



A Better Mix: Why SM strikes the best balance and should be New Zealand's voting system

The voting system turns votes into seats in parliament and is therefore an important part of the machinery of democracy. In November, voters have a chance to say which system they think is best for New Zealand; our current one—MMP—or one of four alternatives.

In making that decision, voters should be thinking about what sort of democracy the different systems would produce in New Zealand. In another paper, called "Kicking the Tyres: Choosing a voting system for New Zealand," we describe seven criteria for evaluating electoral systems, and then discuss how all the systems work and the trade-offs that each of them make between the criteria.¹ Our guiding concern is that **the voting system should enable our MPs and the government to have the freedom to lead and to make decisions in the best interests of all New Zealanders, but it should also encourage them to listen and be responsive to the interests of New Zealanders and their local communities.**²

In our earlier paper, we encouraged voters to think about these criteria and what they value most from a voting system. In this paper, we do that exercise and make those value judgements ourselves. This leads us to recommend Supplementary Member (SM) as our preferred system. We recommend that voters should choose it at the referendum over any other system, including New Zealand's current MMP system.

HOW SM WORKS

There are two main families of electoral system:

1. systems that mainly elect candidates via electorates, and that are meant to enable a candidate or a party to win a *majority* of the vote in an election; and
2. *proportional* systems, which use a list system to elect candidates from parties.

SM, like MMP, does not fit neatly in either family. It mixes elements of both, giving voters two votes—one for an electorate candidate and one for a party list of candidates.

Under MMP the party vote determines the total share of seats (electorate and list seats combined) that each party receives. However, under SM the party vote only applies to the list seats, so the total number of MPs that a party has in parliament is its electorate MPs plus the list MPs, elected separately by the party vote. This is why SM is sometimes described as a "parallel mixed system" because the two votes operate side-by-side, like parallel lines.³

If SM became New Zealand's voting system there would be 90 electorate MPs and 30 list MPs.⁴ By contrast, under MMP we generally have 70 electorate MPs and 50 list MPs. One MP would be elected from each electorate by winning the largest number of votes there, while the list MPs would be elected through people voting for a party. List candidates would be elected in the order in which they appear on the party list, provided that they had not already won an electorate seat.

It is estimated that there would be nine Maori seats if SM were used in New Zealand, based on the current population.⁵

While we know that the balance of seats in parliament would be tipped towards electorate seats under SM, we still do not know some of the details of how SM would work in New Zealand, such as whether the voting paper would be the same design as an MMP ballot paper, or whether the formula for proportionally allocating the list seats would be different to the one used with MMP. If we knew for certain what all the details were, we could be more precise about how SM would affect things like voter behaviour and electoral outcomes. Nonetheless, we know enough about how SM would work to make some general claims about the sorts of outcomes that it would produce.



WHAT MAKES FOR A GOOD VOTING SYSTEM?

There is no perfect voting system, so selecting the best voting system for a country is the result of making trade-offs about the sort of representative democracy that one wishes to see and the sorts of electoral outcomes that one prefers.⁶ We have developed seven criteria for evaluating voting systems based on what New Zealand and international literature says makes for voting systems that provide effective representative democracy.⁷ These criteria should not be taken as being of equal weight and sometimes they may be mutually exclusive—for example, there is often a trade-off between the government being able to pass the laws that it wants, and making parliament more representative of society at large. However, they are helpful guides for understanding the effects of the systems.

a. Representation

Parliament ought to be able to represent both local communities and interest groups.

- i. **Electorate representation**—how important are electorate MPs in the system?
- ii. **Representation of interests**—how does the system provide for the representation of interest and identity groups in parliament?

b. Effects on parliament and government

The voting system affects how parliament and the government functions in practice, too.

- i. **Accountability**—does the voting system help voters hold the government and MPs to account for their performance?
- ii. **Legitimacy**—does the voting system deliver the electoral outcomes that voters, as a whole, want and expect?
- iii. **Stable government**—does the voting system enable governments to form easily and do they last for their term of office?
- iv. **Effective government**—how easy or difficult is it for the government to carry out what it has promised?
- v. **Opposition and oversight**—does the system promote the formation of an opposition that can criticise and challenge the government?

WHY WE RECOMMEND SM

Representation

One of the strengths of SM is that it provides for both electorate representation and for the representation of interests through the party list.⁸

Electorate MPs play a valuable role in providing for representation because they are elected by local communities to represent their interests in parliament, thereby providing a direct link between those communities and national politics.⁹ If SM were used in New Zealand, the number of electorate MPs would increase from 70 to 90. With fewer list seats, MPs would have a greater incentive to take more of an interest in representing a local electorate. They would have to convince the voters in their electorate that they would represent their interests—as well as their party's interests—in parliament, and would need to honour that pledge if elected.¹⁰

This change could be an improvement on the situation under MMP, where some voters have perceived list MPs as being “faceless” MPs who only owe their position to the favour of party bosses.¹¹ True, those MPs have been selected by parties' internal processes and elected by a vote for a party, however, list representation simply does not provide the same level of direct personal connection and accountability as electorate representation. In addition, more MPs might have the courage and the freedom to stand up to their parties if they disagree with them if they know that they have a mandate from an electorate. This effect should not be over-stated—New Zealand has a history of tight party discipline—but it could make a difference in some cases.¹² Overall, SM could contribute to the health of New Zealand's parliamentary democracy by improving the relational connection between MPs and their electorates.

Voting systems that only have electorates which elect a single MP often discourage voters from voting for minor parties, because their vote would most likely be wasted. That is, a minor party candidate is less likely to be elected as the single MP to represent the electorate, so voters who do not want to waste their vote on an unsuccessful candidate will not vote for a minor party at all. This contributes to a strong two-party vote under these single-member electorate systems. The list vote under SM would offer a partial solution to this problem because voters could vote directly for their

preferred minor party.

Under SM, election results are likely to be more proportional than under systems which use single-member electorates, like First-Past-the-Post (FPP) and Preferential Voting (PV).¹³ These systems often produce highly disproportionate results, where parties' share of the vote does not match the share of the seats that they win in parliament. This often happens when parties win a number of marginal seats on a small share of the vote.¹⁴ Under SM, the list vote would partially moderate the disproportionate election results from the electorates by providing some proportional seats. This means that SM would make it easier for some minor parties to win seats in parliament than under FPP or PV. However, as only 30 seats would be list seats, minor parties would find it more difficult to have candidates elected to parliament than under MMP or Single Transferable Vote (STV), which would produce more proportionate results than SM. In short, SM would give minor parties some representation, but a smaller share of power than at present.

Despite this, SM ought to have a positive effect on the representation of interests in parliament. The party list vote should encourage the major parties to stand candidates who represent minority interest groups, or who would struggle to win an electorate seat.¹⁵ As indicated by our data (which is presented and described in the following section), the 30 list seats would probably mean that perhaps as many as four minor parties would win seats in parliament. While under SM there could be fewer MPs from the different minority and interest groups currently represented in parliament, the exact degree of the representation of interests in parliament does not depend solely on the voting system. While the system does make a difference, the degree—and quality—of representation also depends on the range of candidates that parties choose to select for election and how well parties and MPs choose to represent different communities and interest groups in parliament.

Effects on parliament and government

In order to understand how SM could affect parliament and government, we have investigated the results it might have produced if it had been used at the 2005 and 2008 elections, and compared these with the actual results under MMP. This helps create a general picture of the kind of outcomes SM is likely to produce, but it is

not an exact picture. This is because a different system would have affected how voters would have decided to vote, and because of other limitations discussed below.

We have done this by using a simulator developed by the Centre for Mathematical Social Science (CMSS) at Auckland University for researchers and the general public to test what would happen to the make-up of parties in parliament under the different voting systems.¹⁶ One of the simulator's most helpful features is that it models the results for the 20 extra electorates that would be needed if SM were used.¹⁷ No candidate-related information is used, however, to calculate the likely result in the electorates, so it does not show whether charismatic minor party candidates would have won electorate seats, such as United Future's Peter Dunne, the Progressives' Jim Anderton or the ACT Party's Rodney Hide. Electorate results are instead calculated according to the geographical distribution of the party vote. Because of the high degree of split-voting under MMP in the Maori seats, the Maori Party does not win as many of the nine Maori seats that would exist under SM as it perhaps would in reality. A full description of the assumptions which lie behind the simulator and the definition of the electorate boundaries used for SM are publicly available from the CMSS.¹⁸

We have also calculated a disproportionality figure of the result for each election, using the Gallagher index. The disproportionality index measures "the difference between parties' shares of the votes and their shares of the seats."¹⁹ A score close to zero means that the voting system has produced a proportionate result. That is, the larger the score, the more disproportionate the result is.

Assuming that voters would have voted the same way under SM as they did under MMP, the 2005 election result would have been as tight under SM as it was under MMP. Neither major party would have had a majority of seats and would have had to rely on minor parties' support to form government. The National Party would have won more seats in parliament than the Labour Party, despite having won a smaller share of the party vote. It is possible, however, that the National Party would have found it easier to form a majority coalition government with United Future and New Zealand First—whereas the Labour Party would have needed the support of all, or nearly all, of the minor parties. If the National Party had been more able to form a coalition, SM may have changed the outcome.

2005 and 2008 General Election Results Under SM

2005 election	SM				MMP
Party	Electorate seats (out of 90)	Party votes (%)	List seats (out of 30)	Total seats	Total seats
National	46	39.1	12	58	48
Labour	44	41.1	12	56	50
New Zealand First	0	5.7	2	2	7
Green Party	0	5.3	2	2	6
United Future	0	2.7	1	1	3
Maori Party	0	2.1	1	1	4
ACT Party	0	1.5	0	0	2
Progressives	0	1.2	0	0	1
Other parties	0	1.3	0	0	0
Total	90	100	30	120	121
Gallagher index score				8.9	1.1

2008 election	SM				MMP
Party	Electorate seats (out of 90)	Party votes (%)	List seats (out of 30)	Total seats	Total seats
National	61	44.9	14	75	58
Labour	29	34.0	11	40	43
Green Party	0	6.7	2	2	9
New Zealand First	0	4.1	1	1	0
ACT Party	0	3.7	1	1	5
Maori Party	0	2.4	1	1	5
Progressives	0	0.9	0	0	1
United Future	0	0.9	0	0	1
Other parties	0	2.4	0	0	0
Total	90	100	30	120	122
Gallagher index score				13.4	3.8

At the 2008 election, SM would have enabled the National Party to govern alone and increased the difference in seats between it and the Labour Party. The minor parties would have seen their number of MPs in parliament fall under SM, as fewer seats would be distributed on a proportional basis.

In both elections, the number of minor parties that would be represented in parliament would fall slightly from seven or eight to six.²⁰ As there would have been fewer proportionally-allocated seats

the disproportionality of parties' representation in parliament increases for each election—more markedly in 2008 than in 2005. Finally, the two elections show how SM can produce both majority coalition government and single party majority government,²¹ and thus how electoral outcomes under SM can be expected to be more majoritarian.

A return to majority government ought to provide for better accountability, and could be a good thing for legitimacy, stability and effective government. For

instance, SM provides better for direct accountability between the government and voters. Since a major party will generally be the only governing party under SM, it ought to be easier for voters to clearly allocate responsibility for non-performance, or to see when the government has not done what it has promised. Voters can more easily dump a government they disapprove of, and hold the government more directly to account because they decide which candidates are elected from local electorates, which make-up three-quarters of the seats in parliament.²² If they do not like a party, they will not vote for their candidate. This will have a direct impact on that party's representation in parliament.

In terms of legitimacy, under SM the party which wins the most seats in parliament would most likely get to form a government. This is probably consistent with what many people would expect. Under MMP, a party which wins the most seats will not necessarily get to form a government. Voters in safe electorate seats also get the opportunity to split their vote under SM—that is, they can vote for a different party with their party list vote to the one for which their preferred electorate candidate is standing. This means that voters who do not prefer one of the major parties' electorate candidates can still vote to see their preferred party represented in parliament. Voting under SM can produce outcomes that many voters would accept as legitimate.²³

Governments are more likely to be stable under SM because single-party majority governments are more likely to form and to last their term than a government made up of two or more parties.²⁴ This has not recently been a problem under MMP, but in general a lack of stability is more likely in systems which encourage coalition government. Of course, coalition governments are still possible under SM, but because there would be fewer minor party members in parliament, they would have less capacity to influence the government's programme. This may provide for more stable coalition government. SM could also provide for better continuity of government as the policy compromises that regular changes in coalition partners can bring might be reduced.²⁵ Such changes are less likely where minor parties have less representation.

SM can also provide for effective government. Voters could reasonably expect that governments would follow the policy programmes which they had campaigned on at the election.²⁶ This is because the major party

responsible for leading the government would have to make fewer concessions to minor parties' policy objectives if there were a coalition and none if a majority party could govern alone.²⁷ Even outside of coalitions, minor parties could still contribute to better law-making if they can expose weaknesses or limitations in major parties' proposals. However, it is less likely that they would have disproportionate influence on the government's policy. Under SM, generally we could expect governments to form and enact policies more easily around a clear and consistent set of principles rather than having to make undesirable compromises simply as the price of securing enough support to govern.

For the same reason, SM could also provide for a clear opposition and better oversight. With fewer minor parties supporting the government on some issues but not others, as occurs now with MMP, the lines between the opposition and the governing parties would be clear.²⁸ If minor parties were not directly involved in government, then they would have more freedom to critique it and to faithfully represent their voters' interests in parliament without having to compromise their positions.²⁹ This clarification of roles that SM would be likely to create would help provide an effective opposition to the government, ensuring it is subject to scrutiny and debate, and held to account for its performance.

Under SM, the government would have greater freedom to lead and to make the decisions which it thinks are in the nation's best interests, and the odds of having a stable, legitimate and effective parliament and government would be increased.

SOME LIMITATIONS WITH USING SM

There is no such thing as a perfect voting system. While there is much to like about SM, there are still some potential issues that voters ought to be mindful of if they vote for it at the referendum.

First, the strength and the weakness of mixed systems like SM is that they are hybrids.³⁰ The weakness of having 30 list seats is that sometimes those seats would not be enough to correct for highly disproportionate election results and to provide effectively for the representation of minor parties and interest groups. In trying to provide for the best of both electorate-based and proportional systems, there is a risk that SM could, at times, provide

for the best of neither.

Because SM emphasises electorate representation, there will be more focus on winning electorate seats. This means marginal electorate seats will be more important in determining which party or parties will form a government, so it might lead to parties campaigning more on the local issues which are important to winning marginal electorate seats rather than on issues of national significance. This would mean that the outcome of elections could hinge more on what happens in a handful of electorates and what is important to the local communities who live in them.

The emphasis on electorates could also mean that more parties may stand candidates in more electorates, instead of relying on the list. This is reinforced by evidence suggesting that when political parties stand candidates in local electorates under mixed systems it helps them to boost their share of the list vote.³¹ Hence, the prospect of receiving an increase in the list vote—however great or small—might encourage more party competition in local electorates under SM than under FPP, for example.³² This may provide voters with more choice about who is best for their electorate, but it may also create more divisive campaigns in battle-ground seats.

Another issue is whether major parties would choose to coordinate their electorate nominations with minor parties by choosing not to stand candidates in some seats so that a potential minor party coalition partner could be elected to parliament. If this electoral strategy were adopted it could reduce the number of candidates and the range of parties contesting a seat. That is, SM could still encourage the sort of cross-party strategic campaigning that has occurred under MMP which some voters find difficult to accept as legitimate.

It is also worth noting that New Zealand has a history of strong parties influencing voters. Even though SM would be weighted more towards electorate representation, and could in theory encourage more independently-minded candidates, in practice it might not reduce the degree of influence that parties currently, and historically, have had over their candidates and in election campaigns. However, because this is a feature of our political culture, it would probably affect any voting system that we choose.

SM would not solve the problems that have hindered list MPs' popularity among voters under MMP. These problems include voters' perception of list MPs as

"faceless," and the confusion which has arisen about whether list MPs ought to primarily represent an electorate, their party or an interest group.³³

A potentially more serious legitimacy issue with SM is whether the more disproportionate election results produced by the system would mean that voters would not accept electoral outcomes as fair. For example, sometimes the party which has the highest share of the party vote will not be the one that forms the government because it would not have the largest number of seats in parliament. Contests in marginal seats would also be important in deciding the outcome of elections under SM, so some voters' votes would influence the outcome more than others.³⁴ And, as our data for the 2005 election indicate, the legitimacy problems associated with unpredictable government formation that have occurred with MMP could still occur with SM. It could also be difficult to tell which party ought to be held accountable for the government's performance at the election if a coalition were formed. While situations like these would probably only occur rarely, they do illustrate that there may be legitimacy concerns with SM.

RECOMMENDATION

SM measures up well against our evaluation criteria and is the best of the systems on offer. SM can provide well for electorate representation through the 90 electorate MPs that would be elected under the system as they would establish a strong relational connection between parliament and New Zealand's local communities. These MPs could represent the interests of minority groups in their electorates, too. Through its 30 proportional list seats, SM can also provide for the representation of a small number of minor parties and various minority interest groups in parliament, and correct for some of the bias and disproportionality produced by purely electorate-based voting systems. Generally, SM ought to provide a good balance between national and local representation.³⁵

Most of the time, SM could be expected to produce single-party majority or majority coalition government. Generally we could expect that parliament would operate with a clear government and opposition. This would be beneficial for voters because they would know which MPs and which parties to hold to account for the government's performance at the next election. This

means it would also be likely to provide for stable and efficient government, with a clear policy focus.

In conclusion, we believe that SM is the best of the available voting system that voters can choose from at the referendum. It offers the "best of both worlds."³⁶ We recommend that at the referendum voters should vote to reject MMP, and vote for SM as their preferred voting system.

ENDNOTES

- ¹ S. Thomas, "Kicking the Tyres: Choosing a voting system for New Zealand" (Auckland: Maxim Institute, 2011).
- ² Previous Maxim Institute publications which discuss the value of parliament's deliberative role and representative government's role in protecting the common good include: R. Ekins, "A Government for the People: The value of representative democracy," *Guest Paper* (Auckland: Maxim Institute, 2009); and J. Waldron, "Parliamentary Recklessness: Why we need to legislate more carefully," *Annual John Graham Lecture* (Auckland: Maxim Institute, 2008).
- ³ The terminology used to describe parallel systems varies from supplementary member, to mixed-member majoritarian, to parallel systems. S. Hix, R. Johnston and A. Cummine, "Choosing an Electoral System" (London: The British Academy Policy Centre, 2010), 104–105; International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA), "Electoral System Design: The new international IDEA handbook" (Stockholm: 2005), 104.
- ⁴ Electoral Referendum Act 2010, sch 2(7)(2).
- ⁵ Electoral Commission, "The SM Voting System: Supplementary Member System," *Factsheet* (Wellington: 2011), 1.
- ⁶ As political scientist Richard S. Katz puts it, "... once one knows the kind of democracy to be achieved (where you want to go), the question becomes how to get there ... Different societies have different needs and desires concerning to the core values of democracy." R.S. Katz, *Democracy and Elections* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 5–6, 309–310.
- ⁷ See S. Thomas, "Kicking the Tyres: Choosing a voting system for New Zealand," 2–5.
- ⁸ Shugart and Wattenberg go as far as saying that they think mixed systems represent the "best of both worlds." They explain: "Our general point is that MM [mixed member] systems permit myriad variations that can suit a specific political context, while still holding out the promise of providing the best of both worlds—i.e. the best of both identifiable governing blocs and proportionality, and the best of both local accountability and cohesive and programmatic national parties." M.S. Shugart and M.P. Wattenberg, *Mixed-member Electoral Systems: The best of both worlds?* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 1, 591–595.
- ⁹ M.B. Vieira and D. Runciman, *Representation*, (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Polity Press, 2008), x; B. Manin, *The Principles of Representative Government* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 184–192; J. Coniff, "Burke, Bristol and the Concept of Representation," *Western Political Quarterly* 30 (1977): 339; H.F. Pitkin, *The Concept of Representation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), 168–189.
- ¹⁰ H. Catt, P. Harris and N.S. Roberts, *Voter's Choice: Electoral change in New Zealand* (Palmerston North: The Dunmore Press, 1992), 38; New Zealand Royal Commission on the Electoral System and J.H. Wallace, *Report of the Royal Commission on the Electoral System: Towards a better democracy* (Wellington: Government Printer, 1986), 41.
- ¹¹ R. Miller and J. Vowles, "Public Attitudes Towards MMP and Coalition Government," *New Zealand Journal of Public and International Law* 7, no. 1 (2009): 97; International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA), "Electoral System Design: The new international IDEA handbook," 112; M.S. Shugart and M.P. Wattenberg, *Mixed-member Electoral Systems: The best of both worlds?* 593–594. The New Zealand Royal Commission on the Electoral System had similar expectations about how list MPs would be publicly perceived. New Zealand Royal Commission on the Electoral System and J.H. Wallace, *Report of the Royal Commission on the Electoral System: Towards a better democracy*, 53.
- ¹² J.A. Karp, "Candidate Effects and Spill-over in Mixed Systems: Evidence from New Zealand," *Electoral Studies* 28 (2009): 42, citing J. Vowles et al., *Towards Consensus? The 1993 general election in New Zealand and the transition to proportional representation* (Auckland University Press, 1995), 161; D. Denmark, "Choosing MMP in New Zealand: Explaining the 1993 electoral reform," in *Mixed-Member Electoral Systems: The best of both worlds?* eds. M. S. Shugart and M. P. Wattenberg (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 71.
- ¹³ S. Hix, R. Johnston and A. Cummine, "Choosing an Electoral System," 83; M.S. Shugart and M.P. Wattenberg, *Mixed-member Electoral Systems: The best of both worlds?* 25.
- ¹⁴ S. Hix, R. Johnston and A. Cummine, "Choosing an Electoral System," 21.
- ¹⁵ Cf. International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA), "Electoral System Design: The new international IDEA handbook," 112; H. Catt, P. Harris and N.S. Roberts, *Voter's Choice: Electoral change in New Zealand*, 39–40; P. Brook, Cowen, T. Cowen and A. Tabarrok, "An Analysis of Proposals for Constitutional Change in New Zealand" (Wellington: New Zealand Business Roundtable, 1992), 1.3–1.4, 3.4, citing A. Downs, *An Economic Theory of Democracy* (New York: Harper and Row, 1957) and D. Mueller, *Public Choice II* (Cambridge University Press, 1989); New Zealand Royal Commission on the Electoral System and J.H. Wallace, *Report of the Royal Commission on the Electoral System: Towards a better democracy*, 39–42.
- ¹⁶ Centre for Mathematical Social Sciences, *2011 Referendum Options Simulator Project* (2011), <http://cmss.auckland.ac.nz/2011-referendum/2011-referendum-simulator/> (accessed 27 July 2011).
- ¹⁷ Centre for Mathematical Social Sciences, *90 electorates* (2011), <http://www.stat.auckland.ac.nz/~geoff/voting/electorates90.html> (accessed 31 August 2011). New Zealand political scientists Stephen Levine and Nigel Roberts carried out a similar exercise by applying mixed majoritarian electoral rules to the results of the MMP elections held between 1996 and 2008. However, as Levine and Roberts did not create extra electorates, the results which they estimate do not exactly reflect SM rules. This means that their results are not as accurate as the CMSS's results. See tables 2 to 6 in S. Levine and N.S. Roberts, "MMP and the Future: Political challenges and proposed reforms," *New Zealand Journal of Public and International Law* 7, no. 1 (2009): 143–145.
- ¹⁸ Centre for Mathematical Social Sciences, *2011 Referendum Simulator - Frequently Asked Questions* (2011), <http://www.stat.auckland.ac.nz/~geoff/voting/faq.html> (accessed 31 August 2011). For example, each new electorate corresponds to 7/12 of an existing electorate. The simulator includes all of the parties that won at least one seat in the elections. All other parties are grouped together. The simulator does not assume that there is a prescribed party vote threshold for winning one of the 30 list seats under SM.
- ¹⁹ M. Gallagher and P. Mitchell, *The Politics of Electoral Systems* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 602.

- ²⁰ Cf. M.S. Shugart and M.P. Wattenberg, *Mixed-member Electoral Systems: The best of both worlds?* 592. Research also shows that semi-proportional mixed systems, like SM, do not tend to reduce the number of effective parties in parliament. This challenges a commonly-held assumption that altering the weight of electorate seats to list seats in a mixed system can increase or decrease how many parties are elected to parliament. F. Ferrara, E.S. Herron and M. Nishikawa, *Mixed Electoral Systems: Contamination and its consequences* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005), 139-142; International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA), "Electoral System Design: The new international IDEA handbook," 112.
- ²¹ Cf. S. Levine and N.S. Roberts, "MMP and the Future: Political challenges and proposed reforms," 145; New Zealand Royal Commission on the Electoral System and J.H. Wallace, *Report of the Royal Commission on the Electoral System: Towards a better democracy*, 39-42.
- ²² Graeme Edgeler, Personal Communication, 6 May 2011.
- ²³ New Zealand Royal Commission on the Electoral System and J.H. Wallace, *Report of the Royal Commission on the Electoral System: Towards a better democracy*, 42.
- ²⁴ J. Boston, S. Church and T. Bale, "The Impact of Proportional Representation on Government Effectiveness: The New Zealand experience," *Australian Journal of Public Administration* 62, no. 4 (2003): 9-18. That said, under MMP the major parties have negotiated various forms of "multi-party governance" agreements with minor support parties, which have contributed to more stable governments under MMP since the original 1996 National-New Zealand First coalition government that collapsed before its term ended. These agreements have helped the minor parties to maintain their points of difference in their core policy areas while being able to see some of their policies adopted by the government. J. Boston, "Innovative Political Management: Multi-party governance in New Zealand," *Policy Quarterly* 5, no. 2 (2009): 56. A longer treatment of New Zealand's experience of multi-party governance may be found in J. Boston and D. Bullock, "Experiments in Executive Government Under MMP in New Zealand: Contrasting approaches to multi-party governance," *New Zealand Journal of Public and International Law* 7, no. 1 (2009): 39-76. Multi-party governance agreements have also enabled various governments to be more effective, as they helped them to pass legislation with relative ease. S. Levine, N.S. Roberts and R. Salmond, "A Wider View: MMP ten years on," in *The Baubles of Office: The New Zealand general election of 2005*, eds. S. Levine and N.S. Roberts (Wellington: Victoria University Press, 2007), 462; R. Malone, "Who's the Boss?: Executive-legislature relations in New Zealand under MMP," *New Zealand Journal of Public and International Law* 7, no. 1 (2009): 16-18.
- ²⁵ New Zealand Royal Commission on the Electoral System and J.H. Wallace, *Report of the Royal Commission on the Electoral System: Towards a better democracy*, 42.
- ²⁶ This expectation, that parties ought to be held accountable at elections for how they well they have performed at keeping their promises, has traditionally been part of New Zealand's political culture and an important issue for New Zealand voters. D. Denemark, "Choosing MMP in New Zealand: Explaining the 1993 electoral reform," 72-73.
- ²⁷ The trend of major parties making policy concessions to minor parties has developed more in New Zealand since the introduction of MMP, as the minor parties look to see the major governing parties adopt their particular policies in return for their support of the government. Note N. Aroney, "A Tale of Two Houses: Does MMP mean New Zealand doesn't need an upper house?" *Guest Paper* (Auckland: Maxim Institute, 2011), 8-9; C. Geiringer, P. Higbee and E. McLeay, "Standing Orders Review 49th Parliament. Submission to Standing Orders Committee" (Victoria University Wellington: The Urgency Project, 2011), 8; and J. Boston and D. Bullock, "Experiments in Executive Government Under MMP in New Zealand: Contrasting approaches to multi-party governance," 58ff. Some examples include the Green Party's home insulation policy and the ACT Party's "three strikes" criminal sentencing legislation. "Memorandum of Understanding Between the New Zealand National Party and the Green Party of Aotearoa New Zealand." 8 April (2009), 4; "National-ACT Confidence and Supply Agreement." 16 November (2008), 2.
- ²⁸ Political scientist Andre Kaiser observes that MMP has blurred the lines between governing and opposition parties in New Zealand. A. Kaiser, "MMP, Minority Governments and Parliamentary Opposition," *New Zealand Journal of Public and International Law* 7, no. 1 (2009): 90-91.
- ²⁹ Cf. N. Aroney, "A Tale of Two Houses: Does MMP mean New Zealand doesn't need an upper house?" 8-9.
- ³⁰ G. Sartori, *Comparative Constitutional Engineering: An inquiry into structures, incentives and outcomes*, Second ed. (London: MacMillan, 1997), 75.
- ³¹ F. Ferrara, E.S. Herron and M. Nishikawa, *Mixed Electoral Systems: Contamination and its consequences*, 48, 63, 139-141; J.A. Karp, "Candidate Effects and Spill-over in Mixed Systems: Evidence from New Zealand," 42.
- ³² In this respect, the style of politics and campaigning at the electorate level might be more similar to the situation under MMP. The assumption is that there is "contamination" between the two electoral tiers; that is, parties which stand electorate candidates will receive a boost to their party vote even if they do not win an electorate seat. J.A. Karp, "Candidate Effects and Spill-over in Mixed Systems: Evidence from New Zealand," 42, 45-46. Minor parties can exploit mixed systems in this way if they stand well-known candidates in local constituencies who can split the vote of the major parties and enhance the profile and performance of the minor party in the proportional election. S. Hix, R. Johnston and A. Cummine, "Choosing an Electoral System," 104; F. Ferrara, E.S. Herron and M. Nishikawa, *Mixed Electoral Systems: Contamination and its consequences*, 140-142. This strategy has been uncovered in international data. Analysing data for 14 parliamentary democracies that use mixed voting systems, political scientists Frederico Ferrara and Erik Herron find that parties have a greater incentive to independently campaign under more proportional voting systems to boost their parties' profile and so their parties' share of the party vote. F. Ferrara and E.S. Herron, "Going It Alone? Strategic entry under mixed electoral rules," *American Journal of Political Science* 49, no. 1 (2005): 16-31.
- ³³ List-MPs who belong to minor parties, like the ACT Party or the Green Party, for example, have a greater incentive to represent interest groups, national issues or their party's policy programme because contesting electorates is not a viable electoral strategy for them. E. McLeay and J. Vowles, "Redefining Constituency Representation: The roles of New Zealand MPs under MMP," *Regional and Federal Studies* 17, no. 1 (2007): 87. New Zealand Royal Commission on the Electoral System and J.H. Wallace, *Report of the Royal Commission on the Electoral System: Towards a better democracy*, 53. Also see P. Brook, Cowen, T. Cowen and A. Tabarrok, "An Analysis of Proposals

for Constitutional Change in New Zealand," 3.17 and J. Vowles, S.A. Banducci and J.A. Karp, "Forecasting and Evaluating the Consequences of Electoral Change in New Zealand," *Acta Politica* 41 (2006): 275. R. Miller and J. Vowles, "Public Attitudes Towards MMP and Coalition Government," 97.

³⁴ S. Hix, R. Johnston and A. Cummine, "Choosing an Electoral System," 45-46; P. Norris, *Electoral Engineering. Voting rules and political behaviour* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 12.

³⁵ M.S. Shugart and M.P. Wattenberg, *Mixed-member Electoral Systems: The best of both worlds?* 591-592.

³⁶ M.S. Shugart and M.P. Wattenberg, *Mixed-member Electoral Systems: The best of both worlds?*; International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA), "Electoral System Design: The new international IDEA handbook," 119-120.