

How can proportional representation be achieved in Norway?

Are there lessons for Sweden from Norway?

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Outline of presentation:

- **Sweden and Norway, a comparison**
 - Electoral systems
 - Experienced problems
- **Study of Norwegian election in 2009**
 - Votes and elected representatives
 - Counties as constituencies and effect of first divisor
 - Thresholds of representation, in counties and nationally
 - How proportional should national representation be?
- **Small and big problems, Norway and Sweden**
- **A concluding proposal**

Electoral systems

	Sweden	Norway
Seats from the districts	310	150
Adjustment seats	39	19
Number of districts	29	19
Geographic allotment	310	169
Threshold nation	4 %	4 %
Threshold district	12 %	---
Divisor in districts	1.4, 3, 5, ...	1.4, 3, 5, ...
Seats from districts	Irrevocably won	Irrevocably won

Problem at hand:

Too many seats irrevocably won in districts

Sweden

- 1988
 - Soc.dem. (?) won 1 to many in districts.
 - Not important to overall majority
- 2010
 - Soc.dem. won 3 and Con 1 to many in districts.
 - Close to importance for overall majority

Norway

- 2005
 - Labor won 4 to many in districts.
 - Red-green coalition would not have had a majority
- 2009
 - Labour won 1 to many in districts.
 In addition:
 - Lib at 3.9 % did not pass national threshold
 - Close to importance for overall majority

Norwegian election in 2005 & 2009:

- Red-green coalition versus some co-operation between opposition of four parties
 - Socialist left party
 - Labour party
 - Agrarian party
 - ..
 - Progress party
 - Conservative party
 - Christian party
 - Liberal party
- Tightly fought election and unclear blocks. Red-green victory in seats

Party	Percent 2005	Seats 2005	Percent 2009	Seats 2009
Socialist left party	8,8	15	6,2	11
Labour party	32,7	61	35,4	64
Agrarian party	6,5	11	6,2	11
Red-green coalition	46,0	87	47,8	86
Progress party	22,1	38	22,9	41
Conservative party	14,1	23	17,2	30
Christian party	6,8	11	5,5	10
Liberal party	5,9	10	3,9	2
Opposition	48,9	82	49,5	83

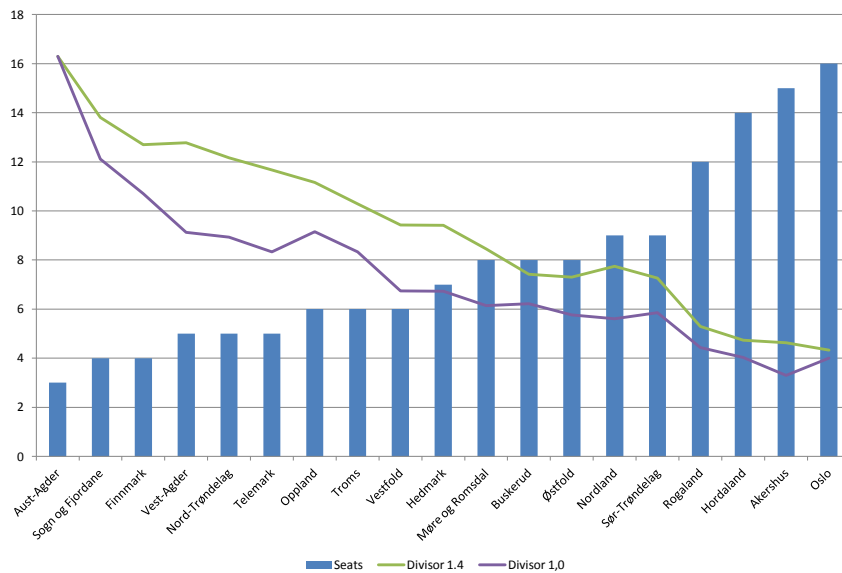
2009: Votes and elected representatives

Party	National vote share	Elected from counties	National adjustment	Actual result	PR with current thresholds	National PR without thresholds
Labour	35.37	64	0	64	63	60
Progress party	22.91	38	3	41	41	39
Conservative	17.24	27	3	30	31	29
Socialist Left	6.20	6	5	11	11	11
Agrarian Party	6.15	9	2	11	11	11
Christian Party	5.54	4	6	10	10	9
Liberals	3.88	2	0	2	2	7
Red Pensioners party	1.35	0	0	0	0	2
	0.44	0	0	0	0	1
Sum	100.00	150	19	169	169	169

Effect of first divisor

First divisor	Wins	District (county)	Loses
1,3	Liberals	Hordaland	Labour
1,2	Red	Oslo	Conservative
	Socialist left	Rogaland	Progress party
	Conservative	Sogn og Fjordane	Labour
1,1	Christian party	Østfold	Progress party
	Agrarian Party	Buskerud	Labour
	Liberals	Rogaland	Conservative
	Agrarian Party	Troms	Labour
	Conservative	Finnmark	Labour
1,0	Conservative	Nord-Trøndelag	Labour

Seats and effective threshold 2009



2009: Alternative electoral systems

Electoral system Party	Red	Soc left	Lab	Agr	Lib	Chr	Con	Pro	Pen	Maj	To many
System in use	0	11	64	11	2	10	30	41	0	R-G	1 Lab
Country without districts & no threshold	2	11	60	11	7	9	29	39	1	even	
Threshold 3.0	0	11	64	10	7	9	29	39	0	R-G	3 Lab
First divisor 1,0	1	11	62	11	4	10	30	40	0	R-G	
First 1.0 & threshold 3.0	1	11	61	11	7	9	30	39	0	Y-B	
Swedish thresholds	0	11	65	11	0	10	31	41	0	R-G	1 Lab
29 adj. seats & threshold 4.0	0	11	63	11	2	10	31	41	0	R-G	
29 adj. seats & threshold 3.0	0	11	62	11	7	9	30	39	0	Y-B	
New district allotment rule	1	11	63	11	3	10	30	40	0	R-G	
As above & threshold 3.0	1	11	61	11	7	9	29	40	0	Y-B	1 Pro
As above & Swedish threshold	0	11	64	11	0	10	31	42	0	R-G	

How many adjustment seats are needed?

- Empirical question. Important factors:
 - Number of seats in constituencies
 - Explicit or implicit thresholds in constituencies
- Empirical finding for Norway 2009:
 - First of every 8 representative from counties serve as national adjustment seat
 - Gives a total 29 adjustment seats
 - Sufficient for full PR
 - Also if national threshold is reduced to 3 percent
- Sweden
 - Impression from summaries from S. Linusson and J. Lanke
 - Adjustment of first divisor suffices?

What is the major problem?

2009 close election in Norway:

- Disregarding votes to parties below threshold, parliamentary majority in line with majority vote

But

- Including all votes, majority in parliament in line with popular vote only with national threshold of 3 %

Is similar possible in Sweden?

Party	2010-election			Alternative outcome					
	Votes	%	Seats	Change	Votes	%	% +/-	Seats	Seats +/-
Social Democratic P	1 827 497	30,66	112		1 827 497	30,66		123	11
Moderate Party	1 791 766	30,06	107		1 791 766	30,06		120	13
Green Party	437 435	7,34	25	10 000	447 435	7,51	0,17	30	5
Liberal Party	420 524	7,06	24		420 524	7,06		28	4
Center Party	390 804	6,56	23	-10 000	380 804	6,39	-0,17	26	3
Sweden Democrats	339 610	5,70	20	-110 000	229 610	3,85	-1,85	—	-20
Left Party	334 053	5,60	19		334 053	5,60		22	3
Christian Democrats	333 696	5,60	19	-100 000	233 696	3,92	-1,68	—	-19
Pirat Party	38 491	0,65	—	100 000	138 491	2,32	1,67	—	—
Feminist Initiative	24 139	0,40	—	110 000	134 139	2,25	1,85	—	—
Valid votes	5 960 408				5 960 408				
National threshold	238 416				238 416				
Red-green alternative	2 598 985	43,60	156	10 000	2 608 985	43,77	0,17	175	19
The alliance	2 936 790	49,28	173	-110 000	2 826 790	47,43	-1,85	174	1
Not represented	85 023	1,43	—		758 329	12,72	11,30	—	—

Party	Outcome		Threshold 4 %		Threshold 3 %	
	Votes	%	Seats	Seats +-	Seats	Seats +-
Social Democratic P	1 827 497	30,66	123	11	113	11
Moderate Party	1 791 766	30,06	120	13	110	3
Green Party	447 435	7,51	30	5	28	3
Liberal Party	420 524	7,06	28	4	26	2
Center Party	380 804	6,39	26	3	23	0
Sweden Democrats	229 610	3,85	—	-20	14	-6
Left Party	334 053	5,60	22	3	21	2
Christian Democrats	233 696	3,92	—	-19	14	-5
Pirat Party	138 491	2,32	—	—	—	—
Feminist Initiative	134 139	2,25	—	—	—	—
Valid votes / Threshold	5 960 408		4 %		3 %	
National threshold	238 416		238 416		178 812	
Red-green alternative	2 608 985	43,77	175	19	162	6
The alliance	2 826 790	47,43	174	1	173	0
Not represented			758 329	12,72	295 023	4,95

My view of major problem

My view from elections in Norway:

- National threshold of 4 % leads to
 - Many voters not being represented
 - Increased uncertainty regarding parliamentary and popular majority
- National threshold of 4 % has probably not
 - Improved possibility to form working government
 - Reduced number of national parties
- A (rather) small lack of PR between those above 4% is more important technically than politically
- Will Swedish experience be the same?
 - Threshold has not stopped creation of new parties
 - There has been some deviations from full national PR

Proposal

Norway

- National threshold: 3%
- Regional threshold: 6 %
- Lower the first divisor in counties to 1 (use the “clean” version of St. Lagüe’s method)
- Increase number of national adjustment seats

Sweden

- National threshold: 3%
- Regional threshold: 6 %
- Lower the first divisor in counties to 1 (use the “clean” version of St. Lagüe’s method)

My study of the situation in Norway

In Norwegian at <http://www.vestvollen.no/litteratur.html>:

- “Valgordninga: Er prøvene bestått?” *Norsk Statsvitenskaplig tidsskrift 26*, s 132-148.
 - With a summary in English: “The electoral system: Have the practical tests been passed”.
- “Plassering av utjavningsmandater på fylkespartier” *Norsk Statsvitenskaplig tidsskrift 26*, s 161-167