

Boundary Delimitation in the Elections

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Abstract— The term "boundary delimitation" is usually used to refer to the process of drawing electoral district boundaries. However, it can also be used to denote the process of drawing voting areas (also called polling areas, districts or election precincts) for the purposes of assigning voters to polling places. Occasionally, the term has been employed to describe the process of demarcating administrative boundaries such as state, county or municipality lines. Because the focus of this project is on election administration, the Boundary Delimitation section of the Administration and Cost of Elections (ACE) Project discusses only the delimitation of electoral districts and voting areas. Furthermore, because the delimitation of electoral districts is far more complicated and much more controversial than the delimitation of voting areas, the vast majority of this section will be devoted to the delimitation of electoral district boundaries.

Keywords— *elective; boundary; delimitation; district; drawing*

I. INTRODUCTION

The periodic delimitation of electoral boundaries, or redistricting, is necessary in any representative system where single-member districts or uniformly small multimember districts are used. If electoral boundaries are not periodically adjusted, population inequities develop across districts.

Adjusting district boundaries can have major consequences not only for the legislators who represent the districts, but also for the individual and community constituents of the districts. Ultimately, election results and the partisan composition of the legislature are affected by the selection of district boundaries. But the importance of the redistricting process is seldom recognised outside of political circles.

Countries have adopted various methods for delimiting districts. In some, the choice of methods is simply a matter of historical tradition. In others, methods for delimiting districts have been borrowed from a colonial power or an influential neighbouring country. In still other countries, conscious decisions based on the geographic size of the country, its physical features, or its financial resources were made. Recently, countries have taken their political and social context into account when making decisions on which redistricting practices to adopt. Clearly, there is a broad range of possibilities. Redistricting practices that work well in some countries will not work in others. Informed decision-making is the best approach to selecting or reforming a redistricting process.

II. ELECTORAL SYSTEMS THAT DELIMIT ELECTORAL DISTRICTS

The delimitation of electoral districts is most commonly associated with plurality or majority electoral systems. Both systems rely heavily, if not exclusively, on single-member districts. These districts must be redrawn periodically to reflect changes in the population.

Plurality and majority systems, however, are not the only types of electoral systems that require the periodic delimitation of electoral districts. One proportional representation system, characterised by the single transferable vote, also must delimit electoral districts occasionally. This is because the single transferable vote requires districts that are uniformly small in magnitude. Another electoral system, the "mixed" electoral system, also requires the delimitation of electoral districts. This is because a mixed system combines party list proportional representation with single-member districts.

The importance of the delimitation process varies, depending on the type of electoral system. Because plurality and majority systems can, and do, produce election outcomes that are disproportional with regard to the ratio of legislative seats to partisan votes, the delimitation process is very important. It is less important in mixed systems or proportional representation systems.

III. STRUCTURE AND RULES FOR DELIMITING ELECTORAL DISTRICTS

Countries that delimit districts must establish a formal structure and a set of rules for carrying out the redistricting process. Because different sets of districts can produce different election outcomes, even if the underlying vote patterns remain constant, the choice of redistricting practices is important. Electoral legislation outlining the formal structure and rules for redistricting should address the following issues:

Who will draw the district lines or boundaries? And who will have the ultimate responsibility for selecting the final redistricting plan?

Should the persons who draw the districts be independent from the legislature?

Should they be politically neutral?

Should the legislature have any formal role at all in the process?

Should some mechanism exist for public input into to the redistricting process?

Should redistricting criteria be adopted for the line drawers to follow? If so, what should those criteria be?

How often should districts be redrawn and how long should the redistricting process take?

Redistricting practices vary markedly across countries. In the United States, for example, legislators are usually responsible for drawing electoral district lines. Partisan politics and the protection of incumbent legislators play a large role in the redistricting process. By contrast, politicians in many Commonwealth countries have opted out of the redistricting process. The process is left to independent commissions with neutral redistricting criteria for guidance. The reasons for these differences are best explained by the social, political and cultural norms.

IV. TASKS INVOLVED IN DRAWING ELECTORAL DISTRICT BOUNDARIES

Although redistricting rules vary markedly across countries, the tasks involved in drawing districts are generally very similar. Drawing district boundaries entails:

- allocating seats to sub-regions of the country, such as states or provinces;
- creating a database minimally composed of maps and population data;
- assigning geographic units to districts until all geographic units within the territory have been assigned;
- summarising and evaluating the redistricting plan.

This can be a complex, time-consuming and expensive process.

V. DELIMITING VOTING AREAS

Most countries, regardless of the type of election system employed, delimit voting areas. Voting areas are contiguous geographic areas in which all the voters are assigned to the same voting place or voting station.

Because voting areas are used for election administration purposes only, the boundaries of these areas tend to be less controversial, and the delimitation of these areas is usually left to the discretion of election administrators. However, because the data required and the tasks involved in the delimitation of voting areas are similar to those involved in drawing electoral district lines, the delimitation of voting areas is discussed under the Boundary Delimitation section.

VI. CONCLUSION

The Boundary Delimitation section of the Administration and Cost of Elections (ACE) Project discusses the types of electoral systems that require periodic electoral district delimitation and the advantages and disadvantages of various districting alternatives (see Delimiting Electoral Districts). It considers the formal structure and rules that countries use to conduct electoral district delimitation, or redistricting (see Structure and Rules for Delimiting Electoral Districts). It outlines each step of the district drawing process, from the

creation of a redistricting database to describing and evaluating redistricting plans (see Tasks Involved in Drawing Electoral District Boundaries). In addition, the delimitation of voting areas for election administration purposes is discussed (see Special Considerations: Delimiting Voting Areas).

It is hoped that this discussion will help countries to make informed decisions on whether to delimit electoral districts and, if so, which boundary delimitation practices to adopt.

VII. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Because delimitation, or redistricting, practices vary greatly around the world, there are few universal principles to guide the delimitation process. Countries disagree on fundamental issues, such as how impartial and independent the process can and should be from the legislative and political concerns. But there are three generally accepted principles:

- "representativeness";
- equality of voting strength;
- reciprocity.

VIII. REPRESENTATIVENESS

Electoral district boundaries should be drawn such that constituents have an opportunity to elect candidates they feel truly represent them. This usually means that district boundaries should coincide with communities of interest as much as possible. Communities of interest can be defined in a variety of ways. For example, they can be administrative divisions, ethnic or racial neighbourhoods, or natural communities delineated by physical boundaries (such as islands). If districts are not composed of communities of interest, however defined, it may be difficult for a single candidate to represent the entire constituency.

Regardless of a representative's characteristics or political beliefs, however, a representative who performs constituency services and works to protect constituency interests in the legislature may be rewarded with re-election if the constituency views this as effective representation.

IX. EQUALITY OF VOTING STRENGTH

Electoral district boundaries should be drawn so that districts are relatively equal in population. Equally populous districts allow voters to have an equally weighted vote in the election of representatives. If, for example, a representative is elected from a district that has twice as many voters as another district, voters in the larger district will have half the influence of voters in the smaller district. Electoral districts that vary greatly in population—a condition referred to as "malapportionment"—violate a central tenet of democracy, namely, that all voters should be able to cast a vote of equal weight.

X. RECIPROCITY

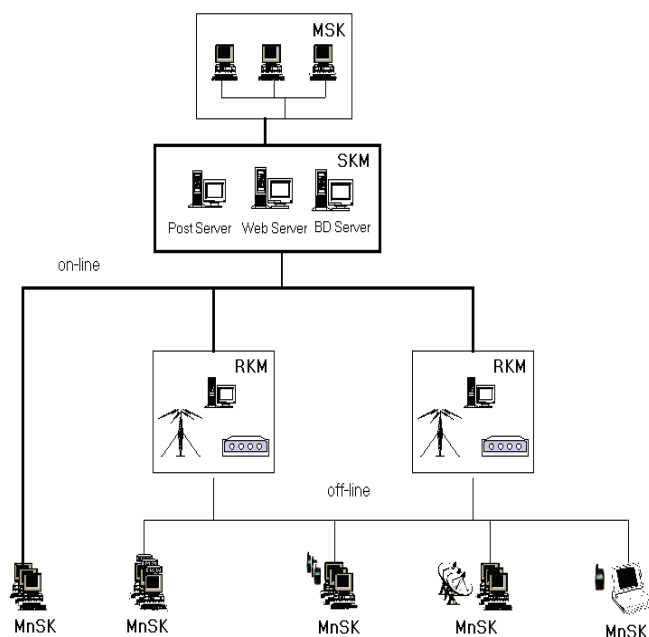
The procedure for delimiting electoral districts should be clearly spelled out in legislation so that the rules regulating the process are the same, regardless of who is drawing the district boundaries. If the redistricting process is to be non-partisan, then all political parties must refrain from attempting to

influence the outcome. If political concerns are permitted to play a role in the process, then all political parties must be given access to the process. If the legislature is to draw electoral district boundaries, then any political party that garners a majority in the legislature will have an opportunity to control the process. These rules must be clearly understood and must be acceptable to all major political parties and participants in the redistricting process.



Structure scheme of the system of automatic election surrounding of the country territory's of the following.

Circle has considerably improved results of the elections of which (whose) optimum division is held of Azerbaijan territory between (among) election points. To show the following results as example is possible:



In the National Assembly (Milli Majlis) 125 members are elected by absolute majority vote in single-member constituencies to serve 5-year terms.

Main parties in the electoral race:

Party: New Azerbaijan Party (YAP)

Seats won in last election: 71

Party: Civic Solidarity Party (VHP (CSP))

Seats won in last election: 3

Party: United People's Party

Seats won in last election: 1

Independent(s): Independents

Seats won in last election: 41

Party: Motherland Party (AVP)

Seats won in last election: 2

Party: Democratic Reform Party (DRP)

Seats won in last election: 1

Population and number of registered voters:

Population: 9,047,000 (July 2010 est)

Registered Voters: 4,946,588 (November 2010 est.)

REFERENCES

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