Just Representation?

A CPJ Backgrounder on Electoral Reform and Representation

by Chandra Pasma

Approved by the Board of Directors: April 16, 2009

CITIZENS *for* PUBLIC JUSTICE

Our Vision

- CPJ is committed to seek human flourishing and the integrity of creation as our faithful response to God's call for love, justice and stewardship.
- We envision a world in which individuals, communities, societal institutions and governments all contribute to and benefit from the common good.

Our Mission

- CPJ's mission is to promote *public justice* in Canada by shaping key public policy debates through research and analysis, publishing and public dialogue. CPJ encourages citizens, leaders in society, and governments to support policies and practices which reflect God's call for love, justice and stewardship.

Public Justice

- Public Justice is the *political* dimension of loving one's neighbour, caring for creation and achieving the common good, and is particularly the responsibility of government and citizens.

CPJ addresses a range of public justice issues, from eliminating poverty to creating a climate of welcome for newcomers to fostering hopeful citizenship. CPJ's professional staff actively engage in a number of activities to realize CPJ's mission and keep public justice front and centre in policy debates.

Our members, who come from a wide variety of faith communities, are committed to public justice and its contributions to public dialogue. They participate in CPJ's work through campaigns, dialogue and financial support. CPJ's 13-member board of directors includes representation from across Canada and meets regularly three times per year.

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Executive Summary

Canada's First Past the Post (FPTP) electoral system is criticized by some for its disproportionality, the prevalence of strategic voting and the perception of wasted votes, underrepresentation of women and minorities, and declining voter turnout. Dissatisfaction with the system has led to five provinces considering options for change. CPJ has long advocated for electoral reform at both the provincial and federal levels.

A system of proportional representation (PR) is generally proposed to replace FPTP. PR systems have greater proportionality in their distribution of seats, which is viewed as more fair, and eliminates the perception of wasted votes. Hybrid systems also combine an element of strong geographic representation with proportionality at the national level.

The electoral system must be viewed as part of representation – citizens choose their representatives through the electoral system. How representatives are selected therefore has an impact on how citizens are represented. But representation is not a simple concept; it combines many components or facets of representation, often in creative tension with one another, with the challenge for any democratic system being to maintain the different components in a way that citizens retain confidence in the system. Different electoral systems have an impact on authorization, accountability, access to representatives, geographic representation, and descriptive and substantive representation.

The electoral system is part of representation, but other factors contribute to the legitimacy of representation and the culture of governance. The role of the party system is important, particularly since in Canada most public policy debate takes place at the party level. For some Canadians, the problem lies less with the electoral system than with the control exercised by the political parties, and changing the electoral system will not necessarily change this. Reform of the electoral system cannot be expected to resolve every problem that Canadians have with representation and governance.

CPJ has long advocated for electoral reform, engaging with the electoral system and its implications for politics from the very beginning of its work. CPJ's public justice framework calls for government to promote just relationships and foster conditions that enhance the common good, and for citizens to participate in the creation of laws in order to ensure that public justice is pursued. Representation is essential to the fulfillment of both tasks, as well as to ensuring respect for the rights, responsibilities and dignity of all people. Accountability, dialogue, descriptive and substantive representation are all important for achieving representation, but they also need to be constructed in a way that respects the wishes of citizens. This has implications for how electoral reform should be pursued from a public justice perspective.

Introduction

Citizens for Public Justice has long advocated for electoral reform in Canada. With five provinces considering or having considered options for change and a federal government study of democratic practices that included questions on electoral reform, the issue of electoral reform has gone mainstream. These explorations of electoral reform appear to be the result of dissatisfaction with how we as Canadians are represented and governed. There have also been disappointments with the provincial debates and referendums on electoral change, however.

This paper explores the current electoral system and the proposal of electoral reform, as well as arguments in favour of and opposed to the status quo and change. Then, looking at electoral systems through the frame of representation, this paper addresses the values and principles that underlie the selection of an electoral system, including authorization, accountability, access to representatives, geographic representation, and descriptive and substantive representation.

1. Policy analysis

Current Situation

In Canada, the electoral system at both the federal and provincial levels is a single-member district plurality system, commonly referred to as First Past the Post (FPTP). This system is part of our Westminster parliamentary heritage from Great Britain, and has been used in Canada since the earliest elections in the colonies that eventually formed Canada. It has been used in every federal election since Confederation, and in all provinces except Alberta, British Columbia and Manitoba, all of which used Single Transferable Vote (STV) or alternative vote for certain elections between the 1920s and the 1950s. FPTP is currently used to elect more than 60 national legislative assemblies[i] around the world.[1]

FPTP systems are frequently characterized by decisive majority governments elected by less than a majority of voters, and seat distribution that does not reflect votes proportionally on a national scale. The strengths of this electoral system are often seen as stable government, direct accountability, geographic representation and a strong constituent-representative link. The perceived stability of governments is tied to the greater likelihood of one party gaining a clear majority of seats than in a proportional system. Thus, there are fewer governing coalitions or negotiations to allow one party to govern.

The direct accountability, geographic representation, and strong constituent-representative link arise from the fact that voters cast one vote for one representative, thereby giving that representative a mandate to represent the district. The representative is held directly accountable by the local population, and retains a close dialogue with constituents about policy matters. Members of Parliament (MPs) and provincial legislative bodies are also service providers and links to government departments within the Canadian tradition: many Canadians turn first to their MP when they have a question about how to apply for EI, have difficulty obtaining a passport, or have a question about the effect of new legislation, etc.

Other advantages of the FPTP system are considered to be its simplicity and familiarity. FPTP is a very easy electoral system to understand, and it is likewise very easy to determine results – a simple tally of

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[i] It should be noted that many countries with two national chambers use different electoral systems for each chamber.

the votes in each constituency provides the seat distribution, as each candidate with the greatest number of votes wins the seat in each riding. FPTP is also familiar to Canadians because of its long history in Canadian elections.

Arguments Against FPTP
There are numerous criticisms of FPTP, generally aimed at the disproportionality of the system, the prevalence of strategic voting and the perception of wasted votes, underrepresentation of women and minorities, and declining voter turnout. The key issue that drives dissatisfaction with our current electoral system is disproportionality – that is, the number of seats a party wins in the House of Commons or legislative assembly is not proportionate to the number of votes that the party receives nation or province-wide. The 2006 federal election, for instance, gave the Conservative party a minority government with 124 seats and a popular vote of 36.27%, and the Liberal party Official Opposition status with 103 seats and a popular vote of 30.23%. However, with 10.5% of the popular vote, the Bloc Québécois gained 51 seats, or nearly 17% of the seats in the House of Commons while with 17.5% of the popular vote, the New Democratic Party gained only 9.4% of the seats in the house, a total of 29. Similarly, an independent candidate won a seat with 0.52% of the vote, but the Green Party, which won 4.5% of the popular vote, did not win any seats.

In the case of majority governments, the issue becomes more distinct. In the last few decades in Canada, only one majority government at the federal level actually received a majority of votes: Brian Mulroney's "super-majority" of 1984 which gave the Conservatives the largest seat majority in Canadian history at 211 out of 282 was based on 50.3% of the popular vote. This means that more people have not voted for the government than voted for it. There are also several unique cases where the FPTP system has created extremely glaring distortions in representation. In 1987, the Liberal Party of New Brunswick won 60% of the vote in a provincial election. It also won 100% of the seats. There was no official opposition despite the fact that 40% of voters had voted for someone other than a Liberal candidate. In several provincial elections, notably New Brunswick in 2006, Quebec in 1998, British Columbia in 1996, and Saskatchewan in 1986, the party that won the majority of seats actually placed second in the popular vote.

One of the principal distortions of the lack of proportionality is that while smaller parties receive significant votes, they are entirely shut out from the House of Commons or legislative assembly. For instance, in the 2006 federal election, 11 parties received votes without winning any seats. The Greens in particular were disadvantaged, receiving 4.5% of the popular vote but no seats.

Because broad, national support or highly concentrated geographic support is required, parties that speak in the broadest terms are rewarded with seats while parties that take distinctive stances on issues or that represent specific voices tend to be marginalized, unless they can gain very strong localized support. This tends to both exaggerate the strength of national support, and underplay diffuse support. For instance, the Reform Party and its successor the Canadian Alliance appeared to be unable to "breakthrough" in Ontario, despite the fact that one of every five Ontario voters supported them in the 1997 and 2000 federal elections.[2]

The zero sum nature of the battle in each electoral district gives rise to strategic voting, whereby voters opt for a second or third choice candidate in hopes of preventing a candidate they do not want from

winning. It also makes people feel that votes for all those candidates that are not elected are wasted.[ii] Some, including Vote for MMP (sponsored by Fair Vote Canada),[3] the Law Commission of Canada, and CPJ in its past work, have suggested that this has contributed to voter disillusionment, thereby fuelling the falling trend of voter turnout in Canada. In the 1984 and 1988 elections, voter turnout was around 75% of eligible voters. In 1993, it was 69.6%, in 1997, 67%, in 2000, 64.1% and in 2004, 60.9%. In 2006, turnout rebounded slightly to 64.7%, before declining to an all-time low of 59.1% in the 2008 election.[4] The decline is especially marked in youth – in the 2000 federal election, only 25% of eligible voters between the ages of 18 and 24 cast a vote.[5]

There is reason to be cautious, however. Voter turnout has been declining globally in most industrialized countries,[6] including Germany and the New Zealand, two countries with mixed member proportional representation (MMP). This suggests that other factors such as the impact of globalization on domestic politics are playing a role in the decline of voter turnout. Analyses by Elections Canada by age cohort also suggest that it is declining youth turnout that is principally contributing to the overall trend of declining voter turnout.[7] This suggests that it is unlikely a single factor, such as the electoral system, is to blame for declining voter turnout.

Many also feel that the current underrepresentation of women and minorities among elected members is a byproduct of our FPTP system. In the last decade, the percentage of seats held by women in the House of Commons has remained very close to 20%, despite the fact that women comprise 50.47% of Canada's population. The percentage of seats held by visible minorities has been steadily increasing over the past few decades, however the 24 seats held by visible minorities in the House of Commons in the 39th Parliament was, at 7.8%, not close to the 12% of our population that are visible minorities.[8] Of visible minority groups, South Asians are the only demographic whose percentage of seats in the House of Commons mirrored their percentage of the population.[9] 5 seats, or 1.6%, were held by Aboriginal Canadians[iii] who represent 3.1% of Canada's population. In explaining this trend, critics point to the power that incumbency holds in the current electoral system, as well as the gatekeeping role played by political parties.

What is Being Advocated

Proportional Representation
Those who advocate for electoral reform in Canada generally propose a variant of proportional representation (PR). Using different methods, PR systems distribute seats to political parties with a greater degree of proportionality than plurality or majoritarian systems. Strict PR has broad, multi-member districts – in some cases, a single nationwide district – with party lists of candidates, and seats are allocated solely on the basis of party votes. Worldwide, 75 national legislative assemblies are elected via List-PR, while over 30 chambers are elected using a hybrid system of some type.[10]

Variations include mixed member proportional representation (MMP) and single transferable vote (STV). These variations combine elements of strong geographic representation with proportionality at the national or provincial level. These are the two models that have been proposed as options for electoral reform in Canada. In an MMP system, each voter casts two votes, one for a local candidate and one for a political party. In addition to those seats in the legislature won by local candidates, parties

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[ii] Although this is changing, at least for federal elections, in an era where votes also represent federal funding for political parties.
[iii] Statistics Canada's definition of visible minorities does not include Aboriginal Canadians.

are given additional seats to fill with list candidates, according to the number of total votes they received as a political party. The result is overall proportionality. MMP has been proposed as an alternative in New Brunswick, Ontario, and Prince Edward Island, as well as being recommended for federal elections by the Law Commission of Canada. STV allows voters to rank their preferred candidates in a multi-member district. If a candidate is eliminated, the vote is given to the voter's second preference. If a candidate is elected, some systems allow unused votes to be transferred as well. STV can also be a majoritarian electoral system, if single-member districts are used rather than multi-member. STV was proposed by the Citizens Assembly of British Columbia.

Those who prefer PR or an electoral system with an element of PR generally focus on the greater proportionality of seat distribution. This is viewed as more fair than FPTP's somewhat arbitrary seat distribution, both to political parties and voters. It eliminates the perception of wasted votes, or of different weights accorded to votes based on the geographical location of voters. There are also correlations between PR and greater numerical representation of women and minorities, although there are also examples where PR has failed to increase their representation. In short, advocates of PR believe that a PR-type system would rectify the major disadvantages of FPTP.

Arguments Against PR
PR also has its detractors, however. Opponents of electoral reform argue that PR will undermine accountability and stability within the Canadian political system. Because PR will result in more minority governments, accountability will be harder to determine and more difficult to enforce. They point to the examples of the Netherlands and Italy (before reforms to the political system), where voters have complained that under PR, elections rarely vary the political landscape.[11] Meanwhile, under FPTP small shifts in vote can result in large shifts in seats, allowing a small group of dissatisfied voters to punish a party they are unhappy with. Party lists make it more difficult to remove individuals from power, even when lists are open.

Variations of PR, including MMP, would create two categories of accountability for MPs, opponents argue, with single-member district MPs held to a higher level of accountability than list MPs. If Canadians had large, multi-member districts, citizens would lose their direct link to an MP. Furthermore, the way in which regional concerns – over natural resources, urban vs. rural issues, and local industry, for instance – were articulated would change. No longer could Canadians pressure a specific person to champion their regional concerns; they would need to adapt to new ways of pressuring parties to adopt their concerns.

Furthermore, minority governments generally do not last very long in Canada's political tradition, and Canada has almost no history of coalition governments, leading to fears of government instability in a PR system. In Canada's Westminster parliamentary system, the government comes out of the legislature, so that, historically, electing the legislature has also meant electing the government. That would not necessarily remain the case if minority governments turned into coalition governments. Therefore, while a PR electoral system would make the legislature more representative of votes received by parties, it would not necessarily make the government more representative. Critics point to countries like Israel, where small religious parties retain a permanent seat at the cabinet table despite their limited support, because of the necessities of coalition building.

It would remain to be seen what effect perpetual minority or coalition governments would have on Canada's tradition of government confidence as well. The foundation for government might need to be changed to a fixed mandate system, as in the United States. PR would also not eliminate strategic

voting, but would change its nature from an emphasis on local races to national races, since some voters are stronger in their dislike of certain parties than in their preference for others. The emphasis would shift to which parties are enabled to become the minority government or the strongest party in a coalition government.

Other Arguments
There are those who, regardless of their position on electoral reform, do not perceive electoral reform to be *the* answer to the key issues affecting political representation in Canada today. For some, the issue of party discipline is the greatest problem in marginalizing dissenting voices – weakening controls of the party Whip and House Leader would heighten the freedom of representatives to speak on issues in the House, while more free votes would allow representatives to vote their conscience or the will of their constituents without significant reprisals. For others, it is a political culture that has focused solely on winning elections, thereby minimizing public debate and silencing creativity and ingenuity, especially in the context of a 24 hour news media which is quick to capitalize on anything that can be spun as a "misstep." Meanwhile, there are those who point to the lack of connection between descriptive and substantive representation[12] as a reason why simply increasing the descriptive representation of women and minorities is not enough – the larger question of how we value women and non-white ethnicities must be dealt with in order to truly address issues of representation.

Who is Advocating Change?
Electoral reform has been a priority for several citizens' groups, including Fair Vote Canada, Equal Voice, Democracy Watch, Mouvement pour une démocratie nouvelle, Fair Voting B.C., and Every Vote Counts P.E.I. CPJ has been involved in the issue for many years, advocating for PR. The federal NDP and Green Party both support a change to PR, as do many of the smaller federal parties like the Christian Heritage Party and the Canadian Action Party. In 2004, the Law Commission of Canada issued a report on electoral reform that recommended MMP for Canada, following public consultations that identified electoral reform as an issue of interest to many Canadians.[13]

But federal and provincial governments have considered electoral reform as well. In 1979, the Task Force on Canadian Unity, headed by Jean-Luc Pépin and John Robarts, recommended adding a measure of proportionality to the House of Commons through the addition of seats as a way of reducing regional alienation. In 1985, the Royal Commission on the Economic Union and Development Prospects for Canada, also known as the Macdonald Commission, considered proportional representation as an alternative to Canada's electoral system. The 1992 Royal Commission on Electoral Reform and Party Financing, also known as the Lortie Commission, did not discuss replacing the electoral system (although there have been suggestions that they received political direction not to consider any such recommendations[14]), but suggested administrative and procedural changes. The House of Commons Special Committee on Electoral Reform, which considered the report of the Lortie Commission, also limited itself to administrative changes to procedure. Meanwhile, the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs limited themselves to recommendations on a process for consultations on reform in 2004.[15]

At the provincial level, five provinces have considered alterations to their electoral system as a result of commissions or citizens' assemblies on electoral reform. In Quebec, where the Parti Québécois promised PR in the early 1970s, the Estates General on the Reform of Democratic Institutions, also known as the Béland Commission, recommended to the provincial government in 2003 that a form of regional PR would provide greater proportionality while protecting the link between citizens and their representatives. The Quebec government has not adopted the recommendation.

Prince Edward Island appointed a retired Chief Justice of the PEI Supreme Court to study electoral reform in 2003. Following his recommendation of MMP in 2004, the Legislative Assembly created a Commission on Prince Edward Island's Electoral Future to carry out a public education campaign and oversee a referendum on the issue. The referendum motion was defeated with 63.5% of votes opposing the reform.

In New Brunswick, the Commission on Legislative Democracy included a referendum on MMP among its 2004 recommendations. Former premier Bernard Lord agreed to hold a referendum in 2008, however his government lost an election in 2006. In 2007, the Liberal government announced in their response to the recommendations that they did not endorse the recommendation of electoral reform and there would not be a referendum.[16]

British Columbia appointed a Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform in 2004, which proposed STV. Although the proposal was approved by a majority of voters, the provincial government had imposed a threshold of 60% approval for adoption, which the yes votes failed to meet. However, because the vote total was so close to the threshold, at 57%, the BC government promised to run the referendum again during the 2009 election.

Ontario also appointed a Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform, which recommended MMP. 63.1% of Ontario voters opposed the proposal in the 2007 referendum.

2. Core Principles and Values

What's at Stake: Why does the Electoral System Matter?
CPJ believes that the role of government is to promote just relations and foster conditions that enhance the common good by adopting fair laws, legally recognizing rights and responsibilities, identifying and resolving injustices and ensuring access to services and infrastructure that benefit all. Citizens, meanwhile, have the right and the obligation to participate in the creation of laws, with the responsibility to ensure that public justice is pursued and the rights of the marginalized are protected and promoted. Democratic political representation is therefore important for both governments and citizens to be able to fulfill their tasks.

Democracy is essentially about representation: government for the people and by the people. But as soon as democracy is distanced from direct democracy, representation becomes complicated by questions of authorization, accountability, and the nature of representation. In order for a representative body to be truly representative, citizens must *believe* that it is representative – that is, the representatives must have legitimacy in the eyes of the represented. Representatives must also be accountable to the represented for the actions they take, whether in the legislative process or in the other tasks of public office. But to what extent are representatives delegates – following the expressed preferences of their constituents – and to what extent are they trustees – following their own understanding of the best interest of their constituents? And how important is descriptive representation, or the

> **Descriptive representation:** Representation of common characteristics
>
> **Substantive representation:** Representation of shared interests

representation of common characteristics of the represented, compared to substantive representation, or the advancement of the best interests of the represented? Rather than being directly preferred, these different understandings of representation often exist in creative tension with one another, each having an impact on perceived legitimacy and accountability. The challenge for any democratic system is to be able to maintain the different components of representation in such a way that citizens retain confidence in the system, especially as changes in political reality change understandings of political representation.

Furthermore, legislative work is not merely a matter of simply voting for or against various propositions, it is also *deliberative* work. Therefore representation has a component of mediation as well; legislators must try to navigate the interests of the nation as a whole, regional and geographic interests, minority rights and concerns, different demographics, economic sectors, and environmental concerns. In this regard, representation can be understood as having a voice – to be represented is to have someone who will voice your concern or interest in the deliberations. Representatives must sometimes try to explain to those they represent how they voted against their constituents' specific interest because they felt it was in the best interest of all, or necessary for the protection of minority rights. These "overriding values" which sometimes lead representatives to ignore specified interests are also created through national, public debate.

Core Principles: Representation through the Electoral System
In a representative democracy such as Canada, elections are a key component of the continual dialogue between citizens and their representatives. Candidates make an appeal to citizens, highlighting the values they hold and the policies they promote, and voters make their selection, choosing who will have the power and the responsibility to represent them in the legislative process and in all the tasks of public office. Because voters are bestowing trust and responsibility for representation, the selection process is of enormous importance to the act and nature of representation, the trust which the represented have in their representatives, and the depth of democracy.

In particular, electoral systems can be seen to balance competing elements of democratic representation in different ways, such that specific elements are prioritized, minimized or forced to co-exist. In this way, the electoral system has a direct effect upon representation and the culture of governance. Different electoral systems have an impact on authorization, accountability, access to representatives, geographic representation, and descriptive and substantive representation.

Authorization – voters in a FPTP system convey one person a mandate to represent their geographical region and their political views, based on a decision to vote for the candidate or their party (and that party's platform). Voters in a PR system give a party (or parties) a mandate to govern according to their platform. Voters in a hybrid system do both.

Accountability – FPTP allows constituents to directly hold one person responsible, although that person's power to enact the changes desired by constituents may be limited. PR type systems emphasize accountability at the party level, allowing voters to reward or punish the party as a whole for keeping or breaking promises, or for the behavior of some party members.

Access to representatives – FPTP creates a direct constituent-representative link by having a single member for every electoral district. PR variants that include an element of FPTP retain this link. PR variants that have only multi-member districts tend to have fewer direct links, and access tends to be issue-oriented rather than geographically-based.

Geographic representation – FPTP mandates one representative to represent geographic concerns, as do variants of PR that retain some single-member districts or regionally specific lists. The larger the multi-member districts of PR become, however, the less focused this mandate becomes. Geographic representation may contribute to the exaggeration of regional differences as well.

Descriptive representation – FPTP is theoretically as open to descriptive representation as PR; in practice, the opportunity to select only one representative narrows that possibility, as do many practices common in FPTP systems like incumbency, party gatekeeping, and nomination battles. PR systems, in contrast, tend to do better because lack of diversity becomes more apparent when considering a list of candidates rather than an individual. Depending on the rules of the system, parties may also be more susceptible to pressure from activists seeking greater diversity among candidates. PR by no means guarantees more descriptive representation than FPTP however.

Substantive representation – FPTP tends to create brokerage parties, that adhere to broadly stated values and mainstream interests, while marginalizing minority voices or enveloping them in big-tent, intra-party coalitions. PR-type systems, in contrast, stress the representation of ideas as expressed through political parties that is both proportional to support and doesn't exclude small parties that have the support of some of the electorate.

Secondary Principles for an Electoral System
In addition to these essential components of representation, there is a sub-set of principles that are frequently used in the assessment of an electoral system: accessibility, accommodation, effectiveness, fairness, precision.[17] Accessibility, which is sometimes defined as simplicity, considers how easy the electoral system is for voters to understand and participate in. Accommodation refers to a sense of compromise, rather than conflict – without a consensus based model, is there still an attempt to accommodate different points of view and experiences? Effectiveness consists of the government's ability to effectively govern or manage the state. It requires a minimum of stability, but it is broader than simply maintaining one party in power for a reasonably long period of time. In some senses, accommodation and effectiveness exist in tension, since a party's ability to implement its platform may undermine accommodation. Fairness implies both equal opportunity and the lack of a systemic bias against any one group. Precision relates to the accuracy with which the final product reflects the preferences of citizens. Generally speaking, the more information received from voters, the greater the precision. The corollary may be, however, the loss of simplicity and accessibility.

Like the principles of representation, these principles are not always easy to balance. For instance, in the community forums held by Compas in 2007 for a report commissioned by the Privy Council, participants found it difficult to prioritize values they felt should underpin the federal electoral system. Generally speaking, those who favoured fairness felt that electoral reform was needed, while those who privileged effectiveness or accessibility preferred the status quo.[18] This reflects, to a certain extent, the ways in which defining how an electoral system meets these values may be subjective. How someone defines what is fair or what is effective will influence their preference for an electoral system.

Thus, FPTP may be seen as more accessible due to its greater simplicity, accommodating to the extent that one person is held accountable for a mandate to represent all of the people in a geographic area, effective insofar as it gives one party a clear mandate to govern and usually for a longer period of time than a minority government lasts in the Canadian system, fair because it gives equal opportunity for individual candidates to be elected, but having little precision.

PR, on the other hand, may be seen as accessible because it eliminates perceptions of wasted votes, accommodating because of the greater number of parties represented and greater likelihood of minority or coalition governments, effective in giving a clearer picture of voters' preferences for ideas, fair because it gives all parties the seats that their total votes merit, and more precise than FPTP because it changes the nature of strategic voting.

Canadian's Core Values

In an October 2007 poll conducted by the Innovative Research Group for *The Hill Times*[19], 48% of respondents said there should be a national referendum on PR in Canada's next general election and 45% said they would support a system of PR in any such a referendum. While there is reason to be cautious about the results of this poll (46% of Ontarians polled said they supported PR, although this poll was conducted right around the time of the Ontario referendum where only 36.9% of Ontarians did vote in favour of MMP), this nonetheless demonstrates a significant desire for a national dialogue about the electoral system, combined with some dissatisfaction about current representation.

At the same time, a 2007 study commissioned by the Privy Council Office from Compas and the Frontier Centre for Public Policy in Winnipeg on public perceptions of democratic institutions and practices including electoral reform suggests that there is a stronger desire for public consultation on government decisions and legislation than for electoral reform.[20] The same Compas study suggests that more Canadians report satisfaction with the electoral system than dissatisfaction, and that when ranking values that should underpin an electoral system, more Canadians list a clear winner, a majority government to hold accountable, and a single MP for a local constituency than those who selected multi-member ridings and proportionality.[21]

These competing values and perceptions of how principles play out in actual practice were echoed in the public consultations of the Law Commission of Canada and the Ontario Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform.[22] Both acknowledged in their final reports that Canadians and Ontarians feel a significant attachment to strong local representation through a single representative, and therefore suggested a hybrid model which would add proportionality to a system of local constituencies.[23] The final reports of Quebec's Estates General and BC's Citizens' Assembly made similar references to strong attachment to local representation, and in fact, all the provinces who have considered electoral reform so far have focused on hybrid models which would retain local constituencies. Of all the models suggested, only BC's proposed model of STV would change constituencies from single member to multi-member, although the constituencies would remain small, with between two and seven MLAs.[24]

Limits to Electoral Reform

Changing the electoral system will have an impact upon representation and culture of governance, but it is not the sole factor that contributes to the legitimacy of representation and the nature of governance. For this reason, electoral reform should not be undertaken lightly: citizens need to be consulted on their desires and their perceptions regarding representation, and it should always be remembered that an increased emphasis on certain factors of representation will mean a decreased emphasis on others. Sometimes, what is required to restore perceived legitimacy and accountability to a political system is not changes to the electoral system, but changes to the political system. Electoral systems are part of the political opportunity structure (POS) – the complex arrangement of institutions, practices and people that make up a political system, and in each POS, elements interact differently. Thus, context is very important: a system or a practice that works well in one country won't always transfer to another with the same results if the political reality of the contexts is different. Each country and province needs

to find the electoral system that is right for its political context, respecting the factors of representation that they believe are most important. This is communal, consultative work. Finally, dialogue about electoral systems can be influential – if representation depends upon perceived legitimacy then even labeling a system unrepresentative can undermine it. Dialogue should always be undertaken with proper respect for the reality of its power and with proper respect for those who hold different opinions.

Role of the Party System
Those who argue electoral reform is needed usually emphasize the distortion in vote totals and seat totals allocated to political parties as being counter to democratic representation. Within Canada's system of strong party discipline, policy views are expressed through party platforms, with much of the public policy debate taking place at party policy conventions or during election campaigns, rather than in the legislature. Members of parliament or of the legislative assembly can be reluctant to vote against their party's position on a topic, much less speak publicly against it, although they do frequently speak in the closed door setting of caucus meetings. This contributes to the feeling of many Canadians that if the party they vote for does not have any seats in the legislature, they are not represented, or that if their elected representative is not from the party they voted for, their concerns are not represented. These Canadians believe that FPTP does not result in truly descriptive or substantive representation.

PR electoral systems generally stress the representation of ideas, expressed through political parties.[iv] However, there are also Canadians who are concerned that the problem lies not with the electoral system, but with political parties that have too much control over the Canadian political agenda, dominating policy and representation through discipline and gatekeeping of candidates. They fear that PR will not truly change the nature of politics, because political ideas will still need to be expressed through parties. Closed-list PR gives parties increased power by taking away individual legitimacy, although it also makes them more susceptible to social movement activists who choose to engage them. Open-list PR and combinations of PR with geographic representation give the parties less power, allowing individuals to stress the unique nature of their contribution to policy and representation, and thus gain individual legitimacy. Dissenting voices need to form new political parties to gain legitimacy and to win seats in the legislature, however.

To those citizens who are concerned primarily about the way political parties control public dialogue in Canada, PR is not the answer – an electoral system that focuses much more strongly on the candidates themselves, such as STV or majoritarian districts would be preferable, and other changes, such as campaign finance, democratic party structures, fair treatment of independent MPs and more free votes in the legislature are equally important.

Representation of Women and Visible Minorities
For instance, to those considering issues of representation for women and minorities, political parties are a serious issue. Political parties have historically had a negative impact on the representation of women in Canada because of their failure to promote women's candidacies. Policies such as incumbency tend to discourage both female and minority candidates, while the practice of putting female candidates in ridings where the party is unlikely to win is pervasive. Furthermore, strong internal discipline minimizes the ability of women and minorities to differ from the party line, even if they feel the best

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[iv] In a strict PR system, it is impossible to get elected as an independent candidate. In mixed systems, independent candidates can be elected in small, geographic electoral districts. All differences in policy or opinion must therefore be expressed through a political party.

interests of women or minorities are not being represented.[25] While increasing the number of political parties in existence and expanding their opportunities for electoral success may impact party discipline and encourage parties to be pro-active regarding the candidacies of women and visible minorities, it does nothing to change the way women and minorities are viewed and valued by political parties.

The representation of women and minorities is important, and their underrepresentation is a challenge to the depth of our democracy. Symbolically, their presence is important in identifying and reinforcing principles of equality, just as their absence highlights the obstacles that undermine genuine equality of opportunity. Substantively, the presence of women and visible minorities contributes to policy that is considerate of the needs and circumstances of women and visible minority groups. This is not to say that all women and minorities have the same interests, nor that every female representative or minority representative will devote themselves to the interests of women and minorities. Rather, because of circumstances in which women and minorities are defined as different and/or less than equal, they are impacted differently by policy, and impacted negatively when policy does not take into account their different experiences or circumstances. They also have different experiences to add to the national dialogue, arising from their circumstances of being defined as different. For women and minorities, therefore, representation is very closely linked to underlying questions of value. The presence of women and visible minorities is important because they have been undervalued by our society and our traditions; their presence is necessary for a revaluation, but the electoral system alone cannot change these underlying values.

Conclusion
Looking at PR through the frame of representation, it is clear that while PR would represent a positive change for the representation of political parties, a strict PR system would have an impact on the way accountability of government is traditionally practiced in Canada, on geographic representation, and on the direct constituent-representative link. There are Canadians who view any impact on these elements as unacceptably negative, just as there are those who are willing to accept changed practices in these areas as part of an overall change in the representation of identities and distinct voices. The advocacy of provincial commissions and citizens' assemblies, as well as the Law Commission of Canada, for MMP as opposed to direct PR recognizes how important these elements of representation are to Canadians.

Looking at electoral systems as part of representation also avoids the trap of claiming electoral reform to be a panacea – it is clear that PR will bring challenges and may impact governance in unexpected ways. It is also unlikely to solve every issue Canadians may have with the political system. Acknowledging this could change the nature of the dialogue over electoral reform from zero sum, in which each side accuses the other of being undemocratic, to a genuine dialogue in which Canadians work out together how to balance competing desires for representation of specific identities and interests.

3. CPJ's Work on Electoral Reform
CPJ has long advocated for electoral reform, engaging with the electoral system and its implications for politics from the very beginning of its work. In the initial stages, this desire for reform related very closely to the emerging mandate of the CJL Foundation, following the merger of the Committee for Justice and Liberty with the Christian Action Foundation in 1972. In trying to define its goals, approach, and its place in the Canadian political landscape, the organization wrestled with questions of political parties and their goals, how to engage in politics as Christians, and how Canada's electoral system

impacted politics and political parties. The result was a series of articles in the CJL Newsletter that explored the electoral system and proportional representation, political parties vs. political movements, and the ideologies of the existing Canadian political parties. In fact, the CJL Foundation corresponded with all of the political parties, requesting information on their ideological commitments and their beliefs on a range of issues, and challenging them to become more principled in their approaches to politics, and then published the correspondence in a Political Service Bulletin for its members.

In November, 1972, the CJL Newsletter identified PR as the only hope for the election of Christian political representatives.[26] It also criticized FPTP for creating elections based solely on personality and material gain, arguing that electoral districts were delineated solely for MPs to derive economic gain for their region in hopes of being re-elected. The result, the newsletter stated, was a lack of differentiation between political parties, and politics devoid of principle.

The following year, in June 1973, the CJL Newsletter tackled the topic again in an article entitled "Federal Elections and Canadian Minorities." Earl Groenewegen reviewed recent academic literature that suggested Canada's party system has tended to exaggerate regional strife because of the necessity of strong regional support in Canada's FPTP system. The electoral system favours minor parties with geographically concentrated support and punishes minor parties with diffuse support. The result is that minority parties with diffuse support are discriminated against, suggesting that CJL was limited to either geographic representation or becoming a pressure group. Another effect of the electoral system was that parties refused to engage in coalitions, even when it would advance their principles, because it would ruin their electoral opportunities by undermining their identity. In order to create a genuine pluralization of politics, parties needed to move away from electoral opportunism to focus on principles of justice, break down brokerage parties and allow for the inclusion of diverse idea-groups. PR, it was suggested, was one way of achieving this.

CJL first addressed decision makers on the issue of electoral reform in 1979, in a brief to parliament following the report of the Canadian Task Force on Unity.[27] CJL endorsed the Task Force's recommendation of PR, suggesting that PR would mitigate regional tensions, in part by giving governments members from every region of the country and not just those where MPs could carry single-member districts. A national list would overlook the need for regional representation, however; therefore CPJ advocated distribution of seats according to provincial popular vote. Such a system would be more representative of Canadians' political principles, CJL argued.

Following the 1980 election, which returned a Liberal majority to the House of Commons, CJL issued another statement on PR, pointing out that with only 44% of the popular vote, the Liberals lacked a true majority.[28] The brief quoted Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau from his time in opposition on the ways in which PR would address the government's lack of legitimacy in regions of the country where it had no MPs elected. The brief encouraged Prime Minister Trudeau to act on his statements during his time in power.

In February 1981, the CJL Foundation dedicated an entire political service bulletin to the issue of proportional representation: "Getting What you Vote For: Proportional Representation." In the context of ongoing constitutional debates, CJL suggested that a false sense of regional polarization was being created by FPTP and its arbitrary electoral boundaries. Rather than being represented as a distinct group with a distinct perspective, people were being represented as individuals isolated by geography. Meanwhile, FPTP also discouraged principled politics by parties, who focused instead on maximizing votes. Adopting a covenantal understanding of political office, the bulletin considered the question of

how co-responsibility between citizens and representatives for justice can be institutionalized. MMP, which had been recommended by the Canadian Task Force on Unity, was dismissed because although it adds proportionality to the system, it does not fundamentally change the nature of political parties. Instead, the bulletin argued, PR is necessary in Canada because it will refocus representation solely on ideas; political parties should be vehicles for a particular vision of life and politics. People should be represented based on their basic political and religious commitments, rather than on the basis of regional and economic interests. The bulletin acknowledged that PR is not a panacea and will bring some problems of its own, but stated that the net effect will be more principled discussion and genuine expression of differences, rather than fake majorities.

CPJ's next major statement on the issue came in 1992, with a paper written following the report of the Beaudoin-Dobbie committee. The Beaudoin-Dobbie committee was a special joint committee of the House of Commons and Senate tasked with consulting Canadians on proposals for constitutional change. One of the proposals was for an elected Senate. Following the public consultations, the Beaudoin-Dobbie committee recommended that the Senate's composition needed to represent regional, gender and social diversity, while "the full range of options for the reform of the House of Commons needs to be explored, so that all Canadians can take pride in it as their effective voice at the centre of government."[29]

While CPJ endorsed the spirit of the recommendation, the paper argued that the committee was looking in the wrong direction by not exploring the representational effectiveness of the House of Commons. The FPTP system is unjust because of inadequate representation, including: arbitrary electoral boundaries, winner-takes-all emphasis, regional tensions, the disappearance of smaller parties, the magnification of small shifts in voting, and the rise of interest group politics. A PR system would correct these injustices by instituting representation that is fair, equitable and effective. In other words, citizens would be getting what they voted for, not an MP from a party they didn't vote for; parties would be getting only the seats their popular vote merited, as opposed to an artificial majority; and citizens could expect implementation of principles and promises which they supported. In addition, PR would bring the distinctive advantages of: equitable representation, principled politics, the absorption of regionalism within parties, and cooperation among parties. CPJ's specific proposal of PR was for a list system with provincial districts and a 5% cut-off for national support. Furthermore, equitable numbers of female, aboriginal and minority candidates should be encouraged on the party lists, ranked in such a way as to ensure election, and party lists should be compiled by the full party membership rather than the elites, or left open for the voters to rank.

Former Catalyst editor Murray MacAdam published two articles in 2000 and 2001 advocating for PR. "Proportional Representation: Making Every Vote Count" appeared in the August/September 2001 issue of Catalyst, while "Potent Medicine for our Ailing Democracy" appeared in the Catholic New Times in April, 2001. In both cases, MacAdam outlined CPJ's position that PR was a more democratic system than FPTP, because of its fairness to political parties and its respect for diversity.

In 2003, when the Law Commission of Canada undertook public consultations on electoral reform, CPJ sent a letter urging the replacement of FPTP with PR in the name of justice and equity. CPJ criticized the lack of room for diversity of public philosophy and policy, the winner-takes-all nature, and the inequity of FPTP, represented by different seat allotments for different vote totals. CPJ also suggested that declining voter turnout was at least in part related to wasted votes, and that a new electoral system would revitalize democracy. Any electoral reform process would need to involve consultation, however, to ensure that Canadians have a meaningful forum in which to express their views on electoral reform.

CPJ's most recent work on electoral reform has focused on the Ontario Citizens' Assembly. In a brief to the Assembly, CPJ recommended electoral reform with "a strong proportional representation component as a first step towards broader democratic renewal." [30]   The brief emphasized the qualities of fairness, proportionality, and effectiveness as essential for any electoral system, and highlighted the necessity of incorporating diverse views and values in political institutions. FPTP does not make room for diversity of philosophy and policy, or for alternative views, making it therefore inequitable and unjust. It also leaves those voters whose representative is not of their party preference unrepresented, the brief argues. The brief also rejects criticisms of PR – that it creates unstable minority governments, gives "single-issue" parties undue power, and confuses voters – as unfounded. This view is also reflected in a brief that went out to Ontario supporters in advance of the 2007 Ontario referendum on MMP.

Through the years, CPJ's position on electoral reform has become more nuanced, from advocating a total change from FPTP in favour of a strict PR system to calling for the introduction of a PR component according to the wishes of citizens. This development of a more nuanced position appears in some ways to reflect the public debate, which has also noted the attachment Canadians feel to strong geographic representation and a direct constituent-representative link. CPJ has never explicitly noted the strength of this attachment to geographic representation or the direct constituent-representative link, however. CPJ's more nuanced position also recognizes the importance of consultation, both for the legitimacy of any new system and because ultimately, representation is the right and therefore the choice of citizens. CPJ's language has continued to reflect the zero sum nature of the larger debate around electoral reform, however, referring to the FPTP system as unfair and unjust. CPJ's position has also not reflected the concerns of some CPJ members that the real problems of our system of representation lie primarily with the power of political parties and not with the electoral system.

4. Public Justice: Electoral Reform and Representation

CPJ's public justice framework states that all people are created by God to live in dignity as God's image bearers with rights and responsibilities within a social context in which justice and compassion are the foundation for peace and joy in social relationships. The role of government is to promote just relations and foster conditions that enhance the common good by adopting fair laws, legally recognizing rights and responsibilities, identifying and resolving injustices and ensuring access to services and infrastructure that benefit all. Citizens, meanwhile, have the right and the obligation to participate in the creation of laws, with the responsibility to ensure that public justice is pursued and the rights of the marginalized are protected and promoted.

Representation is a key issue in ensuring respect for the rights, responsibilities and dignity of all people. It is also fundamental in allowing both government and citizens to fulfill their public justice tasks. This means that the legitimacy of any system of representation, and by extension, its electoral system, is essential. The competing facets of representation must be carefully balanced, according to the wishes and the needs of citizens. An appropriate balance must also be found between national and regional concerns, respect for individual opinions and minority rights, and a space for public dialogue about collective values to guide our governing process. This also means that citizens should be able to change their political system or their electoral system when they believe it is no longer representative of their political reality or their political values. But changes must always be made in consultation with all citizens and with significant public support. Neither change nor the status quo should be imposed upon a reluctant public by those in power.

Accountability is an important feature of ensuring that representation respects the dignity of all people. Citizens should find that their representatives are responsive to their concerns, and that they have an appropriate way to follow-up when they feel that their representatives are not sufficiently responsive. Furthermore, opportunities for dialogue should be maximized so that representatives can explain and debate instances where national interest and regional interest collide, or minority rights supersede individual opinion. This dialogue should be perpetually encouraged, both at the national stage in the deliberative work of the legislative assembly and in the debate over collective values, and at the local stage in communication between local representatives and constituents. It is in this dialogue that representation can transcend the superficial questions of party affiliation or dogmatics to become truly representative. And it is in this dialogue that constituents can ensure that the roles of delegate and trustee are appropriately balanced by their representatives.

The nature of descriptive and substantive representation should be decided by the people who are represented. Citizens should have the right to decide which characteristics are important for representation and to what extent they should be represented. For instance, if it is important to citizens that women are represented according to the proportion of the population which they constitute, then women should be allocated 50% of the seats, regardless of how they behave as legislators or fulfill their duties of public office. However, it is equally important to remember that self-identification is a right and that imposed identities can be a burden. Both citizens and representatives should have the right to define their identity/identities, what that means for their politics, and how they will express that identity politically. Any system of representation or electoral system should respect these characteristics that have been deemed important by citizens.

Citizens also have the right to see their views and opinions expressed and to see those opinions taken seriously, whether through the party system or otherwise. Respect for the dignity of all human beings implies the presence of all voices in deliberations and public dialogue. It also places great emphasis once again on the importance of dialogue, both at the national/provincial level and between representatives and constituents, as being the fairest way to determine how to move forward when interests and concerns collide.

Concern for the dignity of all human life also leads to recognition that sometimes expressed preferences significantly undermine the rights and opportunities of others. One of the responsibilities of citizens collectively is to recognize the harmful nature of these views and to limit their participation in or influence over public dialogue. For instance, this could mean barring certain political parties from participating in Canada's political system, or it could mean outlawing specific forms of discourse, as in Canada's hate crime laws.

Because CPJ's public justice framework emphasizes the importance of other social structures and aspects of community life, it is important to note that representation is not an issue of government or political systems only. Many structures and practices affect identity, choices and daily living, and social change that is not conducted or started in the political arena can have an impact on these areas. The ways in which identity and opinions are expressed in these fora also have an impact on the dignity of all persons and their right to participate in society. How people are represented and their concerns identified in other structures is also a significant public justice issue.

Questions of injustice, inequities and the disempowerment of certain peoples are essential from a public justice point of view. Electoral reform would reduce inequities for the expression of ideas through

political parties by ensuring that seats allocated to political parties more closely matched total votes received. This might in turn encourage active participation in the political system by making people feel that their voices are respected in the representation of their chosen political party. However, electoral reform does not necessarily change political parties or the context in which they operate. In fact, electoral reform that gives political parties more power may discourage participation, as people feel that dialogue is controlled entirely by political parties. Those who are disempowered might not have access to political parties, or the necessary resources to form their own. Electoral reform is likely also insufficient to resolve the injustice of underrepresentation of women and minorities. Electoral reform doesn't address the central issue of justice and empowerment – it only addresses a part of the problem that has given rise to the marginalization of certain views and the disempowerment of some people.

The ultimate issue is the importance of dialogue in which all voices are represented, respected and views and competing concerns balanced consultatively. Electoral reform addresses only part of current unhappiness with our political system, which is that the level of debate and the extent of public dialogue are inadequate. Electoral reform might be part of the puzzle in addressing the insufficiency of public debate, but it is not the sole answer. CPJ should also consider structural reforms to the political system, such as the question of free votes and protocol that gives political parties extensive power to discipline; structural reforms within political parties to democratize them and encourage them to balance centralized concerns with independence for representatives and participation from the grassroots; and value changes that will lessen political parties extensive disciplinary control over their members, increase respect for diversity of views and opinions, and fully recognize the equality of women and non-white ethnicities and allow for their full participation in public life.

CPJ's public justice framework also provides guidelines for debate and public dialogue around electoral reform. Dialogue must demonstrate respect for those who hold alternate views, especially in recognition that participants, no matter their preference of electoral system, all want the same thing: representation that is just, fair and equitable. They just don't agree on which elements of representation are the most important for achieving that. Labeling an electoral system undemocratic or unrepresentative is not respectful of those who appreciate the representative elements of that system, and undermines the legitimacy of representatives elected within that system. The question we are trying to address with electoral reform is "How can we make the system more fair, more representative, more just?" Representation is a collective effort, not a zero sum game.

What does this mean for political parties?
It is clear that developing a more nuanced understanding of representation and electoral reform has an impact on how CPJ views political parties. Historically, CPJ has argued against Canada's traditional big-tent brokerage parties, believing instead that parties should be based on principle, serving primarily as vehicles for distinct visions of life and politics, or distinct "idea-groups." CPJ has not had a vision of how individuals might relate to these monolithic expressions of perspective, however. Would every variation in perspective require a political party? And who has access to the necessary resources to form a political party and make it successful? How do political parties function internally to remain committed to principle?

But CPJ has also rightly criticized brokerage parties for sidelining genuine political debate and taking it out of the national legislature to engage with it in party structures instead. The result is public debate which must always be partisan, contributing to our political culture of electoral opportunism. Greater diversity of political parties and more opportunities for citizens to engage with political parties of their choice would positively impact public dialogue and public policy.

Political parties are important vehicles in a democracy, providing resources and allowing individuals and groups to coalesce. But how can parties be structured in a way that maximizes their benefit to voters, candidates and representatives, but minimizes their excessive power over representatives? Are big tent parties that emphasize internal dialogue better, or principled parties that emphasize one aspect of identity, forcing people to choose what aspect they identify with most, or freezing identities at a fixed time? It is difficult to know what approach better aligns with CPJ's public justice perspective. CPJ would like to engage in a dialogue with members and board members about this particular issue.

5. Questions for Moving Forward

1. In light of the values and preferences balanced by an electoral system, what does CPJ believe is the most appropriate way of moving forward at the present time?

2. What considerations should other reforms to the political system receive, in light of the impact they have on representation?[v]

3. What is CPJ's position regarding representation of women and visible minorities?

4. What should CPJ's position regarding political parties be?

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[v] A related question, which CPJ has not addressed to-date, is what is should CPJ's position regarding representation in other social institutions be?

[1] ACE – The Electoral Knowledge Network, aceproject.org.

[2] John C. Courtney, "Plurality-Majority Electoral Systems: A Review," Elections Canada, 1999, and Elections Canada Official Results, www.elections.ca.

[3] Vote for MMP, http://archive.voteformmp.ca/node/79.

[4] Elections Canada Official Results, www.elections.ca.

[5] "Voting Counts: Electoral Reform for Canada" Report of the Law Commission of Canada, 2004, p. xvi.

[6] Jon Pammett and Lawrence LeDuc, "Confronting the Problem of Declining Voter Turnout Among Youth," *Electoral Insight,* July 2003, www.elections.ca.

[7] Estimation of Voter Turnout by Age Group at the 38th Federal General Election (June 28, 2004), December 2005, www.elections.ca.

[8] Andrew Matheson, "Seeking Inclusion: South Asian Political Representation in Suburban Canada," *Electoral Insight,* December 2006, www.elections.ca.

[9] *Ibid.*

[10] ACE – The Electoral Knowledge Network, aceproject.org.

[11] Christopher Kam, "PR: A Political Shibboleth?" *Policy Options* Vol. 18(9), November 1997, p. 29.

[12] For instance, see Manon Tremblay and Réjean Pelletier, "More Feminists or More Women? Descriptive and Substantive Representation of Women in the 1997 Canadian Federal Elections," *International Political Science Review,* 2000, 21(4), pp. 381-405.

[13] "Voting Counts: Electoral Reform for Canada," Law Commission of Canada, 2004. The Law Commission is now defunct, but the report can still be found on the Library and Archives Canada website, www.lac-bac.gc.ca.

[14] "Skeptical Reflections on Proportional Representation," Nelson Wiseman, *Policy Options,* Vol. 18(9), November 1997, p. 16.

[15] The Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs, "Forty-Third Report," www.parl.gc.ca.

[16] News Release, "Government Response to Committee on Legislative Democracy Report," http://www.gnb.ca/cnb/news/ex/2007e0859ex.htm.

[17] For instance, see Andre Blais, "Criteria for Assessing Electoral Systems," Presented to the Advisory Committee of Registered Political Parties, Elections Canada, April 23, 1999, www.elections.ca.

[18] "Public Consultations on Canada's Democratic Institutions and Practices," A Report for the Privy Council Office by Compas and the Frontier Centre for Public Policy, September 10, 2007, p. 78.

[19] "Half Support National Referendum on PR: Poll," *The Hill Times,* October 15, 2007.

[20] "Public Consultations on Canada's Democratic Institutions and Practices," A Report for the Privy Council Office by Compas and the Frontier Centre for Public Policy, September 10, 2007, p. 78.

[21] *Ibid.,* p. 74-75.

[22] "Voting Counts: Electoral Reform for Canada," Law Commission of Canada, 2004; "Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform Public Consultation Reports," February 2007, http://www.citizensassembly.gov.on.ca/assets/Citizens'%20Assembly%20Consultation%20Reports.pdf.

[23] "Recommendation of the Ontario Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform," May 15, 2007, http://www.citizensassembly.gov.on.ca/assets/One%20Ballot,%20Two%20Votes.pdf, p. 6; "Voting Counts: Electoral Reform for Canada," Law Commission of Canada, 2004, xvii.

[24] "All About BC-STV," BC Citizens' Assembly, http://www.bc-stv.ca/allabout.htm.

[25] For instance, see the Tremblay and Pelletier article, "More Feminists or More Women?"

[26] "CJL Members Comment on Recent Elections," CJL Foundation Newsletter, November 1972, p. 2.

[27] "Public Justice and Political Representation," Gerald Vandezande, CJL Foundation, 1979.

[28] "Election '80: A Majority Without a Majority Vote," Gerald Vandezande, Committee for Justice and Liberty, 1980.

[29] "A "Triple-E"…House of Commons: Effective and Equitable through Election by Proportional Representation," April 30, 1992.

[30] "Fair, Proportional, Effective: The Need for Electoral Reform in Ontario," CPJ, January 31, 2007, p. 2.