Proportional and Semi-Proportional Electoral Systems: Their Potential Effects on Canadian Politics

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3. Every citizen of Canada has the right to vote in an election of members of the House of Commons or of a legislative assembly and to be qualified for membership therein.

Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms

The right to vote, while rooted in and hence to some extent defined by historical and existing practices, cannot be viewed as frozen by particular historical anomalies.

Madam Justice Beverly McLachlin, 1991

Introduction[1]

1. This paper argues that our single-member plurality (SMP) electoral system is no longer acceptable. At present, every Canadian citizen has the formal right to vote for an MP, but his or her vote does not carry the same value as every other. Nor does he or she – especially she – have an equal opportunity to win a seat in Parliament.

2. Canadian representative democracy is justly regarded as a model for other nations. Nonetheless, it faces serious problems: declining voter turnout; increasing voter discontent with representative democratic institutions; the under-representationof women and minorities in the House of Commons; distorted and often capricious election results; growing regional divisiveness, now expressing itself in five parliamentary blocs representing the different regions of Canada; and, for the foreseeable future, one-party dominance with no alternative national government.

3. While it would be absurd to blame these problems entirely on the current electoral system, it is equally absurd to argue that the system has not exacerbated them. The problems listed above arise from several sources, of which the electoral system is only one. They could be reduced, although not removed, by the introduction of greater proportionality.

4. Can we devise an alternative system which would alleviate these problems without creating or worsening others? In the 1990s, several democratic states have answered that question in the affirmative. Japan, Italy and New Zealand replaced their existing electoral systems with new, "mixed" systems. In late 1998 the Independent Commission on the Voting System advised the British government to follow suit. Recently democratized states such as Russia and Hungary have also determined that a combination of electoral methods would offer the advantages of each while mitigating their drawbacks.

5.   In the rapidly expanding universe of "mixed" electoral systems, two models appear to be particularly suited to Canada's needs: parallel mixed-member plurality (MMP) and "top-up" MMP. The paper also compares three other electoral systems – single transferable vote (STV); single non-transferable vote (SNTV) and proportional representation (PR) based on party lists (list-PR) – to SMP. (These electoral systems are described in Appendix A.)

6.   The paper proposes five categories of evaluative criteria for electoral systems: their incentives for political parties, candidates and parliamentary representatives; their incentives for voters; their impact on the composition of the legislature and cabinet; their congruity with public and judicial opinion; and their practicality in the Canadian setting. On the first three criteria – apart from its production of single-party majority cabinets – SMP is found wanting. STV and list-PR are also rejected, despite their advantages for women and the higher turnout they attract, because the multi-member constituencies on which they are based violate Canadians' preference for a single representative in Parliament. In addition, multi-member constituencies large enough for proportionality would be impractical in sparsely populated areas. The SNTV system is also rejected: it is insufficiently proportional to justify the upheaval of electoral reform, and it is biased against both smaller parties and female candidates. However, the two MMP systems perform well in the comparison. Both produce greater proportionality, and less unfairness, in the translation of parties' vote shares into parliamentary seats. Both offer women, Aboriginals and minor-party candidates a better chance of election to the House of Commons. Both combine most of the advantages of SMP with the benefits of list-PR. While no electoral system is perfect, parallel MMP offers the best chance to reduce the problems described in paragraph 2 without necessarily creating even worse headaches for Canadians and their politicians.

7.   The paper concludes with two recommendations. First, the federal government should establish a Royal Commission to investigate alternative electoral systems for Canada. In particular, the Commission should be mandated to consider the impact of a new electoral system on the *Canada Elections Act*; methods to educate the public about any new, more complex voting process; and realistic scenarios for coalition government in this country. The Commission would be required to put forward one or more alternatives to SMP. Second, the decision between the two or more alternative electoral systems should be made through a binding national referendum. If an alternative were preferred to the status quo by a majority of the electorate, it would then be phased in over a five-year period.

Seven Assumptions about Electoral Systems

8.   The accurate translation of party votes into party seats is only one criterion by which electoral systems should be judged. The pursuit of perfect proportionality as an abstract ideal does not justify a major institutional reform. It must be weighed against the competing values discussed

in this paper. That said, any significant change to the Canadian electoral system should ensure greater proportionality, not as an end in itself but as a means to other ends. Specifically, a more proportional system would likely enhance both voter confidence in Canadian politics and the representation of women and minorities.

9. All electoral systems have advantages and disadvantages. No system is perfect, either theoretically or practically. The crucial question for electoral engineers is whether the net disadvantages of any alternative system are more tolerable than the net disadvantages of SMP. Any answer to this question must be subjective. It follows that a new electoral system could be established only by the voters in a national referendum, since the question is ultimately political and not merely technical.

10. While electoral systems influence their environments, they are not deterministic. For example, the number of parties in a given party system is determined by a host of factors – social cleavages, polarization, other institutional incentives – not just by the method used to cast and count votes. There are also multiple conditions affecting the parliamentary representation of women and minorities, the health of party organizations, and the operation of representative democratic structures. It is therefore mistaken to assume that a given electoral system is either a necessary or a sufficient condition for a particular outcome. This paper presents some evidence about the effects of particular systems on their political environments, but the limitations of such evidence must always be taken into account.

11. Similar cautions apply to predictions about the effects of a new electoral system. This paper uses data from the 1997 Canadian federal election to illustrate the way in which various alternative systems might work. These simulations are examples, not projections. Any significant electoral reform would change the behaviour of both voters and parties in ways which cannot be fully appreciated in advance. We can say with some confidence that the 1997 voting pattern under SMP differed from what it would have been under another system. But we cannot say exactly what, or of what magnitude, those differences would have been. Would more Canadians have voted Liberal, to keep other parties from forming a coalition government? Would more people have voted for the New Democratic Party (N.D.P.), Reform or the Progressive Conservatives (P.C.s) if they had known that those parties would win seats outside their regional strongholds? Would there have been an Aboriginal party, an Atlantic Canadian party, a women's party or an anti-gun-control party? Would more Quebec voters, including those who do not favour sovereignty, have opted for the Bloc Québécois (B.Q.) in order to maximize the number of MPs dedicated to advancing Quebec's interests in the federal Parliament? We cannot answer any of those questions with any certainty. No matter how hard we try to model the effects of a new electoral system, any institutional reform demands a leap of faith.

12. Electoral systems rarely affect their environments directly. The best-known exception is Duverger's "mechanical effect": under disproportional electoral systems, smaller parties are consistently denied their fair share of seats in Parliament.[2] Smaller parties are particularly disadvantaged under plurality systems.[3] More commonly, the influence of electoral systems is expressed indirectly, through the incentives they set for parties and voters. These incentives can be either functional or dysfunctional for the political system.

13. One state's experience with a given electoral system cannot be applied to other countries *tout court*. However, we may extrapolate some lessons from one country to another, if we avoid overstating the similarities between the cases and keep the above caveats in mind.

14. Finally, a discussion of electoral reform in Canada is not as quixotic an endeavour as it often appears. In a recent book of essays on the Canadian electoral system, several of the authors concluded that no matter how strong the case for reform, no governing party would ever give up the artificial majorities created by SMP. Kent Weaver offered the most entertaining expression of this sentiment: "The chances that Canada's political elites will adopt MMP are about the same as the odds that they will adopt the Internationale as Canada's official anthem."[4] Despite its surface plausibility, this sceptical approach is unfounded. Ten years ago, electoral reform seemed just as unrealistic in New Zealand and the United Kingdom as it now appears to be in Canada. Yet New Zealand adopted MMP in 1993, and the British government is committed to holding a referendum on the recommendations of the Jenkins Commission. In a recent comparison of electoral reforms in several Western states, Norris identified three common factors: exploding electoral volatility leading to rapid change in the party system; a loss of faith in the political system; and the opportunity for voters to take the decision out of the hands of the political élites through a referendum.[5] All of these conditions are present in Canada at the end of the millennium.

Central Concepts in the Debate over Electoral Systems

15. Electoral systems vary along several dimensions. For the sake of clarity, this paper will focus on five electoral system characteristics. The first three are the electoral formula, the ballot structure and the district magnitude.[6] The *electoral formula* is the procedure used to count the votes and determine the winner(s). There are two *ballot structures* in common use: categorical and ordinal. A categorical ballot requires the voter to choose only one party (in list-PR with closed lists) or one candidate (in SMP); if he or she makes more than one mark on the paper, the ballot is spoiled. An ordinal ballot requires the voter to rank some or all of the candidates listed (STV and list-PR with open lists). *District magnitude* refers to the number of MPs elected from each constituency. Canada is divided into 301 single-member constituencies (or "ridings"). Most Western democracies use some form of PR, and are divided into multi-member constituencies. The Netherlands is the extreme case: the entire country is one huge,

150-seat constituency.

16. The electoral formula and the district magnitude combine to produce the fourth and fifth electoral system characteristics: the threshold of election and the degree of proportionality in election outcomes. The *threshold of election* is the percentage of valid votes required to elect an MP. *Proportionality* refers to the accuracy with which the electoral system translates votes into parliamentary representation. If a party wins 30 percent of the votes and is awarded 30 percent of the seats in Parliament, that is a highly proportional result.

17. All electoral systems are imperfectly proportional. The translation of votes into seats is always distorted to some degree, usually in favour of the largest party. The larger the district magnitude, the lower the threshold of election; therefore, the more proportional the electoral system, the better the chance for female and minority candidates and those from small parties to win seats in Parliament. A smaller district magnitude creates a higher threshold, which makes the electoral system less proportional and sets up greater obstacles to election.

18. If proportionality were the only criterion for judging an electoral system, maximizing the district magnitude would be the sole legitimate goal of electoral engineers. In a small, densely populated country like the Netherlands, a high district magnitude may be appropriate. Canada, of course, is very different. A glance at the electoral map is enough to demonstrate the impracticality of multi-member constituencies in this country, at least outside the major cities.

19. Finally, it is worth considering why citizens make the effort to cast a ballot. Some wish to express their political or ideological preference, and are less concerned with the impact of their vote on the ultimate composition of the government. Others vote strategically: recognizing that their favoured party cannot win in their riding, they opt instead for the lesser of the other evils.[7] Still others decide to sit out the election altogether, rather than cast a vote whose utility is predictably zero. In 1996 the House of Commons passed a law banning the publication of polling results during the 72 hours immediately before voting day, partly in an effort to restrict strategic voting, bandwagon effects and the depressing effect which comes from believing that the outcome is preordained (either nationally or locally). The Supreme Court of Canada struck down this provision in 1998 as a violation of freedom of expression, the majority holding that the measure was too broad to be saved under s.1.[8] The evidence in this paper suggests that a more proportional electoral system, which mitigated the problem of "wasted" votes, would be a more effective way to reduce the incentives for strategic voting and increase voter turnout.

Criteria for Evaluating Electoral Systems

a) Incentives for Political Parties, Candidates and Parliamentary Representatives

20.   The first category of incentives shapes the relations among the members of the party system. These relations are often visualized along a continuum, from polarization to consensus. Some observers argue that proportional and semi-proportional systems promote consensus because they tend to produce coalition governments. While this claim may have some anecdotal validity, there is little solid evidence that a given electoral system can reduce political conflict by itself.[9] There are many factors involved, and no electoral system can ensure political harmony in the absence of other conditions favourable to consensus.

21.   Second, different electoral systems foster varying relationships among party candidates. SNTV, STV, and list-PR with open lists force candidates (and incumbent MPs) of the same party to compete against each other. This condition does not exist in single-member systems, or in list-PR with closed lists. While some voters might welcome the chance to express a preference for a particular candidate or candidates from their favoured party, others would lack the information to make a meaningful choice; such voters might simply pick the first name or names listed on the ballot, in order to simplify the voting process.[10] Where names are listed alphabetically on the ballot, this creates an incentive for parties to nominate candidates with surnames at the front of the alphabet – hardly a desirable way to choose parliamentary representatives.[11] Finally, where candidates from the same party compete against each other in a multi-member constituency, corruption and factionalism may result (see the discussion of SNTV in Japan, paragraphs 63–64). This does not mean that we should dismiss MMP, which would allow members of competing party factions to compete against each other on party lists; but it does mean that we should be aware of potential problems, and seek to prevent them as best we can.

22.   Third, different electoral systems create different nomination structures for candidates, thus influencing their behaviour and attitudes. Candidates in single-member and small multi-member constituencies (SMP, alternate vote [AV], STV) are generally nominated by local party associations, while those in list-PR systems may owe their positions to the national or provincial party bureaucracy. In the latter case, party selectors might favour yes-men or those without strong local loyalties, whereas a dedicated constituency representative might have an advantage in a local nomination or re-nomination battle. It should be noted, given the present argument in favour of MMP, that candidates in mixed systems face different incentives depending on whether they run in a constituency or on a party list (or both). This could lead to strife between the two groups of candidates, or it could foster a mutually satisfactory division of labour between MPs who focus on casework and those who pursue committee work.

23. The prospect of this "division of labour" within parliamentary caucuses troubles some critics of MMP. They argue that the "list" MPs would be political eunuchs whose function was purely arithmetic. This argument is not substantiated by the comparative evidence. In Germany, representatives elected from a list do not take an active role in local constituency affairs, but neither do those elected by SMP.[12] In the Canadian context, a group of MPs without heavy local responsibilities could make the House of Commons a more effective legislative chamber. Under SMP, small swings in the national vote can lead to huge gains or losses in seats by a particular party. The result is a high turnover in the Canadian House of Commons. The Commons is weakened by the inexperience of most of its members, who lack policy expertise and a working knowledge of the rules. Therefore, a more stable membership would make the Commons a more powerful legislative body.[13] Why not create a "class" of MPs with the time and energy for serious committee work, departmental oversight and legislative review? There are three specific ways to give the list MPs their own distinct mandates, thus lifting them above the status of mere numbers on a scoreboard. The first is to use "open" lists to fill the PR seats. This would allow voters to express their candidate preferences separately from their party preferences, and it would give at least some of the list MPs their own distinct mandates. (However, it might foster division within the parties, by pitting candidates from the same party against each other; see paragraph 21.) Second, parallel MMP – as distinct from top-up MMP – would elect the two groups of MPs separately, giving each a unique base in the electorate. Third, while some candidates would likely seek both a constituency seat and a list-PR seat, the majority of candidates should run for only one or the other. If the list MPs were the "losers" who could not win seats under SMP, their legitimacy would be severely impaired.

24. Critics of MMP also speculate that parties would use their power over the lists to keep insubordinate "second-class" MPs in line. But given the current strength of party discipline, especially on the Liberal benches, a "mixed" Commons could hardly be more docile and disciplined than the one we presently have. Finally, the safer "list" seats might be very attractive to cabinet ministers and party leaders whose responsibilities prevent them from paying adequate attention to their ridings.[14]

25. Fourth, single-member and small multi-member constituencies deter parties from nominating female candidates.[15] Where there are only one or two seats available, and nominations are controlled by local party associations which may be reluctant to "risk" nominating a woman (no such risk exists in Canada; see paragraph 43), there will be fewer female candidates in winnable ridings. A national or provincial list-PR system, in which parties put forward a team of candidates, is more likely to elect a significant percentage of women.

26. Fifth, different electoral systems may encourage positive or negative campaign styles. Where each party has a strong incentive to appeal to the supporters of other parties, or to voters in every region – an incentive which a more proportional system should create – it may eschew

divisive electoral appeals (such as Reform's "not just Quebec politicians" ad in 1997). But an electoral system which encourages each party to focus its efforts in a single region – of which SMP is the best example – fosters homogeneous regional blocs in Parliament and excludes entire provinces from the government caucus (see paragraphs 38–40). Courtney suggests that the reverse is true: if each national party knew that a proportional electoral system would guarantee it at least a few seats in every region, it might have an even stronger incentive to concentrate its campaign resources in a particular province instead of spreading them across the country.[16]

27.   A sixth category of incentives applies particularly to parties in government. An electoral system which promotes single-party majority governments – i.e., any system which disproportionately favours the largest national party – makes it easier for voters to hold the executive collectively accountable for its actions at the next election. On the other hand, an electoral system which fosters coalition governments may insulate the member parties from being punished for their collective decisions. So in theory, a single-party cabinet has a powerful incentive to respond to public opinion, because its members know that they will pay a heavy price in the next election for failing to do so. This is a strong argument in favour of a disproportional electoral system. In practice, however, a system which creates artificial party "fortresses" in populous regions insulates the governing party from growing unpopularity elsewhere and shields it from the consequences of poor decisions.

28.   Seventh, a single-member system gives individual MPs an incentive to work hard for their constituencies, because they know that they will have to answer to the voters within a few years. While there is little evidence of a "personal" vote in Canada, parliamentary veterans know that they will pay an electoral price if they neglect the voters back home.[17] Large multi-member constituencies, whether STV or list-PR, make it difficult for voters to hold their MPs accountable for their actions or omissions.

b) Incentives for Voters

29.   The first issue under this heading is voter turnout. The percentage of eligible voters who exercise their franchise has fallen dramatically over the past four Canadian general elections (see Table 1).

30.   Individual motivation to vote depends on age, education, registration rules, political interest, satisfaction with the available choices, and practical obstacles (e.g., physical accessibility, geographic distance). It is also determined, in part, by whether or not one perceives one's vote as "wasted."[18] Blais and Carty found that when other factors are held constant, "in relative terms turnout is over eight percent higher in a PR election than in a plurality one."[19]

31. The democratic rights guaranteed by the Charter do not explicitly include "one vote, one value"; but it is reasonable to conclude that the rights of Canadian voters are violated by a system which "wastes" millions of ballots. As Mr. Justice Cory of the Supreme Court of Canada wrote in 1991, "To diminish the voting rights of individuals is to violate the democratic system. Such actions are bound to incur the frustration of voters and risk bringing the democratic process itself into disrepute."[20] Canadians appear to be increasingly aware of this violation of their rights; partly in response, they are staying home on election day.

32. The government has recently introduced staggered voting hours, a blackout on the reporting of results to regions in later time zones, and a host of physical modifications to encourage voting. But if Blais and Carty are correct, declining turnout might be more effectively reversed by an electoral system which gave every voter a meaningful impact on election outcomes.

33. A further issue related to voter incentives is whether one votes for a party or for an individual candidate. In theory, STV allows voters to choose among candidates, while list-PR – especially its closed-list variety – forces them to choose among parties only. If Canadian voters were strongly influenced by the local candidate when they mark their ballots, the adoption of STV would be appropriate. But since 1974, the proportion of Canadians who cite "party as a whole" as the most important factor in their voting decisions has increased, both in absolute terms and relative to those for whom the local candidate is the crucial determinant (see Table 2). While there is no overwhelming preference for either parties or candidates as determinants of voting choice, party is clearly becoming more influential. Given the importance of both factors, an MMP system with two ballots – one for a local candidate and the other for a party list – may be more appropriate than a forced choice between a strong candidate and one's favoured party, where these differ.

34. Finally, single-member electoral systems discourage voters who wish to cast their ballots for parties or candidates with little or no chance of winning. Blais and Carty found that Duverger's "psychological effect" – arising from the tendency of disproportional systems to punish smaller parties, and thus to discourage their supporters over the long term – reduced the vote share of "third" parties in plurality systems by about 20 percent relative to PR systems.[21] The greater the proportionality in the translation of vote shares to seat shares, the weaker the psychological effect.

c) The Composition of the Legislature and the Executive

35. The first issue is proportionality. As I argued above, proportionality is not the only criterion by which electoral systems should be judged. But the way in which a given electoral system translates the parties' vote shares into their seat allocations in the national legislature is a central theme in the literature, and properly so. The single-member systems often create substantial and capricious distortions in party caucuses, both in their relative sizes and in

terms of their regional composition. The small district magnitude is the key factor.[22] In a 1997 survey of disproportionality in national elections from 1945 to 1996, Canada ranked 35th of the 37 cases studied.[23] In a 1991 study with a more limited sample, the average value of the least-squares index of proportionality – which measures the discrepancy between parties' seat and vote shares – was 5.6. Canada's score for the period from 1979 to 1989 was 13.0.[24] The least-squares index peaked at 16.95 in 1993; although the 1997 figure fell to 12.91, the disproportionality of the Canadian electoral system is still well above the average for Western democracies.

36.   Table 3 presents the seat and vote shares for Canada's major parties in the 1997 election, expressing the relation between the two numbers as a ratio. Where the ratio is greater than 1, the party in question has been helped by the electoral system; a ratio below 1 reflects an electoral penalty. Although the distortion of the parties' parliamentary representation is expressed in mathematical terms, its effects are far from abstract. The 1993 and 1997 elections prove that SMP hurts real people and real party organizations, while giving unfair advantages to others. In 1993 the federal Progressive Conservatives won 16 percent of the national vote, and less than one percent of the seats in the Commons. Although it had received millions of votes, the party was placed on a death watch because it had won only two seats. In the 1997 election Reform won only 66 365 more votes than the Progressive Conservatives (a margin of 0.5 percent of the total vote), but its dominance in British Columbia and Alberta gave it three times as many seats. The distortion in the parties' respective seat shares gave most observers the erroneous impression that Reform was by far the more successful party.

37.   If SMP were performing very well on the other criteria discussed in this paper, its distorting effects on the parties' parliamentary representation might be acceptable. But given its other failings, especially its negative impact on voter turnout and the representation of women and minorities, its continued operation in this country cannot be justified.

38.   The second issue is regional representation in party caucuses. In his ground-breaking 1968 article, Cairns argued that SMP favoured the largest party and regionally concentrated "third" parties at the expense of the second-largest national party and "third" parties with widely diffused support.[25] In addition to the artificial national majorities for the largest party, the system created artificial regional fortresses within particular party caucuses. From 1921 to 1965 the Liberals regularly swept Quebec, with a substantially smaller proportion of the vote than its seat shares indicated, while the Progressive Conservatives unfairly monopolized the Ontario and Prairie seats. The House of Commons was a collection of isolated regional blocs, not a house of nationally based party caucuses. As a result, the brokerage function of the national parties was seriously compromised. By over-rewarding regionally concentrated votes, SMP gives Canadian parties a powerful incentive to engage in divisive appeals (recall paragraph 26). It also encourages them to invest their campaign resources in the regions where they are already strong, instead of appealing for votes across regional and linguistic boundaries.

The skewed regional distribution of party representation is reflected in government policy, which tends to favour the region(s) which dominate the governing party at a given time and to ignore the interests of those regions on the opposition benches.[26]

39. The Cairns article sparked a re-examinationof SMP, and set the terms of the Canadian electoral system debate for over two decades. By the early 1980s, many observers believed that unless a more proportional system were adopted – usually some variant of MMP – Canada could never have a truly national government again.[27] Critics of this position, Courtney among them, argued that the patchy regional composition of the party caucuses in the House of Commons did not justify an institutional response; instead, the parties should work harder to improve their organization and electoral appeal in their weakest regions.[28] The result of the 1984 election proved Courtney right. The Progressive Conservatives chose a leader from Quebec, overcame their historic weakness among francophone voters, and formed a massive majority government with representation from all ten provinces. In 1993 the Liberals returned to power with MPs from every region, although their weakness in the Western provinces was still evident. It now appeared that SMP was not an insuperable obstacle to the creation of a truly national government.

40. But the problem of regional blocs in Parliament has not disappeared; if anything, it has worsened since 1968. In 1997 the Liberals were shut out of Nova Scotia despite winning 28.4 percent of the vote. Reform won no seats east of Manitoba, the Progressive Conservatives only one seat west of Ontario. Alberta is a virtual Reform fortress. Ontario and Prince Edward Island are Liberal bastions. The Bloc Québécois has benefited greatly from SMP over the past two elections. In sum, two-thirds of the Liberal caucus is from Ontario; 73 of the West's 88 seats are held by opposition parties, as are 21 of the 32 seats in the Atlantic and 49 of Quebec's 75 seats. Some would argue that if voters in the West, Quebec and the Atlantic wanted to be included in the government, they would have voted Liberal. This argument overlooks one very simple fact: many voters did just that, and their votes were wasted. These seat distributions do not accurately reflect the wishes of the electorate.

41. The third issue is the representation of particular social groups in Parliament and the cabinet. In recent years, the emphasis on regional representation in the Canadian electoral system debate has been joined by concern about the demographic reflection of the electorate in the House of Commons. In particular, women constitute slightly over half of the Canadian electorate, but have never accounted for more than 21 percent of the House of Commons. While women are in a minority in every national legislature, female representation in the Canadian Parliament is only in the middle rank of Western democracies.[29] Canada ranks 11th out of 28 countries in the proportion of female cabinet ministers.[30] The under-representation of women in élite politics is not just an issue of abstract fairness. It deprives Canadian politics of many talented and energetic people[31], and it may discourage policy innovations which would particularly benefit women and children.[32]

42. In the 1997 election, women accounted for 24.4 percent of the candidates – the highest total ever.[33] Of the 408 women who sought House seats, 15.4 percent were elected. The success rate for all candidates was 18 percent. The gap between male and female candidates has narrowed over the years; in the 1972 federal election, 7.6 percent of women and 25.6 percent of men were successful.[34] But women who seek national public office in Canada are still at a disadvantage. One reason is that women are somewhat over-represented among minor-party and independent candidates, whose chances of winning office are slim. Women accounted for 26.1 percent of these candidates in 1997, compared to 23.7 percent of major-party candidates. Once we subtract the number of women who ran for minor parties or as independent candidates, the success rate climbs to 21.7 percent – which is still below the success rate for male major-party candidates (26 percent). A second reason for women's under-representation in Parliament is that many of the 286 women who ran for the five major parties were nominated in ridings where their parties could not win. In particular, the N.D.P. nominated 34 women in Quebec and 36 women in Ontario; both provinces were N.D.P. wastelands in 1997. If the 107 women who ran for the N.D.P. in 1997 are excluded from the analysis, the success rate for the female major-party candidates jumps to 30.2 percent. So if fewer female candidates succeed, the blame does not lie with the voters; it lies with the parties, and the incentives set for them by the electoral system.

43. There are several reasons why women are less likely than men to seek election to Parliament and why, once nominated, they are less likely to win. These include the wage gap, the gendered division of labour at home and at work, and persistent derogatory stereotypes about women.[35] But cross-nationalsurveys consistently identify the electoral system – specifically,the district magnitude – as the most important variable affecting women's representation in national legislatures.[36] List-PR in large constituencies is significantly more favourable to women than SMP. This electoral system effect is clearly evident in countries like Japan (pre-1994) and the Federal Republic of Germany, where two different systems were used at once (in the case of Japan, the lower house was elected by SNTV and the upper house by list-PR). Under the German MMP system, only one out of four female MdBs elected in 1983 were constituency MPs; the rest were selected from the party lists.[37] The same ratio characterized Japan's upper and lower houses of parliament: in the 1980s, there were four times as many women in the upper house.[38]

44. Women in Canada, and elsewhere, have made tremendous progress in recent decades. There are still barriers to equality, many of which will be extremely difficult to overcome. But the electoral system need not be one of these. A more proportional electoral system would level the political playing field between men and women.

45. Greater proportionality would also lower the barriers to members of minority groups, including Aboriginal Canadians, who seek election to the House of Commons. At present,

SMP works against ethnic, linguistic and other minority groups which are not territorially concentrated. The party lists used in the MMP system would give members of these groups a better chance to win election to the House of Commons. As one American advocate of PR argued, "The parties would find it in their interests to include members of significant racial and ethnic groups in order to increase the appeal of their slates."[39] A similar argument has been made for Aboriginal Canadians, whose territorial concentration – particularly in Northern ridings – has not yet sufficed to guarantee them a fair share of Commons seats.[40]

46. The fourth issue is the relationship between the electoral system and the production of majority governments. Since the 1921 election, which ended the two-party system in Canada, a single party has won a majority of the valid vote on only three occasions: 1940, 1958 and 1984. Defenders of SMP argue that without an electoral system which creates artificial majorities of seats from simple pluralities of the vote, it is unlikely that Canada would have many more single-party majority governments. Defenders of SMP also argue that a more proportional system would force Canadian parties to create unstable coalitions and thus weaken the federal government. But as Table 10 shows, neither of these arguments necessarily applies to parallel MMP.

47. There are three primary arguments against this claim. First, many coalitions are highly stable, perhaps excessively so. The governments of Austria, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Sweden are, on average, longer-lived than Canadian governments. The critics of PR often point to Italy, Israel and Weimar Germany to substantiate their argument that proportionality leads to instability. Apart from the obvious bias inherent in the choice of examples, it is simply inaccurate to blame the electoral system for the political turmoil in these regimes. Israel is a country with intense religious and cultural divisions, constantly under threat from inside and outside its borders. The frequent turnovers in the Italian government arise from "divisions within the parties and between the parties, and from the lack of incentives for them to find areas of stable agreement," not from the electoral system *per se*.[41] Weimar was doomed at birth by the Treaty of Versailles and by its own incongruity with German political culture, and was finally destroyed by the Great Depression and the refusal of the moderate parties to build and maintain coalition governments. It is ridiculous to blame the mechanism which translates votes into seats for the horrors of Nazism.

48. Second, it is not entirely clear what "stability" means in this context. If the word refers to the personnel of the government, it is rather a superficial claim to political virtue. A more substantive approach to "stability" takes into account the magnitude of change in legislative membership and public policy over time. In Canada, as in Britain, relatively small shifts in the parties' vote shares are translated by SMP into huge swings in seats. In Britain, at least, the result has been a series of policy U-turns as Conservative and Labour governments alternate in power.[42] This does not give an impression of stability. Third, the stability of a government is partly a function of its base in the electorate. Coalitions which control a majority of seats

in the legislature are far more likely than single-party majority governments to represent a majority of the voters.[43]

49.   One serious problem with coalition governments is the process by which they are created. Most of the single-party majorities created by SMP are artificial, which is clearly a violation of proportionality. But SMP does give the voters – at least a substantial minority of them – the power to determine the partisan composition of the cabinet. On the other hand, coalition cabinets are the products of backroom deals among party leaders after each election (and sometimes between elections). It can take months to build a coalition in a multi-party system. For example, the first coalition in New Zealand was sworn in to office almost two months after the 1996 election.[44] The cabinet which eventually results from the secret negotiations may not reflect the preferences of the voters. The National-New Zealand First coalition, which eventually emerged from the prolonged negotiations in the fall of 1996, was neither expected nor desired by most voters. Most of those who voted for the two parties were strongly opposed to such an arrangement, both before and after the election.[45] The leader of New Zealand First had repeatedly and categorically ruled out a coalition with the National Party during the election campaign, so the formation of the government shocked voters and contributed to the public cynicism about politics which MMP had been expected to alleviate. But the New Zealand case also shows that there are powerful incentives for parties not to engage in unpopular coalition pairings. Both ruling parties immediately lost support, especially New Zealand First: by the fall of 1997 it stood at two percent in national polls, after winning 13 percent of the vote in 1996.[46] Some of this collapse can be attributed to the party's other problems, common to most inexperienced governing parties; however, "the decision to coalesce with National appears to have been the catalyst for this rapid decline."[47]

50.   One possible solution to the problem of illegitimate coalitions is for potential partners to campaign openly for coalition support. Such a joint campaign is particularly suited to a mixed system, in which voters can divide their ballots between the two governing parties. Between 1983 and 1995 the ruling parties in Germany – the CDU-CSU and the FDP – asked supporters to split their votes between the two coalition partners to keep the government intact.[48] This strategy legitimizes the coalition as a whole, not just the component parties as separate units.

51.   The negative public response to the Meech Lake and Charlottetown accords raises a crucial question about coalitions in this country: would voters accept a government which resulted from horse-trading among party leaders? In recent years, citizens in most Western democracies have become increasingly unwilling to accept the words and actions of their political leaders on faith.[49] The defeat of the Charlottetown accord revealed that the Canadian political class had lost credibility. Among angry and less-informed voters, a perceived élite gang-up provokes fears of a plot against "the people."[50] If a more proportional electoral system were to be introduced in this country, the parties and the electorate would have to be prepared for the

possibility of coalitions, and persuaded that such governments can be perfectly legitimate. The fear of coalitions is one of the principal barriers to electoral reform, but it need not be the determining factor in an informed national debate.

d) Congruity with Public and Judicial Opinion

52.   Canadians are manifestly disenchanted with our representative political institutions. In 1990, 79 percent of respondents to a national survey agreed with the statement that "Generally, those elected to Parliament soon lose touch with the people."[51] Seventy percent believed that the Government did not care about what the people thought; 82 percent thought that candidates for public office "make promises they have no intention of fulfilling." Almost two-thirds (64 percent) believed that most MPs were corrupt, although 62 percent believed that MPs cared about their problems.[52] Political cynicism appears to be rising: in 1960, 60 percent of those surveyed believed that MPs soon lose touch with the voters.[53]

53.   Despite their reservations about the overall conduct of MPs, most Canadians appear to value their work as constituency representatives. When asked to rank five tasks in order of importance, respondents to a 1993 Gallup survey placed "keeping in touch" at the top, and protecting the overall interests of the constituency second.[54] As we have seen (paragraph 28), a Canadian MP is unlikely to earn a significant "personal" vote by diligent casework. But she or he is expected to be a strong advocate for the constituency, and to communicate with the voters about government policy. This suggests that any electoral reform should preserve single-member constituencies, or risk violating the preferences of voters.

54.   Although they enjoy the benefits of single-member constituencies, Canadians are not satisfied with the disproportional effects of SMP. In 1991 – even before the bizarre outcome of the 1993 federal election – a national survey found that fewer than half of Canadians who expressed an opinion about the electoral system favoured SMP. The specific question asked whether it was acceptable or unacceptableto have a majority government elected by a minority of the voters. Substantially higher proportions supported the principle of MMP.[55] The findings were broken down by region, age and gender, among other socio-demographic variables. (Table 4 presents some of these data.) Although support for SMP was far from negligible, MMP was consistently preferred across all regional and demographic groups. The small sample sizes in some regions, further reduced by the fact that only 66 percent of respondents had an opinion about the electoral system, should inspire some caution. But the national findings are clear: only 42 percent of respondents who have an opinion about the current electoral system approve of artificial majority governments, and three-quarters wanted to split their vote between a local candidate and a party list.

55.   The Supreme Court of Canada has never been asked to assess the constitutionality of SMP. But in its 1991 ruling on electoral boundaries, the Court began to define the right to vote under

s. 3 of the Charter. Madam Justice McLachlin defined representative democracy in a manner which suggests, on the evidence presented in this paper, that SMP might also fail a court challenge:

> Ours is a representative democracy. Each citizen is entitled to be represented in government. Representation comprehends the idea of having a voice in the deliberations of the government as well as the idea of the right to bring one's grievances and concerns to the attention of one's government representative …[56]

SMP denies a majority of citizens the "effective representation" described in this passage. However, it does give each citizen a single "government representative" to perform the "ombudsman" function identified by the Court. So MMP, which enhances the representativeness of the electoral system while preserving single-member constituencies, could guarantee the Charter right to "effective representation" as defined by the Court.

56.   In the same Supreme Court judgement, Madam Justice McLachlin, writing for the majority, argued that "The content of the Charter right to vote is to be determined in a broad and purposive way, having regard to historical and social context. … [P]ractical considerations, such as social and physical geography, must be borne in mind."[57] Mr. Justice Cory, writing for the minority, agreed that the equality of voters may legitimately be qualified by "giving due weight to regional issues involving demographics and geography." This compromise between the rights of individual citizens and the physical realities of Canada has clear implications for other aspects of the electoral system, especially the district magnitude. Any proposed electoral system which required the creation of multi-member constituencies in sparsely populated areas, where some ridings are already larger than most European countries, would not survive a court challenge under s. 3.

e) Practicality in the Canadian Context

57.   Because the district magnitude largely determines the proportionality of a given STV or list-PR system – a minimum of four seats per constituency is required for a tolerably proportional outcome[58] – the introduction of such a system is impractical in a large country with many sparsely populated regions. If we wish to enhance the accuracy with which the parties' vote shares are translated into Commons seats, we must do so without sacrificing single-member constituencies, at least in northern and rural Canada.

58.   In this context, it is worth pausing to consider the practicality of MMP, which would require a reduction in the number of SMP constituencies (the alternative, adding 100 or more seats to the current House of Commons, is almost as impractical as multi-member constituencies). The proper balance between constituency members and proportional members is crucial to the

system's success. Too few SMP districts, and their size becomes unmanageable; too many, and the translation of votes into seats is excessively distorted. Although it has been argued that a 30 percent share of list seats is sufficient for proportionality under MMP[59] – even that as little as 15–20 percent would provide reasonable proportionality[60] – most of the countries which have recently adopted mixed systems have gone further. The Japanese have opted for 60 percent SMP seats and 40 percent list-PR seats; the Russians chose a straight 50-50 split; the New Zealand system falls in the middle, with 54 percent SMP seats and 46 percent list-PR.[61] This paper proposes a 60-40 split in favour of SMP, while retaining the current 301-seat House of Commons. The number of SMP seats would fall to 180, with 121 list-PR seats to ensure greater proportionality. With 180 single-member seats, the existing constituency boundaries in northern and rural areas could remain substantially unchanged; the major alterations would affect the urban and suburban seats. Every effort should be made to respect existing communities, to avoid adding unnecessarily to the frightening novelty of a new electoral system. To compensate for the larger and more populous urban constituencies, each of the list MPs could be assigned some responsibility for a particular town or city, helping the local SMP MPs with their casework while being freer to pursue their legislative duties.

Evaluating Alternative Electoral Systems

a) Single Transferable Vote

59.   STV is often described as a form of proportional representation, although its proportionality is contingent on both the district magnitude and voting patterns.[62] (See Appendix A for a capsule description of the system.) For STV to be reasonably proportional, every constituency must contain at least four seats; in smaller constituencies, the strongest party locally is strongly favoured and election outcomes can be very disproportional.[63] It is difficult to predict the effects of STV in Canadian elections with any confidence. Although it is possible to extrapolate the results of a categorical ballot to simulate an ordinal outcome, using the combination survey-computer method developed by Dunleavy *et al.* for the 1992 Rowntree study on electoral reform[64], such a complex simulation was beyond the scope of this paper. But even without a firm prediction about the proportionality of STV in this country, the system has four flaws which militate against its adoption.

60.   First, it requires that all constituencies have multiple seats. As argued above, such a system is at odds with both Canadians' preference for a single MP and the Supreme Court's guidelines for effective representation in sparsely populated areas. Second, STV forces candidates from the same party to compete against each other directly in their home regions. This can divide local party organizations, and it can also foster serious and persistent factional divisions in national parties. Canadian parties usually contain informal factions, often arising from past leadership contests, e.g., the Clark-Mulroney split in the federal Progressive Conservative

party or the Chrétien-Martin tensions in the federal Liberals. Occasionally a formal faction develops, such as the Waffle movement in the federal N.D.P., but most of these parties-within-parties have no formal title or organization. The animosity between the supporters of past leadership rivals demonstrates the potential volatility of Canadian intra-party conflict. While this is a serious issue, however, it is not sufficient by itself to rule out a particular electoral system (see also paragraph 21).

61.   Third, the way in which surplus votes are redistributed can have a powerful and arbitrary impact on the outcome. If the counters simply grab the proper number of ballot papers off the top of the pile, as they do in Ireland, there is one of the remaining candidates who may have a disproportionately large share of those second preferences. The distorting effects of this random-sampling method can be significant, even affecting the composition and duration of some Irish governments.[65] Were Canada to consider adopting STV, it should employ the Australian system, which calculates the fractions of second-preference votes among all of the votes cast for the winning candidates and redistributes them as accurately as possible.[66] However, this would exacerbate the fourth problem of STV: it can take days or weeks to finish counting the votes and elect a government. Canadians have become accustomed to retiring to bed on election night knowing who their next federal government will be. It is doubtful whether they would accept a system which keeps them in suspense through such a lengthy and complex counting process.

62.   I conclude, therefore, that STV should not be adopted in Canada. It would require multi-member constituencies, it would likely create lengthy delays in counting the votes, and it would not ensure a sufficient improvement in proportionality to justify the effort and expense of adopting a new electoral system.

b) Single Non-transferable Vote (SNTV)

63.   Until it adopted parallel MMP in 1995, Japan used SNTV to elect the lower house of its national parliament. The country was divided into multi-member constituencies (averaging four seats per district), but each voter cast a single, categorical ballot. The outcomes were not particularly proportional. Lijphart calculated the effective threshold of election at 16.4 percent, although this varied widely depending on the distribution of votes and the number of candidates in each constituency.[67] The SNTV system favoured the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), giving it an absolute majority of Diet seats with less than half the vote and allowing it to govern Japan for almost 40 years.[68]

64.   After repeated corruption scandals, the LDP finally lost power in 1993. The new coalition government abandoned SNTV in 1994, blaming the system for the climate of corruption in Japanese politics. They argued that it had encouraged Japanese politicians to seek bribes by forcing them to compete against each other – and, in many cases, to out-spend each other.[69]

It may also have nurtured factions within the ruling LDP, leading indirectly to the struggle between the Kaifu and Takeshita forces which finally ended LDP hegemony in 1993.[70] It is unwise to assume that SNTV would have the same effect in Canada. Canadian law imposes spending limits and full financial disclosure on parties and candidates, and it provides some public subsidies for electoral activity. So an SNTV system in Canada would not necessarily promote political corruption, although it might encourage factional disputes (see paragraphs 21 and 60). But even with large district magnitudes, which we have already dismissed as impractical, it could not guarantee reasonable proportionality. Therefore, SNTV should not be adopted in Canada.

c) List-PR

65.   Unlike STV or SNTV, where the voter chooses among candidates, list-PR is based on parties. (For details, see Appendices A and B.) In list-PR systems, as in STV systems, proportionality is determined by the district magnitude. I have already argued that multi-member districts would not be congruent with either public or judicial opinion in Canada. List-PR could also deprive local party associations of the right to nominate parliamentary candidates, depending on how the lists are drawn up. This might be a particular problem in Quebec and Alberta, provinces with strong traditions of political localism and an aversion to central control. However, list-PR does encourage the election of women, minorities, and minor-party candidates. So on balance, the best proposal for Canada is to combine list-PR with single-member constituencies, to enjoy some of the benefits of each. We now turn to the subject of these "mixed" electoral systems.

d) Mixed Systems

66.   From 1949 until 1993, the Federal Republic of Germany was the only major democracy to employ a mixed electoral system. In the 1990s, as described in paragraph 4, several states have devised their own combined models to suit their particular requirements. The Italians and New Zealanders have adopted top-up MMP; the Japanese and Russians have adopted variations of parallel MMP. While there are different names for this type of electoral system – the additional member system (AMS), the two-ballot system, coexistence, combination – this paper will use the designation mixed-member plurality (MMP) to describe a combination of MPs elected by SMP and MPs elected from party lists.

67.   The MMP model does not exhaust the possibilities of the mixed electoral system; there are several other models, real or imagined. One such is Flanagan's proposal to elect rural MPs by AV and urban MPs by STV, a combination which existed in Alberta and Manitoba from the late 1920s through the late 1950s.[71] This paper will focus on MMP, partly because public opinion already appears to support such a system and partly because most of the Canadian electoral reform debate has focused on the SMP-list-PR combination. The advocates of the

system argue that it provides the best of both worlds: it offers the advantages of both systems while mitigating their disadvantages.

68. The first model discussed here is top-up MMP. Under this system, which is presently used in Germany and New Zealand, each party nominates two groups of candidates. The first group runs in SMP constituencies, exactly as candidates for the Canadian House of Commons do now. The second group competes on party lists, either national or regional. When the ballots are counted, each party's share of parliamentary seats is calculated on the basis of its "second-ballot" vote. This can be a simple calculation – a national list divided among the parties according to their second-ballot vote shares – or a complex allocation of local seats, as in Germany.[72] The number of SMP seats won is subtracted from its total entitlement. If the party has fewer seats than its rightful share, it is awarded enough list-PR seats to make up the difference. If it has more constituency seats than its mathematical share – which can easily happen, where one party is particularly strong in a given area or across the country – it is allowed to keep them, and the legislature is enlarged accordingly; but it does not receive any list seats. This is the most proportional of the "mixed" systems, apart from the deviation inherent in the "bonus" seats.

69. Tables 5–7 illustrate top-up MMP, using results from the 1997 general election. In this scenario, the ratio of constituency MPs to list-PR MPs is 60:40. The number of constituency seats is set at 180, with the top-up seats numbering 121 (see paragraph 58). Table 5 shows how the 301 seats in the present House of Commons would be divided between the two categories, while preserving the allocation of seats among the provinces and territories. (The usual caveats apply; see paragraph 11.)

70. Table 6 shows how the constituency seats would have been divided among the major parties in 1997, assuming that their respective vote shares remained the same (which is, as we have seen, a questionable assumption). The SMP seats are allocated among the parties in each province exactly as they were in the actual election. The numbers in brackets measure the deviations from strict proportionality for each party in each province. The Liberals are awarded 30 more seats in Ontario than their vote share entitles them to; Reform also gets a bonus in British Columbia and Alberta, although the penalty it pays in Ontario cancels out that bonus. The bottom three rows of the table show each party's constituency seat totals, the number of seats proportional to its vote share, and the net difference between the two totals.

71. Table 7 presents the list-PR results for the parties, again assuming that the parties' vote shares in each province would be the same as they were in 1997. Recall that in top-up MMP, each party's seat allocation is entirely determined by its share of the second-ballot vote. Note the variations among the proportions of top-up MPs in each party caucus. While there is little evidence of conflict or differentialstatus between the two groups in other states (see paragraph

23), the British commission on electoral reform recommended that any potential problems be prevented by giving list MPs substantial and clearly defined responsibilities.[73] Note also the extreme proportionality of the seat allocations. Given the Liberals' probable reluctance to accept a reform which would wipe out a quarter of its current caucus, the top-up variant of MMP is not a realistic alternative to SMP.

72.   The second type of mixed system is parallel MMP. Parallel MMP is similar to top-up MMP in two key respects: there are two ballots, one for each group of party candidates, and the SMP MPs are elected in the same way. The crucial difference is that under parallel MMP the two groups of MPs are elected separately, and the seat total for each party is the sum of the seats won on both ballots (not entirely determined by the second-ballot result, as in top-up MMP). The seats won on the second ballot are added to those won by SMP. The list-PR seats are not used to correct the disproportional outcome of the SMP election, as they are in top-up MMP. Parallel MMP is therefore substantially less proportional than top-up MMP. It favours the strongest party in each region. The lists used on the second ballot can be either national or regional. A national list is more favourable to smaller parties, especially if the seats are allocated according to either a Droop quota or a Sainte-Laguë divisor (see Appendix B). Provincial lists give a less proportional result, because of the smaller district magnitude; they tend to favour the largest party in each region. However, as Table 8 demonstrates, the outcomes of the national and provincial lists do not differ significantly in our 1997 simulation.

73.   To gauge the relative proportionality of the two MMP models and the current Canadian electoral system, Table 9 compares the seat allocations under the two variants of parallel MMP, top-up MMP and SMP. While the Liberals are always the winners, their share of Commons seats varies from an artificial majority of 51.5 percent to an extremely proportional 38.5 percent. The two parallel MMP systems award the Liberals around 45 percent of the seats – not enough for a single-party majority government, but a comfortable plurality over the second- and third-place parties (Reform and the Progressive Conservatives, with 20 and 12 percent of the seats respectively).

Conclusions and Recommendations

74.   The evidence discussed in this paper sustains the following conclusions about alternative electoral systems for Canada. First, neither SNTV, STV nor list-PR would ensure reasonable proportionality. The latter two systems might do so if they were based on large multi-member constituencies, but these would be both impractical and inconsistent with public and judicial opinion. Second, a more proportional electoral system would probably encourage voter turnout, as well as the nomination of more women and minorities in winnable seats. Third, parallel MMP with national open party lists offers the best mix of legislative proportionality and executive stability. It would not substantially increase the incentives for parties to

fragment. Nor, as Table 10 demonstrates, would it necessarily require coalition government. In three of the last five federal elections – in 1980, 1988 and 1993 – MMP would have created single-party majority governments, based on 44, 43 and 41 percent of the popular vote respectively. (No such artificial majority would have been required in 1984.) Only in 1997, when the vote share of the leading party dipped below 40 percent, would a minority government have resulted from parallel MMP – but a minority with a good chance to govern alone, as argued in the previous paragraph. So it is simply incorrect to argue that *any* increase in electoral proportionality will inevitably lead to weak, unstable coalition governments.

75. While the effect of any electoral reform should not be overstated, and cannot be fully predicted, the idea of MMP has enough potential to warrant serious official investigation and public discussion. To that end, the federal government should establish a commission of inquiry into the electoral system, with a mandate to recommend an alternative to SMP. Any binding decision between the two systems should be left to a national referendum, preceded by an impartial campaign of public education about the issues involved in the choice.

Endnotes

1. I wish to thank Larisa Fry, Samantha Glover and Stefanie Morand for their excellent research assistance in the preparation of this paper. I am also indebted to Bill Jackson, Selma Eren, and the Inter-Library Loans staff at the University of Windsor Leddy Library for their yeoman service. Brian Owens and Paul Vasey generously read a draft of this paper and offered excellent suggestions for improvement. Finally, I am grateful to the colleagues and students who participated in a discussion of this paper at the University of Windsor on March 26, 1999.

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Table 1: Canadian Voter Turnout, 1984-1997

Jurisdiction	1984	1988	1993	1997	1997-1984
Newfoundland	65.5	67.1	55.1	55.2	-10.3
Prince Edward Island	84.6	84.9	73.2	72.8	-11.8
Nova Scotia	75.4	74.8	64.7	69.4	-6.0
New Brunswick	77.3	75.9	69.6	73.4	-3.9
Quebec	76.2	75.2	77.1	73.3	-2.9
Ontario	75.8	74.6	67.7	65.6	-10.2
Manitoba	73.2	74.7	68.7	63.2	-10.0
Saskatchewan	77.9	77.8	69.4	65.3	-12.6
Alberta	69.1	75.0	65.2	58.5	-10.6
British Columbia	77.6	78.7	67.8	65.6	-12.0
NWT	67.9	70.8	62.9	58.9	-9.0
Yukon	77.9	78.4	70.4	69.8	-8.1
Canada	75.3	75.3	69.6	67.0	-8.3

Taken from Chief Electoral Officer of Canada, *Thirty-Sixth General Election, 1997: Official Voting Results Synopsis* (Ottawa: Elections Canada, 1997), Table 4. The 1993 turnout figures should be taken with a grain of salt, because the election was conducted on the basis of year-old voters' lists.

Table 2: Most Important Factors in Voting, 1974-1997

Election	Party Leaders	Local Candidates	Party as a Whole	Column 4 - Column 3
1997	20.0	22.0	58.0	36.0
1993	22.0	21.0	57.0	36.0
1988	20.0	27.0	53.0	26.0
1984	30.0	21.0	49.0	28.0
1980	36.0	20.0	44.0	24.0
1979	37.0	23.0	40.0	27.0
1974	33.0	27.0	40.0	23.0
Averages	28.3	23.0	48.7	28.6

Taken from Pammett, Jon H., "The Voters Decide", in Alan Frizzell and Jon H. Pammett, eds., *The Canadian General Election of 1997* (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1998), 233.

Table 3: Seat-Vote Ratios in the Canadian House of Commons, 1997

	Lib.			Ref.			B.Q.			N.D.P.			P.C.		
	S	V	R	S	V	R	S	V	R	S	V	R	S	V	R
Nfld.	57.1	37.9	1.5	0	2.5	0	—	—	—	0	22.0	0	42.9	36.8	1.2
P.E.I.	100	44.8	2.2	0	1.5	0	—	—	—	0	15.1	0	0	38.3	0
N.S.	0	28.4	0	0	9.7	0	—	—	—	54.5	30.4	1.8	45.5	30.8	1.5
N.B.	30	32.9	0.9	0	13.1	0	—	—	—	20	18.4	1.1	50	35	1.4
Que.	34.7	36.7	0.9	0	0.3	0	58.7	37.9	1.5	0	2	0	6.7	22.2	0.3
Ont.	98	49.5	2	0	19.1	0	—	—	—	0	10.7	0	1	18.8	0.1
Man.	42.9	34.3	1.2	21.4	23.7	0.9	—	—	—	28.6	23.2	1.2	7.1	17.8	0.4
Sask.	7.1	24.7	0.3	57.1	36	1.6	—	—	—	35.7	30.9	1.2	0	7.8	0
Alta.	7.7	23.1	0.3	92.3	54.7	1.7	—	—	—	0	5.7	0	0	15.4	0
B.C.	17.6	28.8	0.6	73.5	43	1.7	—	—	—	8.8	18.2	0.5	0	6.2	0
N.W.T.	100	43.1	2.3	0	11.7	0	—	—	—	0	20.9	0	0	16.7	0
Y.T.	0	22	0	0	25.3	0	—	—	—	100	28.9	3.5	0	13.9	0
National	51.5	38.4	1.3	19.9	19.4	1.0	14.6	10.7	1.4	7.0	11.0	0.6	6.6	18.9	0.4

Table 4: Canadians' Attitudes Toward the Electoral System, 1991

Region/Group	% in favour of SMP	% in favour of MMP
Atlantic	51	70
Quebec	33	85
Ontario	47	73
Manitoba/Saskatchewan	42	66
Alberta	39	78
British Columbia	41	70
Men	46	72
Women	36	80
English	44	73
French	35	81
Other language	44	78
All Respondents	42	75

Table 5: The Provincial Allocation of Seats under 60-40 MMP

Province/ Territory	Current % of the House of Commons	Current seat total	Constituency seats under MMP	List seats under MMP
British Columbia	11.296	34	20	14
Alberta	8.637	26	16	10
Saskatchewan	4.651	14	8	6
Manitoba	4.651	14	8	6
Ontario	34.219	103	62	41
Quebec	24.917	75	45	30
New Brunswick	3.322	10	6	4
Nova Scotia	3.654	11	7	4
Prince Edward Island	1.329	4	2	2
Newfoundland and Labrador	2.326	7	4	3
Territories	0.997	3	2	1
Total	100	301	180	121

Table 6: MMP Constituency Seats, Based on Voting in the 1997 General Election

Province/Territory	Lib.	Ref.	P.C.	N.D.P.	B.Q.	Other	Total Constituency seats
British Columbia	3(-3)	15(+6)	0(-1)	2	0	0	20
Alberta	1(-3)	14(+5)	0(-2)	1	0	0	16
Saskatchewan	0(-2)	5(+2)	0(-1)	3	0	0	8
Manitoba	3	2	1(-1)	2	0	0	8
Ontario	61(+30)	0(-12)	1(-10)	0	0	0	62
Quebec	16(-1)	0	3(-7)	0	26(+8)	0	45
New Brunswick	2	0(-1)	3(+1)	1	0	0	6
Nova Scotia	0(-2)	0(-1)	3(+1)	4(+2)	0	0	7
Prince Edward Island	2(+1)	0	0(-1)	0	0	0	2
Newfoundland and Labrador	2	0	2	0(-1)	0	0	4
Territories	1	0	0	1	0	0	2
Total	91	36	13	14	26	0	180
Proportional Seats	71	37	32	21	18	0	180
Net Difference	20	-1	-19	-7	8	0	0

Table 7: Seat Entitlements in a Top-up MMP System: 1997 General Election Results

Party	Second-Ballot Vote Percentage	Total Seat Entitlement	Constituency Seats Won	Top-Up Seats Required	% of Top-up MPs
Lib.	38.5	116	91	25	21.55
Ref.	19.4	58	36	22	37.93
P.C.	18.8	57	13	44	77.19
N.D.P.	11.0	33	14	19	57.58
B.Q.	10.7	32	26	6	18.75
Other	1.6	5	0	5	100
Total	100	301	180	121	—

Table 8: The 1997 Election Outcome Under Parallel MMP

Party	Constituency Seats	PR-List Seats, Provincial	Total Seats 1	PR-List Seats, National	Total Seats 2	Actual Seat Totals, 1997	Column 7 - Column 6
Lib.	91	48	139	47	138	155	17
Ref.	36	24	60	24	60	60	0
P.C.	13	23	36	23	36	20	-16
N.D.P.	14	14	28	13	27	21	-6
B.Q.	26	12	38	13	39	44	5
G.P.	0	0	0	1	1	0	-1
Ind.	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Total	180	121	301	121	301	301	—

The table compares the hypothetical outcome of the 1997 general election under two variants of parallel MMP: provincial lists (column 3) and a single national list (column 5). Column 8 displays the discrepancies between the actual 1997 results under SMP, and the hypothetical results of parallel MMP based on federal party lists. The numbers show that while the Reform caucus would have been equally large under either system, the Liberals and the Bloc Québécois would have lost seats and the Progressive Conservatives and N.D.P. gained seats under parallel MMP. In Column 3, seats in the four largest provinces – Ontario, Quebec, British Columbia and Alberta – were allocated on the basis of a Droop quota; seats in the smaller provinces and the Territories were allocated according to a Sainte-Laguë divisor. The national list seats in Column 5 were calculated using a Droop quota.

Table 9: Party Seat Totals Under SMP and Three Variants of MMP

Party	Parallel MMP/ Provincial Lists	Parallel MMP/ National List	Top-Up MMP	SMP
Lib.	139	138	116	155
Ref.	60	60	58	60
P.C.	36	36	57	20
B.Q.	38	39	32	44
N.D.P.	28	27	33	21
Other	0	1	5	1
Total	301	301	301	301

Table 10: Government Formation Under SMP and Parallel MMP, 1980–1993

Party	1984 SMP	1984 MMP	1988 SMP	1988 MMP	1993 SMP	1993 MMP
Lib.	40	54	83	87	177*	157*
P.C.	211*	189*	169*	151*	2	24
N.D.P.	30	37	43	52	9	12
Ref.	—	—	—	—	52	52
B.Q.	—	—	—	—	54	47
Other	1	2	0	5†	1	3
TOTAL	282	282	295	295	295	295

* Indicates a single-party majority government.
† Includes the Reform vote.

The national vote shares of the winning party in each election were as follows:

Election	Winning Party	Vote Share
1980	Liberal	44.3
1984	Progressive Conservative	50.0
1988	Progressive Conservative	43.0
1993	Liberal	41.3

In this table, the MMP figures are very approximate.They are based on the data in Tony J. Coulson, "Statistical Appendices: Canadian Federal Election Results, 1925-1993" in A. Brian Tanguay and Alain-G. Gagnon, eds., *Canadian Parties in Transition*(Toronto: Nelson, 1996). The calculation uses MMP with provincial lists, using a Droop quota to allocate the list-PR seats.

Appendix A: Glossary of Electoral Systems

Abbreviation	Full Name	Description
SMP	Single-Member Plurality	The country is divided into single-member constituencies. The voter chooses one of the candidates on the ballot. The candidate with more votes than any other wins the seat.
STV	Single Transferable Vote	The country is divided into multi-member constituencies. The voter rank-orders some or all of the candidates on the ballot. A Hare or Droop quota is calculated on the basis of the valid votes cast (see Appendix B), and the first-preference votes are counted. Any candidate with more first preferences than the quota is declared elected, and his or her surplus votes are redistributed among the remaining candidates on the basis of second preferences. The counting continues, eliminating the lowest candidates and redistributing the surplus votes of the winners, until all the seats have been filled.
SNTV	Single Non-transferable Vote	As STV, except that each voter casts only one vote (instead of a maximum of one per available seat).
List-PR	List-Proportional Representation	The country is divided into multi-member constituencies (or is designated as a single multi-member constituency). Each of the parties lists its candidates on the ballot, and the voter chooses one of those lists. The lists can be open (the voter can express a preference among the candidates of her favourite party) or closed (a simple vote for a party). The seats are allocated on the basis of either a highest-average or a largest-remainder formula (see Appendix B). When the number of seats for each party has been determined, they are filled by the candidates at the top of the lists.
MMP	Mixed-Member Plurality	Each voter casts two ballots: one for a candidate in an SMP constituency and one for a party list. In top-up MMP, the number of seats for each party is calculated on the basis of the list-PR votes and the number of SMP seats is subtracted to determine the number of list-PR seats to which each party is entitled. In parallel MMP the two groups of MPs are elected separately, and their combined totals determine each party's seat allocation.

Taken from André Blais and Louis Massicotte, "Electoral Systems", in Lawrence Leduc, Richard G. Niemi and Pippa Norris, eds., *Comparing Democracies: Elections and Voting in Global Perspective* (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 1997); and from David M. Farell, *Comparing Electoral Systems* (London: Prentice-Hall/Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1997).

Appendix B: The 1997 Seat Distribution in Nova Scotia Under Four List-PR Methods

Table A1: The Actual Vote Results in Nova Scotia

Party	Number of Valid Votes	Actual Seat Allocation
P.C.	143,854	5
N.D.P.	142,081	6
Lib.	132,539	0
Ref.	45,207	0
Total (all parties and candidates)	467,370	11

Tables A2 and A3 demonstrate the two highest-averages methods. In each table, the top row displays the divisors; the column below each divisor shows the products of the division. The italicized numbers represent filled seats, which are further identified by capital letters.

Table A2: The D'Hondt Highest-Average Formula

Party	1	2	3	4	Total Seats
P.C.	*143,854* A	*71,927.0* D	*47,751.3* G	*35,963.5* K	4
N.D.P.	*142,081* B	*71,040.0* E	*47,360.3* H	35,520.3	3
Lib.	*132,539* C	*66,269.5* F	*44,179.7* J	33,134.8	3
Ref.	*45,207* I	22,603.5	15,069.0	11,301.8	1

Table A3: The Sainte-Laguë Highest-Average Formula

Party	1	3	5	7	Total Seats
P.C.	*143,854* A	*47,751.3* D	*28,975.8* H	*20,550.6* K	4
N.D.P.	*142,081* B	*47,360.3* E	*23,680.2* I	20,297.3	3
Lib.	*132,539* C	*44,179.7* G	*22,089.8* J	18,934.1	3
Ref.	*45,207* F	15,069.0	9,041.4	6,458.1	1

Tables A4 and A5 illustrate the two largest-remainder methods. In Table A4, a Hare quota is divided into the parties' respective vote shares to determine the whole numbers of seats to be awarded to each. The remaining seat is then filled by the party with the largest remainder – in this case, the Progressive Conservatives. Table A5 is identical, except that it uses a Droop quota.

Table A4: The Hare Largest-Remainder Formula

Total valid votes ÷ number of seats to be filled = Hare quota
467,370 ÷ 11 = 42,488.2

Party	Vote Total	Hare Quota	Column 2 ÷ Column 3	Total Seats Awarded
P.C.	143,854	42,488.2	3.39 (largest remainder)	4
N.D.P.	142,081	42,488.2	3.34	3
Lib.	132,539	42,488.2	3.12	3
Ref.	45,207	42,488.2	1.06	1

Table A5: The Droop Largest-Remainder Formula

Total valid votes ÷ (number of seats to be filled + 1) = Droop quota
467,370 ÷ 12 = 38,947.5

Party	Vote Total	Droop Quota	Column 2 ÷ Column 3	Total Seats Awarded
P.C.	143,854	38,947.5	3.69 (largest remainder)	4
N.D.P.	142,081	38,947.5	3.65	3
Lib.	132,539	38,947.5	3.40	3
Ref.	45,207	38,947.5	1.16	1

Under all four list-PR counting methods, the Progressive Conservatives receive four seats (36.4%); the N.D.P. and Liberals three apiece (27.3% each); and Reform one (9.1%). While this allocation is not perfectly proportional, it is considerably more proportional than the actual SMP outcome.

The discussion of electoral systems in the Appendices owes much to Farrell, *Comparing Electoral Systems,* and Blais and Massicotte, "Electoral Systems" (see bibliography).

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