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## DUVERGER'S LAW, ITALIAN STYLE

### *Introduction*

On April 18, 1993 the Italian voters overwhelmingly approved a referendum that changed the electoral system for the national Senate. This vote "forced" the Italian Parliament to act on a new law that would introduce a new system also for the Chamber. Italy has a bicameral Parliament with the government responsible to both chambers. If the referendum result were left in place without some analogous changes being made to the electoral system for the Chamber of Deputies the two chambers would have been elected by significantly different systems with the serious risk that the next elections might have produced very different outcomes. Between May and August 1993 Parliament worked on the new electoral law that introduced for both chambers a mixed-member majority (MMM) system with three-quarters of the seats filled in single-seat districts (SSD) and the remaining one-quarter filled by PR. In both cases the formula for the allocation of the SSD is first-past-the post, plurality. Since then three national elections took place under the new rules, in 1994, 1996 and 2001. Too few cases to draw definitive conclusions on the implantation of the new system, but enough to start developing some arguments on how the new rules have changed the pattern of electoral

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