



Electoral System Simulations

PART I

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Objectives

- To give you hands-on experience with different ballot structures and voting methods in Mixed Systems and Single Transferable Vote
- To illustrate the differences in election outcomes which flow from different choices – *e.g.* the district magnitude (DM) and the ratio of single-member to list seats in a mixed system.
- To show how these choices are related to electoral principles

Why are we simulating electoral systems?

- This continues our SMP, AV and List PR simulations from week 1 of the learning phase
- Recall that 'oatmeal cookies' won SMP
- 'Red Grapes' won AV
- In List PR all snack parties won in proportion to their vote share

Why snacks?

- Like parties, you have clear preferences for snacks
- The choice of snacks is non-political
- Allows for different 'candidates' from different 'parties'

Limitations of simulations

- Very small electorate (approx. 120 voters)
- Very small legislature (no more than 20 members)
- Variations imposed after voting does not capture changes to voting behaviour
- Voting for snacks is not the same as voting for parties

Mixed Systems

- Two types:
 - Mixed Member Proportional (MMP)
 - Mixed Member Majoritarian (Parallel)

Mixed-Member Proportional (MMP)

- Also called “mixed corrective”.
- Some representatives are elected from single-member districts; the rest are elected from national or regional party lists.
- The number of seats awarded to each party is determined by its share of the list vote.

Mixed-Member Proportional (MMP)

Continued

- The lists can be open (voters can opt for a particular candidate) or closed (voters opt for the list as ordered by the party).
- The single-member district votes are usually counted in the same way as our current FPTP system.

Mixed-Member Proportional (MMP)

Continued

- The list votes are counted to determine the percentage and number of seats to which each party is entitled.
- The single-member seats won by a party are subtracted from that number, and the remainder are filled from its lists.
- If a party wins one more district seat than its list entitlement, an extra (“overhang”) seat is added to the legislature.

Illustration

- Imagine a jurisdiction with 10 seats:
5 constituency (50%) and 5 list (50%).
- If Party A wins 40% of the vote, it is entitled to 4 seats in that jurisdiction.
- If Party A wins 3 constituency seats, it is entitled to 1 list seat ($4 - 3 = 1$).

Mixed-Member Proportional (MMP)

Continued

- If the list is closed, the top candidate on the Party A list is declared elected.
- If the list is open, the votes for the individual candidates are counted and their rankings may be adjusted. After the adjustment is complete, the top candidate on the Party A list is declared elected.

Mixed-Member Proportional (MMP)

Continued

- If dual candidacies are permitted, and the top candidate on the Party A list has already won a constituency seat, she is struck from the list. The highest-ranking candidate who has not won in a single-member constituency is declared elected.

Characteristics of MMP

- District Magnitude: 1 for the single-member districts, >1 for the list districts
- Ballot Structure: usually categorical
- Electoral formula: usually plurality for the single-member districts and some variant of proportionality for the list districts

Proportionality and MMP

- MMP is the most proportional mixed system, because the list vote determines each party's share of seats. Therefore, MMP “corrects” for the disproportional results in the single-member plurality districts.

Proportionality and MMP

- Larger DM in the list districts → more proportional results.
- Larger % of list seats → more proportional results.
- The electoral formulas used to allocate list seats are more or less favourable to smaller parties.
- If the lists are balanced demographically, more candidates from under-represented groups will be elected.

Voter Choice and MMP

- The voter has two ballots: one for a candidate in the single-member constituency, and one for a party list.
- Open lists provide more choice than closed lists.

Local Representation and MMP

- Every citizen has one MPP from his or her SMP district, which promotes accountability.
- The single-member districts would be larger than the current SMP ridings, unless the legislature is enlarged.

Mixed-Member Majority (MMM)

- Also called “Parallel”.
- Some representatives are elected from single-member districts; the rest are elected from national or regional party lists.
- The number of seats awarded to each party is the sum total of its constituency seats and its list seats.

Mixed-Member Majority (MMM)

- The single-member constituency votes are counted to determine the winners.
- The party list votes are counted to determine what percentage of the list vote was given to each party.

Illustration

- Recall the earlier example of a jurisdiction with 5 single-member seats and 5 list seats.
- Party A wins 3 of the single-member seats.
- Party A also takes 40% of the list vote and is therefore entitled to 2 of the 5 list seats.
- So the total number of seats won by Party A in the jurisdiction is 5:
 - 3 single-member seats plus 2 list seats.

Comparing MMP and MMM

Party A	Seats under MMP	Seats under MMM
40% of the total vote in the mixed district	4 (40%) (3 single-member, 1 list)	5 (50%) (3 single-member, 2 list)

Proportionality and MMM

- Less proportional than MMP: the list vote does not “correct” the disproportionality in the single-member districts.
- The higher the ratio of list seats to single-member seats, the more proportional the results.
- Balanced lists → more MPPs from under-represented groups.

Voter Choice and MMM

- The voter has two ballots: one for a candidate in the single-member constituency, and one for a party list.
- Open lists provide more choice than closed lists.

Local Representation and MMM

- Every citizen has one MPP from his or her SMP district, which promotes accountability.
- The single-member districts would be larger than the current SMP ridings, unless the legislature is enlarged.

MMP Simulation Objectives

- Illustrate how mixed systems work.
- Show that features of mixed systems can be altered to produce different results in terms of:
 1. Party standings in the legislature
(i.e. the share of seats each party wins)
 2. Proportionality

Design Features

- We will explore the effects of the following design features:
 1. Parallel or MMP
 2. Ratio of local to proportional seats
 3. Formula
 4. Legal thresholds

Design Features

- Small Legislature (10 local seats and a maximum of 10 proportional seats)
- Small Electoral districts (approximately 10 voters per district)

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