Mixed Systems

Weekend 4 : Session 3

Mixed Systems

- Mix different formula at different stages of the seat allocation process   *Austria*

- Mix different families across the country   *Germany*

- Mix different families in different places   *France*

- Mix different kinds of options   *Russia*

- Mix different systems for different choices   *Australia*

Why mixed systems?

The general purpose is to provide for both:

1. Identifiable & Accountable local representation

2. Some measure of proportionality

Different Families across the Country

- Spit the legislature in two parts:
  - some members elected in single-member
    districts
  - some members elected by PR-List

- Each set of seats requires decisions:

Local districts - DM; Formula; Ballot Structure

List seats   - Formula; List structure; Basis of
                        allocation; Thresholds

Purpose of List Seats

- Compensatory   **MMP**
  Mixed Member Proportional

  - provide proportional 'top-up'
  - large parties tend to get constituency seats
  - smaller parties tend to get list seats

Germany   New Zealand

■ Supplementary   **MMM**
Mixed Member Majoritarian

   - provide a proportional element; but not PR
   - provides some supplementary seats for
      small parties
   - helps large parties
   - more common than MMP

                                        Italy   Japan

Balancing 2 kinds of Seats

■ Fewer local districts means larger ones and heavier constituency work loads for members

■ Fewer list seats makes it harder to achieve proportional outcomes

■ Proportionality probably requires at least ¼ seats on list – Proportionality difficult in small MMP legislatures

One Vote or Two?

2   once for candidate, once for party list
- allows voters to split giving votes to different parties
- strategic voting can help small parties that can't win local seats

1   constituency vote counts as party vote
- prevents split ticket voting to advantage of larger parties
- avoids parties running on separate labels

Can Candidates run in both parts

- Generally YES

- Ensures parties can elect prominent figures even from areas where party is not popular

- Candidates defeated in constituency elections can be elected to the legislature from the party list

  (*Japan's "zombie" politicians*)

What happens to vacancies

- List members replaced by next person on list

- Constituency members can be replaced by list name (*Germany*) or by a local by-election (*NZ*)

- In NZ if member leaves / switches party then the seat is declared vacant

Mixed Member Systems

- Being proportional they facilitate small parties and lead to coalition politics and government

- Create two kinds of members
  - Constituency
  - List

- Two kinds of political parties
  - Large, doing most of the constituency representation
  - Smaller, with list members pursuing interests

Different Families in Different Places

- Designed to respond to the different
  - needs of voters
  - representational challenges of Members
    in different kinds of communities

- Sparsely populated Rural vs. dense Urban areas

- Varying DMs
  - Low DM (1) in rural areas
  - Higher DMs in urban areas

Manitoba   Alberta

DM – Formula Mix

- Majority or Plurality single-member districts
  (in thinly populated areas)
- STV or PR-List multi-member districts
  (in dense urban areas)

1. Proportionality depends on balance between two kinds of seats
2. All members accountable to a constituency
3. Could use same ballot structure for all voters
   - preferential with Majority / STV

A Mixed System for BC ?

- The possibilities are many
- What do you want from an electoral system that any one family can't deliver?
- Is there some combination that meets BC's particular needs? *(Are we clear on what we think those needs are?)*

- *Do we need a system that provides for local representatives?*
- *Do we want a system with some proportional element?*
- *Do we want both? What would it take to get them?*