is not necessary to cause a breakdown of our society. You take a large city like Los Angeles, New York, Chicago — their water supply comes from hundreds of miles away and any interruption of that, or food, or power for any period of time you're going to have riots in the streets. Our society is so fragile, so dependent on the interworking of things to provide us with the goods and services that you don't need nuclear warfare to fragment us anymore than the Romans needed it to cause their eventual downfall. — Gene Roddenberry While some may consider such a discussion a waste of time, more and more people are coming to the conclusion that preparations of some sort are warranted in our current troubled environment — on many fronts. Surviving Economic Collapse. How much preparation individuals are willing to do is usually in direct correlation to their belief that something catastrophic could happen, making life as we know it a much more difficult task. It is a proven fact throughout history that when disruptions of any kind occur, those who made even the smallest preparations typically fare much better than those who gave no thought at all in this regard. Today I want to share with you a list I have compiled of the things that could potentially happen — and that threaten our way of life in a small or large degree. There is no way to predict these things, but anyone with common sense can see that the possibility is likely we could experience one or more of these events at some point in the future... Any single event or combination of events could cause terrible and debilitating circumstances for a short or long period of time: Natural disasters such as hurricanes, floods, tornados, volcanic eruptions, solar flares, earthquakes, and other geophysical events Possibility of wars, nuclear wars, nuclear reactor meltdowns, and radiation fallout Financial meltdown (derivative, debt crisis, economic collapse and/or bond implosion) causing currencies to implode and governments to topple Problems with the exploration, delivery, or production of oil, the lifeblood of modern economies Spread of disease such as the Black Plague or a bird flu pandemic Power grid failure Political anarchy or revolution Racial strife or civil war Electromagnetic pulse event With any of these scenarios listed above (and there is a host of others I have probably not even thought about), you could have localized, national, or global unrest and even war for an indefinite period of time depending on the scope and duration of the event(s). An item that is not on the list — but could be equally devastating to individual families — is the loss of a job. Losing a job can be a catastrophic event if one is not properly prepared. Most families find themselves living paycheck to paycheck with little in the way of savings and almost nothing in the way of preparations. For years, I had brought up the issue of preparedness to a close friend of mine. When I first started talking about it, my friend and his wife basically blew me off... but I kept bringing the topic up. Eventually they thought it prudent to at least get some sort of food storage together. Their family was accustomed to an upper middle class income and living comfortably in suburbia with their three children... About a year after making their food preparations, the breadwinner of the family lost his job and ended up working a series of almost minimum wage jobs trying to make ends meet. He kept applying for better-paying jobs in his field of expertise — but no matter how qualified he was nobody was interested in hiring someone at his previous salary level or his age (late fifties). The family's lifestyle was devastated and they eventually lost their home... In a recent conversation with this friend, he told me that without their food storage, things would have been immeasurably more difficult. He thanked me for being a good friend and pushing the issue when he and his wife weren’t listening. The family is now living a greatly reduced lifestyle, but keeping their heads above water and continuing with their preparations. I share this story because on an individual basis, there is a host of things that can happen in which being prepared could make a huge difference. We often, as a people in general, terms take things for granted and think 'this' or 'that' will never happen to us. In addition to a major job loss due to a myriad of reasons, you could lose your health or the ability to do your job. Unfortunately, things of this nature are happening to more and more people every day. In fact, I'm certain all of us have been affected to some degree by similar stories of friends and relatives. Our Current State of Affairs The world in general seems afflicted on so many different fronts. When you look at the list above, any rational person could easily see one or more of these scenarios occur within their lifetime. Aside from the geophysical things that seem to be going haywire, and could be explained simply as the planet’s cycles, there are plenty of man-made catastrophes that loom on the horizon... Never has the planet had as many people as it does now. With increased population numbers, there is increased pressure for resources. This is a key point on why you want to stay invested in commodities of all kinds. More countries seek nuclear devices than ever before and recent advancements in technology make this much easier than any time before in history. Biological and chemical weapons are also much easier to manufacture — and are being stored by an increasing number of very scary countries. Oil markets are tighter than ever as demand from countries like China and India increases, but new supply cannot keep up with the increasing demand. The financial debacle of the world economies needs no introduction to my readers. In short, bad times — really bad times — for any number of reasons could and probably will be coming to a location near you. Unless you and your family take this possibility quite seriously, if and when something does happen, you could very well find yourself in some extremely difficult circumstances. Just look at the latest news coming out of Greece, as reported by Reuters, below... This is happening right now — and it’s only going to spread. When the political and economic systems of entire nations collapse the consequences are devastating. Earlier this year pharmacies and hospitals in Greece were unable to provide life saving medicines due to a shortages caused by a freeze in the flow of credit from manufacturers to distributors to patients. A collapse in the country’s economy has forced many Greeks to turn to black market barter economies and has left millions financially devastated, with no hope of finding an income stream for the foreseeable future. The credit system of the entire country is in shambles. So much so that reports are emerging about food shortages and hunger within the Greek prison system, suggesting that serious problems in the food delivery chain have begun to materialize. As Nigel Farage warned recently, we are beginning to see the rise of extreme political parties as a consequence of the total and utter desperation of the populace. Today the news gets even worse. Greece’s Regulatory Authority for Energy (RAE) announced an emergency meeting to deal with what can only be construed as a tell-tale sign that this crisis is very rapidly reaching critical mass and may spiral out of control in the very near future: Greece’s power regulator RAE told Reuters on Friday it was calling an emergency meeting next week to avert a collapse of the debt-stricken country’s electricity and natural gas system. “RAE is taking crisis initiatives throughout next week to avert the collapse of the natural gas and electricity system,” the regulator’s chief Nikos Vasilakos told Reuters. RAE took the decision after receiving a letter from Greece’s natural gas company DEPA, which threatened to cut supplies to electricity producers if they failed to settle their arrears with the company. You may have thought the financial collapse of 2008 was bad. That was just a warm-up. The main event is staring us in the face, and the whole of Europe has front-row seats. What is happening in Europe is just a precursor for what will eventually be coming to the United States... I personally witnessed what can happen within a very short period of time when food is no longer available to the public. I was in my early twenties, living in Paris, France. Because of an extended truckers' strike, the food stores were cleared out within 24 hours of the announcement. Within five days, normally law-abiding citizens took to the streets and began threatening anyone who had food... Those with no food quickly crossed the line of sanity and started desperately looking to take food from those who had it by any means necessary. Economic CollapseThese events were never properly covered by the news media (what a surprise!), but I saw firsthand how uncivilized a so-called "modern country" can become within a matter of days because of a lack of food. If I had not witnessed this myself, I probably would not believe this could happen so easily. And even as a strong young man, I found myself quite frightened at times before the trucks started rolling again. That particular truckers' strike lasted three weeks — but it left me with a lasting impression. The following are Items to Consider that I feel are prudent as you make your own preparations based on the problems that could potentially threaten our way of life. Each of the items below could fill a book... but my intent is to at least get you thinking about the most important things related to being prepared.