

[This was excised as we have reason to believe Hass did not support this concept – Robert Von Stricker Beresford]

Some suggest taking turns, instead of preference voting, as a means of not alienating those who lose. This notion seems intuitively fair to children, at least well-behaved children. The idea is that the losers get a share of power, despite losing. It is positive-sum, as they say in the literature. This is partially expressed in PR where the winner doesn't get as much power as in first-past-the-post (and similar) systems and where some losers may form coalitions with winners. Or, in some PR cases, there are no real winners (which is why many people no doubt don't like PR). It is harder to see how this would work in district-representation systems.

The first, and biggest, problem with taking turns is that, in even fairly small societies, taking turns means affirming groups. There are far too many individuals to take turns, obviously. So then we have to define groups by some characteristic(s) and give turns based on that. With PR, we have the groups in the form of parties, but with representative districts, we don't necessarily. In any case, 'taking turns' seems to assume voting is done by groups, not by individuals. Now, it is easy to theoretically claim, based on general statistics, that it is groups who vote. But that obscures what actually happens at the ballot box. When I voted for the Green party in October 2007, did that place me in some kind of group that needs a turn? I don't know who else is in this group, or where they live, or what their ages are, or what ethnic groups they belong to. I don't know anything about them. Should we gerrymander to get my group more representation? Shouldn't *we* get *our* turn? It's only fair!

Then there's the practical aspect. How do we design terms? Does the winner get the position for two-thirds of the time and then the loser get it for one-third? Does that make any sense? Or do we have more than one member per district? Like a senior member for the winners and a junior member for the losers? Voting is about expressing our individual preferences so that the society knows what it is. It is not about forcing us into predetermined groups to satisfy some abstract notion of fairness. No modern society is small enough to let individuals take turns. Though the idea sounds very nice in

theory, it is rife with problems. It may be a nice way to keep the losers from getting pissed off, but that's it.