

Principles Exercise

Learning Phase – Weekend 5

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Trade-offs



Speed

Style

Status

Safety

Environment

Comfort

Practicality

Open road

Cost

Fuel efficiency

Why Weigh Principles?

- All our principles are important...
but no system can reflect them all equally
- We need to start talking about their
relative importance
- Going through this exercise now will help
us prepare for consultation and plan for
deliberation

Taking Our Temperature

- Today we will “take our temperature” to see how we feel at this point
- Our views will change based on working group reports, public input, deliberation discussions
- No right or wrong answers
- No final decisions today
- We will do this again

The Principles

For this exercise:

- Legitimacy will not be ranked – any system we recommend needs to be legitimate
- Fair representation is separated into:
 - demographic representation
 - proportionality
 - representation by population
- Accountability is separated into:
 - holding local/regional representatives to account
 - holding parties to account

Principles to be Weighed

- Demographic representation
- Proportionality
- Representation by population
- Voter choice
- Effective parties
- Stable and effective government
- Effective parliament
- Stronger voter participation
- Accountability of local/regional representatives
- Accountability of parties
- Simplicity and practicality

What Do They Mean?

- **Demographic representation**
 - The legislature reflects the makeup of Ontario's population (men and women, ethno-cultural diversity, age, class, etc.)
- **Proportionality**
 - The proportion or share of seats a party wins is roughly equal to the proportion of votes it receives
- **Representation by population**
 - Each MPP represents roughly the same number of people
- **Voter choice**
 - Voters have both quantity and quality of choice on the ballot

Principles cont.

- **Effective parties**
 - The electoral system supports parties that are able to do their job
- **Stable and effective government**
 - The electoral system produces stable governments that can govern effectively
- **Effective parliament**
 - The legislature works well and has an effective opposition

Principles cont'd

- **Stronger voter participation**
 - The electoral system helps motivate more people to vote
- **Accountability**
 - Voters can hold local/regional representatives to account
 - Voters can hold parties to account
- **Simplicity and practicality**
 - The system is workable and voters can understand how it works

The Exercise

1. First individual ranking of principles: high, medium, or low
2. Group discussion – where do you agree or disagree and why?
3. Second individual ranking of principles
4. Group discussion – did you change your mind on any principles and why?
5. Results brought back to plenary
6. Open forum

Keep in Mind

- Don't rank more than 3–4 principles as “high”
- Reasons for rankings can differ, e.g. a principle might be ranked lower because:
 - you see it as less important than others
 - you don't see a close connection between this principle and electoral systems
 - you think all systems are generally the same when it comes to this principle

Back to Trade-offs

- Not taking any principles off the table – this is about priorities
- Need to think about the trade-offs or give and take, e.g.:
 - would you give up some simplicity to get more voter choice?
 - which do you value more: local representation or proportionality (or do you value them equally)?
 - what's more important to you: holding a local/regional representative accountable or holding a party accountable (or both)?