

Proportional Representation

List PR and its Variants When Vote Share Equals Seat Share



Objectives

- to demonstrate how the family of list proportional representation (PR) works
- to introduce some of the trade-offs associated with this family
- to show variations within that family
 - Single-Transferable Vote variation to be discussed next session

Key features

- goal is for vote share to equal seat share
- electoral districts are larger geographically because they are multi-member
- usually party-centred electoral system
 - *i.e.*, generally vote for party not candidate

Elements of the List PR family

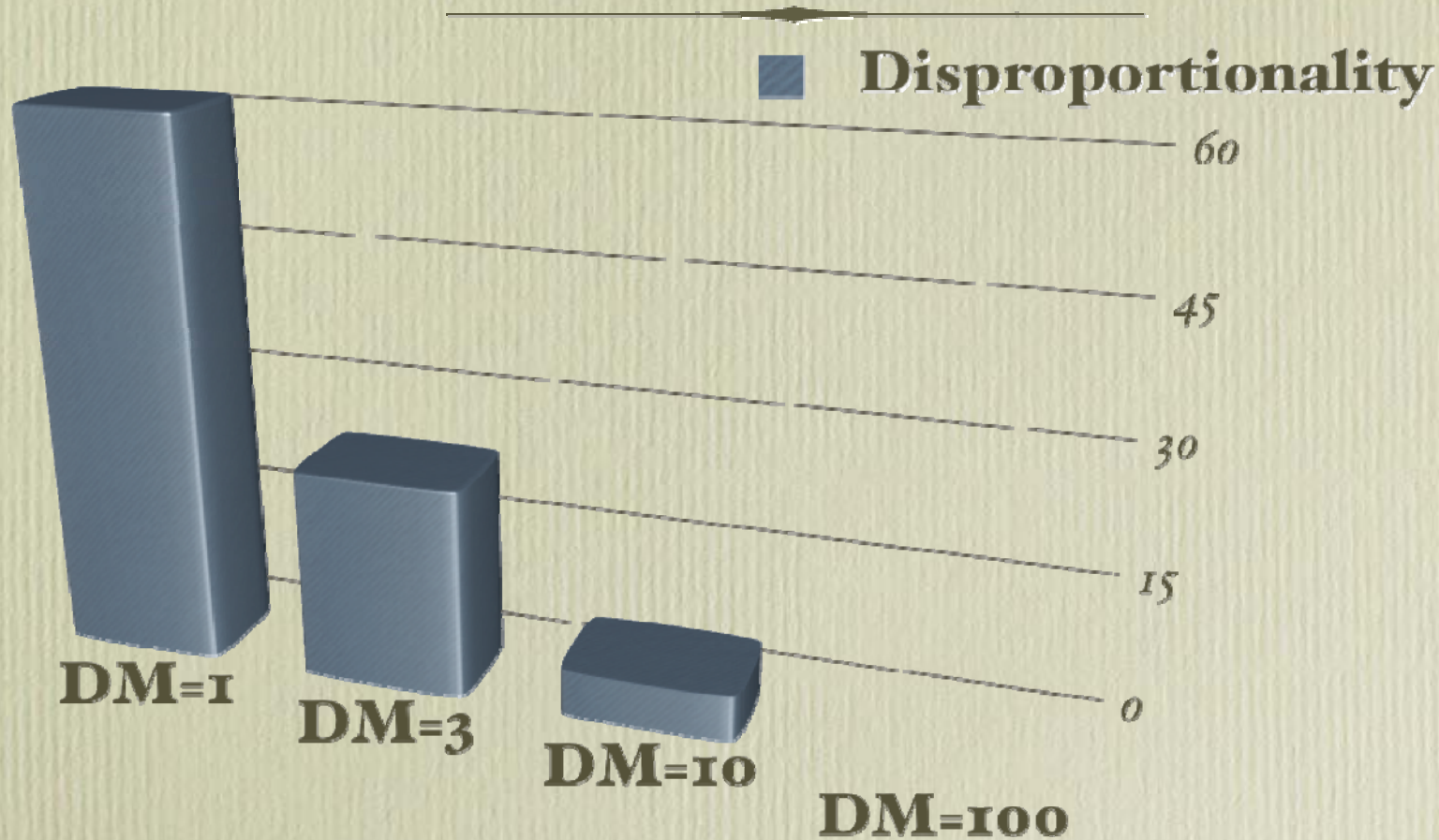
- district magnitude is always greater than one (*i.e.*, multi-member districts)
- ballot structure is usually categorical (*i.e.*, one choice instead of ranking choices)
- formula is proportional (*i.e.*, vote share equals seat share)

District magnitude is always greater than one

- to achieve a degree of proportionality
- DM is the most important variable in determining proportionality

	Party A	Party B	Party C	Party D
votes-total = 10,000	4000	3000	2500	500
percentage of total vote	40%	30%	25%	5%
If ONE seat	1	0	0	0
percentage of seats	100%	0	0	0
If THREE seats	1	1	1	0
percentage of seats	33%	33%	33%	0
If TEN seats	4	3	2	1
percentage of seats	40%	30%	20%	10%

How disproportionality decreases as DM increases



Perfect proportionality occurs when vote share = seat share
Disproportionality is zero

Why vary the DM?

- to determine degree of proportionality
- to take into account geographic representation (e.g., regional)
- to take into account the size of legislature

Effects of a DM greater than one

- electoral districts of a larger geographic size
- no link to a local representative (but might be regional link)

Ballot structure

- in List PR systems voters *usually* vote for party not candidate
- elections are about reflecting party support in the legislature

RSA

1994

South Africa Ballot

Etša letshwao pela mokgato oo n o kgethang.

Yenta uphawu eceleni kwelicembu lolikhetsako.

Endla mfungho eceliso ka vanda leni u ri tlawulaka.

Baya letshwao go lebagana le lekoko la gago.

Yenza uphawu laho eduze nehlangano oyikhethako.

Dira letshwao la gago go lebana le phathi yeo o e kgethago.

Kha vha ite luswayo phanda fra dzangano jine vha khetha.

Yenza uphawu lwakho eceleni kweqelo slo ulikhethayo.

Dweba uphawu esikhaleni esiseduze kwentlangano oyikhethayo.

PAN AFRICANIST CONGRESS OF AZANIA		PAC		
SPORTS ORGANISATION FOR COLLECTIVE CONTRIBUTIONS AND EQUAL RIGHTS		SOCCER		
THE KEEP IT STRAIGHT AND SIMPLE PARTY		KISS		
VRYHEIDSFRONT - FREEDOM FRONT		VF-FF		
WOMEN'S RIGHTS PEACE PARTY		WRPP		
WORKERS' LIST PARTY		WLP		
XIMOKO PROGRESSIVE PARTY		XPP		
AFRICA MUSLIM PARTY		AMP		
AFRICAN CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY		ACDP		
AFRICAN DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT		ADM		
AFRICAN MODERATES CONGRESS PARTY		AMCP		
AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS		ANC		
DEMOCRATIC PARTY - DEMOKRATIESE PARTY		DP		
DIKWANKWETLA PARTY OF SOUTH AFRICA		DPSA		

RSA 1994

List PR formulas

- electoral formulas are the mathematical rules by which votes are translated into seats

Why do you need a formula?

List PR Formulas

Two kinds of rules for determining seats

- **largest remainder**

- uses a quota (*e.g.*, votes/seats)
- seats allocated based on quota
- more proportional than highest average (*i.e.*, rewards smaller parties)

	Party A	Party B	Party C	Party D
votes total = 10,000	4000	3000	2500	500
percentage of total vote	40%	30%	25%	5%
If ONE seat	1	0	0	0
percentage of seats	100%	0	0	0
If FIVE seats				
percentage of seats				
If TEN seats	4	3	2	1
percentage of seats	40%	30%	20%	10%

	Party A	Party B	Party C	Party D
votes total = 10,000	4000	3000	2500	500
percentage of total vote	40%	30%	25%	5%
If ONE seat	1	0	0	0
percentage of seats	100%	0	0	0
If FIVE seats	2	2	1	0
percentage of seats	40%	40%	20%	0
If TEN seats	4	3	2	1
percentage of seats	40%	30%	20%	10%

Why choose one formula over another?

- formulas distribute seats based on values deemed important (rewarding small parties, penalizing small parties)
- like all elements of electoral systems historically they are a result of struggles among political elites about what they deem important

List PR formulas

Two kinds of rules for determining seats

- **highest average (divisor)**

- most widely used

- seats allocated by dividing by a series of divisors (e.g., 1, 2, 3, 4)

- less proportional than largest remainder (*i.e.*, rewards larger parties)

Distributing Seats using Highest Average

Party	Vote Total (v)	V/1	V/2	V/3	Total Seats
Party A	4000	4000	2000	1333	
Party B	3000	3000	1500	1000	
Party C	2500	2500	1250	833	
Party D	500	500	250	167	
Total	10,000				

Distributing Seats using Highest Average

Party	Vote Total (v)	V/1	V/2	V/3	Total Seats
Party A	4000	4000 1st	2000 4th	1333 6th	3
Party B	3000	3000 2nd	1500 5th	1000	2
Party C	2500	2500 3rd	1250 7th	833	2
Party D	500	500	250	167	0
Total	10,000				7

A **formula** determines how many seats are awarded to each party

A **party list** determines who occupies those seats

Parties determine who sits in the legislature

- parties *usually* determine who sits in the legislature
 - open lists and free list exceptions to be discussed later
- in list PR parties choose list of candidates; in SMP parties choose candidates

How lists determine who is elected

Party List
1. Nossal
2. Thane
3. Berger
4. Blais
5. Thomson
6. Roberts

**If 5 are elected
in a district**

Variations in List PR

- Threshold
- Closed List
- Open List and Free List
- Additional Tiers

Variations in List PR: Threshold

- effective threshold: the minimum votes needed to have a chance to win a seat
- evident in every system; a product of math

Variations in List PR: Threshold

•Legal threshold:

- legally imposed minimum vote share needed to win a seat
- can be high to discourage small parties (Turkey is 10%)
- can be low to encourage small parties (Israel is 2%)
- can be applied at regional or provincial levels

Variations in List PR: Closed List Systems

•Closed List

- voter chooses among lists of parties
- voter has no say in candidates
- assumes that elections are about choice of parties not candidates

Variations in List PR: Open List Systems

•Open List

- voter can select a candidate within a party list or the party list
- gives voter some say in candidates
- greater voter choice in theory but takes a lot of votes to move up the list

Variations in List PR: Free List Systems

•Free List

•in free lists voters have as many votes as there are seats and can distribute these votes as they wish

Variations in List PR: The Role of Tiers

- a group of seats elected on a different basis from other seats
- first tier may be regional, second tier may be province wide
- DM is smaller at regional level; larger DM at second tier increases proportionality

Relating list PR systems to principles

- **legitimacy:**

- vote share = seat share

- but...

- voting for party list does not reflect Ontario tradition

Relating list PR systems to principles

- **fairness of representation:**

- emphasis on proportionality and

- list is a mechanism to encourage demographic representation

Relating list PR systems to principles

- **voter choice:**

- more electoral parties therefore more choice

- but...

- may not allow voters to support a candidate

Relating list PR systems to principles

- **effective parties:**

- focusses on parties as vehicles for electoral success; encourages small parties over large parties

- but...

- encourages small parties not large parties; could create 'too many' parties

Relating list PR systems to principles

- **stable and effective government:**

- encourages coalition governments and less adversarial environment

- but...

- multi-party coalition might result in more frequent elections

Relating list PR systems to principles

- **accountability:**

- easy to punish or reward parties

- but...

- no local identifiable representative

Relating list PR systems to principles

- **simplicity and practicality:**

- logic of system is simple and easy to understand (votes = seats)

- but...

- mechanics of the system may be complex

Conclusion

- designed to reflect vote share in terms of seat share
- promotes coalition governments and increased number of parties
- list PR is used in more countries than any other system

Ontario



Citizens' Assembly
on Electoral Reform

L'Assemblée des citoyens
sur la réforme électorale