Mixed Systems

Combining Local Representation with Proportionality
Objectives

- to demonstrate how the family of mixed system works
- to identify the difference between mixed-member proportional (MMP) and parallel
Key features

- Mixed systems combine plurality with proportional representation.
- Voters can choose candidates and parties.
Elements of the mixed member family

district magnitude is one for plurality district and greater than one for PR district

formula usually is plurality + proportionality

ballot structure is usually categorical
District magnitude
Single member seats
District magnitude
Single Seats + Proportional Seats
District magnitude
Single Seats + Proportional Seats
Why combine two types of electoral districts?

- Single member districts allow for local representation.
- Multi-member districts allow for proportional representation.
Formula: combining plurality locally with proportionality

- Local candidates elected by plurality formula
  - Ensures winning candidate has more votes than any one else
  - Allows for local representation
Formula: combining plurality locally with proportionality

- party candidates elected through proportional formula
- percent vote = percent seats
Ballot structure is categorical but voters have two votes

- allows for voters to split their vote between party and candidate
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<th>Platz</th>
<th>Kandidat</th>
<th>Partei</th>
<th>Wählerstimmen</th>
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<td>Kolbow, Walter</td>
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<td>Friedl, Patrick</td>
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<td>Kracht, Moritz</td>
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<td>Brechbilder, Belinda</td>
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<td>Feministische Partei</td>
<td>DIE FRAUEN</td>
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**Erststimme**

**Zweitstimme**

**Sie haben 2 Stimmen**

**hier 1 Stimme**

für die Wahl

eines/einer Wahlkreisabgeordneten

- maßgebende Stimme für die Verteilung der Sitze insgesamt auf die einzelnen Parteien –
But how are those votes combined?

• The relationship between tiers can be non-compensatory -- plurality seats are added to party seats (parallel system)
• compensatory -- party seats used to compensate for disproportionality at plurality level (mixed member proportional)
1. Parallel System

- election seen as two parallel elections
- total seats awarded to a party is PR seat share plus plurality seats
- \( \text{SEATS} = \text{PR} + \text{plurality} \)
Features of Parallel Systems

- most widely used form of mixed systems
- has modest proportionality:
  - because all parties -- including those that get seat bonuses in plurality vote -- have their seat total supplemented by PR
- favours large parties
Adding Seats in Parallel Systems

- **Party A**
- **Party B**
- **Party C**
- **Party D**

**Legend:**
- Blue: Plurality Seats
- Gray: PR Seats

- **Plurality Seats**
- **PR Seats**

- **Axes:**
  - Y-axis: 0, 75, 150, 225, 300

- **Parties:**
  - Party A: Plurality Seats = 0, PR Seats = 0
  - Party B: Plurality Seats = 75, PR Seats = 75
  - Party C: Plurality Seats = 150, PR Seats = 150
  - Party D: Plurality Seats = 225, PR Seats = 225
2. Mixed Member Proportional System (MMP)

- PR vote determines total seat share
- List seats awarded to a party are PR seat share minus plurality seats

LIST SEATS = PR - SMP
Features of MMP

- is generally quite proportional
- parties that get seat deficit in plurality vote are compensated by PR vote
- Since PR vote determines total share of seats, PR seats vary based on success of plurality wins
Combining Seats in MMP Systems

- Party A: PR VOTE = 40, PLURALITY SEATS = 30
- Party B: PR VOTE = 20, PLURALITY SEATS = 15
- Party C: PR VOTE = 10, PLURALITY SEATS = 5
- Party D: PR VOTE = 15, PLURALITY SEATS = 10
- Party E: PR VOTE = 10, PLURALITY SEATS = 5
Combining Seats in MMP Systems

Compensatory PR Seats

PR VOTE
PLURALITY SEATS

Party A
Party B
Party C
Party D
Party E
Design Variations in mixed systems

- ratio of tiers
- thresholds
- two votes or one?
- plurality or majority?
- open or closed list?
- regional allocation or province wide?
- do candidates run locally, appear on party list or both?
What is the ratio between plurality and PR tier?

- If plurality tier is larger: more local representation but less proportionality.
What is the ratio between SMP and PR tier?

- If PR tier is larger: greater proportionality but less local representation.
What is the ratio between SMP and PR tier?

- achieving the goal of local representation and PR requires decisions about
- how many PR seats do you want
- how large plurality tier is
- the size of legislature
Other design variations: thresholds

- Legal thresholds affect the ability of smaller parties to obtain a seat
- Can be a percentage of the PR vote
- Can be a minimum number of seats on the plurality side
- Can be both
Other design variations: one vote or two?

- Two votes (one for plurality + one for PR) allows for greater voter choice as voters can ‘split their vote’
- One vote (for plurality candidate) allows for greater simplicity but hurts smaller parties
Other design variations: PR and plurality differences

- PR vote can be open or closed list
- Local riding can be plurality or majoritarian variant
Other design variations:
How to allocate PR seats?

- PR seats can be province-wide or divided up by regions
- Regional allocation allows for stronger regional representation and representation for dominant ethnic, linguistic groups
Other design variations:  
How to count PR seats?

- counting determines seat total
- PR seats can be counted province-wide or regionally
- seats can be counted province wide and allocated province wide or regionally or counted regionally and allocated regionally
Counting and allocating seats
Counting province-wide

If List PR seats are *counted* province-wide

- Seats can be *allocated* province-wide
- Seats can be *allocated* regionally

decreases wasted votes
Counting and allocating seats

Counting regionally

If List PR seats are counted regionally,

ensures representation of regionally concentrated groups

Seats are allocated regionally.
Number of PR seats can vary per district

• Why?
  • to ensure a reasonable geographic size for list members given principles of representation by population
  • DM of districts in PR tier can vary so rural areas are smaller (geographically and DM)
Other Design Variations:

Do candidates run at one tier or both?

Candidates who run at the plurality tier and whose name appears on the PR list:
- increases likelihood of popular candidates being elected
- but ‘get a second chance’
Relating mixed systems to our principles

• legitimacy
  allows vote for party and candidate and introduces at least some proportionality while maintaining local representation
Relating mixed systems to our principles

- fairness of representation
  - encourages proportionality (greater in MMP than Parallel)
- MMP enables greater ideological and demographic representation than SMP
Relating mixed systems to our principles

• voter choice

usually allows for voters to vote for party and candidate
Relating mixed systems to our principles

- Effective parties
  - Proportional tier under both systems permits small party representation
  - Parallel favours large parties
  - MMP favours smaller parties
Relating mixed systems to our principles

- **effective parties**
  - creates two different kinds of parties
  - large parties tied to constituency representation
  - smaller parties with ideological interests not tied to constituency representation
Relating mixed systems to our principles

• stable and effective government
  - Parallel strengthens large parties government and adds modest proportionality
  - MMP ensures coalition governments
Relating mixed systems to our principles

• accountability
  • voters have both local candidate accountability and can reward or punish parties
  • but
  • accountability may not be clear with two kinds of representatives (local and party)
Relating mixed systems to our principles

- simplicity and practicality
  - ballot structure is simple
  - but
  - two kinds of representatives might be confusing for voters
Conclusion

- All variants of mixed systems allow for local representation and proportional representation.
- MMP systems are more proportional.
- Parallel is more likely to create single party governments than MMP.