

# Proportional Representation (PR-List) Systems

Weekend 4 : Session 1

# Basic Principles

- Designed to *distribute seats* rather than to *elect individuals*
- Contestants are political parties
- Provide parties with share of seats equal to their share of votes

# Key Elements: District Magnitude

- Greater than 1 and can be as large as the whole assembly
- Not all districts need have same DM
- Can have several *tiers* of districts at which seats are allocated from votes

# Key Elements: Formula

## *Largest Remainder systems*

- Establish QUOTA
- Calculate # quotas won by party
- Last seat to biggest remainder

## *Largest Average systems*

- Divide votes by successive numbers
- Seats to parties with highest average vote

LR systems better for smaller parties than LA ones

# Key Elements: Formula

- Different formula can be used in different tiers
- Unused votes can be pooled at higher tiers
  - *Apparentement*
- *THRESHOLDS* identify minimum success needed for any seats
  - Different levels
  - Different sizes
  - Different kinds

# Key Elements: Ballot Structure

- Voters choose between lists of party candidates
- Closed lists – elected in order on list
- Open lists – voters indicate candidate preference
  - Choose either candidate or party *Belgium*
  - Choose among candidates (a party signal) *Finland*
  - Choose more than one candidate or party *Switzerland*
- National allocations can use regional lists  
*Netherlands*

# PR System Design

■ **DM:** Size? How many? Tiers? Tier use?

	Seats	districts	range	average
<i>Austria</i>	183 (~13)	9 (2)	6-39	20.3
<i>Belgium</i>	212 (~7)	30(9)	2-33	7.1
<i>Denmark</i>	175 (40)	23 (1)	2-15	5.9
<i>Spain</i>	350	52	1-33	6.7

# PR System Design

## ■ **Formula:**

Which?

At what level?

What quota or divisors?

Threshold? If so, what kind?

## ■ **Ballot Structure:**

Closed or Open – if open how?



# PR System Design

- ✓ Larger DM → better proportionality
- ✓ More than 1 Tier helps small parties
- ✓ Largest remainder, Hare quota most Proportional
- ✓ PR differences small compared to PR-Plurality differences
- ✓ Closed lists maintain leadership control
- ✓ Limited voter-politician connections

# PR Systems

***Israel*** DM=120 LA-d'Hondt Th=1.5% List= closed  
*2003 GE 13 parties Largest @ 29%*

***Holland*** DM=150 LA-d'Hondt Th=0.67%  
List=preferential (regional)  
*2003 GE 9 parties Largest @ 29% 3 mo*

***Sweden*** 2 Tiers (corr) LA-mod StL Th=4% nat or 12  
in district List=preferential  
*2002 GE 7 parties Largest @ 41%*

***Austria*** DM variable 3 Tiers (corr) LR-Hare Th=4%  
or 1 local seat  
*2002 GE 4 parties 3 mo*

# Evaluation – for governing

- Predictable Governments  
Moderate
- Electoral Accountability  
Poor
- Parliamentary Check on Government / Role of Members  
Good / free of constituents
- 'Fair' Representation  
Good
- Democratic Political Parties  
increase ideological

# Evaluation – for voters

- Voter Choice

Moderate → Poor

- Representation

Poor

- Encouragement to participate

Good

- Equality of the Vote

Good

# Strengths

- Party presence in legislature reflects voter support
- Increases number of parties able to compete
- Minority voices heard in parliament
- Most votes contribute to electing legislators
- Strengthens parliament *vis-à-vis* government
- Voter turnout slightly higher

# Weaknesses

- Does not → identifiable 1-party governments
- Leads to proliferation of minor parties
- Elections not clear choice of government
- Does not provide local representative
- Individual politicians can't be held responsible by voters

# PR for BC ?

	<u>1996</u>	<u>2001</u>
Libs	44	97
NDP	56	3
<b>IF IF</b> Libs	42	58
NDP	40	22
PDA	6	--
Reform	10	--
Green	--	12
Unity	--	3
Marijuana	--	3