



**Transcript of Question & Answer Session:
“Understanding Ontario's FPTP System”
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Dr. David Docherty: DD
Dr. Larry Leduc: LL
Dr. Jennifer Smith: JS
George Thomson: GT

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John Townsend	Marcia Soeda
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JR: I'll put two questioner's questions to the panellists and allow them to either respond to both, one or none; because I think it's important for you to have as much opportunity as possible to ask as many questions as possible. So if you raise your hand, I'll just add you to the speakers' list. For the first two, I'll go to Garth, then Edmund.

Garth: Thanks very much. I'm just seeing a trend on some of your comments for all three of you. Dr. Smith mentioned that political actors will work these new rules to their advantage, and I read that as political parties will adapt to survive in whatever system. Dr. Leduc, you mentioned that these systems aren't pure because of political parties, and they'll influence that system, and they'll contaminate it, for lack of better words. But my question is actually for Dr. Docherty. I'm interested in your comments about the size of the legislature, and your comments that the increasing size increases responsibility because it decreases the cabinet career. I agree with that, I can see your point, I think it's great; but I don't know if it's that simple. I wanted to give you an opportunity to comment on it. I'm wondering because an increased size of legislature increases expenses, it also increases the opportunity for more political parties to be active in an increased legislature. I just wanted to give you an opportunity to comment on if you see an optimal size, where these trade-offs can be relatively balanced. Thank you.

JR: Ok, that's great. Thank you. Edmund?

Edmund: My question is posed to Professor Docherty. I wasn't sure, because we haven't talked much about the Assistant Deputy Ministers in bureaucracy, but when you mention that Harris cut seats in Ontario from 130 to 103, he may have added, I think, a lot of work on other MPPs. But does that work go to the Assistant Deputy Ministers bureaucracy? I'm confused on that one, when they do cut the seats, who does the work go to, and who is accountable and responsible, other than the party?

JR: Ok. We've got the first two questions on the size of legislature, and a question relating to bureaucracy, and I'll allow David to begin, but I'll let the others in if they want.

DD: This is great! I'm so happy to be talking about this on a Sunday morning! That's how bad our lives are, that we think this is a perfect way to spend a Sunday morning!

Is there an optimal size? No. I mean, there are people who do work on the kind of 'cube root law' where if you take the population, and find the cube root, you'll get the size of the assembly,

but I think that if you cube anything you'll start to get some sort of linear relationship. So I don't think there is an optimal size; the increasing costs actually, as it turns out, the legislature was more expensive after the decrease in size than it was prior. Why? A) MPPs thought their salary should go up because its decommensurate with their extra work, because now they were dealing with as many constituents as MPs, so they thought they should have similar salaries to MPs, and part of that got quashed in the last election. But B) they had to hire more staff. The overall number of people working in a constituency office throughout Ontario remained about the same or went up slightly because of larger constituencies. Instead of having one and a half constituency assistants, maybe you had two and a half. So the budget for MPPs offices had to go up, and the cost of the Legislative Assembly, if you look at the annual reports of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, it was more expensive after they decreased the size.

So the cost argument, I don't think actually is there in terms of the running of the Assembly. And even if it were, I would argue that 'democracy ain't cheap'. If we want to have a democratic system -- that seems to me to be one of the most fundamental things we have to invest in is our democratic system. And so even if there were increased costs, whether you're looking at first-past-the-post, increasing the size of the Assembly, or PR, I don't think we can put a monetary value on the ability to engage people in questions of citizenship. That to me is something. In terms of optimal size, I don't know. I mean, I could pull numbers out of the air, but some of the work I look in is if you start to think about, and I mean Ontario is better, but at a minimum I would go back to 130, look at 150, 175. I mean, I've argued that we should double the size of the Federal House of Commons, but that's not what you're looking at here.

In terms of who does the work, does more get taken off to the bureaucracy? No, a lot of it gets done not necessarily at the Deputy Minister stage, but the work that does get done in terms of representation gets done by people who work for the MPPs office; so, the constituency office and the Queen's Park office. Finally, I would argue that less work gets done by the MPPs, because they are spread more thinly; they're a critic for one or two different ministries, they are also sitting on one or two committees, and so they are less well prepared to deliberate within committees. I think some of the work just doesn't get done.

JR: Do others want to comment on this? You don't need to...

LL: Yes, I'd like to get in on this. I don't have a strong view on the size of the Legislature, although I agree with much of what David said. But I think the size of legislature itself is a secondary issue; it depends a little bit on the model. For example, if you have a British-style Westminster model, as we have in Ontario, adding a few members to it probably doesn't do much in and of itself to improve representation. But where it does become relevant, is where you try to bring in other formulas for representation into a model.

Several people asked me at the break, and this is why I wanted to comment, what the new idea was about representation that I never quite got to in my opening presentation. The new idea is that you can put these models together; that you can do a bit of both. It begins with Germany in 1949, and that's why it was a new idea. Because in Germany after the war, all these issues were on the table, and there was a body like this that basically constructed the German system with lots of advice from academics, not a Citizens' Assembly but a deliberative process with lots of consultation, and they put together this mixed-model. The idea was that you'd have some proportional representatives, and some representing districts; and that required a larger legislature to do that. So the German Legislature today is 600 members – it's a big legislature. If someone came along and said could it be smaller? You'd say, well yes, of course it could be smaller, but if you wanted to try to do both of those things then you've got to make it bigger. And that's where the issue of size becomes of relevance. It's not so much that any given number is better; it's that if you choose a particular model, you're trying to make it do certain things and

you want it to be more representative, then you might have to expand it in order to achieve that goal.

JS: Just very quickly; this whole smaller legislature idea, they did the same thing in Nova Scotia – it was part and parcel of that 90s era. It was a government idea; people weren't asked about this. It was a part of a cost-cutting thing, and it happened at the municipal level as well. It is just less democracy, no matter how you cut that cake. Secondly, if you want a committee system that kind of working well, in parliamentary systems that is always sort of dodgy, and sometimes the committee system in the legislature doesn't work very well; but it doesn't help if there aren't enough people to go around. It gets back to your "too much to do". A final thing; there is a relationship between the single member plurality system, number of ridings, and level of distortion. I think there is a relationship there; the smaller the number of seats, probably the more distortion there is under the existing electoral system.

And finally, just a quick point; at the Provincial level, in terms of democracy the legislature's it! It's like that small!

JR: Ok. So I'm going to take the next three, who are John Townsend, Marcia, and Tom. John?

John Townsend: My question is for Dr. Leduc. You did in fact just expand on where I was going with my question regarding what you identified as mixed-systems. My question was going to be, if you combine the Westminster system and the Continental system in two and make it a mixed system, would the experience of such a mixed system in fact benefit or enhance the negatives of both systems?

JR: Thank you, John. Marcia?

Marcia: My question is how many constituents do you think an MPP should represent?

JR: Thank you. Tom?

Tom: My question may not be a fair question, but I'm trying to understand and I realize you're grossly simplifying everything. If you were asked on your own, to set up a new system for Ontario, and your life and the future depended on how well it works, what would you come up with? Or if you're not willing to say what you'd come up with, what philosophies and approaches would you be using to select it? It's directed at all of you, if you're willing to answer.

JR: Ok and you have to have an answer by the end of the day!

LL: I could do that!

JR: So we have three questions: one on mixed systems, one on the optimal number of constituents, and one, I'm going to change your question a little bit, on the philosophical approaches, actually is what you said, that should guide your system. So I'll start with Jennifer.

JS: I will respond to the last question. It's just an opportunity for me to mention one point that I don't want to get lost in all of this. One of the big factors that you should, I think, keep in mind when you're thinking about electoral system design, is geography. One of the huge distinctions between Canada, and even Ontario, and the many European countries, for instance that you might look at for guidance as to mixed systems, is simply geography. This is a really big factor, and it's quite likely I think that if a robust form of PR were adopted in this province, unlike PEI, see if PEI were to do the same, my guess is that you'd get different outcomes. I think that in a province the size of Ontario, and in a country the size of Canada, what you have to think about

is the regionally based, new political party. So I would be guided by fears, in that regard, and probably take a 'small-c' conservative approach because of my concern on that front.

DD: I will very quickly touch on the plusses and minuses of a mixed-member system, well, more on one aspect. Larry could probably go on for the rest of the day on this, and Jon will have to rein him in! One of the - I think this is actually a plus - is that, typically when you elect in a mixed member system, the people who get elected off a list who aren't geographical representatives, tend to be in the opposition. Why? Because it balances for the distortion created, particularly if you look at the New Zealand model, they tend to be in the opposition because it balances the distortion of the first-past-the-post system.

What does that mean? Well, it means that they have more time for the scrutiny/accountability function because they are not representing people, per se; they are representing ideas or policies. I think that in terms of accountability that is not a bad thing, but there may be some minuses of that as well.

How many constituents should an MPP represent? Like Jennifer, I'd say it depends. There is no perfect number. In Northern Ontario, it's going to be far fewer, because if you actually want to visit people, it's going to take an awful lot longer to get around. So size of riding matters in terms of physical size or geographic size as well as number of people. It's easier to represent a downtown Toronto riding and get around the riding than it is to represent Rainy River or other areas in northern Ontario, Conora etc. So I think that's important. At the moment, I'd argue that MPPs could probably do a better, more efficient job of representing their constituents today, even with the same number of ridings although I think that number is far too small, if they were drawn with Ontario in mind, and communities of interest, and not Federal. When they drew the federal boundaries, they could care less how many schools or municipalities were in a riding. It didn't matter constitutionally; it's not a matter of Federal jurisdiction. So they'd even be more effective now with the same number of constituents, if they were redrawn with Ontario communities of interest in mind. So it's hard to put a kind of hard and fast number on it.

What philosophy? Boy, that's a great question. I am an advocate of the Westminster parliamentary system, and I think we have to blend the representation and scrutiny function, so that's where I'd be coming from in designing a system that allows elected officials to scrutinize the government effectively, while representing local interests.

LL: I'd be a bit cautious at this stage, how I'd answer that last question, even though I have my own views on this, because you guys are at the education phase, learning about different models, and it's very important that you look at all these different models and form your own impressions of them.

The question about the mixed systems, of course... a mixed system picks up both the advantages and disadvantages of both models, because it is a mixed system. And I think, as the opening presentation pointed out that Jonathan did, there are advantages and disadvantages, and there are advantages and disadvantages in all these models, because no representative system can do everything that we might like it to do. So, when you look at the different systems, you realize that one has some advantages that the other doesn't have, and vice versa; and therefore, you make your decision based on how you prioritize those things. If you give greater priority to a particular characteristic, then that might tip you one way or the other. And since I have my own priorities, of course then I have on that issue. In the mixed system, of course, you say well, I can't really decide therefore I'd like to try and do a bit of both, and I'm willing to accept some of the disadvantages along with the advantages in order to have something that comes down the middle of that larger debate that I was talking about earlier.

Actually, to respond partly to the last question, I would say that if we looked at my research group, and I'm happy to have two of my research students here with me today, my research group produced three models that we looked at for Ontario -- they would all work, so it's not a question of "gee, would this one work, or would this one not work?" You know, they would all work, here, and they're well tested, it's not as if -- and the thing that Jennifer said earlier that Jennifer said earlier that rankled me the most was the 'uncharted waters' thing, I thought boy, if there were ever waters that have been charted, and charter and charted again, it's this question of how these things have worked. This debate has been around for a long time. You look at New Zealand, for example, New Zealand changed its system in 1993, you can see exactly what the effects of those changes are, so I don't agree that gee, if we made this change or that change we haven't any idea what might happen. We have a pretty good idea just by looking at how these models have worked in different places, and what has happened in the countries that have changed their -- she's going to come after me... -- at these systems that have evolved over time, so yes, we know, and we know they would work, but we also know that there would be some effects. And some of us might not like some of those effects, and that's where the debate is today.

JR: I'm going to allow Jennifer just a brief response to that, because we've got a lot of hands up. The next three questions are Elsayed, Patrick, and Laura. Then I have Stephanie, Jordan, and Bryan.

JS: Maybe I'll just say briefly that no, I don't think you can be certain at all. The law of unintended consequences can easily wreak havoc with your most desired expectations and some of the very things that you don't want could possibly happen. Things that you never thought about could happen. That's why I stressed that the one thing you do know is that the political actors who participate in the system, and whose profession it is, that's how they earn their living, they will certainly find the ways to use the system to their advantage in order to advance their interests. That's my first point; my second point is just in terms of why it is that its very difficult to predict what would happen is because there are factors like geography, demography, and past political practice. Those are big, globby kind of tangible/intangible factors, and they are going to be involved. In other words, this is not a tabula rasa here; you come up with a new electoral system, that's great, but you're dropping it into a system, and it's not the same as New Zealand, and it's not the same as Germany or France, or any other country that you care to mention.

JR: We may have to continue this outside! Elsayed?

Elsayed: Dr. Smith, you have mentioned that the electoral system is just part of the political package. If you could, elaborate more on this. And what are the other parties of the political package that should be considered while we make our decision or recommendation? Thank you.

JR: Ok. Thank you. Patrick?

Patrick: My question is for Dr. Smith regarding the uncharted waters of proportional representation. You imply that by increasing the representation of the underrepresented that we may be setting ourselves up for some sort of tumult, and I'm wondering if this is the same kind of argument that opponents of women's suffrage might have used in extending the vote to women that allowing these underrepresented people the opportunity to participate that they would also be upsetting the system?

JR: Thank you. And, Laura -- the last question of this round.

Laura: Dr. Leduc, I actually have a question for you, which can also be followed up by the other doctors as well. I had myself a good laugh when you got to some of the reasons for voter turnout decreasing under the first-past-the-post system, because you described both my strategy for voting, and the reason why I think it's not really as worthwhile for me to vote. I actually wanted to know if these particular strategies and reasons largely relate to a youth population, because I'm curious with how we can describe and manipulate a new system that will increase the youth vote.

JR: Thank you. So we have a question on other elements effect electoral systems, a question on under-representation of women and other minorities, and one on the youth vote. I'll start with Jennifer.

JS: Thank you. These are great questions, I don't know if I can do them justice. I'll start with yours, and to some extent I'm riffing off of David here, because I think one of the points of his presentation was to suggest that the way our system has developed, it has developed in conjunction with some equally important components of the political system. So they include, for instance, the Parliamentary system – I mean, we don't have a congressional Presidential system, we have a Parliamentary one. So, with our electoral system that is an important consideration, the type of representation that you get out of our system, and that's kind of what this woman is talking about as well, in our system, how many MPs who are elected the next day say how delighted they are being elected, and they want to thank their supporters, and by the way, they don't intend for one second to represent any of the people who vote against them. They never say that! They always talk about how they are going to represent their riding. And in fact, I've spoken to a number of them and that's exactly what they think they are going to do. So they've got something in their mind about representation that I think comes from the Parliamentary system and the electoral system that we have.

Political Parties. I'm convinced that whatever system you come up with, even if try to get a voter centred system, and there are versions of PR that really are voter-centered, and I think the BC Citizens' Assembly was attracted to one of them, but you're certainly not going to dislodge political parties from the system. They will be with you always. So you have to take that into consideration as well.

Finally, the type of representative, which is another component of the system, and I think that someone else has already spoken to this, you know, with our political party system and our electoral system and so on, if we look at the type of representative that is dominated that is another issue. And if you're thinking of changing the electoral system, how you might want to kind of change that up.

And that gets me to then the second business about the 'uncharted waters' and I would say two things here. First of all, in this country, for various reasons, we of course do not have a tradition of coalition government. Not only do we not have a tradition of coalition government, I mean you can try to squeeze some of the few isolated examples, but it's tough to even call them coalition governments really, our political actors don't like that idea at all. And the logic of the system, of course, doesn't reward it. So that's a whole pedigree in terms of political practice that would have to be shunted aside. And I think that it would be absolutely fascinating to see how our political leaders would deal with the whole coalition issue; and that, I think, is uncharted or some part of the uncharted waters business.

But the other is the regional political parties, and I just think that this is worth considering. For instance, in PEI, there are some very good reasons why they might want to look at and in fact have looked at some form of PR -- very different, though, than the reasons why people in Ontario might want to. In PEI, it has to do with the fact that the two leading parties are so close; one gets 50%, the other gets 48%, and the 50% with only 2% more take all the seats, or

practically most of them! It's just an unbelievable situation. And there are several versions of PR that would solve that right away and you probably still only would have two political parties. Would there be a similar situation in Ontario? I don't think so. And so you can easily imagine political leaders, they see opportunities, opportunities of representation on the basis of a regional political party, you can practically spot the areas of the province, so that's an example of what I'm talking about. In other words, you may not get the kinds of representation you want unless you figure that into your thinking about what kind of PR version, and type of electoral system you would want. You might want to try to discourage that to the extent that you can in order to get the other kind of representation that has been talked about, which is not territorially based, but in fact becomes more society based, if you like.

DD: I'll be very, very quick. I think Jennifer has covered the other parts of the political package quite nicely. One of the reasons I said upfront that I am agnostic, you know, a mixed-member system, boy I don't know how many youth are out there that don't vote because they don't know the Green Party isn't going to elect anybody, or a University or College party that represents student issues, so I'm really attracted by the notion that some form of mixed-member system might actually encourage students or youth to vote, because if they don't vote before 25, they're checking' out of the system. So anything that we can do to encourage that... so whether that will work or not I'll leave to Larry who knows more about those kinds of issues to comment on.

LL: Yes, I wanted to comment on the youth vote issue, because the question was addressed to me, and I would say that things are only partly connected. The reasons why voting among younger people has been going down faster than it has been going down in the general population are complicated, and they have a lot to do with social change kinds of issues that are only partly connected to representation. But there is some connection, and the connection is the one that you identified, which is that people start to see politics as irrelevant, if they don't see the choices presented to them as meaningful choices. And so, the less competitive politics becomes, the more that tends to depress turnout. And younger people have been fairly quick to pick up on that in many places, and therefore they tend to conclude that politics just isn't very interesting or relevant to them. So that's where the connection comes, but it's a little bit of a tenuous connection because they're really two different phenomena that are going on.

I would say, however, that there are some places where turnout is not going down, and where it is not going down among young people as well. The Scandinavian countries, for example, are interesting cases to look at within which to look at some of those issues. A friend of mine from the University of Aarhus in Denmark wrote a paper at a recent political science conference entitled, "Why is Turnout not Going Down in Denmark?", and there are a couple reasons. One of the reasons is because voting among young people is still fairly high, because that's one of the things that has been depressing turnout in other places. And the other reason is that, of course, Denmark has a pure PR system, with a 2% threshold for representation. So, under that kind of model, it's pretty easy to persuade people that yes, their vote counts, and yes, it's relevant and so on. So there is a connection, but you have to be fairly careful not to overstate the degree to which some of these different phenomena are related.

I agree with almost everything that Jennifer said on the other question on the importance of geography, for example, and those kinds of questions. It's just that I wouldn't characterize that with an adjective like 'uncharted', because we know what our geography is. It's been around a long time, the geography and demography do change, but they change slowly. They change slowly over time. So we could make some predictions under different models about what would probably happen in Ontario, because that geography is important, but it's a relative constant.

JR: Gee, I'm biting my lip because I'd love to jump in here, but there's a lot of questions here so I'll refrain from asking anything. Stephanie, Jordan, and Bryan are the next three.

Stephanie: Hi, I'm Stephanie from Niagara Centre. So it seems that -- let's say we use the system that's in place, and we change it subtly. There's a lot of different ways to change it. Let's say we're concerned about --- I'm on a group right now which is women and minority issues -- you could deal with that with proportional representation, you could also deal with that by going to the parties and setting up legislation in the parties saying you have to have a certain number of women. And this spills over into representing other people because oftentimes minority groups and oppressed groups have the same problems; no one is listening to them, and they band together. So, what would you recommend, where would you recommend the responsibility lie to changing this, and [unintelligible] change for minority groups and women.

JR: Ok, thank you. Jordan?

Jordan: I would just like to know your beliefs in the Citizens' Assembly; particularly, what are some of the main negative aspects to our Citizens' Assembly, because I know there are negative aspects and I know there has been some negative press. But I'd be really interested to hear that in your honest comments, because it will help us focus on areas where we may fall short otherwise.

JR. Thank you, Jordan. Bryan?

Bryan: It seems that the emphasis placed on the weakness of the coalition government or minority government, but I feel that the Canadian experience has been quite positive, particularly the coalition government in Ontario during the mid-1980s. Would you have a comment on the real background and reasons?

JR: Ok. So we've got three questions: One on the implications of mandatory seats for women and minorities; the second question on beliefs in the Citizens' Assembly, especially the negative aspects; and third is the role of informal coalitions in Canadian politics, particularly in Ontario. So again, I'll encourage the panellists to respond to any, none or all of them. Why don't we start with Larry first.

LL: On the question about representation of women, there's a danger there that that starts to sound a little bit like tokenism that would be quite ineffective. Just because political parties nominate a few more women, particularly when they nominate them in areas where they have no chance to win, I don't think that you've really made any gains at all. Of course, they bump up right away against the constraints of the First-Past-the-Post system. So leaning on the parties to nominate more women, they're happy to do that, because they will look good, but it isn't a very effective strategy.

Secondly, of course, you're always up against the problem of incumbency. If you're trying to bring changes into any system, incumbent members have a stake in that: they want to keep their seats; they're not going to step aside to improve the gender balance in the legislature. So, maybe over a long period of time, if you keep pushing and pushing and pushing you'll get some small effects, but it's not easy to tinker with First-Past-the-Post and get it to achieve some of those societal objectives.

The coalition question is pretty interesting. The government, of course, in Ontario in the late 80s was not a coalition; it was simply an agreement between the 2 parties not to defeat the government for a two-year period of time. Now, that's a little bit different, it's different when you have a condition like that which is quite rare in our system, to where you actually have a functioning coalition. And of course it's perfectly correct, I think as you pointed out in your opening remarks that PR means coalition governments. I wouldn't contest that at all. But that's one of the things people like about it, is because it does produce greater accountability, and the coalition partner often keeps the governing party in check by threatening to walk out of the

coalition, because that would greatly increase the costs for the governing party if it loses their coalition partner. But that's another one of those institutional checks that functions pretty well in coalition systems.

So yes, I mentioned New Zealand earlier as an example, and one of the things that happened in New Zealand is it moved from having fake majority governments, you know majority governments elected with 35 or 36% of the vote and a majority of the seats in the early 80s, to in the 90s having coalitions. And it was a difficult transition for the politicians, because they weren't used to coalition politics. They had a few rather rocky years in there, of simply learning how to manage coalition governments. But after the first two elections, it now works pretty well, and they've become accustomed to coalition politics just as European politicians have. Managing the coalition, of course, is one of the items of political business that is always on the agenda in these systems.

DD: Very quickly. Larry has handled the first question very well, so I won't comment on that. Comments on the Citizens' Assembly. I think you're doing a great job. One of the things I like about the Citizens' Assembly, and I think you should trumpet this, is that it's a citizens' assembly, and to get back to the question of youth voting, I think, and I've only got anecdotal evidence for this not scientific evidence, I haven't crunched the numbers, but I think that a lot of the responsibility for decreased voter turnout among youth lies with the fact that the politicians have taken away the word 'citizen' from their vocabulary. Every time they say 'taxpayer' I cringe, because every time they say 'taxpayer' they are essentially saying to anyone who is a college or university student, "come back and talk to me once you've got a job". I think that nothing decreases voter turnout among youth than politicians who use the word 'taxpayer' when they mean the word 'citizen'.

Now, the fact that this is actually a Citizens' Assembly, we're talking about you as citizens, because citizens have a two way responsibility; we have responsibilities to the state, and the state has responsibilities to us. When you use the word 'taxpayer', it's all one way; the state has to answer to me. It's the fact that you are a citizens' assembly, that you're taking the time shows that you're putting your responsibility back into the state. That's perhaps a glib comment, but I think that's fine.

Comment on coalition government. I was a legislative intern at Queen's Park, where you work for half a year with a government backbencher, and half a year with an opposition backbencher as a research assistant. Fresh out of university with my BA, and I was told that Ontario politics was dull. I started in 1984 in September, and they said, nothing ever happens in Ontario politics. Well, by the time my internship finished, David Peterson was being sworn in on the front lawn of Queen's Park, and it was so much fun I decided to put off my MA for 2 years, and hang around for that 2 year period. And it was interesting! It wasn't a coalition government, it was an accord, and the agreement between the NDP and the Liberals was that the NDP would not vote against the government on matters of confidence to cause an election for a two year period in exchange for agreeing to a certain legislative package. But beyond things that weren't spelled out in that accord, everything was up for grabs. And it was a fun place to be. The government and the legislature actually mattered. David Peterson, everyday he went into the Legislative Assembly, he didn't know whether he'd get what he wanted or not. And that was fun --- that actually was a fun time to be in there. The committees were very excited because they could do things, they could defeat the government, and sometimes the NDP and the Conservatives defeated Liberal packages; beer and wine and corner-stores being one of those. So I don't think we should be afraid of minority government, or coalition government. I think that this -- we've got a minority government in the House of Commons right now, and it seems to be working, the last one wasn't working, but I think that is because that was dysfunctional. It's not because the government per se is dysfunctional. I think minority/coalition government is very sensitive to people's concerns.

JS: Just on the issue of the coalition; one of the important components of the definition of a coalition government is that all of the parties have representation in the cabinet, and that's one of the key features that distinguishes a coalition government from say, a minority government. We have now at the Federal level have a minority government, well – of course you're going to say David Emerson, but he became a Conservative – so there's only Conservatives in Prime Minister Harper's government. So it's important to make that distinction between coalition and minority governments.

Just on the point about the Citizens' Assembly, I think that one of the key components of success is how representative you are, and from what I've heard is that the system has produced a pretty representative group, and you're able to deliberate and that's the fantastic thing because we hardly ever have direct democracy in this country. There are so few examples of it, so I think it's great that you're able to deliberate on this question in an informed way. I don't see what the negatives are there, but I haven't read the local press for whatever criticisms they might have.

On the women and minorities question, this is extremely interesting. Certainly, one of the ways you can get at it is through a system of proportional representation that includes lists. It is, in a way, the responsibility of the political parties, and they haven't stepped up to the plate in this country, and most people who have studied this would certainly say that they haven't. Now, a list PR system is a way of giving them a huge boost, if at the same time it is accompanied by legislation that requires them, for instance, to have a certain percentage of women, and if I'm not mistaken, Scandinavian countries do that. There simply has to be 40 or 50%. And if they work by the list system, then of course it becomes a matter of internal party politics. So there are some arguably negative components of that, but at the same time if the leadership is required by law to do this, then that is a way of injecting that kind of representation into the system.

JR: We have time for three more questions, and that's perfect because that's...

GT: Can I, as the Chair, just ask a question here? It's something I didn't do last week... We're almost at a point where we were going to break into small groups... is the will of the Assembly to do that? Or would you like to go a bit longer with these questions? How many would like to continue this a bit longer past the time when we would move? I see a consensus. So we'll go longer with the questions.

JR: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So we'll go to Pat, Pam, and Salvacion. Pat?

Pat: Yes, my question is for Dr. Docherty. When you were talking about the UK Parliament, you mentioned something about the aspirations of the elected members not being toward Cabinet. Could you explain that a little better?

JR: Thank you. Pam?

Pam: First of all I'd like to welcome all three of you here. This has been very interesting and educational. I've now set myself a new goal that by May I would like to be educated enough to sit there and have a debate with all three of you.

JR: You will be, don't worry.

Pam: My question is, my concern is our decrease in voting, and statistics do show that voting has decreased, not only with the youth, but the poor. Do you feel that the reason this has

occurred is that there is not enough focus do to a perceived lack of their interest, do you feel that perhaps we're focusing on the elderly maybe through our campaigning etcetera?

JR: Thank you. Salvacion?

Salvacion: My thoughts are in line with hers. We have a problem with the turnout of voters. Australia is not having this problem; they are successful, but is this because they are fining their citizens? Should we give our voters an incentive so that they will come over and voice their opinions, because their opinions will have adverse effects towards our electoral system? Thank you.

JR: Ok, thank you. So we have three questions on Cabinet and representation, decreasing voter turnout, and mandatory voting or voter incentives. David, why don't we start with you?

DD: Sure. Well, in the UK Parliament, the argument I would make is that while their Cabinet has got various Senior Cabinet Ministers, Junior Cabinet Ministers, Parliamentary Secretaries, etc. But with 650 MPs, when you get elected you know that the likelihood of you becoming a Senior Cabinet Minister is very small because of the size of the Assembly. Therefore, that means a whole bunch of things: a) you have to find a role for yourself, so you tend to develop what we call a legislative or a parliamentary career, a career as a parliamentarian as opposed to a career as a Cabinet Minister in Waiting. So you tend to develop expertise in one or two policy areas because you work through the committee system, and you hope eventually – I think they still have Cabinet ambition, but they're also more realistic that it might not be satiated – so, they develop their expertise through the committee system and hope that that might lead to something. At the same time, with all those numbers they also have a three line whip system, and I won't get into the details of that, but if you ever want to e-mail me, ddocherty@wou.ca – it's on the website, but they have a three line whip system which means you can vote against the government on certain matters, and so just given the size of the Assembly it is much more likely that you can have a few people voting against your government and still survive. So it's less likely that the government will fall.

Pat: If we come up with a system that has a large number of members, it might have the same...?

DD: We can't necessarily predict the future, our culture certainly is one of tighter party discipline than Great Britain, and Australia, which has a different version but also very high party discipline. So changing the system alone might not make a difference, but I think that anything that is done to decrease the desire of members to get in Cabinet, or make them appreciate the chances that they won't get in, actually has benefits for our legislative system. So that's where I'm coming from on that one.

Decreasing voter turnout, Larry could probably address that, other than to say that yes, elderly people are much more likely to vote, and when one of the largest issues facing citizens is healthcare, you know, wow, that's what politicians are going to respond to, because that's where the votes are. So I think that's the case. Mandatory voting in Australia, well that's certainly something to look at. Other countries have mandatory voting as well --- Larry could probably give the long list of other countries that do. I think that if you go down that road you have to have an opportunity of people either putting in none of the above or having some opportunity to register a protest vote, because now we have no idea how many people are fed up with the system, and how many people quite frankly are just lethargic.

JS: Yes, it's such an interesting question about the youth and voting amongst the youth as a category, and to say the poor or the working poor. The single member plurality system, being a territorially based system, can submerge those voices in riding after riding after riding. And so,

when you think that maybe in a robust form of proportional representation there might arise a party that explicitly mobilizes the votes of poorer people with the idea of giving them strong representation in the Legislature. The bias of the existing system encourages a party like, say the NDP to --- it is always having this argument internally whether or not it should be more centrist and so on. But why is that? Well, the why is because they want to go over the top and get to that vast middle in terms of votes so that they can have a shot at forming government.

So, I guess that would be the question that you would ask yourself, you know, in a system of proportional representation that allowed that kind of a party to come forward and mobilize that vote, and whether that in turn be an encouraging factor for voters. And I think --- and I'll just say that and stop --- that the answer then, would be, it depends on how effective the representation turns out to be at the Legislative level, and it also does depend on some technical factors, and just as a quick example, in the last election in Nova Scotia the Conservative government held that election when most of the students had finished the spring term, and so they were gone. So, if you had looked at the youth vote, what is it, up to age twenty-four? I'm not sure what the cut-off is when you look at the category of voters for the youth vote... but at any rate, certainly the university vote, which you know should have been very high in Halifax, where in the HRM there are at least three universities, probably four, it collapsed because they were all gone. So there's always technical factors which cannot be overlooked here when this issue is being discussed.

JR: Larry?

LL: Compulsory voting is kind of a side issue. A few countries use it, Australia and Belgium being the best examples. A few others use it and don't enforce it, which is a kind of peculiar arrangement, so there's no fun - if you don't vote nothing happens to you. But it probably isn't an issue in Canada, I would say, I don't think there's much support for it. The Chief Electoral Officer, after the election before last one, gave a press conference and he floated the trial balloon about compulsory voting in Canada, and the reaction to it was so hostile that he immediately denied having said any such thing and moved onto other questions. So I don't think that we're ever going to see a groundswell of support for compulsory voting here in Canada. Actually, there is a view out there among some people that it might contravene the Charter, so the minute you try to bring it in, someone would bring a suit under the Charter and probably get a court to agree with them. So it's kind of a non-question here, and I don't think it's a solution anyway to the bigger problem of declining turnout. Because the declining turnout problem, if you see it as a problem, has a lot of different things embedded in it, and one of them is young people's voting. And it tends to be somewhat self-reinforcing over time, as I think was pointed out in the earlier discussion that voting holds up pretty well among older people. It hasn't declined much among the older age groups. And so therefore, politicians know that, so when they go out they take positions that are going to appeal to who they think are the voters. And when young people listen to the political debate that takes place in elections, they don't hear the things that are relevant to them, and they're less likely to vote. So over time, that starts to reinforce itself.

How to change it? There are no quick fixes to it, I don't think in Canada or anywhere else, because it tends to play itself out over long periods of time. So at some point it will plateau, and then it will begin to trend up a little bit, and then some of the factors that are more positive will start to kick in, and it will probably come back up at some point. But whether it ever gets in this country or in this province down to levels that we consider critical for the health of our democracy, I'm not sure. People would disagree about that; some people think that when voting turnout starts to drop below 60% that there's a real problem, where others might not see that as the critical issue even though they might favour measures that would produce higher turnout.

I think I'll stop there because I think the other questions have more or less been answered, and actually the question about PR, Jennifer gave a very good answer to that because if you think about a party's strategic position, if you're a party and you have to nominate someone to a constituency you're going to look at that constituency and make some judgement about who you think might be a good candidate. If the constituency has a large minority group, of some kind, the party might take the risk of nominating a candidate from that minority, because they might think that it would get the votes. But imagine how that contrasts with the strategic position of a party under a PR system that they could nominate, let's say 8 candidates in an 8 member constituency. Don't you think that they'd nominate 4 men and 4 women? Don't you think that if there was an important minority group in that constituency that they would try to get someone from that group on their list? Don't you think they might find a young person to balance out the age distribution of the list? Of course! Parties are strategic, and they play the political game with the tools that they have to work with. And if you give them first-past-the-post and they scratch their heads and say "we've got to put somebody up here, who would be a good candidate in this district," they look at it that way. If you give them a list system and you say, "go out there and construct your list to give your party their best chance to pick up a couple of seats", of course they're going to put up a young person on it, or a woman, or any other group that looks advantageous.

DD: The best example of that probably was once again, Prince Edward Island, where the main difference is religion, Catholic and Protestant, and it wasn't that long ago that there were 16 ridings in PEI and everybody elected two members, and the Conservatives always put up one Catholic and one Protestant, and the Liberals always put up one Catholic and one Protestant!

JR: This gets back to Elsayed's question and the conversation that Jennifer and you Larry, had about other factors. So you're right that electoral systems sort of constrain and motivate parties to behave strategically, but aren't there other things such as political culture, and I think this is what Elsayed was getting at, that also are overlaid on top of a system? And I'm thinking of France, for example, that routinely violates the principle of zippering their lists in EU elections because of a political culture, arguably. Are there other factors? Anyone?

DD: One could probably make the case that in the Scandinavian countries there is a cultural difference that yes, more women are elected, and part of it is law, but also, from what I understand, and again this isn't an area of my own expertise, but I have been talking to people who have looked at it, there's more women in corner offices and corporate boardrooms in the Scandinavian countries than there are in North America. So there are cultural differences that will play and impact; it's a more egalitarian society to begin with, and so those differences tend to be ameliorated anyway.

LL: I could just maybe comment briefly on that. I'll give an example, because this is along the lines of what Jennifer was giving examples earlier on; Norway, for instance. Norway has always had a proportional list system, but if you go back 30 or 40 years it didn't have a terribly high proportion of women in its legislature. That changed in the 1970s, and they didn't change the electoral system, what happened was the Labour Party, which at that time was in opposition, and the Labour Party had a policy conference and they passed a resolution which mandated the party to have at least 40% women on its list. And they also mandated that the women had to be alternated with the men on the list. But they were in opposition at that time, so when Labour came back to power in the late 70s, all of a sudden they discover that their caucus was 40% women. The other parties looked at this, and they saw that Labour had gained a political advantage by doing that, and so they immediately went out and did the same thing. No change in the system, but it became the political culture shifted in the direction of disadvantaging women in that earlier period, to advantaging them in the latter period just because of the behaviour of the parties within the system. I think that's an example of where party strategy and institutional considerations start to come together. Turkey, which also has a PR system, does

very poorly with the representation of women, for reasons of political culture having nothing to do with the institutions.

JR: We have time for two more questions --- we'll take Peter and Karl. Peter?

Peter: Peter Saroka, Lambton-Kent-Middlesex, one of the things we haven't talked about here is the role that money plays in elections. You have a candidate that somehow has raised five-thousand dollars towards their campaign, then another candidate who has a million dollars in their campaign kitty, and I wonder where that money came from, what influence that has on them? You have big business playing a role behind the scenes, big drug companies, banks, whatever. What do other countries do about the money issue? What are your thoughts on the influence of money on elections?

JR: Thank you. Karl, you have the last question.

Karl: It's just a comment on the fact that the nomination processes in many ridings are seen to be tainted. Do you think that is a factor on the voter turnout if there is an issue in that riding? The other one, many newspaper articles after an election comment that this government was thrown-out with what was a negative vote. Can you comment on that? We're looking at an electoral system – how can we come up with a system where the voter goes out to vote for rather than against?

JR: Ok. Great, thank you, Karl. So we have two questions, 1) on the role of money in elections, and maybe I can ask the panellists to speak about the influence of money in different electoral systems; and 2) both party nomination in different systems but also the role of mandates in elections. So, who would like to start first? Jennifer, would you like to start first?

JS: Just on the question of the money, Canada is as good an example as any for you, because we've kind of run the gamut from an unregulated system in the pre-Second World War period, well, I shouldn't say it wasn't regulated but the regulations simply weren't enforced, so corporate money and so on, union money, etc. that was all very important – personal wealth, and so on. Then, in 1973, there was quite a dramatic change at the Federal level and all the provinces kind of fell into line, and so we had strict spending rules and some subsidies, public subsidies and so on, and I think that as these things go, and money is always a big issue, but as these things go, it wasn't too bad at all. Then of course, under the Chrétien government the big change to ban corporate donations and so on, union donations, all together, and so now it's a question of individual donations, and that has opened up a whole new set of activities at the financial front, and we have yet to see really the full flowering of the conduct of political campaigns under this new system. And it may be actually having some consequences that people hadn't expected; and I say that only because the big worries about corporate donations and so on may have been well founded, but if you compare them to say, the campaign finance in the United States, there isn't the remotest comparison. At any rate, is that related to electoral system? I don't necessarily --- well, it's not unrelated, but I think that legislatures can have quite a range of options that they can choose from in terms of regulating campaign finance.

On the nomination processes and are they tainted, well, this is interesting too in the Canadian case because for a long period of time, according to Professor Ken Carty at UBC, many of the local riding associations of the various parties were quite independent, and because of some of the wrinkles in the campaign finance law, over a period of time it wasn't the candidate who built up the kitty, but it was the local riding associations, some of them building up quite a bit of money that they could use for subsequent campaigns. So, is the process tainted when there are parachutes or when you have really competitive nomination contests? Well yes, but you know regulation does try to catch up, and I think it is certainly the Chief Electoral Officer at the Federal level who has been campaigning for a long time to bring candidate nomination contests under

his aegis. He's gotten there, hasn't he? Ok, he has. So I think your point is certainly well taken, but I do think that the regulatory machine does try to catch up to these developments.

DD: Very quickly on the... Jennifer handled the money and elections – I think we do a pretty good job of regulating with expense limits and how much people can spend. Of course, the problem with spending limits is that they could quickly become spending goals. Right, so if you've got a three million dollar spending limit, then you try to spend all three million. The Globe had a great piece on the difference between the Federal Liberal leadership and the Alberta Conservative leadership, where there are no rules out there and no one has to disclose where the money comes from. And there are two very, very different ones.

In terms of the nomination process if it's tainted, does that have an outcome on the election within that riding? I'm not convinced it does, I think what it often will do is indirectly it may. If you have a tainted process, for example, and you've got a lot of long time party activists who have a candidate parachuted into their riding, they may decide not to work as hard for that candidate. And so it may indirectly have an impact on the election outcome in that riding because you don't have – I mean one of the things about a robust nomination process is that you want to sign up members, and bring them in, and keep them in. If you start to parachute people in, people might say "I've been doing all the hard work, and I don't mind doing it, but now I'm being told by the central party who to campaign for". So I think that indirectly it might have an impact on electoral outcomes.

JR: Ok, thank you. Larry? I'm going to put those two questions together in my answer, even though it seems initially that they're about two different things. Because what it really involves is the way in which elections have changed in modern society in terms of how they work. And I was talking earlier in my introductory remarks about the origins of the British system, how it originated from a time in Britain in the early 19th Century when voters were mandated to elect someone from their borough or shire or county or whatever to send to Westminster and represent them. And for a long time, British elections or elections in any parliamentary system were fought by local candidates in local ridings, and they had their own local organizations that they put together, and they raised their own money to bring that element in, and they were essentially local contests.

Now, if you fast-forward to the present, elections don't look like that anymore at all, in parliamentary systems or anywhere else. They are fought by parties. They are fought by the leaders on television, and that's where the big money comes in, because that's what's expensive. And the local campaign still exists, but just because a local candidate raises a million dollars doesn't mean that it will give a big advantage in that kind of politics. It simply may not matter. But it may matter a lot that the party is getting contributions from all over the place, because that might have a lot of influence. So, if we look realistically at how elections are fought today, yes, money matters, but it matters at a different level and the electoral system itself probably is not fundamental to that debate.

GT: Ok, so I'm about to state the obvious, which is the fact that we took the extra time, and the fact that we covered so much ground in the questions and answers, is proof of the tremendous expertise our three experts have demonstrated this morning. What a wonderful job they've done for us. So I thank all three of them, and I'm going to do three other things: 1) we are going to go to the small groups, just for you to get a chance to in a small number to talk about what you've heard, and what (if any) issues it has raised for you, or what (if any) ideas you have in your head as a result of what you've heard today. I need to secondly make my really important point, which is there are no decisions until the final decisions! So whatever you know today is what you know today, and next week you might know something else and think something else, and we're halfway through the learning phase. I want to really emphasize that, and I know that our three experts would encourage you to feel that way. Lastly, you're not coming back here before

you go to the bus, so if you could complete your survey or take it with you to the room and complete it, it's really important to complete the survey, because we're going to learn so much from those surveys. So thank you again to our three experts this morning, and you're off to the small groups. You can leave your name cards here, because we'll be gathering them up.

Small Group Discussion:

Gordon (Facilitator)
Louise (Facilitator)

Taylor Gilbert
John Toll
Laura Antonio

Darcie Beckley
Georgette Amadio



Gordon: I think you folks lucked out in terms of the panellists. I thought their talks were enlightening, clear, and articulate – they give you, as far as I could see, the advantages and disadvantages of moving to different systems. I took note of Professor Leduc's opening comment that I take some comfort from, anyway. He said that, look -- the complexity of these systems that you guys are going to be debating should not be overestimated. There are simple issues at stake, at the level of fundamentals the issues are clear and they have to do with values and principles. Of course, when you do get into the mechanics and the details, yeah you can drill down to the point of complexity, but really these are systems that temp and tried, and they're out there, and thought that was kind of a reassuring comment. But I'll shut up there, and just simply – unless Louise wants to talk and put introductory comments – let's just pour forth for the next twenty or twenty-five minutes. You don't have to raise your hand or look at me, just talk!

Taylor: I thought that the sessions were just excellent. The things that were said weren't covered in our readings, from what I've read. So there was just so much new there. I became much more comfortable and less fearful of PR when I learned that these coalition governments, when the governments change, that they don't basically fall and a new election is held, it think that's terrible especially with what is happening in Italy. Apparently they can just change the make up of the coalition and carry on, and they're much more stable than I had anticipated or thought from my past readings. So I really learned a lot today.

Gordon: Yes, I thought his invitation to rethink the definition of stability was worthwhile for us to consider.

Darcie: I completely agree. That was fascinating – in fact, there was a lot of different points that they made that I hadn't thought of in those terms before. I thought that it was really interesting to break it all down and say what we're really arguing about is the difference between majority governments and coalition governments. I thought that was an interesting way to look at it.

Gordon: It's a framework for your deliberations for the next little while. Ok.

John: Just a point that we were discussing at the last session here about charisma and that whole thing – I think the last speaker nailed something I thought pretty succinctly in saying that elections aren't fought in the ridings; they're fought by the leaders on television. Which goes along with some of our discussion about that --- is that good? And how is our system of voting going to affect that, or is it? I'm not sure on that one...

Taylor: Our media seems to have quite the effect on our elections, and if the media just wants the top three parties represented, and they seem to have the power to say yay or nay to that in

many respects, then your minority parties under the PR system are still at a great disadvantage, I would think. If TV debates are so crucial, and they seem to be...

Gordon: You give the media that much clout to determine who the...

Taylor: Yes, yes I do

Gordon: Does anyone else share that --- the media never came up this morning, but does anyone else share that outlook on the role of the media?

Darcie: I think the media has a really strong role in the [unintelligible]

Georgette: I've found that a lot of newspapers choose one particular party where they will put them on the front page and anyone else is on the back page by the obituaries. Whether that's symbolic...

Gordon: I was going to say, is that symbolic, or...

Georgette: Sure. But that's the way it seems to me, like right now we've got the municipal elections getting ready, and the forerunners are always up on the front page and anybody else who has a little bit of a different opinion are in the middle to the back, or maybe even mixed up in the sports pages somewhere. So that's pretty much the same with every newspaper, but with their particular choice is on the front page, where their second choice is further on down the cycle.

Gordon: So you see that as something that perhaps the electoral system, no matter what the configuration it takes, can't break that kind of media bias?

Georgette: It depends on the editor of the particular paper. They may not intentionally do it, but somewhere along the line there is still... well, they try to have it not look intentional, but it still works out that it is that way. Or it seems to me that way.

Laura: If you look at the leaders' debate, that's a pretty interesting thing right there, because the leaders debate is only including of the leaders of those major parties, so it absolutely seems from the get-go that the Green Party, which you know, maybe only represents or has representatives from 11 different ridings running, if they're lucky they may get one seat, it absolutely assumes that they will not be a contender in that leadership -- they won't be able to form a government anyway. So in that particular exercise of it, the media is already excluding all the other small independents and anybody else from being able to demonstrate what their issue -- what their platform is on --- on those particular important issues. They're just excluded.

Gordon: Is there a system that would enable smaller parties like that that would strengthen the capability of those smaller parties to attract media attention? Is there some kind of arrangement that can be made that would strengthen their ability to capture attention?

Laura: The media likes, I think, three-ring circuses. So if you had a party that came along and said "hey, from now on, we're going to legislate that on Sundays, everyone has to wear a hat" that's going to get some media attention for about 5 minutes. But it's only getting attention because it's ridiculous; they're not giving it attention because it's a serious proposition --- it's because it's something ridiculous. So, for example, when the last election came around and the Marijuana Party got a little bit of exposure, it's because they wanted to legalize marijuana. It's not because we heard -- like, did they have an idea on anything else? No, as far as I know they didn't. Maybe they did, but the assumption is that they're not going to get into power, try to

legislate one thing, and then just sit back and say “ok, let’s just party for the rest of the month”. Then again, maybe they would!

Taylor: I think as far as leadership debates go, if you had 12 parties running, and you tried to get them all in the leaders’ debate, no one would bother watching. They want to see the contenders; they don’t want to listen to the people that they don’t see as having any real chance. I’m not sure how you would ever overcome that in a television leadership debate.

Darcie: If small parties have the opportunity to affect legislation, then they’re going to be taken more seriously by the media, and by everybody.

Gordon: If I could perhaps bring the discussion to our speakers this morning, there were a couple of comments that were made that really jumped out at me, and I’m hoping to get your reaction to. One was Professor Smith’s warning, I guess you could say, about moving into ‘uncharted waters’ with the new arrangement, whatever it is. She spoke of unintended consequences that we simply can’t foresee, and it occurred to me as a very ominous warning. What do we make of that? And the other comment that I thought that was quite striking was Professor Leduc’s observation that Canadians never really had, or at least Ontarians, never really had a chance to discuss and decide on the system that we want for ourselves. We sort of got the system, inherited it, it was given to us by Britain, and we really haven’t perhaps developed a home-grown version of the electoral system. I don’t know – what do you think of those two comments? Should we be approaching a new arrangement with the kind of fear that Professor Smith left us with? Or should we take a chance? Or is there a middle ground? And what about this inheriting this system from Britain? Is it worth giving some thought to that maybe it is time for a home-grown system?

Georgette: Isn’t that what this Assembly is all about?

Gordon: Well, exactly!

Georgette: We are, right now, in uncharted waters, because we are trying to get something going, hopefully a change, maybe we will decide to leave it. But until we get there, we are in uncharted waters!

Gordon: Yes, the Citizens’ Assembly itself is a new thing.

Laura: I see the questions that you just proposed a little differently. Instead of whether or not we’d choose a system that might be completely different and have different implications that we didn’t anticipate, or whether we’d be a little more conservative and make very minor, if any, changes just because we have a system that has been in place for X amount of time, and it seems to work, more or less-ish, with what we’ve wanted to do. The way I see it is the recommendation we make is going to be one that will be palatable to Ontarians. So we may find after all of our education and all of the learning phase, and the discovery phase and all these things, that there is another system out there, and we may unanimously all agree, which I sincerely doubt, but unanimously all agree that X system, which happens to be incredibly drastically different, is the best system that we could possibly have to fulfill all of our values in an order or a ranking that seems to satisfy everybody. And if it’s such a dramatic difference from what Ontarians themselves are used to, Canadians as a whole are rather conservative. To go straight from tepid water to freezing cold or very hot is going to be quite a big step to ask them to take. So the way I see it is to at least suggest something that may have wonderful ramifications, as far as we can see them, but have Ontarians say “you know what, that’s way too big a step for us to take”, and then we end up with the same system we’ve got. Or are we going to end up maybe making concessions so that we can try to push through a

recommendation that might make a minor change, rather than start with something quite a bit larger, because we think it might make it more palatable.

Taylor: We are trying to find something that is saleable, obviously, and one thing that I would like to see is something that lessens the power of the Prime Minister's Office to control everything. Listening to the speaker this morning, [unintelligible] I thought that maybe this idea of coalitions would help that, because I didn't realize that coalitions resulted in mandatory Cabinet Ministers from different coalition parties. But if that's a fact, then I think that it would really help my problem with such a powerful PMOs office, and I'm probably a whole bunch more open than before I heard the speakers, to some form of PR entering into it.

Gordon: It seems to give another slant to the definition of accountability as we have been using it.

Darcie: I wanted to make reference to this issue of making a decision based on fear, and I don't think that it is ever really productive to do that. I find that even in my own life, that you can be aware of the possible ramifications of making certain decisions, but not to make decisions because of that is, in my opinion, kind of a faulty way of processing things. The idea that Canadians are conservative, I think may come from the idea that we're seen that way because we haven't been empowered, because we haven't had that availability of choices in the government. The people that are in power are afraid of losing it, and the people that aren't in power aren't motivated to assert themselves. So it appears that we are conservative, but are we? We don't know --- we haven't really given that a chance.

Gordon: Good point. Does anybody want to pick up on that?

John: To go back to Taylor's comment and talk about coalitions, coalitions only happen when there isn't a fair majority to start with, but if there is, the coalition doesn't do anything. So all these comments about coalitions are dependent on a minority...

Taylor: But under a PR system we are much more likely to have a minority situation or coalition if you will than you would have under first-past-the-post systems.

Laura: Under a system where there are more parties and therefore you are more likely to have a split vote in that way, unless you have a majority, it seems that that actually answers some of the questions we have in regards to minority, special interests, promoting the youth to come out and vote as well, and all that. So that might be that aspect to keep in mind as well.

-----End of Tape-----