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ELECTORAL SYSTEM FAILURE IN THE 2017 FRENCH ELECTIONS

ELI SCHWANITZ

The 2017 French presidential election represented a major shift in the French party system. In the final round, two candidates faced off against each other: Emmanuel Macron and Marine Le Pen. Despite the fact that for over 50 years the French presidency was primarily contested by just two parties, neither of these two major party groups was represented in the final round in 2017. Instead, Emmanuel Macron ran as the leader of a party that he had created barely a year prior. This party, *La République En Marche!* (LREM) was styled as a party of neither the left nor the right that sought consensus and progress. Macron faced off against Marine Le Pen, who led the far-right, anti-immigrant National Front (FN), founded by her father, Jean-Marie Le Pen. Ultimately, voters coalesced behind Macron and elected him to the presidency with broad support. In a matter of less than a year, an apparently stable system had been upended, and the future of France's political system was very much in doubt.

Election systems are the driving force behind party systems. By deciding how votes are translated into political power, election systems determine how many parties can coexist and what types of parties are able to hold power. The conventional wisdom in political science is that single-member district (SMD), plurality systems like France's produce a stable bifurcated system with two major party blocs, one on the left and one on the right. However, there is an extra quirk to France's system. Both presidential and legislative seats are contested in two rounds, with the first round functioning like an open primary. The second round causes France's two-party system to be less stable than that of other, similar countries, producing a higher degree of fractionalization within the two large blocs. This allowed the FN, a group unaffiliated with either bloc, to rise to prominence over time.

However, the presence of this third party was not entirely stable, and continued to put strain on the party system as the significance of the FN grew. In 2017, widespread public dissatisfaction with the two major parties created a breaking point, and the parties collapsed back into a bipolarized system. Macron and Le Pen were able to take advantage of this moment and permanently restructure France's party system, enshrining their parties as major fixtures of the political system moving forward. Nevertheless, France's current electoral system is unstable and potentially dangerous because it is fertile to the growth of extremist parties and is prone to rapid and significant

transformation.

ELECTORAL SYSTEMS SHAPE PARTY STRUCTURES

Perhaps the most famous theory in the realm of electoral systems study is Duverger's Law — the assertion that single-member districts, using plurality election systems, tend to produce two-party systems. This is approximately true, though in some cases extreme social cleavages can cause a different system to emerge.¹ The two-party outcome is predicated on the rational actor model— the idea that both voters and parties reliably act in a way that secures the best possible result for themselves. For example, in a multiparty space using an SMD plurality system, two ideologically nearby parties could join forces, and the sum of the votes for both parties would together be able to outcompete opponents. Every party in the system would feel pressure to do this, until only two large blocs remained. Meanwhile, voters would be incentivized to not “waste their vote” on smaller parties they know will lose, and instead cast their vote for the ideologically-nearest large party.² Ultimately, this system is reductive to two broad coalitions, primarily built on opposition to the other: the two-party system.

This theory can be taken further. SMD plurality is the most exclusionary system that is possible within a competitive democracy, hence its outcome of the minimum number of two competing parties. The opposite of exclusionary systems are permissive ones, which tend to foster competition between greater numbers of parties. More exclusionary systems feature smaller legislative assemblies, a small number of winners per district, limits on the electoral preference that a voter can communicate, and apportionment schemes that favor large parties. Importantly, executive offices behave as a “legislative assembly” with just a single member, and therefore are more exclusionary than legislative elections contested under the same rules. Meanwhile, more permissive systems have larger assemblies, higher district magnitudes, and low thresholds for a party to enter the legislature.³ Any of these variables can be tweaked in a variety of ways to produce electoral systems that are somewhere on the spectrum between exclusionary and permissive.

Electoral systems are not the only consideration at play in the evolution of party systems. Rather, the electoral system should be seen as defining the carrying capacity of the ideological ecosystem. Just as in a biological context, the ideological ecosystem sets an upper bound on the number of parties, and will tend to force party consolidation if there are more parties than what the carrying capacity can permit. Social cleavages are also critically important in determining how many parties a system will produce, since every party is differentiated from every other by at least one line of cleavage. Thus, a very homogenous society might not experience a proliferation of parties, even if its electoral system is suddenly made more permissive.⁴ Further, particularly salient cleavages might result in more parties, even as the electoral system simultaneously puts downward pressure on the number of parties. Finally,

electoral and party systems are endogenous. If we take the effects of electoral systems on party systems to be true, it stands to reason that parties with an opportunity to control the electoral system will select one that is most beneficial to their own continued existence.⁵ Therefore, smaller, issue-focused parties are highly likely to prefer more permissive systems, whereas large, big-tent parties are likely to prefer exclusionary ones. However, both electoral systems and party systems are sticky. Parties must engage in capacity-building before they can build trust with voters, so a new electoral system will not immediately precipitate a break in the party structure. Further, voters tend to favor the status quo election system, and parties that seek to change it face an uphill battle and are often accused of electoral manipulation. For these reasons, change to both party systems and electoral systems occurs relatively slowly, and often both systems change in conjunction with one another.

EXCLUSIONARY AND PERMISSIVE—COMPETING SYSTEMS IN FRANCE

Since the establishment of the French Fifth Republic in 1958, France has almost entirely made use of a two-round system for electing both the president and the members of the National Assembly. The first round of election features all candidates who are running. If one candidate wins a 50%+ majority, they are elected. If no candidate crosses this threshold, a second round is held.⁶ Legislative elections occur after one week. These are contested by the top two candidates from the first round, plus any additional candidates who received votes totaling more than 12.5% of the registered electorate.⁷ Theoretically, this allows more than two candidates to advance to the second round, but so-called triangulaire elections have become vanishingly rare.⁸ Presidential elections, meanwhile, occur after two weeks, and only the top two finishers from the first round can stand.⁹

Both of these systems are relatively exclusionary. Both legislators and the president are elected from SMDs, the lowest possible district magnitude. Since the districting system is not proportional, there is no vote threshold which a party must cross to enter parliament. However, the 12.5% of the vote that must be achieved to stand in the second round behaves approximately like a vote threshold, and is very high compared to vote thresholds of other countries. In fact, France's threshold was raised twice, explicitly to reduce the number of parties that could compete.¹⁰ Due to the two-round system, voters are effectively allowed to communicate their second choice, which is slightly more permissive than a simple plurality election. Still, the system represents a strict limit on the extent to which voters can communicate their preferences. The one way in which the French legislative elections are relatively permissive is the size of the assembly – for a country of France's size, 577 deputies is a relatively high number. Nevertheless, France's system on the balance is closer to the exclusionary end of the spectrum, and therefore produces a relatively small number of parties.

At the same time, France also contains two other elections systems that are

significantly more permissive. These are the local and municipal elections, as well as elections to the European Parliament (EP). Most municipal elections operate on a type of proportional system, whereby voters cast ballots for party lists and seats are filled proportionally to the number of votes cast for each party.¹¹ While there has been year-to-year variation in how French elections to the EP have been conducted, these elections have nearly always been a proportional system, in which candidates are elected from either large, multi-member districts or from a single national constituency.¹² Since both the municipal and EP elections use higher magnitude districts that are apportioned through some sort of proportional scheme, they are far more permissive than national French elections. Additionally, there is evidence that the barrier to entry for new parties is even lower in these elections than would be expected based on their high degree of permissiveness, as the municipal and EP elections are perceived to be less important than national elections. Voters are more likely to cast a sincere vote in elections they see as less important, even if this means their vote is likely to be wasted.¹³ Therefore, these elections operate as extremely permissive ones, with a high number of parties represented on the ballot.

UNSTABLE BIPOLARIZATION — THE FRENCH PARTY SYSTEM

Due to the relatively exclusionary federal election system, France's party system reformed itself into a clearly bipolarized system soon after the establishment of the Fifth Republic's electoral rules. By 1970, the parties of the left had consolidated into an electoral alliance to improve their chances of winning the presidency and the legislature, and a large coalition of the right soon followed suit.¹⁴ Consequently, one of the two major parties nearly always wins the presidency, and the two major parties combined tend to make up a significant majority of the legislature. Nevertheless, the major blocs on the left and right remain somewhat fragmented, causing the system to be described as bipolar multipartism.¹⁵ An assortment of smaller parties usually win representation in the legislature, though each of these parties clearly belong either to the coalition of the left or the coalition of the right. This higher degree of fragmentation is due to the fact that the system is slightly more permissive than strict plurality voting systems.¹⁶ Because voters can communicate both first and second choices, coalitions of parties can coalesce between the first and second rounds.¹⁷ In fact, the French system theoretically has a carrying capacity of three parties. This is because the first-round election behaves as though each district has a magnitude of two, since two winners advance to the second round. Thus, voters could divide their votes between each of three parties in the first round and have no vote be wasted. It should also be noted that, because of the relatively more proportional municipal systems, various parties other than the two primary ones are well-represented in local governments. However, for most of the history of the Fifth Republic, the nature of social cleavages has organized competition into two blocs. The dominant cleavages at the inception of the Fifth Republic were religiosity and

class, both of which corresponded with the left-right divide.¹⁸ Therefore, with no major cross-cutting cleavage, the system of bipolar multipartism remained stable.

However, more recently, a new set of cleavages has begun to restructure the pattern of competition. In the late 1970s, the salience of the religious cleavage was on the decline, and a new issue area was becoming more important across Europe — immigration and globalization.¹⁹ Jean-Marie Le Pen founded the FN in 1972, and by the early 1980s was able to take advantage of the growing importance of the cleavage between nativism and integration.²⁰ By appealing to those who perceived themselves as cultural “losers” of immigration and by amplifying perceptions of difference, the FN was able to achieve limited electoral success. Because France’s system has a carrying capacity of three parties, and because the FN was able to find success in the more proportional municipal and European systems, it was able to gain a toehold in the French party space without being stomped out by the two biggest coalitions.²¹ By the early 1990s, the FN had become fully entrenched as the third pole of the French political space.²² Though it never achieved major electoral success, it was able to legitimately compete in the first round of elections since no voter would waste their vote by voting for the FN.²³ Thus, by the turn of the century, France’s political space was tripolarized, with the large coalitions of the left and right competing alongside the new nativist pole represented by the far-right.

WHAT HAPPENED IN 2017?

Leading up to the 2017 election, the classic left and right poles of French politics faced scandals, party infighting, and defection. The sitting Socialist president, François Hollande, was leading a historically unpopular administration. He had struggled to live up to the strong socialist talking points he put forward in his 2012 campaign, resulting in public clashes between the “liberal-democrat” moderate left and more radical dissidents from within his own government.²⁴ Facing clear electoral headwinds, Hollande announced in 2016 that he would not stand for re-election, becoming the first president of the Fifth Republic to do so. Ultimately, the Socialist nominee Benoit Hamon performed dismally in the polls, and was overwhelmingly overshadowed by the far-left Jean-Luc Mélenchon.²⁵ Thus, going into the 2017 elections, there was nothing that could be described as a unified, effective coalition of the left. The right was also fractured, though to a lesser extent. The leading candidate of the center-right Republicans, François Fillon, was the subject of a corruption and nepotism scandal that negatively impacted his polling.²⁶ The Republicans were also being pulled in two different directions, as both those who supported Macron’s insurgent LREM and supporters of Le Pen’s FN fought with the main wing of the party.²⁷ With disarray in both traditional blocs, the circumstances could not have been better for insurgent parties seeking a symbolic victory to cement themselves as

legitimate alternatives.

Meanwhile, Marine Le Pen had been championing a campaign to make her far-right National Front more palatable and to break the long-standing taboo against collaborating with the FN. This has been broadly successful. The FN has remained true to its nationalist, populist, and anti-immigrant roots, but has managed to broaden its appeal, and the distinction between moderate and extreme right has begun to fade.²⁸ This can also be seen in the FN’s presidential results. In 2002, Jean-Marie Le Pen earned 16.8% of the first-round vote, and became the first FN candidate to reach the second round of a presidential election. However, he received a dismal 17.8% of the second-round vote, demonstrating a clear ceiling on his support. Fifteen years later, his daughter Marine would expand her vote share by more than ten percent between the first and second rounds, showing that she has been able to broaden the FN’s electoral coalition.

The first round of the 2017 election was very closely contested, with four candidates receiving between 19 and 24 percent of the vote. Macron lead with 24%, and Marine Le Pen was sent to the second round by the barest of margins— her 21.3% beat Fillon of the Republicans by 1.3% and only outstripped the far-left Mélenchon by 1.7%. Therefore, it wasn’t enough that two insurgent parties performed well. Their rise had to coincide with serial failure of the traditional parties. Had either the left or the right been more internally unified, their combined votes would have beaten both Macron and Le Pen by a healthy margin. After the first round, most parties coalesced around Macron, because working with the FN remained somewhat of a taboo. As a result, Macron coasted to an easy victory.

Victory in the first presidential round, even by margins so small that the majority of voters actually opposed both Macron and Le Pen, is tremendously valuable in terms of creating legitimacy for new parties. Le Pen’s father’s success in the first round in 2002 started the FN down a path towards being a major player in politics.²⁹ Furthermore, France has a strongly presidential system.³⁰ This is unusual in Europe, and it allows the executive to assume office without the support or confidence of the legislature. This primacy of the executive was taken one step further in the early 2000s when the election calendar was restructured so that the legislative elections would always follow presidential ones within the same year.³¹ This has resulted in a “honeymoon cycle,” whereby the legislative elections reward parties that performed well in the presidential cycle, while handing a governing majority to the newly-elected president.³² Accordingly, Macron’s LREM and allies won a majority, and the FN secured a commanding third place in the first-round popular vote, finishing just a few points behind the Republicans.³³ However, FN would end up with few seats, because of voters’ tendency to align themselves against the party in the second round. Despite this, the 2017 election was the best showing FN has ever had under a two-round system. They demonstrated a high

capacity to advance to the second round, meaning that ballots cast for them in the first round were not “wasted votes,” but rather the results of a legitimate strategic choice.³⁴ Since rational voters tend to vote strategically based on a party’s perceived strength, the compelling results for the FN in the legislative elections indicate that they are here to stay.

This was confirmed in 2019, when a round of municipal elections convincingly demonstrated that the presidential electoral shifts were a sign of longer-lasting change. In major cities across France, the disarrayed Socialists lurched to the left, campaigning very closely with the green and communist parties. This resulted in the victory of many green candidates, as well as other leftists supported by the greens, in a “green wave.”³⁵ Though the Socialists did perform far better than they did at a national level in 2017, they were forced to rely heavily on far-left forces that pulled the party further left.³⁶ Even then, most major Socialist victories were by locally-popular incumbents, whose strength may fade over time. These victories came largely at the expense of LREM, though Macron’s party competed very strongly given that the president’s party tends to fare poorly in midterm elections.³⁷ Meanwhile, in the European Parliament elections, LREM and the FN (renamed National Rally) coasted to comfortable first- and second-place victories. Far from being a major political force, the Socialists have become just one of the many minor parties contained within the far-left bloc. Meanwhile, LREM, the remainder of the Republicans, and the far-right were each able to compete as a distinct coalition, though LREM did sometimes also ally itself with moderate incumbent Republicans.³⁸ The relatively proportional nature of the municipal and European elections means that these four blocs can legitimately compete. However, by the presidential election in 2022, the more exclusionary national-level system will require the four parties to consolidate in some way to support the system’s the carrying capacity of only three parties.

COLLAPSING BACK TO BIPOLARIZATION

Social cleavages can forecast the manner in which the parties will consolidate. As of 2017, the transformation away from the old cleavages of class and religion is nearly complete.³⁹ The French political space is now overwhelmingly defined by two new cleavages — a social one, between a nativist anti-immigrant pole and a multicultural pro-integration pole, and an economic one, between a neoliberal pro-globalization pole and an interventionist anti-globalization pole.⁴⁰ Each of the four major coalitions, as they were in the 2017 presidential election, belong to one quadrant of this space:

	NATIONALIST	PRO-INTEGRATION
PRO-GLOBALIZATION	Republicans	LREM
ANTI-GLOBALIZATION	FN	leftist parties

Figure 1: French political cleavages and party affiliations, as shown on a quadrant model

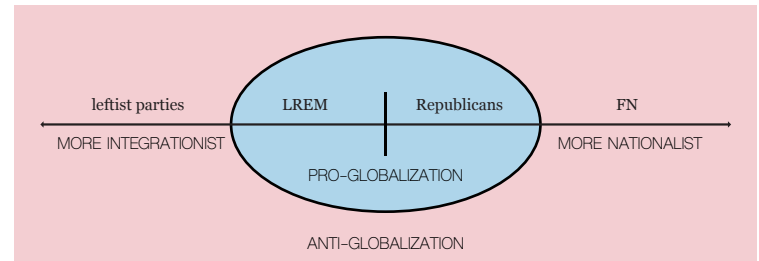


Figure 2: French political cleavages and party affiliations, shown by alignment from left to right

The primary cleavage at work in French society is the nationalist/integration divide, which has now fully matured to form the division between the left and right sides of the political spectrum. The FN was the first to capitalize on the emerging nationalist/integration cleavage, and represents a populist, nativist pole. The moderate right is also moving closer to this culturally-conservative position, though not to the same extent. This pole is most strongly opposed by the parties of the left, which represent an open, cosmopolitan pole. However, the FN has also successfully pivoted to embrace an additional sort of populism, one that allies itself with those of the working class who see themselves as losers of globalization.⁴¹ Thus, the FN is also economically nationalist, and advocates for intervention to protect domestic businesses and workers. The far-left also supports more regulation and intervention, but for profoundly different reasons, emphasizing ecological and redistributive benefits. Meanwhile, the two more centrist parties are opposed to this interventionist take, and both tend to support a pro-globalization pole.⁴²

However, these two cleavages do not form a two-dimensional political space. The FN is ideologically furthest from the far-left, even though they both support higher degrees of economic intervention. The nationalist/integration divide is the more salient of the two, and prevents the FN from ever joining a coalition or campaigning with the far left. Thus, the political space should be understood as one-dimensional. The nationalism/integration divide forms the distinction between the left and the right. Meanwhile, issues of globalization versus intervention divide the center of each bloc from its extremes.⁴³ This one-dimensional structure of the political space forecasts how parties are likely to consolidate themselves in advance of the elections in 2022.

In 2022, parties are likely to collapse back into two broad electoral coalitions, one on the left and one on the right. The broadening appeal of the FN and a convergence on the right towards cultural conservatism indicates movement towards a more cohesive bloc on the right.⁴⁴ Though there still is a meaningful distinction between the Republicans and the FN, the results of the 2017 election show that voters from either of those groups are willing to vote for the other. Meanwhile, on the left, LREM has largely outcompeted the

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Socialists for the support of the moderate left — some Socialist incumbents remain strong locally, but the national party has been eviscerated. The remainder of the Socialists, as well as smaller parties on the far-left, will likely continue to work together as they did in the 2020 municipal elections, eventually moving toward a more united far-left front. This would be a meaningful change from the pre-2017 tripartite political space.

The restructuring of the party system that came to a head in 2017 should be seen as a success story of the far-right. France's electoral system proved to be a uniquely fertile petri dish for far-right populism. Jean-Marie Le Pen's FN was able to engage in capacity-building by contesting the relatively permissive municipal and European elections. From there, the party was able to make the leap into national-level politics, where the carrying capacity of three parties allowed space for one more to compete. For over 20 years, the FN represented one pole of a tripolarized system. Then, in 2017, they were able to seize the moment and reshape the political system around themselves. This has moved the entire party system to the right, as the Socialists, formerly the major center-left party, have been relegated to being a part of a loose far-left coalition. Macron and his allies, who were described three years ago as centrists, are the closest thing that remains to a moderate left party. Meanwhile, the Republicans have moved to the right, accelerated by the loss of their moderate members to LREM. Lastly, the FN has cemented itself as an electoral force that will continue to shape the political landscape in France, even if they are not able to win the presidency outright.

INSTANT-RUNOFF VOTING — CONSENSUS OVER CHAOS

For electoral reformers, there is a debate as to whether strongly exclusive systems or strongly proportional systems present the greatest danger of extremists holding sway within government. In highly proportional systems, more extreme parties on both sides are able to gain seats in the legislature, though they remain fringe parties that tend to gain few seats. Meanwhile, in exclusionary systems, the most extreme tendencies of left and right are rolled into big-tent coalitions or parties. Though this prevents extreme parties from gaining their own seats, it allows extreme parties to pull the major parties away from the center, and thus causes politics to be more extreme as a whole. Regardless of which of these situations is better, France's system is worse than either. It has allowed a place for an extremist party to slowly gain legitimacy, as well as seats in local, national, and supranational governments. However, since the system is not proportional, it also allowed the FN to radically restructure the pattern of party competition and become a legitimate ideological pole in and of itself. Thus, France should serve as a cautionary tale against similar two-round ballot schemes.

Electoral reform is always on the table in France, and should be strongly considered. The damage of the FN in terms of restructuring the party system has been done and France will likely collapse back into a stable bipolarized

arrangement, albeit one that is further to the right and much more friendly to nationalist extremism. However, it is impossible to predict what emerging social cleavage may drive the growth of another radical, fringe party which could similarly destabilize the party system. Therefore, France ought to do away with its two-round balloting system for the legislature. Further, the competing election systems at different levels should be homogenized. This will help disable the ladder of engagement that the FN used to climb from obscurity to political prominence.

The easiest means to achieve this is to return to the proportional system that France used briefly in 1986. Though a proportional system would likely accord more seats to the FN than the two-round system, the FN's share of seats would still represent a small minority of the legislature. Further, a proportional system would prevent the Republicans from needing to cooperate with the FN, and thus reverse the recent trend of integrating extremism into the political establishment. However, in the presidential elections, instituting electoral reform through proportionalism is more difficult. The presidential election is arguably the more important of the two in determining party structure, and there is no way to make a single-winner office proportional. Simply doing away with the second electoral round would eventually result in a stable two-party system. However, the stickiness of existing party systems means that there is a relatively high chance of the FN securing a large minority of ballots, winning the presidency outright before a two-party regime could solidify. This is too large of a risk. France's best option for their presidential elections is one that has not yet been tried in France — an instant-runoff system. This system has the same theoretical basis of the two-round system, in that losing candidates are struck from the ballot and voters who cast their votes for losers are allowed to vote for someone else in a later round. However, instant-runoff voting eliminates only one candidate per round, and thus avoids the problem of first-round vote-splitting that was observed in 2017, ensuring that the candidates who advance from each round collectively have majority support.⁴⁵ This means that in a scenario like the 2017 election, neither Macron nor Le Pen would become president, since both traditional blocs achieved more combined votes. More importantly, however, it would prevent the formation of the 2017 narrative of success for Macron and Le Pen, since the winners of the first round would no longer dominate the media cycle. Thus, radical shifts in perceived party strength would be unlikely, and the party system would be much less vulnerable to shocks in the future.

END NOTES

- 1 Cox, "Making Votes Count," 25
- 2 Golder et. al, "Multi-Level Electoral Politics," Chap. 6, p. 4
- 3 Colomer, "The Strategy and History of Electoral System Choice," 3; Golder et. al, "Multi-Level Electoral Politics," chap. 6, p. 4
- 4 Cox, "Making Votes Count," 25
- 5 Colomer, "The Strategy and History of Electoral System Choice," 5
- 6 Gallagher & Mitchell, "The Politics of Electoral Systems," 122
- 7 Blais & Loewen, "The French Electoral System and Its Effects," 1
- 8 Evans, "The French Party System," 2
- 9 Gallagher & Mitchell, "The Politics of Electoral Systems," 122
- 10 Gallagher & Mitchell, "The Politics of Electoral Systems," 123
- 11 Golder et. al, "Multi-Level Electoral Politics," chap. 3, p. 11
- 12 Golder et. al, "Multi-Level Electoral Politics," chap. 3, p. 11
- 13 Golder et. al, "Multi-Level Electoral Politics," chap. 6, p. 21
- 14 Gallagher & Mitchell, "The Politics of Electoral Systems," 126
- 15 Bornschier, "France — The Model Case of Party System Transformation," 1
- 16 Bornschier & Lachat, "The Evolution of the French Political Space and Party System," 361
- 17 Gallagher & Mitchell, "The Politics of Electoral Systems," 125
- 18 Bornschier & Lachat, "The Evolution of the French Political Space and Party System," 364
- 19 Bornschier & Lachat, "The Evolution of the French Political Space and Party System," 368
- 20 Surel, "How to Stay Populist?," 1231
- 21 Golder et. al, "Multi-Level Electoral Politics," chap. 4, p. 5
- 22 Bornschier, "France — The Model Case of Party System Transformation," 3
- 23 Evans, "The French Party System," 138
- 24 Clift & McDaniel, "Is This Crisis of French Socialism Different?," 408
- 25 Chrisafis, "It Has No Chance"
- 26 Willsher, "François Filon Sinks in Polls After 'Penelopegate' Scandal"
- 27 Hoyo & Chandler, "Emmanuel Macron Just Won a Majority"
- 28 Surel, "How to Stay Populist?," 1252; Gougou & Persico, "A New Party System in the Making?," 308
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- 30 Clift, "The Fifth Republic at Fifty," 384
- 31 Clift, "The Fifth Republic at Fifty," 386
- 32 Hoyo & Chandler, "Emmanuel Macron Just Won a Majority"
- 33 Elliot and Chwalisz, "French Legislative Elections 2017"
- 34 Gougou & Persico, "A New Party System in the Making?," 308
- 35 O'Brien, "Green Wave Scrambles Macron's 2022 Reelection Bid"
- 36 Cugnata, "The Elections and the Pandemic"
- 37 Margulies, "What the Municipal Elections in France Told Us"
- 38 Margulies, "What the Municipal Elections in France Told Us"
- 39 Bornschier & Lachat, "The Evolution of the French Political Space and Party System," 267
- 40 Gougou & Persico, "A New Party System in the Making?," 315
- 41 Surel, "How to Stay Populist?," 1243
- 42 Gougou & Persico, "A New Party System in the Making?," 314
- 43 Lichfield, "France's New Two-Party System"
- 44 Bornschier & Lachat, "The Evolution of the French Political Space and Party System," 372
- 45 Instant-Runoff voting is one of many voting systems collectively described as "ranked-choice" systems. In these systems, voters are allowed to make a list of candidates, in order of their preference rather than selecting just one candidate. Instant-runoff voting is then able to simulate multiple rounds of balloting based on the order in which voters rank their choices. In the first of these rounds, each voter's first choice is counted, and the rest of the choices are ignored for the time being. If one candidate receives more than 50% of first-choice votes, they win the election. If no candidate has achieved this number, the candidate with the fewest first-choice votes is

END NOTES (CONTINUED)

eliminated from the election. Then, any voters whose first choice was eliminated will have their vote count instead for their second choice. This is mathematically equivalent to holding a second election with every candidate but the eliminated one. These rounds continue by eliminating the candidate with the fewest votes and reapportioning the votes of those who voted for that candidate to their next choice down the ballot. As soon as one candidate achieves more than 50% of votes after a round, they are declared the winner.

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