

Introduction

Rule changes are ultimately designed and implemented by political actors under the impetus of the will of the citizenry. In this section we examine how political agents, in the attempt to maintain their power, can subvert changes to electoral rules. The strategies of the political establishment are concerned with working within the changed rules to ensure unchanged outcomes. Simulating the 1996 Italian PL national elections under the old PR electoral rules, we find that in fact, the simulated outcome is virtually the same as the actual outcome. Thus, the new PL rules led to the same pattern of representation as would have occurred under the old PR rules. Further, when changing electoral rules from PR to PL the desire of the people is to choose the government directly rather than delegating the choice to elected representatives in the legislature. However, this desire can be frustrated when the new electoral rules result in a relatively unchanged legislature, since compromises to preserve the status quo will become more likely.