

## Alternative Electoral Systems

Read and précis notes will be checked before this Lecture is delivered ...

1

## In liberal democracies ...

A variety of systems that can be categorised into three types:

- Majoritarian
- Proportional
- Mixed

We will be examining each of these ...

2

## Majoritarian systems ...

Essential majoritarian consists of two basic and popular systems. We will be briefly considering each of these ...

- Alternative vote (AV)
- Supplementary Vote (SV)

3

## Alternative vote (AV)

### Alternative vote (AV)

- Voters indicate choice by "1" beside their first choice - "2" their second choice etc. Not by putting an 'X' on the paper!
- The aim is to achieve an overall majority (50%+1vote)
- If no candidate gets an absolute majority first time - the person with the lowest vote is eliminated and their second preference votes are then allocated.

4

## Alternative vote (AV)

### What are the advantages of AV?

- MP's are elected by the majority of their constituents.
- A link between MP's and their constituencies is retained (if not strengthened).

5

## Alternative vote (AV)

### What are the disadvantages of AV?

- It is even less proportional than FPTP.  
*Why?*
- It exaggerates swings in public opinion.  
*How?*
- Is AV making a comeback?

6

## Supplementary Vote (SV)

A variant of AV and designed for [electing the Mayor of London \(see results\)](#).

- Under this system the elector has one vote and records only his first or second preferences on the ballot paper.
- If no candidate wins a simple majority - all but the top two candidates are eliminated . Second preferences for the two eligible candidates are then added to their first and the one with most votes wins.

9

## Supplementary Vote (SV)

**What are the advantages of the SV system?**

- It is a simple system.
- Second preferences of voters who supported minor fringe parties are not counted ([Is this good or bad?](#)).

10

## Supplementary Vote (SV)

**What are the disadvantages of SV?**

- It is not a proportional system
- The winning candidate need not get a majority of the votes cast. (unlikely)
- Copy the box on SV from page 77

11

## SV Mock Election ...

- **Mock election:** Volunteers needed to be candidates on the mock ballot papers for each of the minor UK parties (Green, UKIP, Plaid Cymru, SNP and English Democrats).
- 5 minutes: Vote for the your first and second choices.
- The ballot papers will then be collected in and mixed up.
- Everyone will then receive a random ballot paper back and we will count up the votes together as a class and declare the winner.

12

## Proportional systems

**Essentially - there are two basic types of proportional systems ...**

- List system
- Single Transferable Vote (STV) System

13

## List system ...

- Electors choose from a list in a large multi-member constituency. The voters vote for a Party and seats are allocated as per the parties vote.
- In OPEN LIST systems the electors can choose from a list of individual candidates.

14

## List systems ...

- In CLOSED LIST systems voters can only vote for a party list or an individual candidate.
- A major problem with a closed list system is that it gives party managers greater control over the electoral system (Who would be top of the list Boris Johnson or Philip Hammond?)

15

## List systems ...

### What are the advantages of the list system?

- There is a high degree of proportionality.
- Each vote has the same value.

16

## List system ...

### What are the disadvantages of the list system?

- In closed list systems - voters have little or no choice between candidates.
- By determining the order in which candidates are placed on the list, party officials can stifle minority views.

17

## A List Mock Election

- **Mock election:** List systems – open and closed. Students vote for musical bands (i.e. The Beatles) on their ballot papers. In the open list system they will get to vote for individual members of the bands.
- The ballot papers will then be collected in and mixed up.
- Everyone will then receive a random ballot paper back and we will count up the votes together as a class and declare the winner.

18

## List Mock election

- **Discussion point:** How does the result highlight the strengths and/or weaknesses of the List system?
- Copy the list box on page 75

19

## Single Transferable Vote (STV)

- STV uses multi-member constituencies only. Voters show their preference (1, 2, 3 etc) from a large list of candidates. Thus, a voter can vote as many times as they like using the list.
- To be elected a candidate must obtain a droop quota - *What is it? Draw the formula ...*

19

### STV ...

- If no candidate successfully reaches the quota on the first ballot - the candidate with the lowest vote is eliminated and their second preferences are transferred. This process continues until the required number of seats are elected.

20

### STV ...

- STV is used in local and European elections in Northern Ireland and for the General Election in the Republic of Ireland.

21

### STV ...

#### What are the advantages of STV?

- It is broadly proportional and ensures votes are largely of equal value.
- Only a party - or coalition parties - that win more than 50% of the popular vote can form a government.
- Voters can choose from a range of candidates (even from the same party).

22

### STV ...

#### What are the disadvantages of STV?

- The system is less accurate in translating votes into seats than list or AMS systems.
- Large multi-member seats can break the link between MP and constituency.
- It produces coalition governments and can give disproportionate power to minor parties that hold balance of power.

23

### STV Mock Election ...

- **Mock election:** Volunteers needed to be candidates on the mock ballot papers for each of the UK fringe parties (Monster Raving Loonies, Natural Law Party, Respect Party).
- 5 minutes: Vote for the candidate and party of your choice.
- The ballot papers will then be collected in and mixed up.
- Everyone will then receive a random ballot paper back and we will count up the votes together as a class and declare the winner.

24

### STV Mock Election ...

- **Discussion point:** How does the result highlight the strengths and/or weaknesses of the STV system?
- Copy the STV box from page 74

25

## Additional Member System (AMS)

This is a mixed system - which combines FPTP in single constituencies and a List system provides additional members.

The idea of this system is to ensure that the total number of seats a party wins is proportionate to their national vote.

Voters would likely have two votes - one for an individual constituency MP and the other for a national political party.

26

## AMS ...

- AMS is best illustrated from Germany - where 50% of the seats in the Bundestag are allocated to additional members. However, to get additional members a party must get 5% of the national vote.
- The 'd'Hondt Formula' is used to mathematically allocate seats.

27

## AMS ...

In simple terms (with 100 seats) - if 50% of the MP's are elected by FPTP and Labour wins 25 individual seats with a party vote of 40% - they would be allowed 15 additional MP's (from a Party List system).

- If - in the same election - the Conservatives obtained 20 seats by FPTP with 40% of the party vote - they would add 20 MP's.

28

## AMS in Great Britain ...

AMS is used in a number of elections in Great Britain.

- Go to page 72 of Garnett & Lynch and produce a chart reflecting Table 3.2.
- For the next lesson - explain what the 'Jenkins Report' is all about.

29

## AMS ...

### What are the advantages of AMS?

- Results are broadly proportional and less likely to be wasted.
- A number of single member constituencies are used - maintains link between MP and a geographical area.
- Electors have two votes.

30

## AMS ...

### What are the disadvantages of AMS?

- It creates two categories of representatives in the assembly.
- Parties can control the list system.
- Small parties may still be under-represented (Is this bad - what about the BNP?) .

31

## Break into four pressure groups and report back ...

Consider the below issues ...

- **What is the best form of electoral system and why?** (a) from a system point of view and (b) from an outcome point of view.
- **What is the worst form of electoral system and why?** (a) from a system point of view and (b) from an outcome point of view.

**32**

## For the next lesson -

### From working groups - present to class details of ...

- The UK's multiple electoral systems.
- The impact of the new electoral systems: What have been the results?
- Electoral reform in the UK.

**33**