ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: RULE OF THE FEWER: ELECTORAL INVERSIONS AND THEIR CONSEQUENCES

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The advent of democracy is supposed to represent a transition from the rule of the few to the rule of the many. In this folkloric account, majority rule is both the embodiment of democracy and its source of legitimacy. Unsurprisingly, however, democratic realities are far more complex—and sometimes more disappointing—than democratic ideals. Although democracy is often equated with the principle of majority rule, government by popular minorities is more common in modern liberal democracies than is government by popular majorities. But if the ideal of majority rule often goes unfulfilled, a redeeming quality of most elections in most democracies is that they nevertheless manage to satisfy the principle of "plurality rule." That is, even when popular minorities govern, as is so often the case, the minority that governs is usually the *largest* minority. But not always. Sometimes governments are elected without even the support of a popular plurality. This phenomenon is called an *electoral inversion*; it is the focus of my dissertation.

More precisely, electoral inversions occur when the party (or coalition of parties) that

wins the most votes nevertheless loses the election. While scholars have long recognized that electoral inversions can and sometimes do occur, especially with respect to the U.S. Electoral College system for presidential elections, no systematic attempt has been made either to identify how often electoral inversions occur in the world's established liberal democracies, or to understand what their consequences are for democracy when they do occur. I address both of these unanswered questions. My first objective is to understand where, when, and thus how often electoral inversions have occurred historically. To do so, I undertake a descriptive study of electoral inversions in 28 established democracies. The results show that electoral inversions have occurred in roughly 8% of elections between 1900 and 2022.

To better understand the *consequences* of electoral inversions, my second objective, I examine how inversions affect democratic support in two countries that have experienced electoral inversions in recent years: Canada (2019 and 2021) and the United States (2000 and 2016). Building on the "winner-loser gap" literature, I show that electoral inversions magnify winner-loser effects on democratic support. While I find consistent evidence in the U.S. and Canada that inversions widen winner-loser gaps by weakening losers' support for democracy, I also find, paradoxically, that the 2016 U.S. inversion increased winners' support. I argue that the negative effect of electoral inversions on losers' support is the consequence of a basic and widely shared normative expectation—which electoral inversions violate—that democratic elections ought to respond the preferences of the greater number. The positive effect of inversions on winners' support in the U.S. is more difficult to explain. I consider whether this result indicates a propensity of these voters to conflate democracy with its short-term benefits, or whether it reflects underlying conditions of political

polarization. Either way, since democracy depends on the support of its citizens—and in particular, on their willingness to accept the results of democratic processes—these findings have implications for continued democratic stability in countries that experience electoral inversions.

RULE OF THE FEWER: ELECTORAL INVERSIONS AND THEIR CONSEQUENCES

by

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Preface

It was a month or two before the November 8, 2016 US presidential election that I began the process of applying to doctoral programs. As I did so, I started by drafting application essays that described my interests and intended field of study. But as the results of the November election became clear, whatever I had thought I wanted to study in graduate school was quickly thrown into doubt. Even though he received nearly three million fewer votes than his opponent, Donald Trump won the Electoral College and thus the election, the second time in as many decades that a US presidential election produced an *electoral inversion*—an election in which the popular winner (the candidate with the most votes) loses the election. This was a remarkable development considering that the Electoral College outcome had matched the popular vote outcome in the 27 presidential elections that took place in the 104 years between 1892 and 1996. It was also remarkable for being the first election in recent memory, and certainly in my lifetime, in which Americans elected a president who manifested an undisguised contempt for the norms and institutions of democracy.

As the 2020 election approached, some observers feared that the Democratic Party candidate, this time Joe Biden, would once again achieve a pyrrhic popular-vote victory in the course of suffering an election defeat to Trump and his Republican Party, which continues, at least for now, to benefit from structural advantages in the Electoral College. For instance, in an October *New York Times* op-ed, political scientists Steven Levitsky and

Daniel Ziblatt worried aloud that even "if Joe Biden wins the popular vote by one to two points, there is an 80 percent chance that Mr. Trump wins the presidency again." Such a result would, like the 2016 election, subject the country to "minority rule" (Levitsky and Ziblatt 2020).

Ultimately, the 2020 did not produce an electoral inversion. As was the case in 2016, the Democratic party candidate, this time Joe Biden, won the most votes by a margin of several million. This time around, however, the popular winner also happened to win the election. But it was close. Writing in the *New York Times*, David Leonhardt observed that although Biden "beat Trump by seven million votes... the Electoral College margin was much narrower. If the right mix of about 50,000 people across a few swing states had switched their votes, Trump could have won" in the Electoral College (Leonhardt 2024). As we approach the 2024 presidential election, the Republican Party continues to benefit from many of the same structural advantages that propelled it to victory (despite winning fewer votes) in 2016, and that nearly did so again in 2020.

Therefore, with each passing election—each of which carrying seemingly ever-greater stakes—the phenomenon of electoral inversions in American presidential elections has only become more relevant, and the questions it poses for democracy more pressing. For instance, what are the effects of electoral inversion on the way Americans think and feel about democracy? How unique is the United States in its propensity to produce electoral inversions? Are electoral inversions a distinctively American phenomenon, the artifact of an idiosyncratic Electoral College system that exists in no other presidential democracies? If electoral inversions do in fact occur in other democracies, what are their effects in these other places? And what broader lessons, if any, can be drawn from these other cases for the

United States, and vice versa? Finally, from the perspective of democratic theory, inversions are an essentially undemocratic election result inasmuch as they enable the smaller number to prevail over the greater. But does this normative abstraction carry any weight in the empirical world? That is, apart from *representing* an undemocratic outcome, do electoral inversions bear any undemocratic *effects*?

These were the questions that ran through my mind in the lead-up to the 2020 US presidential election. I combed through the relevant literatures for answers, but found them wanting. Though perhaps an initial, momentary inconvenience, that these questions turned out to be largely unanswered only served to heighten my curiosity and, ultimately, inspired the project that would eventually become this dissertation. The culmination of more than three years of research, and of seven years of graduate work, writing this dissertation would not have been possible without the support of others. I am grateful to professors Evan Berry and Timothy Shah, both of whom were mentors to me before I came to the University of Maryland, and whose guidance was instrumental to my eventual pursuit of a doctoral degree. I am also thankful to Mark Lichbach for taking a gamble on me seven years ago.

I am especially grateful to Ernesto Calvo, the chair of my dissertation committee, who took me on when I needed an advisor, who stuck with me throughout the three years that it took to complete this dissertation, and who provided me with invaluable ideas, feedback, and encouragement along the way. Whenever he and I met to discuss my dissertation, I invariably entered our meetings brimming with doubts and apprehensions. But not once can I recall leaving our meetings without a rejuvenated sense of confidence and optimism. I owe thanks to the other members of my committee—David Karol, Mike Hanmer, Kris

Miler, and Meyer Kestnbaum—for their thoughtful feedback, both at the early stages of my dissertation, which helped shape the trajectory that it would eventually take, and at the end stage, providing me with new ideas and directions for future research. For instance, my dissertation was enriched by David's suggestion that I study nineteenth-century periodicals in order to understand how contemporaries perceived electoral inversions. I am thankful to Mike, who, in his previous role as Director Graduate Studies, was there to keep me on track more than once when I needed a course correction. That I overcome those initial challenges, and that he, as a member of my committee, was there to witness my eventually achievement, was particularly gratifying, as I hope it was to him as well. Both in her role on my committee, and in the two courses that I took with her, I am thankful to Kris for being an indispensable source of feedback and improvement. It is not just her clarity of mind that I appreciate, which makes her a gifted teacher, but also her willingness as a interlocutor—for instance, meeting me at Politics and Prose to discuss my work amidst the hectic last few days of the Fall semester several years ago. I would be remiss if I did not also thank Meyer, who graciously agreed to come over from the Department of Sociology to join my committee on short notice. He brought a much-needed qualitative-historical perspective to my committee; I was lucky to have him review and comment on my work.

At all stages of this project's development, as well as throughout the entirety of my time as a graduate student, I have found myself indebted to the people nearest to me. The dissertation began as the small seed of an idea that took root in my mind in one of the many long conversations about politics that I had—and that I continue to have—with my father, Myles. It is difficult to imagine reaching this point without those conversations, without his companionship, and without his intellect, which I trust and value more than anyone else's.

It is equally difficult to imagine succeeding without the ever-present support of my mother, Virginia, whose constant (dare I say irrational!) optimism and encouragement kept me afloat. I do not take them for granted. Acknowledgment of my family's support would be incomplete without an appreciation of my sister, Bailey, whose creative brilliance I admire, whose wit always makes me smile (which is no small feat), and whose sarcasm-coated love I wouldn't be able to do without.

Finally, reflecting on all those to whom I owe my thanks and appreciation, I reserve a special category for Rose Stefany, my wife and best friend. In all other respects, I am temperamentally averse to the Leibnizian theorem that ours is the best of all possible worlds. But Rose may be the proof that persuades me otherwise. It is banal to say that I could not have made it through graduate school, or completed my dissertation, without her. But it is the truth. Throughout the long seven-year trudge of graduate school—indeed, even before it began—her support has bordered on the superhuman. It has been unyielding, constant, and kaleidoscopic, often taking the form of patience and understanding, at other times encouragement and moral support, sometimes even coming as tough love (when that was what I needed), and at other times manifesting as concrete advice and direction. Most importantly, she believed in me, even and especially when I did not. If I have any regrets, it's that now she can say, "I told you so."

Dedication

To Rose

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Chapter 1

Introduction

"All communities," Alexander Hamilton instructed delegates to the 1787 Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia, "divide themselves into the few and the many" (Farrand 1911, 299). The question was: who should rule? To Hamilton, who regarded the Many with a measure of contempt surpassed by few if any of his colleagues, a natural aristocracy of the Few was clearly preferable. But even if their preferences were not as straightforwardly undemocratic as Hamilton's, the architects of the American system of government—like most eighteenth century intellectuals—generally assumed that the rule of a cultivated Few over the unpropertied Many was a necessary if unfortunate safeguard against the "turbulent and uncontrouling disposition" of the masses (299). This sentiment coexisted in their minds, if uneasily, with a Lockean conception of popular sovereignty in which legitimate claims to political authority derived from the consent of the governed. But their conceptions of who "the people" are and of what number of them constitutes a sufficient basis for inferring consent were colored—indeed stunted—by their ever-present distrust of the masses. This distrust, so long as it remained, prevented the seed of democracy from fully germinating.

But over time this would of course change. The political shift that unfolded over the next several decades was substantial enough that John Stuart Mill, known better for his exhortations in *On Liberty* to guard against majority tyranny, could innocuously refer

several years later to the "familiar idea" that "the minority must yield to the majority, the smaller number to the greater" (Mill 1862, 145).[1] Across the Atlantic around the same time, the prolific but now obscure Whig historian Richard Hildreth could aver that "under an enlightened democratical government, it is entirely out of place. . . to enable the few to defeat the wishes of the many" (Hildreth 1854, 264). This sentiment was not limited to enlightened Whigs like Hildreth. Thomas Hart Benton, a Jacksonian Democrat and much the political opposite of Hildreth, could confidently assert the "democratic principle" that elections belong to the "the choice of the people," the candidate "receiv[ing] the greatest number of votes" (Benton 1854, 47).[2]

In short, by the middle of the nineteenth century, the primacy of the Many over the Few had become securely lodged in the idea of democracy, and there it has since remained. Few citizens in today's liberal democracies would be prepared to dispute this primacy. Indeed, that the Many instead of the Few—the majority instead of the minority—should rule is as close to a self-evident truth in modern democracies as was Jefferson's pronouncement to his contemporaries that all men are created equal. And yet, both are what historian Edmund S. Morgan (1988) described as necessary "political fictions:" stylized truths, prescriptive rather than descriptive in nature, that through a willing suspension of disbelief sustain and legitimize political orders. Just as one would find an abundance of actual

[1]Mill's heightened concerns in *On Liberty* with the disconcerting prospect of majority tyranny and his apparent acceptance in *Considerations on Representative Government* that the greater number ought to prevail over the smaller need not be seen as incompatible. To the contrary, the former is an outgrowth of the latter. That is, the motivation to issue a warning against the tyranny of the majority was grounded in an appreciation of the majoritarian principle's ascendancy.

[2]The most egregious case of this principle's violation was, in Benton's mind, Andrew Jackson's defeat in the 1824 presidential election. Although Jackson won more popular and Electoral College votes than any other candidate, he did not have an Electoral College majority. As a result, the election was decided in the House of Representatives, which selected John Quincy Adams.

inequalities distributed amongst the people if one were to look, an examination of democracies would uncover no shortage of the Few ruling the Many, the minority prevailing over the majority.

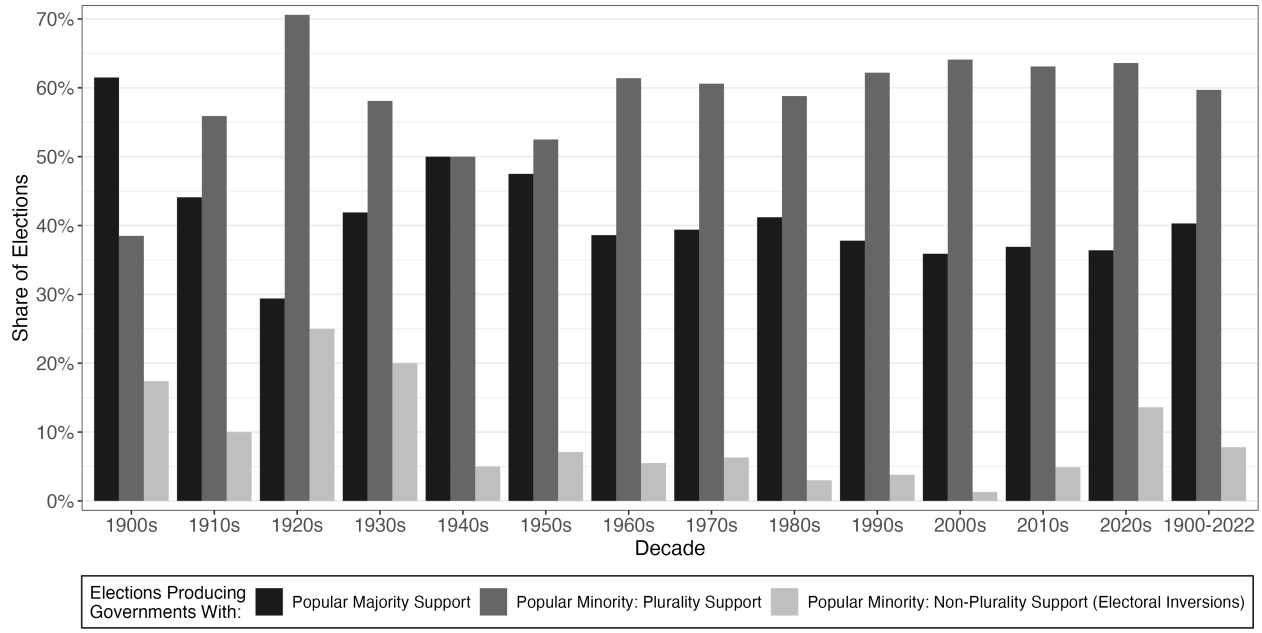
The empirical basis for this claim can be found in Figure 1.1. It calculates the share of governments elected with the support of popular majorities and minorities—with minority support divided between popular pluralities and non-pluralities—in 28 democracies between 1900 and 2022.[3] The figure shows that popular minorities have prevailed over popular majorities in nearly 60% percent of elections. This is a point worth emphasizing: in a sample that includes some of the world's oldest, most stable democracies, the average election is one in which the Few, defeating the wishes of the Many, are empowered to rule. But if the rule of a numerical Few over the Many is as inimical to the idea of democracy as I have suggested, why have citizens of democracies tolerated for so long the Few's stubborn ability to prevail? Why, in other words, have the Many not rebelled?

It could be that democratic commitments to the rule of the Many (or an aversion to the rule of a Few) are simply not as strong or widespread as I initially supposed. This view is certainly plausible. But there are two mutually inclusive alternatives that, in my view, offer more compelling explanations. The first is the winner-loser effect, which can be summarized as follows: Since there are winners and losers in every election, there are always those who stand to gain and to suffer from any particular election result. Moreover, since the winning side is usually the larger of the two, there will always be a substantial number of citizens for whom the violated principle of majority rule is outweighed by the spoils of

[3]The democracies are: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

electoral victory. The second and arguably more important reason is that governments by popular minorities are still in most cases governments by popular *pluralities*—which is to say, they are governments by the *largest* minority. Therefore, although democratic governments are more often elected with the support of popular minorities than majorities, the minority that prevails is almost always one that has more popular support than any other minority. Rule of the greater number may lack the aphoristic charm of majority rule, but it also lacks the vice of fictitiousness. Governments of the "largest minority" might not be able to boast a true popular mandate, but they can at the very least lay claim to a stronger mandate than any of the available alternatives.

Figure 1.1. Rule of the Many, Few, and Fewer



Note: Data on governments elected with non-plurality support (i.e., electoral inversions) excludes Switzerland because elections to the Swiss Federal Council do not, in practice, allow for a situation in which the resulting government lacks plurality support. However, since they do allow for a situation in which the resulting government lacks majority support (as well as governments with majority support, of course), Switzerland is included for calculation of governments with popular majority and minority (plurality) support. Calculations for Finland prior to 2000 are based on the results of presidential elections; after 2000 I use parliamentary election results. This is because a new constitution took effect in 2000, effecting a shift from a presidential to a parliamentary system (Raunio 2006, 473-474; Raunio 2021, 165).
Source: ParlGov database (Döring et al. 2023*a*).

1.1. The Phenomenon of Electoral Inversions

There remains a small but far from negligible subset of governments, however, for which even this weaker mandate proves elusive. These governments—and, more specifically, the elections out of which they arise—are the focus of my dissertation. They are governments produced through what are called *electoral inversions*: elections in which the party that wins the vote loses the election, and the party (or parties) that lose the vote emerge victorious. That is to say, electoral inversions occur when the winners (the party or parties that form the government) lack the support of even a plurality of popular votes. Figure 1.1 previews a key finding of my dissertation: that across 28 democracies (27 parliamentary and one presidential, the United States), there have been 53 electoral inversions since 1900, translating to roughly 8% of elections.[4]

Probably the two most familiar examples of electoral inversions are the 2000 and 2016 U.S. presidential elections. Both saw the Democratic presidential candidate win the most votes yet lose in the Electoral College to the Republican candidate. Looking beyond the United States, Canada has been another major source of electoral inversions in recent years. In the last two Canadian Parliamentary elections, held in 2019 and 2021, the Conservative Party of Canada met a similar fate to that of the 2000 and 2016 Democrats. In both elections, despite outpolling the Trudeau-led Liberals in the national popular vote, the Conservatives won fewer seats, thereby enabling the Liberals to form single-party minority governments.

Prior to the U.S. electoral inversion of 2000, scholars of both comparative and Amer-

[4]For a full list of electoral inversions, see Table A2.1 in the Chapter 2 Appendix. Table A2.1 does not contain the three pre-1900 U.S. electoral inversions. Those can be found in Table A3.1 in the Chapter 3 Appendix.

ican politics paid little attention to the subject. Apart from a handful of early (pre-2000) studies that (1) acknowledged the possibility of an inversion result—usually referred to as a "divided verdict," "unpopular verdict," or "wrong winner" outcome—in U.S. presidential elections (May 1948); (2) sought to estimate their likelihood (Ball and Leuthold 1991; Merrill 1978); or (3) sounded a warning call about their imminent arrival (Abbott and Levine 1991), interest in the subject was almost entirely absent. After the 2000 election, when what had been an abstract possibility suddenly became a reality, political scientists began to look more closely at the phenomenon. However, this renewed interest has mainly been confined to efforts within American politics to predict the likelihood of inversion outcomes in the Electoral College, and, relatedly, to isolate the variables on which such outcomes depend.[5] Meanwhile, comparative political scientists have examined electoral inversions in the context of parliamentary systems, but here too the focus has remained limited—either to demonstrating that inversion outcomes are possible in proportional multi-party systems (Kurrild-Klitgaard 2013; 2014; Miller 2015), or to the effects of electoral inversions on electoral system reform (Farrelly 2009; Flinders 2010; Renwick 2009; Shugart 2008; Siaroff 2003). All told, the existing literature leaves two critical questions about electoral inversions unanswered. The first question—or, rather, series of questions—is essentially descriptive in nature. The second, which I address momentarily (Section 1.2), pertains to the consequences of electoral inversions.

To-date, no systematic study of electoral inversions across countries and over time

[5]There are two exceptions to this, both with an American focus. First, Carey et al. (2021) analyze the effect of electoral inversions on perceived democratic legitimacy via an online survey experiment. Second, though they do not explicitly frame it as an investigation of electoral inversions, Craig et al. (2006) examine the impact of the 2000 election (which, of course, was an electoral inversion) on satisfaction with democracy among Florida voters.

has been attempted. As a result, while it takes little effort to highlight isolated examples of electoral inversions—for instance, the 2000 and 2016 U.S. presidential elections, or the 2019 and 2021 Canadian general elections, or even the well-known 1974 British parliamentary election—it is difficult to say anything definitive about electoral inversions as a broader phenomenon. How common are electoral inversions across the world's established democracies? Are countries like the United States and Canada unusual in their susceptibility to electoral inversions? If so, why? If not, where and when have electoral inversions occurred? I endeavor to answer these questions with an analysis of election results in established parliamentary democracies plus the United States' presidential democracy. For the parliamentary democracies, I use the ParlGov cabinets and elections datasets, which spans the period 1900-2022. Limiting the data to elections and governments in liberal democracies (excluding partial democracies) with parliamentary systems (excluding presidential and semi-presidential systems), and to democracies whose electoral institutions allow for the possibility of an inversion result, yields a sample of 679 elections/governments in 27 parliamentary democracies plus the United States.[6]

1.2. The Consequences of Electoral Inversions

Why do electoral inversions matter? What makes them a subject worthy of study? The answer to this question involves two separate but overlapping dimensions—one abstract and other more practical—but which in both cases lead to the same place, which is the second outstanding question about electoral inversions: their consequences. First, from a theoretical point of view, electoral inversions are both interesting and important because

[6]Chapter 3's Section 2.3.A discusses these sample selection criteria in greater depth.

of the democratic principle that they (fail to) embody. Most people have a sense, if only a vague one, that democracy is a system in which the people choose their leaders. Most probably understand that elections are the principal device in a democracy for making this choice, and that votes are the medium through which leaders are, by election, chosen. Of course, elections are not democratic *per se*—for instance, it is not difficult to imagine elections in which some citizens have more votes than others, in which the ability of some citizens to vote is systematically denied without cause, or in which the number of votes needed to win is set at some arbitrarily high bar. What makes an election a *democratic* method of collective decision-making is its recourse, if not to the will of the majority, then at least to the will of the greater number equally counted. A process of collective decision-making—such as but not limited to elections—that responds affirmatively to the will of the lesser number may be justified or desirable on some matters or in some instances, for there may be good reason to make a collective choice on the basis of a more inclusive decision rule than plurality. But it is not, strictly speaking, a democratic election. In this sense, because electoral inversions permit the will of the lesser number to prevail, they represent an undemocratic byproduct of a democratic process—or, at least, of a process that is supposed to embody a democratic ideal. The type of rule that electoral inversions therefore represent is neither majority rule, the rule of the many, nor even minority rule, the rule of the few. Rather, electoral inversions effect what could be called "the rule of the *fewer*."

The philosophical contradiction that characterizes the relationship between electoral inversions and democracy foreshadows a second aspect of their potential significance. If democratic legitimacy is sustained through democratic ideals, when democratic elections

produce outcomes that are incongruous with the ideals that sustain and legitimate them, the question naturally arises as to whether such outcomes have consequences for the sources of democratic legitimacy. What those consequences are, if in fact there are any, is what I intend to find out. If it turns out that electoral inversions do have consequences for democracy, that suffices *ipso facto* as a reason to understand them better.

However, as I noted above, the existing literature is quiet on the question of electoral inversions' consequences. To the extent that scholars of comparative politics have pursued this line of inquiry, they have considered whether electoral inversions, or elections producing the closely related situation of "spurious majorities,"[7] played a causal role in generating electoral reform (Farrelly 2009; Flinders 2010; Renwick 2009; Shugart 2008; Siaroff 2003). In the context of American politics, to my knowledge there is only one study—Carey et al.'s (2021) superb examination of the effects of electoral inversions on perceptions of democratic legitimacy—that explicitly addresses the consequences of electoral inversions.

My objective is to fill this gap with a comparative study of electoral inversions' consequences. Specifically, I investigate whether inversions affect what I refer to as *democratic support*, or the belief that "it is right and proper...to accept and obey the authorities and to abide by the requirements of the [democratic] regime" (Easton 1965, 278). I focus on three different types of democratic support: support for the principles of democracy, the performance of democracy, and the institutions of democracy. Democratic support so defined borrows from David Easton's (1965; 1975, 93) tripartite classification of regime support, which falls within the broader Eastonian concept of political support. In Easton's influen-

[7] An election producing a spurious majority is one which the party with the most seats is not the party with the most votes, whereas an electoral inversion is an election in which the winning party or parties did not win a plurality of votes, irrespective of how many seats they won.

tial conceptual schema, "support" refers to the way, "favorably or unfavorably, positively or negatively," that "a person evaluatively orients himself to some object through either his attitudes or his behavior" (Easton 1975, 436). Easton identifies three categories of political objects to which political support can be directed: the political community, the political regime, and political authorities. It is the second of these, the political regime, that is the present focus. Support for the political regime can be divided into three additional sub-components, which I have alluded to above: support for the values and principles on which the regime is based, support for the performance of the regime as an overall system, and support for the performance of discrete institutions within that system (Dalton 2004; Norris 2011). In the study that follows, I address the implications of electoral inversions for each of these three dimensions of regime support. As I am exclusively focused on support for the political regime within democracies, I refer to such support in the abbreviated form of "democratic support."

1.3. Theoretical Expectations

If the rule of fewer is inconsistent with democracy, or at least with the way people in modern liberal democracies generally understand democracy, then electoral inversions should, *ceteris paribus*, have a negative effect on democratic support. However, it is in the nature of all elections to create winners and losers, which means that the effects of elections on voters will be uneven. This is the key insight of a voluminous and ever-growing literature on what has come to be known as the "winner-loser gap." The general thrust of the winner-loser gap is that voters of the winning side in elections generally express greater levels of

political support than do voters of the losing side.[8] The existence of a winner-loser gap in political support has been explored and verified across so great a range of indicators and in so many individual studies over the past twenty-five years that it approaches the status of stylized fact.

My point of departure is that inversions are no less immune to winner-loser effects than are any other type of electoral outcome. Therefore, I assume that winning and losing in the context of electoral inversions will positively and negatively affect democratic support, respectively. Importantly, however, I also expect that electoral inversions will condition winner-loser effects on democratic support. More precisely, I expect that (1) the negative impact of losing on democratic support will be heightened when losing comes at the hands of an electoral inversion, but that (2) the positive impact on democratic support of winning will be unaffected by electoral inversions. What reason is there to expect that electoral inversions affect losers but not winners? In all elections, winners derive benefits from winning that losers are denied. Electoral inversions are no different in this regard, except that the losers who numerically speaking "should" have won have cause to be aggrieved by a loss that, with numbers on their side, "should" have been a victory. I expect that this sense of grievance will, in turn, be reflected in decreased levels of democratic support. On the other hand, there is no analog to the losers' grievance available to the winners who "should" have lost, no reason for these winners to feel "done right by" that mirrors losers' sense of having been wronged. As a result, I do not expect to find that winning in electoral inversions has a larger positive effect on democratic support than winning in non-inversion

[8]The winner-loser gap not only applies to political support, which is essentially an attitudinal orientation, but also to *behaviors* that are indicative of political support, such as public protests (Anderson and Mendes 2006; Anderson et al. 2005), election turnout (Kostelka and Blais 2018), and even terrorism (Piazza 2022).

elections. Nor, for that matter, do I expect to find that winners in electoral inversions are *less* supportive than winners in non-inversion elections. While electoral inversions might conflict with winners' intuitive sense that in democracy the greater number ought to prevail over the smaller, in practice I expect principle to be be outweighed by the practical benefits that winners obtain from electoral victory—benefits that, after all, are no different from those obtained by winners in non-inversion elections. Taken together, these expectations about the effects of electoral inversions on winners and losers add up to a third expectation: winner-loser gaps in political support should be greater in elections that result in inversions compared to those that do not result in inversions.

1.4. Research Design

I test these theoretical expectations in two country-case analyses, one focusing on Canada and the other on the United States. The decision to select these two countries for comparative analysis was driven by three factors. First, both experienced two electoral inversions in the twenty-first century. This is a fortuitous coincidence for the researcher not only because of the wide availability of survey data during this period, but also because it leaves the two countries similarly situated vis-à-vis electoral inversions, making more plausible the assumption of an apples-to-apples comparison. Second, the plausibility of an apples-to-apples comparison is further strengthened by the countries' historical, cultural, and institutional similarities. Canada and the United States, both primarily English-speaking former British colonies, employ systems of decentralized federalism (Lijphart 2012, 178-179) and feature a party system comprised of two dominant national political parties, the Democrats and Republicans in the U.S., and the Liberals and Con-

servatives in Canada.[9] Moreover, both countries utilize first-past-the-post systems with single-member districts for electing national offices, which makes them prototypical majoritarian democracies. In short, these commonalities afford a "most similar systems" approach to comparative analysis.

Third, there are of course important differences between Canada and the United States. For one thing, over the past several decades the United States has witnessed precipitous increases in political polarization, reaching levels not similarly seen in Canada (Dalton 2021; Gidron, Adams, and Horne 2020). Apart from this still-evolving trend, a more enduring institutional difference is Canada's parliamentary system and the United States' presidential system. While there is no reason to expect *a priori* that the effect of electoral inversions on democratic support depends on the presence of parliamentary versus presidential institutions,[10] an analysis that incorporates parliamentary-presidential variation can still rule out the possibility that, for instance, any inversion-induced disaffection observed in the United States is a function of its unique Electoral College presidential system.

In exploring the effects of electoral inversions on democratic support in Canada and

[9]At risk of pushing this comparison too far, it should be acknowledged that multi-party competition is prevalent to a much greater degree in Canada than in the U.S., where third parties seldom achieve national relevance. In Canada, by contrast, the Liberals and Conservatives compete for votes with the New Democratic Party (NDP), and in Quebec, with the formidable Bloc Québécois. The mainstream Liberal and Conservative blocs have nevertheless managed to dominate politics at the national level, as no other party or coalition has been in government in the more than 150 years since Canadian Confederation in 1867.

[10]The more relevant distinction is probably between majoritarian "winner-take-all" democracies, on the one hand, and proportional democracies emphasizing broad-based power-sharing, on the other hand. The reason is that losing in the latter case does not imply the near-total degree of exclusion from power as it does in the former case. Thus, losers in proportional systems have less cause to be disaffected with an otherwise undesirable outcome as are losers in majoritarian systems, and vice versa for winners. Several studies have examined and confirmed this pattern in the context on non-inversion elections (Aarts and Thomassen 2008; Anderson and Guillory 1997; Anderson et al. 2005; Bernauer and Vatter 2012; Farrer and Zingher 2019; Ferland 2015; Lijphart 2012; Martini and Quaranta 2019; Merkley et al. 2019; Sanders et al. 2014), and there is no reason to expect that electoral inversions are an exception.

the United States, my point of departure is the winner-loser gap. However, I distinguish voters not only according to whether they voted for a party that won or lost the election (i.e., a party that formed the government), as is traditionally done in winner-loser gap studies, but also by their vote for a party that won or lost the national or popular vote. The result is a four-category indicator of winner-loser status. Winning winners (WWs) and losing losers (LLs) are voters of a party that won and lost both the election and the vote, respectively. Whereas LLs occur in non-inversion and inversion elections, WWs are only found in non-inversion elections. Meanwhile, losing winners (LWs) are voters of a party that won the vote but lost the election, and winning losers (WLs) are voters of a party that lost the election but won the vote. Both LWs and WLs are only found in the context of electoral inversions.

Furthermore, estimating the individual-level effects of electoral inversions—operationalized via the four-category measure of winner-loser status outlined above—on democratic support requires survey data that meet two criteria. First, the data must have a panel design in which respondents are surveyed before and after the election, which allows for individual-level estimates of pre- to post-election changes in support. Second, the data must have questions pertaining both to vote choice (to determine winner-loser status) and democratic support. The Canadian Election Studies (CES) conducted in five non-inversion years (1997, 2000, 2004, 2006, and 2008) and two inversion years (2019 and 2021) fit both criteria. As the sole indicator of democratic support common across the seven CES surveys is satisfaction with democracy, I take that as the indicator of democratic support. Much controversy surrounds the meaning satisfaction with democracy, but is generally regarded as a middle-level indicator of democratic support that reflects evaluative judgments about

the performance of democracy as an overall political system (the second level in Easton's tripartite classification of regime support).

For the United States, I use the 2008 National Annenberg Election Study (NAES) and two of its successor surveys, the 2012 and 2016 Institute for the Study of Citizens and Politics (ISCAP) Panel of the University of Pennsylvania. Each of these three panel surveys include four indicators of electoral integrity, which corresponds to the second level of democratic support within the Eastonian framework: evaluations of the performance of specific democratic institutions (in this case, electoral institutions). Additionally, the 2012 and 2016 surveys, the latter of which came in an inversion year, include a four-item battery of questions tapping into support for democratic principles, the first level in Easton's framework.

1.5. Organization

This dissertation is organized as follows. In Chapter 2 I analyze ParlGov cabinets and elections data in order to identify where and when electoral inversions have occurred in 27 established parliamentary democracies plus the United States. However, in the absence of any prior attempt to systematically determine their incidence over time and across countries, electoral inversions have remained conceptually underdeveloped. Among extant definitions of electoral inversions, none are equipped to deal with the occurrence of electoral inversions across parliamentary and presidential democracies with majoritarian or proportional electoral systems, or in the context of single-party and multi-party coalition governments. Thus my first task is conceptual. Having developed a broadly applicable definition of electoral inversions, I apply it to the data. The central finding is that electoral

inversions have occurred in nearly 8% of elections in the period 1900-2022. I then zero in on several cases of electoral inversions to demonstrate how, in practice, they come about. I identify three types of electoral inversions: necessary inversions, which are the direct consequence of election results (i.e., of a party winning a plurality or majority of seats without winning a plurality of votes); contingent inversions, which are an indirect consequence of election results, arising instead from the contingent decisions of political actors engaged in government formation process; and anomalous inversions, which occur only through a departure from the rules and norms governing electoral institutions.

Chapter 2 concludes with a discussion of the reasons why electoral inversions tend to occur more often in some countries than others, or in other countries not at all. I find that the answer depends on both the type of electoral inversion and on a country's electoral institutions. Since it is extremely difficult under proportional or mixed electoral rules for a single party to win a plurality or majority of seats without winning a plurality of votes, necessary inversions tend to occur only in majoritarian democracies, especially in those with high levels of seat-vote disproportionalities. Contingent inversions, in contrast, are produced through the politics of post-election government formation negotiations, and so tend to occur in places where such negotiations are commonplace. Unsurprisingly, therefore, the incidence of contingent inversions is associated with proportional or mixed electoral systems, where fragmented party systems make it difficult for any single party to govern without coalition partners.[11]

Importantly, however, the presence of a proportional or mixed electoral system, both

[11]Mixed systems contain proportional and majoritarian components. For instance, in the mixed-member proportional (MMP) system used to elect the German *Bundestag*, voters cast two votes: a constituency vote, which determines representation in single-member constituencies, and a party-list vote, on the basis of which seats are distributed to parties proportionally.

of which are conducive to coalition government, is not a sufficient condition for the occurrence of contingent inversions. After all, there are a number of countries using proportional or mixed systems in which no inversions have occurred. The key factor, as I explain, is the type of rules structuring the government formation process. Electoral inversions are exceedingly unlikely in countries employing a system of "positive parliamentarism," which requires prospective governments to obtain parliament's support (either to take office, in an *ex ante* investiture vote, or if already appointed, to remain in office via an *ex post* investiture vote). In effect, positive parliamentarism has a filtering effect on prospective governments, eliminating from contention those unlikely to win parliament's approval, including and especially (but not only) those lacking popular plurality support. In "negative parliamentarism," by contrast, prospective governments can govern so long as they are not actively opposed by parliament. In some cases of negative parliamentarism, no investiture vote is required; in others, an investiture vote is required, but a government can survive it so long as the government is not opposed by an absolute majority. Either way, negative parliamentarism lacks the filtering effect that positive parliamentarism provides, and this difference explains the observed variation in the incidence of contingent inversions in parliamentary democracies.

Chapter 3 marks a transition to a study of electoral inversions' consequences, the issue with which the remainder of the dissertation will concerned. The chapter unfolds in two parts. The first part is an effort in theoretical disentanglement. In order to establish the type of rule that electoral inversions represent, I illustrate what electoral inversions do *not* represent: minority rule. I begin by scrutinizing a longstanding critique of countermajoritarian American political institutions—a critique that has emerged with renewed vigor

in the wake of the 2016 U.S. presidential election. The logical outgrowth of this critique, and the majoritarian assumptions about democracy that sustain it, is a misdiagnosis of the problem of American democracy. I argue that rule of the fewer, not minority rule, is the correct diagnosis. I support this contention with a comparative analysis of national- and district-level election outcomes, which shows that minority rule—arising, strictly speaking, from elections that generate winners lacking popular majority support—is the rule, not the exception. In other words, minority rule the norm in modern liberal democracies. The distinguishing feature of electoral inversions is their instantiation, not of the rule of a minority, but of a non-plurality—the rule of the *fewer*. Though this may appear to be a semantic distinction, I argue that it is nevertheless an important one.

Having thus reframed the theoretical implications of electoral inversions, in the second part of the chapter I am in a position to pose the central question: what effect does rule of the fewer have on democratic support? After outlining the concept of democratic support, which is grounded in Easton's (1965; 1975) theory of political support, I review the expansive body of research—the "winner-loser gap" literature—exploring the relationship between election outcomes and political support. Although this literature mostly ignores the consequences of electoral inversions for democratic support, it does provide a useful template—the winner-loser gap—for investigating these consequences. The chapter concludes by deriving a set of hypotheses about the effects of electoral inversions on the winner-loser gap in democratic support.

The next two chapters test these hypotheses. Chapter 4 does so in the context of Canadian parliamentary elections. I begin the chapter with an overview of the history of electoral inversions in Canada, followed by an examination of the underlying factors

that have generated Canada's five inversions. Next, I examine the premise, central to the theoretical expectations outlined in Section 1.3 above, that voters in modern liberal democracies such as Canada equate democracy with the principle that the greater number ought to prevail over the lesser number. This premise is important because only through the assumption that electoral inversions conflict with voters' normative expectations about how democratic elections ought to work does it logically follow that inversions will negatively affect democratic support. In other words, if voters do not care about the greater number prevailing over the lesser, then we should not expect to find that levels of democratic support are affected by electoral inversions. The Canadian Election Studies (CES) contain two items relevant to this question: one asking whether winning the most seats or the most votes should be more important in forming a government, and the other asking whether respondents find it acceptable that a party can win a majority of seats without winning a majority of votes. Majorities of Canadians think both that winning the most votes should be more important, and that winning a majority of seats without a majority of votes is unacceptable, though this trend tends to reverse for election winners.

The remainder of Chapter 4 addresses the observable implication of these attitudes for the relationship between electoral inversions and democratic support. Using ordered logit models to estimate the effects of winner-loser status on pre- to post-election changes in satisfaction with democracy, I find strong evidence that electoral inversions condition winner-loser effects on satisfaction with democracy. The gap between LWs and WLs in the probability of a post-election decrease in satisfaction is more than twice the size of the WW-LL gap.[12] Consistent with my expectations, the magnification of the LW-WL gap

[12]Recall that LWs and WLs are voters whose winner-loser status was "altered" by the inversion result.

relative to the WW-LL gap is primarily a function of less satisfied losers. With respect to the probability of a post-election *increase* in satisfaction, I do not find a corresponding increase in the LW-WL gap. But this is because LWs and WLs are both less likely than WWs and LLs, respectively, to emerge from elections *more* satisfied with democracy.

Chapter 5, the final substantive chapter, turns to the second country case: the United States. The structure of this chapter largely mirrors the one that preceded it. I begin with an overview of the institutional factors that render U.S. presidential elections vulnerable to electoral inversions. Next I provide historical context for understanding U.S. electoral inversions, paying particular attention to the differences between the three nineteenth century inversions and the two twenty-first century inversions. Notwithstanding these differences, all five inversions are alike inasmuch as they proved controversial. And they proved controversial, I argue, because they upended the expectation—both normative and descriptive—that democracy is a system in which the greater number prevails over the lesser. Though this principle has not gone uncontested throughout American history, and was in fact mostly rejected at the time of the Constitution's drafting and ratification, it has persisted as an undercurrent in American politics at least since Andrew Jackson named as "the first principle of our system. . . that the majority is to govern" (Jackson 1829).[13]

The second half of Chapter 5 addresses the implications of this principle's subversion in the 2016 U.S. presidential election. Using fixed-effects regression, I estimate the effects of electoral inversions, operationalized using the four-level measure of winner-loser status,

LWs (losing winners) voted for the party won the election but not the vote, and WLs (winning losers) voted for the party that won the vote but not the election.

[13]By "majority," Jackson almost certainly had in mind a simple majority (i.e., a plurality)—which the people in 1824 had given him but which the House of Representatives then revoked—as opposed to an absolute majority.

on two different types of democratic support: perceptions of electoral integrity and regime support. Both indicators of democratic support are operationalized using four-item indexes drawn from survey questions in the NAES and ISCAP panel data covering the 2008, 2012, and 2016 elections (data on regime support, however, is limited to 2012 and 2016).[14] All told, I find that electoral inversions magnify winner-loser effects on both types of democratic support, perceptions of electoral integrity and regime support. Average post-election declines in democratic support are greatest for those adversely affected by inversions (WLs), while increases in democratic support are greatest for voters who benefit from the inversion result (LWs). In other words, the way American WLs reacted to electoral inversions was consistent both with my expectations, and with the way Canadian WLs' reacted to inversions. But whereas I expected that inversions would not affect winners, in the U.S. I find that inversions, paradoxically, have a positive effect on democratic support. What is more, not only did the 2016 electoral inversion, contrary to expectations, have a positive effect on winners' levels of democratic support, but the positive effect on winners was *greater* than the negative effect on losers—and in the case of electoral integrity, substantially so.

1.6. Contribution

This dissertation makes three principal scholarly contributions. Its first contribution is essentially conceptual: to think critically about what electoral inversions mean, and in particular, to do so through a comparative lens in which a variety of institutional settings

[14]Having characterized the present analysis as one that is focused on the effects of the 2016 electoral inversion, one might wonder why I have included data from the 2008 and 2012 surveys. The inclusion of data from those election-year surveys is necessary in order to compare how voters in non-inversion elections respond to winning and losing relative to voters in inversion elections. In other words, combining data from the 2008, 2012, and 2016 elections allows winner-loser status to vary from WW to LL to LW to WL. This, in turn, makes possible a comparison of the difference, for instance, between WWs and LWs, and between WLs and LLs.

are taken into account. In endeavoring to attain a greater degree of conceptual clarity, I also gained a clearer sense of the theoretical implications of electoral inversions for democracy. To the extent that electoral inversions strike a nerve in the body politic, it not for their responsiveness to popular minorities, but in their failure to respond to the larger of several competing minorities.

The dissertation's second contribution is its effort to systematically chart the occurrence of electoral inversions across established democracies since 1900, which sheds light on important questions that, previously, there were few answers to. For instance, where and when have electoral inversions occurred in the past. How common are they across the world democracies? Are countries like the United States and Canada unique in the extent to which their electoral systems produce inversion results? What accounts for the tendency of electoral inversion to arise in some countries but not others? And how is variation in the incidence of inversions related to variations in the political institutions of democracy?

Why, though, are these questions important? Of what consequence is it to know, for instance, that electoral inversions are relatively common in countries like Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, and Denmark, but absent in countries like Austria, Italy, Portugal, Spain, and Japan? My third contribution is to answer questions such as these. In effect, I explain why we should care about electoral inversions by showing that they have a polarizing effect on democratic support. They tend to decrease it among losers while, in some cases, simultaneously increasing it among winners. While all elections to some degree leave winners satisfied and losers dissatisfied, elections that result in inversions do so at levels above and beyond non-inversion elections. This finding has interesting yet potentially worrisome implications for societies in which electoral inversions become

a recurrent pattern. Acceptance of electoral defeat is generally regarded as a necessary condition for the perpetuation of democratic regimes. And yet certain types of electoral defeat are more difficult to accept than others. This is especially true of electoral outcomes that large segments of society regard as unfair or unjust, such as electoral inversions. To the extent that electoral inversions erode democratic support, and to the extent that the acceptance of electoral defeat depends at least in part on democratic support, electoral inversions represent a potentially formidable challenge to long-term democratic stability.

Chapter 2

When Losers Win and Winners Lose: Mapping Electoral Inversions in 28 Democracies

2.1. Introduction

This chapter addresses three distinct but related groups of questions about electoral inversions. The first group is comprised of *conceptual* "what" questions. The most fundamental of these is definitional: what are electoral inversions? Though this question seems straightforward enough, it turns out that electoral inversions are dependent in no small part on the institutional setting in which they occur. Namely, what makes for an inversion in the context of single-party government is not what makes for an inversion in the much more complicated case multi-party coalition government. Notwithstanding the institutional variation that must be taken into account when defining electoral inversions, and notwithstanding the nuanced but important differences in definition that arise from this institutional variation, electoral inversions in whatever context they occur share an identifiable property: they are elections in which the popular numerical winner is ultimately counted among the losers.

Having obtained an imperfect, but I hope nevertheless satisfactory, comprehension of what electoral inversions are, I am now in a position to make more concrete inquiries into the occurrence of electoral inversions across time and place. These questions are *empirical*

in nature—they are the "where" and "when" of electoral inversions. Many people, whether they are aware of it or not, are familiar with the phenomenon, if not the concept, of an electoral inversion. Any person who knows that Al Gore and/or Hillary Clinton lost their presidential elections despite winning the popular vote, or knows that Justin Trudeau's Liberals won the last two Canadian general elections after losing to the Conservatives in votes, are already acquainted with the phenomenon. The more curious may even wonder how unusual these election outcomes are in the broader scheme of things, while the more scholarly-minded of these inquirers will want to know how these election outcomes look from a "comparative perspective." Unfortunately, they will be hard-pressed to find answers. I endeavor to fill this gap—the "where" and "when"—in an analysis of election results in 28 established democracies.

After tackling these empirical issues, I turn my attention to a third and final set of what could be termed *causal* questions. These pertain to the "how" and "why" of electoral inversions. To pose the "how" of electoral inversions is to ask: when electoral inversions occur, *how* do they do so? What are the underlying mechanics that produce the inversion result? Is the way that electoral inversions occur in some institutional contexts different from the way they occur in others? I attempt to answer these questions by developing a tripartite classification of electoral inversions as *necessary*, *contingent*, or *anomalous*. In doing so, I begin to address the "why" of electoral inversions. Whereas the object of "how" questions is to understand what happened, "why" questions are interested in the reasons for it happening. In the present context, this means asking why electoral inversions tend to occur more often in some countries, less often in others, and not at all in still other places.

2.2. Conceptualizing Electoral Inversions

In its most basic form, an electoral inversion is an election in which popular-vote loser(s) defeat the popular-vote winner. An electoral inversion is thus an *inversion* in the sense that the party that "should" have won, as indicated by a tallying of votes, lost, while the party (or parties), that "should" have lost, won. Evoking this sense of who "should" have won and lost, electoral inversions are sometimes called "wrong winner" elections (Abbott and Levine 1991; Engstrom 2004; Massicotte 2008; 2017; Miller 2012; Nagel 2004; Quinn 2016; Renwick 2009; Santucci 2020; Vowles 2008). Other names include "misfire" elections (Abbott and Levine 1991; Alexander 2019), "divided verdicts" (Ball and Leuthold 1991; Merrill 1978), and "spoilers" (Kaminski 2018).

2.2.A. Presidential Democracies

Prior work on electoral inversions has mostly been undertaken by scholars of American politics, with a focus on inversions in U.S. presidential elections. In this context, the task of defining electoral inversions is uncomplicated. In Miller's (2012, 93) widely cited formulation, electoral inversions occur "when the candidate (or party) that wins the most votes from an electorate fails to win the most electoral [college] votes." In its reference to electoral votes, this definition reflects the particular institutional setting to which it is directed: the Electoral College system used in U.S. presidential elections. Scholars of American politics have long recognized that the use of an Electoral College makes U.S. presidential elections susceptible to electoral inversions (Ball and Leuthold 1991; May 1948; Merrill 1978). As is well documented, five presidential elections have been decided by electoral inversions—in 1824, 1876, 1888, and most recently, in 2000 and 2016. Less

straightforward is the question of how likely electoral inversions are to occur, and on which variables this likelihood depends. The primary focus of studies on electoral inversions in the United States has therefore been to estimate the probability of an inversion occurring in a given year (Ball and Leuthold 1991; Barthélémy, Martin, and Piggins 2014; Cervas and Grofman 2019; Chambers 2008; Erikson, Sigman, and Yao 2020; Feix et al. 2004; Geruso, Spears, and Talesara 2022; Kaniovski and Zaigraev 2018; Lee 2021; May 1948; Merrill 1978; Miller 2012), and in so doing, to explicate the conditions out of which inversions arise.

Generally speaking, the susceptibility of U.S. presidential elections to inversions derives from the *indirect* nature of the Electoral College system, as opposed to the *direct* methods of presidential elections that, after Finland and Argentina abolished their presidential electoral colleges in the early 1990s—leaving the U.S. with the sole remaining presidential electoral college (Lijphart 2012, 134)—are used in all other presidential democracies.[1] In these other presidential democracies, presidents are elected by either plurality or majority rules.[2] In presidential elections governed by plurality rules, such as those in Mexico, Panama, Malawi, and South Korea, the winner is the candidate who secures the most votes in a single round. In majority systems, variations of which are used in Chile, Brazil, Uruguay, and Ghana, to name a few, a candidate must win a majority of votes in the first round or, failing that, a plurality in the second round (which, if the second-round field is limited to the top two first-round finishers, is in effect a majority). In another, hybrid variation of plurality and majority systems, presidential candidates can win in the first

[1]The Finnish presidential election of 1994 was the first to be held under the new direct system of direct elections (Raunio 2006, 473), though the electoral college was abolished three years earlier in 1991 (Official Statistics of Finland 2000). Argentina replaced its electoral college system with direct presidential elections by constitutional amendment in 1994, and the Argentine presidential election of 1995 was the first to use the new system (Negretto 2004).

[2]The lone exception is Sri Lanka, which uses an Alternative Vote (AV) system for presidential elections.

round by overcoming some predetermined non-majority threshold of the popular vote—for example, 40% in Costa Rica, 40% with a 10-point lead in Bolivia, and 45% (or 40% with a 10-point lead) in Argentina.

Despite their differences, these systems are similar in a crucial respect: by employing either plurality or majority decision rules, or a mix thereof, they are, almost by definition, insulated against the possibility of electoral inversions. Except in very rare circumstances, such as when the leading finisher in the first round of Argentina's 2004 presidential election, Carlos Menem, withdrew from the race four days prior to the second round and thereby handed the presidency to a candidate that had not won the most votes, the winners of plurality and majority presidential elections are necessarily candidates that at the very least won more votes than any other candidate.

In the U.S. Electoral College, by contrast, candidates win elections, not by obtaining some threshold share of the nationwide popular vote, but by indirectly securing a majority of the Electoral College's 538 electors, which are organized within and distributed via state-level blocs. That U.S. presidential elections are decided by EC electors rather than popular votes *per se*—which is to say, that the U.S. uses an indirect system of presidential elections—introduces the possibility, however big or small, that the EC result will conflict with the popular result. But of course, the occurrence of electoral inversions is more than a mere theoretical possibility, as two of the last six presidential elections have produced inversions, largely as the consequence, as Geruso, Spears, and Talesara (2022) has shown, of the closeness of recent presidential elections.

2.2.B. Parliamentary Democracies

Although the United States is unique among the world's democracies in its use of an electoral college,[3] presidential electoral colleges are not unique in their capacity to produce electoral inversions. Electoral inversions can and do occur in parliamentary democracies. Nevertheless, scholars of parliamentary democracy have shown little interest in electoral inversions. Among the handful of studies on the subject that do exist, some address the question, which features prominently in the American literature, of estimating the likelihood of electoral inversions in parliamentary democracies (Kikuchi 2016; Lahrach and Merlin 2012). However, more attention has been paid to demonstrating with theoretical and empirical examples that inversions are possible in parliamentary systems, especially those employing proportional representation (PR) (Kurrild-Klitgaard 2013; 2014; Miller 2015). For instance, Miller (2015) identifies two sources of electoral inversions under PR elections: avoidable imperfections in PR systems that prevent pure proportionality, such as district non-uniformity and electoral thresholds, and unavoidable imperfections, which stem from the "whole number problem." The latter refers to the fact that in even the purest proportional system, seats are distributed as whole numbers on the basis of a continuous measure of votes.

Conspicuously absent from the literature on electoral inversions in parliamentary systems is any systematic attempt to document the elections and countries in which they have occurred. The nearest any piece of scholarship has come is Siaroff's (2003) survey of

[3]The United States is not unique if by that we mean its electoral college is the world's lone surviving electoral college. Electoral colleges do exist in other democracies, but serve a different, less important function than in the United States. France, for example, uses an electoral college to determine membership to its Senate, while several other countries, such as Estonia and India, use an Electoral College to elect their largely ceremonial heads of state. Therefore, it is what the U.S. Electoral College is used for—its purpose—that is unique, not its mere existence.

"spurious majorities" in national parliamentary elections, Canadian provinces, and Australian states (the study uncovers 13 spurious majorities at the national level, beginning with Canada's parliamentary election of 1896). But although spurious majorities are similar to electoral inversions, there is a critical difference. According to Molina (1998, 55), whose definition Siaroff relies on, a spurious majority occurs when "the party that loses in votes still obtains the majority of seats." In an electoral inversion, by contrast, a party or coalition that loses the vote is elected into government, and therefore "wins" the election, irrespective of whether this party or coalition has won a majority of seats.

The inattention paid to electoral inversions (particularly outside of those occurring in U.S. presidential elections) has had two important consequences. The first consequence is that, although scholars have established that electoral inversions *can* occur in parliamentary systems (and have offered several passing examples in support of this point), we still do not know where and when exactly they *have* occurred. The second consequence is less tangible but just as important: conceptual ambiguity. In the absence of systematic cross-country studies of electoral inversions, the need to develop a comparative definition of electoral inversions has not previously arisen. What an electoral inversion *is* in different institutional contexts is thus not well established.

If an electoral inversion in the American context occurs when "the candidate (or party) that wins the most votes from an electorate fails to win the most electoral [college] votes" (Miller 2012, 93), how and why do inversions occur in parliamentary elections? At a basic level, parliamentary elections are, like the electoral college system, an indirect means of electing national governments. However, whereas the U.S. Electoral College system is comprised of first-past-the-post elections in what are effectively multi-member districts,

where the winner is the presidential candidate that commands majority support in the Electoral College (and where the "districts" are states and the "members" are electors), in parliamentary elections the winner is usually the party (or coalition of parties) with a majority of parliamentary seats.[4] Moreover, parliamentary electoral inversions occur in instances of both single- and multi-party government. But, as I show next, the underlying mechanics that give rise to electoral inversions, and the characteristics in terms of which they can be defined, differ in subtle but important ways depending on the number of election winners.

2.2.B.1. Inversions in the Context Single-Party Government

Single-party government is a common occurrence in parliamentary elections. This is the especially true of parliamentary democracies employing majoritarian electoral systems, which tend to be characterized by party systems dominated by two or perhaps three major parties. For instance, in Canada and the U.K.—two paradigmatic majoritarian systems—all but one parliamentary election since 1945 (the U.K.'s 2010 election) has resulted in a single-party government. Perhaps more surprisingly, however, single-party government is also frequent in the context of multiparty politics usually found in proportional systems. Since 1945, a majority of elections held in Spain, Greece, Portugal, and Sweden—all of which use variations of PR, and, with the exception of Spain,[5] historically have had

[4] I have added the caveat "usually" because there are often instances in which no party secures a majority of seats, and in which no set of parties is able to unite to form a majority coalition. The result is either the formation of a minority government, which may or may not also be a plurality government, or a new election.

[5] Until Spain's party system began to fragment in 2015, a two-and-a-half party system had prevailed since its democratization 1977 (Siaroff 2019). Though Spain's Congress of Deputies is elected using List PR, its application of the D'Hondt system to low-magnitude districts, as well as the relatively small size of the chamber, has tended to penalize smaller parties, thus limiting the size of the party system (Hopkin 2006).

multiparty systems of three or more parties—have resulted in single-party governments immediately following the election (i.e., excluding subsequent cabinets formed between elections). The share of elections resulting in single-party government is as high as 92% in Spain, followed by 75% in Greece and Portugal, and 57% in Sweden.

Since there is only one election winner in instances of single-party government, identifying electoral inversions in these cases follows a similar approach as that of the U.S. Electoral College: parliamentary electoral inversions occur when the party that forms the government, the election "winner," is not the party that won the most votes. In other words, an electoral inversion in the context of single-party government is an election in which the party that wins the vote loses the election. For example, in Canada's last two parliamentary elections (2019 and 2021), Justin Trudeau's Liberal Party prevailed over the Conservatives by winning a plurality of parliamentary seats, even though the Conservatives won a greater share of the national popular vote. However, in contrast to U.S. presidential elections, which result from a popular-vote loser necessarily winning a majority in the Electoral College, parliamentary inversions do not depend on a vote-losing party winning more seats than the vote-winning party (if parliamentary seats can be analogized to Electoral College electors). That is, in some instances a party can win fewer votes *and* seats than another party in parliamentary elections and still form a government.[6] This is what would occur if an electoral inversion produced a minority government. For instance, in Denmark's 2015 parliamentary elections, the center-right Liberals managed to form a single-party minority government despite winning fewer votes and seats than both the Social Democrats

[6]Technically, a U.S. presidential candidate can win fewer popular and Electoral College votes than another candidate and still win the election. For example, if no candidate secures an Electoral College majority, the House of Representatives chooses the winner. As the 1824 presidential election demonstrated, there is no guarantee that the House will elect the candidate with the most popular and Electoral College votes.

and the People's Party.

2.2.B.2. Inversions in the Context of Multi-Party Government

Though single-party government is by no means rare, the more common outcome of elections in parliamentary democracies is multi-party coalition government. This is particularly true of countries that follow what Lijphart (2012) calls the "consensus model" of democracy—those generally "characterized by inclusiveness, bargaining, and compromise" and, more specifically, by "executive power-sharing in broad multiparty coalitions" (Lijphart 2012, 2-3). In seven parliamentary democracies—Estonia, Germany, Israel, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Slovenia, and Switzerland—every initial government formed after a parliamentary election (again, excluding subsequent governments formed in the absence of a new election) since 1945 has been made up of two or more parties. In other established parliamentary democracies that have seen at least one single-party government since 1945, multiparty coalitions nevertheless predominate. Only in eleven parliamentary democracies (of the 27 that I examined) has multiparty government been less common than single-party government.[7]

Identifying electoral inversions in cases of multiparty coalition government is complicated by the presence of more than one winning party. In single-winner cases, a simple dyadic comparison can be made between the votes of the party in government and those of the second-place finisher.[8] However, when there is more than one "winning" party—that is, when there is more than one party in government—which parties' vote shares should be

[7]These eleven are: Canada, Spain, New Zealand, the U.K., Portugal, Greece, Norway, Sweden, Ireland, Denmark and Japan.

[8]To be clear, the second-place finisher in the national popular vote, not the second largest parliamentary party in terms of seats

included in that dyadic comparison is neither straightforward nor self-evident.

The only existing approach, first suggested by Kurrild-Klitgaard (2013) and later formalized by Miller (2015), conceives of electoral inversions as situations "in which a coalition of parties collectively supported by a majority of voters fails to win a majority of seats and, conversely, the complementary coalition supported by only a minority of voters wins a majority of seats" (Miller 2015, 5). There are three problems with this approach. First, the stipulation that an inversion occurs when a coalition collectively "supported by only a minority of voters wins a majority of seats" confuses winning a majority of seats with winning an election.[9] Parties routinely govern without a majority of parliamentary seats; this is called a minority government. Second, it also confuses the absence of *plurality* support—the defining feature of electoral inversions—with the absence of *minority* support. The fact that a party (or a coalition of parties) won an election while only winning a minority share of the vote does not imply that that party (or coalition) won when it "should" have lost. If that winning party (or coalition) won more votes than any other party (or coalition), then there is no mismatch between the election winner and the popular winner and, by extension, no inversion.

Third, it assumes that there are "complementary coalitions" in government and opposition against which to compare votes, and that these coalitions are the relevant points of reference to use in that comparison. Analyzing Denmark's 1990 parliamentary election, Kurrild-Klitgaard and Miller appear to regard the opposition parties as the "complemen-

[9]In this regard, what Kurrild-Klitgaard and Miller understand as an electoral inversion bears a greater resemblance to a "spurious majority." Recall that a spurious majority occurs when a party wins a majority of seats without winning a plurality of votes. An electoral inversion, by contrast, occurs when the winning party or parties (those that form the government) did not win a plurality of votes. In other words, there is no requirement in an electoral inversion that the election winner(s) won a majority of seats.

tary coalition" to the governing coalition. The latter they liberally define as not only the two parties represented in the cabinet (the Conservatives and the Liberal Party), but also the parties "supporting" governing coalition (i.e., those indicating they would back the government in a no-confidence vote, were one to arise): the Progress Party, Centre-Democrats, Radicals, and Christian People's Party. They consider the election result an inversion because the opposition parties, treated as a coalition, edged out the seat-winning coalition 51% to 49% in the national popular vote.

Apart from the logistical challenges created by the need to identify coalitions of losing parties that "complement" the winning parties,[10] there is no clear justification for treating discrete opposition parties as a single bloc when they are not members of an explicit coalition. The justification for aggregating the votes of the parties in a governing coalition, in contrast, is that these parties *have* entered into a formal partnership. Nor is it clear why non-cabinet parties that support the government should be considered among the election winners. Parties do not compete in elections for the opportunity to support the government; they compete for the opportunity to *be* the government. Similarly, prior studies (Daoust, Plescia, and Blais 2021; Singh, Karakoç, and Blais 2012) have shown voters are most likely to perceive themselves as winners when the party they voted for makes it into government.

2.2.C. Definition

The above considerations call for three conceptual refinements. First, I define the winning side in an election as the parties (or party) that form the government,[11] and

[10] The main challenges being that investiture requirements differ widely across countries, making it difficult to track complementary losing coalitions. In some cases, such as when formal votes of investiture are not required, identifying such coalitions is not possible.

[11] In defining the parties that "form the government," I adhere to the coding rules set forth in Döring et al. (2023*b*), which are based on Indridason and Bowler (2014). The latter identify government parties as

the losing side, by extension, as the parties that do not enter government. Doing so, I argue, accords with a more intuitive notion of what it means to be a winner and loser. If the purpose of democratic elections is to enable a citizenry to collectively determine who will govern, then it follows that a "winner" is best understood as the party (or parties) empowered, by means of elections, to govern.

Second, democratic states are made up of a variety of different representative institutions bound together vertically and horizontally. Although elections for these different representative bodies produce winners that are empowered to govern, and in terms of which the concept of electoral inversions could theoretically apply, my focus is on the national executive, typically the uppermost point in the hierarchical chain of democratic political authority. In presidential systems, this means the office of the presidency; in parliamentary systems, the prime minister. When the national executive is divided between a president and a prime minister, I define electoral inversions in terms of elections to the more powerful office between the two.

Third, in instances of coalition government, for the purpose of comparing the votes of winners and losers, I regard the governing parties (the winners) as a single unit.[12] How-

those with "(i) the right to attend cabinet meetings and (ii) the right to cast a vote on matters before the cabinet (where applicable)" (Indridason and Bowler 2014, 396).

[12]In some cases, an opposition party (or parties) will form confidence-and-supply agreements with the parties in government. In doing so, the opposition party provides explicit but non-binding support to the government (for instance, by promising to back the government in the event of a no-confidence vote) in exchange for policy concessions. For example, in 2017 the New Zealand Labour Party formed a minority coalition with New Zealand First. The coalition was able to form and govern despite its minority status because it had the support of the Green Party, which took the form of a confidence-and-supply agreement. More recently, in 2022 the Canadian Liberal Party—which since 2019 has governed as a single-party minority—entered into a confidence-and-supply agreement with the National Democratic Party (NDP) that extends to 2025 (Zimonjic 2022). In doing so, the Liberals broke the longstanding precedent in Canadian politics of avoiding such agreements (Godbout and Cochrane 2022, 154). In exchange for its support of the Liberal government, the Liberals agreed to work with the NDP on a range of priorities, such as healthcare policy. Overall, then, confidence-and-supply agreements bring opposition parties into alignment with the government, creating a mutually beneficial cooperative relationship. On the basis of this relationship, it could be argued that the NDP ought to be treated as part of the governing coalition,

ever, I do not similarly pool the non-governing parties (the losers) unless a group of two or more parties has established an explicit alliance. From this it follows that the aggregated share of the government parties' votes are compared with the individual vote shares of non-government parties. In this approach I avoid the problems inherent in that taken by Kurrild-Klitgaard and Miller, addressed in the previous section, of identifying a complementary coalition in the opposition vis-à-vis the government, while at the same time leaving intact the essential features of winning and losing—namely, inclusion and exclusion from government.

These two conceptual adjustments, taken together, imply that an electoral inversion occurs *when the the government formed following an election is comprised of parties (or a single party) that collectively failed to win a plurality of the national popular vote.* This is equivalent to saying that an electoral inversion occurs, in the context of single-party governments, when there is a losing party that won a greater share of the vote than the winning party—and in the context of multiparty coalition governments, when there is an opposition party that won more votes than not only any single party in the governing coalition, but of *all* the parties in that coalition.

In addition to its conceptual grounding in an intuitive notion of winning and losing, this definition of electoral inversions has another important feature: its broad applicability across a diversity of institutional contexts. It serves as a reliable indicator of electoral in-

and thus ought be counted among the electoral winners. I do not do so, however, for the simple reason that this relationship remains informal and non-binding. A confidence-and-supply agreement is not a coalition, which means that the opposition party in such an agreement is not in government and is not therefore an electoral "winner" in this sense in which I am deploying the concept. What is more, the Liberal-NDP agreement was forged in March 2022, more than six months after the Canadian general election of 2021, which elected the current Liberal minority government. Therefore, while the NDP would certainly be justified in chalking up its agreement with the Liberals as *political* and *policy* "wins," it would be a stretch to regard the NDP as an *election winner*.

versions in presidential and parliamentary democracies using majoritarian or proportional electoral systems, irrespective of whether those elections produce single-party or multiparty governments, as well as majority or minority governments. For instance, it accurately discerns the presence of an electoral inversion in the context of the single-party minority government formed after Canada's 2019 and 2021 parliamentary elections, the single-party majority government that arose from the U.K.'s February 1974 election, and the single-party majority governments elected in the 2000 and 2016 U.S. presidential elections. It also finds an electoral inversion in the multiparty context of the 1990 Danish election—but not for the reason suggested by Kurrild-Klitgaard and Miller. In this case, the inversion happened not because the Conservative-Liberal governing coalition failed to secure an absolute majority of the national popular vote (with 31.8%), but because the Social Democrats won more votes (37.4%) and yet were excluded from government.

As the foregoing discussion suggests, electoral inversions produce a type of government—which I will call an *inversion government*—that is similar to but nevertheless distinct from what is called a "minority government." A minority government describes a situation in which "the parties holding ministerial portfolios do not control a majority of seats in the legislature" (Cheibub, Martin, and Rasch 2021, 351). An inversion government, by contrast, is one whose member parties (or party) did not win a plurality of votes in the previous election. Hence, minority governments differ from inversion governments in two respects. First, whereas minority governments are defined in terms of *seats*, inversion governments are defined in terms of *votes*. Second, the concept of a minority government implies an absolute majority decision rule, while the concept of an inversion government implies a simple majority (plurality) decision rule. In other words, identifying minority governments

hinges on the answer to the question, "do the parties of the government control a 50% plus 1 *majority* of (parliamentary seats)?" The question for inversion governments, on the other hand, is, "did the parties of the government win a *plurality* (of popular votes)?"

2.3. Mapping Electoral Inversions

2.3.A. Data and Method

Having outlined a comparative definition of electoral inversions in the previous section, one that is workable across a variety of institutional contexts, I next attempt to put it into practice. In a handful of prior studies, scholars have examined particular electoral inversions, usually in the context of a single country. The cumulative result of this heretofore piecemeal approach is that while a number of elections have been identified as electoral inversions, a cohesive account of the phenomenon remains lacking. The aim of this section is therefore to develop a more comprehensive picture of when and where electoral inversions have occurred across time and place, and consequently, to determine how frequent they are.

To do so, I examine election results in 27 parliamentary democracies and the United States. The decision to focus primarily on parliamentary democracies is driven by the simple fact that parliamentary institutions provide an opportunity—which is not similarly available in the vast majority of elections in presidential democracies—for electoral inversions to occur. However, presidential elections in the United States, being the main exception to this rule, are included in the analysis.[13] For the purpose of identifying electoral inversions in U.S. presidential elections, I draw on Dave Leip's Atlas of Presidential

[13]U.S. presidential elections are an exception to this rule because, as I noted earlier, the Electoral College is an indirect mode of electing the chief executive. All other presidential democracies employ direct elections based on majority or plurality formulas that by definition preclude the possibility of inversions.

Elections, a database containing national presidential election results since 1789. For identifying electoral inversions in parliamentary democracies, I rely on the ParlGov dataset (Döring et al. 2023*a*), which includes data on the composition of cabinets and party-level results of national lower house elections for 37 democracies between 1900 and 2022.

Case selection from this original sample of governments and elections was guided by four criteria. First, although the unit of analysis is elections, because winning and losing are defined in terms of government membership, the presence or absence of electoral inversions can only be determined in relation to the composition of governments. At the same time, however, it is often the case in parliamentary systems that multiple governments follow from a single election. In such instances, attempting to classify electoral inversions retrospectively, based on the composition of successive governments, would imply that a single election could simultaneously be both an inversion and a non-inversion election. To avoid such contradictions, I classify elections based only on the first government formed after an election. In other words, when a later government (the second, third, etc., government formed after a single election) is comprised of a party (or parties) lacking a plurality share of the popular vote, while we could call this an *inversion government*, the election itself is not therefore an electoral inversion.

Second, caretaker governments, defined as "cabinets with a limited legislative mandate" (Döring et al. 2023*b*, 5), are excluded. When the initial cabinet formed after an election is a caretaker government, the first non-caretaker government is used to indicate the presence of an electoral inversion. Third, I exclude governments and elections from countries that were not consistently democratic in the time period analyzed. Specifically, countries were eliminated from the sample if they did not receive a "liberal democracy"

rating from V-Dem's regime-type measure (v2x_regime) (Coppedge et al. 2022) for at least a third of cabinet-years sampled.

The fourth and final selection criterion is to exclude elections from countries whose electoral systems effectively rule out the possibility of electoral inversions.[14] This criterion mainly applies to presidential democracies that use majority or plurality formulas for presidential elections, since these systems produce winners that, by definition, have more votes than the losers.[15] But there are other, non-presidential contexts in which the possibility of electoral inversions is precluded. For instance, although the Swiss electoral system does not technically prevent electoral inversions from occurring, all major political parties are guaranteed representation in the Swiss Federal Council. Because this grand-coalition approach to cabinet membership makes it effectively impossible to get an inversion result from parliamentary elections, I exclude Swiss elections.

Semi-presidential democracies present another challenge for case selection. Executive power in most non-presidential democracies is divided between a head of government and a head of state. In parliamentary democracies, the division of power is skewed towards the head of government (typically a prime minister), with the head of state (often

[14] Why exclude these cases? Since the objective of my research is to identify where and when electoral inversions have occurred, it makes sense to focus on places where inversions *can*, in fact (and according to the electoral rules in force), occur. The downside of excluding these cases is twofold. First, when calculating the relative frequency of electoral inversions, excluding countries whose electoral systems preclude inversion outcomes decreases the denominator, leading to an inflated measure of how frequently inversions occur as a proportion of all elections in established democracies. However, as long as readers keep in mind that the sample includes only elections out of which inversions can theoretically arise, this weakness seems surmountable. The second downside is that there is a potential for missing electoral inversions that occur in places where they should, according to the rules of the game, be impossible. As I discuss later, the Argentine presidential election of 2003 is one such example.

[15] Since pure presidential systems are not included in the ParlGov dataset (with the exception of Cyprus), I did not need to apply this fourth criterion to cases of presidential elections in presidential democracies. However, this criterion did bear on my decision to rely on a data set that excludes presidential governments and elections.

a hereditary monarch or an appointed president) occupying a largely ceremonial position. In semi-presidential democracies, by contrast, the head of state (always a president) is directly elected for a fixed term, unaccountable to parliament, and typically more powerful than the head of government.[16] Therefore, semi-presidential systems present a complication for case selection that does not similarly arise from parliamentary systems: should electoral inversions be identified in terms of the indirect election of the prime minister via parliamentary elections, or the direct election of the president? Since I have chosen to define electoral inversions in terms of the chief executive—the office vested with the greatest degree of executive power—in cases of semi-presidentialism I apply the fourth selection criterion to presidential elections. For example, the question for semi-presidential Finland (pre-2000), France, and Poland is whether the rules governing their presidential elections—not their parliamentary elections—allows for the possibility of an inversion result. Because the answer is 'no' for France and Poland, elections from these countries are excluded from the analysis. However, until 1988, Finnish presidents were elected indirectly using an electoral college system that did not preclude electoral inversions. Between 1989 and 1999, Finland retained its semi-presidential character, but switched to direct presidential elections that eliminated the possibility of inversions. Then, Finland's enacted a new constitution in 2000, which effectively transformed it into a parliamentary democracy (Raunio 2006, 473-474; Raunio 2021, 165). Thus, I include Finnish presidential elections

[16]Robert Elgie (1999) maintains that defining semi-presidentialism in terms of the relative power of presidents and prime ministers introduces problems of unreliability and selection bias. Instead, he argues for a minimalist definition of semi-presidentialism—now standard among scholars—as a "situation where a popularly elected fixed-term president exists alongside a prime minister and cabinet who are responsible to parliament" (13). Even if semi-presidentialism is not, by definition, a situation in which the balance between presidential and prime ministerial powers favors the former, the cases of semi-presidentialism at issue in the ParlGov data set mostly involve presidents with greater *de facto* powers than the corresponding prime misters.

for the period 1925–1988, and then switch to Finnish parliamentary elections after its shift to a parliamentary system in 2000.

Applying the third and fourth selection criteria to the ParlGov data resulted in the elimination of all elections from nine countries: Cyprus, France, Lithuania, and Poland (non-parliamentary systems that preclude an inversion result); Malta and Turkey (insufficiently democratic); and Bulgaria, Croatia, and Romania (inversions are precluded and insufficiently democratic). With the addition of U.S. presidential elections, the resulting data set comprises a total of 679 elections in 28 countries.[17] For each of the 679 elections in the data set, the vote shares of the parties in government were aggregated and compared against the vote share of the non-government party with the most votes. Elections producing a government comprised of parties that together won fewer votes than a non-government party were coded as electoral inversions.

2.3.B. Electoral Inversions in 28 Democracies, 1900-2022

Table 1 summarizes the results of the analysis by country and pre- and post-1945 periods. The right-most three columns aggregate the results by country across the two periods, while the last row reports totals aggregated by period across the 28 countries. The key finding is that, of the 679 elections analyzed, 53 (or 7.8%) resulted in an electoral inversion. These 53 electoral inversions originated from 13 countries, less than half of the 28 examined. Among this group of 13 countries, electoral inversions were most common in the Nordic countries of Norway (10 inversions, or 30% of all elections) and Denmark (9

[17]The 28 countries are Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

inversions, or 20%). Both countries epitomize what Arend Lijphart has described as the consensus model of democracy, which is based on executive power-sharing in broad coalition government, proportional representation, and multipartism, among other institutional characteristics (Lijphart 2012, 33-40). After Norway and Denmark, inversions are most likely to be found in a group of four majoritarian democracies: Canada, with 6 inversions (17%); Australia, with 7 (15%); the United Kingdom, with 4 (14%); and New Zealand,

Table 2.1. Electoral Inversion in 28 Democracies, 1900-2022

	Prewar Period (1900-1944)			Postwar Period (1945-2022)			Prewar & Postwar (1900-2022)		
	Inversions		Total	Inversions		Total	Inversions		Total
Country	*n*	%	Elections	*n*	%	Elections	*n*	%	Elections
Australia	2	11.8	17	5	16.7	30	7	14.9	47
Austria	0	0.0	5	0	0.0	23	0	0.0	28
Belgium	0	0.0	13	1	4.3	23	1	2.8	36
Canada	1	9.1	11	4	16.0	25	5	13.9	36
Czech Republic	0	0.0	0	0	0.0	10	0	0.0	10
Denmark	4	25.0	16	5	17.2	29	9	20.0	45
Estonia	0	0.0	0	0	0.0	8	0	0.0	8
Finland	3	100.0	3	0	0.0	12	3	20.0	15
Germany	2	28.6	7	0	0.0	20	2	7.4	27
Greece	0	0.0	0	0	0.0	16	0	0.0	16
Hungary	0	0.0	0	0	0.0	9	0	0.0	9
Iceland	2	33.3	6	0	0.0	23	2	6.9	29
Ireland	0	0.0	10	0	0.0	21	0	0.0	31
Israel	0	0.0	0	0	0.0	23	0	0.0	23
Italy	0	0.0	0	0	0.0	20	0	0.0	20
Japan	0	0.0	0	0	0.0	28	0	0.0	28
Latvia	0	0.0	0	0	0.0	11	0	0.0	11
Luxembourg	1	25.0	4	0	0.0	17	1	4.8	21
Netherlands	0	0.0	6	0	0.0	23	0	0.0	29
New Zealand	2	18.2	11	3	11.5	26	5	13.5	37
Norway	7	53.9	13	3	15.0	20	10	30.3	33
Portugal	0	0.0	0	0	0.0	16	0	0.0	16
Slovakia	0	0.0	0	0	0.0	10	0	0.0	10
Slovenia	0	0.0	0	0	0.0	10	0	0.0	10
Spain	0	0.0	0	0	0.0	13	0	0.0	13
Sweden	1	11.1	9	1	4.3	23	2	6.2	32
United Kingdom	2	28.6	7	2	9.5	21	4	14.3	28
United States	0	0.0	12	2	10.5	19	2	6.5	31
Total	27	18.0	150	26	4.9	529	53	7.8	679

Source: ParlGov database (Döring et al. 2023*a*).

with 5 (13.5%).[18] Reflecting the mirror opposite of consensus democracy, the majoritarian model is characterized by single-party majority governments, winner-take all elections, and two-party electoral competition. Interestingly, despite the contrasting institutional patterns of consensus and majoritarian democracy, both models have produced some of the highest rates of electoral inversions.

In absolute terms, nearly the same number of inversions occurred in the periods 1900-1945 (27 electoral inversions) and 1945-2022 (26 electoral inversions), hereafter referred to as the "prewar" and "postwar" periods.[19] But because the postwar period contains more than three times as many elections as the prewar period, the rate of prewar inversions is triple the rate of postwar inversions. The discrepancy between the number of elections contained in the two periods is due, on one hand, to the simple fact that the postwar period covers 32 more years of elections than the prewar period. On the other hand, it is also function of an increasing number of post-1945 democracies. Prior to 1945, 8 of the 28 countries analyzed had yet to democratize (Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Portugal, and Spain) and four countries (Israel, Slovenia, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia) had yet to exist. Thus data for prewar elections is drawn from a more limited sample of 16 countries. Although the 170 elections corresponding to these 16 countries amount to less than a quarter all elections contained in the data, these prewar elections account for half of

[18] Ever since enacting proportional electoral system reforms in 1994, it is difficult to regard New Zealand as a straightforwardly majoritarian democracy.

[19] Because World War II ended at different times in different places, affixing a start date on the "postwar period" is unavoidably inexact. Here, the postwar period is defined as beginning after the German surrender in May 1945. Consequently, elections held in 1945 prior to May—which, in practice, includes only the Finnish elections of March 1945—are assigned to the imperfectly named "prewar era." Furthermore, the years 1900-1945 include the period (1939-1945) in which World War II was, of course, fought. Technically speaking, then, while it would be more accurate to call this the "prewar and intrawar" period, for the sake of simplicity I nevertheless refer to this as the "prewar" period.

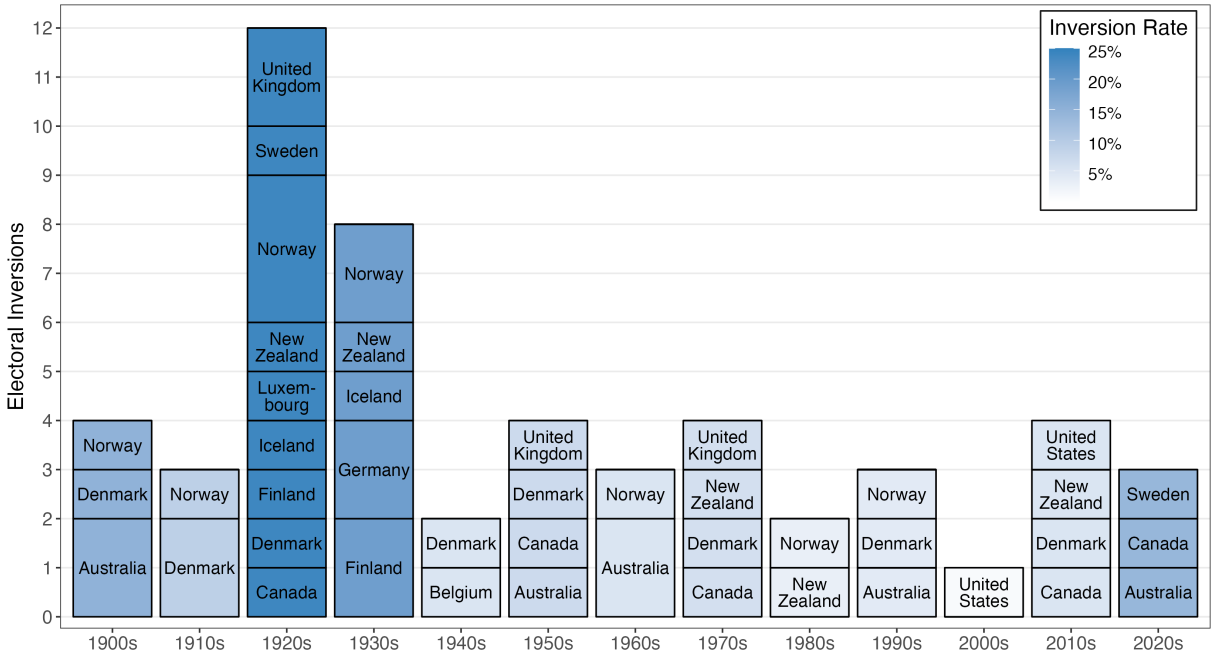
the total number of electoral inversions observed between 1900 and 2022. Overall, whereas 18% of pre-1945 elections produced electoral inversions, only 5% of postwar elections did so.

Moreover, as Figure 2.1 shows, the elevated rate of electoral inversions prior to 1945 is, by and large, a product of the interwar years. A combined 20 electoral inversions occurred in the two decades between the world wars—a period characterized by high levels of party system fragmentation, cabinet instability, and a series of social, economic, and political crises. Interestingly, with the exception of two inversions in the waning days of Germany's Weimar Republic, electoral inversions during this period tended to occur in countries that proved particularly adept at weathering the turbulence of the interwar years. These include Canada, Denmark, Finland, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, and the United Kingdom—all countries that Cornell, Møller, and Skaaning (2017, 18) describe as "virtually immune to the repeated crises of the interwar period." Thus, while interwar electoral inversions might be attributable to the fluidity of party systems and cabinet instability, the prevalence of inversions was not necessarily an indicator of the kinds of terminal weaknesses that would doom other European democracies, such as Austria, Germany, Greece, Italy, and Spain.

Figure 2.1 also shows that, compared with the somewhat erratic prewar period, the incidence of electoral inversions in the decades after 1945 has remained more or less stable. Between three and four electoral inversions occurred in five postwar decades: the 1950s, 1960s, 1970s, 1990s, and 2010s. The 1980s saw two inversions, one in Norway and the other in New Zealand, while George W. Bush's victory over Al Gore in the 2000 U.S. presidential election was the only inversion that took place in the decade 2000-2009. Meanwhile, with three electoral inversions having occurred in 2021 and 2022, the 2020s are on pace to exceed

the 1950-2019 average of 3.3 inversions per decade.

Figure 2.1. Electoral Inversions by Decade



Source: ParlGov database (Döring et al. 2023*a*).

Comparing the records of individual countries between the pre- and postwar periods reveals instances of both continuity and discontinuity. In terms of continuity, Norway, Denmark, Australia, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom each registered at least two electoral inversions in both periods. On the other hand, several countries that experienced electoral inversions in the prewar period—such as Finland, Germany, Iceland, and Luxembourg—have had no inversions since 1945. A reversal of this pattern can be observed in the United States and Belgium, each of which has experienced at least one inversion in the postwar period after recording no inversions between 1900 and 1945. Similarly, although Canada did experience one prewar inversion (1929), four elections after 1945 have resulted in inversions.

2.4. Explaining Electoral Inversions

What explains the cross-country differences in electoral inversion outcomes observed in Table 2.1? The answer to this question depends, in part, on the electoral inversions themselves. Although all electoral inversions are uniform in terms of the outcome they entail—causing winners to lose and losers to win—the processes through which inversions occur are not similarly uniform. In the following section (2.4.A), I identify three different types of electoral inversions—contingent, necessary, and anomalous—and, using historical examples, describe how each type arises in practice. Building on this typology, I turn in Section 2.4.B to a discussion of the institutional factors that help explain cross-country differences in the incidence of electoral inversions.

2.4.A. Typology

2.4.A.1. Necessary Inversions

First, inversions can be the necessary consequence of an election. This occurs when a single candidate or party overcomes the electoral threshold required to form a government while simultaneously failing to win a plurality of the vote. In U.S. presidential elections, for example, a candidate that wins an Electoral College majority is, on that basis, the winner of the election. And when that Electoral College victory is not accompanied by a popular-vote victory—that is, when the election winner is not the popular vote winner—the electoral inversion that this produces can be said to be an unavoidable, or *necessary*, consequence of the election.

Necessary inversions can also arise in parliamentary elections, but usually only in those producing single-party governments. For a necessary inversion to occur in parliamen-

tary elections, a single party would normally need to win a majority of seats—thus giving it the requisite parliamentary support to form a government—without winning a plurality of votes. For instance, Winston Churchill's Conservatives (running in an electoral alliance with the National Liberals) defeated the incumbent Labour government in the 1951 U.K. general election with 321 seats to Labour's 295, but failed to win a popular-vote plurality (48% to Labour's 48.8%). Since the 321 seats won by the Conservatives (and National Liberals) constituted a majority of the 625-member House of Commons, and since winning a parliamentary majority is the threshold for electoral victory, a Conservative government was the necessary consequence of the election. The unavoidability of the inversion, in other words, arises from the fact that the winning party is the outright winner; no other party or parties can effect a legitimate maneuver to supplant it.

Parliamentary elections can also produce necessary inversions even when no party wins a majority of seats. This is only true, however, of countries where winning a plurality of seats is conventionally understood as a sufficient basis for forming a government.[20] Canada is perhaps the best example of this plurality norm at work. The point can be illustrated with the Canadian parliamentary elections held on May 22, 1979, which gave the Progressive Conservatives—led by a 39-year-old newcomer from Alberta, Joe Clark—a surprising 136 seats (48%) in the 282-member House of Commons.[21] Placing second with

[20]The expectation that the largest party, irrespective of its minority status, will govern is different than the expectation that a minority party *may* govern alone. The latter describes the norm that prevails, for instance, in Danish politics, where single-party minority governments are not uncommon. After the 2015 Danish parliamentary elections, the Liberals formed a single-party minority government. The election was an inversions because the Liberals, despite governing alone, had won fewer votes (19.5%) than the Social Democrats (26.3%). The difference here is that there is no unwritten rule in Danish politics, analogous to the norm in Canada, according to which the Liberals would naturally be expected to govern—especially, in this case, because the Liberals actually won fewer votes *and* seats than the Social Democrats.

[21]The Canadian elections of 1957, 2019, or 2021—all necessary electoral inversions—would demonstrate the point equally well.

114 seats (40%) was the incumbent Liberal Party, led by Pierre Trudeau, followed by the National Democratic Party with 26 seats and the Social Credit Party with 6 seats. In other parliamentary democracies, these results might have prompted the Conservatives, five votes shy of a majority, to begin negotiating with other parties to form a coalition government. In Canada, however, the prevailing expectation is that the party with the most seats will be invited to govern alone (Banfield 2015; Godbout and Cochrane 2022, 154). Indeed, only once since 1900 has a party without the most seats formed the government. The lone exception, the Mackenzie King government formed after the election of 1925, proved a highly controversial and ultimately unstable arrangement that lasted only eight months. In effect, then, although there is no formal rule that entitles Canadian parties to govern by virtue of winning the most seats, in practice being the largest parliamentary party is tantamount to winning. Accordingly, when the results came in on election night, there was no question that Joe Clark, despite his party's failure to win a parliamentary majority, would become the country's next Prime Minister. In recognition of this, Pierre Trudeau conceded to Clark early the next morning (Giniger 1979). Once the Conservatives emerged as the largest party, Clark's victory was effectively sealed; since the Conservatives won fewer votes than the Liberals, the victory was an electoral inversion. Combining these two ingredients yields a necessary inversion.

Because necessary inversions in parliamentary systems typically imply a single-party majority winner (and sometimes a single-party minority winner, as the Canadian election of 1979 demonstrates), they tend to arise in the context of majoritarian elections, since these promote top-heavy party systems in which a single party can realistically hope to obtain an outright parliamentary majority. Although the use of proportional rules does

not preclude the possibility of a necessary inversion, in practice proportionality tends to promote a high enough degree of multipartism that it becomes exceedingly difficult for any single party to win a majority of seats. This tendency is reflected in Table 2.2, which presents a list of electoral inversions by their classification as necessary, contingent, and anomalous.

2.4.A.2. Contingent Inversions

Not all electoral inversions follow logically from a given set of election results. Often times, an electoral inversion is just one of several possible ways an election can turn out. If the distinguishing feature of the *necessary* inversions that resulted from the British and Canadian elections of 1951 and 1979, respectively, is that there was effectively only one possible outcome—in both cases, Tory governments—the defining trait of *contingent* inversions is the possibility of non-inversion alternative outcomes. Take, for example, the U.K. election of February 1974. In a bid to strengthen his government's position, which had suffered amidst rising oil prices and an ongoing standoff with the National Union of Mineworkers, Prime Minister Edward Heath called snap elections to be held on February 28. The decision ultimately backfired, however, as Heath's Conservative Party lost its parliamentary majority and, despite a first-place finish in the national popular vote, emerged with four fewer seats than the Labour Party.

Notwithstanding the Conservatives being reduced to the second largest party in Parliament, the now-largest party, Labour, itself remained unable to form a government since its 301 seats remained 17 shy of a majority. Heath tried to salvage his situation by negotiating with the Liberal Party leader, Jeremy Thorpe, in hopes of striking a deal to

Table 2.2. Three Types of Electoral Inversions

#	Necessary	Contingent		Anomalous
1	Australia (2022)	Sweden (2022)	Sweden (1928)	Argentina (2003)[d]
2	Canada (2021)	New Zeal. (2017)	Norway (1927)	Germany (Nov 1932)
3	Canada (2019)	Denmark (2015)	Iceland (1927)	Germany (Jul 1932)
4	U.S. (2016)	Norway (1997)	Denmark (1926)	
5	U.S. (2000)[a]	Denmark (1990)	Canada (1925)	
6	Australia (1998)[b]	Norway (1981)	Luxembourg (1925)	
7	New Zeal. (1981)	U.K. (1974)	Finland (1925)	
8	Canada (1979)	Denmark (1973)	Norway (1924)	
9	New Zeal. (1978)	Norway (1969)	U.K. (1923)	
10	Australia (1969)[b]	Australia (1961)	Norway (1921)	
11	Canada (1957)	Denmark (1953)	Norway (1918)	
12	Australia (1954)[b]	Belgium (1946)	Denmark (1918)	
13	U.K. (1951)	Denmark (1945)	Denmark (1913)	
14	U.S. (1888)[c]	Iceland (1937)	Norway (1909)	
15	U.S. (1876)[ac]	Finland (1937)	Denmark (1909)	
16		Norway (1933)	Australia (1906)	
17		New Zeal. (1931)	Australia (1903)	
18		Finland (1931)	U.S. (1824)[c]	
19		Norway (1930)		
20		U.K. (1929)		
21		New Zeal. (1928)		

[a] Since the 2000 and 1876 U.S. presidential elections were decided outside the usual institutional channels—in 1876, a special congressional commission; in 2000, the Supreme Courts' *Bush v. Gore* decision—a case could be made that these belong in the "anomalous" category.

[b] The Australian elections of 1954, 1969, and 1998 are difficult to categorize. All three produced Liberal-National coalition governments that, at first glance, seem to be contingent inversions. For instance, in 1998 the Liberals won 64 seats, while the National Party supplied the coalition with an additional 16 seats, producing an 80-seat majority. In opposition was Labour with 67 seats, fewer than the coalition but more than either coalition parties taken individually. On this basis, it might be supposed that Labour, as the largest single parliamentary party, had a mandate to govern, and could have acted on this mandate by forming a government. The possibility of more than one outcome—a Liberal-National coalition (actual government) or a single-party Labour government (hypothetical government)—would imply a contingent inversion. However, when the Liberal and National parties collectively obtain parliamentary majorities at the federal level, they effectively operate as a permanent, unified governing coalition. This federal coalition has endured for seventy-five years. Throughout this period, not once has the Liberal Party governed without its junior partner, even when doing so was unnecessary. For instance, in 1975, 1977, and 1996, the Liberals won an outright majority of seats, which would have been enough to form a single-party majority government. In other ways, however, the parties do not behave as a single entity. For instance, they compete against each other in state-level elections (and sometimes even at the federal level), and previous attempts to merge into a single party has been met with stubborn resistance (Costar 2011). Nevertheless, given their longstanding cooperation, for practical purposes I regard Liberal-National governments as the natural consequence—not a contingent one—of the two parties collectively winning a majority of seats.

[c] U.S. presidential elections prior to 1900 were excluded from the main analysis in Table 2.1 in order to preserve, for comparative purposes, consistent time periods across countries. Chapter 5 discusses these pre-1900 U.S. inversions in greater detail; they are included here for illustrative purposes.

[d] Data on Argentina was not included in main analysis (the results of which are reported Table 2.1) because its electoral system rules out—at least in theory—the possibility of an electoral inversion. However, I have included the 2003 election here for illustrative purposes

form a Conservative-Liberal coalition. The talks broke down after Heath was unable to

accede to Thorpe's terms, which centered on a demand for proportional reforms to the U.K.'s first-past-the-post electoral system. Fearing that an attempt to persist in office without shoring up majority support in parliament would discredit him and his government by inviting "accusations of hanging on to office at all costs despite defeat at the election" (Armstrong 1974), Health resigned from office. Minutes later, the leader of the Labour Party, Harold Wilson, was en route to Buckingham Palace to accept the Queen's invitation to form a minority government (Butler 1974, 255).

Distinguishing the February 1974 U.K. election from that of 1951 was the possibility of more than one outcome. Though he ultimately failed in doing so, Heath *could* have worked out a successful deal to bring Thorpe's Liberal Party, and its 14 seats, into his cabinet. Had that happened, an electoral inversion would have been avoided—the Conservative party would have emerged as both the election winner and the popular vote winner. That it did not happen, in other words, was contingent. Once the election returns came in, the election need not have resulted in an inversion.

Although contingent electoral inversions occur in majoritarian parliamentary systems like the U.K., they are more likely to arise from institutional conditions—namely, proportional electoral systems—that impede the formation of single-party majority governments. Proportional rules tend to promote broad multiparty systems, and the more competitive parties there are, the lower the likelihood is that any one of them will win an outright majority of seats. Thus, by necessity, proportional democracies are usually characterized by a well-established tradition of executive power-sharing. One such example is Denmark. Its parliamentary election of 1990 offers an illustrative case of contingent electoral inversions in proportional multi-party systems. When Prime Minister Poul Schlüter called an early

election for December 12 that year, his government was a three-party center-right coalition anchored by his party, the Conservatives, and supplemented by the Liberals and the Social Liberals. The election resulted in a net loss of one seat for the coalition: the Conservatives lost five seats, the Social Liberals lost three, while the Liberals gained seven. After the Social Liberals withdrew from government "to lick their wounds" (Borre 1991), Schlüter's faltering coalition was left with an unimpressive 59 seats. Meanwhile, the election strengthened the coalition's main opposition rival, the Social Democrats, which gained 14 seats to bring their parliamentary representation up to a total of 69 seats. Not only were the Social Democrats now the single largest party in the Folketing, they possessed more seats—and had won more votes—than the two parties remaining in Schlüter's coalition.

But because Denmark uses a system a negative parliamentarism, prospective governments do not need an explicit vote of approval from parliament to take office, as would be the case under positive parliamentarism. Rather, the Schlüter government simply needed no parliamentary majority to coalesce that would vote against it in a vote of no confidence. With the support of the Progress Party (12 seats), Center Democrats (9 seats), Social Liberals (7 seats), and Christian People's Party (4 seats), the Conservative-Liberal government (and its 59 seats) held a 51% majority. Narrow as it was, the majority was enough to prevent the Social Democrats from forcing a government turnover, and in doing so, averting an electoral inversion. That an inversion could have been avoided, moreover, suffices to distinguish it as a contingent electoral inversion. Like the U.K. election of February 1974, the inversion in Denmark's 1990 election was not predetermined by the election results.

2.4.A.3. Anomalous Inversions

A third and final type of electoral inversions, *anomalous inversions*, arise from exceptional circumstances outside the ordinary course of institutional procedures or practices. Like contingent inversions, anomalous inversions are not the natural consequence of a particular election result. Though this makes them "contingent" in a technical sense, anomalous inversions are nevertheless distinguishable from contingent inversions. Whereas the latter is usually brought about by the caprices of multiparty coalition politics, which, messy though they may be, are nevertheless part of a normal, institutionalized process, the former is not. Two cases of anomalous inversions serve to illustrate this distinction: the 2003 Argentine presidential election, and the German Reichstag elections of July and November 1932.

Judging by its electoral system alone, Argentina is an unlikely source of an electoral inversion. In fact, Argentina's electoral system does not, at least on paper, allow for the possibility of an inversion result. After abolishing its electoral college in 1994—under which, ironically, electoral inversions were possible—Argentina adopted a two-round system for directly electing presidents. Candidates can win in the first round if they meet one of two criteria: winning 45% of the vote, or winning 40% of the vote with a 10 percentage-point lead over the candidate with the second most votes. If no candidate overcomes either of these hurdles in the first round, a second round is held between the two candidates that received the most votes. When this system functions as designed, the winning presidential candidate should therefore be elected with either a popular-vote plurality in the first round, or by a popular vote majority in the second round. Whichever scenario plays out, both

preclude an inversion result.

However, after an unusual turn of events during the 2003 presidential election, an inversion nevertheless occurred. The first round featured a polarized campaign that centered on a fragmented field of five main contenders, three of which were fielded by the Justicialista Party (PJ). None of the candidates managed to secure 40% of the vote, prompting a second round between the top two finishers, both members of the PJ: Carlos Menem, a former two-term president, with 24.5%, and Néstor Kirchner, a long-serving provincial governor yet relatively unknown in national politics, with 22.2%. With the campaign for the second round underway, the polarization that had worked to Menem's advantage in the fragmented first round now became a liability, as Kirchner consolidated the anti-Menem vote (Levitsky and Murillo 2003). With polls indicating a collapse of Menem's support and a near certain defeat, he withdrew his candidacy four days before the scheduled run-off. Though Menem's withdrawal made Kirchner the default winner, this came at the cost of depriving Kirchner the strong popular mandate that he would have otherwise obtained (Sanchez 2005, 471). This "unprecedented move" (Levitsky and Murillo 2003, 159) also came at the cost of an electoral inversion. With the run-off election canceled, the first-round results—in which Kirchner, ultimately elected, had won fewer votes than Menem—remained standing.

The governments formed in the aftermath of the July and November 1932 *Reichstag* elections mark another case of anomalous electoral inversions. Both elections qualify as electoral inversions in the technical sense that the post-election governments lacked a plurality share of the popular vote. In both cases, the post-election governments were led by politically unaffiliated chancellors appointed by Paul von Hindenburg—the former Prussian general who had been serving as President since 1925—and were filled by cabinet minis-

ters that were either politically unaffiliated or from the German National People's Party (DNVP), a minor party that placed fifth in the national popular vote in both elections. The July election led to the second cabinet of Franz von Papen, formerly a leading Centre Party representative in the Prussian Landtag but since expelled from the party and now serving as an independent (Jones 2005). The only party represented in Papen's cabinet was the DNVP, which, after winning 37 of the Reichstag's 608 seats and 6 percent of the vote, was given three ministerial posts. Since the remaining cabinet appointments were, like Papen, unelected aristocrats—contemporaries derided it as the "cabinet of barons"—the government that formed had been supported in the election by just under 6 percent of voters.

The government cobbled togather following the November election was similarly lacking in popular support. At the helm was another Hindenburg appointee, general Kurt von Schleicher. During the preceding months, Schleicher had served as *Reichswehr* minister under Papen; in two years hence, he would be fatally shot by Hitler's assassins in a purge known as the Night of the Long Knives. For the moment, however, Schleicher managed to cobble together a government, mainly retaining Papen's cabinet ministers, which left the composition of the Schleicher cabinet more or less unchanged from the one that preceded it. The government was again comprised of a single party with parliamentary representation, the DNVP, whose position in the *Reichstag* improved slightly with the November elections. Whereas Papen's government could claim the support of around 6 percent of voters, the DNVP's modest improvement gave Schleicher's an 8-percent share of the vote, which translated to 51 DNVP seats. But as far as electoral inversions are concerned, this difference is nevertheless irrelevant. The *Reichstag* elections of July and November 1932

were inversions because the vote-winning party in both elections, which was the National Socialist German Workers' Party (NSDAP), colloquially known as the Nazi Party, was excluded from government.[22]

If this explains why these two elections are electoral inversions as a matter of definition, it does not explain what actually brought about this result, or relatedly, on what basis we can regard these two elections as *anomalous* inversions. In both cases, the elections and ensuing governments represented a departure from the norms of parliamentary government that had governed Weimar democracy since its inception in 1918. The first unmistakable signs of this departure emerged following the collapse of Hermann Müller's "grand coalition" Social Democratic government in 1930, at which point Hindenburg appointed Heinrich Brüning of the Centre Party as *Reichstag* Chancellor. Müller's cabinet would be the last Weimar government to command a parliamentary majority; Brüning's, the first of several successive "presidential cabinets" that, lacking majority support in the *Reichstag*, governed through Hindenburg's presidential decrees, emergency powers conferred to the President by Article 48 of the Weimar constitution. These presidential cabinets, which remained viable only by Hindenburg's abuse of Article 48 powers, marked a "qualitative leap towards turning the Weimar Republic into a semi-authoritarian system of government" (von der Goltz 2009, 142).

In 1932, after Brüning led a *Reichstag* effort to overturn one of Hindenburg's presidential decrees, Hindenburg dismissed Brüning and installed Papen as Chancellor. Facing sharp opposition in the *Reichstag*, Papen quickly sought—and received—Hindenburg's as-

[22]The NSDAP won 37 and 33 percent of the vote in July and November, respectively. Trailing the NSDAP in the popular-vote rankings were the Social Democrats (22 and 20 percent, respectively), Communists (14 and 17 percent), and the Centre Party (12 and 12 percent), followed by a handful of marginal parties winning three percent or less of the vote.

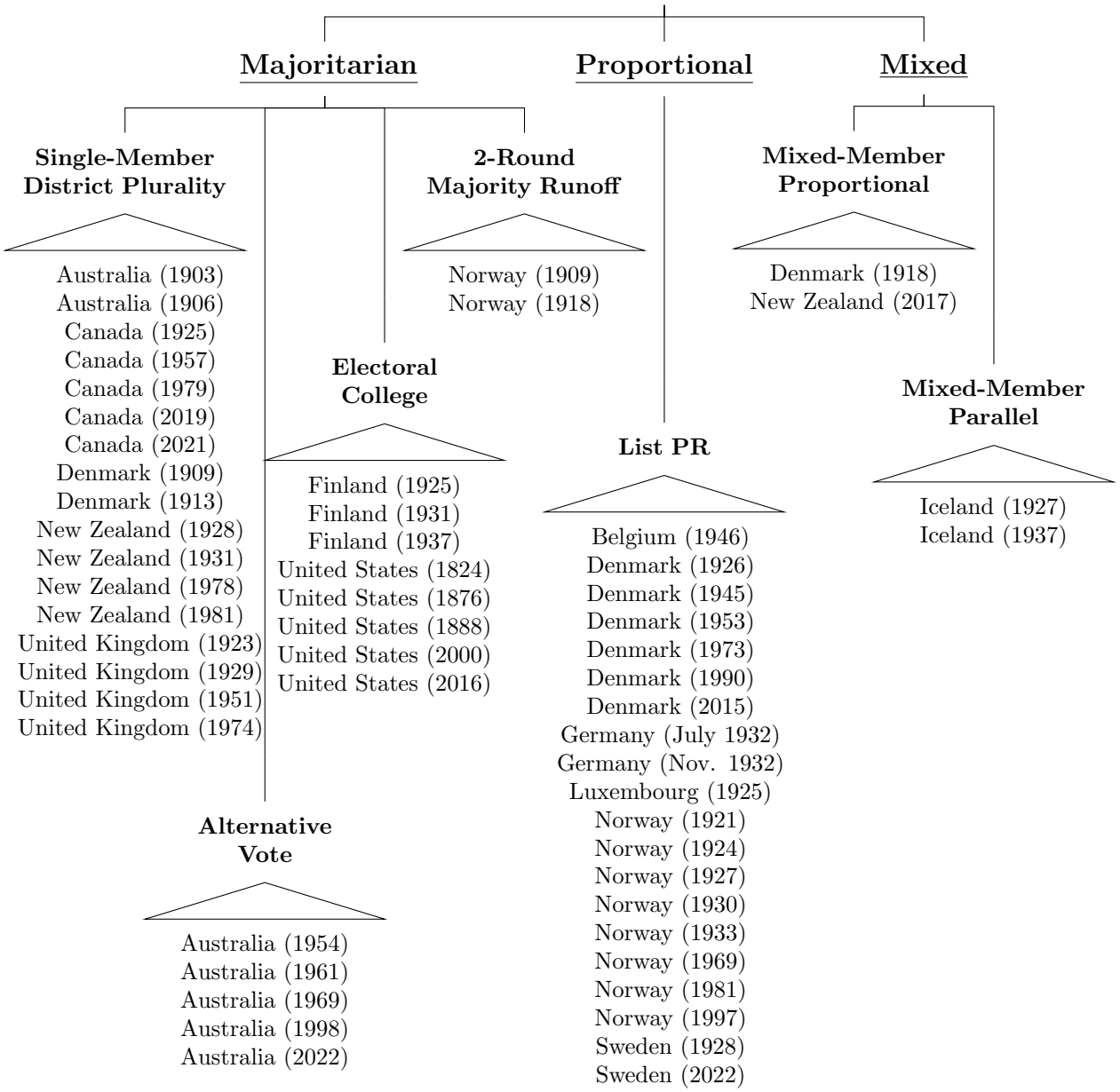
sent to dissolve the *Reichstag* and hold new elections in July. While the *Reichstag* elections of July 31, 1932 are best remembered for making the Nazis the largest party in the *Reichstag*, an equally pernicious result was the solidification of a problem that had plagued Weimar democracy since the fall of Müller's majority government two years earlier: the inability of the pro-Republican parties to assemble a governing coalition with majority support in the *Reichstag*, and the permissiveness this condition created for Chancellors to rely on the increasingly extra-constitutional use of Article 48 emergency powers (Kolb 2005, 116-117). Hindenburg's appointment of Schleicher following the November elections, which were precipitated by the *Reichstag*'s premature dissolution in September, marked the next stage in this uninterrupted trend. Though Papen's and Schleicher's governments are typically regarded as the Weimar Republic's last—Hitler became Chancellor less than two months after Schleicher's appointment, quickly expunging the remaining traces of Weimarian democracy—it was only by departing from the parliamentary system established with the Republic that these governments were possible. And it is through this departure, in short, that the electoral inversions that these governments followed from—or rather, created—qualify as *anomalous* inversions.

2.4.B. Cross-National Differences

Why do electoral inversions tend to occur more often (or not at all) in some countries compared with others? What effect do political institutions have on electoral inversion outcomes? And how, if at all, are cross-country differences in inversion outcomes related to the types of inversions described in the previous section? To determine the extent to which electoral institutions play a role in generating electoral inversions, Figure 2.2 classifies

all 53 elections that resulted in an inversion between 1900 and 2022 by electoral system type. As Figure 2.2 makes evident, electoral inversions do not originate from any single type of electoral system. Majoritarian, proportional, and mixed systems are all capable of producing inversion outcomes. Diversity can also be found within these broad categories.

Figure 2.2. Electoral Systems in 53 Electoral Inversions



Data Sources: Post-1946 electoral system data comes from the Democratic Electoral Systems (DES) dataset (Bormann and Golder 2022). Information on pre-1946 electoral systems draws on a variety of sources, including Grofman and Lijphart (2002), Strøm, Müller, and Bergman (2003), and Gallagher and Mitchell (2006).

For instance, among majoritarian systems, 19 electoral inversions occurred in parliamentary elections in five countries (Australia, Canada, Denmark, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom) utilizing single-member districts with first-past-the-post (plurality) rules; four occurred in elections under Australia's alternative vote (AV) system; two in Norway's early twentieth-century two-round majority runoff system; and another two in both the Finnish and American presidential electoral college systems (or four in the U.S. electoral college when including the two pre-1900 inversions). Apart from four inversions in mixed systems—Denmark (1918), New Zealand (2017), and Iceland (1927, 1937)—remaining electoral inversions originated from list proportional representation systems.

Table 2.3 offers a wider appraisal of the potential relationship between electoral inversions and institutions—including, but also going beyond, electoral institutions. The table presents crosstabulations of electoral inversions, with rows corresponding to two variables related to cabinet composition: cabinet size (single-party versus multi-party), and the parliamentary strength of cabinets (majority versus minority governments). Meanwhile, columns are divided between electoral system type (majoritarian versus proportional/mixed systems) and parliamentarism (negative versus positive). Finally, electoral inversion type—contingent, necessary, and anomalous—appears along both axes. Each cell in the table thus represents the frequency of electoral inversions coinciding with two criteria, or in the case of row and column totals, with the single criterion.

As was reflected in Figure 2.2, electoral inversions are roughly split between majoritarian and non-majoritarian (proportional and mixed) electoral systems. Though evidently not a determinant of electoral inversions in general, electoral system type is important insofar as inversion type is concerned. Since necessary inversions typically imply an outcome

Table 2.3. Institutional Patterns of Electoral Inversions

		Electoral System		Parliamentarism[ab]		Inversion Type		
	Total	Majoritarian	Proportional/ Mixed	Negative	Positive	Contingent	Necessary	Anomalous
Total	53	29	24	44	2	38	13	2
Cab. Size								
Single-party	39	25	14	31	1	29	10	0
Multi-party	14	4	10	13	1	9	3	2
Cab. Strength[a]								
Majority	8	7	1	8	0	1	7	0
Minority	40	17	23	36	2	34	4	2
Inversion Type								
Contingent	38	16	22	31	2			
Necessary	13	13	0	11	0			
Anomalous	2	0	2	2	0			

Note: Cell entries are joint frequencies. Row and Column totals will not sum to 53 (the total number of inversions).

Data Sources: Post-1946 electoral system data comes from the Democratic Electoral Systems (DES) dataset (Bormann and Golder 2022). Information on pre-1946 electoral systems draws on a variety of sources, including Grofman and Lijphart (2002), Strøm, Müller, and Bergman (2003), and Gallagher and Mitchell (2006). Classifications of positive and negative parliamentarism primarily derive from the Party Government in Europe Database (PAGED) (Hellström et al. 2023), as well as Strøm, Müller, and Bergman (2003), Rasch, Martin, and Cheibub (2015*b*), and Bergman, Bäck, and Hellström (2021).

[a] Excludes the United States and Finland (during the electoral college era), to which the cabinet strength and majority type variables do not apply.

[b] Excludes Iceland's 1927 and 1937 elections because I was unable to determine which type of parliamentarism obtained in Iceland prior to the establishment of its Republic after breaking from Denmark in 1944. Also excluded are Finland's electoral college inversions in the 1920's and 1930s, as the concepts of negative and positive parliamentarism pertain to the rules that regulate the formation of *parliamentary* governments.

that is especially rare in non-majoritarian systems—a single-party majority government—non-majoritarian systems are considerably more likely to produce contingent inversions. To date, all 13 necessary inversions have occurred in majoritarian elections. The reverse is not necessarily the case, however. That is, whereas necessary inversions are unlikely in proportional and mixed systems, contingent inversions are not correspondingly unlikely in majoritarian systems. In fact, of the 29 inversions in majoritarian systems, more than half (16) have been contingent.

With respect to cabinet size, inversions are more common in the context of single-party government (39) compared with multi-party government (14). Given that single-party government is more common in majoritarian systems, this would seem to indicate

that inversions are more likely to occur in majoritarian systems. At the same time, however, because inversions tend to arise in the context of minority government (40 of 48 parliamentary inversions), which is more frequent in proportional systems, any relationship between cabinet size and electoral system type is offset by the countervailing direction of the relationship between cabinet strength of electoral system. In sum, neither electoral institutions, nor their propensity to produce different types of cabinets (single- versus multi-party, minority versus majority), help explain electoral inversion outcomes.

What *does* appear to matter, however, is the type of rules—negative or positive—governing the government formation process. To form a government under *positive parliamentarism*, a prospective coalition (or a party, in cases of single-party government) must actively obtain the support of parliament through a vote of investiture. There are different types of investiture votes, ranging from *ex ante* votes that a prospective government must win before taking office, to *ex post* votes through which a government, having already taken office, must demonstrate its parliamentary backing. Investiture votes also differ by the threshold required to win, with some demanding that governments secure an absolute majority in parliament, to others only requiring the support of a simple majority (plurality). But beyond the particularities of these different types of investiture votes, it is the underlying motivation that they have in common: insisting that prospective governments explicitly demonstrate that they command parliament's support. In countries in which the government formation process is regulated by *negative parliamentarism*, by contrast, explicit proof of parliament's support is not needed, and thus an investiture vote is usually not required. Instead, a prospective government can assume office under negative parliamentarism so long as it is not actively opposed by parliament. If such opposition does

exist, parliament can register it in a vote of no confidence. Thus whereas the principle underlying positive parliamentarism is that a government should actively obtain parliament's endorsement, under negative parliamentarism "the onus is not on the government to prove that it is supported by the parliament. Rather it is left to the parliament to prove that the government is not tolerated" (Bergman 1993*b*, 57).

One consequence of the higher bar that positive parliamentarism imposes on government formation is, according to Bergman (1993*b*) and Bergman (1993*a*), the creation of fewer minority governments. Others have since challenged Berman's argument on the grounds that it is not the presence of an investiture requirement *per se* that limits the formation of minority governments, but rather the type of investiture vote (ex ante versus ex post, simple versus absolute majority) (Field and Martin 2022; Rasch, Martin, and Cheibub 2015*b*). Even so, the more fundamental idea—namely, that the permissiveness of government formation rules affects what types of governments are formed—is not in dispute. In fact, it offers the most plausible explanation for cross-country differences in electoral inversions.

As Table 2.3 shows, only two electoral inversions occurred under a system of positive parliamentarism. The first was in Luxembourg in 1925, when the incumbent Party of the Right, led by Émile Reuter, won pluralities in seats and votes by wide margins. However, Reuter refused to govern alongside any party that had voted against the controversial railway treaty that his government had negotiated with Belgium, and which had caused its government's collapse several weeks earlier (Thewes 2011). The second was Belgium's first post-war election, which was held in February 1946 amidst a climate of political flux and uncertainty. After several fruitless rounds of coalition negotiations between the Christian

Democrats (92 seats and 42.5% of votes), Socialists (66 seats and 31.6% of votes), and Liberals (16 seats and 8.9% of votes), Paul-Henri Spaak of the Socialist Party formed a minority government. Though his government was sworn in on March 13, under Belgium's system of positive parliamentarism, Spaak's government still needed to win majority support from the Chamber of Deputies in an *ex post* investiture vote.[23] After failing to do so on March 19 (the vote resulted in a 90-90 tie), Spaak resigned—barely a week after taking office (André, Depauw, and Deschouwer 2015, 49).

That Belgium's 1946 election resulted in an inversion in spite of its positive parliamentarism might appear, at first glance, to undercut the claim that positive government formation rules prevent inversion outcomes. In point of fact, however, the case of Belgium's 1946 electoral inversion illustrates why it is so unusual for electoral inversions to occur in the context of positive parliamentarism. Knowing in advance that it will need to win parliamentary approval, whether by a simple or absolute majority (the decision rule varies between countries), any prospective government must be reasonably confident that it has the requisite support. As Spaak's short-lived government demonstrates, failing to do so comes at the risk of a swift and ignominious defeat. In essence, then, positive parliamentarism has a filtering effect on the government formation process, eliminating from the range of possible coalitional configurations those unlikely to garner sufficient support. The potential governments eliminated through this process are not limited to those that would trigger an electoral inversion. As noted above, positive parliamentarism also tends to filter out minority governments (Bergman 1993*a*;*b*). Similarly, any candidate government that collectively won fewer votes than the most popular opposition party (and that likely

[23]For the distinction between *ex post* and *ex ante* investiture votes, see Rasch, Martin, and Cheibub (2015*a*)

also failed to win a majority of seats) is not one that is likely to command a broad base of support within parliament. Such governments, therefore, are likely to be filtered out in advance.

Table 2.4 demonstrates this point empirically. Countries are divided between 13 cases of negative parliamentarism, on the left, and 17 cases of positive parliamentarism, on the right. Three countries—Belgium, the Netherlands, and Spain—appear in the table twice

Table 2.4. Post-1945 Electoral Inversions, by Negative and Positive Parliamentarism

	Negative Parliamentarism				Positive Parliamentarism		
Country	Elections	Inversions (%)	Period[a]	Country	Elections	Inversions (%)	Period[a]
Australia	30	5 (16.7)	1946-2022	Czech Republic	10	0 (0)	1990-2021
Austria	23	0 (0)	1945-2019	Estonia	8	0 (0)	1992-2019
Belgium[b]	7	0 (0)	1993-2019	Belgium[b]	16	1 (6.2)	1946-1991
Canada	25	4 (16)	1945-2021	Finland	5	0 (0)	2003-2019
Denmark	29	5 (17.2)	1945-2022	Germany	20	0 (0)	1949-2021
Iceland	23	0 (0)	1946-2021	Greece	16	0 (0)	1974-2019
Netherlands[c]	20	0 (0)	1946-2010	Netherlands[c]	3	0 (0)	2012-2021
New Zealand	26	3 (11.5)	1946-2020	Hungary	9	0 (0)	1990-2022
Norway	20	3 (15)	1945-2021	Ireland	21	0 (0)	1948-2020
Portugal	16	0 (0)	1976-2022	Israel	23	0 (0)	1949-2022
Spain[d]	1	0 (0)	1977	Spain[d]	12	0 (0)	1979-2019
Sweden	23	1 (4.3)	1948-2022	Italy	20	0 (0)	1946-2022
United Kingdom	21	2 (9.5)	1945-2019	Japan	28	0 (0)	1946-2021
				Latvia	11	0 (0)	1990-2022
				Luxembourg	17	0 (0)	1945-2018
				Slovakia	10	0 (0)	1990-2020
				Slovenia	10	0 (0)	1990-2022
Total	**264**	**23 (8.7)**			**239**	**1 (0.4)**	

Source: Information on positive and negative parliamentarism in this table is based primarily on the Party Government in Europe Database (PAGED) (Hellström et al. 2023). I also drew on three additional sources: Strøm, Müller, and Bergman (2003) (see, in particular, Table 4.9); Rasch, Martin, and Cheibub (2015*b*) (see Table 18.1); and Bergman, Bäck, and Hellström (2021) (see Table 1.1).

[a] The start and end dates in this column refer to election years. For instance, the start date for Belgium under negative parliamentarism is 1995, the first election held after new rules were enacted with the 1993 constitutional reforms. Similarly, the end dates correspond to the last election held in each country (as of 2022).

[b] Constitutional reforms enacted in Belgium in 1993 (but which took effect in the 1995 general election), though better known for formalizing the federal structure of the Belgian state, also effected a shift from positive to negative parliamentarism (André, Depauw, and Deschouwer 2015; De Winter and Dumont 2021; Mattila and Raunio 2004).

[c] The Dutch Parliament, through legislation passed in March 2012, assumed responsibility for the government formation process, which was previously initiated by the monarch. In doing so, the Dutch House of Representatives (the lower house in its bicameral parliament) "included in its Standing Orders the provision that (in)formateurs be appointed by the lower house of parliament," which, according to Louwerse and Timmermans (2021, 449), "can be regarded as a form of proactive investiture."

[d] The Spanish Constitution of 1978 established positive rules for the government formation process. Prospective prime ministers must secure parliament's approval by an absolute majority in an investiture vote; if an absolute majority is not obtained, the threshold relaxes to a simple majority in a second round of voting (Field 2021). However, these rules were not yet in effect for the 1977 Spanish general election, the first democratic election held after the end of the Francoist regime, and the first and only election held under negative parliamentarism.

because they enacted reforms that effected either a shift from negative to positive parliamentarism (Netherlands and Spain), or from positive to negative rules (Belgium). Focusing on elections in the post-1945 period, the table puts the difference between negative and positive rules in stark relief. Of 239 elections held under positive parliamentarism across 17 countries, only one resulted in an inversion. As we saw above, this one exception—Belgium's 1946 election—arose from the unsettled political climate that lingered in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War. Positive parliamentarism has not produced another electoral inversions the seven and a half decades since. Meanwhile, in the same period countries with negative parliamentarism have produced 24 electoral inversions from a total of 280 elections, a rate of approximately 1 inversion for every 12 elections.

2.5. Conclusion

In its examination of electoral inversions, this chapter addressed three separate but interrelated dimensions: conceptual, empirical, and causal. First, at the heart of the conceptual dimension is the basic question: what are electoral inversions? To this end, I developed a precise yet generalizable definition, one that can be used to discern the presence or absence of the phenomenon of electoral inversions in a variety of institutional contexts—from presidential and parliamentary democracies, to those utilizing majoritarian or proportional electoral systems, and still further to situations of majority and minority government comprised of a single party or a coalition of multiple parties. On the basis of this process of conceptual refinement, I then turned to the empirical dimension. Examining data on nearly 700 elections and governments in 28 democracies between 1900 and 2022, I identified 53 cases of electoral inversions. In more concrete terms, I found that just under

8% of elections in these democracies have produced an inversion result.

Finally, I explored what could be called the "causal" dimension. Here, two questions figure prominently: how do electoral inversions occur, and why do they occur? With respect to the former question, electoral inversions can be a necessary consequence of an election, a contingent consequence, or they can be the result of unforeseen "anomalous" events. Whether a given electoral inversion is necessary or contingent (but to a lesser extent anomalous) is in large part a function of the underlying institutional conditions. Necessary inversions tend to occur in majoritarian democracies with smaller party systems and in which single-party government is the norm, while contingent inversions are characteristic of democracies with larger party systems and a propensity for coalition government.

Separate from the different ways electoral inversions occur is the question of *why* they tend to occur in some countries and not others. The answer to this question depends in part on the necessary/contingent distinction. Countries with proportional multi-party democracies are more likely to experience an electoral inversion—and, specifically, a contingent inversion—if the process of government formation is guided by negative parliamentarism. The presence of positive parliamentarism—a condition that at various times since 1945 has characterized 17 of the 28 democracies analyzed in this chapter—renders electoral inversions all but impossible. On the other hand, in countries with majoritarian institutional configurations—namely, those with first-past-the-post elections with single-member districts, which constrain the size of the party systems—necessary electoral inversions are always a latent possibility where the executive is elected indirectly, though this possibility becomes more realistic as the number of parties competing for votes increases. And here, as with proportional democracies, the likelihood of contingent inversions will depend on

the presence of positive parliamentarism.

But if this chapter has shed light, as I hope it has, on the questions of what electoral inversions are, how often they occur, and how and why they occur, it has left other important questions unanswered. The most important of these is the issue of electoral inversions' consequences. Irrespective of how and why they occur, when electoral inversions *do* occur, what are their effects? Supposing that electoral inversions are an "undemocratic" election result in the sense that they turn winners into losers and losers into winners, elevating the fewer over the many, the unpopular over the popular, what are their implications, if any, for the way citizens think and feel about democracy itself? It is to this question that I now turn.

Chapter 3

The Consequences of Electoral Inversions: Theorizing "Rule of the Fewer" and Democratic Support

3.1. Introduction

After the preliminary results of New Zealand's 2017 general election came in on the evening of September 23, Bill English, National Party leader and incumbent prime minister, addressed a crowd of elated supporters with the ebullient confidence of an election victor. "The voters have spoken," he proclaimed, "and now we have the responsibility of forming a strong and stable government" (English 2017). Later events would prove this attitude premature. But for the moment, English could be forgiven for reciprocating the crowd's optimism. Although his party had failed to obtain the 60 seats needed for a majority in New Zealand's 120-member parliament, it had come close. With 56 seats, National had won ten more seats than Labour, the runner-up, and one more than the combined seats of Labour and the third-place finisher, New Zealand First.

Not only had National won a plurality of parliamentary seats by a comfortable margin, but it had also secured a decisive popular-vote victory over its Labour rival—a party that just days before had been surging in the polls, buoyed by the popularity of its new leader, Jacinda Ardern. Nevertheless, on election day National won 44.5% and 44% of the party and electorate vote, respectively (New Zealand uses a mixed-member system), while Labour

managed just 37% and 38%. This popular victory, English asserted, armed him with the "moral authority" to form the next government (Milne 2017).

But, of course, the mandate that English claimed was nothing more than symbolic. His case for continuing in government was a normative one— namely, that the party that wins the most votes and seats should, as a matter of democratic fairness, win the election. Under New Zealand's parliamentary system, however, no actual authority to form a government derives from winning the most votes or winning the most seats. What matters is whether a party has the support of parliament, whether from within its own ranks or through a coalition arrangement with other parties. National, four seats short of this authority, entered into negotiations with Winston Peters, the cantankerous leader of New Zealand First (NZF), a populist party with enough seats in parliament (9) to tip the balance in National's favor. However, Peters began parallel talks with Labour and, after a drawn-out period of two-track negotiations, Peters made the controversial decision to throw his support behind Ardern's Labour Party.

The resulting government was a Labour-NZF "minority coalition" in two different senses of the term. On the one hand, with only 55 seats between the two parties, the coalition reflected a *parliamentary* minority, a situation that remained tenable only through a confidence-and-supply agreement that secured the support of the Green Party. On the other hand, having won a combined 44.1% of the party vote and 43.3% of the electorate vote, the two coalition parties also represented a *popular* minority. But at the same time, the Labour-NZF government was not *just* a minority coalition. Because it excluded National, which had won more votes *and* seats, it was, as more than one columnist derided, a "coalition of losers" (Prebble 2017; Roughan 2017). That is to say, the government was

the product of an electoral inversion.

This was not the first time a coalition of losers unsettled politics in New Zealand. In a reversal of its 2017 fortunes, the National Party prevailed in the elections of 1978 and 1981 despite winning fewer votes than Labour. These successive electoral inversions provoked widespread dissatisfaction with New Zealand's first-past-the-post electoral system, particularly within the ranks of the Labour Party, which won the vote in both elections. When Labour returned to government in 1984, it appointed a "Royal Commission on the Electoral System" to study the question of electoral system reform. In its final report, published in 1986, the Commission observed that, "not only were small parties severely under-represented" in the elections of 1978 and 1981, "but also the party with the most votes lost." This result, the report's authors insisted, had "caused some New Zealanders to question the legitimacy of the system," and warned that "the perception of legitimacy may be eroded if apparently unfair results persist and if in an increasingly diverse society significant groups and interests remain excluded from Parliament" (Royal Commission 1986, 27).

Taking these observations as its point of departure, the Commission then considered potential replacements to the Westminster system of single-member plurality elections that had been in use since 1914. The Royal Commission ultimately endorsed a mixed-member proportional (MMP) system modeled on the one used to elect the German *Bundestag*. When the question of electoral reform was put to voters in two successive referendums in 1992 and 1993, a majority of New Zealanders voted to adopt MMP. While other long-term factors contributed to the appointment of the Royal Commission, and ultimately to the coalescing of public support for electoral system reform, the 1978 and 1981 electoral inver-

sions were important catalysts (Renwick 2009). They helped create momentum for reform, not only among supporters of smaller parties for whom electoral frustration was an endemic feature of New Zealand's disproportional SMP system (for instance, the 1981 election gave the Social Credit Party 2% of seats on 21% of votes), but also among supporters of the larger parties (Vowles 2008, 169).

Although electoral inversions have not precipitated wholesale electoral system reform outside of New Zealand, other countries, such as Canada, have seen passionate debates about the viability of electoral institutions when such institutions have produced recurrent inversions. But perhaps nowhere have electoral inversions caused democratic institutions to come under greater scrutiny than in the United States, where two recent presidential elections (2000 and 2016) allowed the Republican Party to win the presidency despite losing the popular vote to the candidate of the Democratic Party. Why do electoral inversions generate backlash, if not in the form of electoral system change, as in New Zealand, then at least in the form of a critique of electoral institutions, as in the cases of the United States and Canada? What do such critiques tell us about the theoretical tensions between inversions and normative conceptions of democracy? And to what extent can we expect these tensions to affect public attitudes about the functioning of democracy?

These are the central questions addressed in this chapter. In the next section (3.2), I examine the debate over U.S. electoral institutions that emerged in response to the 2000 and 2016 electoral inversions. Critics tend to frame the problem of electoral inversions in terms of a conflict between majorities and minorities, between majority rule and minority rule. But, as I show in Sections 3.2.A and 3.2.B, this debate is premised on a nuanced yet critical misapprehension of the empirical reality in most democracies. The consequence

of electoral inversions is better understood, I argue, as "rule of the fewer," not "minority rule" (Section 3.2.D). Having thus reoriented the conceptual framework, Section 3.3 turns to the potential impact of rule of the fewer—which is to say, of electoral inversions—on democratic support. After introducing the concept of democratic support and reviewing the relevant literature, Section 3.4 outlines a set of theoretical expectations—to be tested in later chapters—about the effects of electoral inversions on democratic support.

3.2. Beyond "Minority Rule"

3.2.A. The Majoritarian Theory of Democracy

That it is possible under the U.S. Electoral College system to win elections without winning the most votes has long been true. But with the electoral inversions of 2000 and 2016, what had hitherto existed as a latent theoretical possibility became a concrete reality that could not easily be ignored. Consequently, these elections renewed and intensified a long-running debate over reforming the Electoral College system. At the heart of this debate is a theory of democracy—let us call it the "majoritarian theory"—that measures political legitimacy by the responsiveness of democratic institutions to electoral majorities. The majoritarian critique of the Electoral College, then, objects to the system on the grounds that it produces outcomes that do not adequately reflect the preferences of electoral majorities.

Since 2000, and especially following the 2016 election, this majoritarian critique has progressively broadened its gaze beyond the Electoral College to other "countermajoritarian" features of American democracy—unequal representation inherent in the distribution of Senate seats, the Senate filibuster, the Supreme Court, and the vote-seat disproportion-

alities created by winner-take-all congressional elections, to name a few. Throughout most of American history, these institutional features had weak or cross-cutting partisan effects, which prevented any one political party from obtaining from them a decisive electoral edge. For instance, while the constitutional requirement that each state have two senators has always created a degree over overrepresentation for those living in small states, this small-state bias was weaker when population differences between large and small states were less pronounced. Additionally, not only were small-state biases weaker, but prior to the relatively recent phenomenon of parties being sorted along rural-urban lines, they were not simultaneously *partisan* biases. Over time, however, political and demographic trends have converged in such a way that the asymmetric benefits of American democracy's counter-majoritarian design now primarily accrue to the Republican party, whose popular support at the national level tends to lag behind that of the Democratic party. The consequence of this dynamic, critics argue, is effectively a situation of "minority rule" (Balz and Morse 2023; Barnicle 2020; Boot 2022; Bouie 2021; 2022*a*;*b*; 2023*a*;*b*;*c*; Edsall 2022; Frum 2020*a*;*b*; 2021; Goldberg 2017; Jentleson 2021; Kane 2023; Lawrence 2020; Leonhardt 2022; Levitsky and Ziblatt 2020; 2023*a*;*b*; Liasson 2021; Markovits and Ayres 2018; Masket 2020; Müller 2022; Owen 2020; Robin 2022; Rubin 2020; Sargent 2020; Thomas 2020; vanden Heuvel 2020; Waldman 2018; Zakaria 2022).

Minority rule is particularly worrying for proponents of the majoritarian theory of democracy because of how closely the theory associates democracy with numerical majorities. All theories of democracy accept some version of the proposition that legitimate political authority flows from "the people."[1] Furthermore, although not the case historically,

[1]From the Ancient Greek *dēmokratia*, democracy literally means "rule of the people."

virtually all theories of democracies today have come to accept elections as the principal mechanism for the governed to transmit that authority.[2] In the case of the majoritarian theory of democracy, the "people" is defined as the numerical majority, and thus the electoral transmission of legitimate authority is the majority's prerogative. For that authority to issue from a minority rather than a majority—which is to say, for elections to produce non-majority winners—is the difference between non-democracy and democracy.

In other words, minority rule is not just an undesirable byproduct of otherwise well-founded democratic institutions; from a majoritarian point of view it is the antithesis of democracy. As Levitsky and Ziblatt (2023*b*, 142-143) argue, "democracy is more than majority rule, but without majority rule there is no democracy... When candidates or parties can win power against the wishes of the majority, democracy loses its meaning." And when majority rule does not prevail, democracy gives way to the "tyranny of the minority" (Levitsky and Ziblatt 2023*b*). The observable implication of this argument is that, if we were to examine the world's healthiest democracies, we should find majority rule thriving. But that is not the case. Majority rule, it turns out, is something of an empirical anomaly.

[2]Of course, different theories of democracy disagree about who the governed—"the people"—are, and about the electoral specifics of how the people, however defined, can best transmit legitimate political authority to those that govern them. In the West today, it is generally taken for granted that elections serve this function. But this was not always the case. In eighteenth century Britain, for example, political theorists contended that Parliament could represent the people "virtually" in the absence of elections. This argument was used, in particular, to justify the continued denial of parliamentary representation to the American colonies (Wood 1969). Although the idea of virtual representation conjured a version of democracy—albeit a very early and undeveloped form of democracy—in which elections were dispensable, virtual representation implicitly retained a commitment to the idea that the legitimacy of the governors derives in some shape or form from the governed. Were a theory of democracy to reject this notion, it could not in any meaningful sense be called a theory of "democracy."

3.2.B. National-Level Minority Rule

Most elections in most democracies—even the strongest and most stable ones—produce outcomes that do not reflect numerical majorities. This is most clearly the case when it comes to electoral outcomes at the national level, but also, as I show momentarily, at the district level. In their influential and wide-ranging study of electoral loss and political legitimacy, *Loser's Consent*, Anderson et al. (2005, 8) find that "of all governments formed in the twenty-one most stable contemporary democracies around the world between 1950 and 1995, only around 45 percent were actually elected by popular majorities; that is, in fewer than half of all elections held did the parties that formed the government after the election obtain more than 50 percent of the vote." Even in the United States, where the problem of minority rule is often framed as representing a deviation from a historical norm of majority rule,[3] presidential candidates have prevailed with minority support in almost a third of all presidential elections.[4]

Using the ParlGov dataset (Döring et al. 2023*a*), in Tables 3.1 and 3.2 I build on Anderson et al.'s (2005) findings in both a temporal and a geographic sense, covering 29 countries rather than their original 21, and covering the 102-year period between 1900 and 2022 instead of the 50-year period between 1950 and 1995.[5] Table 3.1 offers two different

[3]Of course, suggestions that majority rule has been the historical norm for U.S. democracy is especially implausible in light of the mass disenfranchisement of women and African Americans until the early- and mid-twentieth century, respectively.

[4]For a full list of US presidential election results, which identifies elections in which the winner lacked either a popular vote majority or plurality, see Table A3.1 in the Chapter 3 Appendix. Of 57 presidential elections, 19 were decided in favor of candidates lacking popular-vote majorities (1824, 1844, 1848, 1856, 1860, 1876, 1880, 1884, 1888, 1892, 1912, 1916, 1948, 1960, 1968, 1992, 1996, 2000, and 2016). In five elections, the winner failed to win a popular-vote plurality (1824, 1876, 1888, 2000, and 2016). In 1824, the winner, John Quincy Adams, lacked a popular-vote plurality *and* an Electoral College majority. After no candidate won the required EC majority, the decision was turned over to the House of Representatives, which gave the nod to John Quincy Adams—despite having won fewer popular and electoral votes than Andrew Jackson.

[5]There are nine countries that I include but that Anderson et al. (2005) do not: the Czech Republic,

ways of conceptualizing minority rule: governments lacking popular majority support and governments lacking parliamentary majorities. The former, which I term "vote-minority governments" (or VMGs) are comprised of parties that, taken together, won a minority of the national popular vote. The latter, which are usually known simply as minority governments, I refer to here as "seat-minority governments" (or SMGs) to distinguish them from VMGs. SMGs occur when "the parties holding ministerial portfolios do not control

Table 3.1. Vote-Minority and Seat-Minority Governments in 29 Established Democracies, 1900-2022

	VMGs		SMGs		Total
Country	*n*	%	*n*	%	Elections[a]
Australia	40	85.1	8	17.0	47
Austria	4	14.3	2	7.1	28
Belgium	11	30.6	7	19.4	36
Canada	27	75.0	13	36.1	36
Czech Republic	9	90.0	4	40.0	10
Denmark	38	84.4	37	82.2	45
Estonia	4	50.0	0	0.0	8
Finland	8	26.7	9	30.0	30
Germany	11	40.7	5	18.5	27
Greece	14	87.5	1	6.2	16
Hungary	6	66.7	1	11.1	9
Iceland	7	24.1	5	17.2	29
Ireland	26	83.9	17	54.8	31
Israel	8	34.8	6	26.1	23
Italy	13	65.0	8	40.0	20
Japan	22	78.6	5	17.9	28
Latvia	5	45.5	3	27.3	11
Luxembourg	6	28.6	2	9.5	21
Netherlands	5	17.2	1	3.4	29
New Zealand	29	78.4	11	29.7	37
Norway	31	93.9	20	60.6	33
Portugal	12	75.0	7	43.8	16
Slovakia	8	80.0	1	10.0	10
Slovenia	3	30.0	1	10.0	10
Spain	13	100.0	9	69.2	13
Sweden	26	81.2	24	75.0	32
Switzerland	5	15.2	0	0.0	33
United Kingdom	25	89.3	4	14.3	28
United States	9	29.0	–	–	31
Total	425	58.5	211	30.3	727

[a] Excludes caretaker governments.
Source: ParlGov database (Döring and Manow 2022).

Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Israel, Japan, Latvia, Slovakia, Slovenia. There is one country that Anderson et al. (2005) include but that I do not: France.

a majority of seats in the legislature" (Cheibub, Martin, and Rasch 2021, 351).

When SMGs are taken as the indicator of minority rule, majority rule prevails more often than not. Across 28 democracies (excluding the United States' presidential system, to which the concept of a seat-minority government does not apply), 70% of elections resulted in governments supported by parliamentary majorities. However, if majority rule is understood in terms of the support of popular majorities, then majority rule is a minority condition. In comparison to Anderson et al. (2005), who found that roughly 55% of elections produced governments that were not elected with a majority of votes, the expanded analysis in Table 3.1 puts that figure at 58.5%.[6] Governments in 17 out of 29 countries are elected with popular minorities more often than with popular majorities, and in 14 of these, the rate of VMGs is 75% or higher. That is, a majority of elections in a majority of democracies elect governments through popular minority support.

Table 3.2. Popular Majority and Minority Governments, 1900-2022

	Popular Minority		Popular Majority	
Period	*n*	%	*n*	%
1900-1949	115	56.4	89	43.6
1950-1995	172	56.2	134	43.8
1996-2022	138	63.6	79	36.4
1990-2022	425	58.5	302	41.5

Source: ParlGov database (Döring and Manow 2023).

Interestingly, moreover, the incidence of VMGs has risen since 1995, the last year in the data on which Anderson et al.'s (2005) findings were based. Table 3.2 indicates a nearly identical rate of VMGs (roughly 56%) in the pre-1950 and 1950-1995 periods. After 1995, however, nearly 64% of all elections produces VMGs. Could it be that this

[6]Notably, the rate of VMGs between 1950 and 1995 reported in Table 3.1, 56.2%, is an exact match of the 56.2% reported in Anderson et al.'s (2005, 8) Table 1.1.

decline in popular majority governments in the mid-1990s is an artifact of several new post-Soviet democracies (Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Slovakia, and Slovenia) that emerged between 1900 and 1992? When these countries are excluded from the calculation, the average rate of VMGs is unchanged. The increase of VMGs, and the corresponding decline of majority rule, is a phenomenon afflicting the world's long-established democracies as much as the new. The dwindling of majority rule over the past several decades gives added weight to Anderson et al.'s (2005, 9) diagnosis that "plurality rule, and not uncommonly minority rule, are the norm in contemporary democracies."

3.2.C. District-Level Minority Rule

Given certain institutional conditions, minority rule can also be common at the level of district elections. In this case, minority rule takes the form of candidates who win their electoral districts with a minority share of the popular vote. While the concept of district minority winners could be applied to elections at any level of government, my focus is on elections to determine the composition of national governments. In parliamentary systems, this means national lower-house elections; in presidential systems, this means presidential elections.

In the case of presidential systems, the composition of the national executive is determined via presidential elections. However, in most countries presidents are elected directly using majority or plurality formulas in a single, nationwide district. In such cases, there are no sub-national units in terms of which presidential candidates can be regarded as minority or majority winners. The United States, because of its Electoral College system, is the lone exception. The U.S. Electoral College embeds first-past-the-post (FPTP) contests

within states, which essentially function as winner-take-all multi-member districts (except for Nebraska and Maine, which award some Electoral College electors proportionally).

With respect to parliamentary democracies, the concept of district-level minority winners is only relevant to elections decided by a plurality winner-take-all formula, a type of election that tends also to be conducted in single-member districts. District-level minority winners do not occur in any meaningful sense in the context of elections with proportional representation (PR) and multi-member districts (MMDs). This is because districts in these systems produce multiple "winners," with seats awarded proportionately to votes. In other words, in PR systems, discrete "winners" do not emerge from electoral districts; rather, districts produce varying *degrees* of winners, those with more or fewer seats corresponding to a greater or lesser share of the vote. Only when the rules provide that single winners emerge from districts, and when the threshold to win is a plurality, does the concept of district-level minority winners have any practical relevance.

Within the domain of relevant electoral systems, some are national lower-house elections that rely on a pure SMD-plurality system, such as the systems used in Canada, the United Kingdom, and pre-1996 New Zealand. In other cases, national governments are elected via partial SMD-plurality systems, or "mixed-member" systems. For instance, in Germany's mixed-member proportional (MMP) system, a fixed number of seats, 299, are elected in SMDs under FPTP rules; the remaining seats are distributed in proportion to party-list votes, such that each party's total share of seats (single-member and party-list) matches its share of the party-list vote. If a party wins a greater share of seats than its share of the party-list vote (by winning "overhang" single-member seats), additional seats

are awarded to other parties to achieve proportionality.[7]

After a series of referendums in 1992 and 1993, New Zealand discarded its Westminster system and adopted a MMP system modeled on Germany's. The MMP system in New Zealand was first used in the 1996 parliamentary election, and has remained in effect thereafter. Currently, 72 of 120 seats in its unicameral parliament are elected in single-member districts.[8] The remaining seats, as in Germany, are distributed to parties according to their share of the party-list vote. If parties win more district seats than they are entitled to as indicated by their share of the party-list vote, they retain the overhang seats, which results in an increase in the total number of seats in the chamber. But in contrast to Germany, other parties do not receive additional seats to restore overall proportionality (Vowles 2006, 300).

In 1996, the same year New Zealand first held elections under the new MMP system, Japan held elections under a newly reformed system. In 1994, it replaced its single non-transferable vote (SNTV) system based on multi-member districts, with a majoritarian variant of the proportional mixed-member system used by Germany and New Zealand. Under Japan's mixed-member majoritarian system (MMM) system—sometimes referred to as a "parallel" system—the lower house of parliament is comprised of single-member district seats determined by FPTP rules, and party-list seats awarded proportionally. However, in contrast to Germany and New Zealand's MMP system, the proportional distribution of party-list seats is unaffected by the outcome of elections for district seats. For instance, a party that underperformed in district elections would not receive compensatory party-list

[7]Prior to 2013, no additional seats were applied to correct for imbalances created by overhang seats.
[8]Due to population changes, the number of single-member district seats has gradually increased from 65 in 1996.

seats to achieve a total representation matching its party-list proportional vote. Despite their differences, the mixed-member systems used in Germany, New Zealand, and Japan are similar inasmuch as they each elect members of parliament using a mix of constituency and party-list seats. Although the set of seats distributed proportionally via a party-list vote is not subject to an analysis of minority winners, the set of SMD-plurality seats is.

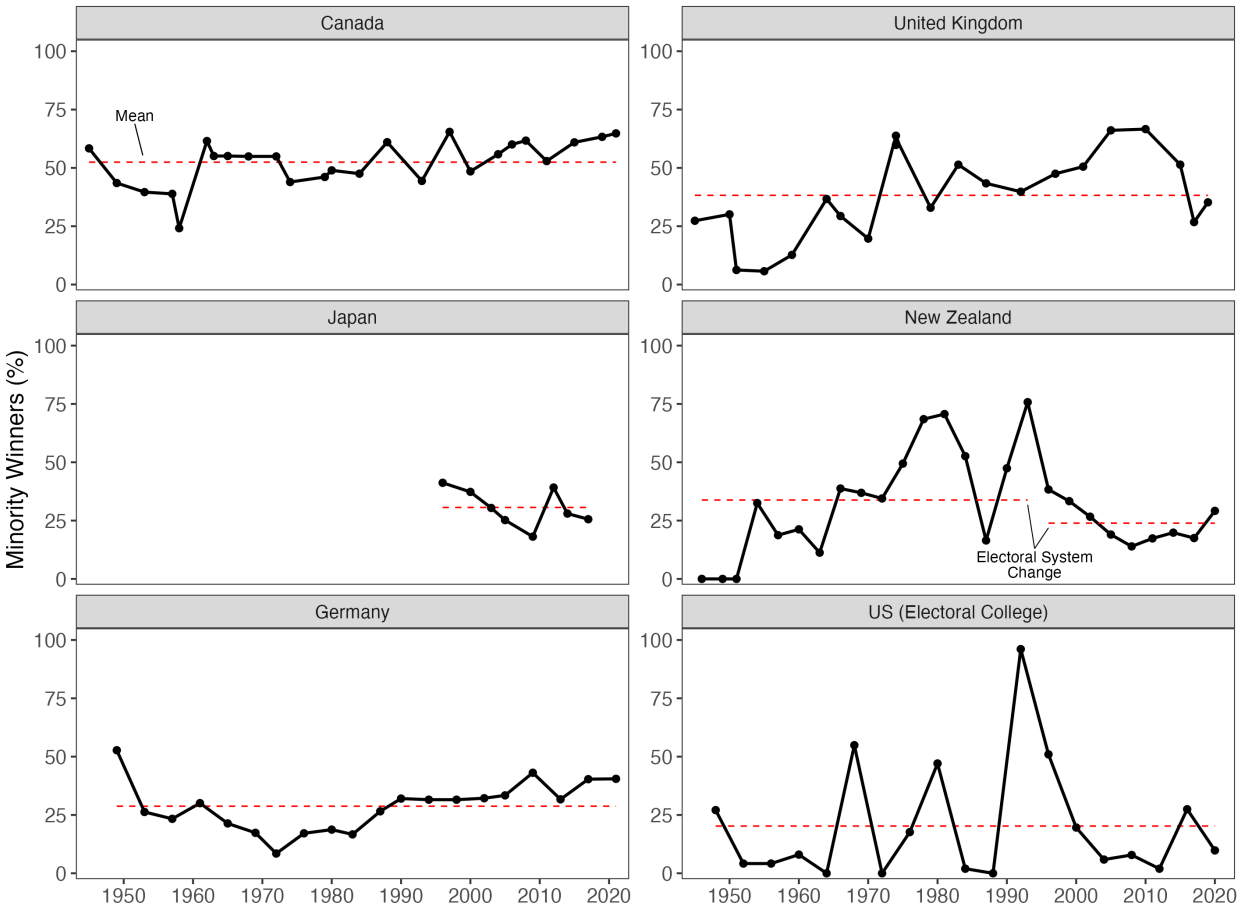
Figure 3.1 plots the percentage of district-level minority winners occurring in Canada, the United Kingdom, Germany, New Zealand, Japan, and the United States since 1945. For the three countries with mixed member systems (Germany, New Zealand, and Japan), the percentage of minority winners was calculated with the total number of parliamentary seats as the denominator, rather than the just the constituency seats. In the U.S. case, minority winners were calculated using state-level popular and Electoral College votes in presidential elections rather than for lower house elections, as was the case in the other five countries. That is, presidential candidates are coded as district-level minority winners when they win a state-wide election, and thus that states' slate of Electoral College electors, with a minority of the popular vote.[9]

As Figure 3.1 shows, minority rule at the district level is pervasive in the SMD-plurality systems of Canada, the United Kingdom, and (albeit to a lesser extent) pre-1996 New Zealand. Since 1945, an average of around 52% and 39% of all members of the Canadian and British House of Commons, respectively, have been elected to parliament with a minority share of the popular vote. In New Zealand, the average share of district-level minority winners in the era of the SMD-plurality system (1945-1993) was 34%. In

[9]Nebraska and Maine are excluded from the analysis because they do not award electors using a simple winner-take-all approach.

the mixed-member systems of Germany, Japan, and post-1996 New Zealand, where the percentage of minority winners is calculated as a share of the total number of seats in the lower parliamentary chamber (i.e., SMD seats *and* party-list seats), the rate of district-level minority winners is lower. This is not surprising, given that party-list seats cannot by definition produce minority winners.

Figure 3.1. Minority Winners in Canada, the UK, Germany, New Zealand, Japan, and the US



Data Sources: 2021 Canadian election data comes from Elections Canada, https://www.elections.ca/. US data comes from Dave Leip's Atlas of Presidential Elections (Leip 2024). All other data: Constituency-Level Elections Archive (CLEA) dataset (Kollman et al. 2019).

Still, the presence of minority winners in these three countries is not negligible. Since its first post-war election in 1949, an average of 29% of members to the German *Bundestag* have been elected without winning a majority of votes in their districts. After the 1996

switch to mixed-member systems in Japan and New Zealand, roughly 31% and 24% of MPs, respectively, have been minority winners. If the denominator is limited to just SMD seats, the average rate of minority winners is as high as 59% in Germany, followed by 49% in Japan and 42% in New Zealand. Finally, in an average year, presidential candidates in the United States win 20% of state-level elections with a minority of the vote. In 1992, a strong showing by third-party candidate Ross Perot caused the share of minority winners to reach 96%. All but two "districts" that year were decided by popular-vote minorities: strongly Democratic Washington D.C., which Bill Clinton won with nearly 85% of the vote, and Clinton's home state of Arkansas, which he won with 53% to George H.W. Bush's 35% of the vote.

Put another way, in 26 of the 98 parliamentary elections examined in Figure 3.1, a majority of candidates who won their district elections did so with minority support (Table 3.3). In these 26 elections, the resulting parliament was comprised of more minority winners than majority winners. In the case of the United States, the winning candidate in 3 of 19 presidential elections since 1945 (Nixon in 1968, Bush in 1992, and Clinton in 1996) won more states with a popular minority than with a popular majority. Thus, if we group the United States with the other five parliamentary democracies, nearly a quarter of elections produced this type of district-level minority rule. Remarkably, more than half of Canadian elections did so, and over a third of British elections.

Table 3.3. Elections with a Majority of Minority Winners (District Level)

		Majority-Minority	
Country	Elections	*n*	%
Canada	24	14	58.3
United Kingdom	20	7	35.0
United States (EC)	19	3	15.8
New Zealand	26	4	15.4
Germany	20	1	5.0
Japan	8	0	0.0
Total	117	29	24.8

Data Sources: 2021 Canadian election: Elections Canada, available at https://www.elections.ca/. US presidential elections: Dave Leip's Atlas of Presidential Elections (Leip 2024). All other elections data: Constituency-Level Elections Archive (CLEA) dataset (Kollman et al. 2019).

3.2.D. From "Minority Rule" to "Rule of the Fewer"

In Section 3.2.A., I outlined the majoritarian theory of democracy and, in particular, its critique of American political institutions. From the perspective of majoritarians, U.S. democracy is increasingly trending towards a form of minority rule, a tyranny of the minority. Assuming that minority rule is an affliction for which majority rule is the salve, we should find majority rule at work in the world's highest quality democracies. However, as I endeavored to show in Sections 3.2.B. and 3.2.C., minority rule predominates over majority rule in many otherwise strong, long-established democracies.

Where does this leave us? My aim is neither to reject the majoritarian theory of democracy, nor to dismiss its concerns about minority rule on substantive grounds. The point is, instead, to achieve a clearer understanding of the theoretical implications of electoral inversions for democracy. Although democracy is often equated with the principle of majority rule, and democratic legitimacy understood as flowing from the will of the majority, this reflects classical liberalism's idealized image of democracy more so than it does empirical reality. In practice, governments in modern democracies usually come to power

with the support of popular minorities. Therefore, if electoral inversions are in tension with the principles of democracy, it is not because electoral inversions bring about a condition of minority rule that conflicts irreconcilably with the principle of democratic majority rule.

I argue that electoral inversions *are* in tension with democracy, but for a different reason. While a majority of democratic elections produce governments that are representative of popular-vote *minorities*, most elections nevertheless produce outcomes that are representative of popular *pluralities*. That is, while electoral minorities normally prevail over majorities in contemporary democracies, the minority that prevails is almost always the "largest minority" (Sartori 1987, 136). From an empirical standpoint, then, "rule of the largest minority" offers a more accurate characterization of democracy than "rule of the majority." Weighed against this new criterion, the nature of electoral inversions comes into clearer focus: electoral inversions are in tension with democracy not because they represent an electoral outcome in which the minority prevails over the majority, but in which the smaller minority prevails over the larger. Electoral inversions are thus not merely the byproduct of counter*majoritarian* institutions, which protect the rights and interests of minorities by constraining the power of majorities (Alberts, Warshaw, and Weingast 2012); electoral inversions are counter*pluralitarian*, rewarding the Fewer at the expense of the More. In short, if minority rule is normatively undesirable, as the majoritarian theory of democracy holds, then the type of rule that electoral inversions create—*the rule of the fewer*—raises still more serious concerns.

3.3. "Rule of the Fewer" and Democratic Support

What are the implications of the rule of the fewer for democracy? That is, how do electoral inversions affect citizens' perceptions and evaluations of democracy? Do inversions cause people to lose faith in the ability of democratic institutions to function properly? Or does their confidence remain unshaken? We know that electoral inversions elicit disaffection with democracy among proponents of the majoritarian theory of democracy, but do electoral inversions have this effect among the wider public? These are the central questions to be addressed in the remainder of this dissertation.

At their heart, these questions are concerned with the relationship between electoral inversions and what David Easton has called "political support" (Easton 1965; 1975). The meaning of political support is as multifaceted as the concept of politics itself; there are as many potential types of political support as there are different aspects of the political world to which one can give or withhold one's support. Generally speaking, however, Easton identified three main types of political support corresponding to discrete levels of society: support for the political community, support for the regime, and support for political authorities. Support for the political community, typically regarded as the most general form of support, encompasses "general orientations toward belonging to a common nation, including enduring bonds typically expressed through feelings of patriotism, national pride, and a sense of national identity" (Norris 2011, 25). Support for the political community represents a form of *diffuse* support, meaning a persistent, long-term predisposition that is not sensitive to daily outputs. On the other end, the narrowest form of support is oriented towards political authorities. This refers to approval of particular officeholders, as distinct

from the offices themselves. In contradistinction to diffuse support, support for political authorities is a form of *specific* support, a short-term reaction that "flows from the favorable attitudes and predisposition stimulated by outputs that are perceived by members [of a political system] to meet their demands as they arise or in anticipation" (Easton 1965, 273).

Lying in between support for the political community and support for political authorities on the diffuse-specific continuum is support for the regime. It is this middle-level type of support that will be my chief focus. Given that I am interested in the effect of electoral inversions on regime support in the context of one type of regime in particular, democracy, I henceforth refer to it as *democratic support* (though I postpone the adoption of this terminological practice while I explicate Easton's theory of political support). As with support oriented towards the political community, regime support is diffuse in nature, albeit to a lesser degree. In its broadest formulation, it entails the conviction that "it is right and proper...to accept and obey the authorities and to abide by the requirements of the regime" (Easton 1965, 278). Easton refines this general definition of regime support by identifying three further sub-types, with each becoming progressively less diffuse: support for (1) regime principles, (2) norms and procedures, and (3) institutions.

The first of these refers to "principles and normative values upon which the regime is founded, reflecting beliefs about the legitimacy of the constitutional arrangements and the formal and informal rules of the game" (Norris 2011, 26). For instance, the belief that democracy is the best form of government exemplifies political support at the level of regime principles. Support for regime principles is followed by support for what Dalton (2004, 6,

39) calls "norms and procedures," which taps into "evaluations of system performance."[10] As opposed to being concerned with the abstract principles and values that motivate normative commitments to particular political systems, this level of regime support consists of perceptions about the actual functioning those political systems. A paradigmatic indicator of regime support at the level of norms and procedures is satisfaction with the way democracy is working. With a final contraction of the lens, we move from evaluations of political systems to evaluations of particular institutions within those systems, such as the legislature, executive, judiciary, as well as parties and electoral institutions (Norris 2011, 29). In Chapters 4 and 5, I examine the effects of electoral inversions on each of these three dimensions of regime support.

3.3.A. Electoral Inversions and the "Winner-Loser Gap"

While several studies have examined the effect of electoral inversions on electoral system reforms (Farrelly 2009; Flinders 2010; Renwick 2009; Shugart 2008; Siaroff 2003), research on the effects of electoral inversions on democratic support is virtually non-existent. There are two exceptions, however, and both are studies of electoral inversions in United States. In one study, Craig et al. (2006) examine how Florida voters responded to the 2000 U.S. presidential election, which—though they do not explicitly identify it as such—was an electoral inversions. They observe that Bush voters emerged from the election more satisfied with democracy, and more sanguine about the fairness of U.S. elections, than Gore voters. The authors hint at the possibility that this gap in satisfaction was exacerbated by the perception among Gore voters that the outcome, in which their candidate's popular vote

[10] While Norris (2011, 24-25, 28-29) labels this level of regime support "evaluations of the overall performance of the regime," her characterization is not substantively different from what Dalton calls "regime norms and procedures."

victory did not translate into an Electoral College victory, was decided unfairly. However, because the study design does not permit straightforward cross-election comparisons, it is it difficult to disentangle whether the negativity of Gore voters was a consequence of the electoral inversion that year, or if it reflected a more general predisposition of Democratic voters.

In a more recent study, Carey et al. (2021) use an online survey experiment to test the effect of electoral inversions on perceptions of democratic legitimacy. Despite the study's limitations, it contributes two important findings.[11] First, electoral inversions are shown to negatively affect the perceived legitimacy of Electoral College winners. Second, however, the decrease in the perceived legitimacy of inversion Electoral College winners is driven almost entirely by respondents who identify as Democrats. Carey et al. (2021) interpret the latter finding as reflecting Democrats' experience of being on the losing end of two recent electoral inversions.

Although Craig et al. (2006) and Carey et al. (2021) adopt different methodological approaches to answer slightly different research questions, both are premised on a similar theoretical expectation—namely, that the effects of electoral inversions will not be evenly spread across the electorate, but will instead depend to a significant degree on whether an individual voted for the winning or losing party. Analyzing the effect of an explanatory variable—in this case, electoral inversions—on attitudes towards democracy by way of the mediating variable of winning and losing is a well-established empirical approach, and is one that I adopt here. Beyond Craig et al. (2006) and Carey et al. (2021), no other studies

[11] The (understandable) limitations include a reliance on experimental data without corroborating observational data, and on a single country-case (the United States).

to my knowledge have analyzed the conditional effect of electoral inversions on winning and losing.[12] However, there is a vast literature that studies the effects of winning and losing on a variety of different attitudes and behaviors associated with democracy.

These range from turnout (Kostelka and Blais 2018), protest potential (Anderson and Mendes 2006; Anderson et al. 2005), support for coups (Cohen et al. 2023), and terrorism (Piazza 2022); to perceptions of freedoms (Monsiváis-Carrillo 2020), democratic legitimacy (Carey et al. 2021; Moehler and Lindberg 2009; Sances 2023), confidence in the judiciary (Böhringer and Boucher 2024), electoral integrity (Cantú and García-Ponce 2015; Daniller and Mutz 2019; Fisher and Sällberg 2020; Fortin-Rittberger, Harfst, and Dingler 2017; Levy 2021; Mochtak, Lesschaeve, and Glaurdić 2021; Mongrain 2023; Sances and Stewart 2015; Schnaudt 2023; Sinclair, Smith, and Tucker 2018), procedural fairness (Werner and Marien 2022), and perceived ideological congruence (Best and Seyis 2021); to support for electoral reforms (Bowler and Donovan 2007), democratic principles (Anderson et al. 2005; Cohen et al. 2023), and civil liberties and horizontal accountability (Singer 2018); to trust in government (Anderson and LoTempio 2002) and democratic institutions (Hooghe and Stiers 2016; Mauk 2022); and finally, to feelings of political efficacy (Anderson and Tverdova 2001; Anderson et al. 2005; Davis 2014; Kim 2021) and acceptance of electoral loss (Nadeau and Blais 1993; Tilley and Hobolt 2023).

However, no political behavior or attitude has garnered more attention in the literature on winner-loser effects than satisfaction with democracy. In the literature, satisfaction with democracy has become a conventional indicator of political support, defined as the

[12] And, for what it is worth, the primary focus of Craig et al. (2006) is not the effect of electoral inversions *per se*.

"the belief that the political system (or some part of it) will generally produce 'good' outcomes" (Anderson et al. 2005, 19). For decades, moreover, satisfaction with democracy has been included as a standard item in many national and cross-national surveys. In its most common formulation, respondents are asked, "On the whole, are you very satisfied, fairly satisfied, not very satisfied, or not at all satisfied with the way democracy works in [country]?" Despite a long-simmering debate about the exact dimension of political support this question taps into, scholars generally understand it as eliciting an evaluative judgment about the performance of institutional democratic processes—and specifically, about the way these institutions and process are performing *in practice* (Dalton 2004; Linde and Ekman 2003, 39). Therefore, it is typically understood as corresponding to Easton's second level of regime support, which pertains to norms and procedures.

In the past twenty-five years, there have been more than fifty published works—books, chapters, and/or journal articles—focused at least in part on winner-loser effects on satisfaction with democracy. Among the earliest and most influential was a study by Anderson and Guillory (1997), which found that being an electoral winner (voting for the winning side in an election) tends to increase satisfaction with democracy relative to electoral losers (voters of the losing candidates or parties). This finding, which has come to be known as the "winner-loser gap" in satisfaction with democracy, has proven to be one of most durable in political science of the past twenty-five years. Dozens of follow-up studies have corroborated Anderson and Guillory's (1997) basic finding of a winner-loser gap in satisfaction with democracy. But subsequent work has also expanded on it two important ways: first, by scrutinizing the underlying mechanisms that drive winner-loser effects on satisfaction with democracy, and second, by examining macro- and micro-level conditions

that mediate it.

Mechanisms

Explanations of the winner-losing gap in satisfaction with democracy primarily center on two possible mechanisms, the instrumental mechanism and the affective mechanism (Anderson et al. 2005).[13] First, elections have an *instrumental* value to voters because electoral outcomes determine the likelihood that a voter's preferred policies will be enacted. Since being on the winning side of an election increases that likelihood, and assuming that voters derive greater satisfaction with the democratic process from seeing their policy preferences acted on rather than thwarted, it follows that individuals who vote for the winning side will hold more positive evaluations of the democratic process than those who vote for the losing side. Accordingly, the gap in satisfaction with democracy is less a direct consequence of winning or losing *per se* than it is a byproduct of the disparity in actual or expected policy rewards accruing to winners and losers.

Second, winners may be more satisfied with democracy than losers, not because of the material benefits that electoral victory confers, but because of the positive emotional feelings associated with winning and the negative emotions that come with losing. According to this argument, the experiences of winning and losing are primarily *affective* ones, and thus the degree to which voters perceive the democratic process to be working satisfactorily is a function of this affective response. Basically, the case for the affective mechanism rests on two discrete claims: (1) that winning engenders positive feelings, and losing unpleasant ones; and (2) that these feelings are more powerful than material policy rewards in shaping

[13] Anderson et al. (2005, 23-27) call these the utilitarian and affective responses. They include a third, the cognitive consistency response, that has not figured prominently in the literature.

citizens' evaluative judgments about the functioning of democracy.

Mediating Variables

Whereas the objective in research on causal mechanisms is to explain *why* winning elections makes people more satisfied with democracy compared with losing them, the aim of another subset of the literature is to determine the conditions under which winning and losing have a greater or lesser effect on satisfaction with democracy. These conditions, or mediating variables, fall into three overarching groups: macro-level variables, micro-level variables, and temporal variables.

Macro-level conditions encompass variables that vary across countries and elections, rather than across individuals. One possibility is that the effects of winning and losing on satisfaction with democracy depend on the nature of political institutions. Theoretically, institutions matter because they set the rules governing political competition, which shapes the incentives, rewards, and behaviors of the political actors. For instance, the degree to which a country's political institutions employ a consensus design, rather than a majoritarian one, is thought to decrease the winner-loser gap in satisfaction (Aarts and Thomassen 2008; Anderson and Guillory 1997; Anderson et al. 2005; Bernauer and Vatter 2012; Farrer and Zingher 2019; Ferland 2015; Lijphart 2012; Martini and Quaranta 2019; Merkley et al. 2019; Sanders et al. 2014). This is because consensus democracies incorporate institutional features that protect, or promote the inclusion of, electoral losers to a degree not found in majoritarian democracies. Similar arguments are made about the role of direct democracy institutions—which tend to be more extensive in consensus systems—in narrowing the winner-loser gap (Bernauer and Vatter 2012; Leemann and Stadelmann-Steffen 2022).

Other institutional variables that may condition the effects of winning and losing on satisfaction with democracy include the quality of a country's democracy (Dahlberg and Linde 2016; Martini and Quaranta 2019; Nadeau, Daoust, and Dassonneville 2021; Reher 2015) the age of its democracy (Anderson and Tverdova 2001; Anderson et al. 2005; Chang, Chu, and Wu 2014; Fortin-Rittberger, Harfst, and Dingler 2017; Reher 2015), electoral turnovers (Moehler and Lindberg 2009), government system fractionalization (Christmann and Torcal 2018), the competitiveness of elections (Singh, Lago, and Blais 2011), and the oversight power of legislative institutions (Wang 2021). Still other research investigates the mediating effects of macro-level variables not directly related to political institutions, such as economic inequality (Han and Chang 2016), economic performance (Martini and Quaranta 2019), sociotropic ideological congruence (Mayne and Hakhverdian 2017), and the perceived character valences of governing and opposition parties (Leiter, Clark, and Clark 2019).

Satisfaction with democracy among winners and losers is also affected by individual-level variables. In the literature, these fall into two main categories. The first includes individual characteristics related, broadly speaking, to voter perceptions. For instance, voters who think there are no meaningful differences between their country's political parties are less satisfied with democracy than those who perceive the parties to be different (Ridge 2022*b*). Negative partisans (both winners and losers) are also less satisfied with democracy relative to citizens who do not hold strong negative perceptions of rival political parties (Ridge 2022*a*). Though negative partisanship depresses satisfaction generally, it heightens winner-loser effects: differences in satisfaction between winners and losers are greater among negative partisans, a gap driven primarily by unsatisfied negative partisan

losers (Ridge 2022*a*). This echoes Anderson et al.'s (2005, 80-81) earlier finding that strong partisanship (measured as the feeling of closeness to the party with which respondents identify) augments the winner-loser gap. Inclusive discourse, on the other hand, is thought to reduce the winner-loser gap by elevating losers' satisfaction. In a simulated election campaign, Merkley et al. (2019) find that losers who perceive that the election discourse covered issues they care about are more satisfied with democracy than losers who feel their concerns were ignored.

Furthermore, perceiving oneself to be well-represented by one's political parties has been shown to increase satisfaction with democracy among winners and losers. This is the case whether representation is conceived of in terms of ideological congruence (Broderstad 2023; Curini, Jou, and Memoli 2012; Hobolt, Hoerner, and Rodon 2021),[14] policy congruence (Ferland 2021; Gärtner, Gavras, and Schoen 2020), priority congruence (Reher 2015), optimality (Singh 2014),[15] coalition ambivalence (Singh and Thornton 2016),[16] or racial resentments (Enders and Thornton 2022). Moreover, in the case of policy and ideology, congruence appears to decrease the gap in satisfaction between winners and losers in addition to increasing overall levels of satisfaction (Curini, Jou, and Memoli 2012; Gärtner, Gavras, and Schoen 2020).

The second category of individual-level variables encompasses different *types* of winners and losers. Howell and Justwan (2013) find a negative relationship between margin of victory and satisfaction among winners, indicating that narrow winners derive greater

[14]However, Singh, Lago, and Blais (2011) find that ideological congruence does not affect satisfaction with democracy.

[15]Singh's optimality variable is an additive index comprised of ideological congruence, affinity, and party identification (with respect to the party respondents voted for).

[16]Coalition ambivalence is defined as a situation in which "citizens who strongly favor one of the parties [in a coalition] have unfavorable feelings toward another" (Singh and Thornton 2016, 115).

satisfaction from victory than resounding winners. Distinguishing between major-party coalition winners and minor-party coalition winners also affects the size of the winner-loser gap. Voters of the party that leads a government coalition are twice as satisfied as voters of a minority party in a government coalition (Christmann and Torcal 2018), and satisfaction for the latter group is indistinguishable from losers (Blais, Morin-Chassé, and Singh 2017). Gender also moderates the winner-loser gap, which is smaller among female winners/losers than males (Williams, Snipes, and Singh 2021). In addition, Blais and Gélineau (2007), Hollander (2014), and Mongrain (2023) assess whether expectations about the outcome of the election moderate the winner-loser gap, but find little to no differences in satisfaction between surprised and unsurprised winners/losers.

Additional winner-loser types can be derived from the particularities of different electoral institutions. In France's two-round system for presidential elections, no difference in satisfaction emerges between first-round and second-round winners/losers (Beaudonnet et al. 2014). The evidence is mixed as to whether being a district-level winner/loser compared with national-level winner/loser conditions the winner-loser gap. Henderson (2008) and Beaudonnet et al. (2014) conclude that winning at the district level exerts little to no effect on satisfaction independently of winning at the national level. However, Blais and Gélineau (2007) find that voting for a winning party at the constituency-level even if that party is a loser at the national level, and vice versa, increases satisfaction at comparable levels to winning at both levels. Similarly, Singh, Karakoç, and Blais (2012) show that winning (losing) German state-level elections in North Rhine-Westphalia increases (decreases) satisfaction with both local democracy and with German democracy as a whole. Winners and losers can be further distinguished in Germany's mixed-member electoral system by

their party list and district votes. Rich and Treece (2018) find a larger satisfaction gap between district-vote winners/losers compared with party-list winners/losers. Similarly, in the context of Belgium's flexible-list PR system, Bol et al. (2018) show that preference-vote losers are less satisfied with democracy than party-list voters, though preference-vote winners are not more satisfied than their party-list counterparts.

Finally, time offers another dimension for categorizing types of winners and losers. Analyses of the effects of winning and losing over two or more election cycles suggest that repeated losing depresses political support (Kern and Kölln 2022). Repeated losers are less satisfied than repeat winners, past losers–present winners, as well as past winners–present losers (Chang, Chu, and Wu 2014; Delgado 2016). Along these lines, Curini, Jou, and Memoli (2012) find that being a present loser (but not a present winner) moderates the gap in satisfaction between past winners and losers. In the context of satisfaction with local democracy in Denmark, however, only voters who switch from being a winner in the past to a loser in the present exhibit significant shifts in satisfaction (Hansen, Klemmensen, and Serritzlew 2019). Reinforcing the conclusion that past experiences with winning and losing continue to matter in the present, Dahlberg and Linde (2017) and Loveless (2021) both find that winner-loser effects on satisfaction with democracy are stable over time. The implication, according to Dahlberg and Linde (2017, 638), is that the experiences of winning and losing are not temporary reactions to particular electoral outcomes, but instead reflect a "relatively long-lasting aspect of how voters regard the functioning of the democratic system."

To summarize thus far: the winner-loser gap in democratic support is the subject of a robust literature that has emerged over the past twenty-five years, and which has

convincingly shown that winning increases democratic support while losing decreases it. Beyond this core finding, the literature also provides a detailed picture of the contextual factors—macro-level, micro-level, and temporal—that interact with the winner-loser gap in satisfaction with democracy in particular, and with democratic support more generally. Notwithstanding this breadth and depth, little is known about the effects of winning and losing on democratic support in the context of electoral inversions. To the extent that scholars have analyzed electoral inversions, they have primarily done so with an eye towards the explanatory factors that produce inversion outcomes. As a result, not only do scholars lack a detailed picture of where and when electoral inversions have occurred empirically—a gap which I addressed in the previous chapter—but they lack theory and evidence about the effects of electoral inversions on citizens' democratic support. The next section addresses the theory aspect of that equation; Chapters 4 and 5 then turn to the evidence component.

3.3.B. Theory and Hypotheses

An election is a mechanism for making a collective political decision about who will govern through the aggregation of individual preferences expressed through votes. An important aspect of what makes an election *democratic* is its adherence to the principle of voting equality. Voting equality requires not only that all citizens be accorded an equal opportunity to register their preferences at the ballot box, but also that all votes be counted equally so that the preferences of some citizens are not given greater weight than others (Dahl 1998, 37). The latter stipulation—the "equal weight" principle of voting equality—yields a corollary proposition: after all votes have been tallied, the alternative with the most votes is necessarily the alternative with the greater "weight of value"(Sartori 1987,

138). That is, the equal weight principle implies that the outcome of an election should be determined "by the greater number expressing their preferences in the 'last say'" (Dahl and Lindblom 1953, 41).

Even if the principle that all votes should count equally in determining electoral outcomes—and therefore, that elections should be decided in the greater number's favor—were to rest on sound theoretical grounds, is it a principle on which citizens generally agree? The available evidence suggests that it is. In a recent study covering fifteen West European democracies, Blais et al. (2021) analyze the kinds of electoral outcomes that citizens think are good for democracy. The results show that the more votes won by the parties in government, the more favorably citizens in these countries evaluate the electoral outcome. Overall, "West Europeans think that a good outcome for democracy is one with few governing parties that enjoy a majority of parliamentary seats and a large vote share" (Blais et al. 2021, 17). Similarly, Plescia and Eberl (2021, 108) find that Austrians "accept the norm that the party with the most votes should lead the next government." An earlier study of citizens in four countries—Austria, Canada, Germany, and Spain—likewise found that although "a party entering the government unequivocally augments perceptions that the supported party has won the election, the performance of the party in terms of votes (and especially in comparison to the previous election) has an equally strong impact" (Plescia 2019, 798).

Furthermore, in an analysis of how winners and losers are framed in the media in 16 European countries, Gattermann, Meyer, and Wurzer (2021, 10) find that the largest vote-winning party is "more likely to be seen as an election winner." In the United States, meanwhile, a majority of surveyed Americans report that it is important or essential for

democracy that "all votes have equal impact on election outcomes" (Carey et al. 2019), which is logically equivalent to saying that the preferences of the greater number in an election should prevail.[17] In short, voters in presidential and parliamentary systems alike seem to associate winning with securing the most votes, which suggests that people place normative value on electoral outcomes in which greater number's preferences prevail.

What happens when the preferences of the *lesser* number prevail? All else equal, I expect that electoral inversions will negatively impact voters' levels of democratic support. This expectation derives from three assumptions. First, as I detailed above, I assume that citizens in democracies generally prefer electoral outcomes that express the will of the greater number. Second, I assume that this preference is grounded in a normative conception of electoral fairness. In other words, people dislike inversion governments because they are perceived as an unfair, and ultimately undemocratic, electoral outcome. Third, to the extent that people perceive electoral inversions as unfair electoral outcomes, I assume that this perception will inform their performance evaluations of democratic institutions, and ultimately, their support for democracy as a political system. Prior studies suggest that perceptions of unfairness have a negative effect on perceptions of political legitimacy (Erlingsson, Linde, and Öhrvall 2014; Levi, Sacks, and Tyler 2009), on the acceptance of and compliance with political decisions (Esaiasson 2010; Grimes 2006), and on system support (Linde 2012; Magalhães 2016). What is more, "perceived violations of democratic requirements" have also been shown to decrease satisfaction with democracy (Esaiasson 2011, 111). Taking these three assumptions together, electoral inversions should, all else equal, reduce democratic support.

[17] Admittedly, whether respondents recognize this logical equivalence is another matter.

However, all else is not equal, because elections invariably work to the benefit of some and to the detriment of others. This was the key insight of the winner-loser gap literature—that the way voters react to elections depends on their status as winners or losers. But taking electoral inversions into consideration introduces an added layer of complexity to winner-loser status. In the context of electoral inversions, not only can winners and losers be identified according to whether or not an individual voted for a party that entered government and therefore "won" the election, but they can also be differentiated by the popular vote result. What follows is a four-category indicator of winner-loser status, which is summarized in Figure 3.2. *Losing winners* (LWs) are voters who voted for a party that won the election but lost the popular vote;[18] *winning losers* (WLs) are voters who voted for a party that won the popular vote but lost the election; *losing losers* are voters who voted for a party that lost the election and the popular vote; and *winning winners* (WWs) are voters who voted for a party that won the election and the popular vote. Disaggregating winner/loser status into these four categories makes it possible to formulate theoretical expectations about the conditioning effects of electoral inversions on the relationship between winning, losing, and democratic support.

Figure 3.2. Winner-Loser Status in Electoral Inversions

		Vote for party that...	
		Wins Election	Loses Election
Vote for party that...	Wins Vote	**W**inning **W**inner	**W**inning **L**oser
	Loses Vote	**L**osing **W**inner	**L**osing **L**oser

[18]In the context of coalition government, LWs voted for a party that entered government (and therefore "won" the election) in a coalition with parties with a losing vote share. That is, the coalition's collective share of the vote was less than an opposition party's.

Winners

What effect, if any, can electoral inversions be expected to have on winners? One possibility is that winning in the context of an electoral inversion has a negative effect on democratic support. This would mean that electoral inversions reduce democratic support even among those who benefit from the inversion result. This might occur if, for instance, an inversion takes place in the context of an already frustrated electorate inclined to view an inversion not only as unfair, but as part of a broader electoral system failure. Although this account is plausible, it seems more likely that the self-interestedness of voters will prevail over any broader sense of an electoral inversion's normative undesirability. That is, I expect that the utility that voters derive from winning—which could be instrumental, affective, or both—will outweigh any abstract sense of who, as a matter of fairness, ought to have won the election. Thus, inversion winners (LWs) should not be *less* supportive of democracy than non-inversion winners (WW)s.

Even if electoral inversions do not negatively affect winners' levels of democratic support, is there reason to think that electoral inversions might strengthen winners' support? A second possibility therefore is that LWs will be *more* supportive than WWs. It could be, for instance, that victory is sweeter when it is unexpected or achieved despite improbable odds. Or perhaps the realization that one's preferred party can win or retain power without the inconvenience of having to outcompete its rivals for popular support imparts an added sense of gratification. Hence electoral inversions might leave winners giddy with excitement about having won an election that they "should" have lost. This line of thinking implies that the mechanism linking electoral outcomes to democratic support is primarily affective. But from an instrumental point of view, where the effects of winning are linked to the

material benefits associated with electoral victory, winning in the context of an inversion is effectively indistinguishable from winning a non-inversion election.

The evidence on these two mechanisms is inconsistent. Support for the instrumental mechanism can be found in studies showing that winner-loser effects on political support depend on ideological congruence (Broderstad 2023; Curini, Jou, and Memoli 2012; Hobolt, Hoerner, and Rodon 2021), policy congruence (Ferland 2021; Gärtner, Gavras, and Schoen 2020), priority congruence (Reher 2015), coalition ambivalence (Singh and Thornton 2016), and voting for a major-party coalition winner rather than its junior partner (Blais, Morin-Chassé, and Singh 2017; Christmann and Torcal 2018). Taken together, the findings of these studies suggest that democratic support increases when voters perceive the election winner(s) to be more closely aligned with, and thus more likely to govern in accordance with, their political preferences. Hence, these studies demonstrate the instrumental value of winning. On the other hand, studies showing that winner-loser effects are conditioned by levels of partisan attachment (Anderson et al. 2005; Ridge 2022*a*; Singh 2014), the (popular vote) margin of victory (Howell and Justwan 2013), and racial resentment (Enders and Thornton 2022) lend support to the affective mechanism, since these variables are unlikely to bear on the concrete benefits voters expect to derive from winning.

Ultimately, however, the instrumental mechanism seems to offer the more compelling rationale for the effects of winning on democratic support in the context of electoral inversions. There are two reasons for this. First, unlike the experience of losing in electoral inversions, which entails a sense of having been unfairly denied victory, there is no equivalent manner in which inversion winners have been fairly rewarded. Second, this in turn creates an opening for winners to instead focus on the more immediate, tangible policy

rewards that they expect will accrue to them through victory. Accordingly, just as I do not expect inversions to negatively affect the democratic support of winners, I also do not anticipate that inversions will have a positive impact. In other words, all else equal, I hypothesize that winners will be unaffected by electoral inversions.

Losers

In contrast to the situation of winners, whose democratic support I anticipate will be unaltered by electoral inversions, there is reason to think that losers will not be similarly unaffected. Support among losers who would have won if not for the electoral inversion (WLs), I argue, should be less than among losers whose party lost the popular vote (LLs). As dozens of prior studies have shown, electoral loss exerts a negative impact on a wide variety of political support indicators, and in a variety of institutional contexts. In the case of electoral inversions, I anticipate that the pre-existing negative effect of losing will be further compounded by the violation of the normative expectation that elections should give expression to the preferences of the greater number. In other words, on top of being dissatisfied with a process that produced an undesirable result, WLs should be further disaffected with a process that they perceive as having been produced by an *erroneous*, *unfair*, or *undemocratic* result.

As is the case with winning, the instrumental consequences of losing in inversion and non-inversion elections remain the same: losers—whether *winning losers* or *losing losers*—are unlikely to see their preferred policies enacted. However, an inversion-induced loss entails a perceived wrong for which the experience of winning has no analog. Whereas WLs have grounds to claim that an injustice has been done, there are no parallel grounds on which LWs have a plausible, opposite claim that justice *has* been done. Consequently,

while inversions are not expected to influence democratic support among electoral winners, I do expect that they will affect losers. Underlying these two expectations are different assumptions about the mechanism linking electoral outcomes (winning and losing in inversion and non-inversion elections) to democratic support outcomes (increased, decreased, or unchanged support). As noted above, I assume that the instrumental mechanism drives the relationship between winning and democratic support. But in supposing that WLs react differently to losing than LLs do in non-inversion elections, I am suggesting that the affective mechanism is more important for the experience of losing.

To summarize, then, I anticipate that while electoral inversions will not yield more or less supportive winners, they *will* condition the effect of losing, causing WLs to express lower levels of democratic support than LLs. Assuming further that both types of winners will be more supportive than both types of losers, the relationships between the four winner-loser types can be expressed in following set of inequalities, with "DS" signifying democratic support:

$$WW_{DS} = LW_{DS} > LL_{DS} > WL_{DS}$$

Two important implications follow from these rankings. First, the difference in support between LWs and WLs should be greater than the difference between WWs and LLs. In other words, electoral inversions should create a losing-winner–winning-loser (LW–WL) gap that is greater than the winning-winner–losing-loser (WW–LL) gap. Second, the widening of the LW–WL gap relative to the WW–LL gap should be driven primarily by a decrease in satisfaction among WLs, rather than by any upward shift in satisfaction among LWs. These considerations yield a set of two testable hypotheses:

H1: The LW–WL gap in democratic support will be larger than the WW–LL gap.

H2: The increase in the LW–WL gap will be driven by less supportive WLs (relative to LLs) rather than by more supportive LWs (relative to WWs).

3.4. Conclusion

In the remaining two chapters, I test these hypotheses with cross-country analyses that address three different types of democratic support, each corresponding to a level of Easton's tripartite classification of regime support: (1) principles, (2) norms and procedures, and (3) institutions. Chapter 4 addresses the middle level of democratic support—norms and procedures—in the context of Canada. Using data from seven recent Canadian parliamentary elections—two of which, 2019 and 2021, produced inversions—I analyze the effects of winning and losing in electoral inversions on satisfaction with democracy. Chapter 5 turns to a different country case, the United States, with a different set of indicators for democratic support: support for regime principles and perceptions of electoral integrity. The former refers straightforwardly to the first and most abstract level of regime support; the latter provides an indicator of support for regime institutions, the third level of regime support in Easton's schema.

Chapter 4

Consecutive Electoral Inversions and Satisfaction with Democracy in Canada

Leading up to the parliamentary elections of October 2015, the new leader of the Liberal Party, Justin Trudeau, had the unenviable task of revitalizing a party whose showing in the last election was, by all accounts, a disaster. In 2011, the Liberals lost more than half of their seats in parliament and in so doing emerged as the third largest parliamentary party. This marked the first time in the Liberal Party's history they had been relegated to third place. By the summer of 2015, there was additional cause for concern: public opinion polls began showing waning support for the Liberals amid surging support for the New Democratic Party (NDP).

Against this backdrop, Trudeau appeared at a "campaign-style" event (official campaigning is prohibited until the start of the campaign period, designated in this case for August 4) in Ottawa on June 16, 2015. The appearance, unremarkable in most other respects, made headlines when Trudeau unexpectedly promised that, if elected, he and his party would pursue electoral reform. "We are committed to ensuring," he pronounced, "that the 2015 election will be the last federal election using first-past-the post." What Canada's first-past-the-post (FPTP) elections would be replaced by, whether proportional representation or an alternative vote (AV) system using ranked ballots, Trudeau would not

reveal. The question would be "fully and fairly studied," a verdict to be rendered "within 18 months of forming a government" (Barton 2015).

The Liberals went on to win a parliamentary majority in October, and Trudeau became Prime Minister. But despite Trudeau's professed commitment, 2015 would not be the last federal election using the FPTP system. Two years after his initial pledge, Trudeau abandoned his party's electoral reform efforts altogether, citing a lack of society-wide consensus. Still, that he made the pledge in the first place was revealing. On the one hand, the promise of electoral reform could be read as a last-ditch bid to jump-start a flagging campaign. It could also be seen as a cynical but predictable response to a set of electoral rules by a party that, having just suffered a major loss, perceived those rules as electorally disadvantageous. In this interpretation, the Liberal Party merely joined the ranks of other minor Canadian parties that are disadvantaged under the current rules and that have long called for electoral reform, such as the NDP. But whatever its underlying motivations, Trudeau's pro-reform appeal was addressed to a perceived demand. That is, the promise of electoral reform was designed, at least in part, to resonate with an electorate frustrated by an electoral system that has an uncommon knack for generating unrepresentative results.

Perhaps the clearest indication of this unrepresentativeness is the frequency with which Canadian parliamentary elections result in electoral inversions. Since 1900, five Canadian elections have produced inversions. That is, in 5 of the 36 general elections held in Canada between 1900 and 2022 (a rate of one inversion for every seven elections), the party that won the most votes nationally has lost the election, and the party that won the election lost the vote. As Chapter 2 showed, Canada's five inversions corresponds to

the fourth highest rate of electoral inversions of the 28 democracies analyzed. Canada ranks second, however, in terms of inversions in the postwar period, with four of its five inversions occurring after 1945. This chapter examines what effects electoral inversions in Canada have on Canadian voters' satisfaction with democracy. I begin Section 4.1 by reviewing the five Canadian parliamentary elections that produced inversions, followed by an examination of the factors that contributed to the inversion outcomes. In Section 4.2, I discuss the expected relationship between electoral inversions and satisfaction with democracy in Canada, and how this relationship follows from Canadian's stated preferences for majoritarian (or at least pluralitarian) democracy. Next, Section 4.3 discusses the data, variables, and methodological approach that I employ to estimate the effects of electoral inversions on Canadians' satisfaction with democracy. Finally, I discuss my findings in Section 4.4.

4.1. Canadian Inversions in Context

The results of the five Canadian elections that produced inversions are summarized in Table 4.1. Beginning with the first of these five, the election of 1925 stands out as the only Canadian election in which the winning party was a loser in both votes and seats. Under the leadership of incumbent Prime Minister W. L. Mackenzie King, the Liberal Party won 99 seats in October 1925—17 fewer seats than the 116 they held prior to the election—and just under 40 percent of the vote. Meanwhile, Arthur Meighen's Conservatives saw its parliamentary standing improve significantly from the last election in 1921. After winning just 50 seats and 30 percent of the vote in 1921, the Tories grew to 116 seats on 46.5 percent of the vote in 1925. This improvement largely came at the expense of the agrarian

Progressive Party, which saw its parliamentary representation decline from 64 to 24 seats and its popular support decline from 23 to 9 percent of the vote.

Despite emerging from the election with pluralities in both votes and seats (albeit narrow ones), the Conservatives were still 7 seats shy of a majority. Consequently, Meighen lacked the requisite support in the House of Commons to form a government. The Liberals were lacking in the same regard, however. But rather than step aside and give the largest parliamentary party an opportunity to form a government, as convention dictated, a defiant King worked to secure the support of the Progressive Party and its 24 members. Ultimately, with the Progressives' backing, King was able to remain in office—at least for another 8 months.[1]

Table 4.1. Results of Five Inversions in Canadian Parliamentary Elections

	Winner				Runner Up[a]			All Losers	
Year	Leader (PM)	Party	Votes (%)	Seats (%)	Party	Votes (%)	Seats (%)	Votes (%)	Seats (%)
2021	J. Trudeau	Liberal	32.7	47.3	Conservative	33.8	35.2	66.6	52.7
2019	J. Trudeau	Liberal	33.1	46.5	Conservative	34.3	35.8	66.5	53.5
1979	Clark	Progressive Conservative	35.9	48.2	Liberal	40.1	40.4	63.1	51.8
1957	Diefenbaker	Progressive Conservative	39.0	42.3	Liberal	42.3	39.6	59.8	57.7
1925	King	Liberal	39.9	40.4	Conservative	46.5	47.4	60.1	59.6

[a] The runner up party is defined in terms of votes rather than seats—i.e., it is the losing party that won the greatest share of the vote.
Data Source: Constituency-Level Elections Archive (CLEA) dataset (Kollman et al. 2019).

In contrast to 1925, the inversions that occurred in the elections of 1957, 1979, 2019, and 2021 involved winning parties that, though lacking a popular-vote plurality, never-

[1]King was eventually forced out of office due to a scandal known as the King-Byng Affair affair.

theless obtained the most parliamentary seats. Thus whereas the inversion result in 1925 hinged on inter-party negotiations conducted in the aftermath of the election between the Liberals and Progressives, the four later inversions arose, so to speak, from the election results in and of themselves. That is, the largest parliamentary (seat-winning) party to emerge from the election—which happened not to be the largest electoral (vote-winning) party—was permitted to form a government, as was their prerogative by convention. In 1957 and 1979, it was the Tories that exercised this prerogative; in 2019 and 2021, it was the Liberals.

What underlying factors explain how the Tories (in 1957 and 1979) and the Liberals (in 2019 and 2021) could win the most parliamentary seats without winning the most votes? Electoral inversions are highly contingent events, the product of a complex interaction of variables, such as the size of the party system and the dominance of the main parties; the geographic dispersion of parties' support bases (Calvo and Rodden 2015); and institutional rules governing district magnitude and electoral formulae. Generally speaking, however, in the context of Canada's first-past-the-post electoral system, electoral inversions are a product of two principal conditions: (1) a popular-vote winner with inefficiently distributed votes in (2) the context of a close election. To say that a party's votes are distributed efficiently is essentially to say that few votes, relatively speaking, are wasted. In a party's winning districts, wasted votes are those accumulated in excess of the minimum needed to win, which in FPTP elections is a plurality. For example, take two hypothetical parties, A and B, that finish first and second in a district election, respectively. If party A wins 50,000 votes to party B's 40,000, then 10,000 of party A's votes are effectively wasted. Moreover, parties also waste votes in the districts that they lose. In fact, in FPTP elections, all of a

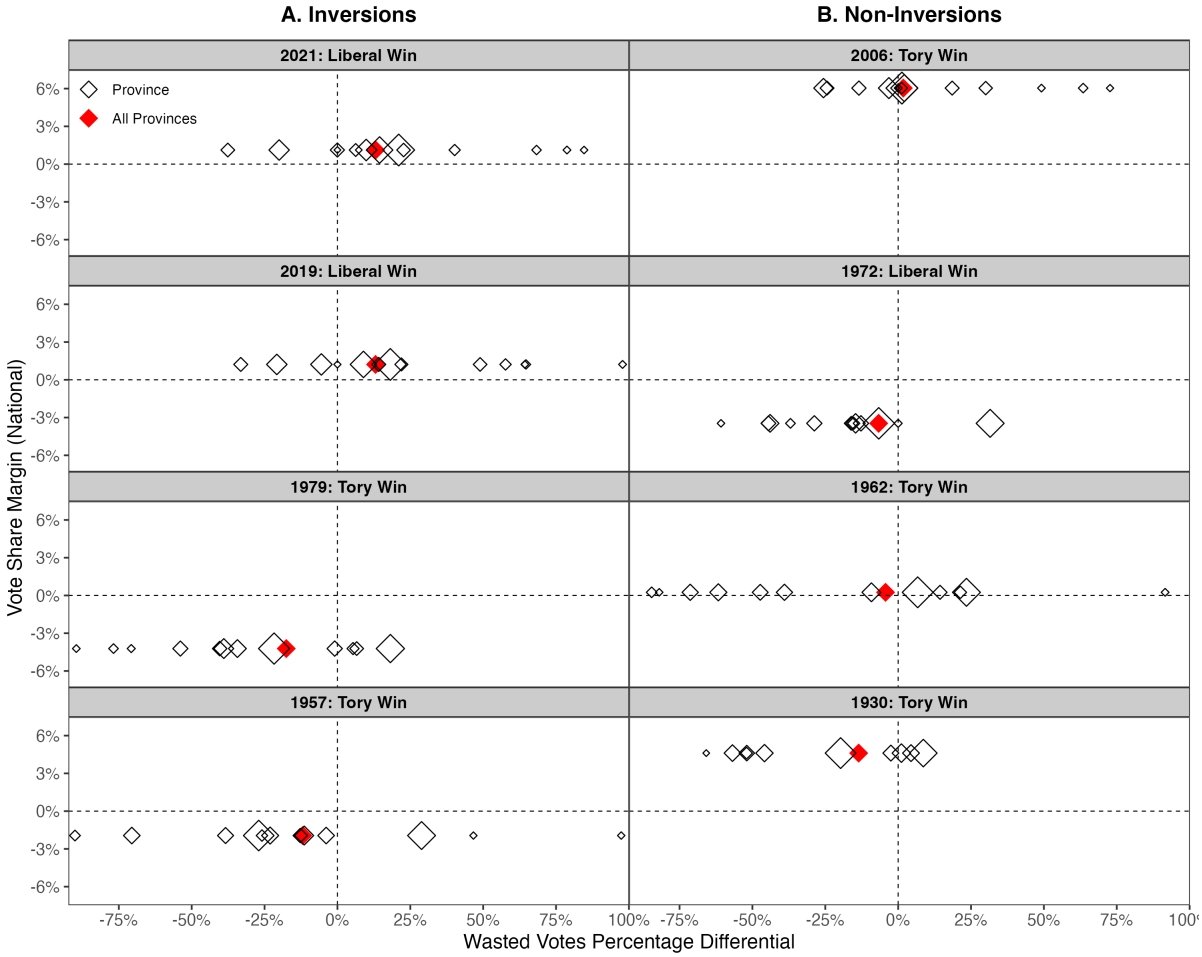
party's votes in a losing district are wasted, since they return no added seats.

In FPTP elections that are not competitive at the national level—that is, elections with a fairly wide vote margin separating the top two parties—the number of votes wasted among the leading parties may affect disproportionality in the translation of votes into seats, causing a party to win a greater share of seats than votes, or vice versa. But wasted votes in uncompetitive elections are rarely decisive factors in the election's outcome for the simple reason that the leading party, by definition, has a healthy lead. By extension, as the vote margin between the first and second place parties expands, it becomes increasingly unlikely that the party finishing first in votes will waste enough of them to win fewer seats than the party finishing second in votes, which is what happens in an electoral inversion.

However, in close elections wasted votes *can* play a decisive role in triggering inversions. As national vote margins grow narrower, the influence of inefficiently distributed votes becomes increasingly magnified. To demonstrate this influence, Figure 4.1 plots the relationship between the distributional inefficiency of the Liberals' and Conservatives' votes (x-axis) and their national vote share margins (y-axis) in eight of Canada's closest elections. The vote share margins depicted on the y-axis are calculated by subtracting the vote share of the Liberal party from that of the Conservative party such that positive values indicate that the Conservatives won the national popular vote and negative values indicate the reverse. Similarly, the inefficiency of the parties' vote distributions is measured on the x-axis at the province level by subtracting the percentage of the Liberals' wasted votes from the percentage of the Conservatives' wasted votes. Moreover, to convey in absolute terms the degree of vote wasting in each province, the size of the points are scaled relative the number of votes cast in that province as a proportion of the national turnout. Thus each

point in Figure 4.1 represents the relationship between (1) national vote-share margins on the y-axis, and (2) Liberal-Conservative differential in the percentage of wasted votes in each province on the x-axis (red points correspond to the total percentage of wasted votes across all provinces), with positive values indicating more Conservative wasted votes, negative values indicating more Liberal wasted votes, and larger points indicating provinces with more total votes.

Figure 4.1. Conservative–Liberal Wasted Votes Differentials in Close Canadian Elections



Data Source: CLEA dataset (Kollman et al. 2019).

Panel A in Figure 4.1 includes the electoral inversions of 1957, 1979, 2019 and 2021, each of which were decided by a national vote share margin of less than 5 percentage

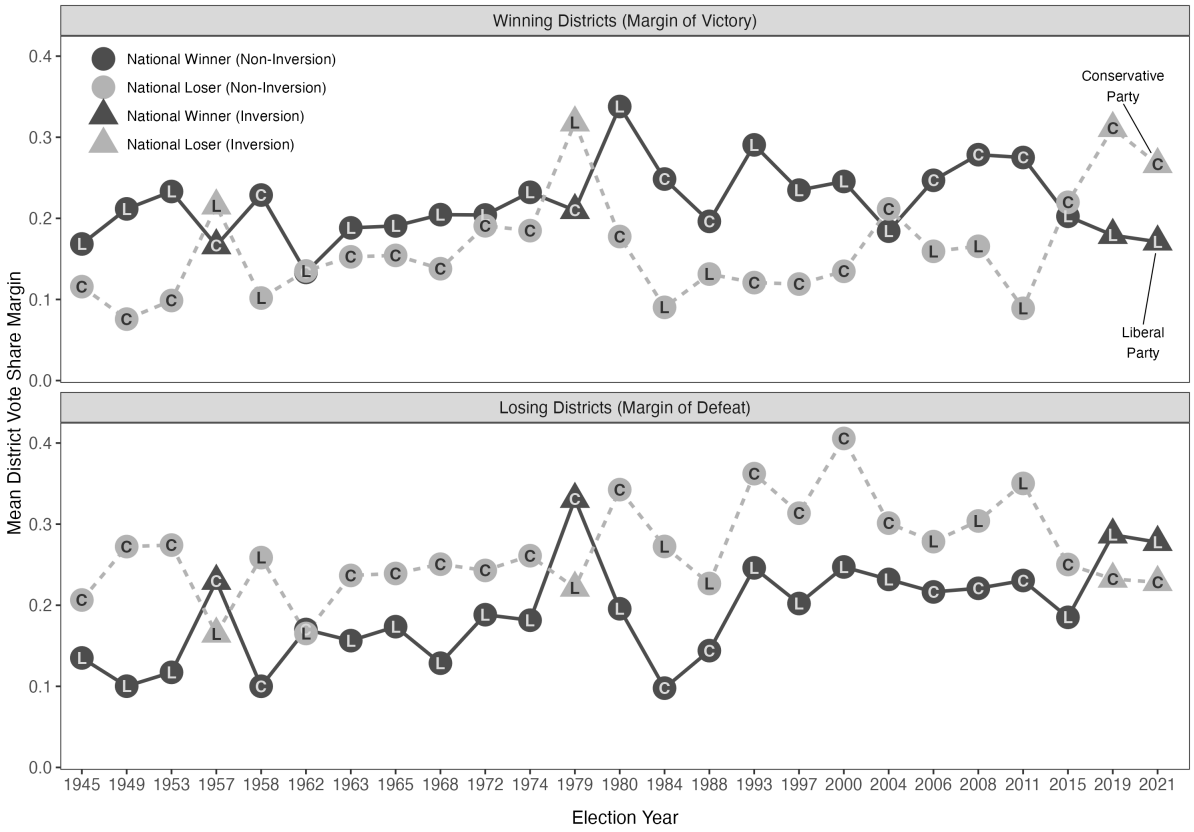
points, while Panel B includes four comparably close non-inversion elections. Comparing the election results in Panels A and B, a common pattern can be discerned. In each of the inversion elections in Panel A, the party that won slightly more votes than the other nevertheless *wasted* significantly more votes, which translated to a deficit in parliamentary seats. In the non-inversion elections in Panel B, the party that won slightly more votes than the other either wasted fewer of their votes (as in 1930 and 1962) or, if they did waste more votes than their opponent, they did so only slightly (as in 1972 and 2006).

For instance, in 1972 the Liberals won the national popular vote by 3.5 percentage points, which translated to a 2-seat lead over the Conservatives and, therefore, an election victory. Two election cycles later, in 1979, the Liberals again won the national popular vote, defeating the Conservatives by a more comfortable 4.2-point margin (483,713 votes). But this time the Conservatives emerged victorious. Figure 4.1 suggests how this could happen: although the Liberals' popular vote margin over the Conservatives was larger in 1979 than 1972, the wasted votes differential was nearly 3 times greater in 1979 than 1972. In 1972, the Liberals wasted 69% of their 3.7 million votes, while the Conservatives wasted 62% of their 3.4 million votes. This created a wasted votes differential of 7 percentage points. But in 1979, the Liberals wasted 76% of their 4.6 million votes while the Conservatives, despite winning 483,713 fewer votes, wasted only 58% of theirs. This 17-point wasted votes differential, which favored Conservatives, was too great for the Liberals to overcome with their comparatively modest 4.2-point lead in the national popular vote. Similarly, the Conservatives won the popular vote by comparably narrow margins in 1962 and 2021 (0.25 and 1.1 points, respectively). The difference is that, as Figure 4.1 shows, whereas the Conservatives wasted a smaller share of their votes in 1962 than the Liberals did, in 2021

the Conservatives wasted a considerably larger share of their votes vis-à-vis the Liberals. Thus even though 1962 was the closer election, the winning party dodged an inversion through a more efficient allocation of votes.

Figure 4.2 and 4.3 illuminate two additional aspects of the (in)efficiency of the Liberal and Conservative vote. First, Figure 4.2 compares the parties' vote inefficiencies in winning and losing districts in all elections since 1945. Specifically, it plots the average margin of victory in the districts that the parties win (top panel) and the average margin of defeat in districts that they lose (bottom panel), according to whether the party is the national winner or loser. On the whole, national winners, whether Liberal or Conservative, typically win districts by greater margins than national losers, and lose districts by narrower margins (i.e., they win a greater share of the vote). Although this implies that national winners waste more votes—and so are more inefficient—than national losers, this is unsurprising when considering that parties that win national elections usually have more votes available to be wasted. More to the point, Figure 4.2 shows an altogether different pattern in years in which an electoral inversion occurred. In 1957, 1979, 2019, and 2021, the national winner made a much more efficient use of its votes than the national loser in winning *and* losing districts. The average margin (of victory) in districts that the national winner won was well below the average margin in districts that the national loser won. Similarly, in electoral inversions the average margin of defeat was greater in districts that the national winner won, indicating fewer wasted votes and thus greater efficiency. Apart from the four inversions in Figure 4.2, no other elections resulted in that particular combination, with the national winner winning by narrower margins in winning districts and losing by greater margins in losing districts.

Figure 4.2. Liberal and Conservative Vote Share Margins in Winning and Losing Districts

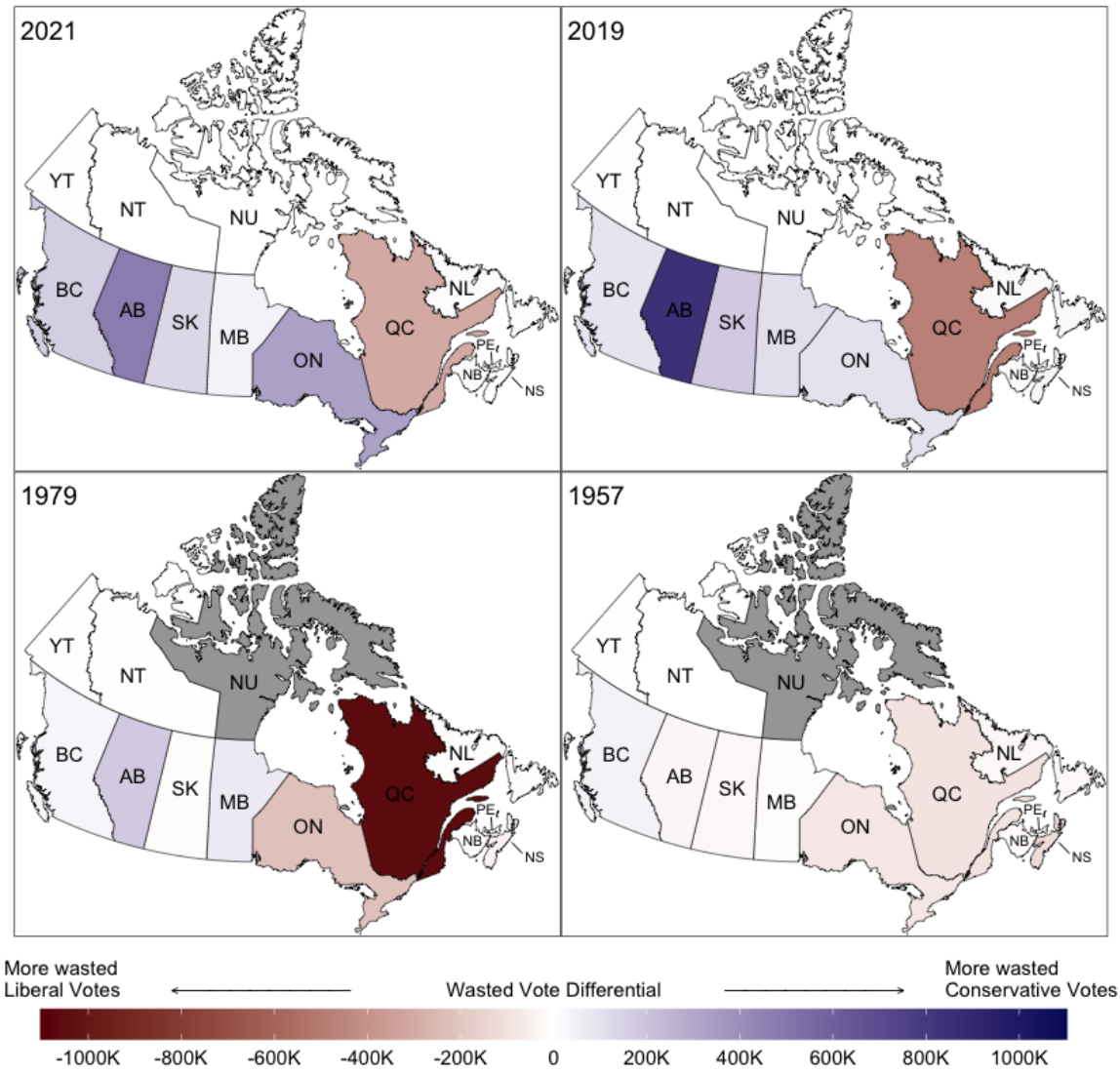


Data Source: CLEA dataset (Kollman et al. 2019).

Second, Figure 4.3 maps the geographic distribution of Liberal and Conservative wasted votes in the 1957, 1979, 2019 and 2021 electoral inversions. In 2019 and 2021, the Liberals' good fortunes arose primarily from the province of Alberta and, to a lesser extent in 2019, Ontario. Although the Conservatives won 33 of Alberta's 34 ridings in 2019, and 30 of 34 in 2021, they did so by wide margins, causing most of these votes to go to waste—1,139,110 votes (or 79%) in 2019, and 741,748 (69%) in 2021. Meanwhile, the Liberal candidates faired poorly in Alberta, but nevertheless wasted few votes in the process, the consequence of which was massive wasted vote differentials between the two parties. Ontario also contributed to the 2021 inversion in the form of 329,405 more wasted Conservative votes than wasted Liberal votes. Even though the Liberals wasted more

votes than the Conservatives in Quebec—476,179 in 2019, and 304,997 in 2021—in neither election was this enough to offset the votes the Conservatives squandered in Alberta in 2019, and in Alberta and Ontario in 2021.

Figure 4.3. Conservative–Liberal Wasted Vote Differentials, by Province



Data Source: CLEA dataset (Kollman et al. 2019).

Turning to the two electoral inversions that the Conservatives won, in 1979 Quebec played the decisive role. In the process of winning 67 of Quebec's 75 ridings in 1979, the Liberals wasted 1,457,571 votes, which exceeded the Tories' number of wasted votes by more than a million. To a lesser but not inconsequential extent, Ontario also hurt the

Liberals—there, the Liberals wasted 217,615 more votes than the Conservatives. In 1957, the distribution of wasted votes was more evenly spread across Canada's 12 provinces and territories. As in 1979, Quebec and Ontario were the main sources of the Liberals' wasted votes, if to a slightly more modest degree: whereas 73% of Liberal wasted votes derived from these two provinces, and in 1957 this share declined to a still high 62%. But the key province in 1957 was Nova Scotia. Even though Nova Scotia accounted for only 8.5% of the Liberals total wasted votes, it produced a significant 120,667 wasted-vote differential vis-à-vis the Conservatives. That is, whereas the Liberals wasted 159,908 votes in Nova Scotia (by comparison, they wasted 642,356 and 539576 votes in Ontario and Quebec, respectively), the Conservatives wasted only 39,241 votes in Nova Scotia, a 120,667-vote differential.

4.2. Electoral Inversions and Satisfaction with Democracy

Electoral inversions are uniquely unrepresentative events insofar as the partisan composition of the governments they produce was not preferred by the most voters. The characterization of electoral inversions as "unrepresentative" electoral outcomes is, on the one hand, a purely descriptive one. However, the descriptive unrepresentativeness of electoral inversions also has normative implications that pose a particular challenge for countries with majoritarian electoral systems, such as Canada. This is because one of the primary arguments in favor of majoritarian electoral institutions is, of course, that they produce outcomes that are responsive to majorities. Whether responsiveness to majorities *ought* to be the motivating principle of a democratic system is another matter. While remaining agnostic on this latter question, which is more an issue of normative theory, the degree to

which majoritarian electoral systems like Canada's fulfill the ideals of majoritarian democracy can be—and has been (Anderson et al. 2005; Lijphart 2012; Powell 2000)— evaluated empirically.

Scholars who have looked at this question have generally concluded that the majoritarian ideal at the heart of majoritarian democracy is, as Rohrschneider and Thomassen (2010, 6) put it, "often missed when the governing 'majority' actually constitutes a plurality." Indeed, Chapter 2 demonstrated that parties win elections with popular pluralities more often than with popular majorities, both in majoritarian and proportional/consensus democracies. The propensity of so-called majoritarian electoral systems to respond to popular pluralities rather than majorities, though perhaps underappreciated, has not gone unnoticed. Prompted by Nagel (1998) and Nagel (2000), several scholars have suggested that these systems—singling out the U.K., New Zealand, and Canada—are more accurately described as *pluralitarian* democracies (Kaiser et al. 2002; McDonald and Budge 2005, 236; Blau 2008; Lundell 2011; Lijphart 2012, 14). Recasting the relevant majoritarian systems as pluralitarian, though a helpful corrective, makes such systems no less irreconcilable with the occurrence of electoral inversions. Just as a majoritarian system is supposed to respond to majorities, the object of pluralitarian systems is to respond to pluralities. Electoral inversions, of course, are responsive to neither. When pluralitarian elections such as Canada's produce inversions, they can therefore be said to undermine the terms of their own *raison d'être*.

In the remainder of this chapter I investigate the consequences of this failure. Specifically, I ask whether—and if so, how—electoral inversions affect the way Canadian voters evaluate the performance of their democracy. As I explained in the previous chapter, my

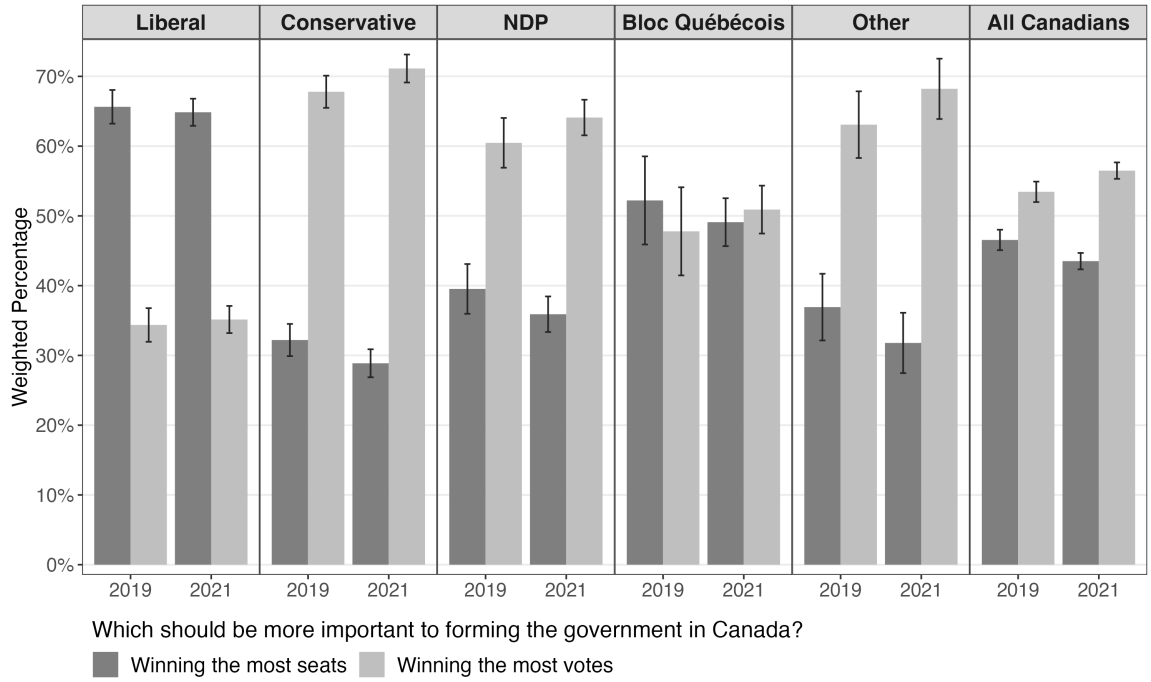
point of departure is the notion that democratic elections are essentially contests over public support, where public support is measured in votes and where at minimum the greater number of votes ought to defeat the smaller number. To be sure, different electoral systems apply different decision rules when determining winners and losers. For instance, elections in non-proportional systems in some cases require that winners obtain more than 50% of votes (an absolute majority of votes); in other cases, winners need only win more votes than all other competitors (a plurality). Similarly, in proportional systems it is typically expected that the largest parliamentary party after an election will form a government, often with coalition partners (and, since seats are allocated proportionally to votes, the largest party usually implies the most-voted-for party). While it is not atypical to see the largest single party (in terms of seats) supplanted by a rival coalition in proportional parliamentary systems, when this does happen the rival coalition is almost always comprised of parties that, though smaller individually, as a collectivity nevertheless commands the most seats in parliament.

To my knowledge, no system for democratically electing national governments employs a popular less-than-plurality decision rule—that is, a decision rule that expressly directs a smaller number of voters is to prevail over a larger one. When a smaller number of voters does prevail over the larger number, as is the case in electoral inversions, it is invariably because the relevant "larger number" in the decision rule is defined in terms of seats rather than popular votes—which is to say, it is because the decision rule is not a *popular* decision rule. In fact, were a popular less-than-plurality decision rule to exist as a mechanism for electing governments, it would almost certainly not be regarded as democratic.

The point is that a basic if often unstated expectation of democratic elections of all types is that the winners will (and should) at the very least reflect the preferences of the greater number. In this sense, to the extent that electoral inversions do the opposite, reflecting the preferences of the the lesser number, they embody an undemocratic electoral outcome. This claim is not simply theoretical, following logically from a particular conception of democracy. The claim is also an empirical one. More precisely, it is that citizens generally understand democratic elections as contests over public support in which the greater share of support should prevail over the lesser share. Canadians' responses to two questions in the Canadian Election Studies are indicative of this.

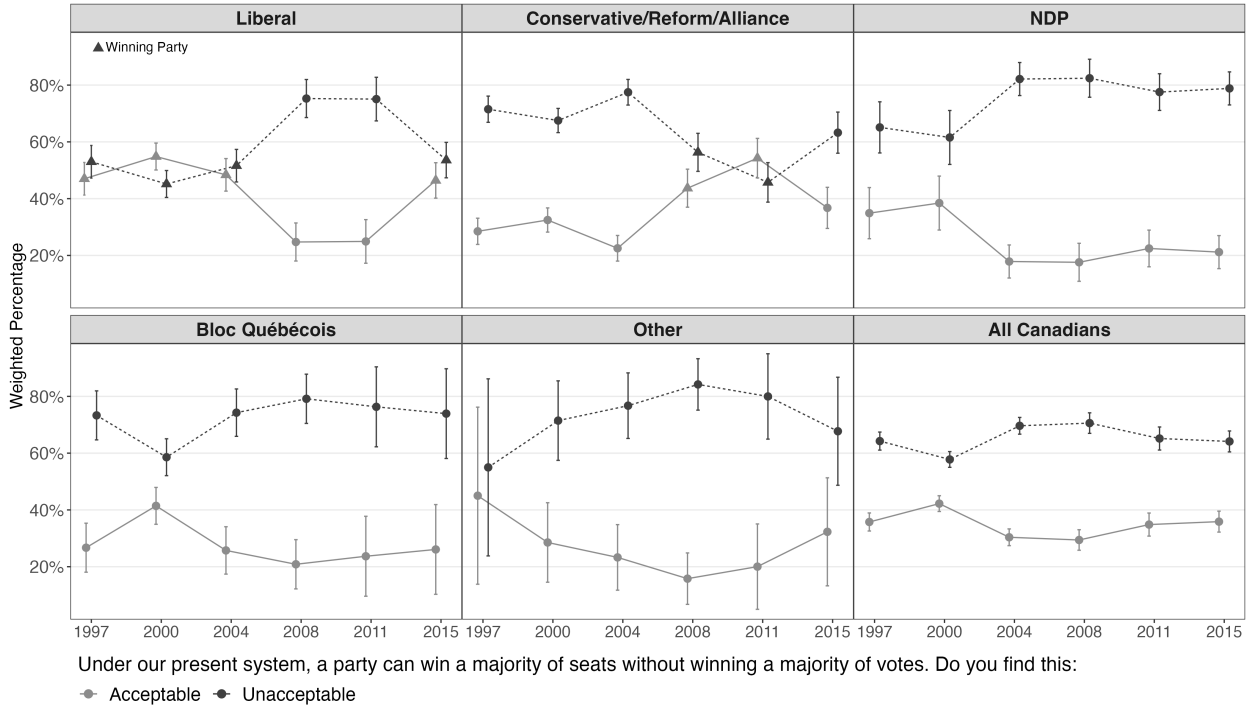
First, the post-election waves of the 2019 and 2021 surveys asked respondents, "Which should be more important to forming a government in Canada: (1) Winning the most seats, (2) Winning the most votes?" As Figure 4.4 shows, majorities of Canadians after both elections, but increasingly so in 2021, thought that it is more important for the party forming the government to have won the most votes than the most seats. Unsurprisingly, the only group with a decisive preference for winning the most seats is Liberal voters, the sole beneficiaries of the 2019 and 2021 inversions. The overriding weight that Conservative voters place on winning the most votes is equally unsurprising, since it was their party that won the most votes in both elections. Clearly, then, self-interest plays a role in shaping preferences on this issue. But even most voters on whom the inversions in 2019 and 2021 had no decisive impact—voters who would have lost even if the elections had not resulted in an inversion—express a clear preference for winning the most seats.

Figure 4.4. Importance of Winning the Most Votes versus Seats to Forming Government



Data Source: Canadian Election Studies.

Figure 4.5. Acceptability of Winning Majority of Seats without Popular Majority



Data Source: Canadian Election Studies.

Second, CES respondents in 1997, 2000, 2004, 2008, 2011, and 2015 were asked: "Un-

der our present system, a party can win a majority of seats without winning a majority of votes. Do you find this acceptable or unacceptable?" Figure 4.5 compares responses by vote choice across the six elections. Significant majorities of Canadians indicate that they find winning seat majorities with vote minorities unacceptable. The margins are particularly wide with respect to Canadians who did not vote for either of the two major parties. But even most Liberal and Conservative voters, in all but two cases (Liberals in 2000 and Conservatives in 2011), expressed an aversion to winning parliamentary majorities with electoral minorities. To be clear, this survey question is not asking respondents whether they find electoral inversions acceptable or unacceptable; a party can win a majority of seats, and thus form a government, with a minority of votes and still win *more* votes than the runner-up party. Responses to this question, and to the question in Figure 4.4, nevertheless illustrate the degree to which Canadians, when asked to balance the relative importance of electoral outcomes that represent popular preferences (votes) versus manufactured preferences (seats), place a greater weight on the former.

Given the prevailing view within the Canadian public that electoral winners should be determined on the basis of winning the most votes rather than by winning the most seats, and that parties should not be able to win a majority of seats with a majority of votes, it is not unreasonable to expect that electoral inversions will leave Canadians dissatisfied—or at least more dissatisfied than they would otherwise be in non-inversion elections. At the same time, Figures 4.4 and 4.5 suggests that not all Canadians will be equally dissatisfied. In particular, a clear majority of Canadians who identify with the Liberal Party—which won the 2019 and 2021 elections only because winning the most votes is *not* the determining factor in producing winners and losers in Canadian elections—believe winning the most

seats is more important than winning the most votes. Similarly, Conservative identifiers—whose preferred party lost in 2019 and 2020 despite winning the most votes—are the most likely of any other group to indicate that winning the most votes is more important. The unmistakable conclusion is that individuals' preferences are not impartial to outcomes, but are shaped by them.

More generally, the same is true of satisfaction with democracy, the dependent variable examined in this chapter. An extensive literature on the winner-loser gap has repeatedly shown that the effect of electoral outcomes on satisfaction with democracy depends on having voted for a winning party, which produces an increase in satisfaction relative to voting for a losing party. That is, people develop a more positive evaluation of democracy when elections, an important component of democracy, produce favorable outcomes. I assume that the positive relationship between winning and satisfaction with democracy found in elections generally also applies to elections that result in inversions. However, electoral inversions affect voters differently. Some, such as Liberal voters in 2019 and 2021, benefit; others, such as Conservative voters in 2019 and 2021, are disadvantaged; and still others are neither advantaged nor disadvantaged (those who voted for a party other than the Liberals or Conservatives). Accordingly, I anticipate that the effects of inversions on satisfaction with democracy will depend on voters relative positions vis-à-vis the election outcome. Specifically, and to reiterate the hypotheses developed in the previous chapter, I expect that winning losers (WLs), which are voters of the party that won the vote but lost the election, will be less satisfied than losing losers (LLs), voters of a party that lost the vote and the election. I also expect that losing winners (LWs), voters of a party that won the election but lost the vote, will be neither more nor less satisfied than winning winners

(WWs), which are voters of a party that won both the election and the vote. Taken together, these expectations imply that electoral inversions will magnify winner-loser effects, widening the LW-WL gap relative to the WW-LL gap.

4.3. Data, Variables, and Method

To test these expectations, I make use of Canadian Election Studies (CES) conducted before and after the parliamentary elections of 1997, 2000, 2004, 2006, 2008, 2019, 2021. Combining these seven surveys yields a data set totaling 24,451 observations. The results of these seven elections are described in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2. Results of elections included in the analyses

	Winner				Runner-Up		
Year	PM	Party	Votes (%)	Seats (%)	Party	Votes (%)	Seats (%)
1997	Chretien	Liberal	38.5	51.5	Reform	19.4	19.9
2000	Chretien	Liberal	40.9	57.1	Alliance	25.5	21.9
2004	Martin	Liberal	36.7	43.8	Conservative	29.6	32.1
2006	Harper	Conservative	36.3	40.3	Liberal	30.2	33.4
2008	Harper	Conservative	37.6	46.4	Liberal	26.3	25.0
2019	Trudeau	Liberal	33.1	46.5	Conservative	34.3	35.8
2021	Trudeau	Liberal	32.6	47.3	Conservative	33.7	35.2

Data Source: CLEA dataset (Kollman et al. 2019).

4.3.A. Dependent Variable

The dependent variable is based on the standard 4-level satisfaction with democracy question, which asks respondents, "On the whole, how satisfied are you with the way democracy works in Canada? (1) Very satisfied, (2) Fairly satisfied, (3) Not very satisfied, (4) Not at all satisfied, (5) Don't know/Prefer not to answer." Satisfaction with democracy is one of the most frequently used indicators of support for democracy. In the past, inattention to the subtleties of what the 'satisfaction with democracy' question actually

signifies in the minds of survey respondents led scholars to deploy it as a measure of support for the principles of democracy. Despite lingering disagreement about its meaning and measurement (Canache, Mondak, and Seligson 2001), scholars today generally agree that rather than tapping into support for democratic principles, it reflects perceptions of democratic performance (Singh and Mayne 2023). That is, 'satisfaction with democracy' is best understood as eliciting an evaluative judgment about the way the democratic system is working in practice (Dalton 2004; Linde and Ekman 2003). Accordingly, it corresponds to the middle level of regime support in David Easton's intricate hierarchy of political support (Easton 1965; 1975), a level which Dalton (2004) helpfully clarifies as pertaining "norms and procedures" of the democratic system. Viewed as such, respondents' answers to the 'satisfaction with democracy' question reflect the degree to which they perceive that the functioning of democracy—the way it is working in practice—is consistent with the principles of democracy (as they understand those principles).

Unlike most cross-national surveys and national election studies, as well as CES surveys in other years, the 1997, 2000, 2004, 2006, 2008, 2019, and 2021 CES surveys gauged respondents' satisfaction with democracy in the pre- and post-election survey waves.[2] Measuring satisfaction with democracy at two time points, one before the election and one after, makes it possible to estimate the effect of electoral outcomes on individual-level changes in satisfaction with democracy. Accordingly, the dependent variable is pre-post satisfaction with democracy change (*SWDchange*). The first step in constructing the SWDchange variable is to subtract respondents' post-election satisfaction levels from their pre-election

[2]Other CES surveys were excluded because they either did not include the satisfaction with democracy question, or because, as was the case in 2011 and 2015, they included it only in the pre-election wave.

levels, with responses reverse coded such that higher values indicate higher satisfaction levels. This results in 7-point measure of satisfaction change, which ranges from -3 to 3. Second, I simplify this measure by collapsing it into three categories: decreased satisfaction, no change in satisfaction, and increased satisfaction. As this produces a dependent variable with three ordinal categories, I estimate models using ordered logistic regression.[3]

4.3.B. Primary Independent Variable

The primary independent variable is winner-loser status, which is based on a respondent's reported vote choice in parliamentary elections. I use two indicators of winner-loser status: *winner* and *winner4*. First, following the standard approach in studies of winner-loser effects, *winner* is a dummy variable indicating whether or not the respondent voted for a party that formed (or was a member of) the ensuing government. Second, to capture winner-loser effects in the context of electoral inversions, *winner4* indicates whether a voter is a winning winner (WW), losing winner (LW), losing loser (LL), or winning loser (WL). To reiterate, *WWs* and *LLs* are voters of a party that won and lost both the election and the national popular vote, respectively. In non-inversion elections, by definition all losers are *LLs*, and and all winners are *WWs*. The other two winner-loser types, *LWs* and *WLs*, are specific to electoral inversions. The former refers to voters of the party that won the election but lost the vote, while the former refers to voters of the party that won the vote but lost the election. In all statistical models that follow, *WL* is treated as the reference category.

Tables 4.3–4.5 present descriptive statistics of the dependent and independent vari-

[3]I also estimate OLS models using the original 7-point *SWDchange* variable measured on a continuous scale. The results of these models, which are consistent with the ordered logit models, are reported in Table A4.3 in the Chapter 4 Appendix.

ables. Table 4.3 reports, for each election year, the number of WWs, LWs, WLs, and LLs in the data. Table 4.4 then records mean levels of pre-election satisfaction, post-election satisfaction, and pre-post change in satisfaction, for each of the four winner-loser status groups across the seven elections covered in the data. Moreover, the rightmost three columns in TAble 4.4 offer a more general summary in which all voters are grouped together.

Table 4.3. Frequencies, by Winner-Loser Status and Year

	Respondents (N)				
Year	WW	LW	WL	LL	Total
1997	770			1,425	2,195
2000	738			1,207	1,945
2004	804			1,512	2,316
2006	994			1,568	2,562
2008	647			1,143	1,790
2019		3,696	3,459	3,382	10,537
2021		4,178	3,547	4,662	12,387
Total	3,953	7,874	7,006	14,899	33,732

Source: Canadian Election Studies 1997, 2000, 2004, 2006, 2008, 2019, and 2021.

Three patterns can be discerned from the mean changes in satisfaction reported in the right half of Table 4.4. First, prior to 2019, satisfaction with democracy tended to increase after elections. Notably, this was the case for both winners and losers. In 1997 and 2008, the average increase in losers' post-election satisfaction levels even exceeded that of winners. Second, satisfaction suffered noticeable declines beginning with the the electoral inversion of 2019, and this trend carried over to the 2021 election, which also resulted in an inversion. Across all voters in 2019 and 2021, average levels of post-election satisfaction with democracy were 0.13 less than pre-election levels. The average pre-post satisfaction change in the five elections in the data that occurred prior to 2019, was by contrast, an increase of 0.18. Overall, whereas each group of winners and losers in the five elections

between 1997 and 2008 reported an average satisfaction increase, *no* group of winners or losers in 2019 and 2021 registered an increase.

Table 4.4. SWD Averages by Winner-Loser Status and Year

	WWs			LWs			WLs			LLs			All Voters		
Year	Pre	Post	+/-	Pre	Post	+/-	Pre	Post	+/-	Pre	Post	+/-	Pre	Post	+/-
1997	2.89	3.11	+.21							2.50	2.74	+.24	2.64	2.87	+.23
2000	3.00	3.13	+.13							2.57	2.57	+0	2.73	2.78	+.05
2004	2.83	3.05	+.22							2.45	2.62	+.17	2.58	2.77	+.19
2006	2.52	3.04	+.52							2.74	2.95	+.21	2.65	2.98	+.33
2008	3.07	3.08	+.01							2.75	2.80	+.05	2.87	2.91	+.04
2019				3.13	3.09	-.03	2.69	2.43	-.26	2.73	2.62	-.11	2.85	2.72	-.13
2021				3.20	3.20	0	2.61	2.34	-.27	2.72	2.57	-.15	2.85	2.72	-.13
Total	2.84	3.08	+.24	3.16	3.15	-.01	2.65	2.38	-.27	2.66	2.66	-.01	2.80	2.77	-.03

Third, lying beneath the surface of aggregate trends in satisfaction are well-defined differences between the four winner-loser types. Though post-election satisfaction was greater than pre-election levels across all voters prior to 2019, differences between winners and losers were particularly pronounced in 2000, 2004 and 2006. In 2000, the average post-election increase in satisfaction was 0.13 for winners, whereas the average loser experienced no change. In 2004, the average increase for winners was 1.3 times greater than for losers, and nearly 2.5 times greater for winners than losers in 2006. Winner-loser differences in satisfaction change were comparatively modest in 1997 and 2008. As noted above, losers' average post-election satisfaction increases were occasionally *greater* than winners', albeit by narrow margins (0.03 in 1997 and 0.04 in 2008). Similarly, although all three winner-loser types emerging from the 2019 election were less satisfied with democracy than they had been before it, the decline was much sharper among losers—particularly WLs. Among WLs (Conservative voters), the average post-election decrease in satisfaction was nearly 9 times greater than for LWs (Liberal voters). WLs were also more than 2 times less satisfied with

democracy than LLs (all other voters). Differences between winners and losers were even starker in 2021: while post-election satisfaction among winning Liberal voters remained unchanged, post-election satisfaction among winning losers and losing losers continued to fall relative to 2019 levels.

Table 4.5 tells much the same story. Instead of calculating mean changes in satisfaction between pre- and post-election periods, it records the percentage of respondents, by winner-loser type, that reported a lower, higher, or unchanged satisfaction level after the election compared with before the election. Across all election years, the most common outcome is no change in satisfaction. With the exception of winners in 2006, majorities of respondents across the four winner-loser categories maintained the same level of satisfaction after the election. After a period of stability between 1997 and 2006 in which the size of these majorities never exceeded 57 percent or fell below 51 percent, the share of voters reporting no change in satisfaction rose to nearly 61 percent in 2008 and continued to hover around 60 percent in 2019 and 2021. In the five non-inversion elections, moreover, it was more common for respondents to report post-election satisfaction increases than decreases. Between 1997 and 2004, more than a quarter of winners reported satisfaction increases, as did nearly half of all winners in 2006, though this figure fell to 18 percent in 2008. Losers were not far behind. In each election prior to 2019, between 21 and 33 percent reported satisfaction increases. However, beginning in 2019 and continuing into 2021, the percentage of respondents reporting an increase in satisfaction fell across all winner-loser types, with the sharpest declines concentrated in the loser categories. Whereas the lowest percentage of more satisfied losers prior to 2019 was 21.4 (in 2000), only about 14 percent of both WLs and LLS became more satisfied after the 2019 election. In 2021, post-election satisfaction

increases fell to 11.7 percent of LLs, and to an even lower 11.3 percent for WLs.

Table 4.5. Percentage of Respondents Reporting Decreased, Unchanged, or Increased Post-Election Satisfaction Levels, by Year

	Decrease in SWD (%)					No Change in SWD (%)					Increase in SWD (%)				
Year	WW	LW	WL	LL	Total	WW	LW	WL	LL	Total	WW	LW	WL	LL	Total
1997	11.9			12.9	12.6	59.6			54.5	56.3	28.4			32.6	31.2
2000	17.1			21.4	19.7	56.5			57.2	57.0	26.4			21.4	23.3
2004	11.8			16.5	14.9	57.5			52.8	54.4	30.7			30.7	30.7
2006	6.3			13.7	10.9	47.0			55.7	52.3	46.7			30.6	36.8
2008	16.8			18.6	17.9	64.8			58.3	60.6	18.4			23.2	21.5
2019		18.7	34.9	24.7	25.9		66.3	51.4	60.8	59.7		15.1	13.7	14.5	14.4
2021		15.7	33.9	25.1	24.5		68.5	54.8	63.2	62.6		15.8	11.3	11.7	12.9
Total	12.3	17.1	34.4	21.0	21.8	56.3	67.5	53.1	59.1	59.5	31.5	15.4	12.5	19.9	18.7

Source: Canadian Election Studies 1997, 2000, 2004, 2006, 2008, 2019, and 2021.

The reverse pattern can be observed in the percentages of respondents reporting a decrease in post-election satisfaction. Prior to 2019, the percentage of voters—winners and losers taken together—reporting a lower level of satisfaction after the election was never more than 19.7 percent (in 2000), and was as low as 10.9 percent (in 2006). But by 2019, almost 26 percent of voters emerged from the election less satisfied than they had been before it, followed by 24.5 percent in 2021. This general trend towards dissatisfaction is most apparent with respect to WLs and, to a lesser extent, LLs. Whereas roughly 19 and 16 percent of winners, respectively, were less satisfied after the 2019 and 2021 elections than they had been before them, a quarter of LLs reported a decrease in satisfaction after these elections, while more than a third of WLs in 2019 and 2021 reported satisfaction decreases. In other words, the share of WLs that became *less* satisfied between the pre- and post-election periods in 2019 was more than 2.5 times greater than the share of WLs that became *more* satisfied, and this disparity grew to a factor of 3 in 2021. At the same time, 1.8 and 2.2 times more LLs were less rather than more satisfied after the 2019 and 2021 elections,

respectively. Finally, aggregate levels dissatisfaction appear slightly diminished in 2021 relative to their 2019 levels, as the percentage of voters registering a lower post-election level of satisfaction fell from 25.9 to 24.5 percent between these two elections. It is worth noting, however, that this aggregate shift is primarily a function of positive changes in the winner group. The shares of less satisfied losers declined by only 1 percentage-point between 2019 and 2021, while the share of less satisfied winners dropped by 3 percentage points.

4.3.C. Control Variables

A well-developed literature on winner-loser effects has identified a number of individual-level factors that mediate the relationship between election outcomes and satisfaction with democracy, and whose influences the statistical models estimated below endeavor to control for. For instance, prior studies have shown that past experiences of winning and losing shape the effect of winning and losing on satisfaction with democracy in the present (Chang, Chu, and Wu 2014; Curini, Jou, and Memoli 2012; Delgado 2016; Hansen, Klemmensen, and Serritzlew 2019). Accordingly, *previous winner* is a dummy variable indicating whether the respondent was a winner or loser in the previous election. To the extent that winning and losing in the past affects satisfaction with democracy in the present, it is reasonable to expect similar effects from past winning and losing in the context of electoral inversions. To account for this possibility, models utilizing the 4-category winner-loser status variable for the current election variable also utilize the 4-category indicator for the previous election (*previousWW*, *previousLW*, *previousWL*, and *previousLL*).

Prior work also suggests that partisanship affects the winner-loser gap (Anderson

et al. 2005; Ridge 2022*a*). I control for the effects of partisanship with a dummy variable, *strong partisan*, which equals 1 when respondents identify with a party "very strongly," and 0 when respondents feel "fairly" or "not very" strongly about the party with which they identify.[4] Respondents who identify with a party but who decline to indicate the strength of their identification are also included in the latter group of weak partisans. Previous studies have also shown that the size of the winner-loser gap is mediated by perceived differences between political parties (Ridge 2022*b*), different types of congruence between voters and their representatives (Curini, Jou, and Memoli 2012; Ferland 2021; Gärtner, Gavras, and Schoen 2020; Hobolt, Hoerner, and Rodon 2021; Reher 2015), "optimal" voting (Singh 2014), coalition ambivalence (Singh and Thornton 2016), and racial resentment (Enders and Thornton 2022). Unfortunately, however, these variables do not appear consistently enough across the CES surveys to include in the analysis.

Furthermore, following standard practice in the literature, I control for a number of demographic and political variables. These include *election interest*, measured on an 11-point numeric scale with 0 corresponding to "no interest" at all and 10 indicating "a great deal of interest;" *age*; sex (*female*); *income group*, measured on a 10-point numeric scale ranging from \$0-\$19,999 (*income group* = 1) to \$100,000 or more (*income group* = 10); employment status, a binary indicator (*unemployed*); education level, measured on an 11-point numeric scale ranging from "no schooling" (*education level* = 0) to "professional degree or doctorate" (*education level* = 10); the importance of religion (*religion important*), originally a 4-category indicator that collapses "somewhat important" and "very impor-

[4]Party ID variables were not included in the models because they are strongly correlated with the winner-loser status variables, which are based on vote choice. The party people identify with is usually, but not always, the party they voted for.

tant" into one group, and "not important at all" and "not very important" into another; and country of birth (*foreign born*), equal to 1 if the respondent was born in a country other than Canada. Though less common in studies of the winner-loser gap in satisfaction with democracy, I also include a variable, *worse off financially*, which is based on a survey question that asks respondents if their personal financial situation has gotten better, stayed about the same, or gotten worse over the past year. The logic for including this variable is that the degree to which people say they are satisfied with democracy might plausibly be an expression of important non-political conditions in their lives.

The models estimated below incorporate a final control. Estimates of pre- to post-election satisfaction change are sensitive to, and thus need to account for, initial satisfaction levels. Consider two hypothetical voters, one who reports being not at all satisfied with democracy before the election, and a second who is fairly satisfied before the election. Whereas the maximum value of *SWDchange* for the first voter is 3 (not at all satisfied to very satisfied), the maximum value for the second voter is only 1 (fairly satisfied to very satisfied). Similarly, whereas the minimum value of *SWDchange* for the first voter is 0 (since this voter is already in the lowest category of satisfaction with democracy, a post-election decrease is not possible), the minimum value for the second voter is -2 (fairly to not at all satisfied). To deal with these floor and ceiling effects (Blais and Gélineau 2007; Bol et al. 2018; Daoust, Plescia, and Blais 2021; Singh, Karakoç, and Blais 2012), I control for pre-election satisfaction with democracy (*pre-SWD*), measured on a nominal 4-level scale, by interacting it with the winner-loser status variables.

4.4. Results

The results are reported in Table 4.6. The first two models measure winner-loser status with the binary indicator, *winner*, while Models 3 and 4 employ the four-category winner-loser status variable. Furthermore, Models 1 and 3 exclude controls, retaining only winner-loser status variables and their interaction with pre-election SWD (*preSWD*). Since the winner-loser status variables are interacted with *preSWD*, the coefficients on the former are interpreted as the effect of being a given type of winner (loser) when the latter is equal to "not at all satisfied," the reference category. Meanwhile, the coefficients on *preSWD* indicate the effect of a given pre-election level of satisfaction (relative to preSWD = 1, i.e., "not at all satisfied", the reference category) on pre-post satisfaction change among losers (in the case of *winner*) or WLs (in the case of *winner4*).

Beginning with the first two models employing the binary indicator of winner-loser status, the results are consistent with the findings of previous studies. The positive and statistically significant coefficients on *winner*, and on the interactions between *winner* and *preSWD* (with the exception of *preSWD = 2*) indicate that winning is associated with higher levels of satisfaction with democracy than losing. More precisely, as the dependent variable is the change in satisfaction between pre- and post-election periods, the coefficients on *winner* indicate that voting for a winning party, as a opposed to a losing one, has a positive effect on *SWDchange* when *preSWD* equals "not at all satisfied," the reference category. Each of the coefficients on the three levels of *preSWD* are negative and statistically significant, which implies, unsurprisingly, that the negative effect of losing on *SWDchange* is stronger at higher levels of pre-election satisfaction. Notably, moreover, the introduction

Table 4.6. Electoral Inversions and Winner-Loser Effects on Satisfaction with Democracy

	2-Category Winner-Loser Status		4-Category Winner-Loser Status	
	M1. Baseline	M2. Covariates	M3. Baseline	M4. Covariates
Winner	1.503*** (0.143)	1.166*** (0.184)		
WW			2.397*** (0.192)	2.036*** (0.029)
LW			0.963*** (0.250)	0.299*** (0.024)
LL			0.705*** (0.092)	0.413*** (0.024)
preSWD=2	−1.082*** (0.052)	−1.150*** (0.063)	−1.512*** (0.092)	−1.571*** (0.022)
preSWD=3	−2.193*** (0.049)	−2.247*** (0.060)	−2.281*** (0.084)	−2.396*** (0.017)
preSWD=4	−3.505*** (0.063)	−3.624*** (0.076)	−3.268*** (0.109)	−3.465*** (0.020)
Interactions				
Winner × preSWD=2	0.123 (0.155)	0.230 (0.198)		
Winner × preSWD=3	−0.548*** (0.146)	−0.429** (0.187)		
Winner × preSWD=4	−0.985*** (0.153)	−0.808*** (0.194)		
WW × preSWD=2			0.468** (0.213)	0.429*** (0.004)
WW × preSWD=3			−0.765*** (0.200)	−0.843*** (0.022)
WW × preSWD=4			−1.741*** (0.219)	−1.828*** (0.005)
LL × preSWD=2			0.556*** (0.111)	0.564*** (0.019)
LL × preSWD=3			0.046 (0.101)	0.137*** (0.024)
LL × preSWD=4			−0.473*** (0.129)	−0.412*** (0.023)
LW × preSWD=2			1.179*** (0.266)	1.481*** (0.006)
LW × preSWD=3			0.466* (0.254)	0.822*** (0.024)
LW × preSWD=4			−0.268 (0.264)	0.133*** (0.023)
Covariates				
Previous Winner		0.346*** (0.033)		
Previous WW				0.571*** (0.025)
Previous LL				0.393*** (0.027)
Previous LW				0.667*** (0.029)
Strong Partisan		−0.008 (0.031)		0.020 (0.031)
Election Interest		−0.018*** (0.006)		−0.004 (0.006)
Worse off financially		−0.385*** (0.032)		−0.326*** (0.031)
Age		−0.002** (0.001)		0.002*** (0.001)
Female		−0.083*** (0.027)		−0.101*** (0.027)
Income Group		−0.023*** (0.005)		−0.004 (0.005)
Unemployed		−0.120 (0.082)		−0.152*** (0.003)
Education Level		−0.006 (0.007)		0.001 (0.007)
Religion Important		0.222*** (0.027)		0.213*** (0.028)
Foreign Born		0.088** (0.040)		0.114*** (0.040)
Decrease | No change	−3.218*** (0.047)	−3.660*** (0.099)	−2.820*** (0.078)	−2.637*** (0.012)
No change | Increase	0.080* (0.043)	−0.317*** (0.095)	0.555*** (0.075)	0.785*** (0.026)
Num.Obs.	33,732	24,451	33,732	24,175
Log. Lik.	−28341	−20398	−27893	−19842
AIC	56699.0	40835.4	55820.0	39746.4

***p < .01; **p < .05; *p < .1

Note: Reference categories are *WL*, *Previous WL*, and *Pre-SWD* = 1.

of controls in Model 2 does not alter the direction or significance of the coefficients in Model 1.

These initial observations broadly apply to the results reported in Models 3 and 4. Again, there is a significant positive association between winning and satisfaction with democracy. In this case, however, we can see that the *type* of winner or loser matters for satisfaction with democracy. Relative to WLs (now the baseline category), being a LW generally exerts a weaker effect on *SWDchange* than being a WW. In addition, that the coefficients corresponding to LL in Models 3 and 4 are both positive and statistically significant is a sign that, at least for those voters not at all satisfied with democracy before the election, being a LL rather than a WL has a positive effect on *SWDchange*.

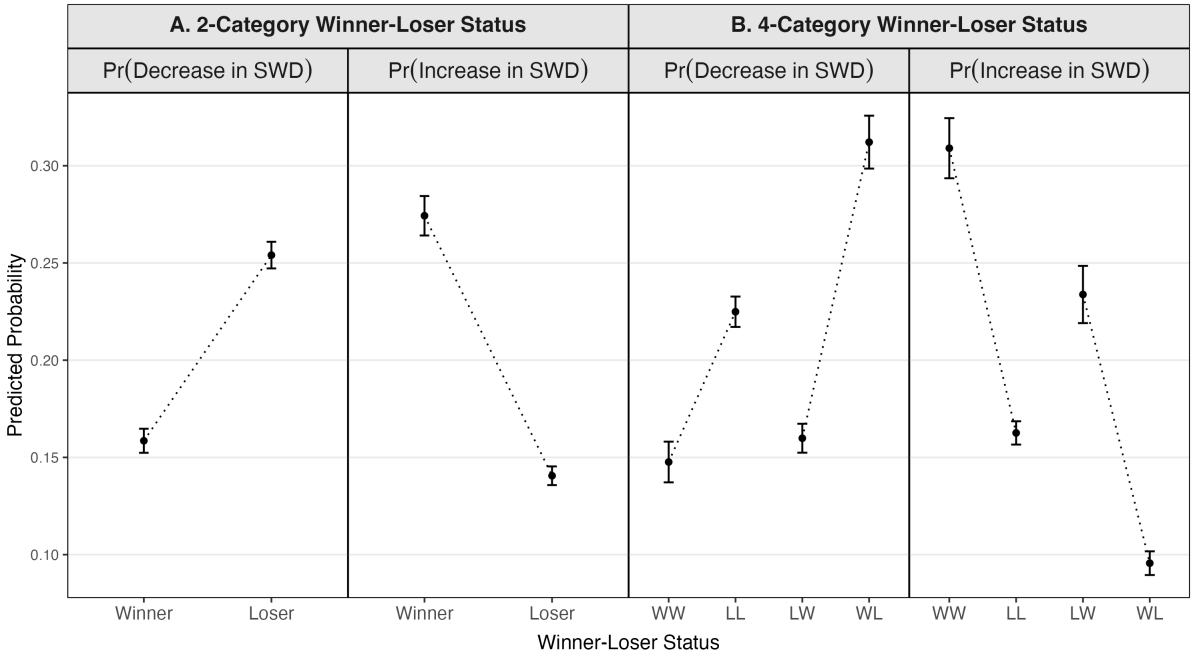
To facilitate a more substantive interpretation of the results presented in Table 4.6, Figure 4.6 plots the predicted probabilities of experiencing decreases and increases in satisfaction depending on two-category and four-category winner-loser status.[5] To obtain predicted probability estimates, I use the models that include the full suite of control variables (Models 2 and 4).[6] The predictions in Figure 4.6 were generated by holding each observation's covariates at their observed values while varying winner-loser status across the range of possible values, and repeating this step for each of the three ordinal outcomes and four levels of pre-election satisfaction.[7] This process results in a set of predictions corresponding to each observation, where the size of each set of predictions is equal to the product of winner-loser categories (two, in the case of *winner*; four, in the case of *winner4*),

[5]The predicted probabilities associated with the third outcome, no change in satisfaction with democracy, have been omitted from Figure 4.6, they can bee found in Table A4.4 in the Chapter 4 Appendix.
[6]I also calculate predicted probability estimates from the two models that exclude controls (1 and 3). The resulting predicted probabilities, which are depicted in Figure A4.2 in the Chapter 4 Appendix, do not materially differ from those reported in Figure 4.6.
[7]Predictions were generated using the `marginaleffects()` package in R.

satisfaction outcomes (three), and pre-election satisfaction levels (4). The final step is to calculate group-wise means, that is, to calculate average predicted probabilities across the pre-elections satisfaction levels for each winner-loser status group nested within the three satisfaction outcomes.

Thus each point in Figure 4.6 represents an average prediction of the probability of a given outcome across the four *preSWD* levels, adjusted for winner-loser status, the variable of interest. Alternatively, rather than averaging across the four levels of *preSWD*, one could calculate average predicted probabilities of a given outcome for the different winner-loser types at each *preSWD* level. Doing so affords a more granular evaluation of winner-loser effects on SWD, but at the cost of an additional layer of complexity. Predicted probability estimates using this approach are provided in the Chapter 4 Appendix (Figure A4.1).

Figure 4.6. Predicted Probability of SWD Change in Canadian Elections



Note: Predicted probabilities in Panels A and B are based on Models 2 and 4 in Table 4.6, respectively. Vertical bars represent 95% intervals.

The predicted probabilities shown in Panel A are derived from Model 2, which relies

on the standard binary measure of winner-loser status. We can see that the probability of becoming less satisfied with democracy after the election is about ten points higher for losers than winners (0.25 to 0.16, respectively), while the likelihood of becoming more satisfied is greater for winners than losers by more than 13 points (0.27 to 0.14).[8] Panel B uses Model 4 to calculate predicted probabilities for WWs, LWs, LLs, and WLs.

As in Panel A, winners in Panel B are more likely than losers to experience an increase in satisfaction after the election, and vice versa when the outcome is a decrease in satisfaction. In this case, however, differences in the probability of a given satisfaction level clearly depend on the *type* of winner or loser. Although WWs and LWs are not statistically different when it comes to the probability of a decrease in SWD, WLs are substantially more likely than LLs to become less satisfied. On average, the probability of a decrease in satisfaction is 0.23 for LLs. But for WLs, the probability increases by nearly 0.09 points to 0.31. A reversal of this pattern occurs when the outcome is an increase in satisfaction. LLs (0.16) are significantly more likely than WLs (0.09) to experience an increase in satisfaction by a difference of 0.07 points. Interestingly, LWs are also less likely than WWs to become more satisfied with democracy. In other words, electoral inversions exert a downward effect on the likelihood of becoming more satisfied for both winners *and* losers.

Three initial conclusions can be drawn thus far. First, satisfaction with democracy suffers when electoral inversions occur. WLs are simultaneously more likely to experience a decrease in satisfaction, and less likely to experience an increase, than LLs. And although LWs are not statistically distinguishable from WWs when it comes to the likelihood of experiencing a decrease in satisfaction, they *are* less likely than WWs to become more satisfied

[8]See Table A4.4 in the Appendix for a full list of predicted probabilities underlying Figure 4.6.

with democracy after elections. Second, electoral inversions tend to magnify winner-loser effects on satisfaction with democracy (at least when the outcome is a decrease in satisfaction). As Panel B in Figure 4.6 makes clear, the gap between LWs and WLs in the probability of decreased satisfaction is significantly wider than the gap between WWs and LLs. Third, losers appear to be the main culprit behind the widening of the LW-WL gap. The second and third conclusions offer tentative support for the hypotheses outlined in Chapter 3. Recall that H1 predicted that electoral inversions would amplify winner-loser effects on democratic support, resulting in a widening of LW-WL gaps relative to WW-LL gaps. Meanwhile, H2 expected that the relative increase in the size of the LW-WL gap would be the function of declining democratic support within the losing side, as opposed to increasing support from the winning side.

For a more direct test of these hypotheses, I turn to Figures 4.7 and 4.8. The former contains estimates of contrasts between the predicted probabilities depicted in Figure 4.6. That is, it displays predicted probability gaps between the different winner-loser types. Figure 4.8 then compares the sizes of the gaps most relevant to H1: the WW-LL and LW-WL gaps. Beginning with the predicted probably contrasts depicted in Figure 4.7, I calculate two types of contrasts for five dyadic combinations of the six winner-losers types (from Model 2 the W-L gap; from Model 4, the WW-LL, LW-WL, LL-WL, and WW-LW gaps). First, Panel A calculates the gaps as absolute differences by subtracting the predicted probability of a given satisfaction level of one winner-loser type from the predicted probability of the other winner-loser type. Second, in Panel B I estimate the gaps as percentage differences by dividing rather than subtracting the two predicted probabilities. Each point in Figure 4.7 thus represents the value of the resulting differences or quotients,

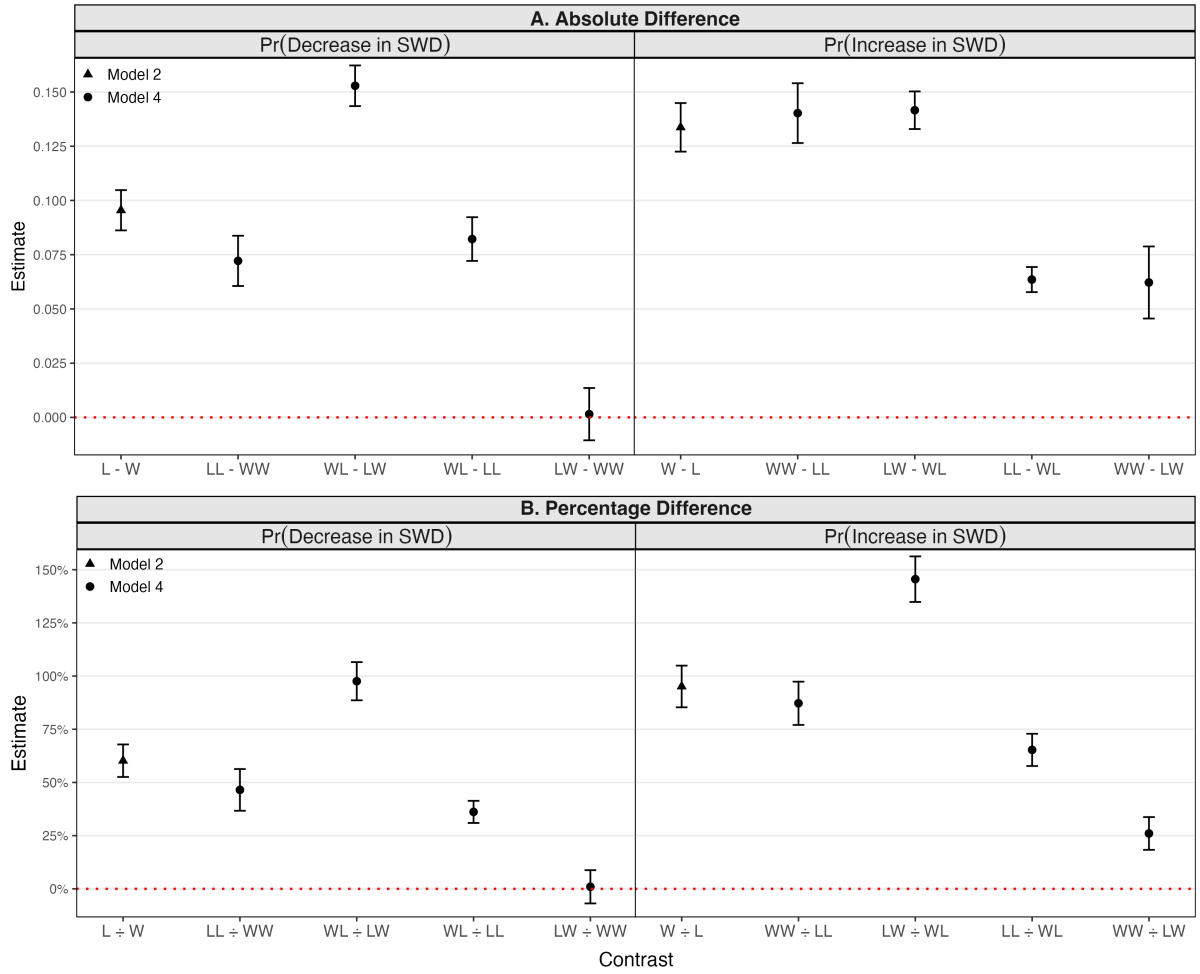
with vertical bars representing 95% confidence intervals calculated. Though the contrasts between winners and losers, reflecting the binary measure of winner-loser status, cannot be directly compared to contrasts derived from *winner4*, the four-category measure, as they were generated from different models (2 and 4), they are nevertheless included in Figure 4.7 for illustrative purposes. Furthermore, in all cases the predicted probabilities associated with a decrease in satisfaction are greater for losers than winners, and vice versa when the outcome is an increase in satisfaction. To make the contrasts more easily comparable across the two outcomes, when the outcome is a decrease in satisfaction the contrast equation takes the predicted probability of the loser as the minuend or numerator, and vice versa when the outcome is an increase in satisfaction.[9] Doing so ensures that each contrast estimate is a value greater than one.

In Panel A in Figure 4.7, we can see that the satisfaction gap separating undifferentiated winners and losers (those deriving from the binary winner-loser status variable specified in Model 2) is a predicted probability difference of just under 0.1. Panel B indicates that losers (Ls) are 60% more likely than winners (Ws) to experience a post-election decrease in satisfaction, and Ws are 95% more likely than Ls to experience a post-election increase in satisfaction. The contrasts obtained from the four-category measure of winner-loser status employed in Model 4 tell a more nuanced story, however. Whereas the predicted probability of LLs becoming less satisfied with democracy is only 1.47 times greater than that of WWs, on average, the probability that WLs will experience a decrease in satisfaction is nearly double that of LWs. This is consistent with Hypothesis 1's expectation that

[9] As in Figure 4.6, Figure 4.7 omits the "No change in SWD" outcome. Contrast estimates for this outcome, along with the other two outcomes (increase and decrease in SWD) can be found in Table A4.5 of the Chapter 4 Appendix.

electoral inversions magnify winner-loser effects on satisfaction with democracy.

Figure 4.7. Predicted Probability Contrasts (Gaps) in Canadian Elections



Note: Contrasts are based on predicted probabilities reported in Figure 5. Vertical bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

For the predicted probability of experiencing an increase in satisfaction, the results are less clear. In absolute terms, the size of the WW-LL (0.07) and LW-WL (0.142) gaps are essentially identical. This is a reflection of Figure 4.6, where the predicted probabilities of increased satisfaction for LWs and WLs were both lower than for WWs and LLs. Thus, while electoral inversions diminish the likelihood of a post-election increase in satisfaction with democracy, because this effect applies more or less symmetrically to both LWs and WLs, the size of the resulting gap ultimately mirrors that of the more satisfied WWs and

LLs. Another consequence of lower probabilities of increased satisfaction for LWs and WLs is that the relative difference between them become inflated. Though the WW-LL and LW-WL gaps are indistinguishable in absolute terms, in relative terms the LW-WL gap is significantly larger (see Panel B).

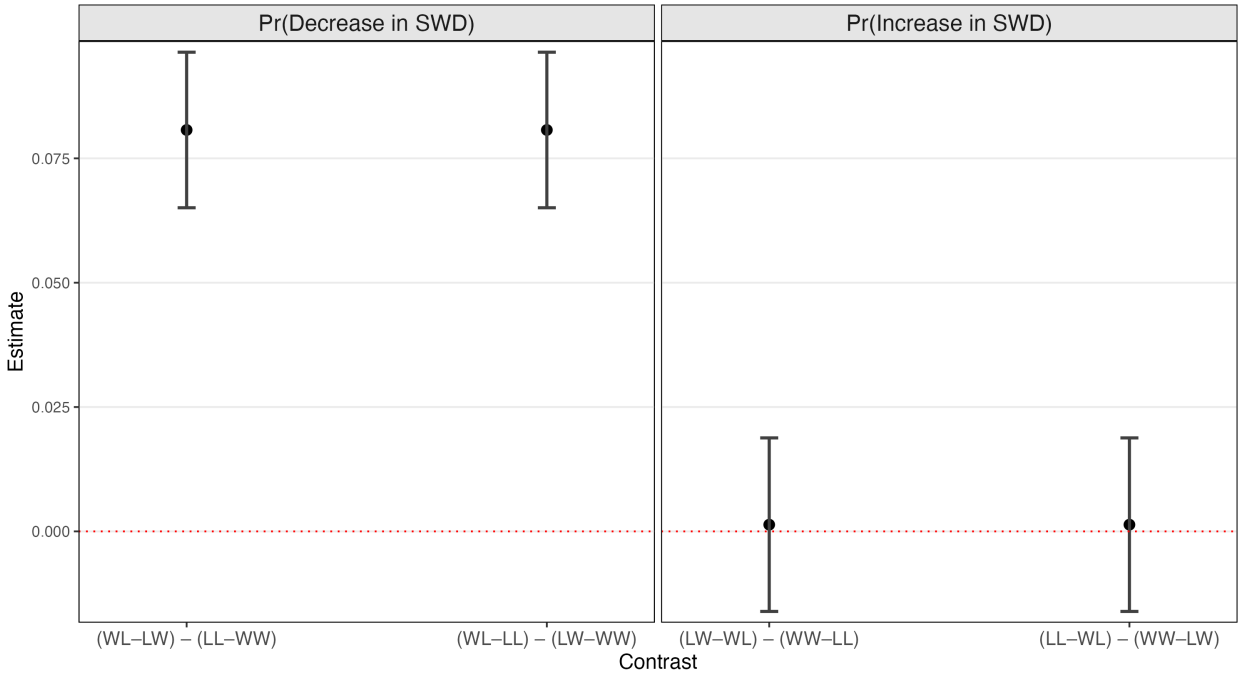
By comparing the LL-WL and LW-WW gaps, Figure 4.7 also offers insight to Hypothesis 2's prediction that diminishing satisfaction among WLs, rather than improving satisfaction among LWs, would be the driving factor behind the widening of the LW-WL gap. Whereas the LW-WL gap represents the aggregate results of discrete shifts among winners and losers in inversion and non-inversion elections, the LL-WL and WW-LW gaps address these underlying shifts themselves. The probability of becoming less satisfied with democracy is 36% greater for WLs than LLs, but the difference between LWs and WWs is virtually zero. With respect to the probability of decreased satisfaction, then, Hypothesis 2 has unambiguous support: WLs are the sole contributor to the enlarged LW-WL gap. However, when it comes to the probability of experiencing an increase in satisfaction, the WW-LL and LW-WL gaps are, as noted above, roughly equal in size. Hypothesis 2, whose prediction assumes a widening of the LW-WL gap, is rendered moot.

As a final test of Hypothesis 1 and 2, Figure 4.8 assesses the degree to which two sets of gaps—the WW-LL and LW-WL gaps, and the WW-LW and LL-WL gaps—are statistically different. It may be helpful at this point to recall that the WW-LL gap reflects satisfaction differences between winners and losers in non-inversion elections (or, more precisely, between winners and losers whose loser status was not altered, as is the case with WLs, by an inversion result).[10]. The LW-WL gap, on the other hand, reflects

[10]LLs, who are voters of a party that lost the election and the popular vote, also occur in the context of

satisfaction differences between voters whose winner-loser status was directly impacted by an electoral inversion. As a result, a statistical comparison of the two gaps constitutes the most straightforward test of the degree to which electoral inversions magnify winner-loser effects on satisfaction with democracy.

Figure 4.8. Comparing WW-LL and LW-WL Gaps in Satisfaction with Democracy



Note: Contrasts-in-contrast estimates are based on predicted probability contrasts shown in Figure 4.6. Vertical bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

The results presented in Figure 4.8 offer no surprises. As was evident from Figure 4.7, the LW-WL and WW-LL gaps are statistically indistinguishable for the probability of increased satisfaction. However, for the probability of a decrease in satisfaction, the LW-WL gap is indeed significantly larger than the WW-LL gap—by 0.08 points, to be exact. In relative terms, the size of LW-WL gap in the probability of decreased satisfaction is 118% greater than that of the WW-LL gap. But this does not address the *relative* contributions

electoral inversions. In Canadian elections, they would be voters of, for example, the Green or National Democratic Party.

of the LL-WL and WW-LW gaps to increasing the size of the LW-WL gap. Do electoral inversions magnify winner-loser effects a by acting on winners, on losers, or on both? Consistent with Hypothesis 2, the positive and significant estimate for the comparison of the WL-LL and LW-WW gaps (when the outcome is, again, a decrease in satisfaction) in Figure 4.8 confirms that losers are the main conduit through which inversions magnify winner-loser effects in Canadian elections.

Chapter 5

Electoral Inversions and Winner-Loser Effects on Democratic Support in the United States

5.1. Introduction

What are the implications of electoral inversions for American democracy, or rather, for the way Americans think and feel about democracy? The task of Chapter 3 was to progress from suspicion to theory, to explain what reasons there are to think electoral inversions have consequences for democratic support, and to translate these reasons into testable propositions about the expected relationship between electoral inversions and democratic support. One proposition was that the experiences of winning and losing modify this relationship. Another was that, because of the undemocratic nature of electoral inversion outcomes, the effects of inversions on democratic support would be primarily negative, and mainly concentrated on the losing side. The previous chapter tested and validated these propositions in the context of Canadian parliamentary elections; this chapter attempts to do so in the context of U.S. presidential elections.

Since the theoretical expectation that electoral inversions erode democratic support only makes sense if we assume that citizens understand democracy as what Levitsky and Ziblatt (2023*b*, 169) call a "game of numbers" in which "the party with the most votes wins," the plausibility of the theory developed in Chapter 3 depends in large part on the

validity of this assumption. Whether this assumption is sound, in other words, is critical to my argument. Thus I address this important question in Section 5.2, with a particular focus on the historical development of the idea of majoritarian democracy in the United States. Before doing so, however, I first review the institutional conditions that contribute to the incidence of electoral inversions in the United States. Section 5.3 then turns to the *consequences* of electoral inversions—the issue with which the remainder of the chapter will be occupied.

5.2. Understanding U.S. Electoral Inversions

5.2.A. Institutional Factors

In Chapter 2, I identified the *indirectness* of U.S. presidential elections as the source of electoral inversions. However, if the indirect nature of presidential elections governed by the Electoral College is a necessary precondition for making electoral inversions *possible*, it is not by itself sufficient for guaranteeing that inversions are, in practice, *likely* to occur. For example, were electors awarded to candidates in proportion to the percentage of votes they received in state-wide elections, and were electors distributed among states in closer proportion to their populations, the probability of an inversion it would be reduced dramatically, if not effectively eliminated. Thus, the susceptibility of the Electoral College to inversions is a function, not only of its indirectness, but two additional factors: (1) the formula by which votes are translated into EC electors in statewide elections, and (2) to disproportionalities embedded in the distribution of electors across state "districts."

Beginning with the first factor, U.S. presidential elections are essentially the sum product of a series of discrete state elections, and each state election, in turn, is a contest

over that state's EC electors. Critically, the translation of votes to electors in each of these state elections is determined via a plurality formula, which is to say, the candidate with the most votes receives all of that states' electors.[1] The winner-take-all nature of these state-level elections means that a candidate may lose several close elections in large states while winning elections in other states lopsidedly, resulting in a disproportionately small share of electors relative to votes. As this disproportionality increases, so does the likelihood that a candidate will win the most votes while failing to win an Electoral College majority.

Second, the potential for disproportionality between candidates' electors and votes, and thus the potential for an electoral inversion, is magnified by another form of disproportionality affecting the share of EC electors apportioned to each state relative the size of its electorate. The number of electors allocated to each state is equal to the size of its congressional delegation, and the size of a state's congressional delegation, in turn, roughly corresponds to its population. In practice, however, achieving a truly proportional distribution of electors (relative to state populations) is constrained by constitutionally and congressionally mandated requirements on the minimum and maximum sizes, respectively, of congressional delegations. On one end, states are constitutionally guaranteed at least three EC electors (corresponding to the minimums of one representative and two senators) irrespective of their populations. On the other end, with the Reapportionment Act of 1929, Congress limited the total size of the House of Representatives to 435 members, a ceiling that has remained unchanged for nearly a century. As a result, while the floor constraint ensures that the least populous states receive at least three electors, the ceiling

[1]Two exceptions are Maine and Nebraska, which allocate electors according to the congressional district popular vote, along with an additional two electors corresponding to the statewide popular vote.

constraint prevents the most populous states from receiving a proportionally-scaled share of electors. For example, with its 55 electors, California, the nation's most populous state, has 18 times more electors than the 3 that the least populous state, Wyoming, receives. However, California's population is 68 times greater than Wyoming's. Allocating electors in proportion to this ratio would mean giving California 204 electors to Wyoming's 3. Doing so is not feasible, however, because the remaining 331 electors (out of a maximum total of 538) are too few to be proportionally allocated to the remaining states. The result is a disproportionately small share of electors reserved for the larger states.

That some states provide enormous reservoirs of votes while being only relatively modest sources of EC electors matters for inversions in two related ways. On the one hand, when presidential candidates win winner-take-all elections in large states by wide margins, this affords large vote surpluses that are nevertheless out of proportion to the electors they provide. On the other hand, winning in small states provides a share of electors that is disproportionately high relative to the available surplus in votes. Such discrepancies can be decisive for creating inversions, especially in close nationwide contests[2] and when the partisan composition of the national electorate is polarized along the lines of large and small states—that is, when support for one party is generally concentrated in more populous states, while support for the other party tends to predominate in less populous states.

[2]For instance, Geruso, Spears, and Talesara (2022) find that the likelihood of electoral inversions is high in close elections, and that this high likelihood has remained surprisingly stable for much of U.S. history. In elections with a margin of victory within 1 percentage-point, the probability of an electoral inversion has, since the early 1800s, remained at the level of roughly 40%.

5.2.B. Historical Context

In 2000 and 2016, these factors converged to produce the only two electoral inversions in modern U.S. history. Both presidential elections saw the Republican candidate—George W. Bush in 2000, Donald Trump in 2016—win the Electoral College, and thus the election, despite losing the popular vote to the Democratic candidate. Most Republicans may have had little compunction about winning in this fashion, but for Democrats, defeat was not so easily accepted—though except it they eventually did. In the 2000 election, where the outcome came down to the disputed vote in Florida, "angry controversies" over voting machine glitches, poorly designed ballots, improperly invalidated registrations, voter intimidation, and the Supreme Court's intervention in *Bush v. Gore* all contributed to an atmosphere, as one historian has described it, of "partisan warfare that raged throughout the nation" (Patterson 2005, 413). Lurking beneath—and at least initially overshadowed by—this multifarious mess was the more fundamental issue of the electoral college, the idiosyncratic American institution without which the outcome of the 2000 election would not have been in doubt in the first place. Contemporaries certainly recognized the role of the electoral college in determining the election's outcome, and debated the institution's merits. But to a degree not repeated in 2016, the electoral college in the aftermath of the 2000 election could blend into a distinguished crowd of other problems plaguing the electoral process. In the wake of the 2016 election, which neither featured a statewide election mired in electoral irregularities nor one that was too close to call, the electoral college and the non-majoritarian vision of democracy it embodies more easily crystallized as a focal point of debate. In fact, it was the 2016 electoral inversion, and the aggravating factor of it coming so close on the heels of the 2000 inversion, that was largely responsible for

stimulating and giving form to what I identified in Chapter 3 as the majoritarian critique of American democracy.

While 2000 and 2016 might be the most well-known, and most viscerally felt, examples of popular vote-winning parties losing U.S. presidential elections, they are not the country's only electoral inversions. Finding earlier electoral inversions, however, requires looking back in history more than a century—to the elections of 1888, 1876, and 1824. The results of these elections, along with the two more recent electoral inversions, are summarized in Table 5.1. In 1888, Benjamin Harrison, the Republican candidate, handily defeated Democrat Grover Cleveland by 65 electoral college votes, an impressive 16.2-point margin given that Harrison lost the popular vote to Cleveland by 94,530 votes. Just three election cycles earlier, in what remains the closest Electoral College contest to-date, Rutherford B. Hayes prevailed over Samuel Tilden in the election of 1876 by one electoral vote, though Tilden won a 51% popular-vote majority to Hayes' 48%. With echoes of 2000, Hayes prevailed only after a drawn-out fight over the electors of three states—Florida, Louisiana, and South Carolina, each submitting rival slates of electors—where the election outcome was, like in 2000, disputed (Holt 2008). It took the appointment of a commission by Congress—and an agreement, known as the Compromise of 1877, to withdraw federal troops from the southern states, effectively ending Reconstruction (Woodward 1966)—to resolve the matter in Hayes' favor. Finally, in 1824 John Quincy Adams defeated Andrew Jackson despite receiving fewer popular *and* Electoral College votes—the first and only time in American history that that has happened.

Table 5.1. Five U.S. Electoral Inversions

	Winner				Runner Up			
Year	Candidate	Votes %	EC	EC%	Candidate	Votes %	EC	EC%
2016	Donald Trump (R)	45.93	304	56.5	Hillary Clinton (D)	48.02	227	42.2
2000	George W. Bush (R)	47.87	271	50.4	Al Gore (D)	48.38	266	49.4
1888	Benjamin Harrison (R)	47.80	233	58.1	Grover Cleveland (D)	48.63	168	41.9
1876	Rutherford B. Hayes (R)	47.92	185	50.1	Samuel Tilden (D)	50.92	184	49.9
1824	John Quincy Adams (D-R)	30.92	84	32.2	Andrew Jackson (D-R)	41.36	99	37.9

No longer in the collective consciousness of most Americans, the outcomes of the three nineteenth-century electoral inversions were arguably no less controversial. But these electoral inversions differed from the two twenty-first century inversions in a crucial respect. Although the United States became progressively more democratic during the course of the nineteenth century, even by the end of the century the process of democratization remained very much incomplete. Although women would remain disenfranchised until 1920, by the late 1860s African Americans had obtained a modest but not inconsequential amount of civil and political rights. Yet as Reconstruction progressed in the South, blacks increasingly found themselves victims of racial violence and persecution, revealing the extent to which the federal enforcement of their newly acquired rights was impossible so long as local populations of white Southerners were intent on violating them. Congress tried to address the escalating violence with a series of Enforcement Acts in 1870 and 1871. However, after showing some initial promise, a succession of Supreme Court decisions in the *Slaughter-House Cases* (1873) and *United States v. Cruikshank* (1876) rendered the Acts toothless (Foner 1988, 529-531). By 1876, Southern Democrats were freshly emboldened and unwilling to countenance the political participation of their black populations, and Republicans for their part had come to believe that "the Northern public would no longer

support federal intervention in Southern affairs" (Foner 1988, 567). Without a credible threat of federal intervention, Southern Democrats had free rein. "A reign of terror" ensued, and "throughout the Deep South, black belt Democrats either barred freedmen from the polls... or stuffed the ballot boxes" (Foner 1988, 574-575). Ultimately, "Democrats' ruthless determination to prevent blacks from voting," and to drive white scalawags either to the Democratic party or away from the polls, lead to the "decimation of the Republicans' black vote," and guaranteed "almost certain Democratic victories" in the Southern states (Holt 2008, 169).

Therefore, when the 1876 election resulted in an inversion, what this outcome meant for the principle of popular democracy was seriously muddled. On the one hand were Tilden's supporters who reasoned that, "should the vote of Louisiana, South Carolina or Florida be counted for the Republican candidate, it would be done in direct opposition to the popular will fairly expressed at the ballot-box" (*Democratic Advocate* 1876). On the other hand, Republicans could argue that this ostensible popular will was not, in fact, fairly expressed. In the words of Ohio's *Ashtabula Telegraph* (1876): "In the South, where intimidation, proscription and bitter persecution forced Republicans away from the polls or into the Tilden ranks, the majorities include a large proportion of the whole vote, and whenever Democrats boast of these ill-gotten majorities, they glory in their own shame. It is fully equal to the murderer who was on trial for killing his parents, and demanded the clemency of the court because he was a *poor orphan*!"

Between 1876 and 1888, the problem of free and fair elections in the South only grew worse. In a post-Reconstruction South unfettered by federal oversight, Democrats suppressed and intimidated the Republican voter into near political extinction. For in-

stance, as Calhoun (2008, 179) points out, while the black population in South Carolina had grown by 60 percent in the two decades prior to 1888, "the number of Republican votes for President in the state had declined by more than 80 percent" since 1872. "The defeat of Cleveland [in 1888], despite his majority of the popular vote," concludes a historian, "was not the blot on democracy that it seemed because there were far larger blemishes. Given the suppression of the Republican black vote in the South, it was hard to argue that Harrison was truly a minority president" (White 2017). Yet argue it Democrats did, for it was they who felt cheated (Summers 2004, 14). "Though defeated in the Electorial [*sic*] College," said the *Russellville Democrat* (1889), Grover Cleveland and "the late managers of the party were supported by a popular majority of nearly 100,000 votes. The result in the Electoral College was brought about by corruption, sectional hate, 'blocks of five', bribery, forgery and theft in a few localities." But once again, others could reasonably wonder, as did a column in the *New York Tribune* (1889), what Cleveland's popular majority meant in a one-party South in which the Republican vote had been stifled "under the lash and shotgun." In contrast to Cleveland, the *Tribune* further argued, who fell short of a *true* popular majority in both 1884 (an election he won "through fraud") and 1888, "General Harrison has been elected President in spite of fraud. This is the distinction which history will be compelled to make between the men."

Although Americans in 1876 and 1888 disagreed about the fairness and legitimacy of the election outcomes, it is interesting nonetheless that they generally shared a conception of democracy that linked legitimacy to popular support. Of course, how much Americans were willing to put this principle into practice varied widely. And how far they were willing to go in linking legitimacy and popular support depended, as it still does today, on the popularity

of their side. But even as early as the election of 1824, this understanding of democracy, inchoate though it may have been, had entrenched itself the minds of contemporaries. When no candidate managed to secure a majority of electoral college votes in the presidential election of 1824, the decision devolved to state delegations in the House of Representatives, which were tasked with choosing between the top three finishers—Andrew Jackson, who had won the most electoral and popular votes, John Quincy Adams, and William Crawford. A period of intense negotiations ensued in which Henry Clay of Kentucky played kingmaker. Once Clay threw his support behind Adams, the contest was over.

Jackson and his supporters were outraged that his popular victory did not translate to electoral victory, and accused Clay of "clearly subverting the will of his constituents" (Callahan 2022, 297). Though Clay and Adams may not have intended to chart an undemocratic course, they failed to perceive just how much voters now "expected their will to be reflected in the choices made by Washington politicians" (Callahan 2022, 298). By present-day standards, that voters would expect this seems natural and obvious. But by the standards of the early 1820s, when the young republic was still just one generation removed from the revolutionary and founding eras, this expectation was a novel development.[3]

A measure of just how novel it was can be gleaned from the political culture that prevailed in the late-eighteenth century, and that provided the intellectual backdrop for the constitution debated and drafted in 1787. It was a culture in which the word "democracy"—in contrast to the preferred alternative, a republic—still carried a pejorative tinge (Wilentz 2005, 7; Bailyn 1967, 282), which followed from the long-standing assumption that democ-

[3]Of course, for some it was an unwelcome development. As the historian Sean Wilentz (2005, 188) notes, even as late as 1820 John Adams, "imprisoned in his eighteenth-century orthodoxies," was complaining of "government by 'mere numbers'."

racy left unchecked tends naturally to "degenerate into anarchy and tumult" (Wood 1969, 198). Many delegates to the 1787 Constitutional Convention saw a confirmation of this tendency in the "popular despotism" of the state legislatures that emerged from the Articles of Confederation (Wood 1969, 403-413; Klarman 2016, 243-246). Edmund Randolph of Virginia propounded the "incontrovertible maxim" that "our chief danger arises from the democratic parts of our [state] constitutions" (Farrand 1911, 26). At various times during the Convention, a number of other delegates endorsed this sentiment.[4] Even among those delegates less outspoken on the perils of democratic excess, "virtually all... could agree upon the proposition that ordinary citizens ought not to have too great a role in governmental affairs" (Klarman 2016, 244).

What was needed, then, was a reorganization of the Confederation along the lines of Britain's constitutional model of mixed government, whose enduring success was attributed to a harmonious balance between the crown, the aristocracy, and the people (Wood 1969, 197-255). This meant a strengthening of the monarchical and aristocratic elements of society (embodied, respectively, in the British crown and House of Lords), vis-à-vis the popular element (embodied in the Commons) (Wood 1969, 432). This imperative is evident in several of the 1787 constitution's institutional innovations. For instance, the drafters devised a bicameral legislature comprised of an indirectly elected upper house to check the potential democratic excesses of the popularly elected lower house. While apportionment in the latter—the only popularly elected branch of government—would be proportional and based on population,[5] the Senate would be apportioned in accordance with the principle

[4]Roger Sherman remarked that the people "should have as little to do as may be about the Government. They want information and are constantly liable to be misled." To this Elbridge Gerry replied in agreement: "the evils we experience flow from the excess of democracy" (Farrand 1911, 48).

[5]Though a number of delegates hoped that seats to the House of Representatives would be apportioned on

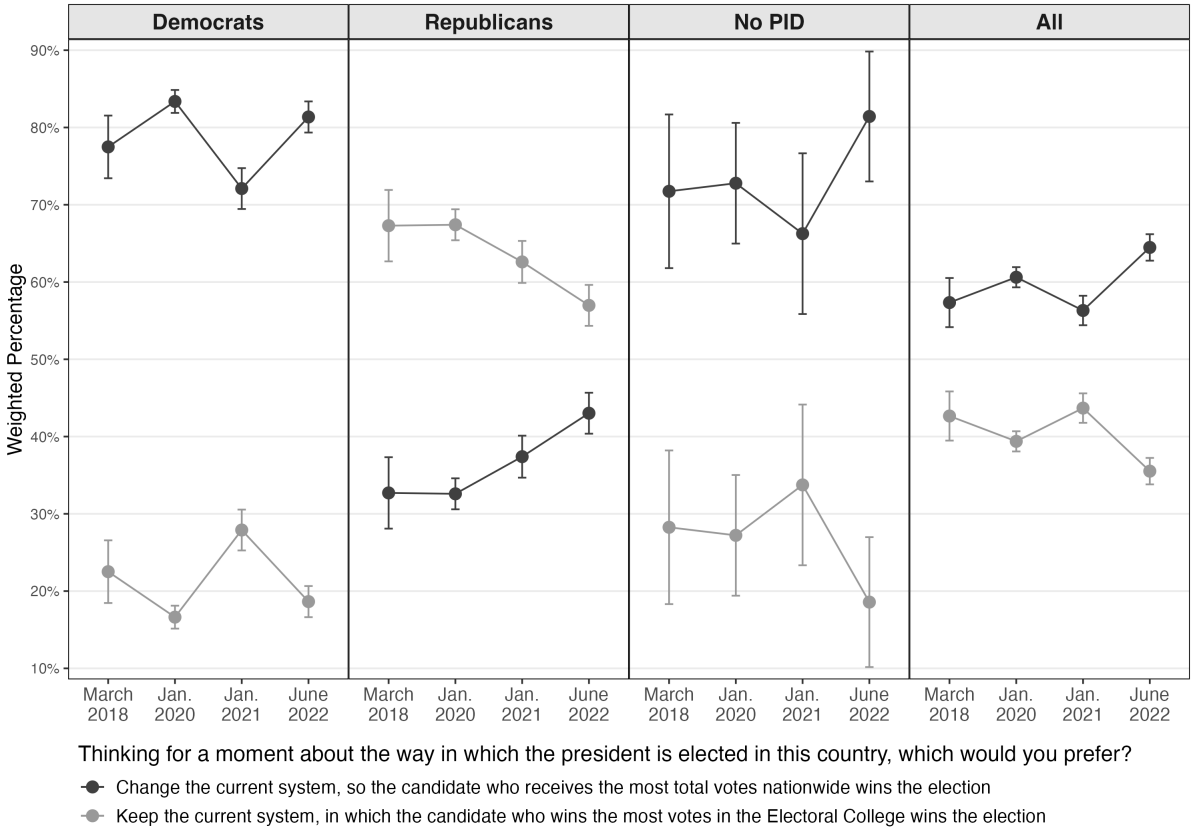
of the equality of states. In doing so, the constitution gave expression to the principle that states, and not only people, are the objects of representation. As for the election of the executive, which proved to be one of the Convention's most fiercely debated issues, the constitution again provided an indirect mechanism: the electoral college system. The electoral college system represented a compromise between a contingent of delegates who advocated election by the national legislature, with some preferring it take place in the upper house and others preferring the lower house, and another group that argued for election by the state legislatures. Only one delegate, James Wilson of Pennsylvania, pressed for the direct election of the executive by the people. But his proposal "had so little support that he never even attempted to bring it to a vote" (Beeman 2009, 136).

If it is true that, at its inception, the American political system embodied a renunciation of the principle of majoritarian democracy, it is equally true that over time this renunciation was gradually supplanted by acceptance. Indeed, without recognizing this historical shift it is difficult to make sense of the debates generated by the outcomes of the 1824, 1876, and 1888 presidential elections. Given that nineteenth century Americans were questioning the fairness of winning elections while losing the vote, it is unsurprising to see in Figure 5.1 that Americans continue to do so in the twenty-first century. When a sizable majority of Americans indicate a preference for an electoral system that determines winners and losers on the basis of obtaining the most votes (64.5% in the most recent Pew survey), what happens when presidential elections create winners out of candidates that win fewer votes than losers? How if at all do electoral inversions affect American voters' confidence in and support for democracy? The remainder of this chapter addresses this

the basis of property.

question.

Figure 5.1. Americans' Views on Electing the President by Popular Vote versus Electoral College



Source: The Pew Research Center's American Trends Panel (2020-2022 data); 2018 data comes from the Pew Research Center's Political Survey conducted March 7-March 14, 2018.

5.3. Electoral Inversions and Democratic Support

In assessing the political consequences of electoral inversions, I focus on two dimensions of political support: (1) perceptions of electoral integrity and (2) support for regime principles. As I explain in greater detail below (Section 5.5.A), while there is little consensus about the meaning of electoral integrity, it can be broadly understood as relating to the freeness and fairness of elections, which implies the absence of significant manipulation or corruption.[6] Perceptions of electoral integrity involve the evaluation of a particular

[6]Needless to say, the degree to which elections have integrity, and the degree to which elections are *perceived* as having integrity, are separate (though surely related) matters. As my focus is on perceptions, what

democratic institution within the broader political regime: the system of elections. As I explained in Chapter 3 (see Section 3.3), in the language of Easton (1965) and Easton (1975), this makes perceptions of electoral integrity an indicator of regime support at the level of institutions, the most particularized form of regime support. In contrast, support for regime principles constitutes the most generalized form of regime support within Easton's hierarchy. Regime principles "define the broad parameters within which the political system should function," such as "choices about whether political relationships should be organized as a democratic, authoritarian, or other political form" (Dalton 2004, 6). In the context of the United States, a democratic regime, support for regime principles is tantamount to a preference for democracy over non-democratic alternatives.

What is the relationship between the perceptions of electoral integrity and support for regime principles? For one thing, both are forms of political support—and more specifically, they are types of regime support, albeit oriented towards different levels of a democratic regime. Nevertheless, for the sake of convenience I henceforth refer to support for regime principles using the abbreviated term *regime support*. Furthermore, perceptions of electoral integrity and regime support both exemplify what Easton called "diffuse support." In contradistinction to specific support, which "is a response to the authorities," and is directed to the perceived decisions, policies, actions, utterances or the general style of these authorities" (Easton 1975, 437), diffuse support is "independent of the effects of daily outputs" and "consists of a reservoir of favorable attitudes or good will that helps members [of a political system] to accept or tolerate outputs to which they are opposed or the effects of which they see as damaging to their wants" (Easton 1965, 273). Positive perceptions of electoral

matters is not actually existing levels of electoral integrity but what people perceive about elections.

integrity indicate a favorable evaluation of the performance of electoral institutions, not for the performance of specific individuals participating in elections. By the same token, high levels of regime support among citizens of democracies reflect approval of democracy as a system of government, rather than approval of incumbents in power at a particular moment.

Finally, perceptions of electoral integrity, more particular and less "diffuse" than regime support, undoubtedly play a important role in shaping regime support. For example, it is difficult to imagine that having grave doubts about the integrity of elections would not negatively affect one's confidence in the principles of democracy. At the same time, though, it is just as plausible that one could have a low level of regime support without corresponding doubts about the integrity of elections. This would be the case, for instance, if the source of low regime support was not disaffection with electoral institutions, but instead with some other aspect of the political system. In short, electoral integrity is related to regime support, and could even be regarded as a constituent element of it. But whereas perceptions of electoral integrity are directed towards the system of elections in particular, regime support refers more broadly to the effectiveness and legitimacy of the political system as a whole.

5.4. Data and Method

I measure both electoral integrity and regime support by constructing multi-item indices using survey questions from the University of Pennsylvania's Institute for the Study of Citizens and Politics (ISCAP) Panel (Hopkins and Mutz 2022), and its precursor, the 2008 National Annenberg Election Study (NAES 2008). Specifically, I use the 2012 and

2016 ISCAP Panel surveys, which were conducted before and after the presidential elections held in those years. The 2008 NAES survey was also conducted before and after the 2008 presidential election. That respondents were interviewed at two time points, once prior to the election and again afterwards, makes it possible to test with a relatively high degree of confidence hypotheses about the effects of electoral outcomes on political attitudes. The ISCAP and NAES surveys have the added benefit, moreover, of including a common set of items tapping into perceptions of electoral integrity and regime support, which allows for consistent measurement across three election cycles.

5.4.A. Measuring Electoral Integrity

Though studies of electoral integrity are common, the concept is seldom defined in precise terms. Often, the concept of electoral integrity is operationalized in terms of one or two underlying indicators—such as evaluations of whether the election was conducted fairly (Mongrain 2023), or whether votes were counted fairly (Bowler et al. 2015) or accurately (Sinclair, Smith, and Tucker 2018)—without defining the overarching concept that these variables are supposed to relate to. Sometimes a lack of precision is part of a deliberate strategy, however, as in the case of minimalist conceptions of electoral integrity that strive for a value-neutral and thus broadly applicable conceptual framework. According to the standard minimalist definition, electoral integrity refers to "agreed upon international conventions and universal standards about elections reflecting global norms applying to all countries worldwide throughout the electoral cycle, including during, the pre-electoral period, the campaign, on polling day, and its aftermath." (Norris 2014, 21). The flip side of this coin, electoral malpractice, occurs when the "standards" and "norms" of electoral

integrity are violated. Of course, what this rendering of electoral integrity achieves in flexibility comes at the expense of substance. What are the core principles that form the conceptual basis of electoral integrity?

To Birch (2012), in one of the most comprehensive and substantive theoretical accounts, having electoral integrity means fulfilling three principles of democratic electoral outcomes: inclusiveness (requiring the right to vote and to stand for election), policy-directed voting (requiring equal information and the free expression of preferences), and effective aggregation (requiring impartiality, openness, and transparency). When these conditions are not met, the result is electoral malpractice, or the "the manipulation of electoral processes and outcomes so as to substitute personal or partisan benefit for the public interest" (Birch 2012, 14). Alternatively, Norris (2018) expands on her minimalist definition by linking electoral integrity to the guarantee, expressed in Article 21(3) of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, of the right to "periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures." This principle, Norris notes, is "widely seen as providing the cornerstone of the legal definition of electoral integrity" (Norris 2018). In framing electoral integrity in terms of the fulfillment of a set of international electoral norms, Norris identifies her approach with the practice of defining electoral integrity positively. Positive definitions, van Ham (2015, 716) explains in a broad survey of existing electoral integrity measures, are grounded in the *fulfillment* of certain conditions and "use terms ranging from free and fair elections, clean elections, and democratic elections to election quality and electoral integrity." Conversely, negative definitions frame electoral integrity in terms of *violations*, such as "flawed elections, electoral malpractice or misconduct, electoral manipulation, fraud, or corruption,

and election rigging."

That van Ham attempts to clarify positive and negative conceptions of electoral integrity by citing an assemblage of commonly used terms, rather than by the underlying concept to which these terms are supposedly linked, is symptomatic of a more general problem of conceptual fuzziness that afflicts the study of electoral integrity. Simply put, nothing approaching a scholarly consensus exists about the proper way to define electoral integrity, not least because agreement about the meaning of electoral integrity would imply a prior agreement about the meaning of democracy itself. Fortunately, the task at hand is not a search for a general theory of electoral integrity, but rather a minimally cogent working definition in terms of which the effects of electoral inversions can be assessed. To that end, I understand electoral integrity in broad terms as a quality of both process and performance. With respect to process, elections have integrity when they are conducted freely and fairly, and without outcome-altering manipulation. With respect to performance, electoral integrity can also be understood as the degree to which elections produce democratic outcomes. In this sense, elections can be said to have integrity when they hold elected leaders accountable, when they represent voters in approximate proportion to their numbers, or when they make government responsive to citizens' preferences. The inclusion of the latter performance dimension, though it is less concrete and not contemplated in most accounts of electoral integrity, is justifiable on the grounds that the present study is interested in *public perceptions* of electoral integrity. As will become clearer below, even if a given election fulfills all of the process criteria, a widespread public perception that the election results were "undemocratic" bears on its integrity.

To measure electoral integrity, I build on the approach of Daniller and Mutz (2019),

who construct an Electoral Integrity (EI) Index using the first three survey questions listed in Table 5.2. Since the fairness of elections is a core component of electoral integrity, the relevance of the first question, which prompts respondents to evaluate the degree to which presidential elections in the United States are conducted fairly, is straightforward. The second question assesses the degree to which elections are perceived as being responsive to ability versus money. This is in line with extant measures of electoral integrity, which typically incorporate indicators related to the influence of money in determining election outcomes. For example, the Perceptions of Electoral Integrity (PEI) Index, a widely used expert survey, identifies a "campaign finance" dimension of electoral integrity comprised of four indicators, one of which asks whether rich people buy elections (Garnett et al. 2023). Though the third question is usually employed as an indicator of external efficacy or government responsiveness, it can also be interpreted as reflecting the consequences dimension of electoral integrity. That is, whereas Questions 1 and 2 address the electoral process—whether elections are conducted fairly, and whether they confer undue advantages to wealthy interests—Question 3 taps into electoral performance. Citizens that perceive that elections do not cause government to heed their preferences may therefore regard elections are failing to satisfy one of its core functions, namely, to give them a voice in the machinery of collective self-government.

Though it does not appear in Daniller and Mutz's (2019) PEI index, the fourth item, which asks respondents whether they are confident in the accuracy of the vote count, is a commonly used indicator of electoral integrity (Karp, Nai, and Norris 2018; Mochtak, Lesschaeve, and Glaurdić 2021; Mongrain 2023; Sinclair, Smith, and Tucker 2018). This is for good reason, as vote count accuracy bears directly on the fairness criterion of electoral

integrity. Insofar as citizens believe votes are not counted accurately, they will probably doubt that the election was conducted fairly—which is to say, they will doubt its integrity. For this reason, I include the question about vote count accuracy in my PEI Index.

Table 5.2. Electoral Integrity Index Items

Question	Values	Recoded Values
In some countries, people believe their elections are conducted fairly. In other countries, people believe that their elections are conducted unfairly. Do you believe presidential elections in the United States are generally:	1. Very fair 2. Somewhat fair 3. Neither fair nor unfair 4. Somewhat unfair 5. Very unfair	2. Fair (very/somewhat) 1. Neither fair nor unfair 0. Unfair (very/somewhat)
In general, do you think the best candidates win the elections or is it just the candidates who raise the most money that get elected, or something in between?	1. Best candidates 2. Most money 3. Something in between	2. Best candidates 1. Something in between 0. Most money
How much do you feel that having elections makes the government pay attention to what the people think:	1. A good deal 2. Some 3. Not much	2. A good deal 1. Some 0. Not much
How confident are you that the votes across the country are accurately counted on Election Day?	1. Very confident 2. Somewhat confident 3. Not too confident 4. Not at all confident	2. Very confident 1. Somewhat confident 0. Not (too/at all) confident

Source: ISCAP Panel Survey (Hopkins and Mutz 2022)

However, while Daniller and Mutz do not explain why their PEI index excluded the question about vote count accuracy, the most likely reason is that the question was not asked in the 2016 pre-election survey. It was, however, asked in the ISCAP survey fielded after the 2014 midterm elections. Due the panel nature of the ISCAP data, a number of respondents interviewed in the 2014 post-election survey were reinterviewed in the 2016 pre-election wave. In fact, nearly 85% of respondents to the 2016 pre-election survey had been interviewed in the 2014 post-election wave and had given valid responses to the vote count accuracy question. I used these 2014 responses as the pre-election reference point

for the 2016 pre-post analysis. Despite having been recorded nearly two years prior to the 2016 election, the 2014 post-election responses were largely consistent with the pre-election proportions in 2008 and 2012 (see Table 5.4 below). This, coupled with the use of three alternate measures of electoral integrity within the PEI Index, reduces the chance that any effects observed in 2016 are mere artifacts of the discrepancy in the timing of the pre-election vote count question.

To construct the 4-item PEI Index, I first recoded each variable such that higher values represent greater levels of electoral integrity. I then put each variable on a standard 3-point scale. This required collapsing the upper and lower categories of the 5-level electoral fairness variable, and combining the lower two categories of the vote count accuracy variable (see Table 5.2). The resulting 9-point index variable ranges from a minimum of 0 to a maximum of 8.

5.4.B. Measuring Regime Support

Table 5.3 provides the four items comprising the Regime Support (RS) Index. These questions were not included in the 2008 NAES survey; all analyses involving the RS Index are thus limited to the 2012 and 2016 presidential elections. All four items are measured on a common 5-point scale, ranging from 4 = "strongly agree" to 0 = "strongly disagree." Combining these items results in a 17-point index, with 0 as the minimum value and 16 the maximum value. The first two items are framed positively and prompt respondents to weigh the U.S. "system" or "form" of government against potential alternatives. For these questions, increasing levels of agreement represent higher levels of regime support, while decreasing levels of agreement indicate lower levels of support. The reverse is true

of the next two questions, which are framed negatively. Here, stronger agreement corresponds with weaker regime support, and vice versa for stronger disagreement. Item 3 asks respondents to consider the degree to which the U.S. system of government requires series changes, while Item 4 encourages a more general, affective reflection on their feeling of criticism towards the political system.

Table 5.3. Regime Support (RS) Index Items

	Question	Values
1.	I would rather live under our system of government than any other that I can think of.	4. Strongly agree 3. Somewhat agree 2. Neither agree nor disagree 1. Somewhat disagree 0. Strongly disagree
2.	Whatever its faults may be, our form of government is best for representing the interests of the country's citizens.	
3.	Our system of government is in need of some serious changes.	0. Strongly agree 1. Somewhat agree 2. Neither agree nor disagree 3. Somewhat disagree 4. Strongly disagree
4.	At present I feel very critical of our political system.	

Source: ISCAP Panel Survey (Hopkins and Mutz 2022)

On what grounds can we say that these items are indicators of the underlying concept of "regime support," rather than some other type of political support? First, through references to the "political system" and "form of government," each of these four questions evokes a diffuse rather than specific form of political support. That is, the questions implicate deep-seated sentiments felt toward broad features of political system, not, as is the case with specific support, judgments about the performance of particular political authorities. Second, diffuse support can be directed towards the political community, or it could be directed towards the political regime. The four questions comprising the proposed RS Index fit more neatly under the latter category. While the first two questions in the index might activate in some respondents a sense of national pride in and reverence for

American democracy, which would be indicative of support for the political community, any appeals to this effect are inexplicit and incidental. The more immediate sentiment that the questions address is the regime, the "system" or "form" of government.

Third, even if the index is in fact measuring regime support, as I think I have established, this support can be further disaggregated according to the constituent elements of political regimes to which it is directed. (Easton 1965) identifies three levels of regimes: values and principles, norms and procedures, and institutions. The latter two types of regime support are typically understood as performance evaluations—for example, of the way democracy is working in practice (norms and procedures), or of the way particular institutions, like the legislature or judiciary, are working (institutions). Of the four questions, none refer to any specific political institution, nor do they solicit an evaluation about performance, whether it be performance of democracy writ large or of a particular aspect of democracy. The questions are rather asking respondents for a more general evaluation of the U.S. political system that corresponds to the level of regime values and principles, which "define the broad parameters within which the political system should function" (Dalton 2004).

5.4.C. Estimation Strategy

In the following analyses, perceptions of electoral integrity (PEI) and regime support (RS)—both measured on a continuous scale—serve as the dependent variables. The independent variable in both analyses is winner-loser status. Since I am interested in the modifying effect of electoral inversions on winning and losing, I employ the 4-category measure of winner-loser status, *winner4*. Since *winner4* is a categorical variable, its four

levels are equivalent to four separate dummy variables, with *WW* indicating voters of the vote-winning and election-winning party, *LL* indicating voters of a vote- and election-losing party, *LW* indicating voters of the vote-losing but election winning party, and *WL* (the reference category) indicating voters of the vote-winning but election-losing party. Moreover, winner-loser status is determined by respondents' answers to the post-election vote choice question.[7] Table 5.4 provides a summary of the dependent variables. Grouping voters by winner-loser type and vote choice, it reports pre- and post-election means, and the pre-post mean difference, for the PEI Index and the RS Index in the three election-years covered in the analysis.

Table 5.4. Descriptive Statistics: Democratic Support by Winner-Loser Status

			PEI Index (Means)				RS Index (Means)			
Year	Voter Type	Vote	Pre	Post	Diff	*N*	Pre	Post	Diff	*N*
	WW	Democrat	3.83	5.48	1.65	5441				
2008	LL	Republican	4.54	4.01	-0.53	4819				
	LL	Other	3.39	3.50	0.10	439				
	WW	Democrat	4.34	5.24	0.90	1016	8.91	9.19	0.29	1002
2012	LL	Republican	3.83	3.03	-0.80	860	8.94	8.42	-0.52	861
	LL	Other	2.85	3.09	0.24	87	7.06	7.03	-0.02	88
	LW	Republican	2.77	5.22	2.45	386	7.79	8.94	1.15	422
2016	WL	Democrat	4.50	3.71	-0.78	367	8.79	7.93	-0.86	438
	LL	Other	3.12	3.88	0.77	78	7.89	8.15	0.26	94

Data Source: 2008 NAES; 2012 and 2016 ISCAP.
Note: The PEI Index is measured on a 9-point scale ranging from 0-8. The RS Index is measured on a 17-point scale ranging from 0-16.

[7]Daniller and Mutz (2019) make a case for identifying winners and losers by respondents' vote choice *intentions* as recorded in the pre-election survey wave. For example, they code winners in 2016 as respondents who, prior to the election, said they would vote for Donald Trump "if the election were held today" (so long as they also reported having voted in the post-election wave). The rationale for this coding scheme is that election outcomes influence who respondents report having voted for, with some respondents falsely claiming to have vote for the winning candidate after the election. While I do not doubt that such misreporting exists, the question is whether it matters. Take, for instance, a respondent who claims in the post-election survey to have voted for Donald Trump in the 2016 election. Whether or not she actually voted for Donald Trump is less important than that she is now identifying herself as having voted for the winning candidate. In a crucial sense, *feeling* like an electoral winner or loser is what matters; vote choice merely offers a convenient, but not watertight, method of accurately representing that feeling.

PEI and *RS* are measured at two points in time, and these points in time are separated by an election, which thus acts as a "treatment." This before-and-after design with two time periods permits a fixed-effects approach to estimating the conditioning effects of electoral inversions on winner-loser gaps. This approach is represented in the following two fixed effects regression equations, where *wave* is a dummy variable indicating the pre-election (=0) or post-election (=1) period, and *winner4* is the 4-category winner-loser status variable with the reference level set to *WL*:

$$PEI_{it} = \alpha_i + \beta_1 Wave_i + \beta_2 Winner4_i + \beta_3(Wave_i \times Winner4_i) + e_{it}$$

$$RS_{it} = \alpha_i + \beta_1 Wave_i + \beta_2 Winner4_i + \beta_3(Wave_i \times Winner4_i) + e_{it}$$

In this model, PEI_{it} and RS_{it} signify perceptions of electoral integrity and regime support, respectively, for individual i at time t. The interaction of *Wave* and *Winner4* produces β_3, which is essentially a difference-in-difference estimator.[8] It captures the post-election effect of the "treatment" (i.e., *Winner4*) on *PEI* and *RS*. Furthermore, α_i represents respondent-level fixed effects, which control for time-invariant differences between individuals. Because fixed effects estimation eliminates the potential confounding effects of observed and unobserved individual characteristics that do not change over time, including control variables for these characteristics is redundant (Halaby 2004).

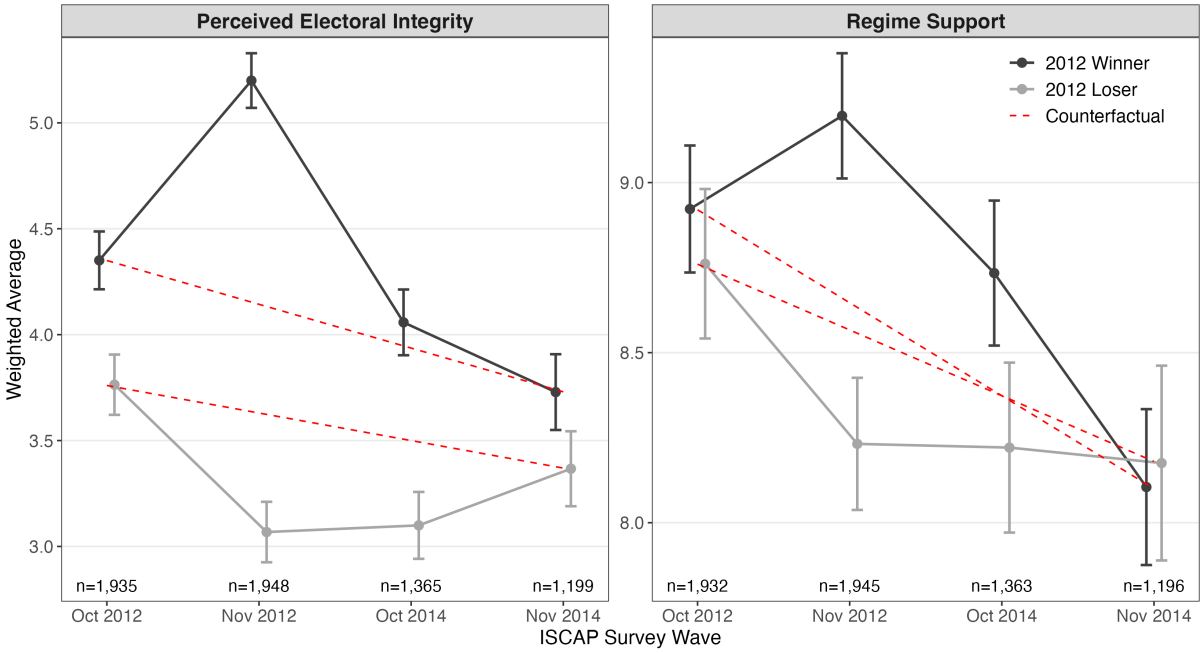
However, producing unbiased estimates in a difference-in-difference model depends on the parallel trends assumption. According to this assumption, a treatment group, had it not been subjected to the treatment, would have followed the same over-time trend as the control group. Meeting this assumption in the present context would imply that observed differences between winners and losers in pre-to-post election changes in democratic

[8] When there are only two time periods, the difference-in-difference and fixed effects estimators are equivalent (Wooldridge 2001, 284).

support would *not* have been observed had there not been an election. In other words, in a counterfactual world in which an election did not taken place between the two points in time that individuals were surveyed, the parallel trends assumption holds that these individuals, now indistinguishable as winners and losers, would have experienced the same changes.

One way, albeit an imperfect one, to evaluate the plausibility of this counterfactual is to compare differences in democratic support between winners and losers from one presidential-election cycle with differences in democratic support in the absence of a presidential election. To do so, I calculated the survey-weighted mean levels of PEI and RS across five waves of the ISCAP Panel, beginning with the 2012 pre-election period. As we can see in Figure 5.2, from the pre-election October 2012 wave to the post-election November 2012 wave, at which point voters could be classified as winners or losers, average levels of PEI and RS for these two groups trended in opposite directions, with democratic support rising among winners and declining among losers. If the parallel trends assumption holds, we should observe a leveling out of trends in democratic support over time in the absence of another election. The red dotted lines suggest this to be the case. Ignoring the "treatment" effects of the 2012 election, the two groups in the left panel exhibit a remarkably similar over-time trend from October 2012 to November 2014. Though the trend is less symmetric for regime support (right panel), by October 2014 the difference between 2012 winners and losers is almost statistically indistinguishable. By November 2014, there is no statistical difference between 2012 winners and losers.

Figure 5.2. Trends in Democratic Support



Note: The points above are survey-weighted means, with vertical lines representing 95% confidence intervals.

Inferring a parallel trend from Figure 5.2 is not without complication, however, because of the regularity with which elections are held. In textbook applications of the difference-in-differences design, the parallel trends assumption would be substantiated through an analysis of pre-treatment trends. Because the "treatment" in this case is a presidential election, and because presidential elections occur every four years, there is no analogous sense in which respondents could be regarded as being in a state of pre-treatment. It is true that Figure 5.2 could be interpreted as depicting a pre-treatment trend if the 2016 election were the point of reference—except, of course, for the fact of the 2012 election, which equally renders it a depiction of post-treatment trends. Ultimately, incontrovertible evidence of parallel trends will not be forthcoming in quasi-experimental settings. The question—which I believe Figure 5.2 answers affirmatively—is whether the evidence is sufficient to justify the statistical method.

5.5. Results

Table 5.4 presents the results of fixed effects models estimating the effects of winning and losing, in inversion and non-inversion settings, on pre-post changes in perceptions of electoral integrity and regime support, respectively. In both models, the coefficient on *wave* indicates the average pre-post change in democratic support among WLs, the reference category. The coefficients on the interactions between *wave* and the winner-loser status variables can be interpreted as the average effects of being a WW, LW, or LL, relative to WLs, on post-election democratic support. Table 5.4 does not report coefficients for *WW*, *LW* and *LL* (which would be differences in democratic support between these groups and WLs when $Wave = 0$) because they are perfectly correlated with the individual fixed effects captured in α_i.

Beginning with perceptions of electoral integrity (PEI), the negative and statistically significant coefficient on *wave* in the second column of Table 5.4 indicates that WLs on average become less sanguine about electoral integrity over the course of an election. Specifically, WLs experience an average decrease of 0.78 points on the PEI Index between the pre- and post-election periods. Three preliminary conclusions can be drawn from the coefficients on the interactions between *Wave* and winner-loser status. First, the positive direction of the coefficients, all of which are significant ($p < 0.1$), mean that post-election confidence in electoral integrity is lower for WLs than any other winner-loser type. Second, in comparing the sizes of the coefficients, it is clear that the gap in PEI is greatest for LWs. As measured in the PEI Index, mean levels of PEI are more than 3.2 points higher for LWs than WLs, on average. Third, although the gap narrows considerably for the LL-WL pair

(by a factor of 11 compared to the LW-WL gap), the results indicate that the negative effect on PEI of voting for a losing party is stronger when the losing party was the popular-vote winner.

Table 5.5. The Effects of Electoral Inversions on Winner-Loser Gaps in Democratic Support

	Electoral Integrity	Regime Support
Wave	−0.782***	−0.861***
	(0.091)	(0.110)
Wave x WW	2.314***	1.147***
	(0.093)	(0.130)
Wave x LW	3.233***	2.008***
	(0.132)	(0.158)
Wave x LL	0.286***	0.453***
	(0.093)	(0.130)
N	14,724	2,905
R2	0.309	0.072
AIC	72449.6	17806.9

***p < .01; **p < .05; *p < .1
Note: Parentheses contain robust standard errors.

The same general pattern holds for winner-loser effects on regime support (RS), the results of which are provided in the third column of Table 5.4. Average levels of regime support among WLs are 0.86 points less on the RS Index after the election relative to pre-election levels. As the positive coefficients on the interaction terms indicate, the magnitude of the negative WL effect is significantly greater than the effects associated with WWs, LWs, and LLs. Once again, being a LW rather than a WL produces the largest gap in regime support, and the LL-WL gap, though less prominent, nonetheless persists.

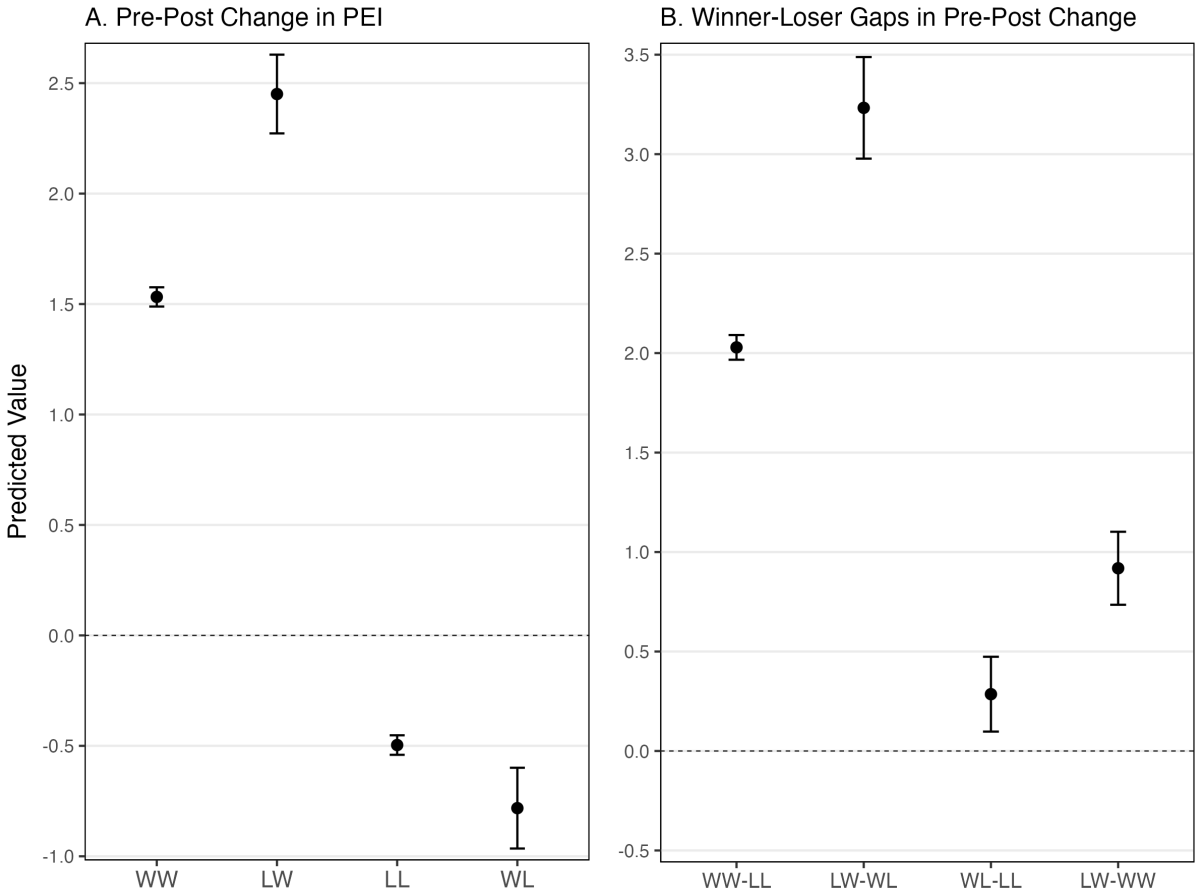
To make the interpretation of these results more concrete, I calculated two sets of predictions for perceptions of electoral integrity and regime support. The first set are the predicted values of pre-post change in PEI and RS for WWs, LWs, LLs, and WLs. The

second set are the predicted differences in pre-post change between the different winner-loser types. In other words, whereas the first set of predictions evaluates the effect of a given winner-loser type on pre-post change in democratic support, the second set evaluates the *difference* in pre-post change between a given *pair* of winner-loser types. In both cases, predictions were generated from the observed values in the data, but varying winner-loser status for each individual respondent, and then averaging the predictions for each winner-loser type.

Predictions for perceptions of electoral integrity are displayed in Figure 5.3. Panel A plots the predicted pre-post change in PEI for WWs, LWs, LLs, and WLs. On one hand, it exemplifies the typical winner-loser effects on democratic support: as expected, voting for an election-winning party has a salutary effect on perceptions of electoral integrity, while voting for an election-losing party reduces confidence in the integrity of elections. But on the other hand, it demonstrates the magnifying effect of electoral inversions on winning and losing. Whereas the average pre-post change on the PEI Index is an increase of 1.5 for WWs, the effect of being a LW is to increase post-election PEI by 2.5 points. Similarly, the average effect of being a LL is a decrease of 0.5 on the PEI Index, compared with a decrease of 0.8 for WLs. In other words, compared with voting for a party that won both the election and the vote, being a voter of a party that won the election but *lost* the vote is associated with an average post-election increase of nearly 1 point on the PEI Index. That this 1-point difference is statistically significant is confirmed on the right-hand side of Panel B, where the predicted value and 95% confidence interval of the pre-post difference between LWs and WWs is safely above zero. Also significant but more modest is the difference between WLs and LLs. Nevertheless, as Panel B shows, the degree to which being a WL *reduces*

confidence in electoral integrity relative to LLs, coupled with the even greater degree to which being a LW produces an *increase* relative to WWs, yields a LW-WL gap that is 1.2 PEI Index points larger than the WW-LL gap. At nearly 3.25 points, the WL-LW gap represents about 1.6 standard deviations on the PEI Index, and is 1.6 times greater than the WW-LL gap.

Figure 5.3. Predicted Effects of Election Outcomes on Perceived Electoral Integrity



Notes: Vertical bars represent 95% confidence intervals. Estimates in Panel A indicate pre-post differences in electoral integrity perceptions, by winner-loser type. Panel B displays winner-loser gaps in pre-post change.

Electoral inversions shape regime support in much the same way. Panel A in Figure 5.4 again presents the average pre-post change, this time in regime support, predicted for the four winner-loser types, and Panel B displays the various winner-loser gaps in pre-post change. Beginning with Panel A, note first that, consistent with the winner-loser gap

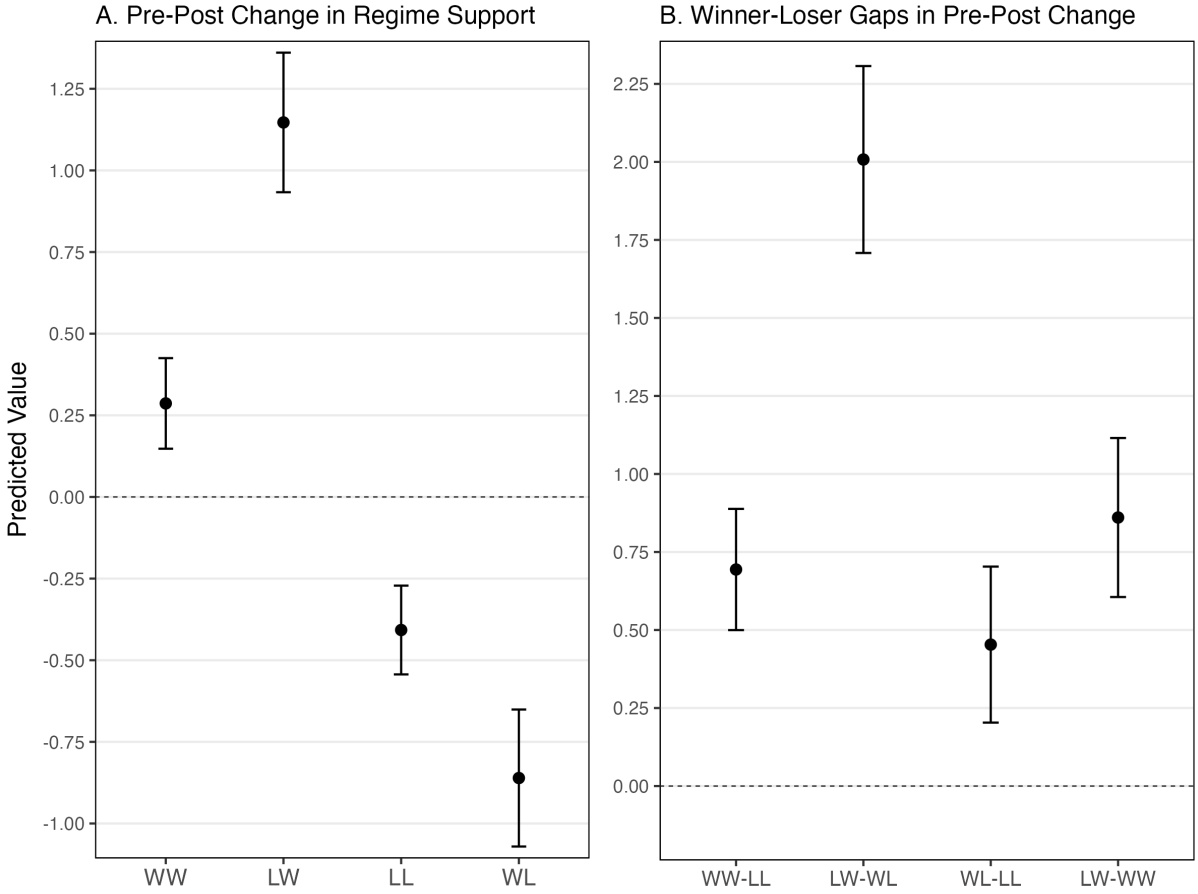
literature, winning generally increases regime support, while losing decreases it. However, predicted pre-post changes in regime support depend on having voted for an election-winning party that lost the popular vote, or an election-losing party that won the popular vote. In the former case, whereas the positive effect of being a WW is an increase of about 0.29 points on the RS Index on average, this effect increases to 1.15 on the RS Index for LWs, a difference of 0.86. Turning to losers, post-election regime support among LLs declines by 0.41 points on the RS Index. Being a WL, by contrast, increases the negative effect of losing by an additional 0.45, for a total decline of 0.86 on the RS index.

The modifying effects of electoral inversions on winning and losing come into clearer focus in Panel B, where the difference of 0.69 in pre-post change between WWs and LLs is overshadowed by the difference between LWs and WLs of 2 on the RS Index. In relative terms, the LW-WL gap is nearly 3 times the size of the WW-LL gap. Put a different way, the absolute value of the difference in regime support associated with being a WL rather than a LW is equivalent to 0.86-standard deviations on the RS Index, but less than a third of a standard deviation for the difference between WWs and LLs.

On the whole, winner-loser effects on both electoral integrity and regime support become magnified in the presence of electoral inversions. This result is consistent with H1's expectation that the LW-WL gap will exceed the WW-LL gap. But, as was the case in the previous chapter's analysis of satisfaction with democracy in Canada, the relative increase in the size of the LW-WL here is *not* primarily because of changes on the losing side, which is what H2 predicted. Figures 5.3 and 5.4 both show that the difference in democratic support between LWs and WWs is greater than the difference between WLs and LLs, which suggests that winners are the main driver behind the larger LW-WL gap.

This is especially the case with electoral integrity, where the LW-WW gap is more than 3 times the size of the WL-LL gap. In the case of regime support, the LW-WW gap exceeds the WL-LL gap by a more modest but still statistically significant ($p < 0.01$) factor of 1.9.

Figure 5.4. Predicted Effects of Election Outcomes on Regime Support



Notes: Vertical bars represent 95% confidence intervals. Estimates in Panel A indicate pre-post differences in regime support, by winner-loser type. Panel B displays winner-loser gaps in pre-post change.

5.6. Alternative Explanations

Could the results described above be explained by something other than electoral inversions? I have skated by thus far on the unexamined assumption that electoral inversions are the sole causal factor that might account for differences in democratic support observed across different groups of winning and losing voters. However, there are theoretically plau-

sible explanations for these differences in democratic support that do not involve electoral inversions, and that therefore must be addressed.

The electoral integrity and regime support models estimated in Section 5.4 rely on NAES and ISCAP Panel data from only three presidential elections—or only two, in the case of regime support. For perceptions of electoral integrity, I have data on the 2008, 2012, and 2016 elections; for regime support, the 2012 and 2016 elections. Therefore, when I conclude that electoral inversions cause winners to express higher levels of confidence in electoral integrity than they otherwise would (i.e., than they would in non-inversion elections), what I am really saying is that *the positive effect on perceptions of electoral integrity of being a Republican voter in 2016 is greater than the positive effect of being a Democratic voter in 2008 and 2012*. Similarly, to claim that electoral inversions reduce confidence in electoral integrity among WLs relative to LLs is, in effect, to suggest that *the negative effect of voting for the Democratic party in 2016 is greater than the negative effect of voting for the Republican party in 2008 and 2012, or for a third-party candidate in 2008, 2012, or 2016*.[9] The same reinterpretations apply to regime support, with the exception of the 2008 election, for which regime support data is unavailable.

Overall, then, my point of departure is the empirical claim—which I do not think is in doubt, given the evidence provided in the previous section—that winner-loser effects in 2016 are stronger than in 2008 and 2012. However, my aim is more ambitious than this. It is to advance the additional causal claim that the *reason* we observe stronger winner-loser effects in 2016 is that the 2016 election resulted in an inversion, whereas the 2008

[9]The 2016 election is included for third-party candidates here because their voters are classified as LLs even in an electoral inversion.

and 2012 elections did not. The difficulty in sustaining this claim is that presence of an electoral inversion in 2016 is not the only thing that differentiated that election from the 2008 and 2012 elections. There are two other critical differences, and thus two alternative explanations that could be developed.

5.6.A. Alternative 1: The Trump Anomaly

The first difference has to do with the actual politics of the 2016 election. Those politics—characterized by partisan polarization, distrust of elites and institutions, and racial animus, among other qualities— represented a continuation of pre-existing trends in ways that have probably been underappreciated. But in the character of Donald Trump, at least, the politics of the 2016 presidential election represented a stark outlier. From this point of view, which could be called the *Trump Anomaly Hypothesis*, Trump's unique capacity to provoke the ire of his opponents, and to gain the unwavering allegiance of his supporters, explains why winner-loser effects on democratic support are magnified in 2016 relative to the previous two elections. Accordingly, when we observe a widening of the LW-WL gap in Figures 5.3 and 5.4, what we are seeing is not the effect of voting for a party that won the election but lost the vote, or vice versa, but the effect of Trump and the super-charged political environment that he created.

Supposing that this were correct, it would follow that if a less provocative, more mainstream candidate had won the 2016 Republican nomination, an electoral inversion in the general election would not have magnified winner-loser effects on democratic support to the extent that it did. A test of this counterfactual being out of reach, we could instead ask how winning and losing in the 2016 election affected voters with weaker or stronger preferences

for the Democratic and Republican presidential candidates. If the *Trump Anomaly Argument* is correct and the strengthening of winner-loser effects in 2016 is primarily a function of voter reactions to the unusually contentious candidacy of Donald Trump, then we should find the strengthening of 2016 winner-loser effects to be driven by voters with stronger preferences for the presidential candidates. This expectation can be parsed into two discrete observable implications: (1) among voters with weaker preferences, 2016 winner-loser gaps in democratic support should *not* be larger than those in 2008 and/or 2012; (2) among voters with stronger preferences, winner-loser gaps *should* be larger in 2016.

To test the *Trump Anomaly Hypothesis*, I first divided the data into two groups of voters, one with weaker preferences for the presidential candidates, and the other comprised of voters with stronger preferences. The strength of preference classification is based on feeling thermometer ratings of the Democratic and Republican presidential candidates. The absolute value of the difference between the two ratings provides a strength of preference measure that ranges from 0 (lowest preference level) to 100 (highest preference level). Weaker preference voters are defined as those whose strength of preference is less than or equal to 40, the median value across the three election years. Voters whose preference strength measure is greater than 40 are thus coded in the "higher preference" group.

I then created a dummy variable for the 2016 election, which I included in a three-way interaction with *Wave* and *Presvote*. The latter, which serves as an alternative to *Winner4*, indicates whether respondents voted for the presidential candidate of the Republican Party, Democratic Party, or another candidate. *Presvote* is preferable to *Winner4* in the present context because it allows for a more straightforward comparison of winners and losers between inversion and non-inversion elections. The models estimated in Table 5.4 did

not distinguish individual respondents by election year, which made it possible to directly compare, for example, LWs with WWs, even though LWs occurred only in 2016, and WWs only in 2008 and 2012. However, if the objective is to compare levels of democratic support in 2016 (an electoral inversion where voters are either LWs, WLs, or LLs) to levels in 2008 and 2012 (not electoral inversions, where voters are either WWs or LLs), it makes more sense to divide voters by vote choice, which takes the same three values (Democrat, Republican, Other) in 2008, 2012, and 2016.

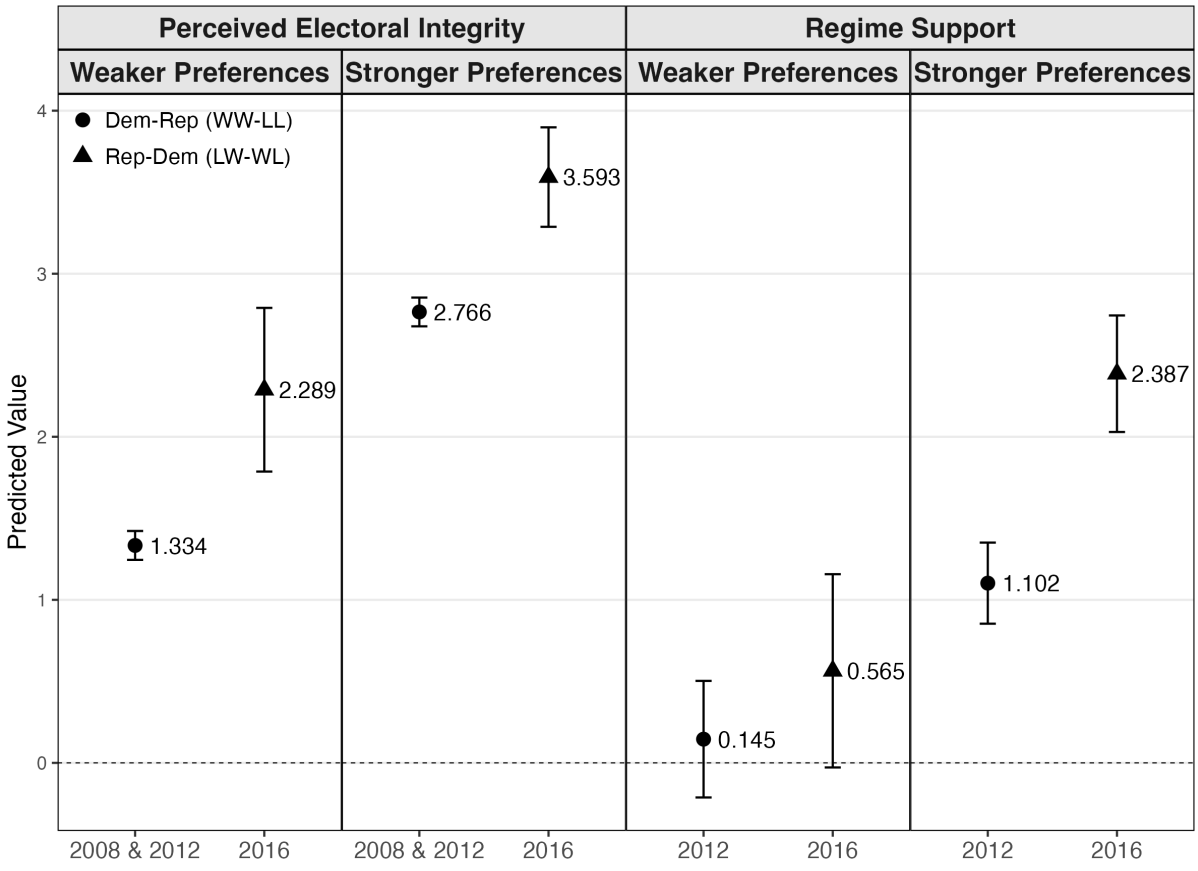
Estimating the effect of vote choice on perceptions of electoral integrity (PEI) and regime support (RS) among low and high preference voters entails four separate fixed-effects regressions, the results of which are summarized in Figure 5.5 (for the full table of results, see Table A5.1 in the Chapter 5 Appendix). Each point in Figure 5.5 represents either the pre-post change in PEI/RS of Democratic voters minus the pre-post change of Republican voters (2008/2012 elections), or Republican minus Democratic voters' pre-post change (2016 election).[10]

Again, following the *Trump Anomaly Hypothesis*, which explains the strengthening of winner-loser effects in 2016 as a function of the polarizing candidacy of Trump, we should expect to find wider winner-loser gaps along among stronger preference voters; among weaker preference voters, winner-loser gaps in 2016 should be no different from those in 2008 and 2012. Contrary to this expectation, however, Figure 5.5 shows that the 2016 winner-loser gap in perceptions of electoral integrity is significantly larger than the

[10]I subtracted Republicans' pre-post change from Democrats' pre-post change for the 2008 and 2012 elections, and vice versa for the 2016 election, in order to compare the absolute values of the differences in pre-post change between the two groups of voters. And because Democratic voters were winners in 2008 and 2012, the value of their average pre-post change was positive (whereas the value for Republican voters was negative). The same applies to Republicans vis-à-vis Democrats in 2016.

2008/2012 gap for stronger *and* weaker preference voters.

Figure 5.5. Winner-Loser Gaps in Pre-Post Change in Democratic Support for Low and High Preference Voters



Notes: Vertical lines represent 95% confidence intervals.

To be sure, winner-loser effects on perceived electoral integrity are more pronounced for stronger preference voters, whether in the 2008/2012 elections or the 2016 election.[11] But even among lower preference voters, winner-loser effects on PEI in 2016 continue to be elevated relative to 2008/2012 levels. In fact, in relative terms winner-loser effects were actually stronger in 2016 among weaker preference voters than stronger preference voters. Whereas the difference between weaker preference Democrats and Republicans is about 75%

[11]The average difference between stronger preference Democrats and Republicans was about 2.8 and 3.6 on the PEI Index in 2008/2012 and 2016, respectively, compared with about 1.3 and 2.3 among lower preference Democrats and Republicans.

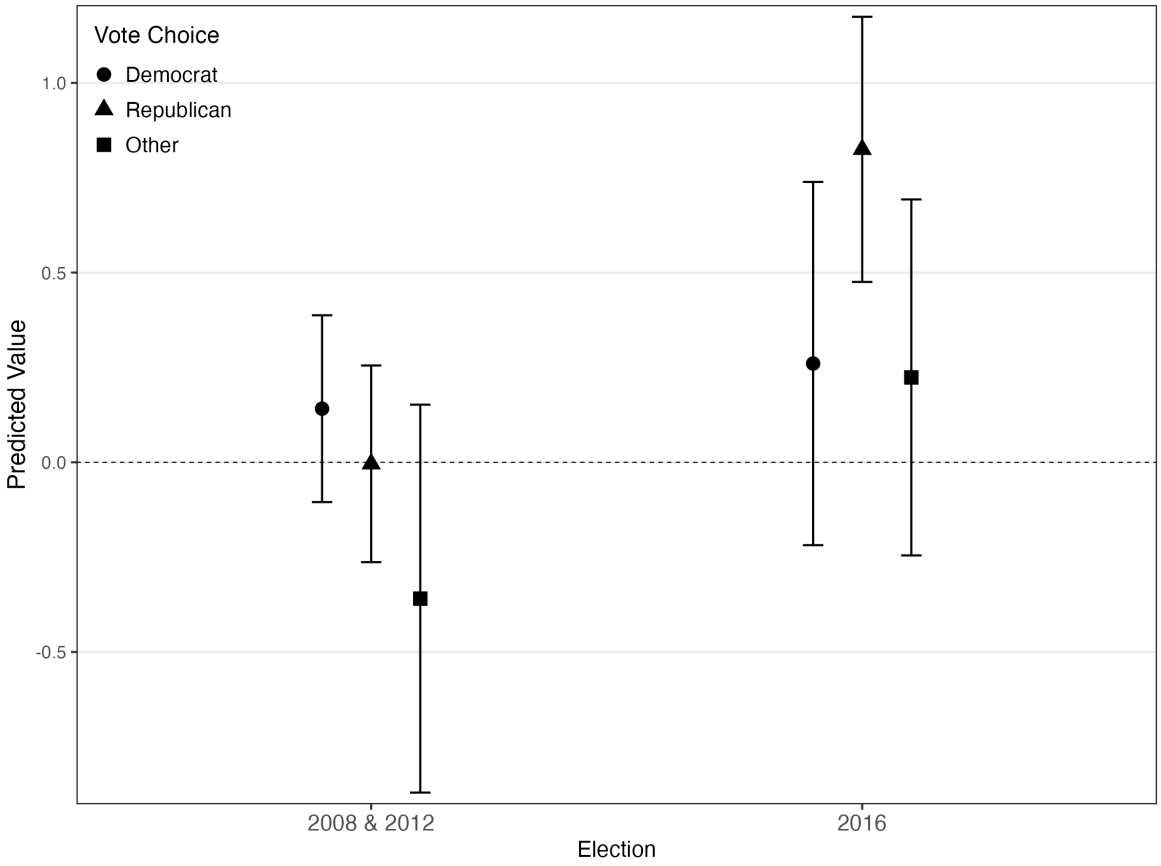
greater in 2016 than in 2008/2012, for stronger preference Democrats and Republicans the 2016 gap is only about 58% larger than the 2008/2012 gap.

When it comes to regime support, the results are not as straightforwardly injurious to the *Trump Anomaly Hypothesis*. On the one hand, Figure 5.5 shows that the 2016 gap in regime support between lower preference Democrats and Republicans is not statistically different the 2008/2012 gap. This means that the widening of the 2016 winner-loser gap in regime support is being driven by higher preference voters. Upon closer examination, however, that the 2016 weaker preference Democrat-Republican gap is no larger than the 2008/2012 gap is largely the consequence of weaker preference losers, not winners, being unaffected by the election outcome.

To demonstrate this point, Figure 5.6 plots pre-post changes for low-preference voters in 2008/2012 and 2016.[12] In 2008/2012, there are no statistical differences in pre-post change for weaker preference voters any of the three groups. Nor is there a difference in post-election regime support for Democrats and "Other" voters in 2016. However, low preference Republican voters in 2016, the (losing) winners, *do* exhibit a statistically significant post-election increase in regime support. In other words, while it is true that the weaker preference Democrat-Republican regime support gap is not any greater in 2016 than in 2008/2012, it is not necessarily the case that the magnification of winner-loser effects in 2016 is solely limited to stronger preference voters.

[12]These are simply the predicted values that, by subtraction, produce the Republican-Democrat gaps in Figure 5.5.

Figure 5.6. Predicted Pre-Post Change in Regime Support for Weaker Preference Voters



Notes: Each point is the average predicted post-election level of regime support minus the average predicted pre-election level. Vertical lines represent 95% confidence intervals.

What Figure 5.6 makes clear is that, even if levels of regime support among weaker preference WLs (Democratic Party voters) was unaffected by the election outcome in 2016, weaker preference LWs (Republican Party voters) in 2016 nevertheless did experience an average post-election increase in regime support. At the very least, therefore, the *Trump Anomaly Hypothesis* might be able to account for the erosion of regime support among losers, and specifically WLs. But it cannot at the same time explain WLs' increasingly negative perceptions of electoral integrity in 2016. Nor for that matter can it explain the increasingly positive perceptions of electoral integrity and regime support of LWs in 2016.

5.6.B. Alternative 2: Partisan Differences

The other way the 2016 election differed from the 2008 and 2012 elections is the parties that won and lost. The Democratic Party candidate won both the 2008 and 2012 elections, while the Republican party candidate won the 2016 election. If Republican voters differ from Democratic voters in some fundamental and systematic way, we cannot rule out that this difference, not the electoral inversion, explains the sharpening of winner-loser effects in 2016. For example, it could be that Republican voters for some reason are more vigorous in their response to victory than are Democratic voters, and that Democratic voters tend naturally to react to electoral defeat with greater intensity than do Republican voters. In order to rule out this possibility, what is needed is a point of reference for gauging Republican voters' reactions to non-inversion victory and Democratic voters' responses to non-inversion defeat.

The 2004 NAES general election panel survey offers one such point of reference. In fact, the 2004 presidential election is virtually the only available point of reference. It is the only election since 1988 that the Republican Party won the popular vote, which is to say it is the only recent case of a presidential election producing Republican WWs that can be compared with Republican LWs, and Democratic LLs that can be compared with Democratic WLs. Although the 2004 NAES survey did not, like its 2008 NAES successor, include the full battery of questions comprising either the PEI Index or RS Index, it did administer a question about vote count accuracy, which was one component of the PEI Index. Specifically, the 2004 survey asked respondents how confident they are that their vote has been counted accurately.[13] Respondents could answer in one of four ways: "very

[13]Note that the language of this question is slightly altered from the 2008 NAES and 2012 and 2016 ISCAP

confident, "somewhat confident," "somewhat doubtful," or "very doubtful."

To test the *Partisan Differences Hypothesis*, I re-estimated a fixed effects regression model on a subset of the data that included only the 2004 and 2016 elections. The dependent variable is confidence in vote count accuracy, coded on an interval scale ranging from 1 to 4, with higher values indicating greater confidence. Following the difference-in-difference approach to the *Trump Anomaly Hypothesis*, the primary independent variable, *presvote*, is included in a three-way interaction with *wave*, which produces an estimate of pre-post change, and *2016*, a dummy variable (equal to 1 for the 2016 election, and 0 for the 2004 election) that captures the conditional effect of the election year.

If partisan differences explain winner-loser effects in 2016, then average levels of pre-post change in confidence in vote-count accuracy should follow similar patterns for Democrats and Republicans in 2004 and 2016. The degree to which Republicans become more confident after the 2016 election should approximate the degree to which Republicans become more confident after the 2004 election, and vice versa for Democratic voters. With respect to Republican voters, this finding would indicate that the distinction between being a WW (2004 election) and a LW (2016 election) does not help to explain the spike in winners' post-election democratic support in 2016, at least insofar one dimension of democratic support (confidence in vote count accuracy) is concerned. The opposite goes for Democratic voters. If Democrats' post-election confidence in vote count accuracy decreases by comparable amounts in 2004 (when Democratic voters are LLs) and 2016 (when

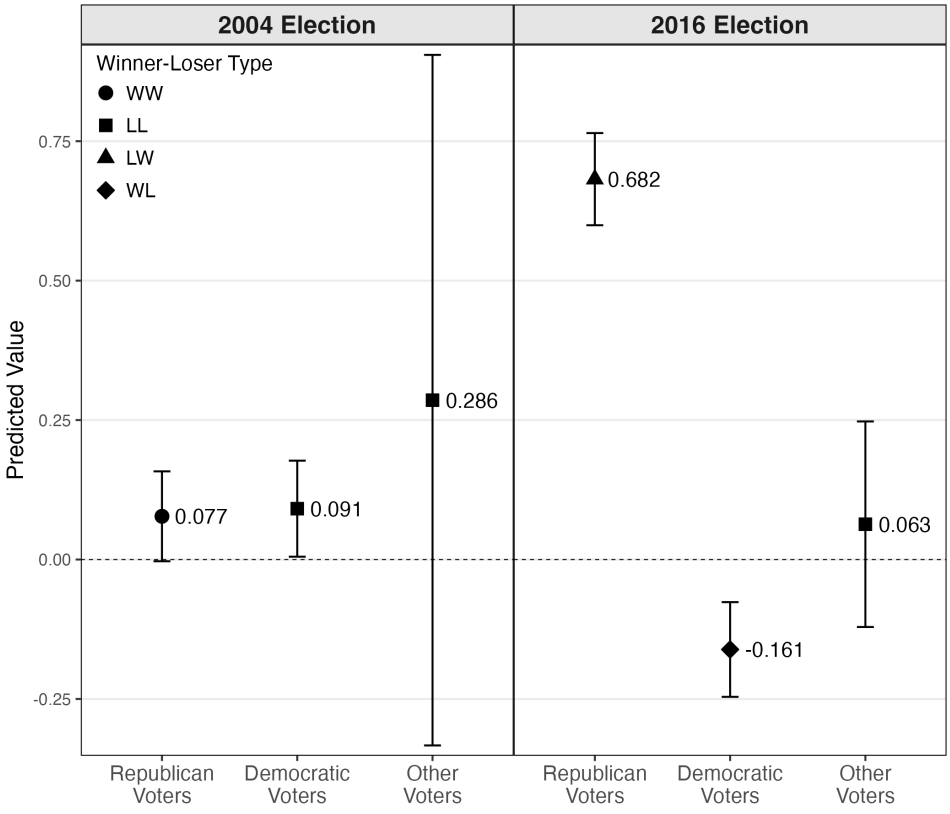
surveys. Whereas in the latter three surveys respondents were asked about the accuracy of the counting of votes *across the country*, in 2004 they were asked to assess whether their *own* vote was counted accurately. While it is possible that voters might form contrasting judgments about the degree to which their own vote was counted accurately, versus how votes across the country were counted, I assume that the 2004 variant of the vote count accuracy question is tapping the same underlying perception as the 2008/2012/2016 variant is.

Democratic voters are WLs), that would suggest that being a *Democratic loser*, irrespective of loser *type*, is what drives the post-election decline in 2016 democratic support.

Ultimately, as is evident in Figure 5.7, there is no support for the *Partisan Differences Hypothesis* (Table A5.2 in the Chapter 5 Appendix contains a full summary of model results). The figure depicts mean levels of predicted pre-post change in confidence in vote count accuracy by 2004 and 2016 vote choice. As expected, Republicans and Democrats in 2016 (LWs and WLs, respectively) are characterized by a clear gap in post-election confidence in vote count accuracy. Critically, however, the outcome of the 2004 election appears to have exerted very little, if any, influence on voters' beliefs about vote count accuracy. Whereas Republican voters' post-election confidence was not, on average, statistically different from their pre-election levels, confidence among Democratic voters actually underwent a marginal increase between the pre- and post-election periods.

In more concrete terms, the confidence of 2004 Republican voters was not affected by the experience of having their candidate win the presidential election. Meanwhile, the experience of losing in 2004 appeared, if anything, to allay Democrats' doubts about the accuracy of the vote count. Considering that the outcome of the 2000 election hinged on the disputed accuracy of the vote count in Florida—a dispute settled by the Supreme Court's controversial intervention that nearly provoked a constitutional crisis—the integrity of the vote counting process was likely a top-of-mind issue for many 2004 voters, Democrats and Republicans alike. In this sense, 2004 arguably represents a "most likely case" scenario for winner-loser effects on confidence in the vote count. With the wounds of 2000 still fresh, Democratic voters were primed to react negatively to a second consecutive electoral defeat. At the same time, Republican voters were eager for the kind of undisputed victory, free

Figure 5.7. Pre-Post Change in Confidence in Vote Count Accuracy



Note: Vertical lines represent 95% confidence intervals.

from the taint of miscounted votes, that could establish for their candidate and party the legitimate popular mandate that had eluded them in 2000. Yet the impact of the outcome of the 2004 election on attitudes towards the vote counting process was virtually non-existent. This finding is all the more striking when considering the very clear winner-loser effects that emerge twelve years later, especially given the political dynamics of that election. The 2016 presidential election featured a Republican candidate whose campaign included as one of its driving principles an effort to cast the vote counting process in a shroud of vituperative doubt. Meanwhile, on the other side was a Democratic candidate who responded with an elevated defense of electoral integrity. Nevertheless, Republican voters emerged from the 2016 election significantly *more* trusting of the vote counting process, while Democratic

voters emerged *less* trusting.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

6.1. Summary of Findings

The aim of this dissertation was twofold. The descriptive aim was to investigate empirically electoral outcomes in which the party that wins the most votes loses the election. Where, when, and thus how often have electoral inversions occurred in the world's parliamentary democracies in the past 120 years? To answer this question, this dissertation undertook the first large-scale comparative study of electoral inversions in parliamentary democracies. The first step was to develop a conceptual framework for analyzing electoral inversions across different types of parliamentary democracies. In contrast to existing definitions, I argued that electoral inversions are best understood as occurring when the popular vote-winning party in an election is not included in the subsequent government. Using ParlGov's data on cabinets and elections, I found that electoral inversion occur at a rate of approximately 1 for every 13 elections, or 8% of the 679 elections included in my sample of 28 democracies. I also found that inversions arise in one of three ways: as necessary inversions, contingent inversions, and anomalous inversions. While anomalous inversions are, by their idiosyncratic nature, difficult to anticipate, there are institutional correlates that help explain incidence of necessary and contingent inversions. The former occur only in the context of majoritarian electoral systems, whereas the latter are found

in both majoritarian and non-majoritarian systems so long as the process of government formation is governed by rules of negative parliamentarism.

The second aim was to understand how voters react to electoral inversions. To this end, I asked whether electoral inversions affect voters' levels of democratic support, and if so, to what extent that effect depends on a voter's winner-loser status. Drawing on the "winner-loser gap" literature, I anticipated that the well-established conditional effect of winning and losing on democratic support would be further conditioned by the essentially undemocratic quality of inversion outcomes. In particular, I hypothesized that the gap in democratic support between *losing winners* and *winning losers* would exceed the gap between *winning winners* and *losing losers* (H1). Put differently, I expected that the gap between winners who would have been losers and losers who would have been winners (if the election outcome matched the popular vote outcome) would be greater than the gap between winners whose party won both the election and the popular vote and losers whose party lost both the election and the popular vote. I also expected that this widening of the LW-WL gap would be a function of electoral inversions exerting a negative effect on the democratic support of losers, rather than (also) positively affecting democratic support among winners (H2).

Both hypotheses followed logically from a series of theoretical propositions. First, that electoral inversions represent what I have called "the rule of the fewer," a condition at odds with the democratic principle that the greater number ought to prevail over the lesser. Second, that the preponderance of citizens in modern liberal democracies accept this principle consciously or implicitly. Third, that when elections violate this generally accepted principle, people not only notice the violation, but their attitudes towards democracy are

affected by it. Fourth and finally, that the way people are affected by electoral inversions depends, however, on whether the inversion result was to their benefit or detriment—which is to say, on whether the inversion converted them from winners to losers or from losers to winners.

To test these hypotheses—and, by extension, the theory on which they are based—-I conducted two country-case analyses, one of Canadian voters in Chapter 4 and the other of voters in the United States in Chapter 5. The results of both analyses offer clear support for the first hypothesis. On the one hand, a large body of research has shown that elections tends to produce gaps in democratic support between losers and winners. My results support this well-established finding. At the same time, however, I find that electoral inversions exacerbate these preexisting winner-loser gaps in democratic support. Relative to non-inversion elections, electoral inversions widen the gap in democratic support separating winners and losers—particularly between LWs and WLs, voters whose winner-loser status was directly affected by the inversion result. The fact that winner-loser gaps grow wider when American *and* Canadian elections produce inversions supports the inference that electoral inversions, rather than some other omitted variable, explain the observed widening.

This inference gains strength when considering the differing circumstances that surrounded the recent electoral inversions in the U.S. and Canada. To be sure, the two countries generally have much in common. As might be expected of two strongly allied neighboring countries sharing a 5,525-mile border, the U.S. and Canada are similar not only in terms of culture, history, and language, but also in their political institutions. Despite the presidential-parliamentary distinction, are both quintessentially majoritarian

democracies. Juxtaposed against these similarities, the differences between the 2016 U.S. presidential election and the 2019 and 2021 Canadian parliamentary elections are all the more striking. The former featured two highly polarizing rival candidates, the eventual loser a moderate left-of-center party stalwart at the end of a long career in public service, the eventual winner a neophyte political insurgent possessing an ideological outer core of loose policy commitments flittering around an inner core of populist authoritarianism. The two Canadian electoral inversions, meanwhile, featured conventionally waged major-party campaigns spearheaded by a Liberal center-left eventual winner and two Conservative center-right eventual losers. Even amidst these dissimilar circumstances, the American and Canadian electoral inversions both generated similar post-election increases in winner-loser gaps in democratic support.

Whether inversions have this widening effect on winner-loser gaps primarily by making winners more supportive or, as the second hypothesis anticipated, by making losers less supportive, is less clear. Chapter 4's study of satisfaction with democracy in Canada suggested that to the degree electoral inversions have a differential effect on winners and losers, it is primarily by depressing losers' satisfaction. Consistent with H2, LWs in Canadian elections were no more likely to experience a post-election increase in satisfaction than WWs, but WLs were more likely than LLs to experience a post-election satisfaction decrease. However, LWs and WLs were both less likely to see post-election increases in satisfaction than their WW and LL counterparts. In Chapter 5, by contrast, I found that while post-election levels of democratic support both increased for LWs and decreased for WLs (relative to WWs and LLs, respectively), the effects were more pronounced among electoral inversion *winners*.

6.2. Interpretation and Broader Implications

Zooming out to a wider field of vision, what do these findings mean? It may be helpful to address this question in two steps, beginning with the findings as they pertain to losers, and following that, to winners. Of the two, the effects that inversions were found to have on losers are easier to explain, and the wider implications of these effects are easier to perceive. Chapter 4's analysis of Canadian voters found losers, particularly winning losers, to be the group most affected by electoral inversions. And although Chapter 5 found that the effects on democratic support of electoral inversions were stronger for winners than losers in the United States, inversions still had a substantial eroding effect on the support of winning losers. That the effects of electoral inversions would be concentrated on the losing side accords with the notion, developed in Chapter 3, that electoral loss through popular victory conjures a certain indignation that does not similarly exist in inverse form for the experience of winning through popular defeat. I argued that this indignation stems from a widely understood democratic principle, which electoral inversions violate, that the greater number ought to prevail over the smaller. If this understanding of democracy did not exist, the degree to which losers—especially losers who would have been winners but for the inversion result—emerge from electoral inversions less supportive of democracy should be no greater than for losers in non-inversion elections. The fact that democratic support *is* lower for winning losers than losing losers suggests that there is something about electoral inversions that losers find unsettling.

When attempting to unspool from their findings a greater theoretical significance, most winner-loser gap studies emphasize the pivotal role that losers play in preserving

the fragile equipoise between competing societal interests that sustains democracy. While this emphasis is justified, it can also, as I explain momentarily, obscure the role that winners play in this equation. It is justified because the health of democratic institutions depends not only on the support of those—namely electoral winners—who benefit from those institutions at a given moment, but also on the support of the losers. In order for the game of democracy to continue for another round, losers must be willing to accept defeat (Anderson et al. 2005). But why would losers be willing to do so? Why, in Adam Przeworski's words, "would those who suffer as the result of the democratic interplay not seek to subvert the system that generates such results" (Przeworski 1991, 18-19)? Losers are incentivized to abide by the rules of democracy when they believe either that they have "a fair chance to win" in the future, or that "losing will not be that bad" (33). If a substantial number of voters believe that existing institutions do not offer them a fair chance to win, perhaps because of the persistent failure of elections to convert their popular victory into electoral victory, then these voters may over time come to regard the outcomes of elections as nonbinding. The challenge of obtaining "losers' consent" (Anderson et al. 2005), already a delicate one, is thereby further compounded by electoral inversions, an outcome that losers are especially predisposed to regard as unfair and potentially intolerable.

But it is not just that losers are primed to view inversion outcomes as unfair; it is that this perception of unfairness can, in turn, translate to a weakening of the attitudinal basis that sustains democracy. Scholars have long recognized that "more than any other type of regime," democratic regimes "depend for support on the activation of commitments for the implementation of decisions binding on the collectivity" (Linz 1978, 16). Long before this, David Hume (2018 [1741], 147) puzzled over the "easiness with which the many are governed

by the few; and the implicit submission, with which men resign their own sentiments and passions to those of their rulers." It must be, he reasoned, that "as Force is always on the side of the governed, the governors have nothing to support them but opinion. It is, therefore, on opinion only that government is founded." The dependence of political regimes on the opinion of the governed is no less true—and if anything, is more true—of modern democratic regimes as it was for the seventeenth century regimes of Hume's era.

The implication here is not merely that electoral inversions sour the opinions of the losers, which in turn undermines the foundations of democratic government. After all, all elections produce losers, and rare is the loser whose opinion has not suffered because of defeat. Instead, the point is that democracy, where it persists, manages to overcome the problem of "losers' consent" by preventing losers' disappointments from expanding from a particularized to a more generalized form. That is, a democracy's capacity to secure the consent of its losers is only as great as its capacity to channel their discontent to specific outcomes that institutional processes produce, or to the temporary authorities occupying leadership positions within those institutions, without letting that discontent extend either to the institutions themselves or to the broader system of which those institutions are a part. If losers perceive electoral inversions not only as an unfavorable outcome, but as an essentially unfair, undemocratic, and therefore illegitimate one, then democracy runs the risk not only of souring opinion, but of infecting that opinion with a generalized rejection of the system and institutions of democracy.

If a focus on the losing side is merited for the reasons spelled out above, it does not follow that such a focus should be to the exclusion, as is so often the case in studies of the winner-loser gap, of electoral winners. One of this dissertation's most surprising, and

therefore most interesting, findings was the way that winners respond to electoral inversions. On the one hand, although Chapter 4 found that electoral inversions had no effect on the probability of winners exhibiting decreased post-election satisfaction with democracy, it did find winners in electoral inversions to be *less* likely to report post-election *increases* in satisfaction with democracy. This latter finding was unexpected, but only because I was reasoning from the premise that the material and psychological benefits of victory would soften any dissatisfying effects that follow from the undemocratic nature of inversion outcomes. To find that the dissatisfying effects of electoral inversions would extend to winners, even if only modestly, makes sense if one were to instead assume that losers *and* winners recognize and are negatively affected by the fewer prevailing undemocratically over the greater number.

On the other hand, Chapter 5 showed that the 2016 U.S. electoral inversion not only augmented levels of democratic support among losing winners, but did so by a larger margin than it decreased support among winning losers. What to make of this finding? That the 2016 election would erode democratic support for voters of the Democratic Party is unsurprising. But why would increases in democratic support—measured either as perceptions of electoral integrity or as regime support—be so pronounced for Republican voters? This finding implies a somewhat puzzling contradiction: *undemocratic electoral outcomes can strengthen commitments to democracy.* Perplexing though it may be, this contradiction appears in a similar form in a recent study of Brazil's 2018 presidential election, which produced a victory for an illiberal candidate, Jair Bolsonaro. Rather than examining how attitudes towards democracy are affected by undemocratic electoral *outcomes*, Cohen et al. (2023) ask how commitments to democracy are affected by electoral outcomes in which the

victorious *candidate* is undemocratic.

They find an increase in post-election winner-loser gaps in the propensity of voters to support specific breaches of the democratic process, such as taking power through executive or military coups, mainly because the 2018 winners—Bolsonaro voters—became more supportive of these extra-democratic measures. However, the winner-loser gaps contract when it comes to more abstract support for democratic principles. One reason for this narrowing is that Bolsonaro voters became more supportive of democratic principles between pre- and post-election periods. This result could be interpreted optimistically as suggesting that the election of authoritarian candidates can paradoxically strengthen citizens' commitments to democracy. However, in view of the degree to which Bolsonaro voters became more receptive to the idea of extra-democratic means of acquiring and maintaining power, the authors adopt a more skeptical view. While Bolsonaro's victory may have strengthened abstract commitments to democratic principles professed by his voters, Cohen et al. (2023, 263) conclude that these professions were largely superficial, cloaking a deeper ambivalence towards the core principles of democracy.

A similar dynamic may have been at play in the 2016 U.S. presidential election. Like Brazil's 2018 election, the winning candidate in the 2016 U.S. expressed irresolute commitments to democracy; like supporters of Bolsonaro, supporters of Trump initially regarded democracy with a heavy degree of pessimism, but became decidedly optimistic after their candidate prevailed. Could Trump's authoritarian appeal explain why his voters, like Bolsonaro's, became substantially more supportive of democracy after the election? I am skeptical of drawing this conclusion for the simple reason that, as I showed in Chapter 5, even Republicans with a weak preference for Trump exhibited significant post-election

increases in democratic support relative to voters of the winning candidate in 2008 and 2012. It is unlikely that a group of voters defined by their relative indifference to the candidate they supported would be enamored by Trump's illiberal tendencies to such a degree that their support for democracy would increase by more than similarly indifferent winners in 2008 and 20012.

But even if Trump's anti-democratic qualities cannot explain his voters' surging post-election levels of democratic support, it is still possible that these expressions of support belied a deeper antagonism towards democracy's core principles—an antagonism that would have surfaced in an examination of attitudes about specific anti-democratic acts. Were this the case, it would mean that the measures of democratic support employed in Chapter 5—the Perceptions of Electoral Integrity (PEI) and Regime Support (RS) indexes—are not faithfully reflecting the degree to which voters support the fundamentals of democracy. In other words, I cannot rule out the possibility that what appears in 2016 to be a post-election increase in democratic support on the winning side is in fact something else. For instance, it could be that rather than measuring levels of democratic support, the PEI and RS indexes are merely conveying a "superficial commitment to the system that empowered their candidate" (Cohen et al. 2023, 263).

Another way of approaching the anomaly of Republicans' post-election spike in democratic support is to ask why Canadian Liberals in 2019 and 2021—who, like 2016 Republicans, were LWs—did not exhibit comparable increases in support. One possibility, already discussed, is that Trump's illiberality is the relevant difference between the two cases. But there are at least two other possibilities. First, partisan differences could explain why LWs in the U.S. and Canada responded differently to electoral inversions. Strength of commit-

ments to the core principles of democracy could plausibly influence how voters perceive electoral inversions, with more weakly committed democrats less likely to view inversions as undemocratic or illegitimate. Thus, perhaps Republican voters did not view their 2016 electoral victory as any less legitimate for it not also being accompanied by a popular victory, and therefore had no reason to temper their celebratory mood. It is also possible that, absent any democratic inhibitions, 2016 Republicans had reason to be *more* triumphant. Perhaps their post-election upswing in democratic support reflects their sense of gratification at having learned, or been reminded, that their (non-plurality) minority status is not after all such an insoluble problem for the acquisition of power in democracy.

Second, the difference between LWs in the U.S. and Canada could also be explained in terms of the underlying conditions that structure the relationships between political competitors. What it means to win in one context is not the same as in another. Arguably the most important difference of this type distinguishing the U.S. and Canada is partisan polarization. To a degree not paralleled in Canada, politics in the U.S. have over time become increasingly polarized along partisan lines (Dalton 2021; Gidron, Adams, and Horne 2020). Whether this polarization is ideological or affective in nature (or both), and whether or not it is driven by an asymmetric shift in one partisan camp or by a symmetric centrifugal pull, polarized conditions raise the stakes of elections, thereby altering the meaning of victory and defeat. Under conditions of low polarization, the consequences that follow from losing are not all that different from those that follow from winning. But as polarization increases, so too does the difference between what winning and losing entails, potentially creating a situation in which winning may be so preferable to losing that the manner of victory is of little consequence. The storming of the U.S. Capitol on January 6,

2021—with the goal of interrupting the counting of Electoral College votes, thereby preventing president-elect Biden from taking office—leaves little doubt that this is the type of polarized environment in which electoral battles in the U.S. are now fought. In such an environment, that victory is achieved at the expense of the greater number is, for the victors, not only a triviality, but arguably the badge of an even greater triumph. In short, while appreciating the indispensability of losers' consent, we should not lose sight of the fact that sustaining democracy is a juggling act that also requires the support of electoral winners. A set of voters may express support for democracy when it allows them to prevail. But winners today may become losers tomorrow. If today's winners have adopted a normative understanding of democracy in which the legitimacy of electoral outputs is divorced from popular inputs, there is little to prevent defeat tomorrow from spelling a disintegration of democratic support among these voters.

When considering the broader implications of electoral inversions for democratic support—and ultimately, for long-term democratic stability—a final difference between the U.S. and other democracies, including Canada, is worth contemplating. The U.S. is not uniquely susceptible to electoral inversions. As I showed in Chapter 2, five countries have experienced more postwar inversions than the U.S.: Australia (5), Denmark (5), Canada (4), New Zealand (3), and Norway (3). However, the U.S. is unique in the multidimensional way that its institutions are hospitable to the rule of the fewer. We have already seen how the Electoral College system renders the U.S. executive vulnerable to this type of rule. But the issue is not simply one of vulnerability; also at issue is the potential *severity* of the rule of the fewer that the U.S. executive is vulnerable to. The U.S. Constitution provides that when no candidate secures an Electoral College majority, the outcome is decided by

majority vote in the House of Representatives, with state delegations voting as individual blocs. This means that presidential candidates can be elected with the support of 26 state delegations. Given current House apportionment and population figures,[1] were the next presidential election to result in an Electoral College tie, a coalition of the 26 smallest states (in terms of population) representing only 17.6% of the U.S. population could defeat a coalition of the 24 largest states representing 82.4% of the population.

While theoretically possible, this outcome is extremely unlikely, as it would mean Republican strongholds like Wyoming and the Dakotas allying with states like Vermont and Delaware that haven't voted for a Republican is more than three decades. Yet, the fact that such a possibility is even countenanced by the U.S. democratic system is nevertheless striking. Beyond this improbable scenario, there are more realistic scenarios that still achieve rule of the fewer, albeit in a less severe form. For instance, a coalition of the 26 state delegations with Republican majorities in the 118th Congress could defeat a coalition of the 24 delegations without Republican majorities (adding the 22 Democratic-majority delegations with the two evenly split delegations of Minnesota and North Carolina).[2] In this utterly plausible scenario, a coalition representing approximately 46% of the national population would prevail over a rival coalition representing about 54% of the population.

Beyond the executive, the United State is unique in the extent to which the rule of the fewer appears in other branches of its separation-of-powers system.[3] The underrepresentation of large states in the U.S. Senate combined with the Republican Party's advantage in the over-represented small states enables the Republicans to obtain legislative pluralities

[1] "Current" figures here refer to the 2020 Census.
[2] These calculations do not include any vacancies that have arisen after several resignations.
[3] In parliamentary democracies, an intermingling of the legislative and executive makes it difficult to isolate the presence of rule of the fewer in these different branches of government.

without popular pluralities. In the current 118th Congress, the popular results happen to match the partisan composition of the Senate. The Republicans are in the minority with 49 seats, while the Democrats have a 51-seat majority (including the three Independents who caucus with the Democrats). But winning these 51 seats took the Democratic Party 81 million votes, whereas the Republicans' 49 seats cost only 56.5 million votes. Democrats were not so fortunate—if a 24.5 million vote surplus for a one-seat edge can be considered fortunate—in the 116th Congress. Towards the end of that Congress in December 2020, the partisan composition of the Senate was a 52-seat Republican majority. But whereas the Republican party had obtained just under 58 million votes in the course of winning those 52 seats, the Democrats' 48 seats reflected 68.5 million votes. Similarly, whereas the Republicans' 52-seat majority in 2020 represented a population of 156 million, the Democrats 48-seat minority represented a population of 174 million.[4]

Nor is the judicial branch beyond the tentacled reach of the rule of the fewer. Since the composition of the Supreme Court is determined via presidential appointment, the representativeness of the Court tends to be correlated with the representativeness of the presidency. As of 2024, Republican presidents have appointed six of the Court's nine justices, though only one Republican president since 1988 (George W. Bush in 2004) has won the popular vote. The discrepancy between popular presidential outcomes and Court appointments may have worsened in recent years, but the phenomenon is not new. Looking back to the first Eisenhower administration, Republican presidents have held office for a combined 11 terms totaling 40 years between 1952 and 2024. Meanwhile, Democrats have been in the White House for a combined 8 terms and 31 years (excluding the remaining

[4]These calculations assume that each senate seat represents one half of its state's population.

year in Biden's first term). But whereas 40 years of Republican presidencies have yielded 21 Supreme Court appointments, 31 years of Democratic presidencies have yielded only 9 appointments. Whether through foresight or, more likely, historical accident, Republican presidents have appointed justices at a rate of one every 1.9 years, while Democrats mustered an appointment only once for every 3.4 years. This discrepancy does not necessarily reflect seven decades of the greater number succumbing to the smaller (Republicans like Eisenhower and Reagan commanded considerable public support). But it does reflect the susceptibility of U.S. political institutions to producing outputs that are severely out of proportion to its inputs. As the current situation in the United States illustrates, though these outputs may not be counterpluralitarian at one moment, they can easily become so at another moment.

In conclusion, when thinking about the broader implications of electoral inversions for democracy, the context in which inversions occur cannot be ignored. When and if future electoral inversions occur in the United States, they will likely do so on a multi-layered bedrock of unrepresentative legislative and judicial institutions. Future research should explore the phenomenon of electoral inversions within, and as symptomatic of, this broader landscape of unrepresentative institutions. This means questioning, for instance, whether the effects of electoral inversions on attitudes towards democracy depend on a political system's more generalized level of unrepresentativeness. Do electoral inversions pose a danger to democracy when they occur, as they occasionally do, in otherwise representative political systems, such as the proportional democracies of Denmark and Norway? Future research should also examine the implications of a second contextual factor for the consequences of electoral inversions: underlying conditions of political polarization. Irrespective of the

broader (un)representativeness of a political system, does the extent to which a democratic citizenry is polarized along partisan, ideological, or social lines shape how citizens perceive and react to electoral inversions? Finally, in addressing these issues, future studies should be particularly attentive to the problem of measurement. Drawing reliable conclusions about the effects of electoral inversions, or of any other variable, on democratic support depends on the researcher's ability to disentangle support for *specific* outcomes from support for the institutions that generate those outcomes, from the broader system that those institutions constitute, and from the normative principles that animate and sustain that system.

Appendices

Chapter 2 Appendix

Table A2.1. Electoral Inversions in 29 Democracies, 1900-2022

		Government					Runner-Up			Opposition		
Country	Year	Leader[a]	Leader Party	Cab. Size	Votes (%)	Seats (%)	Party	Votes (%)	Seats (%)	Votes (%)	Seats (%)	Type[b]
Australia	2022	Albanese	ALP	1	32.6	51.0	C	35.5	38.4	64.5	49.0	N
Sweden	2022	Kristersson	M	3	29.0	29.5	SAP	30.3	30.7	69.8	70.5	C
Canada	2021	Trudeau	LP	1	32.7	47.3	CPC	33.8	35.2	66.6	52.7	C
Canada	2019	Trudeau	LP	1	33.1	46.5	CPC	34.3	35.8	66.5	53.5	C
New Zeal.	2017	Ardern	LP	2	44.1	45.8	NP	44.4	46.7	54.8	54.2	C
U.S.	2016	Trump	REP	1	45.9		DEM	48.0		54.1		N
Denmark	2015	Rasmussen	V	1	19.5	19.0	Sd	26.3	26.3	80.5	81.0	C
U.S.	2000	Bush	REP	1	47.9		DEM	48.4		52.1		N
Australia	1998	Howard	LPA	2	39.2	54.1	ALP	40.1	45.3	60.4	45.9	N
Norway	1997	Bondevik	KrF	3	26.1	25.5	DNA	35.0	39.4	72.7	74.5	C
Denmark	1990	Schluter	KF	2	31.8	33.0	Sd	37.4	38.5	66.5	67.0	C
New Zeal.	1981	Muldoon	NP	1	38.8	51.1	LP	39.0	46.7	60.1	48.9	N
Norway	1981	Willoch	H	1	31.7	34.8	DNA	37.2	41.9	67.4	65.2	C
Canada	1979	Clark	PCP	1	35.9	48.2	LP	40.1	40.4	63.1	51.8	C
New Zeal.	1978	Muldoon	NP	1	39.8	55.4	LP	40.4	43.5	58.9	44.6	N
U.K.	1974	Wilson	Lab	1	37.2	47.4	Con	38.0	46.8	61.8	52.6	C
Denmark	1973	Hartling	V	1	12.3	12.3	Sd	25.6	25.7	87.7	87.7	C
Australia	1969	Gorton	LPA	2	43.4	52.8	ALP	47.0	47.2	55.8	47.2	N
Norway	1969	Borten	Sp	4	45.9	50.7	DNA	46.5	49.3	50.9	49.3	C
Australia	1961	Menzies	LPA	2	42.0	50.0	ALP	48.0	50.0	58.1	50.0	C
Canada	1957	Diefenbaker	PCP	1	39.0	42.3	LP	42.3	39.6	59.8	57.7	C
Australia	1954	Menzies	LPA	2	47.0	52.0	ALP	50.1	48.0	53.0	48.0	N
Denmark	1953	Eriksen	V	2	39.4	39.1	Sd	40.4	40.4	60.2	60.9	C
U.K.	1951	Churchill	CNL	1	48.0	51.4	Lab	48.8	47.2	51.9	48.6	N
Belgium	1946	Spaak	BSP-PSB	1	31.6	32.7	PSC-CVP	42.5	45.5	68.0	67.3	C
Denmark	1945	Kristensen	V	1	23.4	25.5	Sd	32.8	32.2	76.7	74.5	C
Finland	1937	Kallio	KESK	1	16.6		SSDP	30.7		83.4		C
Iceland	1937	Jonasson	F	1	24.9	38.8	Sj	41.3	34.7	74.8	61.2	C
Norway	1933	Mowinckel	V	1	17.1	16.0	DNA	40.1	46.0	82.8	84.0	C
Germany	1932	Schleicher		3	8.3	8.7	NSDAP	33.1	33.6	90.7	91.3	A
Germany	1932	Papen		2	5.9	6.1	NSDAP	37.3	37.8	93.3	93.9	A
Finland	1931	Svinhufvud	KOK	1	21.6		SSDP	30.2		78.4		C
New Zeal.	1931	Forbes	NZLP	1	16.9	23.8	LP	34.3	30.0	83.1	76.2	C

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		Government					Runner-Up			Opposition		
Country	Year	Leader[a]	Leader Party	Cab. Size	Votes (%)	Seats (%)	Party	Votes (%)	Seats (%)	Votes (%)	Seats (%)	Type[b]
Norway	1930	Mowinckel	V	1	20.2	22.0	DNA	31.4	31.3	79.8	78.0	C
U.K.	1929	MacDonald	Lab	1	37.0	46.7	Con	38.2	42.3	63.0	53.3	C
New Zeal.	1928	Ward	NZLP	1	30.2	33.8	RP	35.9	35.0	69.8	66.2	C
Sweden	1928	Lindman	M	1	29.4	31.7	SAP	37.0	39.1	70.5	68.3	C
Iceland	1927	Porhallsson	F	1	29.8	45.2	Sj	42.5	38.1	70.1	54.8	C
Norway	1927	Lykke	H	2	25.5	20.0	DNA	36.8	39.3	74.4	80.0	C
Denmark	1926	Madsen	V	1	28.3	31.1	Sd	37.2	35.8	71.6	68.9	C
Canada	1925	King	LP	1	39.9	40.4	PCP	46.5	47.4	60.1	59.6	C
Finland	1925	Relander	KESK	1	19.9		SSDP	26.6		80.1		C
Luxemb.	1925	Prum	ONP	2	16.5	17.0	PD	42.6	46.8	82.8	83.0	C
Norway	1924	Mowinckel	V	1	18.6	22.7	H	32.5	28.7	81.1	77.3	C
U.K.	1923	MacDonald	Lab	1	30.7	31.1	Con	38.0	42.0	69.3	68.9	C
Norway	1921	Blehr	V	1	20.1	24.7	H	33.3	28.0	79.4	75.3	C
Denmark	1918	Zahle	RV	1	20.7	23.0	V	29.4	32.4	78.2	77.0	C
Norway	1918	Knudsen	V	1	28.3	40.5	DNA	31.6	14.3	71.7	59.5	C
Denmark	1913	Zahle	RV	1	18.7	27.2	Sd	29.6	28.1	81.3	72.8	C
Denmark	1909	Holstein	V	1	24.0	32.5	Sd	28.7	21.1	75.6	67.5	C
Norway	1909	Knudsen	V	1	30.4	37.4	H	41.5	33.3	68.0	62.6	C
Australia	1906	Fisher	ALP	1	36.6	34.7	FTP	38.2	36.0	62.9	65.3	C
Australia	1903	Watson	ALP	1	31.0	30.7	FTP	34.4	33.3	69.1	69.3	C

[a] This denotes the Prime Minister—or, in U.S. elections, the President—following the election.
[b] "C" denotes contingent inversions; "N" denotes necessary inversions; and "A" denotes anomalous inversions.
Note: Electoral inversions are defined in terms of the first non-caretaker government formed after an election.
Source: ParlGov database (Döring and Manow 2022).

Table A2.2. Elections Included in Analysis of Electoral Inversions, by Country

Country	N	List of Elections
Australia	47	1901 **1903** **1906** 1910 1913 1914 1917 1919 1922 1925 1928 1929 1931 1934 1937 1940 1943 1946 1949 1951 **1954** 1955 1958 **1961** 1963 1966 **1969** 1972 1974 1975 1977 1980 1983 1984 1987 1990 1993 1996 **1998** 2001 2004 2007 2010 2013 2016 2019 **2022**
Austria	28	1919 1920 1923 1927 1930 1945 1949 1953 1956 1959 1962 1966 1970 1971 1975 1979 1983 1986 1990 1994 1995 1999 2002 2006 2008 2013 2017 2019
Belgium	36	1900 1902 1906 1910 1912 1914 1919 1921 1925 1929 1932 1936 1939 **1946** 1949 1950 1954 1958 1961 1965 1968 1971 1974 1977 1978 1981 1985 1987 1991 1995 1999 2003 2007 2010 2014 2019
Canada	36	1900 1904 1908 1911 1917 1921 **1925** 1926 1930 1935 1940 1945 1949 1953 **1957** 1958 1962 1963 1965 1968 1972 1974 **1979** 1980 1984 1988 1993 1997 2000 2004 2006 2008 2011 2015 **2019** **2021**
Czech Republic	10	1990 1992 1996 1998 2002 2006 2010 2013 2017 2021
Denmark	45	1901 1903 1906 **1909** 1910 **1913** **1918** 1920-Apr 1920-Jul 1920-Sep 1924 **1926** 1929 1932 1935 1939 **1945** 1947 1950 **1953-Apr** 1953-Sep 1957 1960 1964 1966 1968 1971 **1973** 1975 1977 1979 1981 1984 1987 1988 **1990** 1994 1998 2001 2005 2007 2011 **2015** 2019 2022
Estonia	8	1992 1995 1999 2003 2007 2011 2015 2019
Finland[a]	15	**1925** **1931** **1937** 1950 1956 1962 1968 1978 1982 1988 2003 2007 2011 2015 2019
Germany	27	1919 1920 1924 1928 1930 **1932-Jul** **1932-Nov** 1949 1953 1957 1961 1965 1969 1972 1976 1980 1983 1987 1990 1994 1998 2002 2005 2009 2013 2017 2021
Greece	16	1974 1977 1981 1985 1989 1990 1993 1996 2000 2004 2007 2009 2012 2015-Jan 2015-Sep 2019
Hungary	9	1990 1994 1998 2002 2006 2010 2014 2018 2022
Iceland	29	1919 1923 **1927** 1931 1934 **1937** 1946 1949 1953 1956 1959 1963 1967 1971 1974 1978 1979 1983 1987 1991 1995 1999 2003 2007 2009 2013 2016 2017 2021
Ireland	31	1922 1923 1927-Jun 1927-Sep 1932 1933 1937 1938 1943 1944 1948 1951 1954 1957 1961 1965 1969 1973 1977 1981 1982-Feb 1982-Nov 1987 1989 1992 1997 2002 2007 2011 2016 2020
Israel	23	1949 1951 1955 1959 1961 1965 1969 1973 1977 1981 1984 1988 1992 1996 1999 2003 2006 2009 2013 2015 2020 2021 2022
Italy	20	1946 1948 1953 1958 1963 1968 1972 1976 1979 1983 1987 1992 1994 1996 2001 2006 2008 2013 2018 2022
Japan	28	1946 1947 1949 1952 1953 1955 1958 1960 1963 1967 1969 1972 1976 1979 1980 1983 1986 1990 1993 1996 2000 2003 2005 2009 2012 2014 2017 2021
Latvia	11	1990 1993 1995 1998 2002 2006 2010 2011 2014 2018 2022
Luxembourg	21	1919 **1925** 1931 1937 1945 1948 1951 1954 1959 1964 1968 1974 1979 1984 1989 1994 1999 2004 2009 2013 2018
Netherlands	29	1918 1922 1925 1929 1933 1937 1946 1948 1952 1956 1959 1963 1967 1971 1972 1977

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Country	N	List of Elections
		1981 1982 1986 1989 1994 1998 2002 2003 2006 2010 2012 2017 2021
New Zealand	37	1902 1905 1908 1911 1919 1922 **1928** **1931** 1935 1938 1943 1946 1949 1951 1954 1957 1960 1963 1966 1969 1972 1975 **1978** **1981** 1984 1987 1990 1993 1996 1999 2002 2005 2008 2011 2014 **2017** 2020
Norway	33	1900 1903 1906 **1909** 1912 1915 **1918** **1921** **1924** **1927** **1930** **1933** 1936 1945 1949 1953 1957 1961 1965 **1969** 1973 1977 **1981** 1985 1989 1993 **1997** 2001 2005 2009 2013 2017 2021
Portugal	16	1976 1979 1980 1983 1985 1987 1991 1995 1999 2002 2005 2009 2011 2015 2019 2022
Slovakia	10	1990 1992 1994 1998 2002 2006 2010 2012 2016 2020
Slovenia	10	1990 1992 1996 2000 2004 2008 2011 2014 2018 2022
Spain	13	1977 1979 1982 1986 1989 1993 1996 2000 2004 2008 2011 2016 2019
Sweden	32	1911 1914 1917 1921 1924 **1928** 1932 1936 1944 1948 1952 1956 1958 1960 1964 1968 1970 1973 1976 1979 1982 1985 1988 1991 1994 1998 2002 2006 2010 2014 2018 **2022**
United Kingdom	28	1918 1922 **1923** 1924 **1929** 1931 1935 1945 1950 **1951** 1955 1959 1964 1966 1970 **1974-Feb** 1974-Oct 1979 1983 1987 1992 1997 2001 2005 2010 2015 2017 2019
United States[b]	31	1900 1904 1908 1912 1916 1920 1924 1928 1932 1936 1940 1944 1948 1952 1956 1960 1964 1968 1972 1976 1980 1984 1988 1992 1996 **2000** 2004 2008 2012 **2016** 2020

[a] Finnish elections between 1925 and 1988 are presidential elections. Elections occurring in the period 1989-2002 are excluded because Finland abolished its electoral college after the 1988 election, and electoral inversions were not possible in the new system of direct presidential elections. Finland enacted constitutional reforms in 2000 that moved it from the "semi-presidential system" to the "parliamentary system" category, which means that after 2000, parliamentary elections were used to identify the presence or absence of electoral inversions. And since electoral inversions are possible in Finnish parliamentary elections, post-2000 parliamentary elections are included in the analysis.

[b] In contrast to all other elections listed in this table (except for pre-2000 Finnish elections), entries for the United States are presidential elections.

Note: Elections in bold are electoral inversions.

Data Source: ParlGov dataset (Döring et al. 2023*a*) (except Finnish and U.S. presidential elections).

Appendices

Chapter 3 Appendix

Table A3.1. US Presidential Elections: Popular Vote and Electoral College Results

	Winner				Runner Up				All Losers		
Year	Candidate	Vote %	EC	EC %	Candidate	Vote %	EC	EC %	Vote %	EC	EC %
2020	Biden (D)	51.3	306	56.9	Trump (R)	46.8	232	43.1	48.7	232	43.1
2016	Trump (R)**	45.9	304	56.5	H. Clinton (D)	48.0	227	42.2	54.1	234	43.5
2012	Obama (D)	51.0	332	61.7	Romney (R)	47.1	206	38.3	49.0	206	38.3
2008	Obama (D)	52.9	365	67.8	McCain (R)	45.6	173	32.2	47.1	173	32.2
2004	W. Bush (R)	50.7	286	53.2	Kerry (D)	48.3	251	46.7	49.3	251	46.6
2000	W. Bush (R)**	47.9	271	50.4	Gore (D)	48.4	266	49.4	52.1	266	49.4
1996	B. Clinton (D)*	49.2	379	70.4	Dole (R)	40.7	159	29.6	50.8	159	29.6
1992	B. Clinton (D)*	43.0	370	68.8	H. W. Bush (R)	37.5	168	31.2	57.0	168	31.2
1988	H. W. Bush (R)	53.4	426	79.2	Dukakis (D)	45.6	111	20.6	46.6	111	20.6
1984	Reagan (R)	58.8	525	97.6	Mondale (D)	40.6	13	2.4	41.2	13	2.4
1980	Reagan (R)	50.8	489	90.9	Carter (D)	41.0	49	9.1	49.2	49	9.1
1976	Carter (D)	50.1	297	55.2	Ford (R)	48.0	240	44.6	49.9	240	44.6
1972	Nixon (R)	60.7	520	96.7	McGovern (D)	37.5	17	3.2	39.3	18	3.4
1968	Nixon (R)*	43.4	301	55.9	Humphrey (D)	42.7	191	35.5	56.6	237	44.0
1964	Johnson (D)	61.0	486	90.3	Goldwater (R)	38.5	52	9.7	39.0	52	9.7
1960	Kennedy (D)*	49.7	303	56.4	Nixon (R)	49.5	219	40.8	50.3	234	43.6
1956	Eisenhower (R)	57.4	457	86.1	Stevenson (D)	42.0	73	13.7	42.6	73	13.8
1952	Eisenhower (R)	55.1	442	83.2	Stevenson (D)	44.4	89	16.8	44.9	89	16.8
1948	Truman (D)*	49.5	303	57.1	Dewey (R)	45.1	189	35.6	50.5	228	42.9
1944	F. Roosevelt (D)	53.4	432	81.4	Dewey (R)	45.9	99	18.6	46.6	99	18.6
1940	F. Roosevelt (D)	54.7	449	84.6	Willkie (R)	44.8	82	15.4	45.3	82	15.4
1936	F. Roosevelt (D)	60.8	523	98.5	Landon (R)	36.5	8	1.5	39.2	8	1.5
1932	F. Roosevelt (D)	57.4	472	88.9	Hoover (R)	39.6	59	11.1	42.6	59	11.1
1928	Hoover (R)	58.2	444	83.6	Smith (D)	40.8	87	16.4	41.8	87	16.4
1924	Coolidge (R)	54.0	382	71.9	Davis (D)	28.8	136	25.6	46.0	149	28.1
1920	Harding (R)	60.4	404	76.1	Cox (D)	34.1	127	23.9	39.6	127	23.9
1916	Wilson (D)*	49.2	277	52.2	Hughes (R)	46.1	254	47.8	50.8	254	47.8
1912	Wilson (D)*	41.8	435	81.9	T. Roosevelt (Prog)	27.4	88	16.6	58.2	96	18.1
1908	Taft (R)	51.6	321	66.5	Bryan (D)	43.0	162	33.5	48.4	162	33.5
1904	T. Roosevelt (R)	56.4	336	70.6	Parker (D)	37.6	140	29.4	43.6	140	29.4
1900	McKinley (R)	51.7	292	65.3	Bryan (D)	45.5	155	34.7	48.3	155	34.7
1896	McKinley (R)	51.0	271	60.6	Bryan (D)	46.7	176	39.4	49.0	176	39.4
1892	Cleveland (D)*	46.0	277	62.4	Harrison (R)	43.0	145	32.7	54.0	167	37.6
1888	Harrison (R)**	47.8	233	58.1	Cleveland (D)	48.6	168	41.9	52.2	168	41.9

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	Winner				Runner Up				All Losers		
Year	Candidate	Vote %	EC	EC %	Candidate	Vote %	EC	EC %	Vote %	EC	EC %
1884	Cleveland (D)*	48.9	219	54.6	Blaine (R)	48.3	182	45.4	51.1	182	45.4
1880	Garfield (R)*	48.3	214	58.0	Hancock (D)	48.2	155	42.0	51.7	155	42.0
1876	Hayes (R)**	47.9	185	50.1	Tilden (D)	50.9	184	49.9	52.1	184	49.9
1872	Grant (R)	55.6	286	81.3	Greeley (D)	43.8	66	18.8	44.4	66	18.8
1868	Grant (R)	52.7	214	72.8	Seymour (D)	47.3	80	27.2	47.3	80	27.2
1864	Lincoln (R)	55.0	212	91.0	McClellan (D)	45.0	21	9.0	45.0	21	9.0
1860	Lincoln (R)*	39.6	180	59.4	Douglas (D)	29.5	12	4.0	60.4	123	40.6
1856	Buchanan (D)*	45.3	174	58.8	Frémont (R)	33.1	114	38.5	54.7	122	41.2
1852	Pierce (D)	50.8	254	85.8	Scott (Whig)	43.9	42	14.2	49.2	42	14.2
1848	Taylor (Whig)*	47.3	163	56.2	Cass (D)	42.5	127	43.8	52.7	127	43.8
1844	Polk (D)*	49.5	170	61.8	Clay (Whig)	48.1	105	38.2	50.5	105	38.2
1840	W. Harrison (Whig)	52.9	234	79.6	Buren (D)	46.8	60	20.4	47.1	60	20.4
1836	Van Buren (D)	50.8	170	57.8	W. Harrison (Whig)	36.6	73	24.8	49.2	124	42.2
1832	Jackson (D)	54.7	219	76.0	Clay (Nat'l R)	36.9	49	17.0	45.3	67	23.3
1828	Jackson (D)	55.9	178	68.2	Q. Adams (Nat'l R)	43.7	83	31.8	44.1	83	31.8
1824	Q. Adams (D-R)**	30.9	84	32.2	Jackson (D-R)	41.4	99	37.9	69.1	177	67.8
1820	Monroe (D-R)		231	99.6	Q. Adams (D-R)		1	0.4		1	0.4
1816	Monroe (D-R)		183	84.3	King (Fed.)		22	10.1		22	10.1
1812	Madison (D-R)		128	59.0	D. Clinton (D-R)		89	41.0		89	41.0
1808	Madison (D-R)		122	69.7	Pinckney (Fed)		47	26.9		47	26.9
1804	Jefferson (D-R)		162	92.0	Pinckney (Fed)		14	8.0		14	8.0
1800	Jefferson (D-R)		73	26.4	Adams (Fed)		65	23.6		65	23.6
1796	Adams (Fed)		71	25.7	Jefferson (D-R)		68	24.6		68	24.6
1792	Washington (Ind)		132	100.0							
1789	Washington (Ind)		69	100.0							

* Failed to win a popular-vote majority.
** Failed to win either a popular-vote majority or plurality.
Source: Dave Leip's Atlas of Presidential Elections, https://uselectionatlas.org/.

Chapter 4 Appendix

Table A4.1. Parties Underlying Winner-Loser Classifications (with Voter Frequencies in CES Data)

Election	WW Party	LL Parties	LW Party	WL Party
1997	Liberal (n=770)	Reform (n=492) Conservative (n=400) NDP (n=269) Bloc Québécois (n=225) Other (n=39)		
2000	Liberal (n=738)	Reform/Alliance (n=460) Bloc Québécois (n=271) Conservative (n=236) NDP (n=181) Other (n=59)		
2004	Liberal (n=804)	Conservative (n=758) NDP (n=391) Bloc Québécois (n=231) Green (n=99) Other (n=33)		
2006	Conservative (n=994)	Liberal (n=698) NDP (n=465) Bloc Québécois (n=266) Green (n=118) Other (n=21)		
2008	Conservative (n=647)	Liberal (n=463) NDP (n=350) Bloc Québécois (n=205) Green (n=112) Other (n=13)		
2019		NDP (n=1750) Green (n=826) Bloc Québécois (n=547) People's (n=190) Other (n=69)	Liberal (n=3696)	Conservative (n=3459)
2021		NDP (n=2438) Bloc Québécois (n=1424) People's (n=409) Green (n=264) Other (n=127)	Liberal (n=4178)	Conservative (n=3547)

Table A4.2. SWD Change (% Respondents), by Year and Winner-Loser Type

		SWD Change (% Respondents)						
Year	WL Status	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3
1997	WW	0.1	0.6	11.2	59.6	23.6	4.2	0.6
	LL	0.1	1.6	11.2	54.5	27.1	5.0	0.5
	Total	0.1	1.3	11.2	56.3	25.9	4.7	0.6
2000	WW	0.1	1.1	15.8	56.5	21.5	4.6	0.3
	LL	0.5	2.6	18.2	57.2	18.1	3.1	0.2
	Total	0.4	2.1	17.3	57.0	19.4	3.6	0.3
2004	WW	0.0	0.8	11.1	57.5	27.2	3.1	0.4
	LL	0.3	1.9	14.3	52.8	26.2	3.8	0.7
	Total	0.2	1.5	13.2	54.4	26.6	3.5	0.6
2006	WW	0.0	0.3	6.0	47.0	35.4	10.5	0.8
	LL	0.1	1.4	12.2	55.7	25.6	4.5	0.6
	Total	0.1	1.0	9.8	52.3	29.4	6.8	0.7
2008	WW	0.0	2.0	14.8	64.8	16.8	1.6	0.0
	LL	0.4	1.8	16.4	58.3	20.4	2.4	0.4
	Total	0.2	1.9	15.8	60.6	19.1	2.1	0.2
2019	LW	0.0	0.8	17.9	66.3	14.1	0.9	0.1
	WL	0.4	5.3	29.2	51.4	12.3	1.2	0.1
	LL	0.1	2.2	22.4	60.8	13.2	1.3	0.0
	Total	0.2	2.7	23.0	59.7	13.2	1.1	0.1
2021	LW	0.1	0.5	15.2	68.5	15.0	0.7	0.1
	WL	0.3	4.7	28.9	54.8	10.6	0.6	0.0
	LL	0.2	2.2	22.8	63.2	10.9	0.7	0.2
	Total	0.2	2.3	22.0	62.6	12.2	0.6	0.1

Source: Canadian Election Studies 1997, 2000, 2004, 2006, 2008, 2019, and 2021.

Table A4.3. OLS Estimates of the Effects of Electoral Inversions on Satisfaction with Democracy

	2-Category Winner-Loser Status		4-Category Winner-Loser Status	
	M1. Baseline	M2. Covariates	M3. Baseline	M4. Covariates
Winner	0.792*** (0.031)	0.659*** (0.038)		
WW			1.330*** (0.047)	1.199*** (0.059)
LW			0.822*** (0.047)	0.613*** (0.055)
LL			0.454*** (0.033)	0.338*** (0.039)
preSWD	−0.415*** (0.006)	−0.417*** (0.007)	−0.368*** (0.010)	−0.387*** (0.011)
Winner × preSWD	−0.153*** (0.010)	−0.134*** (0.012)		
WW × preSWD			−0.265*** (0.016)	−0.263*** (0.020)
LL × preSWD			−0.071*** (0.012)	−0.056*** (0.014)
LW × preSWD			−0.120*** (0.016)	−0.091*** (0.018)
Previous Winner		0.112*** (0.010)		
Previous WW				0.199*** (0.018)
Previous LL				0.141*** (0.015)
Previous LW				0.224*** (0.019)
Strong Partisan		−0.016* (0.010)		−0.013 (0.010)
Election Interest		−0.007*** (0.002)		−0.003 (0.002)
Worse off financially		−0.135*** (0.010)		−0.117*** (0.010)
Age		−0.001** (0.000)		0.000 (0.000)
Female		−0.022*** (0.008)		−0.026*** (0.008)
Income Group		−0.008*** (0.001)		−0.002 (0.001)
Unemployed		−0.064** (0.026)		−0.063** (0.025)
Education Level		−0.002 (0.002)		−0.001 (0.002)
Religion Important		0.063*** (0.008)		0.065*** (0.009)
Foreign Born		0.030** (0.012)		0.037*** (0.012)
Num.Obs.	33732	24451	33732	24451
R2	0.231	0.237	0.252	0.247
R2 Adj.	0.231	0.237	0.252	0.246
AIC	67278.3	47803.2	66355.3	47504.4
BIC	67320.5	47949.1	66431.1	47682.7
Log.Lik.	−33634.163	−23883.594	−33168.635	−23730.207
RMSE	0.66	0.64	0.65	0.64

***p < .01; **p < .05; *p < .1

Note: Reference categories are *WL* and *Previous WL*.

Table A4.4. Predicted Probabilities for SWD Change in Canada (from Models 2 and 4 in Table 4.6)

	Estimate [CI Low, CI High]		
Type	Pr(Decrease in SWD)	Pr(No Change in SWD)	Pr(Increase in SWD)
WW	0.148 [0.137, 0.158]	0.543 [0.531, 0.556]	0.309 [0.294, 0.324]
LL	0.225 [0.217, 0.233]	0.613 [0.605, 0.62]	0.163 [0.157, 0.169]
LW	0.16 [0.152, 0.167]	0.606 [0.594, 0.619]	0.234 [0.219, 0.249]
WL	0.312 [0.299, 0.326]	0.592 [0.582, 0.603]	0.096 [0.09, 0.102]
W	0.159 [0.152, 0.165]	0.567 [0.558, 0.576]	0.274 [0.264, 0.284]
L	0.254 [0.247, 0.261]	0.605 [0.599, 0.612]	0.141 [0.136, 0.145]

Note: Table entries are the underlying predicted probabilities (and brackets containing 95% confidence intervals) used to construct Figure 4.6. Predicted probabilities for WWs, LLs, LWs, and WLs are based on Model 4 in Table 4.6. Predicted probabilities for winners (W) and losers (L) are based on Model 2 in Table 4.6.

Table A4.5. Predicted Probability Contrasts in SWD Change in Canada (from Models 2 and 4 in Table 4.6)

	Pr(Decrease in SWD)		Pr(No Change in SWD)		Pr(Increase in SWD)	
Comparison	Equation	Estimate [CI]	Equation	Estimate [CI]	Equation	Estimate [CI]
WW & LL	LL - WW	.07 [.061, .084]	LL - WW	.07 [.064, .072]	WW - LL	.14 [.126, .154]
LW & WL	WL - LW	.15 [.143, .162]	LW - WL	.01 [.005, .018]	LW - WL	.14 [.133, .150]
LW & LL	LL - LW	.07 [.060, .081]	LL - LW	.01 [.004, .010]	LW - LL	.08 [.067, .089]
LL & WL	WL - LL	.08 [.072, .092]	LL - WL	.02 [.013, .024]	LL - WL	.06 [.058, .069]
WW & LW	LW - WW	.00 [-.011, .014]	LW - WW	.06 [.056, .066]	WW - LW	.06 [.046, .079]
WW & WL	WL - WW	.15 [.144, .165]	WL - WW	.05 [.042, .057]	WW - WL	.20 [.191, .216]
W & L	L - W	.10 [.086, .105]	L - W	.04 [.029, .047]	W - L	.13 [.123, .145]
WW & LL	LL÷WW	1.47 [1.367, 1.563]	LL÷WW	1.13 [1.117, 1.133]	WW÷LL	1.87 [1.770, 1.974]
LW & WL	WL÷LW	1.98 [1.886, 2.066]	LW÷WL	1.02 [1.008, 1.030]	LW÷WL	2.46 [2.348, 2.562]
LW & LL	LL÷LW	1.45 [1.368, 1.534]	LL÷LW	1.01 [1.007, 1.017]	LW÷LL	1.49 [1.409, 1.562]
LL & WL	WL÷LL	1.36 [1.310, 1.414]	LL÷WL	1.03 [1.022, 1.041]	LL÷WL	1.65 [1.577, 1.729]
WW & LW	LW÷WW	1.01 [.931, 1.088]	LW÷WW	1.11 [1.102, 1.121]	WW÷LW	1.26 [1.183, 1.337]
WW & WL	WL÷WW	1.99 [1.877, 2.112]	WL÷WW	1.09 [1.077, 1.105]	WW÷WL	3.09 [2.931, 3.258]
W & L	L÷W	1.60 [1.526, 1.679]	L÷W	1.07 [1.051, 1.084]	W÷L	1.95 [1.853, 2.049]

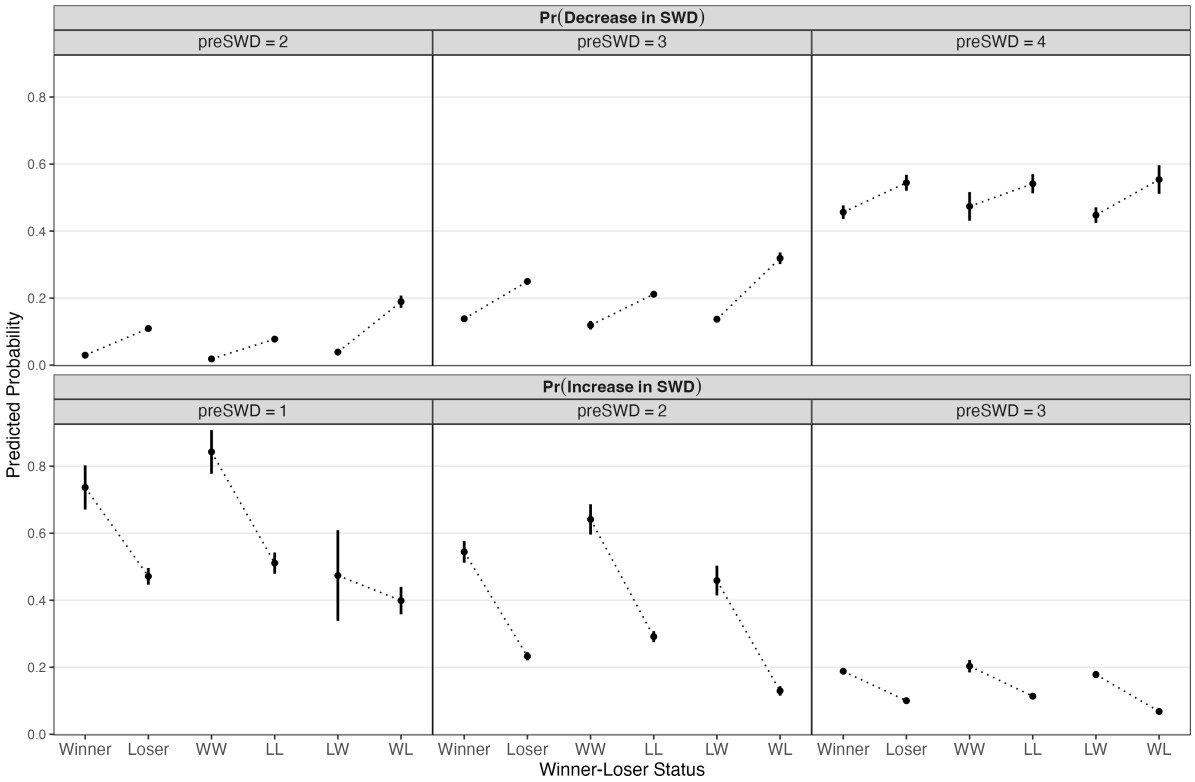
Note: Table entries are the underlying predicted probability contrasts (one predicted probability subtracted or divided by another predicted probability) used to construct Figure 4.7. Predicted probabilities for WWs, LLs, LWs, and WLs are based on Model 4 in Table 4.6. Predicted probabilities for winners (W) and losers (L) are based on Model 2 in Table 4.6. Brackets contain 95% confidence intervals.

Table A4.6. Predicted Probability Gap Comparisons (from Models 2 and 4 in Table 4.6)

Contrast	SWD	Equation	Estimate [CI]
WW & LL vs. LW & WL	Decrease	$\frac{(WL–LW)–(LL–WW)}{(LL–WW)}$	1.118 [0.742, 1.495]
	No change	$\frac{(LL–WW)–(LW–WL)}{(LW–WL)}$	5.045 [1.386, 8.704]
	Increase	$\frac{(LW–WL)–(WW–LL)}{(WW–LL)}$	0.010 [-0.116, 0.135]
	Decrease	$(WL–LW)–(LL–WW)$	0.081 [0.065, 0.096]
	No change	$(LL–WW)–(LW–WL)$	0.057 [0.049, 0.065]
	Increase	$(LW–WL)–(WW–LL)$	0.001 [-0.016, 0.019]
LL & WL vs. WW & LW	Decrease	$\frac{(WL–LL)–(LW–WW)}{(LW–WW)}$	53.841 [-387.239, 494.921]
	No change	$\frac{(LW–WW)–(LL–WL)}{(LL–WL)}$	2.251 [1.272, 3.231]
	Increase	$\frac{(LL–WL)–(WW–LW)}{(WW–LW)}$	0.022 [-0.264, 0.308]
	Decrease	$(WL–LL)–(LW–WW)$	0.081 [0.065, 0.096]
	No change	$(LW–WW)–(LL–WL)$	0.042 [0.035, 0.049]
	Increase	$(LL–WL)–(WW–LW)$	0.001 [-0.016, 0.019]

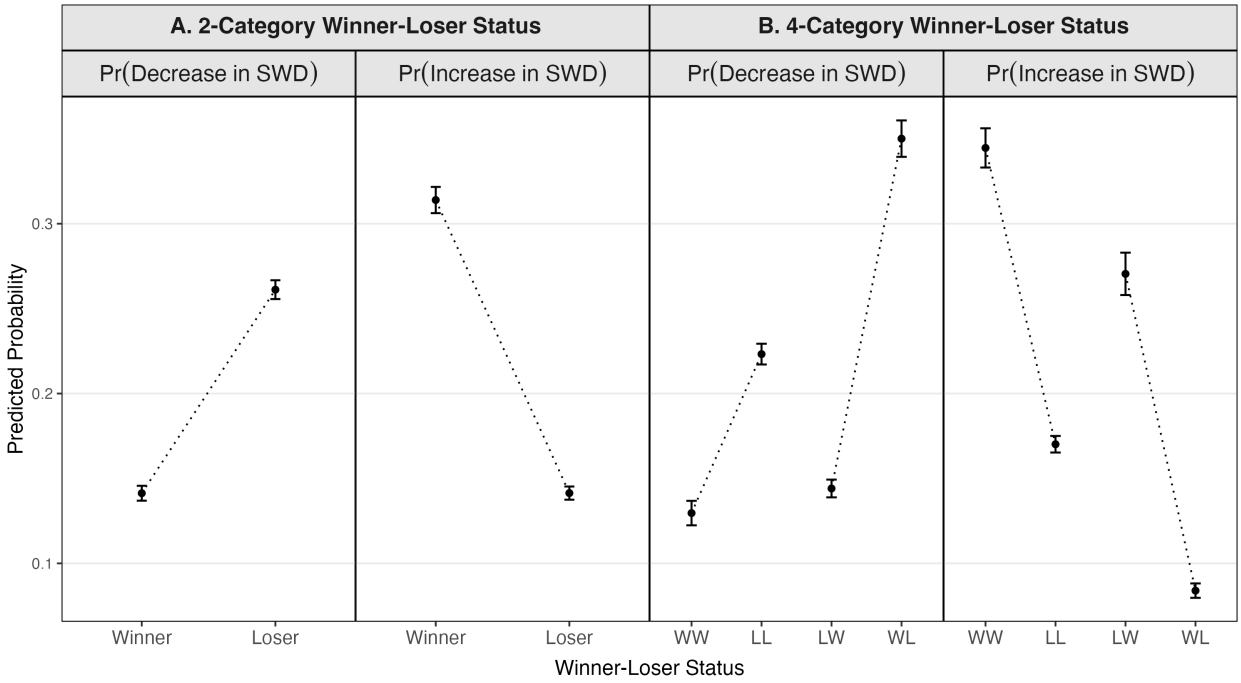
Note: Table entries are the underlying predicted probability contrasts-in-contrasts (one predicted probability contrast subtracted or divided by another predicted probability contrast) used to construct Figure 4.8. Predicted probabilities for WWs, LLs, LWs, and WLs are based on Model 4 in Table 4.6. Predicted probabilities for winners (W) and losers (L) are based on Model 2 in Table 4.6. Brackets contain 95% confidence intervals.

Figure A4.1. Predicted Probability of SWD Change in Canadian Elections, by Winner-Loser Status and Pre-Election Satisfaction Level



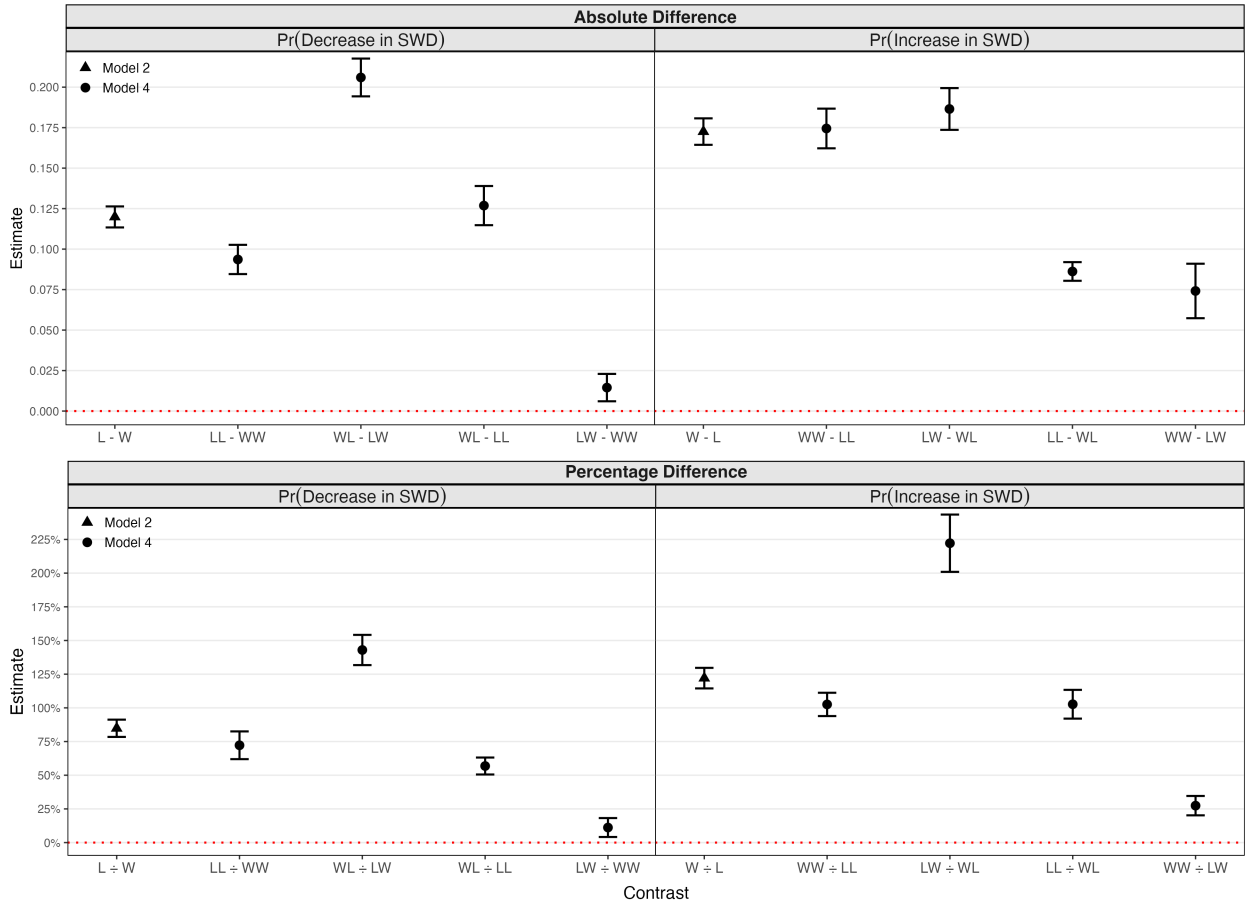
Note: Predicted probabilities are based on Models 2 and 4 in Table 4.6, respectively. Vertical bars represent 95% intervals.

Figure A4.2. Predicted Probability of SWD Change in Canadian Elections, by Winner-Loser Status: Models Without Covariates (Models 1 and 3 in Table 4.6)



Note: Predicted probabilities are based on Models 1 and 3 in Table 4.6. Vertical bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

Figure A4.3. Predicted Probability Contrasts (Gaps) in Canadian Elections: Models Without Covariates (Models 1 and 3 in Table 4.6)



Note: Predicted probabilities are based on Models 1 and 3 in Table 4.6. Vertical bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

Chapter 5 Appendix

Table A5.1. Strength of Preference and Winner-Loser Effects in Political Support

	Electoral Integrity		Regime Support	
	Low Pref	High Pref	Low Pref	High Pref
Wave	0.159*	0.019	−0.359	1.263**
	(0.082)	(0.179)	(0.261)	(0.521)
Wave x Democrat	1.007***	1.776***	0.501*	−0.919*
	(0.088)	(0.181)	(0.290)	(0.528)
Wave x Republican	−0.327***	−0.990***	0.355	−2.022***
	(0.088)	(0.182)	(0.292)	(0.529)
Wave x 2016	0.746***	0.092	0.583*	−0.763
	(0.224)	(0.631)	(0.354)	(0.837)
Wave x Democrat x 2016	−2.396***	−2.697***	−0.464	−0.683
	(0.309)	(0.641)	(0.448)	(0.850)
Wave x Republican x 2016	1.226***	3.661***	0.246	2.806***
	(0.269)	(0.642)	(0.418)	(0.853)
N.	12054	14588	1750	3900
R2	0.793	0.793	0.852	0.830
AIC	41699.7	53176.5	6864.9	15958.6

* $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Table A5.2. Fixed Effects Regression: Electoral Inversions and Confidence in Vote Count Accuracy among Republican Winners and Democratic Losers

	(1)
Wave	0.286
	(0.316)
Wave x Democrat	−0.195
	(0.319)
Wave x Republican	−0.208
	(0.319)
Wave x 2016	−0.222
	(0.330)
Wave x Democrat x 2016	−0.030
	(0.335)
Wave x Republican x 2016	0.827**
	(0.335)
N	3252
R2	0.798
AIC	6804.5

* p < 0.1, ** p < 0.05, *** p < 0.01

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