

**The Case for a Regional List
Proportional Representation (PR) System
for Ontario¹**

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There is a growing sense among Ontarians that our electoral system is in need of significant reform. Democracies around the globe are undertaking reforms to their electoral systems in an attempt to improve voter choice and fairness of representation. One of the most popular voting system design choices among advanced Western democracies is proportional representation (PR). Proportional representation systems aim to deliver a close match between the percentage of votes obtained by political parties in elections and the percentage of seats they are awarded in legislative assemblies. Party list systems are by far the most common form of proportional representation; over 80% of the PR systems worldwide use some form of party list approach (PR Library, “Proportional Representation Voting Systems,” N.d.). The purpose of this research report is to develop a regional party list model that will fit the needs and interests of Ontarians. The questions I address in the paper are: What would a regional party list voting system look like for Ontario? How would it work? And lastly, is a list-PR system the best approach for the province?

In an effort to answer these questions, the paper begins with an analysis of the basic principles underlying the list-PR system. Examples of list systems in established democracies are used to illustrate the potential benefits and challenges associated with this approach for Ontario. The various components of a list-PR voting system and their possible political effects are then examined. Special attention is paid to the issue of fair representation for women, minorities and Aboriginal peoples. The issue of guaranteed representation in the legislature for Aboriginals is explored in detail. Two separate regional party list models are then adapted and applied to the case of Ontario. The paper concludes with an assessment of the list-PR approach based on the principles of proportionality, fair representation, accountability, geographic representation and real voter choice. It is the position of the author that a tailor-made regional party list approach is the best alternative for the province.

What is List-PR? How does it work?

List-PR systems provide the greatest proportionality of all electoral systems in translating votes into seats. The principles underlying the party list approach are straightforward. Under this system, each party presents a list of candidates to the

electorate equal to the number of seats to be filled in the district or riding. Open list systems allow the voter to cast a vote for a preferred candidate on his or her party list of choice. Under closed list systems, the voter simply casts a vote for his or her preferred party's list of nominated candidates. Once the votes are tallied, seats in each district are awarded to the parties according to their respective share of the vote. For example, if Party A wins 60% of the vote in a 5 member district, the party is awarded 3 of the 5 possible seats. In a closed list system, the top three candidates on Party A's list would be elected. In an open list system, ballots are first counted as votes for the parties to determine each party's seat entitlement. Preferential votes for individual candidates among the party lists are then counted to determine which candidates are to hold those seats. Given that it is impossible to divide up a single seat in a one-seat district, the list-PR system necessitates the use of large, multi-member districts (ACE Electoral Project, "List PR," N.d.). Independent candidates wishing to run under this system are listed separately on the ballot as if they were their own party and are elected if they win enough votes (PR Library, "Proportional Representation Voting Systems, n.d.).

List-PR is the most commonly used voting system among the countries of the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development); 17 of its 30 members employ a party list approach (Legislative Assembly of Ontario 2005, 42). The Netherlands, in particular, stands out for its highly proportional electoral system. In 1917, the country switched from a plurality system based on 100 single-member districts to a system of proportional representation. The entire country is now treated as one 150-seat district. Political parties obtaining less than 1% of the total national vote are able to capture seats in the Dutch parliament, ensuring broad societal representation. Although seat distribution is calculated at the national level, a measure of regional representation is made possible by the geographical organization of the political parties and the pressure to include local candidates on their lists (Andeweg & Irwin 1993).

While the use of national party lists provides for near perfect proportionality, regional party list approaches serve as an intermediate solution to the inevitable trade-off between proportionality and geographic representation. The country of Finland is a pioneer in the use of the regional list PR system, establishing its current electoral system in the parliamentary reform of 1906. For the purposes of parliamentary elections, the

country is divided into 15 districts. Parties may present lists in all or only some of the regions. However, a candidate can only be nominated in one constituency. The number of seats per region is determined by population size. The total number of Finnish MPs (Members of Parliament) to be elected is 200 (Sundberg 2005). Regional population changes are not dealt with by redistricting but rather by reallocating the 200 seats between regions. The Finnish party list approach represents a compromise between the maximum proportionality that would have resulted from treating the country as one giant district and the close connection between representatives and voters that would have resulted from the country being divided into numerous small constituencies. Instead, the country is divided into constituencies that are large enough to ensure strong proportionality yet still capable of providing good regional representation in parliament (Pesonen & Riihinen 2002, 140-141).

All electoral systems possess a number of advantages and disadvantages and the list-PR system is no exception. The main advantages of list-PR are that it produces greater proportionality of seats to votes, fairer representation and more voter choice than Ontario's current FPTP (First-Past-The-Post) system. Under the party list system, parties are generally awarded the seats they deserve. List-PR also tends to encourage new party formation, meaning more choice for voters (Blais 2004, 3). As a result, legislatures tend to closely mirror the political preferences of the electorate. In addition, list-PR also makes it more likely that women and minorities will be elected and therefore better represented. Under single member plurality voting systems, parties are encouraged to nominate mainstream candidates, who are usually white males. Under the list-PR voting system, it is in the tactical interest of parties to present a balanced list of candidates, one that appeals to a variety of socio-demographic groups as well as various geographic areas. In fact, in all regions of the world, proportional representation systems perform better than FPTP systems in the number of women elected (ACE Electoral Project, "Advantages and Disadvantages of List PR," N.d.).

The main disadvantages of list-PR relate to accountability and geographic representation. A central critique of the list-PR system is that it weakens the link between MPs and local constituencies by relying on multiple member districts that often cover vast geographical areas. Geographic representation is certainly one of the strengths of the

first-past-the-post system and has been cited as a long-standing political tradition valued by Ontarians (Legislative Assembly of Ontario 2005, 1). Recent research, however, has suggested that today's highly mobile citizens may in fact identify themselves with communities of interest that are not geographically bound. According to the Law Commission of Canada (2004, 65): "It may therefore be somewhat limiting to conceptualize our electoral system primarily on the basis of territorial constituencies." While the use of a single national district to calculate proportionality for an entire country, as is done in Israel and the Netherlands, may sever the link between voters and representatives, a regional list approach is one means of increasing proportionality without completely sacrificing geographical representation. A regional list approach can ensure that most voters will get an MP from their preferred party to represent them in their region (Blais 2004, 2).

Perhaps the fiercest debates over the merits of the party list approach concern the issues of stability and accountability. Proportional representation systems tend to produce multi-party coalition governments as opposed to the single-party governments that often result from FPTP systems. Coalition governments are commonly argued to be unstable. This is not necessarily true. Blais (2004) has suggested that the durability of Canadian governments appears comparable to those observed in most proportional representation countries. There is also no evidence to suggest that PR governments perform less effectively than majoritarian governments (Lijphart 1999). It has been argued by opponents of list-PR that voters who may wish to hold their representatives accountable may be unable to identify their MPs under such a system (Legislative Assembly of Ontario 2005, 19). While accountability is easiest in systems where citizens vote for an individual MP who is directly responsible for a small, specific geographic area, under list-PR, voters can punish parties for poor performance at the next election as well as regional representatives if an open list system is employed. Finally, it has been argued that list-PR systems increase the power of party organizations in determining who gets elected because they determine candidate placement on their lists. Although this may be accurate in closed list systems, the problem can easily be ameliorated by the use of open lists (Law Commission of Canada 2004, 82). The choice of an electoral system always involves trade-offs. The key is to decide which values or objectives are most important.

Voting System Components

There are five main components to any list-PR system that must be taken into consideration when making electoral system design choices. These components include: district magnitude (DM); seat allocation formula; ballot structure; threshold; and the option of quotas or reserved seats for ensuring fair representation for women, visible minorities and Aboriginal peoples. The following discussion outlines the various options for reform within each of these categories as well as their possible effects.

District Magnitude

District magnitude (DM) is defined as the number of representatives to be elected in each electoral district. The degree of proportionality of a voting system depends very much on district magnitude size. In order to have strong proportionality, large districts (at least 10 seats) are necessary (Blais 2004, 3). Large districts achieve the greatest degree of proportionality because they enable even the smallest parties to gain representation in the legislature. In most countries with regional party list systems, districts are not large enough to permit perfect proportionality. While smaller districts provide strong geographic representation, they do so at the expense of proportionality. As districts are made larger, both in terms of the number of seats as well as geographically, the linkage between representatives and constituencies weakens. This dynamic can have serious consequences for societies whose citizens expect their MPs to maintain strong links to local constituencies and to serve as their delegates in parliament. There is no perfect district magnitude size. However, most observers agree that as a general rule, district magnitudes of between three and seven work well at mitigating the trade-off between proportionality and adequate geographic representation (ACE Electoral Project, "District Magnitude," N.d.).

Seat Allocation Formula

There are a variety of formulas to calculate the actual allocation of seats to parties once all the votes have been counted. The two main formulas are: the largest remainder method and the highest average formulation. The seat allocation formula chosen has a subtle but important effect on the outcome of elections under proportional representation. The largest remainder method tends to enhance proportionality, more so than the highest average formulation. The largest remainder approach to seat allocation is also one of the

simplest formulas. In the widely used Hare approach, a quota based on the total number of votes in a district divided by the number of seats to be filled is calculated. The quota is then divided into the number of votes received by each of the parties. Each party is awarded the whole number of seats produced. If there are any remaining seats to be distributed, the division remainder numbers are compared and the parties with the largest remainders are awarded the seats (PR Library, "Proportional Representation Voting Systems," N.d.). Under the highest average formula, the total number of votes received by each party can either be divided by successive odd numbers (1,3,5,7 etc.) under the Sainte-Laguë rule or by the D'Hondt rule of successive numbers (1,2,3,4 etc.). After each round of division, the parties with the highest remaining vote totals are awarded a seat until all of the available seats are distributed. The D'Hondt counting rule tends to favour large parties, while Sainte-Laguë tends to work to the advantage of smaller parties (Fair Vote Canada 2005, 11).

Ballot Structure

In terms of ballot structure, there are three options available: open, closed or free lists. In closed list systems, the party determines the order in which candidates are listed and elected and the voter simply casts a vote for the party as a whole. The basic case for closed lists is that they reduce intra-party disputes and in-fighting as they allow party members to select their top candidates. However, they deny voters the right to decide which individuals should represent them. Open list systems allow voters to indicate their preference for individual candidates among their preferred party's list. In some countries with open list systems, many voters prefer to vote for the party list as printed. For instance, 90% of voters in the Netherlands simply vote for the first name on the list, allowing the parties to decide which of their candidates will hold the remaining seats (Andeweg & Irwin 1993, 90). Within free list systems, voters have as many votes as there are seats to be filled in a district and have the option of voting for candidates across party lists or of casting more than one vote for a highly favoured candidate. Free list systems are used in Ecuador, Luxembourg and Switzerland (ACE Electoral Project, "Open, Closed and Free Lists," N.d.). Ballot structures that allow voters to express their preferences in as many ways as possible more accurately convey citizens' interests and opinions.

Open and closed lists are by far the more commonly used systems. The actual ballots are straightforward and easy to follow as illustrated by these examples:

Closed List Ballot

DISTRICT ONE					
Voting Instructions: 1. You only have ONE vote. 2. Place an X in the box UNDER the party for which you wish to vote.					
Party A	Party B	Party C	Party D	Independent	Independent
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Candidate 1	Candidate 1	Candidate 1	Candidate 1	Candidate 1	Candidate 1
Candidate 2	Candidate 2	Candidate 2	Candidate 2	Candidate 2	Candidate 2
Candidate 3	Candidate 3	Candidate 3	Candidate 3	Candidate 3	Candidate 3
Candidate 4	Candidate 4	Candidate 4	Candidate 4	Candidate 4	Candidate 4
Candidate 5	Candidate 5	Candidate 5	Candidate 5	Candidate 5	Candidate 5

Open List Ballot

DISTRICT ONE				
Voting Instructions: 1. You only have ONE vote. 2. Place an X in the box next to the candidate for whom you wish to vote. 3. Your vote counts both for your candidate and your party.				
Party A	Party B	Party C	Party D	Independent
<input type="checkbox"/> Candidate 1	<input type="checkbox"/> Candidate 1	<input type="checkbox"/> Candidate 1	<input type="checkbox"/> Candidate 1	<input type="checkbox"/> Candidate 1
<input type="checkbox"/> Candidate 2	<input type="checkbox"/> Candidate 2	<input type="checkbox"/> Candidate 2	<input type="checkbox"/> Candidate 2	<input type="checkbox"/> Candidate 2
<input type="checkbox"/> Candidate 3	<input type="checkbox"/> Candidate 3	<input type="checkbox"/> Candidate 3	<input type="checkbox"/> Candidate 3	<input type="checkbox"/> Candidate 3
<input type="checkbox"/> Candidate 4	<input type="checkbox"/> Candidate 4	<input type="checkbox"/> Candidate 4	<input type="checkbox"/> Candidate 4	<input type="checkbox"/> Candidate 4
<input type="checkbox"/> Candidate 5	<input type="checkbox"/> Candidate 5	<input type="checkbox"/> Candidate 5	<input type="checkbox"/> Candidate 5	<input type="checkbox"/> Candidate 5

Threshold

An election threshold is a minimum percentage of the vote that a party must receive in order to qualify for a seat. Thresholds can be legally imposed (formal thresholds) or exist naturally as a mathematical property of the electoral system (effective thresholds) (ACE Electoral Project, “The Threshold,” N.d.). Formal thresholds are an optional feature. In order to limit excessive party system fragmentation, many list-PR systems set formal thresholds for parties to gain representation. For instance, Israel sets a relatively low threshold of 1.5%, while Germany and Sweden set intermediate thresholds of 5% and 4% respectively. High thresholds, such as Turkey’s 10% rule, can severely limit proportionality. To overcome excessively high threshold requirements, some countries that use list-PR allow small parties to group together for electoral purposes, a system known as *apparentement*. Although parties are listed separately on the ballot, their votes are combined in order to increase their chances of gaining representation as an electoral group (Milner 1999, 194). In many cases formal thresholds are not even necessary as many systems are sufficiently disproportionate to limit small parties from gaining seats. For example, in a 5 seat district, parties must mathematically win at least 20% of the vote to gain representation. Proportional representation systems with high thresholds, either formal or effective, distort election outcomes.

Quotas and Reserved Seats for Women, Minorities and Aboriginals

Party list voting systems generally create incentives for parties to better reflect socio-demographic and regional diversity. Where district sizes are larger, meaning more representatives per region, there is a greater chance for a diverse array of candidates to be nominated and to win seats. However, a proportional representation system alone may not be sufficient to promote better gender and minority representation in Ontario. Even under a list-PR system, political parties have to be committed to recruiting women and ethnic minorities and to giving these candidates opportunities to gain cabinet posts if elected. As a result, mechanisms to guarantee fair representation for women, minorities and Aboriginal peoples may have to be put into place. Fortunately, the current political climate in Canada appears to be favourable to such institutional innovations. According to the Law Commission of Canada (2004), in a 2000 survey of Canadian voters, 35% of respondents found the underrepresentation of minority groups to be problematic. Nearly

half of this group approved of measures to increase the number of minority candidates. Similarly, some 57% of respondents in the survey were in favour of establishing guaranteed seats in parliament for Aboriginal peoples.

The issue of fair representation for women and minorities is a concern for most of the world's democracies. In terms of gender representation, many countries have experimented with quota systems that require a certain percentage of party lists to be made up of female candidates. For instance, France in 2000 passed a controversial bill requiring parties to present equal numbers of female and male candidates (gender parity) in most elections. If a party fails to comply with the new law, its list can be rejected and the party is barred from participating in the election (Praud 2002). The parity law has thus far been quite successful. The 2001 municipal elections in France, the first election to operate under the new law, saw 47.5% of council seats go to women, up from the 25.7% of seats previously held by women (Dean 2002). Quotas are an important means for women to gain political representation. However, before a decision is made in terms of adopting candidate quotas, the way in which they interact with other electoral system design choices needs to be taken into account. Gender quotas are more easily applied in party list systems than in FPTP elections (Bird 2004). A study by Jones and Navia (1999) on quotas in Latin America found that ballot structure also has an impact on the effectiveness of quotas in securing representation for women. Quotas were found to be much more effective in closed list systems, where laws can determine candidate placement. In open list systems, quotas can only mandate a minimum presence for women on party lists, it is up to the electorate to choose whether or not to elect them. Thus, in many instances quotas merely increase the percentage of female candidates, and cannot guarantee an increase in the number of women elected.

Policies used to improve representation for women tend to differ from those used for ethnic groups. In general, women receive quotas and ethnic minorities are awarded reserved seats in the legislature (Htun 2004). Where candidate quotas have been applied to native peoples, as in Peru in 2002, they have served to fracture and divide indigenous movements and organizations according to partisan interests as potential indigenous candidates are aggressively wooed and co-opted by parties trying to satisfy quota requirements (Rice 2006, 142). In most cases, however, Aboriginal peoples have been

awarded guaranteed seats in the legislature as a means of ensuring their representation. Aboriginal peoples hold a unique position within most societies and deserve special recognition and rights as such (Milen 1991). New Zealand is perhaps the country with the longest history of experimenting with guaranteed representation for Aboriginal peoples. The Maori peoples of New Zealand constitute approximately 14.5% of the country's total population (Sibbeston N.d). The Maori Representation Act of 1867 provided the Maori with four guaranteed seats in the House of Representatives. The 1993 electoral reform mandated that the number of Maori seats be increased to proportionally represent the number of Maori voters (Law Commission of Canada 2004). Under New Zealand's system, Maori voters are required to choose whether to be listed on the Maori electoral rolls or on the general rolls. Only registered Maori voters can vote for these special seats. For the purposes of Maori representation, the country is divided into four electoral districts, none of which correspond to Maori tribal organization. The effectiveness of New Zealand's dual system of Aboriginal representation has come under considerable debate in recent years. Most significantly, the dual system discounts the relevance of Maori issues in general ridings and segregates Aboriginal peoples' concerns from those of the general public (Fleras 1991; Law Commission of Canada 2004; Sibbeston N.d).

Guaranteed seats are critical to involving Aboriginal peoples in the decision-making processes that affect them. The real question is how to effectively implement them in the Canadian context. The most widely cited proposal came from the Royal Commission on Electoral Reform and Party Financing in 1991, which recommended the establishment of Aboriginal Electoral Districts (AEDs). The AED proposal, which was modeled after New Zealand's system, suffers from similar shortcomings (Schouls 1996). An alternative model for the province of Ontario would be to assign reserved seats for Aboriginal peoples in the legislature based on their share of the population. Using the current provincial quotient of 1 representative for every 107,642 residents (with a lower limit of 80,732 with the 25% variance rule), Aboriginals would be entitled to at least 2 seats in the provincial legislature (Elections Canada 2003, 2). These seats would be added to the current number of assembly seats rather than subtracted from existing ridings. Aboriginal representatives would be selected through a province-wide process of consultations among self-identifying Aboriginal peoples' organizations. Rather than

having to register on separate electoral rolls, Aboriginal peoples would simply continue to vote as part of the general public in the constituencies in which they live. Such an arrangement has proven to be highly effective in stimulating the political participation of native peoples in Latin America. For instance, Colombia in 1991 reserved two seats in the senate and Venezuela in 1999 reserved three seats in the legislature for indigenous representatives. In both countries, indigenous political organizations have since expanded their representation beyond that of the established minimums (Van Cott 2005). Bold initiatives are needed if we are to ensure fair Aboriginal representation in Ontario's electoral system. Of course any proposal in this area must take into account the vast cultural diversity and politics of the province's Aboriginal peoples and would require their input and final approval.

Modeling Regional List PR Options

To fully understand how a regional list PR system would work in Ontario, we need a map of what the actual constituencies would look like. This section of the paper develops two separate models with possible variations on each. Model 1 clusters together existing ridings in order to increase district magnitudes without having to increase the current number of legislative seats. Two options are presented: a 7 district, 103 seat scenario and a 3 district, 103 seat scenario. A simulation of the 2003 general election is then conducted under each of these scenarios in order to illustrate the potential impact of the new electoral system on election outcomes. Model 2 increases the number of seats in the provincial legislature in order to create multiple member districts while ensuring adequate geographic representation. Two hypothetical options are explored: a 13 district, 130 seat scenario and a 15 district, 150 seat scenario. The possible trade-offs in adjustments to the models are discussed throughout.

The electoral boundaries of Model 1a (7 Districts, 103 Seats) respect existing communities of interest by clustering ridings together based on geographic regions of identity. These regions are Northern Ontario; Eastern Ontario; Durham Region and City of Toronto; Simcoe and York Regions; Southwestern Ontario; Niagara Region and City of Hamilton; and Halton, Peel and Dufferin. The average district magnitude of the model is approximately 15. This formulation provides for moderate proportionality and

moderate geographic representation. The 7 regions and their constituent ridings are as follows:

Region 1: Northern Ontario

Ridings	Population
Algoma—Mounitoulin	73,400
Kenora—Rainy River	78,755
Nickel Belt	79,665
Nipissing	74,910
Parry Sound—Muskoka	85,375
Sault Ste. Marie	74,565
Sudbury	79,340
Thunder Bay—Atikokan	76,015
Thunder Bay—Superior North	75,230
Timiskaming—Cochrane	69,900
Timmins—James Bay	71,645
Total	838,800

Region 2: Eastern Ontario

Ridings	Population
Glengarry—Prescott—Russell	103,920
Haliburton—Victoria—Brock	109,580
Hastings—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington	98,155
Kingston and the Islands	112,870
Lanark—Carleton	138,400
Leeds—Grenville	96,605
Nepean—Carleton	126,630
Northumberland	102,430
Ottawa Centre	114,040
Ottawa South	118,475
Ottawa West—Nepean	112,240
Ottawa—Orléans	108,375
Ottawa—Vanier	106,185
Peterborough	112,110
Prince Edward—Hastings	92,930
Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke	96,415
Stormont—Dundas—Charlottenburgh	94,270
Total	1,843,630

Region 3: Durham Region and City of Toronto

Ridings	Population
Beaches—East York	112,965
Davenport	103,620
Don Valley East	116,960
Don Valley West	115,540
Durham	122,100
Eglinton—Lawrence	111,230
Etobicoke Centre	105,620
Etobicoke North	118,585
Etobicoke—Lakeshore	113,915
Oshawa	107,005
Parkdale—High Park	107,975
Pickering—Ajax—Uxbridge	137,515
Scarborough Centre	123,090
Scarborough East	115,800
Scarborough Southwest	113,615
Scarborough—Agincourt	114,410
Scarborough—Rouge River	126,375
St. Paul's	108,700
Toronto Centre—Rosedale	122,900
Toronto—Danforth	103,155
Trinity—Spadina	103,360
Whitby—Ajax	128,165
Willowdale	118,370
York Centre	107,055
York South—Weston	114,635
York West	103,615
Total	2,976,275

Region 4: Simcoe and York Regions

Ridings	Population
Barrie—Simcoe—Bradford	154,945
Markham	142,410
Oak Ridges	173,380
Simcoe North	112,090
Simcoe—Grey	123,785
Thornhill	116,840

Vaughn—King—Aurora	164,590
York North	132,040
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Total	1,120,080

Region 5: Southwestern Ontario

Ridings	Population
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Brant	109,015
Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound	98,525
Cambridge	125,950
Chatham—Kent—Essex	106,145
Elgin—Middlesex—London	103,690
Essex	121,750
Guelph—Wellington	122,600
Haldimand—Norfolk—Brant	101,565
Huron—Bruce	93,460
Kitchener Centre	112,505
Kitchener—Waterloo	126,145
Lambton—Kent—Middlesex	98,875
London North Centre	107,685
London West	110,990
London—Fanshawe	107,305
Oxford	99,270
Perth—Middlesex	97,215
Sarnia—Lambton	88,330
Waterloo—Wellington	119,470
Windsor West	117,045
Windsor—St. Clair	109,045
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Total	2,276,580

Region 6: Niagara Region and City of Hamilton

Ridings	Population
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Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Aldershot	104,765
Erie—Lincoln	98,310
Hamilton East	98,155
Hamilton Mountain	111,330
Hamilton West	102,445

Niagara Centre	104,140
Niagara Falls	95,725
St. Catharines	103,680
Stoney Creek	109,970
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Total	928,520
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Region 7: Halton, Peel and Dufferin

Ridings	Population
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Bramalea—Gore—Malton—Springdale	144,715
Brampton Centre	119,970
Brampton West—Mississauga	189,940
Burlington	101,990
Dufferin—Peel—Wellington—Grey	127,675
Halton	154,030
Oakville	104,105
Mississauga Centre	122,870
Mississauga East	108,460
Mississauga South	101,635
Mississauga West	150,765
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Total	1,426,155
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The hypothetical results of the 2003 election, had it been carried out under the proposed model, are listed below. It should be noted that this simulation in no way represents what the outcome would have been had a regional list PR system been in place at the time. It is only an illustration of how the existing outcomes change using the new electoral rules. For instance, it is impossible to know how many Green Party supporters voted strategically for other parties in order to avoid “wasting” their votes. Under a list-PR system, voters would be free to vote for their first choice without fear of going unrepresented. The seat allocation formula used in the calculations was the largest remainder method (Hare). The distribution of seats using the Sainte-Laguë divisors of the highest average method produced the same results. The D’Hondt counting rule produced slightly less proportional results. In any case, the seat distribution under this model is a

dramatic improvement upon the current distribution. In terms of party gains and losses at the provincial level: the Liberal Party would go from holding 71 seats to 49 seats; the Progressive Conservative Party from 24 seats to 35 seats; the New Democratic Party would go from holding 8 seats to 16 seats; and the Green Party from 0 to 3 seats.

Model 1a: 7 Districts, 103 Seats

Region 1: Northern Ontario (DM=11)

Political Party	% of Vote	Seats Under Current System	Seats Under List-PR
Liberal Party	50.6	7	6
Progressive Conservative Party	20.0	1	2
New Democratic Party	26.8	3	3
Green Party	2.3	0	0

Region 2: Eastern Ontario (DM=17)

Political Party	% of Vote	Seats Under Current System	Seats Under List-PR
Liberal Party	47.3	12	8
Progressive Conservative Party	37.5	5	6
New Democratic Party	10.4	0	2
Green Party	3.8	0	1

Region 3: Durham Region and City of Toronto (DM=26)

Political Party	% of Vote	Seats Under Current System	Seats Under List-PR
Liberal Party	48.4	20	13
Progressive Conservative Party	29.8	3	8
New Democratic Party	17.1	3	4
Green Party	3.0	0	1

Region 4: Simcoe and York Regions (DM=8)

Political Party	% of Vote	Seats Under Current System	Seats Under List-PR
Liberal Party	43.8	3	3
Progressive Conservative Party	45.1	5	4
New Democratic Party	7.8	0	1
Green Party	2.5	0	0

Region 5: Southwestern Ontario (DM=21)

Political Party	% of Vote	Seats Under Current System	Seats Under List-PR
Liberal Party	45.1	15	10
Progressive Conservative Party	35.2	6	7
New Democratic Party	15.3	0	3
Green Party	2.8	0	1

Region 6: Niagara Region and City of Hamilton (DM=9)

Political Party	% of Vote	Seats Under Current System	Seats Under List-PR
Liberal Party	43.7	6	4
Progressive Conservative Party	30.3	1	3
New Democratic Party	23.1	2	2
Green Party	1.9	0	0

Region 7: Halton, Peel and Dufferin (DM=11)

Political Party	% of Vote	Seats Under Current System	Seats Under List-PR
Liberal Party	44.0	8	5
Progressive Conservative Party	42.9	3	5
New Democratic Party	8.9	0	1
Green Party	2.4	0	0

Model 1b: 3 Districts, 103 Seats

Model 1b provides for greater proportionality by increasing district magnitude size. The average district magnitude under this model is approximately 34. However, the increase in proportionality is at the expense of geographic representation given that there are only 3 very large multi-member districts under this scenario. The three districts are almost equal in terms of population size and numbers of representatives. The districts continue to follow natural geographic regions. The regions include: North and East Ontario; South and West Ontario; and Toronto and Vicinity. The net party gains and losses under this scenario are similar to those of the first model.

Region 1: North and East Ontario

Includes Northern Ontario; Eastern Ontario; and Simcoe and York Regions

Population Total: 3,802,510

DM=36

Political Party	Seats Under Current System	Seats Under List-PR
Liberal Party	22	17
Progressive Conservative Party	11	13
New Democratic Party	3	5
Green Party	0	1

Region 2: South and West Ontario

Includes Southwestern Ontario; Niagara Region and City of Hamilton

Population Total: 3,205,100

DM=30

Political Party	Seats Under Current System	Seats Under List-PR
Liberal Party	21	14
Progressive Conservative Party	7	10
New Democratic Party	2	5
Green Party	0	1

Region 3: Toronto and Vicinity

Includes Durham Region and City of Toronto; Halton, Peel and Dufferin

Population Total: 4,402,430

DM=37

Political Party	Seats Under Current System	Seats Under List-PR
Liberal Party	28	18
Progressive Conservative Party	6	13
New Democratic Party	3	5
Green Party	0	1

Model 2a: 13 Districts, 130 Seats

The Law Commission of Canada (2004) has suggested that there is little appetite for substantially increasing the size of legislatures to accommodate new electoral systems. The size of Ontario's provincial legislature, however, is currently set at a forty year low. From 1967 to 1971 the legislative assembly had a total of 117 seats; from 1975 to 1985 it consisted of 125 seats; and from 1987 to 1995 the legislature had 130 seats (Elections Ontario N.d.). Based on a 130 seat assembly, Model 2a seeks to improve geographic representation through the use of smaller, more numerous districts while still offering sufficient proportionality. The district magnitude under this model is set at 10. The average population size per district would be 877,695. Under this scenario, Northern Ontario would remain unchanged as 1 district. Eastern Ontario could be divided into 2 districts: the Ottawa Area and Eastern Ontario excluding Ottawa. Durham Region could be combined with Simcoe Region to produce a new district. York Region could be grouped together with the City of Toronto, which would then be divided into 3 districts: Toronto North; Toronto Centre; and Toronto East. Southwestern Ontario would be divided into 3 districts: Kitchener-Waterloo Area; London Area; and Windsor Area. Niagara Region and City of Hamilton would remain unchanged as 1 district. Finally, Halton, Peel and Dufferin would be divided into 2 districts: Dufferin-Peel-Halton; and Mississauga-Oakville-Burlington. Based on a simulation of the 2003 elections, the results of the model are as follows:

Region 1: Northern Ontario

Ridings include: Algoma—Manitoulin; Kenora—Rainy River; Nickel Belt; Nipissing; Parry Sound—Muskoka; Sault Ste. Marie; Sudbury; Thunder Bay—Atikokan; Thunder Bay—Superior North; Timiskaming—Cochrane; Timmins—James Bay

Population Total: 838,800; DM = 10

Seat Allocation under Proposed Model (with current allocation in parentheses): Liberal Party = 5 (7); Progressive Conservative Party = 2 (1); New Democratic Party = 3 (3)

Region 2: Ottawa Area

Ridings include: Glengarry—Prescott—Russell; Nepean—Carleton; Ottawa Centre; Ottawa South; Ottawa West—Nepean; Ottawa—Orléans; Ottawa—Vanier; Stormont—Dundas—Charlottenburgh

Population Total: 884,135; DM = 10

Seat Allocation under Proposed Model (with current allocation in parentheses): Liberal Party = 5 (7); Progressive Conservative Party = 4 (1); New Democratic Party = 1 (0)

Region 3: Eastern Ontario (excluding Ottawa)

Ridings include: Haliburton—Victoria—Brock; Hastings—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington; Kingston and the Islands; Lanark—Carleton; Leeds—Grenville; Northumberland; Peterborough; Prince Edward—Hastings; Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke

Population Total: 959,495; DM = 10

Seat Allocation under Proposed Model (with current allocation in parentheses): Liberal Party = 5 (5); Progressive Conservative Party = 4 (4); New Democratic Party = 1 (0)

Region 4: Durham—Simcoe

Ridings include: Barrie—Simcoe—Bradford; Durham; Oshawa; Pickering—Ajax—Uxbridge; Simcoe North; Simcoe—Grey; Whitby—Ajax

Population Total: 885,605; DM = 10

Seat Allocation under Proposed Model (with current allocation in parentheses): Liberal Party = 4 (1); Progressive Conservative Party = 5 (6); New Democratic Party = 1 (0)

Region 5: Toronto North

Ridings include: Markham; Oakridges; Thornhill; Vaughn—King—Aurora; York Centre; York North; York South—Weston; York West

Population Total: 1,054,565; DM = 10

Seat Allocation under Proposed Model (with current allocation in parentheses): Liberal Party = 5 (6); Progressive Conservative Party = 4 (2); New Democratic Party = 1 (0)

Region 6: Toronto Centre

Ridings include: Davenport; Eglinton—Lawrence; Etobicoke Centre; Etobicoke North; Etobicoke—Lakeshore; Parkdale—High Park; St. Paul's; Toronto Centre—Rosedale; Trinity—Spadina; Willowdale

Population Total: 1,114,275; DM = 10

Seat Allocation under Proposed Model (with current allocation in parentheses): Liberal Party = 5 (9); Progressive Conservative Party = 3 (0); New Democratic Party = 2 (1)

Region 7: Toronto East

Ridings include: Beaches—East York; Don Valley East; Don Valley West; Scarborough Centre; Scarborough East; Scarborough Southwest; Scarborough—Agincourt; Scarborough—Rouge River; Toronto—Danforth

Population Total: 1,041,910; DM = 10

Seat Allocation under Proposed Model (with current allocation in parentheses): Liberal Party = 5 (7); Progressive Conservative Party = 3 (0); New Democratic Party = 2 (2)

Region 8: Kitchener—Waterloo Area

Ridings include: Brant; Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound; Cambridge; Guelph—Wellington; Kitchener Centre; Kitchener—Waterloo; Waterloo—Wellington

Population Total: 814,210; DM = 10

Seat Allocation under Proposed Model (with current allocation in parentheses): Liberal Party = 4 (3); Progressive Conservative Party = 4 (4); New Democratic Party = 1 (0); Green Party = 1 (0)

Region 9: London Area

Ridings include: Elgin—Middlesex—London; Haldimand—Norfolk—Brant; London North Centre; London West; London—Fanshawe; Oxford; Perth—Middlesex

Population Total: 727,720; DM = 10

Seat Allocation under Proposed Model (with current allocation in parentheses): Liberal Party = 4 (5); Progressive Conservative Party = 4 (2); New Democratic Party = 2 (0)

Region 10: Windsor Area

Ridings include: Chatham—Kent—Essex; Essex; Huron—Bruce; Lambton—Kent—Middlesex; Sarnia—Lambton; Windsor West; Windsor—St. Clair

Population Total: 734,650; DM = 10

Seat Allocation under Proposed Model (with current allocation in parentheses): Liberal Party = 5 (7); Progressive Conservative Party = 3 (0); New Democratic Party = 2 (0)

Region 11: Niagara Region and City of Hamilton

Ridings include: Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Aldershot; Erie—Lincoln; Hamilton East; Hamilton Mountain; Hamilton West; Niagara Centre; Niagara Falls; St. Catharines; Stoney Creek

Population Total: 928,520; DM = 10

Seat Allocation under Proposed Model (with current allocation in parentheses): Liberal Party = 5 (6); Progressive Conservative Party = 3 (1); New Democratic Party = 2 (2)

Region 12: Dufferin—Peel—Halton

Ridings include: Bramalea—Gore—Malton—Springdale; Brampton Centre; Brampton West—Mississauga; Dufferin—Peel—Wellington—Grey; Halton

Population Total: 736,330; DM = 10

Seat Allocation under Proposed Model (with current allocation in parentheses): Liberal Party = 4 (3); Progressive Conservative Party = 5 (2); New Democratic Party = 1 (0)

Region 13: Mississauga—Oakville—Burlington

Ridings include: Burlington; Oakville; Mississauga Centre; Mississauga East; Mississauga South; Mississauga West

Population Total: 689,825; DM = 10

Seat Allocation under Proposed Model (with current allocation in parentheses): Liberal Party = 5 (5); Progressive Conservative Party = 4 (1); New Democratic Party = 1 (0)

Model 2b: 15 Districts, 150 Seats

To improve geographic representation AND strengthen proportionality, the number of legislative seats would need to be increased further to 150. Such a proposal should not be dismissed outright simply because it may not be politically popular. When designing an electoral system, it is important to consider all options. Increasing the size of Ontario's legislature would satisfy both the need for effective geographic representation and for proportional representation (Pilon & Docherty 2006). In this case, two new electoral districts could be added. Eastern Ontario could be divided into 3 districts rather than 2: Ottawa Area; Kingston Area; Peterborough and the Haliburton Highlands. The City of Toronto could be increased from 3 to 4 districts: Toronto North; Toronto Centre; Toronto West; and Toronto East (see below). The average population size per district would be 760,670. The end result would be a potential solution to the trade-off between proportionality and geographic representation. The province would be divided into constituencies large enough to ensure strong proportionality yet still recognizable to the voters.

Region 1: Northern Ontario (see Model 2a)

Region 2: Ottawa Area

Ridings include: Glengarry—Prescott—Russell; Ottawa Centre; Ottawa South; Ottawa West—Nepean; Ottawa—Orléans; Ottawa Vanier

Population Total: 663,235; DM = 10

Seat Allocation under Proposed Model (with current allocation in parentheses): Liberal Party = 5 (6); Progressive Conservative Party = 3 (0); New Democratic Party = 1 (0); Green Party = 1 (0)

Region 3: Kingston Area

Ridings include: Kingston and the Islands; Lanark—Carleton; Leeds—Grenville;
Nepean—Carleton; Stormont—Dundas—Charlottenburgh

Population Total: 568,775; DM = 10

Seat Allocation under Proposed Model (with current allocation in parentheses): Liberal
Party = 4 (2); Progressive Conservative Party = 4 (3); New Democratic Party = 1 (0);
Green Party = 1 (0)

Region 4: Peterborough and the Haliburton Highlands

Ridings include: Haliburton—Victoria—Brock; Hastings—Frontenac—Lennox and
Addington; Northumberland; Peterborough; Prince Edward—Hastings; Renfrew—
Nipissing—Pembroks

Population Total: 611,620; DM = 10

Seat Allocation under Proposed Model (with current allocation in parentheses): Liberal
Party = 5 (4); Progressive Conservative Party = 4 (2); New Democratic Party = 1 (0)

Region 5: Durham—Simcoe (see Model 2a)

Region 6: Toronto North

Ridings include: Markham; Oakridges; Thornhill; Vaughn—King—Aurora; York North;
Willowdale

Population Total: 847,630; DM = 10

Seat Allocation under Proposed Model (with current allocation in parentheses): Liberal
Party = 5 (4); Progressive Conservative Party = 4 (2); New Democratic Party = 1 (0)

Region 7: Toronto Centre

Ridings include: Beaches—East York; Davenport; St. Paul's; Toronto Centre—Rosedale;
Toronto—Danforth; Trinity—Spadina; York Centre

Population Total: 761,755

Seat Allocation under Proposed Model (with current allocation in parentheses): Liberal
Party = 4 (4); Progressive Conservative Party = 2 (0); New Democratic Party = 3 (3);
Green Party = 1 (0)

Region 8: Toronto West

Ridings include: Eglinton—Lawrence; Etobicoke Centre; Etobicoke North; Etobicoke—
Lakeshore; Parkdale—High Park; York West; York South—Weston

Population Total: 775,575; DM = 10

Seat Allocation under Proposed Model (with current allocation in parentheses): Liberal Party = 6 (7); Progressive Conservative Party = 3 (0); New Democratic Party = 1 (0)

Region 9: Toronto East

Ridings include: Don Valley East; Don Valley West; Scarborough Centre; Scarborough East; Scarborough Southwest; Scarborough—Agincourt; Scarborough—Rouge Rivers
Population Total: 825,790; DM = 10

Seat Allocation under Proposed Model (with current allocation in parentheses): Liberal Party = 6 (7); Progressive Conservative Party = 3 (0); New Democratic Party = 1 (0)

Region 10: Kitchener—Waterloo (see Model 2a)

Region 11: London Area (see Model 2a)

Region 12: Windsor Area (see Model 2a)

Region 13: Niagara Region and City of Hamilton (see Model 2a)

Region 14: Dufferin—Peel—Halton (see Model 2a)

Region 15: Mississauga—Oakville—Burlington (see Model 2a)

Disparity Index

The proposed models differ substantially in terms of their degrees of proportionality. In order to compare their performance, I developed a disparity index that measures the proportionality of the different models. The index ranges from a value of 0 to 100. A score of 0 signifies perfect proportionality between the percentage of votes received by parties and the percentage of seats in the legislature that they are awarded, with a score of 100 indicating complete disproportionality. For each of the models, the absolute difference between the percentage of votes won and the percentage of seats awarded for each of the parties was calculated and summed to produce a disparity score. Based on the 2003 elections, Ontario's current FPTP system received a score of 45.1. We can use this score as a baseline against which to compare the performance of the proposed models. As expected, Model 1b (3 districts, 103 seats) proved to be the most proportional model given its high district magnitudes. Model 2a (13 districts, 130 seats) proved to be the least proportional. Model 2b (15 districts, 150 seats) demonstrates how disparity decreases as the number of seats increases. The results are displayed below.

Model	Disparity Score
Current System (103 single-member constituencies)	45.1
Model 1a (7 districts, 103 seats)	3.9
Model 1b (3 districts, 103 seats)	2.1
Model 2a (13 districts, 130 seats)	6.7
Model 2b (15 districts, 150 seats)	3.4

Assessing the List-PR Approach for Ontario

The list-PR system is closely associated with the idea of political equality. It gives all citizens equal opportunity to influence the decision-making processes which affect our lives. As already noted, all electoral systems have their drawbacks. In the case of the list-PR system, proportionality often comes at the cost of the close link between local constituencies and representatives. The key question to ask ourselves is: What is most important to us? This final section of the paper assesses the strengths and limitations of a party list approach for Ontario based on criteria outlined by Fair Vote Canada (2005) and the Ontario Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform (2006).

Proportional Representation

Strong. The List-PR system is the most proportional of all electoral systems, including the MMP (Mixed-Member Proportional) and the STV (Single Transferable Vote) proportional representation systems. The STV system is perhaps the least proportional of the PR systems due to its relatively small multi-member districts; while the proportionality of the MMP system depends on the relative number of list-PR versus single district seats (Macivor 2003). Only the party list approach can ensure that parties have no more and no fewer seats than their popular support warrants.

Fair Representation for Women, Minorities and Aboriginals

Strong. The List-PR system also does a better job at ensuring fair representation for women and other marginalized social actors than any other electoral system. District magnitude size is the strongest predictor of women's parliamentary representation. Where parties are able to nominate several candidates per district, they can nominate women without having to deny nominations to men or incumbents (Bird 2004). Ethnic

minority candidates also fare better under list-PR, especially in open list systems, where such candidates have been elected by preference votes from minority voters. The party list approach can ensure that Ontario's legislature truly reflects our province's diversity.

Effective Parties

Moderate to Strong. Political parties are essential to the functioning of democracy. Effective political parties are able to structure and channel the political demands of the electorate. The adoption of a list-PR system in Ontario would likely increase the number of political parties represented in our legislature. Rather than a negative, new parties can enhance the quality and inclusiveness of political representation by effectively articulating the interests of new social actors in the political arena. The shift to a list-PR system would ensure a broader range of political views in the legislature.

Stable and Accountable Government

Moderate to Strong. Party list systems do not create political instability. They do, however, make coalition government more likely. Coalition governments are the norm in most democratic countries. While single-party majority governments may be able to make decisions faster, they may not necessarily produce the best outcomes (Massicotte 2004). Under coalition governments, political parties must negotiate, compromise and cooperate in order to pass legislation. The end result may be legislation that is more in tune with public thinking.

Geographic Representation

Moderate to Weak. List-PR systems favour the principle of proportionality over that of territorial representation. It is for this reason that the party list approach is often dismissed by observers as a viable option for Ontarians, who have long been organized into small, single-member constituencies. However, the trade-off between proportionality and geographic representation is not automatic. A tailor-made regional party list approach can ensure strong proportionality and effective and accountable representation of real geographic communities by carefully grouping communities of interest.

Real Voter Choice

Strong. A party list approach promotes healthy competition among candidates and political parties. Under the list-PR system, voters will never again have to vote for their second choices for fear of not having their votes count. All votes are equal.

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