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Voting Methods and Counting Systems: Are they Failing American Democracy?

A Dissertation Submitted to the Department of Letters and English Language in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Master's Degree in Language and Culture.

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Abstract

This work sheds light on the shaming issues like voting fraud and miscounting votes in U.S elections, a country traditionally viewed as a model for democracy. The research tackles the question of election results now commonly contested in America. The work seeks to explain whether the American voting methods and counting systems are the culprit of this widespread dissatisfaction or do deliberate and malignant practices truly infect the American political life. Therefore, the dissertation starts with an overview of the electoral system and the various election stages. It then devotes a part to the voting methods and counting systems many of which are rejected by Americans as a means of fraud and stealing voter ballots. The dissertation concludes that deficiencies in the voting methods and counting technology are to blame for a great part as they tend to disenfranchise voters by their thousands especially minority ethnic groups. Likewise, votes cast by dead people and the tendency to cast more than one ballot in many elections in addition to so many other dishonest subterfuges are evidence of a fraudulent will among voters as well as party officials.

الملخـــص

الإنتخابات موضوع معقد للغاية لأنها تعد أساس أي نظام حكم حيوي. في الولايات المتحدة، تتم إدانة تزوير الإنتخابات وممارسات الإقتراع غير العادلة في بشكل متزايد من قبل المواطنين وكذا السياسيين، يحاول هذا البحث تسليط الضوء على هذه القضية المخزية في بلد ينظر إليه تقليديا على أنه نموذجا للديمقراطية. كما يعالج هذا البحث مسألة نتائج الانتخابات المتنازع عليها الآن بشكل شائع في الولايات المتحدة. إضافة إلى توضيح ما إذا كانت أساليب التصويت وأنظمة الفرز سبب هذا الإستياء الواسع النطاق أم أن ممارسات متعمدة خبيثة هي التي تؤثر حقا في الحياة السياسية الأمريكية. لذلك تبدأ المذكرة بلمحة عامة عن النظام الإنتخابي ومراحل الإنتخابات المختلفة، ثم تخصص هذه المذكرة جزء للتعريف بأساليب التصويت وأنظمة الفرز التي يرفض الأمريكيون الكثير منها لأنهم يرونها كوسيلة للتزوير وسرقة أصوات الناخبين. أما الفصل الأخير لهذا البحث فيعالج حالة الممارسات الإنتخابات السيئة التي شهدتها الإنتخابات الرئاسية لعام 2020، حيث أدت جائحة كوفيد 19 إلى اللجوء إلى التصويت عبر البريد على نطاق واسع وهو الأمر الذي رفضه الرئيس دونالد ترامب بإعتباره مصدرا للإحتيال. هدد ترامب المنهزم التنازل عن الإنتخابات التداول السلمي على السلطة حيث سار الآلاف من مناصريه الى الكونجرس في محاولة منهم لإبطال نتائج الإنتخابات. تخلص هذه المذكرة إلى أن مشاكل التصويت وفرز الأصوات هي السبب بكيفية كبيرة لأنها تميل الى حرمان الآلاف من الناخبين خاصة الأقليات العرقية من المشاركة في الإنتخابات. وبالمثل فإن الأصوات التي تنسب إلى الموتى الإدلاء بأكثر من صوت في الإنتخابات الرئاسية بالإضافة إلى الكثير من الأساليب الغير نزيهة الأخرى التي تعتبر دليل واضح على وجود نية الغش بين الناخبين وكذلك مسؤولي الأحزاب.

List of Abbreviations

HAVA: Help America Vote Act.

ID: Identification.

VRA: Voting Rights Act.

FPTP: First past the Post.

TRS: Two Round System.

RCV: Ranked Choice Voting.

IRV: Instant Run-off Voting.

IBM: International Business Machines.

DRE: Direct Recording Electronic.

DHS: Department of Homeland Security.

PPE: Personal Protective Equipment.

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Introduction

Elections are a significant process that guarantees the peaceful transfer of power from one president to another and determines the state of democracy in the country. The term democracy became related to elections, that is to say; the state of democracy depends on the success or failure of the elections. Voting methods and counting systems are crucial elements in elections that citizens and election officers use in order to vote and count these votes.

America is one of the most developed countries in the world thus, it adopted several kinds of advanced technologies in both voting and counting processes which gave her an honorable place with a leading role for democracy worldwide. However, the last American presidential elections demonstrated that the American electoral system is suffering from several issues that affected democracy in a very serious way, especially voting and counting methods that were the main problem threatening its transparency. The truth behind the claim that the American electoral system affects democracy gave rise to this study that examines the influence of voting methods and counting systems on American democracy.

Citizens can participate in elections that happen on a regular basis allowing them to choose their president. In the United States, presidential elections are held every four years based on an organized electoral system that specifies which voting methods and counting systems can be used, the political parties allowed to participate, and how can political campaigns be organized. Thus, voting methods and counting systems are a double-edged weapon that decide the success or failure of an electoral system which means that their appropriate use affects positively election results whereas their misuse leads to severe problems giving American democracy a strong blow.

The U.S allows the use of several voting methods and counting systems in elections due to the federal system which allows each state to organize elections in the manner it deems appropriate. On one hand, the strength of American democracy depends mainly on citizen's

strong will to vote, having free access to the polling stations during election day and most importantly, the fact that their vote will be counted correctly without being affected by any fraud. On the other hand, fraudulent vote counting decreases people's confidence in their electoral system hence, suspecting the whole government.

Accordingly, this research work investigates the different voting methods and counting systems used in the United States. Additionally, it seeks to list the main counting disputes that occurred in the American history and the pre-cautions provided by the U.S to secure its elections. Moreover, it sheds light on the 2020 presidential election; milestones of the election, under which circumstances it was held, its results, the main voting fraud claims and how it was prepared in general.

For many years, the case of voting methods and counting systems and whether they are failing American democracy has been under discussion nationally and internationally. The thorny issue has inspired many writers to write about it and publish their works that attracted a huge number of interested readers about this issue all over the world not only Americans. Books, articles in journals and magazines discussed this theme. In addition to political experts who raised huge debates on TV shows and even posted their thoughts on their social media profiles such as Twitter and Facebook.

Although the debate is still going on whether the voting technologies and counting systems are literally an evidence for the absence of democracy in U.S elections or it is just a rumor to destroy Americans' confidence in their electoral system. In this regard, considerable works on this case are available. In his book entitled, *Bitter Tweet: The Presidency of Donald J Trump,* Alan Cashman writes that; in September 28th, 2020 the federal bureau of Investigation and the Cyber- security and Infrastructure Security Agency declares in a joint statement that foreign cyber criminals spread false and inconsistent information via several

online platforms attempting to undermine Americans confidence in U.S democratic institutions, manipulate public opinion and discredit the electoral process in general.

In a similar vein, the author of *Unrigged: How Americans Are Battling Back to Save Democracy*, David Daley pointes that political parties neglect the interest in governing and seek to entrench its power by limiting democracy, dominate the US. He adds that these parties are going so far to force U.S citizens to go to the polling stations and vote in the middle of the pandemic. All this means that U.S government is cruel in fact, because it does not try to protect citizen's lives but only to do the election in order to guarantee the fake image of transparency and perfectness, however stepping on people, who are suffering to preserve their rights and democracy in the country, to climb the ladder of uniqueness. In the same path, John Fund writes in his book, *Stealing Elections: How Voter Fraud Threatens Our Democracy*, that hanging chads, butterfly ballots and Supreme Court intervention by the Florida Fiasco of 2000 led Americans to discover the ugly reality behind their electoral system idealism. He strongly argues that the U.S election system is the sloppiest of any industrialized nation ever. Being sloppy to a large degree in which criminals such eight from 19 hijackers who were behind the attacks of 9/11 on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon had ability to register to vote in either Virginia or Florida while they were supposed to be dead. He also explores dark episodes such as in 1998 in Miami, when vote brokers stole a mayoral election by tampering with 4700 absentee ballots. Furthermore, Fund highlights that Election officials are trying to manipulate election results through changing old ways of voting into computerized voting machines; however, with the new technology the problem would be much greater. Writing with urgency, John Fund shows how electoral vulnerability in the 2004 presidential election would develop in the future to put the U.S democracy at risk.

Norman Eisen in his book, *A Case for the American People: The United States v. Donald J. Trump* says that Americans are unsatisfied about their president Trump because he

was corrupted and a source of disorder. By revealing ten proposed articles of impeachment drafted by him, Eisen then guides the readers through the lifelong instincts that have dictated Trump's presidency: a cycle of abuse, corruption, and relentless obstruction of the truth. Which clearly shows that Donald Trump has been using his presidency power and wealth at the expense of people who were looking for their regular rights. *The Art of the Steal: Exposing Fraud and Vulnerabilities in America's Elections* is a book written by Adrian Norman in the same issue of U.S elections that are found to be non-democratic. The writer gave readers a clear vision about the nature of American election architecture when he addresses controversial issues covering elections and voting fraud such as ballot harvesting, voter identification, foreigners who can vote in U.S election and voter suppression. This book best explains how U.S electoral parties rely on a win at all costs strategy in election using illegal ways and disobeying laws only to seize power.

Another writer, who goes in the same framework, Richard L. Hasen in his book, *Election Meltdown: Dirty Tricks, Distrust, and the Threat to American Democracy* confirms that when the 2020 presidential campaign started, there was a widespread distrust of the fairness and transparency of U.S presidential election. In his book, Hasen highlights four main problems helped for the appearance of this distrust: Voter suppression that served the Republican Party as a tool aimed to depress turnout of the voters from the Democratic Party. In election administration in large cities, Democrats controlled Pockets of incompetence, which lead to an opening to claims of unfairness.

The electoral integrity was threatened by old-fashioned and new-fangled dirty tricks, including foreign and domestic misinformation campaigns via social media. Furthermore, the inflammatory rhetoric about "stolen" elections supercharges distrust among hard-core partisans. All these problems shaped the key threats of Democracy in the U.S 2020 presidential election. In his article, "International Observers Say U.S Elections 'Tarnished' by

Trump and uncertainty", Julian, Borger mentions that; an international observer mission has announced that the U.S elections have been "tarnished" by legal uncertainty and Donald Trump's "unprecedented attempts to undermine public trust"; which means that trump was the main source of violence and threat against the U.S 2020 presidential election since he rejected defeat and urged a state of emergency in the country. The thing that made Americans loose trust in their rulers, the whole electoral system and by this the U.S sacred model of democracy have been under discussion and went through harsh criticism. Americans, use several voting methods and counting systems in their presidential election neglecting democracy that can be highly affected by the electoral system. The perfectness behind the U.S electoral system lays on making equality and protecting people's rights for choosing the desired candidate. As the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance state, the events witnessed by the country in the last three decades together with the monopolization of politics by elites led it toward failure (4).

In this concern, Lynn Jones in her article "Why the United States Should Spread Democracy" adds that democratic elections can have a positive impact on the country unlike non democratic elections that is why the U.S government should spread and enhance democracy to have fair elections. The strength of American Democracy relies on each citizen's vote and it can be achieved only when citizens freely and privately exercise their right to vote and have their vote recorded correctly.

According to the National Commission for on Federal Reform, Americans doubt their electoral system transparency especially after November 2000 elections when they recognized that their electoral system suffers from many problems such as voting fraud and technical issues in the voting machine itself when most of votes were miscounted. Moreover, in November 2004, a *New York Times* poll reported that only one third of the American people declared that they have a strong belief that their votes will be taken into consideration.

However, 29 percent among them declared the opposite. Nevertheless, raising awareness about this unease forced the U.S Department of Justice to deploy 1,090-election observer to make the operation pass without problems. In addition, by the end of the election, a Pew Research Center Survey announces that a small group of Americans was somehow satisfied about the counting of their votes whereas; thirty-seven percent had doubts. Public confidence for any nation's progress in electoral system and government is a key to fulfill democracy (1).

The present dissertation seeks to demonstrate the effect of voting methods and counting systems on democracy in the U.S and profoundly examines the following inquires: what are the basic elements of the electoral system? What type of electoral system the United States adopted? What are the voting methods and counting systems used in the American elections? How can voting methods and counting systems influence democracy? How affected has the U. S government become? All these questions will be discussed additionally to other different concepts that will appear during the process of developing the subject matter of this research.

This research requires profound investigation and analysis. For this sake, it will be conducted through both historical and analytical methods adopted to examine the influence of voting methods and counting systems on the American democracy. This study is based on the historical method in order to go deeper in the U. S electoral system and the last U.S elections as a great example. However, the analytical method highlights the influence of voting methods and counting systems and how registering any attempt to fraud can diminish Americans trust in their country's democracy. These are the predominant approaches used in conducting this research.

The first chapter titled "Elections in the U.S" discusses the historical overview of elections besides showing in which way elections can be a challenging event. This section displays how the U.S process of electing takes place including the different stages it passes

through; political parties, political campaigns, the selection of candidates, primaries and caucuses in addition to the important part the Electoral College that plays a major role in the whole U.S electoral system. These elements combine to shape nowadays' American electoral system that is known by uniqueness.

The title of the second chapter is "Voting Methods and Counting Systems"; it highlights the voting methods and tallies used in U. S elections. It mainly explains how American citizens, on election day, go to the polling stations to submit their ballots via several voting methods making sure that their vote will be granted to the right candidate they intended to vote for. They usually trust the government and election officers however, recently their blind trust started to be diminished because of evidence provided by experts that U.S elections are no longer fair and democratic since tallies are affected by many fraud attempts.

Titled as "U.S 2020 Presidential Election", the final chapter investigates the voting methods and counting systems used in the 2020 elections to facilitate voting for Americans during the pandemic situation of COVID 19. Furthermore, it best explains how Joe Biden wins regardless of Trumps many attempts to falsify election results and his strong and aggressive rejection of being defeated.

Chapter One: Elections in the U.S

This chapter highlights the main aspects of elections and explains the process of voting systems the U.S in general. A brief history is surveyed in this chapter. The major points addressed are; the U.S electoral system, the Electoral College, the political parties and the election campaigns, and the selection of candidates. Additionally, the constraints facing candidates in their electoral journey will be covered too.

1.1.   Preparing for the Elections

Elections are complicated events in the political sphere that needs a very arranged system to rely on while preparing for such events. However, it is known as political or electoral system that contains several laws and conditions to arrange elections like: candidate selection, political parties, debates and so on. The United States like the other countries in the world prepares its elections a year before the fixed date in order to have a successful election the protect democracy and stability in the country.

1.2.   Overview of Elections in the World

Elections date back to very old times; they existed first in Rome, then in ancient Greece. They were practised under the reign of majestic Roman emperors and some holy Popes of the Roman church. However, the origins of elections in contemporary world started in the 17th century in North America and Europe with the emergence of representative government (Paul and Heinz). In ancient ages, the representation of a whole nation was characterized by the concept of group, however, in the Middle Ages, it became represented by the individual as a basic actor.

An example is stated by Paul David Webb and Heinz Eulau about the British Parliament that was serving as an instrument for the common interests and later became focused on the individual interests. In the 18th century, to be an aristocrat gives the person the right to be engaged in political affairs and spheres because political participation was linked

mainly with the individual's origins and social class. Even though, both revolutions in France and America were designed by the notion of equality between citizens regardless of their rank or social status, voting kept its value as a privilege point in politics enjoyed by the nobles or the elite (Britannica.com). They say that:

"During the 18th century, access to the political arena depended largely on membership in an aristocracy, and participation in elections was regulated mainly by local customs and arrangements. Although both the American and French revolutions declared every citizen formally equal to every other, the vote remained an instrument of political power possessed by very few".

In Western Europe, the competitive mass elections reached their peak between the 19th and the 20th century. Although these countries differ culturally. However; the one-party communist governments of USSR and Eastern Europe did not share the same goals and results in mass elections, especially in the period between the end of the second World War and 1989-1990.As voting for or against the solemn contender was the only option for voters in these governments, the turnouts were not competitive. According to Paul and Heinz elections held by these authorities were like those of the 19th century in which they sought to show people unified not diversified.

In addition to Eastern and Western European countries and according to Britannica.com, competitive elections in sub-Saharan Africa were divided into 3 different periods; the first one was between 1950 and 1960, when elections took place because a group of countries gained their independence. The second one was in the late 1970s when, few countries organized elections because military forces lost their power and control. The last period was at the beginning of the 1990s, when the two important concepts of democracy and competitive elections were highly valued with the end of the Cold War, demilitarization, and economic growth (Paul and Heinz).

Likewise, in Latin America competitive elections were introduced in phases. After 1828, elections were held in countries like Chile, Argentina, Uruguay and Colombia even though, Chile reverted to *authoritarianism*. In the period 1943 to 1962, many other countries adopted elections but the majority did not retain democratic rule. By the mid-1970s, competitive elections went gradually to cover the whole region of Latin America (Paul and Heinz).

By the end of the Second World War and with the independence of countries such as India, Malaysia and Philippines elections took place in Asia. By the 1970s, elections were reintroduced in other countries such as South Korea. Although the notion of competitive elections existed in many countries, they were rare in the Middle East (Paul and Heinz).

Finally, governments use elections as a means to justify their legitimacy. Elections are held at a regular lapse of time when candidates can face their fate according to their policy. Voters may sanction them when they feel that their rights as humans are being violated especially when they notice that the regime is unfair. Sometimes authorities feel they have no chance to win elections they do call what is known as early elections or may delay elections to a period when their popularity may surge. Since their emergence in ancient times until the present day, elections went through many stages to reach the present form. The expected goals differ from one country to another and from one regime to another.

1.3.   The Process of Elections

According to Britannica.com, elections are essential for the reform of any nation seeking good governance and stability. Elections are defined as the formal process of choosing not appointing a person for public service or authority. There is a great difference between the form and the substance of elections. According to the Free Online Dictionary of Law Terms and Legal Definition "Law Insider", "Election from Definition: 2k Samples", election form is defined as: the form set by the committee from time to another in which the

participant must sign and returns it back to the committee in order to prepare an election according to the plan. In some countries, the electoral form is present while the electoral substance is absent. This happens when voters do not choose between at least two alternatives; two contenders or two political programmes.

The electoral form of elections is highly practised by several countries. Nevertheless, in many of these countries, elections are not competitive as when one or more parties are excluded from competition. However, in many countries the substantive aspect of elections is shaped by a certain environment in which elections occur. These environments can be shaped in markets; since both politics and markets are human attempt to achieve an outcome at the end, and this result can be achieved only through competition between the target participants. An example stated by Richard E. Wagner and Yazigi Deema shows how the form is different from the substance because the competitive form is universal where everyone can participate in it however, the substantive quality is chosen depending on a certain area where the competition happens. For instance: both diving and swimming select a participant whose abilities are high to manage the water.

The qualities owned by the selected participant differ between the two environments (swimming and diving) since it is not necessary that the participant who is a champion in diving can be a good swimmer too. This is the same in politics, manly election, when a doctor, an engineer or even an architect can compete for presidency since it is not only for people engaged in the field of politics but it depends on the abilities owned by these people regardless to their field of interest.

1.3.1. Political Parties

Political parties take part in the debate in which the party in government and the opposition parties compete against each other to gain power. Therefore, it is important to examine what is a political party, how does it work and how did U.S political parties develop?

Elections require political parties in order to display citizens' needs, interests, and perspectives and help them to choose candidates. Political parties are groups of people working in government to achieve political purposes. Besides, they nominate candidates for positions and chairs at the state and the local levels. Moreover, they arrange elections and demonstrate the necessities of its members. In the light of this, National Democratic Institute defines political parties as:

"A group of citizens organized to seek and exercise power within a political system. All parties participate to some extent in the exercise of political power whether through participation in government or by performing the role of opposition…Political parties nominate candidates, organize political competition …[and] they provide a constructive critical opposition" (3).

In the eighteenth century, political parties were identified as a group of men sharing the same ideologies and creating American political beliefs. At that time, Americans were familiar with partisan opposition and two-party system that was used in the British House of Commons (Hofstadter 126). Later on circumstances led to the emergence of the two-party system in United States.

The United States adopted the two-party system in 1796, when several political parties participated opposing the political norms at that time which allowed the participation of only one party. As ushistory.org stated "The election of 1796 was the first election in American history where political candidates at the local and national level began to run for the office as members of organized political parties held strongly opposed political principles". Consequently, voters have the chance to express their ideology through different parties; this shapes the new American political system and determines the standards of political competition between all parties.

According to ushistory.org, the two first parties were *Federalists* (Liberal, the Left) and *Democratic-Republicans* (Conservatives, the Right). The federal administration, merchants, creditors supported the first party which was considered as a real threat to Republicans under the rule of Vice President John Adams. Besides, the second party was mainly supported by farmers and led by Jefferson.

Stephen P. Nicholson et al. affirms that "in a two-party system, the primary choice is often between a party on the left and a party on the right" (280), that is to say voters choose either the left party or the right one. The two-party system shows that minor parties are overlooked and only the two parties can get access to government. The most compelling evidence is that candidates of Democratic or Republican parties always win the elections. Kristina Nwazota and PBS News Hour state that "But despite an active political presence, only Democrats and Republicans dominate the modern American political process…what of the 52 other parties, many of which contributed ideas and polities that have become mainstays of American political life and law?" In other words, the Democratic Party and Republican Party are the two main parties in the United States nowadays, while the 52 other parties such as the Reform Party and the Green Party are third parties that are notably active and present candidates in presidential elections (Nwazota).

Each party carries specific ideas and beliefs, hence; they have a great impression on citizens and politics. However, the influence of political parties on politics appears when members of the third party occupies offices in Congress, House of Representatives and even presidency. A great example is when Abraham Lincoln a candidate of the minor Republican Party won the election and defeated Democratic and the Whig Parties in the 1860 presidential election. In fact, Americans avoid voting for third parties because they are unlikely to win and less famous compared to major parties.

One may ask why there are only two political parties in the U.S as Blake Aaron write, the answer to this question is inherited in the history of the U.S. From 1852 there have been only two parties engaged in elections known as Republican Party and Democratic Party. Americans used to vote only for the candidates of these parties pushing third parties- Federalists and Whig parties- into ignorance. Furthermore, the situation continues revolving until 1912 when Theodore Roosevelt third-party candidate won the election. Additionally, the American political system is based on two political parties because it requires seats in congress and presidency using the winner-takes-all system. In the presidential elections, the president and Vice President are elected indirectly by citizens through Electoral College, in which candidate needs to get the absolute majority of the electoral votes in 48 states and this is known as state by state system. Thus, the candidate who wins the plurality of electoral votes will be elected as president. Whereas in other types of elections candidates are elected directly by citizens through by popular vote, which means the candidate who get plurality of popular votes is the winner.

1.3.2. Political Campaigns

After forming a political party and fixing its objectives, candidates tends to express their ideas, plans, and policies through political campaigns to attract sponsors. However, it needs financial support usually from businessmen and rich people. Here candidates get access to all people throughout the country and convince them to vote for their party. Elin Falguera et al. claims that "political finance has positive role to play in democracies: it can help strengthen political parties and candidates, and provide opportunities to compete on more equal terms" (1). To put it differently; political parties can never reach success in elections without the financial support that candidates gain through political campaigns. Candidates travel from one region to another, print handouts, pay for advertisements that is why they need money.

Additionally, funding candidates should be transparent to prevent electoral fraud and corruption, which are not recommended in politics. Elin et al. said that, "The flows of money through the political sphere can threaten key democratic values" (2). Positively, money influences political campaigns, promotes political parties' ability to attain their objectives and negatively, it can cause corruption such as buying votes. As *Political Campaign Planning Manual, Step by Step Guide to Winning Elections* states, political campaigns have many stages. Starting by searching and preparing for the campaign for example; searching to be aware of what to say and under which circumstances this campaign will take place. Also, deciding about the goals and objectives of the campaign, which kind of voters is the target, what number of voters is needed and analyzing the target voters finally, applying the plan in real situations (9). All these stages help in choosing which message to pass and which material or media to use, in order to convince voters.

Once a political party candidate respects these stages, they may have a successful campaign. They can persuade people and gain more support by participating in a series of tasks using television, radio, social media (Facebook Twitter, Email), and newspapers to demonstrate the concerns of the party which is the significant goal of the whole campaign. Political campaigns are vital in a democracy in the U.S American politicians launch them months and sometimes years before the elections.

1.3.3. Candidate Selection

Before engaging in any election, political parties nominate candidates to represent the party interests, perspectives, and ideology. Candidates are not randomly selected, they are selected following some provisions stated in the constitution and decided by the party leader. However, party leaders tend to choose the appropriate candidate to be supported later on by

citizens as well as to be elected. Austin Ranney [1]said that "candidate selection is the process by which a political party decides which of the persons legally illegible to hold an elective office will be designated on the ballot and in election communication as its recommended and supported candidate or a list of candidates" (qtd. in Rahat 1).

1.3.4. Primaries and Caucuses

Party delegates are elected through primaries either closed or open and registered voters are able to cast their votes for a certain delegate. Concerning the open primaries registered voters can cast their votes in any primary whether Republican or Democratic one, but they cannot vote in more than one primary. Whereas in the closed primaries, only the registered voters of a particular party can vote; for example, a registered voter from Republican Party can choose only one delegate from the same party. Besides, some American states utilize only one type of primary and others mix the two types of primaries in what is called semi-closed primary. In the semi-closed primary, both party members and affiliated members can vote (Matthew and Cirlig 3), this means that citizens can pick party delegates and the latter choose political party candidates thus, enhancing democracy inside the electoral system in the United States.

American Elections are a very long process that is prepared in a very different way from other countries, elections in the U.S start by selecting the *candidates* on the basis of their background and achievements to participate in election. In a presidential election, Brendon O'Connor argues that, Iowa held the very first caucus and New Hampshire held the first primary. In addition, states like South Carolina and Nevada were considered as primary states and Super Tuesday was the name given to the first large multi-state primary.

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[1]Austen Ranney: An American political scientist and leading American authority on political parties and elections. His doctoral dissertation is entitled "The Doctrine of Responsible Party Government" (1954) which is considered as one of his main explorations and achievement in the political domain.

In the article 'A Simple Guide to U.S Primaries and Caucuses' *Super Tuesday* is defined as the most important day in the primary calendar, when 16 states, groups or territories give their ticket for the candidate they prefer and *Super Tuesday* happens in primaries and caucuses. Caucuses are held at different levels: district, county or precinct level. Mostly, participants in caucuses regroup themselves according to the candidate they support. Then in every single group, the number of voters decides how many delegates the candidate won. It is up to the local government and state to decide when primaries and caucuses are held. However, the date and amount of time between a general and primary election can have a great impact on how early candidates begin and on their choices about in which way and at what time funds of a campaign are spent (U.S. Mission Thailand).

In the United States, political parties nominate candidates every four years to participate in presidential elections; this nominee comes out after winning high votes of the party's delegates in either primary or caucus then, he/she starts arranging for a general election. Jonathan Masters and Gopal Ratnam writes "Every four years, presidential candidates compete in a series of state contests…before the general election to gain their party's nomination. At stake in each contest-either primary or caucus- is a certain number of delegates, or individuals who represent their states at national party conventions".

Party delegates, suggest nominees following caucus in which they negotiate about the selected candidates for both President and Vice-President Chairs. Then they declare them in a national party conference held during the summer of the year of election and vote for him/her at preliminary election. Consequently, the one who gets the highest number of votes will be the candidate and represents the whole party in the elections. Leonard P. Stark argues that:

> Both of the major political parties, the Democrats and Republicans, formally choose
> their nominees for president and vice-president at quadrennial national nominating
> conventions held during the summer of the presidential election year … Throughout

the nineteenth century, most states decided who to send as delegates to the national

conventions by holding caucuses of a small groups of the party's members in the state

(332).

The selected candidate will have to lead the party during the election and will have to display

the ideology of that party.

1.3.5. Presidential Winner Selection

Furthermore, as Jack Walter Peltason mentions that the U.S constitution indicates the

candidate that will be the President should be purely American born, should live in U.S for

fourteen years and he/she should reach the age of 35. Candidates should manifest these

characteristics in order to be able to contest in the presidential election (26). Alexander S.

Belenky confirms that candidates are going to be elected at the same time through electoral

college, in which electors should leave two votes; one for the president and the other for Vice-

President. Inside Congress, House of Representatives votes and picks a president from the

three primary candidates who got the highest number of popular votes. Then, the Senate will

vote and choose a Vice-President from the first two candidates who got the high number of

votes using ballots (22).

Further, each Senator is permitted to cast one vote thus, two votes for each state unlike

members of the House of Representatives who are allowed to cast only one vote for each state

despite the number of its members. In this way, competitors gather votes from states and from

either Electoral College or House of Representatives. Belenky confirms this by saying, "each

state delegation-i.e., all the Representatives from the state- would have a single vote, no

matter how many Representatives the state was entitled to have there. In electing Vice-

President in the Senate, each Senator was given one vote so that each state was given two

votes" (6).

A candidate can be declared as president in two ways. The first one is when he/she takes the majority of votes from selected electors and the second one is when he/she gets the plurality of votes through two or three other candidates. These candidates also get the majority of votes from appointed electors (Belenky10). In the two cases, the candidate should win the majority of votes in order to serve the position of President. However, Vice President and President are first chosen as a candidate at the level of political parties then elected at the level of Congress also, remain to manifest the interests of their political parties and apply the program they have outlined during the campaign.

1.3.6. The National Nominating Convention

Before selecting any candidate, political parties arrange their calendar in which they select days for debates and national conventions to accomplish their preparation to announce the final nominees to participate in the presidential election. According to Encylopaedia Britannica, "*Political* Conventions/American Politics / Britannica" in the United States, the strength of voting at the Republican and the Democratic Party convention is divided between states depending on their Electoral College vote, when two convention votes per elector are allocated by each state separately. Then, both parties start to give votes as "BONUS" for the states that are under their authority in previous elections. By the 21st century, most of Republican and Democratic Party delegates are chosen through primary election. Moreover, the candidate who win more votes by delegates than others can be sure he will win nomination on the first ballot.

1.3.7. The Debates

According to Trueman Chris, National Conventions are part of the U. S electoral process. Historically, they are held in July or August from the same election year however, both parties prefer August. Moreover, they serve as a media attraction that covers both of Democratic and Republican parties. In the past and prior to a national election, both parties

hold national conventions; they are very important in the sense that they give parties the opportunity to announce who is the winner of the "party ticket" who will represent his party as the presidential nominee together with his Vice Presidential candidate in presidential election. After knowing the role of national conventions, one must understand their purposes. Both parties announce the official nominee of the party publically and also declare the party policy or platform of party. This is mainly what each party plans to do if people elected them. Furthermore, Republican and Democratic parties adopt national conventions as a legitimate platform serving their needs in elections but do not bind either candidates or state parties.

When the pre-selection contests finish, American leaders start to use influential speeches or *debates* to test the ground and the needs of the Americans. The first presidential debate occurred on 26 September 1960 between John F. Kennedy and Richard Nixon three times before the Election Day and there was no other round of these debates until 1976 when debates were considered as an important part of the election calendar. Unlike the first debates, the recent debates are not run by TV stations but rather by a free commission (The conversation.com).

1.4. The U.S Electoral System

The electoral System is adopted to serve and organize political issues as well as to protect the right of citizens to choose the candidate they want. In this concern, Garrone Pierre [2]defines the electoral system as "a set of procedural rules governing the expression of votes cast in a given election and their conversion into seats" (qtd. in Broquet 6). In general, the electoral system is a set of guidelines for the electoral process.

The United States follows an electoral system known as Winner-Takes All or the Plurality System. The latter is used to elect members of House of Representatives and

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[2] Garrone Pierre: is the head of the Division of the elections and political secretariat of the Venice Commission (Council of Europe), PHD in Geneva University, avocet (Switzerland). His works addresses issues like electoral law, the Venice Commission, European Union law.

members of local legislature and divides the country into districts represented by an elected member. However, citizens of each region will tend to vote for their representative so he/she will get the highest total of votes (FairVote.org). This means that voters vote separately for each candidate to take a seat and only one candidate is elected in each district. The plurality system is extensively used in U.S legislative chambers like in North Dakota, New Jersey and Washington DC.

In the plurality system, there are three possibilities regarding how a candidate gains the most votes. The first possibility is called the *Relative Plurality* in which the candidate definitely wins the total votes to be elected. The second one is the *Absolute Majority* when the candidate wins only half plus one votes. Unlike the second possibility, the *Qualified Majority* is when the candidate wins more than half plus one votes. Nevertheless, in all cases the winner takes all seats of the state and these are equal to the number of Representatives in the House. In the light of this, Mr. Christoph Broquet wrote that:

> The plurality and majority systems may take many forms according to how one defines "the most votes". There are three possibilities: Relative (or simple) majority (plurality system/first-past-the-post in English): the candidate obtaining the most votes in the conclusive round (the one on which the election depends) is declared to have been elected: Absolute majority: defined as half plus one of the votes cast. Qualified (or reinforced) majority: this corresponds to a greater majority than half plus one of the votes cast (majority equivalent to, for example, two-thirds or three-fifths of the votes cast). This type of majority is little used in elections based on direct universal suffrage (8).

In the United States, there exist several types of the electoral systems. The most known are the Winner takes all system and the proportional system. Both are used in different elections in the country and differ in their use. While the winner takes all system was used in

national and state elections, recently, the proportionality system had been used since the nineteenth century and is applied to elect officials mostly in New York City, Cincinnati (FairVote.org).

1.4.1. The Electoral College

For Wayne Stephen, the constitution of 1787 established the system under the provisions of article 2 although the term *Electoral College* is not clearly used. This system was set to solve the problem of selecting the future president and vice –president by organizing a sort of elections and giving the citizens the opportunity to vote for the candidate of their choice.

According to Funakoshi, Minami, et al. selecting a candidate in U.S to govern the country and become the president is not like in other countries. There, a candidate wins if he/she gets the highest number of votes however, in the United States, the Electoral College raises the votes to the fifty state and the D.C (District of Columbia) based on each state population and it decides which candidate is qualified to win the seat. The number of electors is 538 so; the candidate needs 270 votes to win.

The Electoral College working system starts by the *Allotment of electors* where every single state has its number of electors being equal to its number of representatives, and senators in the U.S Congress. While each state has two senators, the number of representatives in the House depends on the whole population in each state. Wyoming, for instance, has three electoral votes because its population is smaller than that of California that has fifty-five electoral votes. The *Nomination of the great electors* is based on party they are selected by political parties to set down the votes of each state (Funakoshi, Minami et al).

On the *Election Day,* voters cast their ballots to choose the presidential and the vice presidential candidates they trust. For the *winner takes* all strategy, all states tend to use it except Maine and Nebraska. These two states have an allocation system based on a very

complex district system in which it can separate their nine related electoral votes (graphics.reuters.com). In December, electors from states according to the winning party in each state hold a meeting in Washington DC to cast their votes and the candidate who collects 270 votes wins the presidency; this is called the *Electoral College convenes*.

According to Robert Longley, the American Electoral College has been criticized and debated for many times especially after the 2016 elections. Although the Democrat Hillary Clinton was leading in the polls and supposed to be the new president instead, the Republican Donald Trump became the president. Trump clinched 304 electoral votes of the 270 needed while Clinton won 227. Because of the winner takes all, the electoral vote does not reflect the exact votes cast by voters on Election Day. Hillary Clinton is the presidential candidate number five to win the Popular Vote and lose the Electoral College, which is the basis of presidential selection (Abramson).

1.4.2. Proponents of the Electoral College

As a part of the U.S Electoral System, the Electoral College plays a very crucial role. First, it sets equality in voice between big and small states and it gives them the opportunity to be present in elections. In addition, it promotes legal representation to the least populous states the same as the most populous ones; because the majority of the candidates tend to give more attention to big states and neglect others (Longley). Second, it provides elections with a clear ending where transparency and fairness cover the results. Another advantage is that it is not obligatory for all states to recount votes if there is a mistake but only, the one that registered it. Besides, to the common idea that candidates must be loyal and truthful to win many supporters along many regional states, the reason that made many national regions unified sharing equal powers. Third, electoral campaigns are cheaper in cost and candidates tend to spend less time and money on them (Longley).

1.4.3. Opponents of the Electoral College

As a tool in elections, the electoral college cannot be successful so far, since the 2016 presidential elections results were unexpected. According to Josephson Amelia, voters are unsatisfied about their votes that may not be counted appropriately or never been taken into consideration. The participation rates of U.S voters is very low and few people think that when eliminating the Electoral College in elections can make them somehow high.

Josephson adds that battlefield states are given supreme power over the other states for instance; if someone lives outside a swing state like Florida, Wisconsin, Michigan and Pennsylvania, etc., he/she may not see as much ads as usual. The Electoral College in its principles gives much importance to these states, in particular, in the time when they should have minor attention than other states. Consequently, some voters got offended and felt injustice because; it is the candidate's duty to protect the votes of all citizens. All these reasons and more went against the Electoral College and encouraged its opposition.

Faithless electors or Rogue electors are another factor that stands against the Electoral College. In the U.S several states have no law that requires electors to vote the way their state has voted therefore, they are "unbound" in these states. The last disadvantage is that the popular vote results and the results of Electoral College can be conflicting. A simple example that strengthens this idea is the elections of 2000, when Al Gore lost the Electoral College votes and won the popular vote with that he lost the presidency (Josephson). Although authorities responsible for the Electoral College argued that this would not happen again but in 2016 elections the same scenario was repeated when Clinton lost presidential elections because she registered less Electoral College votes than Trump.

The Electoral College is a basic element in the American electoral system. It was created as a response to the U. S framers' ideologies and thoughts. They debated and questioned many principles including democracy, equality, and justice between American citizens to give them and their states equal rights and, to raise their opinions in order to elect

the candidate they want. Although the intended goals were mostly achieved and the Electoral College served elections appropriately, its glory did not last forever because of the doubt about its role and legitimacy in U.S Presidential Elections.

1.4.4. Election as Challenging Events

Elections are major events, hence, all states start preparing them a year before and sometimes more. They face a series of issues at the governmental level threatening the fairness and transparency of the election. However, these issues can occur when candidates in primary elections gather power through illegal methods. This can result in unqualified voters without any evidence neither about how much votes they have cast nor about how they voted. Thus, government pass laws to arrange the process of election and to control the illegal activities that may affect them (Michal and Herbert 241). Furthermore, illegal support and votes that lack qualifications are the common challenges to elections, but they can be solved by governmental control over the actions of candidates, irregular voters and illegal affairs in elections.

The American electoral system suffers from several problems that affect the integrity of the election and democracy in general. This influence can be through; decreasing public confidence in political parties and elections, as well as voter turnout that are considered as crucial elements in elections. Many other problems can appear especially concerning ballot box like miscounting votes, destroying ballot boxes, casting several ballots instead of one ballot or even getting no access to polling stations and discrimination among voters. All the stated problems are common in all countries, they also need an immediate solution to facilitate the process of electing and more importantly, to have fair votes and integral election. Pippa Norris argues that:

> The 2012 and 2014 elections in the United States displayed the worst performance
> among all western democracies. Without urgent reform, these problems risk damaging

the legitimacy of American elections—further weakening public confidence in the major political parties, Congress, and the US government, depressing voter turnout, and exacerbating the risks of continuous outcomes fought through court appeals and public protests (2).

Furthermore, using social media in politics and elections causes many problems like voting fraud. Due to fake news published on social media there spread wrong conclusion and interpretation of election results. During the U.S 2018 midterm election, which is an election, held each two years before the presidential election. This election, marked a high average of voter fraud because of fake news on social media but in 2016, presidential election politicians did not expect Donald Trump to win because he was not represented well for citizens in social media (Deb et al. 237). Social media affects citizens' attitude toward candidates and the electoral process in general. It can increase as it can decrease voter turnout and alter the prediction of both people and politicians concerning elections' results.

Likewise, the other challenge that may appear in elections is the imbalance of votes between states with a huge difference. This case occurred in 2016 presidential elections, when results of the upper Midwest states (Wisconsin, Michigan, and Ohio) in the polls apparently differs from the other states, the government did not take in consideration the differences between urban cities and rural cities or people unaware about candidates plans ("Stanford Experts Discuss Polling Challenges during the 2016 Presidential Election Cycle"). These problems are likely to arise in U.S because of its large area and reduce voter turnout in elections and the loss of votes.

There are multiple aims behind elections; the most significant is the legal transfer of power from a current president to the next one by taking into account citizen's choices and needs. In this regard, Martha E. Kropf states, "elections are about the legitimate transfer of power. Elections allow us to aggregate the interests of citizens to have a say in the

continuation or transfer of power (2). In recent years, voters all over the world start asking:

why do we vote? In this sense, Ron Johnston claims that voting is a social and civic duty for

citizens that helps them to display the interest of the whole society, as well as to push

politicians to work in favor of individuals (283). This means that elections are citizen's

decision in which they ought to elect a candidate hoping to do his duty appropriately to

improve their life conditions. Similarly, Wojtasik Waldemar state that the competition during

elections provides legitimacy to elections (27). It is clear that it is organised by law and this is

what makes it a legitimate contest for the sake of organizing government and avoiding

political conflicts that may break peace in the country. He also considers elections as an

opportunity for people to select and decide which person they are going to vote for (28).

Chapter Two: Voting Methods and Counting Systems

Voting methods and counting systems are also two essential parts of the elections, in fact they are the real engagement of citizens in choosing their future president and the real practice of democracy. However, countries all over the world including U.S use several and different voting methods and counting systems that suits its geography, culture, and citizens needs and preferences. For example, citizens may prefer to use new technologies instead of traditional ways of voting and counting votes while others may the old methods.

2.1. What is Voting?

Democracy promotes the participation of citizens in political events. However, being a citizen in a democratic country means being guaranteed a set of rights such as free education, healthcare and security, practicing a set of duties like respecting law and voting. Voting is both a right of a citizen to express his political will and a duty to take part in shaping the government by choosing representatives to sit in different governing bodies.

Voting is the real engagement of citizens in the political field and the real application of their right to select their favorite political leader according to their own ideology and beliefs. As a process, it is defined as an opinion or choice of individual or group of individuals expressed formally, using ballots, tickets, machines, or showing hands as in a traditional way, and is usually protected by law ("Definition of Vote Dictionary.com").

In the political field, voting means casting a ballot formally in favor of a particular candidate to allow him to serve a certain position in the government, this act should be planned by the constitution and law. In the United States, the government created several laws to protect citizen's right to vote, to arrange the voting process, to decide about the eligibility of the voters, and to show how and when people can vote. Therefore, as Kropf shows, voting process needs time and effort to be arranged. Likewise, the U.S government organized the electoral processes by allowing voting from abroad, absentee voting, electronic voting, and

voting before the Election Day to raise voter turnout and to decrease pressure and facilitate the whole process of election (97-98).

According to National Academies of Sciences et al. there are numerous laws and rules set by the American government that manage the eligibility of voters and transparency of election. Most of those laws specified that voters should be residents at least for 30 days and should have 18 years old to be able to vote. Additionally, other laws provide all citizens with the right to vote like the Voting Rights Act in 1965 which aimed at protecting people from discrimination in elections mainly because of errors in registration. The Voting Accessibility for the Elderly and Handicapped in 1984 and the National Voter Registration Act in 1993 were also directed toward organizing elections and increasing voter participation.

The election process is designed long process therefore, there are several steps preceding the day of election. The first step is voter registration in which voters are obliged to register to cast their votes. This process became easier with the enactment of the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) in 2002 that encouraged the use of technology in registration, computerizing voter registration lists, and securing the process by using new security technologies (National Academies of Sciences et al.)

However, the HAVA indicates that voters should provide either a driver's license or a state-issued identification in order to register. Concerning mail registered voters; they should be present at Election Day to confirm their information. Sarah. J Eckman affirms that, HAVA provides voters by several registration equipment, which are Internet Voter Registration and Automatic Voter Registration to save time and check errors. Online registration was first adopted in June 14, 2016 in 31 states in addition to the District of Colombia and is used to guarantee accuracy of voter registration. The Automatic Voter Registration was adopted first in many states like California, Oregon, West Virginia, and Vermont. However, in automatic voter registration officials ask voter's Driver License application or other eligible agency

form in order to register and cast their ballot in election. The registration is done by government agencies which gather all required information about the voter and register him automatically in an electronic voter database (18-19).

The second step is voter identification, in which election officers verify whether the submitted information is true or not. Sometimes voters change their address or use incorrect information and this is used for authenticating their identity at the poll stations, or when using absentee ballots (Sarah 55). In the United States, voter identification is applied through asking voter to provide photo ID to verify their information especially those who had registered by mail. In recent years, most of the states annulled asking for ID believing that such requirements create voting fraud and decrease voter turnout in elections (Sarah 7). Likewise, Kevin J. Coleman and Eric A. Fischer explains that: "states vary greatly in what identification they require voters to present, ranging from nothing beyond federal requirement to photographic identification for all voters. A number of states enacted laws in recent years to require photo ID to vote, which resulted in a series of state court challenges and rulings" (7). Voter identification can be applied before or on the election day as a way of proving their identity and making sure that their ballots will be counted.

Election witnesses the participation of huge number of citizens thus officers need time and well-ordered program to organize and check their information to be accepted as eligible voter and to manifest the right of choosing the president they want.

2.2. Voting Rights Act (VRA)

As the land of democracy and equality, America has been criticized because of the lack of these two conducts especially in elections. However, by the creation of the Voting Rights Act in August 6, 1965 signed by Lyndon B. Johnson, all people had the right to vote regardless of their race and ethnicity. Encyclopaedia Britannica argues that the Voting Rights Act main objective was to remove the obstacles that prevented African Americans from

voting at local or state levels. The fifteenth Amendment designed by the U. S constitution in 1870, prevented African Americans from voting for almost a century. However, this Amendment was ratified the same period as the U.S Civil War (1861-1865) and it guaranteed that the right to vote should not be based on physical appearance, ethnicity or origins.

In the South and during the period between 1950-1960, activists of voting rights were treated badly (the civil rights movement). On 7 March 1965, Selma to Montgomery in the state of Alabama a march was organized to become one of the significant American events in which participants were demanding their rights to vote peacefully. After their refusal to get back and stop the march, they were blocked, bloodied and beaten without mercy by police officers of Alabama (Britannica.com).

The best example about the VRA is the story of a 100 years –old black woman Lillian. The story depicts the truth about African Americans generally and women precisely and highlights that they were suffering and struggling in the United States for the sake of having their legitimate right to vote. In his book entitled Lillian's Right to Vote: A Celebration of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, Jonah Winter tries to tell the story of the protagonist using strong words to give the readers the same impression felt by Lillian at that time, and to describe how her grandparents were segregated. Blacks were living under the pressure of taxes and laws of illiteracy in addition to, the bad difficulties encountered during the Selma to Montgomery march. The Voting Rights Act, therefore, gave them the ability to vote freely without any other external interference or pressure (Winter and Evans).

In response to the terrifying massacre of Selma to Montgomery march, President Johnson delivered a speech on March 15, 1965 highlighting the importance of giving African Americans the right to vote as any other American citizens living in the U. S territory (History.com Editors). The Voting Rights Act was a good step to reduce the racism against innocent African Americans.

2.3. Electoral System

Eric Pacuit state that a significant issue might occur between any groups of people about which candidate they prefer to govern them. In this concern, they may disagree with each other where everyone tries to prove and convince the rest of the group members by his point of view about a certain representative. Experienced people such as philosophers, mathematicians, political scientists or economists made a distinction between several voting methods in order to pick up one winner or group of winners without neglecting anyone's opinion.

A task that is made by a group of people to get a common decision about a certain candidate profile is known as the voting method. Moreover, one candidate, group of candidates or ordered candidates can take the agreement between the group members. The voting method pays more attention to the candidates' qualifications because it clarifies to which ballot the voter belongs. That is to say; that the latter can be set to choose a candidate based on a single voters' ballot and neglecting others. About this point, Pacuit had its proper opinion concerning the ties between the profiles' ballots and the voters' point of view. Any voting method decides that the voter ballot is a reflection of his vision about the intended candidate (Pacuit).

The voter tends to select the appropriate representative according to his thoughts and he may ask himself some questions such as what contributions and policy would the winner bring? Would they be beneficial and serve our needs or instead, they will serve his own interests? The voter may think of these questions and more before giving his ticket to any candidate. Several vote methods are used in America; however, the most important ones are the following:

2.3.1. Plurality Rule or the First Past the Post (FPTP)

Plurality rule is an easy way largely used regardless of its several problems; one among them is giving a loser the opportunity to be elected. This method means that every single voter chooses only one candidate or does not choose at all if he/she refuses to vote. At the end, the candidate with high number of votes wins (Pacuit).

2.3.2. Runoff Election or Two Round System (TRS)

In his article "What is a Runoff Voting and Why It Is Important?" Louise Hall mentions that people responsible of the state election would call for a runoff voting if the candidate does not gain a majority of votes to be declared as a winner.

In most cases, the candidates who collects two highest number of votes will meet face to face to have a transparent runoff voting in order to guarantee the one who earned 50% plus 1 vote. Because U.S Constitution leaves the choice to the states to manage their elections and select the intended winner, runoff voting is important since candidates have to affront each other in endless battles where one must win. Moreover, winners of two runoff votes in one state will push the Senate into problems to declare which candidate is victorious. Runoff voting is very important since candidates must affront each other in endless battles where one should be entitled winner (Hall).

2.3.3. Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) or Instant Run-off Voting (IRV)

As stated by CNN, Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) literally gives the voters opportunity to level up their preferable candidate registering them by order from number one, two or three and so forth. The winner should have the majority of votes (less than 50% are not acceptable) instead of most the votes. RCV in the state of Maine can be influential only when three candidates or more are found on the ballot. Voting is counted by round where in every single one the candidates who have the lowest rank are eliminated until the time when only two candidates are left. In addition, Ranked Choice Voting is the method to make sure that elections are legal and fair for all voters. It makes democracy applicable and present in the

sense that it allows any voter from any race to rank candidates even if the top candidate loses (FairVote.org).

2.4. Voting Methods

The feeling of gratitude touches many life domains especially the field of politics and precisely elections. The way Americans vote, their attachment and sensibility about their country's success made them unique. Dave Roos, shows how U.S voting methods had developed over history from voice voting until voting via new technologies i.e. screen digital consoles.

2.4.1. Voice Voting

For a long period, voting was done in public and the ones who have the right to vote were the white men only. They had the ability to go to the courthouse in order to cast their votes loudly and not privately (Roos). Voice Voting or *Viva Voce* is the form of voting in public where voters face a judge and swear on the bible that they are the same who they said to be and that they voted only one time. After doing this step, the voter shouts the candidate' name to declare his choice.

2.4.2. The First Paper Ballots

As Roos stated, the first paper ballots appeared in the 19th century but they were not printed or being declared by officials of elections. They were only scraps of paper in which the voter writes the name of his candidate then drops it into the ballot box. This was the traditional way however; it was developed by the political parties' officials into pre-printed rectangular tickets that resemble train tickets at that time.

2.4.3. The Australian Paper Ballot

After the 1884 presidential elections, the Australian ballot in the United States was adopted in an extensive manner. According Encyclopaedia Britannica, "Australian Ballot / Politics" define the Australian Paper Ballot or the Secret Ballot as the process of voting where

voters register their selection privately in which the government distributes the printed ballots to them. Other secret tools can designate their choices.

2.4.4. The Punch Cards and Hanging Chads

Companies like International Business Machines (IBM) [3]made the very first punch cards in the 1960s in which they were similar to the age of computer. Besides this, computers were used to count ballots as a result; the process of counting was fast with instant results the thing that is taken for granted by voters nowadays. Furthermore, the Chad that is a tiny rectangle of paper dropped out from the punch card when the voter makes his choice. It is easy in use but can complicate the results since it is not always fully detached and sometimes partially pushed in; that is why election officials must check manually each punch card (Roos).

All these and more are the voting methods used in U.S elections to have fair and equal votes. In addition to offering all American citizens the chance to give their ballots freely the U.S, elections are considered more complex in comparison to other countries electoral system and ways of voting.

2.5. The Dominion Voting System

Neena Satija argues that the Dominion voting system is a procedure of voting and casting ballots, it was created by Canadian company in 2003 to be incorporated later on in the United States. The author says that: "the company offers software and hardware for elections, including computer programs to manage database and election audits, touch-screen voting machines, ballot scanners and ballot printers". Because of this variation in voting methods, it became widely used in in recent years in 28 states by 40 percent of American voters. The ballot marking machine is among the machines proposed in the dominion system for voting.

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[3] International Business Machines (IBM): A special company that leads American computer manufacturer with major share either in U.S or abroad. Its programs are advanced and highly used in economy, politics, and business.

In this system, voters can cast their ballots using a touch-screen, and a summary of their selection is tabulated and counted. The company confirms that those systems have high security because they produce paper-record to check the results of the counting process. The Dominion voting machines as any other types of machines save time and effort for both voters and poll workers. Regardless of the emergence of the new technologies, it remains a crucial equipment in the American elections and provides accurate results.

2.6. The Electronic Voting

In their book, Ajeeli and Youcif Al Latif Al- Bastaki defines electronic voting as the umbrella term covering many distinctive types of electing including both electronic means of counting and casting votes. It allows also transmitting votes and ballots via mobiles, personal computer networks or Internet. Its technologies give voters with disability the accessibility to voting besides to making the counting vote's process quick. Optical Scan Voting Systems, Punch Cards and Specialized Voting Kiosks including Direct Recording Electronic (DRE) go all under the types of E-voting (431).

According to Sophie Bushwick, several kinds of voting machines are used in U.S. She argues that Americans are no longer using old voting technologies however; they did not get rid of the mechanical lever machines and the punch cards. During the period between1960 and1970, two categories of voting machines were introduced. One is the Optical scan voting machines; they are similar to test scoring machines where the voter should fill in a bubble that is next to the name of the candidate. A second one is known as the DREs, where they cannot be audited once the voter touches the screen or pushes the lever regardless to the kind of the machines (old or modern). From here, the honesty of the machine cannot be tested. In this context, Bushwick says that today a large part of the votes is filled in manually and recorded on paper ballots the reason that the audit law in many U.S states is in progress.

2.7. The Effect of Voting Technologies on Election Results

Although voting technologies facilitate the process of voting and are not time consuming they, may influence the results of elections. As Card, David and Enrico Moretti mentions; during the 2000 presidential elections, it was so hard to count the votes in Florida that left the whole nation to concentrate on the technologies used in voting.

The writers in their analogy, focuses on the touch-screen voting machines or the direct recording electronic voting. The DREs may end up by falling in voting fraud like in the 2004 elections when a technical issue appeared in the voting machine that registered an error, which served President Bush who was given more votes than what he really had (Card and Moretti 1).

For Card and Moretti, lever machines are so far successful in their job however, they are costing and hard to maintain also, they lack the key advantage of auditing the votes' cast trail. Additionally, to lever machines, DREs are also criticized because of having one single problem that occurs while using them; this issue is that they lack direct method to check the process of voting or even the tally of the final vote (7).

Another important thing is that voting by technology is not prevented from committing errors that may go in favor of one party or candidate over another. A research about voting in the 1988-2000 presidential elections by Alvarez et al. affirms that the high rate of the votes that are neutral (residual votes in which they have no preferable candidate) registered by the DRE are higher than lever, optical scan voting or paper and they can be compared to punch-card voting methods. Tomz and Van Houweling, argues that adopting direct recording electronic voting could cause many problems relatively for the deliberate votes. Concerning the adoption of e-voting machines, different effects can appear notably on the voter turnout scores of groups, which are distant resulting in a random and chaotic choice (qtd.in Card and Moretti 7).

As Bushwick states, in spite of the evolution of voting technologies they are still vulnerable. The computer scientist at the University of Iowa and co-author of the Book *Broken Ballot,* Douglas W. Jones, explains that, officials of election should have the ability to check and double check voting outcomes in order to have fair elections. He says "There is a nice dictum that (computer scientist and electronic voting security researcher) David Dill came up with at Stanford University: if we do it right, the Devil himself could build the voting machines, and we could hold on an honest election".

2.8. Defending U.S Elections

American people are highly attached to anything that may threaten the stability and security of their country. In this concern, free and fair elections are the two main factors designing American democracy and making Americans proud of having the right to vote and sense of belonging to the U. S society. Their confidence in U. S electoral system mainly relies on the strong security and defense authorities offer when vote-counting starts or when election results are about to be announced. Commonly, security and resilience are crucial elements to any successful electoral system worldwide.

2.9. Election Security

Root, Danielle et al. declares that a strange nation-state targeted the 2016 U.S elections and threatened completely the electoral system stability. On 22 September 2017 a notification by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) in U.S reported that in 2016 elections, 21 states among them Alabama, Ohio, and California and Illinois were hacked however, did not admit that their electoral systems were affected because, the hackers may have addressed the systems of Illinois only. Many people believed that it is Russia the responsible since the

Department of Homeland Security [4]did not declare who committed the hacking and many experts warned from future Russian or other countries attacks.

Nowadays, U.S citizens are more aware about the vulnerabilities in their electoral system. Hacking voting machines, having fears about the voter registration systems and their privacy are the main factors that threaten the American elections preventing them from having fair results and sense of democracy (Root et al.).

In addition to this point, Root et al. assumes that once registering failure to manage the vulnerabilities already existing and not being prepared for unexpected future attacks, the security of the whole nation would be in danger as much as the rights and freedoms of U.S citizens at the heart of their democracy. Furthermore, they insist on driving governor's attention to forge strong security system to protect elections through investments in the infrastructure and putting some effective protocols that may help in preventing the malfunction of voting machines and avoiding hacking.

2.9.1. Security Pre-Cautions taken by Some States

There is a great difference between U.S states concerning their electoral system and voting technologies, however the threat is common. For this reason, every single state is obliged to adopt a kind of security system to preserve its voting results and elections in general. In this respect, Virginia, Delaware and Louisiana, were the first to change their Direct Recording Electronics' (DRE) voting machines that do not include papers to voting ballot system by papers (Root et al).

In the same way Colorado, Indiana and Rhode Island, became the first states to hold the challenge of the mandatory post-elections audit for elections. Moreover, the state of

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[4] Department of Homeland and security (DHS): an institution responsible for the security of citizens and for protecting their rights, it includes customs, border, and immigration enforcement, emergency response to natural disasters etc.

Alabama signed a contract about a new election vendor that allows officials of election to have access to the system of the voter registration in the state in order to overcome cyber security before Election Day. These states and about thirty-six others requested help from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to reinforce their security in front of any external threat (Root et al).

The Center for American Progress' Research and Analysis announces that an improvement room is for all states because14 states use the machines of DRE without papers and 33 adopted the procedure of post-election audit in their jurisdictions (qtd.in Root et al.). The United States of America has many enemies endangering its political safety. Because of its interventions in external cases, strong countries such as China, Germany, France and mainly Russia sought to endanger its internal stability.

2.10. Types of Voting Fraud

Farivar Masood argues that in the late election 3 November 2020, coronavirus pandemic is the reason that pushes Americans to voting by mail. The state of Georgia officials prepares a debate over voter fraud in the light of the presidential elections to reduce any attempt to double voting. Indeed, it held and voting tallies doses not change. The executive director of Common Cause Georgian; Aunna Dennis says in a statement: "We wholeheartedly agree that people who intentionally vote twice should have no subject to the usual criminal penalties for election law violation". This means that voters who do not have a previous attempt to vote twice should be excluded from being punished since they did not do that on purpose unlike those who planned to cheat. He also argues that President Donald Trump doubts the credibility of mail voting and claims that it is prone to widespread fraud in which it will be beneficial for his opponent Joe Biden. From this point, Trump urges his followers encouraging them to vote twice in the third of November general elections once by mail and

the other one at the polling stations on the day of elections to show the feasibility of this fraud.

Jeff, Dunetz also argues that voting is something sacred for Americans and that the vote of every single person is worthy. As a result, if there were voter fraud it would largely influence the election's legitimacy. Leftists and their allies encourages voting by mail claiming that fraud does not exist -which is not true. Voter fraud existence in mail voting and other voting types is an evidence to justify their reason and guarantee that elections are going in their right way. In addition to this, they say that anyone who refuses is trying to limit the chances of minorities to vote.

Electoral or voter fraud is defined by Beale Henry as "the interference with the process of an election, either by increasing the vote share of a favored candidate, depressing the vote share of rival candidates, or both." Desmond-Harris Jenée highlights that "any illegal tampering with the results of an election is a kind of voter fraud. This can take the form of intimidation or threats of violence against voters, vote buying, misrecording of votes, destruction or invalidation of ballots, tampering with electronic voting machines, and more".

Voting fraud is considered as violation of electoral system rules. It prevents citizens from practicing their right to vote by maintaining voting results. Fraud in elections is a severe problem including many types such as voter registration fraud, voter impersonation fraud, voting in two states, non-citizen voting and felon voting.

2.10.1. Voter Registration Fraud

FindLaw's team, the world's leading provider of online legal information, declares that not only a signal voter commits a voter registration fraud but also a worker or even a whole campaign can be the cause behind fraud. However, there can be some instances where someone helps the voter to fill out his registration card then, forges his signature. Sometimes

people fill the voter registration card with a name of nonexistent person or a fictional character such as Minnie Mouse.

2.10.2. Voter Impersonation Fraud

Impersonation occurs when someone pretends to be someone else and tries to cast his vote. Nineteen studies were conducted in the period between 2009 and 2017 to highlight that researchers from different states identified a small number of voter fraud from impersonation. *Voting by the 'Dead'* is a type of voting impersonation, where the KCNC TV in Denver, found that huge number of mail ballots cast by dead people (FindLaw's team).

2.10.3. Voting in Two States

According to FindLaw's team, in two situations people can vote twice; once they own a property, mainly homes, or they move to another state. In both situations, people can wind up being registered to vote more than one time in more than one place. Nevertheless, in federal elections people cannot vote in more than one state because of Duplicate Registrations. This constitutes great danger in voter fraud leading some states to develop voter registration data and share it to avoid duplication (FindLaw's team).

2.10.4. Non-Citizen Voting

People, who do not have American citizenship, do not have the right to vote in both state and national elections. In Pennsylvania and West Virginia, people who were ineligible to vote received cards because of the connection of motor vehicle registration to voter registration cards (FindLaw's team).

2.10.5. Felon Voting

After being guilty of a felony crime, a person may lose his right to vote permanently in states like Wyoming, Florida, Arizona, Tennessee or temporarily in some other states. However, in the states of Vermont and Maine felons vote normally without any state

intervention. It is rare to involve felons in voting fraud and it often results when a person ignores his eligibility to vote since he may be still on probation or parole (FindLaw's team).

2.11. Counting Systems

There are several counting systems and voting methods utilized in the elections around the world. However, they vary from one country to another in which each country decided to design its electoral system based on some standards and criteria that suit its government and people. The Process of counting existed ages ago after the development of language with ancient civilizations and developed through time to be crucial in many domains of life such as education, economy, and politics. Politically speaking, counting system exists in elections as a way of calculating votes considering two manners using new technologies or manually. Instead of counting the votes in the traditional way using proper hands, machines do the job. The persons who count the votes are known as the *'Tellers'*.

Counting systems are very important procedure especially in elections; they are used as a means to count election's votes, enabling people who are in charge to test the elections results correctness. Nowadays, vote counting can be done through two steps, first, by machines due to the influence of new technologies or manually which is more frequent. Technological tools made the electoral system easier since they are not time consuming or expensive, they are more accurate than counting paper ballots by hand that is why a lot of countries tend to use machines in their votes rather than wasting time in counting manually.

However, Gang Xiao et al. state that the quick counting of votes became a curial characteristic of democracy in the recent years. According to them, there are two types of counting ballots, which are traditional teller and electronic machines. They classify the counting process into three approaches. The first approach known as artificial approach involves counting vast amount of votes correctly nonetheless it may cause faults but in general, it is highly accepted by citizens. The second approach, known as the electronic vote-

counting approach that facilitates the procedure of counting votes as well as saves time and effort but citizens does not trust it, because it threatens their security and personal information. The third approach which is the automatic vote-counting approach ballot samples and symbols should be submitted in the software of a host computer to save it, then on the day of election voters cast their votes in the computer which will be recorded directly by the software program which recognizes the symbol of the ballot and adds it to the appropriate candidate. What is special about this approaches that it ballots into pictures then provides the result (76-77). Electronic machines are very useful in elections but they had negative reputation among voters because it can lose votes, this is why election administrators tend to count ballots using hands and tabulation.

Counting systems are methods for recording votes at the end of the election, the U.S constitution fixes the day of counting presidential votes on January 06 following each election. Elizabeth Rybicki and Jack Maskell detailed, "The day of counting the electoral votes is fixed by law as January 6 following each presidential election" (3). Votes should be counted loudly in front of the members of House of Representatives, who gather in a session called *joint session* in the House chamber, usually it starts at 1:00 p.m. and led by the head of the Senate who opens the votes and shows electoral certificates of all states in addition to District of Columbia alphabetically, then the tellers start reading the votes. Tellers are appointed by the leaders among members of the Senate and House of Representatives at the level of the chambers (3). Moreover, Rybicki and Maskell points, "The certificate, or an equivalent document, from each state and the District of Colombia then is to be read by tellers previously appointed from among the membership of the House and Senate. Before the joint session convenes, each chamber appoints two of its members to be the tellers" (3). After reading the votes of each state and the District of Columbia, they start counting votes to announce the results and declare the winner who reaches the highest number of votes to be the

president. In the 2016 presidential election, the joint session was held on January 6, 2017.The votes were opened at the poll stations to confirm the validity of the votes then to send them to tally locations to count them and to declare the names of the president and vice-president (Chiacu and Cronwell).

In the U.S elections, several voting methods are used. However, each voting method requires a particular counting system. For Randolph C. Hite et al. the optical scan voting method is one of the counting methods that was adopted in the American electoral system in 1980s, which counts votes electronically using optical-mark-recognition materials, which read the symbol of the ballots and add the vote to the appropriate candidate. The counting process which is known as precinct-count optical scan is done at the polling stations, or at a central location. Furthermore, if the ballots are calculated at the polling stations, officials submit the votes on tabulation equipment to score them, store the score in short storage and to convert them to central tally locations or they can be sent electronically.

Moreover, the direct recording electronic system that was first adopted in the 1970s; which utilizes electronic ballots instead of paper ballots has two forms; the old form push-button or the modern form touch-screen. The whole counting system is similar to the previous one in which it records and stores votes electronically using software (Randolph C. Hite et al 10-15).

Ajeeli and Youcif Al Latif Al-Bastaki adds other machines like votes counting server (VCS) which records votes and deliver results of the process (443). In addition to the public network DER (Direct Electronic Recording) system, which applies either precinct or central count that arranges the ballots at the poll stations and electronically count them (433). Lever Machines was first used in 1892 in Lockport New York, and count votes by organizing the ballots in odometer wheels behind their back panels. Recent studies reports that lever

machines work properly and count votes correctly and counting disputes are very rare. In this concern, Ted Selker explains clearly how lever machines work, he says that:

The voter then enters the machine and closes the curtain against onlookers watching. Rows and columns of levers are aligned with labels that indicate parties and candidates for each race. The ballot layout in rows gives perceptual cues to simplify voting. The sight of misaligned lever lets the voter perceive that she has made the selection intended. Mechanical logic prevents over votes. Finally, the voter uses a big red lever to cast the vote and open the curtain (2).

Vote counting takes a long time and exhaustive effort from poll workers. The ballots are counted first at the poll stations using different methods and machines then each state and the District of Colombia provides its results to be recounted again in the joint session to announce the results.

The best example of miscounting votes in the United Sates occurred on the 2000 election, when the punch-card voting system caused losing and miscounting millions of ballots therefore losing citizen's choices. Besides the low quality of the machines used like computers, they have been used for several years with an old version of software that does not offer safety for voters and commit errors in counting ballots. Additionally, other voting machines cause problems in the process of counting votes; like the win-vote machines that work with venerable wireless suffering from several technical issues and affect scoring votes especially those used in Virginia ("America's Electronic Voting Machines Are Scarily Easy Targets").

Disputes in counting votes have many reasons mainly concerning how machines work and their state but it is common that computers and other machines are exposed to several problems like losing the registered data. The United States witnessed another problem of vote counting in the 2016 presidential election, when most of people claim that voting machines

caused many errors because they work only on the day of the election. Technical problems are likely to happen such as the inconsistency of vote counting in Michigan especially because the ballot consisted two pages while machines are designed only to count one-page ballot. Poll workers were obliged to recount the ballots and Trump won the 10,704 votes not only this, but also the law of this state do not allow human errors in counting votes ("Detroit Voting Machine Failures Were Widespread on Election Day").

Consequently, in 2016 there is no chance for recounting them since machines made errors. Again, in Michigan a big number of blank ballots were left in the polling stations hence, machines were not able to do their task. Several officials like Jocelyn Benson claimed that either voters did not vote for the president or they were not counted ("Detroit Voting Machine Failures Were Widespread on Election Day"). Sometimes, errors committed by voting machines change the results of elections; nevertheless, the recounting process is not available due to restrictions made by law. Bushwick mentions other problems concerning the direct recording voting machine. Once the voter submits his ballot he cannot check whether the scoring and submitting processed are done correctly or not also, he cannot alter it. Similarly, fill-in-the-bubble machine -which counts votes ballots by scanning them- influence counting by printing the ballot with candidate in one order but, classifying the scanner in different order. A real example of this this issue happened in Potawatomie, where results were illogical and did not meet any one's expectations though; the problem was solved by returning recounting the ballots manually.

For absentee voting there is a special machine that verifies their mails, address, and signature. Such technologies lack the basics and laws on which they rely on to decide about the validity of the signature simply because the American government did not determine how a valid signature should be, thus losing a huge amount of eligible voters. There are many

problems concerning vote-counting systems either human errors or machine errors, some of them can be solved immediately while other cannot (Bushwick).

As any technology, some technical problems appears and break the whole process down. In American elections similar problem appeared in 2006 and 2008 elections in states like Texas and New Jersey when the touchscreen of the Direct Recording machine blocked so, voter cannot cast their votes or the machine switch them to another candidate. Nowadays, internet is used in all domains but, some are crucial ones like politics specifically in elections. United States as a developed country and regardless of all its weaknesses makes use of internet voting in its voting system. Hackers threaten elections results; in which they tend to steel personal information of voters or to withdraw their votes so they will not be counted (Beall).

Lever machine is also a source of counting disputes, when pol workers read the odometers inaccurately. This occurred in 2000 in Boston when 20,000 of the votes were ignored because poll workers were confused about which odometer should be counted and considered correct. At the end on the election, the machine presented a doubtful series that are similar to each other. As a solution Local Government proposed adding more workers to observe the odometers at the back of the machine. Another solution, which is adding cameras to observe whether the machine turns its numbers after casting and counting each ballot or not (Selker 2).

With the adoption of new technologies, the vote-counting process became easier and rapid nevertheless, created a lot of errors thus local government and elections officials sold revise and test machines before the election and train poll workers on how to use them, as well as to read their results in order to prevent counting disputes.

Chapter Three: U.S 2020 Presidential Elections

The 2020 presidential elections witness several electoral malpractices. The COVID pandemic urges the recourse to widespread mail voting rejected by president Donald Trump as a source of fraud. Refusal to concede the election by a losing Trump threatened the peaceful transfer of power as thousands of his supporters marched on Congress in an attempt to undo the election results.

3.1   Milestones in the 2020 Presidential Election

History.com Editors, "Presidential Elections" state that, the U.S founding fathers imitated the British monarchical tradition to create a system that allows Americans to choose a person to rule them. In article two, section one of the U.S constitution, the executive branch of the American government was established. This new order served the very first U.S president, George Washington, to be elected in the 1789 elections. At that time, the privilege of voting was restricted only for white men having property however, the 15th, 19th and 26th amendments of the U.S Constitution, encouraged the right to vote for all U.S citizens from the age of 18 and up.

On the first Wednesday of January in 1789, the first American presidential elections were held and no one competed against George Washington. Each state had the right to vote because the U.S constitution gave them the opportunity to decide how to select their leader. That year, Pennsylvania and Maryland were the only two states to hold elections for this sake, in other states, state legislators took the responsibility to choose electors. This caused a problem in New York in which it was divided between the Federalists who were with the new constitution and Antifederalists, who were opposing it. Yet, the operation of selecting either U.S senators or presidential electors failed (History.com Editors. "Presidential Elections").

Furthermore, in U.S elections there is one ballot for both president and Vice President. Electors tend to cast two ballots and the one with high votes becomes president however, the

one who receives less rates of votes becomes the Vice-President, all this was before the adoption of the twelfth Amendment.

3.1.1. Holding the Election

The American Presidential Election Day is fixed since the establishment of the constitution. In 2020, Americans are aware about the different events they will pass through under COVID 19 pandemic. In June 2020, the president Donald Trump suggests postponing the election because of the virus, but the head of the Senate and state officials rejects his suggestion. Hence, they continue to prepare for the election to be held on their regular time. Not only this but also, he claims that voting by mails results inaccurate counts ("Trumps Defends 'Delay the Election' Tweet, Even Though He Can't Do it"). Postponing an election in the U.S requires approval from the Senate. Thus, it is not an easy process because even if the Senate accepts that, there will be no change in the presidential terms without citizen's acceptance to delay it.

3.1.2. Litigating the Election

Officials and authorities form election depending on law, which means that it can be litigated whenever they misuse or disrespect the laws. In the last years, American elections were highly litigated because of the rise of election's problems and voter's willingness to achieve eligible election. However, according to Kate Sullivan this growth in election litigation proved that official holders and election administrators failed in designing, arranging, and overcoming problems encountered during election. She says that: "The willingness of all participants in US election to 'rush to law' … means that electoral administrators have little certainty about whet arrangements they must make" (8).

In the 2020 Presidential election, the new health emergency of COVID 19 presents a need for the electoral system to be adapted to the situation and prepare a safe election, at the same time and to reduce the amount of litigations toward election also, to rise voter participation and all this effort ends up in court in most of the cases. As a result, there are

several case studies related to election litigation and COVID 19 like extending voter registration process in Arizona, as well as the problem of counting votes casted by mail … such problems are direct effect of the pandemic as the Federal Judicial Center confirms in its report COVID-19and Emergency Election Litigation. However, electoral arrangements cannot be changed unless in an emergency 12 months before the Election Day. Similarly, administrators should implement legal judgment submitted before or on the day of election, but in 2020 election they do not implement the judgements and remain until the end of October (Sullivan 8).

It is clear that Corona virus gave birth to new types of election litigation problems that should be solved to overcome voting fraud, low voter turnout, and achieve legible election which is a significant feature of democracy.

The 2020 election witnesses a series of voting rights litigations, most of which were related to COVID 19. The latter threatens citizen's voting rights and prevents them from practicing their right to vote as they used to do. As Brennan Center for Justice state [5]"2020 saw a flood of voting rights litigation, much of it related to COVID-19's impact on elections. This tracker seeks to aggregate all active and recently disposed of litigation on both state and federal courts pertaining to voter's ability to cast their ballots in 2020…" there are a lot of litigations passed by voters to the courts after the election day that proves the violation of voting rights in the U.S.

On 23 November, a citizen files a lawsuit in the court of Michigan looking for forensic examination of precinct tabulating machines used in the state of Antrim. This indicates that the citizen doubts the counting system used in his state because his ballot was not counted correctly. As a response to this litigation, the court permitted officials to start inspecting the

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[5] Brennan Center for Justice: a neutral law and policy institute seeks to improve the American democratic values, to spread equality and justice, and to provide a suitable platform that enhances democracy in the U.S.

counting process at the same time and required protecting all the records used to arrange votes in these machines. At the end, the court dismissed the case (Brennan Center for Justice).

Another case of voting rights litigation took place in Arizona where a citizen files a lawsuit concerning the extensive spread of fraud for the sake of decertifying the election. However, the court dismissed quickly the case since there was no evidence about voting fraud (Brennan Center for Justice).

In Pennsylvania, the situation is different, this time a congressional member files a lawsuit rejecting the overuse of absentee ballots and the extension of the deadline. He assumes also that ballots sent at 5:00 p.m. should be considered valid even if they lack postmark. The court of the district refused to cut off the deadline extension, then the litigator raised the case to the Supreme Court, the latter as well denied the case (Brennan Center for Justice).

Donald Trump also seizes a part in the 2020 election litigation, in which he accuses Election Commissions, Mayors, and election officials in Wisconsin of disrespect and violation of Wisconsin's election law. He asks the court to investigate the issue and propose solutions. Then, the court refuses his litigation, later Trump and his supporters transferred the case to the Supreme Court. However, nothing has changed even the Supreme Court did not accept the lawsuit (Brennan Center for Justice).

Moreover, this set of lawsuits influences the eligibility of election, as well as the validity of voting and counting methods, voter registration, and identification methods used in the United States. When Americans claim that, their ballots are not counted or the registration process fail this means that they no longer trust the electoral system, which threatens democracy in the country (Brennan Center for Justice).

It seems that the last two presidential elections gave the world a different view about democracy in the United States. All the problems that emerge during 2020 election proves

that the American political system fail to deal with the pandemic situation. In addition to that, litigations dropped by citizens in the state courts demonstrates that democracy enters a crisis in the United States.

3.1.3. Financing the Election

During elections, eligible candidates receives funds from the government to finance their political campaigns. Nevertheless, COVID 19 pandemic requires more funds to have safe-elections. Such funds are used in providing safe equipment like masks, plastic screens, sensitizers for voters and machines or what is known as personal protective equipment (PPE), used for promoting citizen's participation in election. For example, the state of Kentucky held both in person and in postal voting methods that costs U.S $12 million, whereas previously it costs only U.S $9 million (Asplund et al.). This large amount of money is used to offer extra materials for printing and other protective stuff. In the United States, the Electoral Assistance Commission for candidates to support their campaigns provides funds.

In the2020 presidential election, president Trump establishes and signs Corona Virus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act [6]that delivers USD 400 million as a support for all states to arrange elections in new emergencies. However, this Commission distributes a huge quantity of money according to state's needs, population and size. Although, Congress announced that states this money should be returned back to treasury ("Funding Safe and Secure Elections during the COVID 19 Pandemic."). It seems that it is not enough since states kept asking for money claiming that it does not fit their needs for protecting the election.

Additionally, Carries Levin and Matt Vasilogambros reports that there are also extra sources of funds from businessman and other American famous actors like Arnold Schwarzenegger, who delivers $ 210,675 grants to election administration hoping that his funds will cover state's needs like buying more masks, administering polling locations, and

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[6] Corona Virus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act: a neutral law and policy institute seeks to improve the American democratic values.

extra equipment. They declare that "Now, Schwarzenegger and other rich donors are stepping up. Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg and his wife Priscilla Chan have funded $400 million in election administration grants awarded through two nonpartisan non-profits. Schwarzenegger, through his institute at USC, is awarding grants aimed at reversing the impact of polling place closure and offering more in-person access to voting". It is worth mentioning that financial support smooths the voting process in the middle of economic and health crisis, as well as reduces citizen's fear because they are going to be in touch with many people and use several devices that rise the possibility of infection.

3.1.4. Voter Registration

In 2020 election, COVID 19 influence expended to voter registration since it is an important part of it. However, voter registration methods are selected at state level which means that each state choose the appropriate registration method that suits its characteristics and citizens needs but things change when states propose different methods to enhance social distancing.

Voters in all states expect North Dakota, are able to register using different means either through third party organization like political parties or civil society organizations. Furthermore, they can register using paper forms at the local electoral office in another state agency or registering at the state Department of Motor Vehicles. In general, they are working on spacing out citizens to decrease the possibility of infection (Sullivan 9). What differs the 2020 voter registration process from the previous ones is the effect of Coronavirus, in which most of government offices locked and citizens cannot register. Nikita Biryukov explains well this influence by presenting an example of New Jersey where electoral administrators adds around 8,002 new voters in April 2020.Whereas, in 2016, they adds 29,000 new voters, as a result state department adopted an online registration in the coming election. This confirms the damage caused by the pandemic on voter registration process.

In earlier elections, political parties are able to organize face-to-face interaction like door-knocking, music festivals, other events in shopping locations to promote the process of voter registration. Further, in 2020 healthcare American institutions prevent public events as a safe standard. Because of this, political parties and civil societies cannot maintain face-to-face interaction with citizens and this is another effect of COVID 19 on voter registration during the last American election

In such cases, Internet is the best solution. However, 40 states and the District of Colombia offers online registration to avoid infection and to facilitate the registration in which voters fill in an online paper in an Internet site to be submitted electronically to election officials. What is important is that officials can review the request and decide whether it is valid or not. Nevertheless, this way of registering is available only for people who own state issued driver's licences or identification cards though only few states offer access to these documents (Wendy Underhill and Brian Hinkle). Additionally, Sullivan claims that other states offer automatic voter registration, nonetheless government institutions are also closed thus the process cannot be done, this issue occurs in 19 state and the District of Colombia where most of them closed preventing voters to register. Whereas 21 state propose registering in the Election Day with the condition of providing residency and photo identification (19).

There are also other issues concerning voter certification. Voters must confirm their identity online using state-issue documents and photo identification that should be valid and issued by the Department of Motor Vehicles unless it will not be accepted. The problem concerning voter identification is that most of the documents are considered invalid and unacceptable thus, voter losses their right to vote because of the online identification process that was adopted as a response to COVID 19 (Sullivan 9-10). The new health emergency establishes several problems and created a need to promote the electoral system of the United States by the use of new technologies and improving the already existed ones. Moreover, it

shows the strengths and weaknesses of voter registration and identification systems used in the country.

3.1.5. The Electoral Campaign

Electoral campaigns are the core of the presidential elections, as well as they are an opportunity for both voters and candidates to get closer and understand each other. Here, the candidate recognizes citizen's needs and the latter realizes future plans of the candidate to decide whether to vote for him or not. However, campaigns rely heavily on face-to-face meetings, though during COVID 19 pandemic it is impossible. Furthermore, in a normal situation the U.S candidates start their campaigns preceding the Labor Day; the last day of summer holiday (Sullivan 19). Although in 2020 candidates have little chance to hold face to face campaigns in the fixed period since there is progress in the average of infection in the US. During September and October.

 Trump on one hand, held several public rallies without neither preparation nor application of safe standards, the famous rally was the Omaha rally. After the campaign, thousands of Trump's supporters cannot back home due to the lack of airplanes and busses which obliged them to stay in the busses. Unfortunately, the weather was cold and most citizens got sick because they spend a long time outside. Brittany Shammas and Tim Elfrink stated "The busses, the huge crowded soon learned, couldn't navigate the jammed airport roads. For hours, attendees-including many elderly Trump supporters-stood in the cold, as police scrambled to help those most at-risk get to warmth".

Even though, Trump campaign says that it provides them with enough busses, masks and they checked their temperature each time. Because of this campaign, thousands of people were confirmed to be affected with Coronavirus and hundreds of them died. Such a negative point, gave Democratic supporters the chance to criticize Republican's policy (Elfrink and Shammas).

Joe Biden on the other hand, uses 'drive in rallies' in Tampa where attendees stood inside their cars in the park and watched campaigners. In this way, social distance and safe standards are highly respected. Biden also criticizes Trump's campaigns that put people's lives in danger. Additionally, both candidates relay on online conferencing sessions using video conferencing software that are suitable to health emergency (Staff). Electoral campaigns, are characterized by the mixture of traditional and new campaigning tools to encourage voters and reach high level of voter turnout at the same time and protecting citizen's health.

3.1.6. Voter Arrangement

Arranging voters is a significant process in election, in which it helps decreasing the pressure felt by voters during elections day. Nevertheless, in 2020 presidential election it protects voters from being infected. However, voter arrangement in this election, focuses on separating voters through directing them to different voting locations and using several methods. For example, a group of voters might cast their ballots at the polling location whereas; the other group vote outside the polling location or extend the election for more days. Moreover, some states propose several voting forms like postal voting, absentee voting, in-person-voting to avoid chaos in polling station (Sullivan 19).

The U.S Elections Project [7]confirms that more than 99 million of Americans vote early in 2020 because of Coronavirus and such methods seem safer than in-person voting (BBC News). Hence, the rate of early voting became double in last elections, which confirms people's awareness of the hard situation they are living as well as their trust in government. By all means, the threat of COVID 19 open American's eyes at the neglected voting methods in which they are now brave to use other voting systems rather than in-person voting.

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[7] The U.S Election Project: a reliable source for delivering accurate statistics about the American electoral system, election results, and electoral laws research reports.

3.2. Lessons Learned

Crises leave a series of problems that can last for a long period as well as lessons that can be learned. However, this is the same case of United States with the Coronavirus. Its effects on the electoral system are not temporary; this is why the government should be aware of similar problems that may occur in the future.

The main important impact of COVID 19 on the American election is the high degrees of early and postal voting. Sullivan argues that, it will affect preceding elections mainly the 2022 federal election because, voters realize the accuracy of several voting methods hence, and they will use the same methods in 2022 federal election. Furthermore, this requires investment in the electoral system like altering political party's organization and campaigns to fit the variations in elections (18). In 2020 election, electoral administrators on one hand tried to deliver a safe election while, partisan participants on the other hand spread wrong information about the electoral system which influenced voter's attitude toward the government thus, they will no longer trust their government (19). That election, witnesses several problems in the political sphere that can be avoided in the future. Concerning their influence, it can be overcome through adopting new methods, passing new laws, or punishing people responsible for the previous problems.

Elections mean a lot for Americans, because they believe in democracy. Therefore, any dispute in their administration is counted and citizens may even tend to go to courts to punish accused people. However, the last election indicates Americans willingness to vote as well as, to improve democracy whatever the situation is. Even though, this election presents a series of lessons that helps to promote the U.S electoral system especially in the side of election administration and arrangement.

3.3 Deficiencies in Counting Systems of the 2020 Presidential Election

Vote counting is a very sensible process in which counters need to concentrate to avoid errors. Usually, they count votes together in form of groups and in one chamber. Nevertheless, with the new health emergency of Corona virus it became hard to limit the amount of the groups and the distance between them to avoid infection. According to Tim Harper et al. election administrators took into consideration the guidelines issued by the government to protect social health by using PPE to save their lives and encourage voting by mail to reduce crowd on Election Day. In addition to, leaving space between poll workers especially inside chambers where they verify voter's signature, votes, and count them (14).

However, for absentee ballots, election administrators can limit number of poll workers and add more time for the process of verifying signatures this may minimize the risk of being infected. The other solution that can be applied in the counting process under COVID 19 pandemic, is offering masks, stuff to sanitize surfaces and tolerating voter's reason's for absentees especially for those who experience symptoms of the virus (Harper et al.14). During 2020 presidential election, health is the most crucial element that attracts the attention of both voters and election administrators who have the responsibility of providing safe election.

For voting methods, and as Tim, Harper et al. declares in their report "Counting the Vote during 2020 Election", the COVID 19 pandemic obliges citizen to use different methods that allow them to vote without going to polling stations. Further, one of them is voting by mail, states encourage voters to apply this way of voting by accepting various reasons of voters as well as mailing ballots to all registered voters. All this can motivate people to stay at home and protect their health. In addition to this method, there was early voting when people casted their ballots before Election Day. In 2020 elections, the percentage of votes submitted by mail increased whereas, the percentage of in-person voting decreased. Most of Americans were brave to utilize unfamiliar methods that offer them more safety while, others doubt such

methods (Tim harper et al 2). That year, citizens are free to choose which method to use mails, absentee voting, early and in-person voting. Nevertheless, the government motivate them to choose the safest ones like early voting and mail voting.

In addition to COVID 19 challenges, other problems occur mainly after the election. The significant problem according to Monica Elliott et al. happens in Georgia while counties still counting ballots, the Republican and conservative parties claim that the election is unfair and it raises voter fraud. Parties are seeking for decertify the election and they even fill several litigations in the court of Georgia. Similar case occurs in Texas, when True the Vote organisation claim that there is voting fraud just few weeks before January runoff. As a result, voters reject election outcomes and issued numerous litigations (Monica Elliott et al 26). Moreover, the most important step in elections is the counting process; the latter guarantees that citizen's vote is counted and their opinions are highly respected and transferred in the correct way.

Furthermore, Nick Castele argues that Donald Trump and his supporters criticise Dominion voting machines, they say that they work in the favor of Democratic Party, because they transmit a large amount of votes of Trump to Joe Biden. Not only this, they even claim that Dominion machines are not secure; they may lose votes as they may miscount them. Consequently, the recounting process took place to prove that the machines are working correctly mainly in New York where state leaders defended the Dominion machines, in addition to that, several county boards expresses a desire to bring new machines in next federal election to promote their validity. Nevertheless, Republicans are not convinced yet and continue doubting the accuracy of Dominion machines. However, this claim creates voter fraud among Americans and raises the possibility of changing these machines in the future.

Nevertheless, these series of claims demonstrates in a way or another that voting methods and counting systems affect democracy in the United States, more precisely

democracy is directly linked to these methods. However, one may decide about the effectiveness of voting methods and counting systems by looking at counting disputes it results to determine whether there is democracy or not.

3.4 Victory of Joe Biden

According to Nigel Walker, the election ends up by the victory of the Democratic candidate Joe Biden by 51, 5 percent of the vote over the Republican candidate Donald Trump who get 46, and 8 percent of the vote. Moreover, Biden's victory was declared on 7 November and confirmed on 14 December.

It is highly important to mention that in the U.S wining popular vote does not mean winning the election. Because, the number of electoral votes won by the candidate determines the election and this means that, there is two kinds of votes: popular vote and Electoral College vote. Additionally, each state has a number of Electoral College votes that varies from one state to another according to its size and population. In 2020 Presidential election, Electoral College give 306 votes to Joe Biden and 232 votes to Donald Trump; thus, it selects Biden as the new president of the United States (Walker 15).

3.5 Trump's Contention of the Results

Unlike all U.S former presidents, Donald Trump doubts 2020 election results claiming that they were fraudulent. Evan Halper et al. writes, Trump's army attorneys backed him and he has laid groundwork to minimize the results of election, which does not declare him victorious. Because of his reaction, lawmakers of the Republican Party were put in an astonishing situation of having responsibility to reassure American people that he should lose a peaceful transition of power. In this concern, Richard L. Hasen [8]argues that: "Trump has

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[8] Richard L. Hasen: An American expert in legislation, election law and campaign finance. He is currently Chancellor's Professor of Law and Political Science at the University of California, Irvine School of Law.

broken so many norms…including about not agreeing to a peaceful transition of power, that my alarm bell are going off".

According to William Cummings et al. much of the 2020 presidential campaign are spend by president Trump who insists on saying that he may fail only if the election is rigged against him. Since the day of his defeat, he kept claiming that his dire predictions of fraud happens and kept maintaining that his victory was stolen without any strong and credible evidence to support his belief, despite the assurances from his department of justice and homeland security that no fraud occurred. Moreover, Trump rejects election results and mounts a relentless campaign in order to reverse 306-232 votes Joe Biden won in the Electoral College.

3.5.1   Fraud Claims

With the Electoral College declaring Joe Biden new U.S president and Trump's allies recognition of his failure, the following are some fraud conspiracy theories tried by Trump and his team, however failed, to reverse the 2020 presidential elections outcomes.

For McEvoy, Jemima, Trump's first claim is that the voting machinery of the country run by the Dominion Voting System is manipulated to delete millions of ballots for him, give more votes for Biden and has a relationship to Venezuela and its former president (Hugo Chavez[9]) who is dead. None of these claims is believed since there is no clear evidence that any voting system is compromised and there is no link to Venezuela. Second, Trump argues that even dead people had the ability to vote mainly in swing states such as Pennsylvania and Michigan. Officials of these states denies this claim and it is announced as unfound. Third, Trump alleges a video about election fraud in the state of Pennsylvania and mentions that in

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[9] Hugo Chavez Frias: Venezuelan politician and former president from 1999 until his death in 2013.

key states across the whole nation, Republican poll watchers are not able to monitor votes counted in Democrat-run states.

Furthermore, he highlights that in Nevada, election officials deliberately play with machines responsible for verifying voters' signature in order to allow ballots that normally will not muster but this claim is refused by a judge because there is no evidence to support it. Furthermore, Trump declares that only the Supreme Court can solve the problem why he rejects election outcomes and confirms that election results are swindles pulled by Democratic Party against him relying on his claim that postal voting is open to fraud. After that, he proposes one of his supporters to replace Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg who died, in order to support him and to remain in the presidency (BBC NEWS). The last claim is that a huge amount of votes for Biden are dumped after being counted on election night and this claim also, includes no real allegation of corruption (McEvoy). Eventually, none of the intended claims is successful and they have no great impact on election results.

3.5.2   Trump Instigation of Violent Attacks on Congress

Trump's actions fomented violence and white supremacy. He also tries to mobilize his supporters and encourages them to try to overturn election outcomes. Cornwell, Susan, mentions that in the U.S Senate and despite the lawmakers' strong criticism, Republicans derails a bipartisan inquiry into the deadly assault on capitol by supporters of former president Trump. In addition to some democrats who calls for a commission that tries to solve problems of violence including the event of 6 January when hundreds of Trump's allies storm the capitol, urge violence against lawmakers, fought police and have a total rejection of Biden's victory. These violent protests resulted in the death of five innocent people including a police officer of the capitol. The leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) says that there is no "no question, none, that President Donald Trump is practically and morally responsible" which means that he is the source of threat and all the blame falls on him. Although the commission and what it

calls for, the former president urges lawmakers of the Republican Party to stand in opposition to it, and he warned them of the consequences if they support it (Cornwell).

According to Hsu, Spencer S. on Tuesday, the chairman of the House Homeland Security Committee files a federal lawsuit to accuse Donald Trump, his lawyer Rudolph W. Giuliani besides to two other extremist groups whose members are charged of the bad events happens in Jan 6 and blocked the 2020 election certification of Congress. The federal lawsuit alleges that Trump and his supporters temporarily succeed in forcing the lawmakers to wear gas masks and take the cover on the House gallery floor. Hsu state that fortunately they are rescued with more than 200 other representatives, relatives and staffers to a shelter in the Longworth House Office Building.

Trump also, have put the lawmakers in danger and supports the possibility to have a kind of authoritarianism in the future. In this regard, Thompson says that; "While the majority of Republicans in the Senate abdicated their responsibility to hold the president accountable, we must hold him accountable for the insurrection that he so blatantly planned" (Hsu).

3.6   Effects of Counting Systems on American Democracy

Voting methods and counting systems are crucial parts of the electoral system; they determine the way this system works as well as affect democracy. However, democratic government has numerous features including the electoral system and events, for example, a successful election might provide political, economic, and social stability and vice versa. In the light of this L. LeDuc et al. says that "the future of democracy in both established and emerging systems depends to a large extent on events related to the electoral process, because elections are the one political institution that both leads and reflects many of the social, political, and economic trends" (qtd. in Hoffman 232).

In the United States, the use of several traditional or modern voting and counting system-enhances democracy. However, when the country adopts these technologies new types

of problems occurs like counting disputes, unsuccessful voter registration process, uncounted ballots… this have an impact on citizen's attitude toward their government.

In the 2020 American presidential election, democracy is highly endangered because of several problems as Hasen confirms. The first problem is voter suppression; like what happens in Florida where 85 votes are removed from voter rolls. The second problem is foreign and domestic dirty tricks however; it was applied by Russia in the 2016 election when it hacked American voter registration databases trying to alter public opinion and election results. The third reason was incendiary rhetoric; includes Republican's claim that the Democratic Party stole the election which raises voting fraud and the possibility that if Trump losses a close contest in the 2020 election he may reject to concede.

Furthermore, other factors that influences democracy in the United States are voting methods and counting systems. Concerning counting systems, as Ronnie Dugger explains, they are open to voting fraud and errors, especially computers. Besides, the results should be announced on election night to prevent voting fraud.

Nonetheless, he adds that computer programs proposed by private companies to count votes are designed in higher computer languages or intermediate languages. During, the process of counting votes, these languages turn into a language of one and zero that only computers can understand. The problem with such programs is that they struggle with litigations in which citizens ask them to hide the original codes of vote counting from everyone even local officials who arranges the election. However, the private companies tend to hide the original codes in order to secure the election thus it will not be a democratic election if they show these codes (Dugger).

However, according to Estelle H. Rogers the effect of voting methods on democracy can be noticed through problems caused by voting machines or even election administrators in the electoral process. In the 2020 election, the American government are obliged to change its

voting system and use new methods even though they are not familiar with them. Furthermore, states have a very short time to change the old methods with the new ones in order to be adapted to the new pandemic situation pandemic, for example, many states used voting by mail and absentee voting for the first time instead of in-person voting. Consequently, the rate of voter turnout using absentee ballots was low; in politics, a low rate of participation in elections is not democratic since it reflects the non-participation of citizens in electing the president.

The best example of voting machine errors that influences American democracy in the 2020 election happened in Antrim, when computers causes massive errors in counting votes. The state reports that the problem occurred when the totals by precinct were combined with Candidate County to send it to states using a software system. Then, the state declares that these voting machines were provided by the Dominion Voting System which is the same type of machines used all over the state but, the software problem is not related to the Dominion system rather it is related to another voting system known as Election Source (BBC NEWS).

Moreover, J. Alex Halderman a professor and voting expert, reports that the real reason behind this issue is that Antrim officials loaded a new version of election definition, which is similar to a spreadsheet describing the races and candidates on the ballot, but they did not omit the previous version. As a result, the combination of the two versions of election definition caused counting errors (BBC NEWS).

As Estelle H. Rogers claims that, the other factor that influenced American democracy during the last presidential election was the delay of Primaries. However, it is common that Americans have never postponed their election under whatever emergencies; hence, the delay of the Primaries of the 2020 election left a damaging impact on American democracy. He stated that:

In the almost 250-year history of the United States of America, no presidential election has ever been postponed, much less canceled. Primaries have been postponed, as in happening now. But, and this bears repeating, no general election federal election has ever been proponed or canceled during weather emergencies, two World Wars, or the Civil War. There is no reason that this iconic, uninterrupted exercise of our democratic values should be interrupted now (Rogers).

All the issues that emerges in the 2020 election concerning voting or counting votes, proved the claim that voting methods and counting systems influence American democracy since it means allowing citizens to practice their right to vote freely in addition to counting their votes correctly, but these two aspects were highly threatened in the last American election.

3.6.1 Tarnished Democracy

Countries all over the world start contesting for being the most democratic country but only the United States succeeded in that it comes to be a model for democracy. After a long time, many problems emerged and threatened the image of democracy in U. S like violation of human rights, vote counting disputes, corruption and so on.

According to Steven Levitsky and Daniel Ziblatt, Americans believe that their country enters a crisis of democracy since the 2016 presidential election with Trump's presidency. Additionally, one of the main aspects of democracy is the political party's acceptance of failure, but this is not the case with Republicans because they want to win at any cost. Hence, they engaged in illegal activities that threaten the eligibility of elections therefore, the state of democracy. While it seems to the rest of the world the election is eligible, there are problems inside the country that reflects the real situation of democracy.

Levitsky and Ziblatt claim that there are three potential threats used by Trump that endanger the American democracy, which is continued democratic backsliding, descent into

dysfunction, and minority role. Furthermore, for the first threat of continued democratic backsliding, Trump attacks social media and search for foreign intervention in the American election; he sought to use his office for achieving personal and undemocratic goals. Moreover, with the emergence of COVID 19, Americans are afraid of Trump's policy that seeks for decreasing the possibility of voting and altering the results of the election. The most compelling evidence of this is that several officials and administrator are removed and replaced by Republican supporters. Consequently, Trump left a very corrupted system that needs to be renewed unless there will be no democracy in the United States of America.

The second threat, descent into dysfunction, which means mistreating new emergencies. The country witnesses new emergencies during the presidential term of Trump, like COVID 19 pandemic that needs immediate solutions but, the government reacted after a long time. However, this causes citizen's distrust in their government and political system, which is not democratic (Levitsky and Ziblatt).

The third threat is the minority role; in recent elections, minorities gradually win the presidential election despite their loss of popular vote. Nevertheless, the Democratic Party won the 2016 and 2018 Senate elections but Republicans are still monitoring the Senate. This control over Senate and presidential seats reflect the lack of democracy in the different types of elections because in democracy all political parties share power and governmental seats (Levitsky and Ziblatt).

All the previous events show that democracy in the United States is tarnished because in reality there is no democracy. Furthermore, the illegal policies approved by Trump and other Republicans to remain in the presidency marks as undemocratic, changs the view of the other countries about the United States, and enters the country into democratic crisis. Therefore, the new president has to restore democracy in the country as well as renew confidence of citizen in the government.

3.6.2   The Threat of Peaceful Transfer of Power

Transferring power at the level of government is done through elections, but it can be peaceful or severe depending on the events succeeding the electoral process and the president himself. In general, in the U.S the transfer was peaceful in almost of the previous elections except the 2020 presidential election that affect the stability of the country, elections transparency, and the state of democracy.

In the 2020 presidential election, the transfer of power is not peaceful because Donald Trump refuses the results of the election claiming that there is a voting fraud. However, the response of the opposing party is direct, in which Joe Biden says that the military intervention will be the best solution to remove Trump from the White House (BBC NEWS).

Moreover, Trump declares his rejection publically and this is not the first time that trump denies election results. In 2016 also, he refuses the results despite his victory in the Electoral College but he still doubting his loss of 3 million popular votes. In politics, refusing election results is considered a real attack on democracy. The reaction of the Democratic Party confirms readiness to defend Trump's claim as well as their confidence in the American government to remove the previous president and to smooth the electoral process (BBC NEWS).

Conclusion

Since the U.S declaration of independence on July 4, 1776, there was a need to establish a viable system of government. The framers of the constitution started with an electoral system to choose their president which underwent several reform stages to reach the shape it has nowadays.

The United States of America holds presidential elections every four years and they cannot be postponed no matter the incidents happening either in the country or in the external world. U.S electoral system used to have a good reputation and it was the mirror that reflects an undeniable democracy.

The study was concerned with the part of election where it could be exemplified through people who freely choose their representatives to serve in governmental offices. On election day Americans, go to the polling stations to submit their ballots hoping that their ballots will be received and counted appropriately. Furthermore, to call an election "Democratic" it should be characterized by transparency, acceptance and equality between people regardless of their origins and social rank. In the late elections, many irregularities were registered as ballots were not counted correctly. Vote miscounting became very common as more and more citizens announced that their votes have been transferred to an inappropriate candidate. Therefore, vote miscounting proved the failure of the American electoral system.

Another key feature that assesses the state of democracy in elections, is voting fraud that is in general; the manipulation of votes in favor of certain candidate over the other. The 2020 American elections recognized high degrees of voting fraud in all its features, this threatened democracy, credibility of election, and decreased voter turnout. The most famous voting fraud incident in 2020 election is Trump's claim that the Dominion voting machines

transferred a huge amount of his votes to Joe Biden, hence, people started doubting voting machines and counting systems used in elections.

Election litigation also controlled the state of democracy. It reached its peak in the last U.S election and reflected the lack of citizens' trust in their government. This endangered democracy because the latter is based on trust between government and people and led not only U.S citizens but people around the world including political scientists and experts to open endless debates and harshly criticize U.S democracy and its handling of elections.

Therefore, the research ends with the conviction that not only voting methods and counting technologies are failing American democracy but evidence shows the presence of fraud practices on many occasions replicated in many places. Indeed, meant to save time and facilitate voter turnout, voting methods such as vote by mail and absentee vote became a great source of fraud. Likewise, the different electronic counting devices or other mechanical machines have become a great source of mistrust among Americans who blame these devices for the loss of their votes. To preserve American democracy, there is an urgency to survey the dubious voting methods as well as the deficient counting gear and replace them with transparent ways of counting ballots. Many states have already started using reliable manual auditing to stay beyond suspicion. Similar initiatives should become the norm throughout the country.

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