



Electoral System: Transforming Your Vote to Elected Governance

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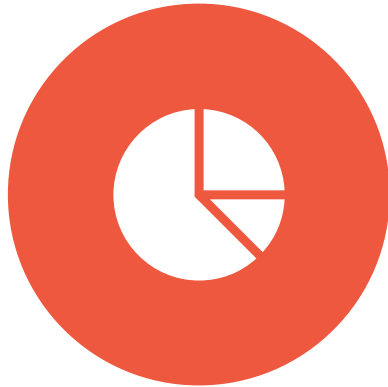
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Contents



DEFINITIONS AND
CONSIDERATIONS OF
ELECTORAL SYSTEM



ELECTORAL SYSTEM
FAMILIES AND EXAMPLES



CONCLUSION



Pop Quiz

What is the name of electoral system Malaysia uses?

Is the name of electoral system found in our constitution/acts/regulations?

DEFINITIONS AND CONSIDERATIONS



DEFINITIONS AND CONSIDERATIONS

Method and rules of counting votes to determine the outcome of elections.

What are the main jobs of electoral system?

- o **Translate votes** into seats for legislature or translate votes for electing a position – Mayor, President, Vice President etc. (Primary)
- o **Form** the direct or indirect channels of **accountability**
- o **Provide** different incentives for political parties who are competing for your votes

DEFINITIONS AND CONSIDERATIONS

Criteria of choosing electoral system:

- Ensuring a **representative** legislature
- Elections should be **accessible** and **meaningful** for voters
- Perception of **legitimacy** of government (think about our GE13)
- **Formation of Stable Government** (how's our federal situation before 2008 and after 2018)
- **Promoting Parliamentary Opposition**
- Does it **provide incentive** political parties to be conciliatory to hostile parties? (Think about our situation)

Rarely, an electoral system is deliberately chosen.

DEFINITIONS AND CONSIDERATIONS

Key Variables for Electoral System

- Electoral Formula
- Ballot Structure
- District Magnitude



DEFINITIONS AND CONSIDERATIONS

An electoral formula is a function that transforms the set of decisions made by voters in a constituency into a set of **seats to be allocated** within that constituency.

Is Electoral System -

- plural
- majoritarian
- proportional
- something else?



Pop Quiz

In Malaysia, there were instances where the same area elected multiple candidates (True/False)?

In Malaysia, there were cases where the same area elected multiple candidates of SAME VOTES?

23. (1) Each voter shall be given one ballot paper and shall be entitled to as many votes as there are candidates to be returned, but shall not give more than one vote for any one candidate.

19. (1) Subject to the provisions of the Election Offences Ordinance, 1954, the candidate for an electoral ward who polls the greatest number of valid votes cast by the registered electors of such ward shall be deemed to be the elected Councillor for such ward:

Provided that if more than one Councillor is required to be elected for such ward, candidates shall be deemed to be elected Councillors in accordance with the relative number of such valid votes polled by them.

DEFINITIONS AND CONSIDERATIONS

Ballot Structure stipulates the way in **which electoral choices** are presented to the candidates (do you choose candidates or political parties)

Two ways to see this

- Choose Candidates **or** Parties
- Choose **one option** in the ballot or allowed to choose **multiple options**

Number of Choices in Ballot

- **Categorical** (Choose one party or candidate in the ballot)*
- **Ordinal** (Can choose more options for candidates or parties in the ballot with ordered preferences)
- **Combination of both**

* According to Nohlen's *Elections in Asia: A Data Handbook* states Categorical Ballots allow voters to choose one or more candidates without ranking them

DEFINITIONS AND CONSIDERATIONS

District Magnitude: Specifies **number** of elected representative per electoral district

Electoral District can be a country, province and/or divisions smaller than a province

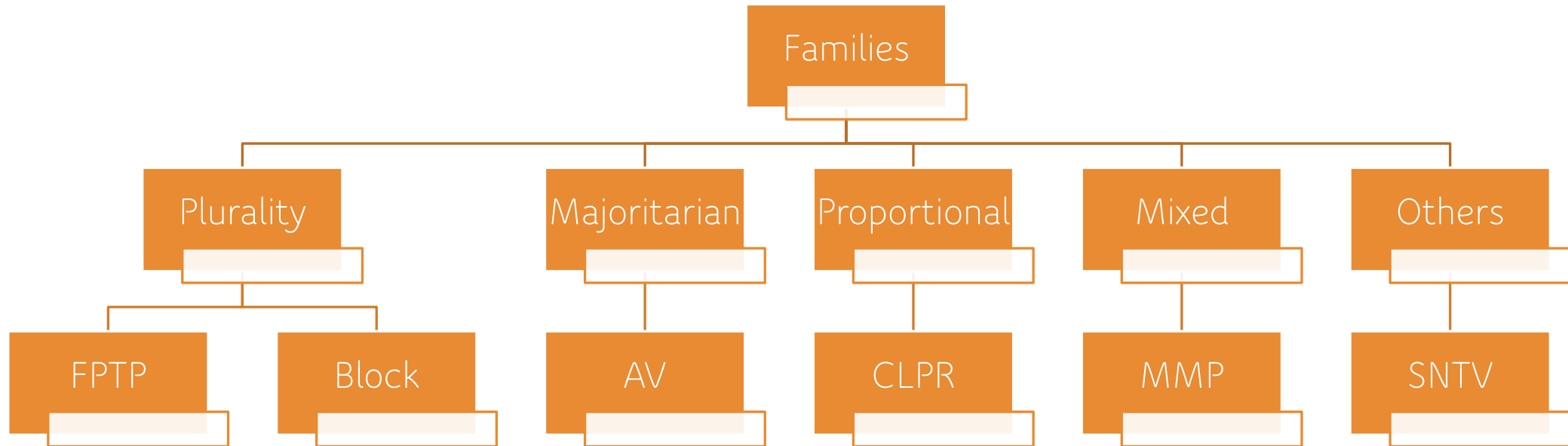
District Magnitude of **One** – One elected representative per district. Example **electoral systems:**
FPTP, AV, TRS

District Magnitude of **More than One** – More than one elected representative per district.
Example Electoral System: All forms of **proportional systems, SNTV, Party Block Vote**

Electoral System Families

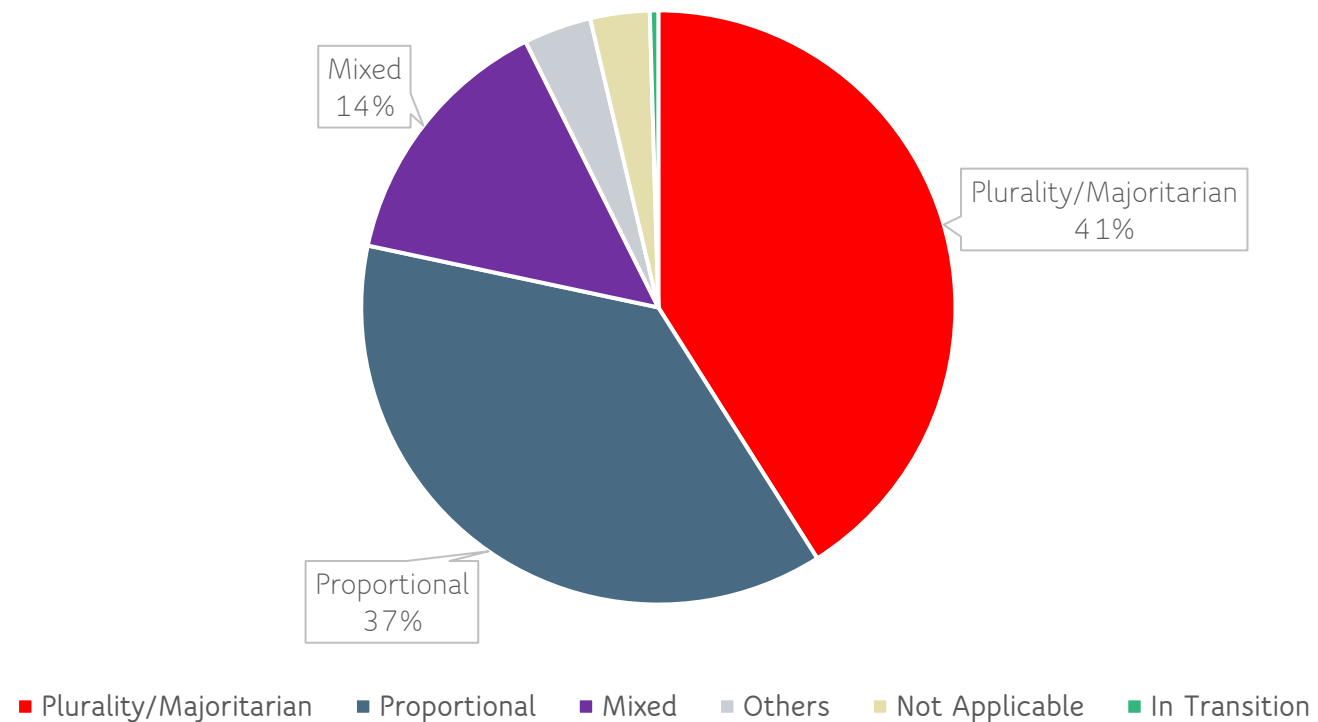


ELECTORAL SYSTEM FAMILIES



ELECTORAL SYSTEM FAMILIES

Electoral System Adoption for the World



Source: [International Idea](#)

ELECTORAL SYSTEM EXAMPLE: FPTP

First Past the Post System (FPTP) (e.g. Malaysia)

Features

- o Member of Plurality Family
- o Winner wins on the premise of **gaining most votes** (NOT MAJORITY unless straight fight)
- o In theory, candidate centric
- o Categorical ballot
- o Geographical representation
- o District Magnitude: One (Single Member Territorial Representation)





Pop Quiz

What happens if a given constituency or a ward, two candidates won the same highest amount of votes if the constituency is allowed to send one representative?

ELECTORAL SYSTEM EXAMPLE: BLOCK

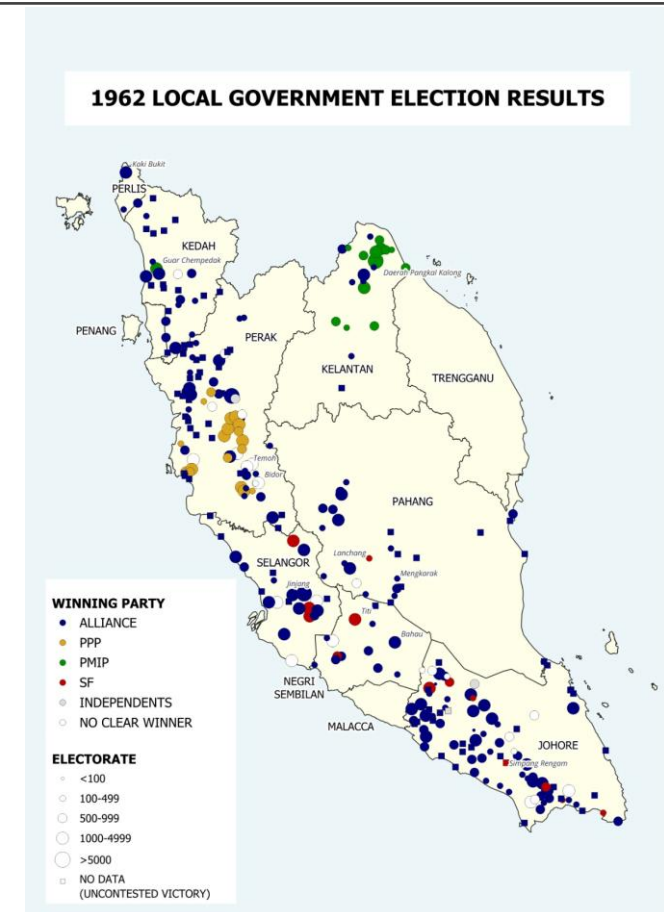
Block Voting (e.g. Malayan Local Elections of 1960s)

Features:

- o Member of Plurality Family
- o all candidates compete for m positions, often referred to as the district magnitude. Each voter selects up to m candidates on the ballot. The m candidates with the most votes, are elected and fill the positions
- o Categorical ballot*
- o Geographical
- o District Magnitude: > 1

* *International Idea and ACE states block vote uses ordinal ballot while other academics like Farrell and Nohlen state block vote is categorical*

Map on the Right is produced by Yap Zhen Hey (Tindak Malaysia, 2026)

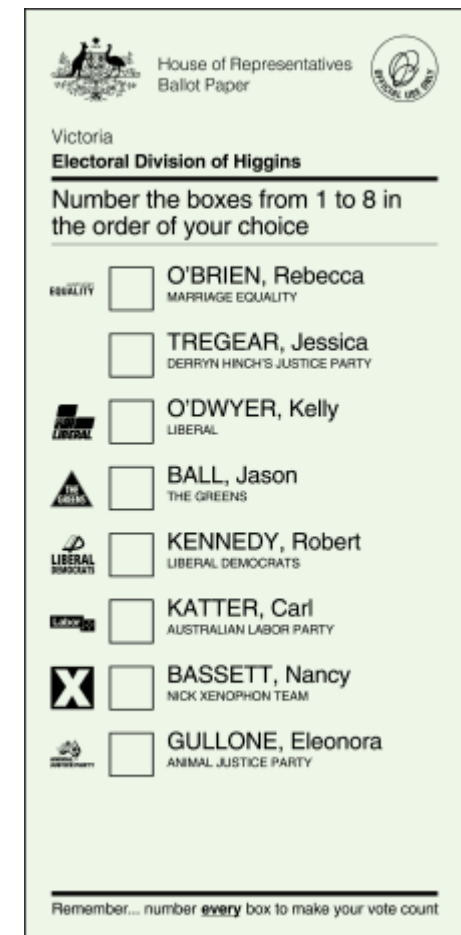


ELECTORAL SYSTEM EXAMPLE: AV

Alternative Vote (e.g. Australian House of Representatives)

Features

- o Member of Majoritarian Family
- o The key essence of the election is the candidate must win a majority of the votes in a given area.
- o In theory, candidate centric
- o Ordinal Ballot
- o District Magnitude: 1



ELECTORAL SYSTEM EXAMPLE: AV

In a given electoral division like Higgins, you have 8 candidates

You are to number the candidate in the **order of your preference**

(hence, preferential voting)

Write number **1** for **your first choice** among the candidates. Write

number **2** for **your second choice**...finally number 8 for last choice

You are **required to number all** the boxes. If not, your ballot would

not be counted. There is an exception (if you mark your preferences in








consecutive manner and left last option blank, last option would be deemed

as your last preference)

House of Representatives
Ballot Paper

Victoria
Electoral Division of Higgins

Number the boxes from 1 to 8 in the order of your choice

	<input type="checkbox"/>	O'BRIEN, Rebecca MARRIAGE EQUALITY
	<input type="checkbox"/>	TREGEAR, Jessica DERRYN HINCH'S JUSTICE PARTY
	<input type="checkbox"/>	O'DWYER, Kelly LIBERAL
	<input type="checkbox"/>	BALL, Jason THE GREENS
	<input type="checkbox"/>	KENNEDY, Robert LIBERAL DEMOCRATS
	<input type="checkbox"/>	KATTER, Carl AUSTRALIAN LABOR PARTY
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	BASSETT, Nancy NICK XENOPHON TEAM
	<input type="checkbox"/>	GULLONE, Eleonora ANIMAL JUSTICE PARTY

Remember... number **every** box to make your vote count

ELECTORAL SYSTEM EXAMPLE: AV

Let the Counting begin

Candidate	Total Votes	Share (%)
A	51356	63.6
B	16735	20.7
C	9249	11.5
D	1971	2.4
E	1459	1.8
TOTAL	80770	

In this first count of preference, A commanded 51356 first preference votes

A got 63.6% of the votes

According to this majoritarian system, a candidate wins the seat should he or she commands 50% of first preferences + 1

A gets elected for this seat

Adapted from [Australian electoral systems](#) (Research Paper no. 5 2007-08) by Bennett & Lundie (2007)

ELECTORAL SYSTEM EXAMPLE: AV

Candidate	First Count		Second Count		Third Count	
	Votes	Share (%)	Votes	Share (%)	Votes	Share (%)
A	25000	25%	33000	33%		
B	15000	15%				
C	32000	32%	34000	34%	49000	49%
<u>D</u>	28000	28%	33000	33%	51000	51%
<i>TOTAL</i>	<i>100000</i>		<i>100000</i>		<i>100000</i>	

Straight forward situation if A won 50% or more votes in first preferences. In Australia, quite hard to find many candidates winning 50% outright in the first go. For the above scenario, Candidate D wins

Adapted from [Preferential voting in the House of Representatives](#)

ELECTORAL SYSTEM EXAMPLE: MMP

Mixed Member Proportional (MMP) (e.g. New Zealand)

Features

- o Member of Mixed Family
- o Ballot Choice: Depending on which electoral systems that you go
- o District Magnitude: 1 (plurality/majoritarian) and > 1 (for proportional representation)

ELECTORATE 1 No. of MP's 30001
























YOU HAVE 2 VOTES 30001

PARTY VOTE **ELECTORATE VOTE**

Explanation
This vote decides the share of seats which each of the parties listed below will have in Parliament. Vote by putting a tick in the circle immediately after the party you choose.

Explanation
This vote decides the candidate who will be elected Member of Parliament for the AORAKI ELECTORATE. Vote by putting a tick in the circle immediately before the candidate you choose.

Vote for only one party **Vote for only one candidate**

 BUSINESS PARTY	<input type="checkbox"/>	 BROWN, John	<input type="checkbox"/>
 UNION PARTY	<input type="checkbox"/>	 EGGERS, Fiona	<input type="checkbox"/>
 SOCIAL DEMOCRAT PARTY	<input type="checkbox"/>	 HENKEL, Graeme	<input type="checkbox"/>
 HERITAGE PARTY	<input type="checkbox"/>	 JOHNS, Wayne	<input type="checkbox"/>
 WORKER'S LEAGUE	<input type="checkbox"/>	 LADD, Karen	<input type="checkbox"/>
 ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION PARTY	<input type="checkbox"/>	 McINNES, Meira	<input type="checkbox"/>
 LIBERTY PARTY	<input type="checkbox"/>	 PERO, Jonathan	<input type="checkbox"/>
 FREE TRADE PARTY	<input type="checkbox"/>	 STARR, Ruth	<input type="checkbox"/>
 FREEDOM PARTY	<input type="checkbox"/>	 WEISS, Mike	<input type="checkbox"/>
 CHATHAM ISLANDS PARTY	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
 KOTAHITANGA PARTY	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
 NZ FABIEN PARTY	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
 NZ SOCIALIST PARTY	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
 TRANSUBSTANTIATION PARTY	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>

SAMPLE

Final Directions
1. If you spoil this ballot paper, return it to the officer who issued it and apply for a new ballot paper.
2. After voting, fold this ballot paper so that its contents cannot be seen and place it in the ballot box.
3. You must not take this ballot paper out of the polling place.

ELECTORAL SYSTEM EXAMPLE: MMP

There are **two types** of electoral system that co-exist with each other:

One electoral system for **geographical seats** (electorate vote in the ballot) – First Past the Post System

Another electoral system for **party list seats** (party vote in the ballot) – Closed List Proportional Representation (CLPR)

In New Zealand, the **party vote** is very important as it determines the number of seats a party gets in the Parliament

Remember MMP is proportional

ELECTORAL SYSTEM EXAMPLE: MMP

In order for party to get a representation of the parliament, you need to **meet one of the two criteria**

- Obtain 5% of party vote OR
- Obtain a minimum of one geographical seat

Every candidates who wins the geographical seat gets into Parliament (like Malaysia)

If a party (let's say A) gets 40% of party vote, it should **get around 40%** of the seats in the Parliament

If a party (let's say B) gets 4% of the party votes and **DOES NOT WIN** geographical seat, B gets **no representation**

If a party (let's say C) gets 3% of the party votes **BUT** wins a geographical seat, party C should be **getting 3%** of the Parliamentary seat count

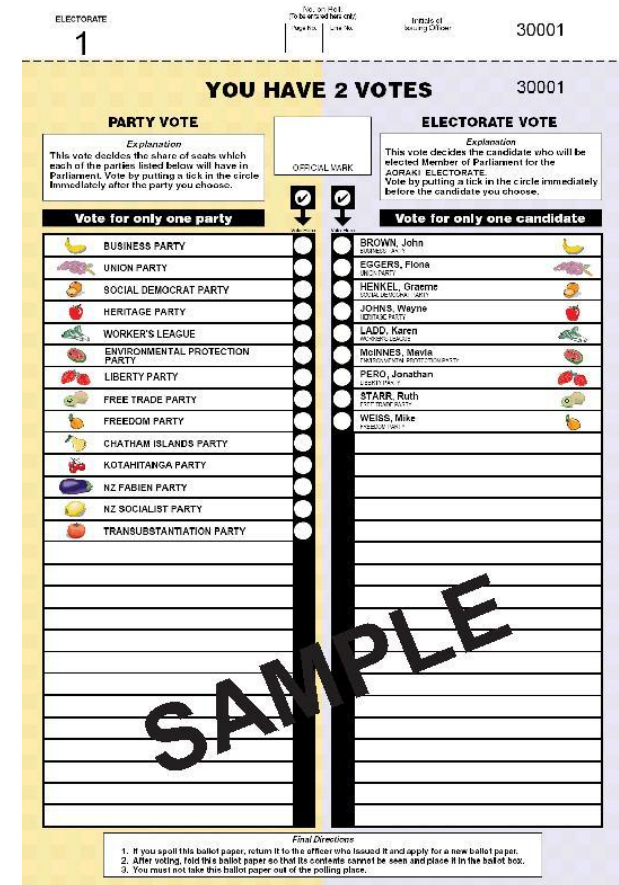
ELECTORAL SYSTEM EXAMPLE: MMP

Let's take the situation of party C.:

- o Candidate of Party C who won the geographical seat **gets in**
- o To complete the 3 % representation of party C in Parliament, remaining seats of party C comes from party list. Parties determine the order of candidates. Let's say top **three** people in party C list get voted into power

Consequently, it is hard for a **party to form a government by its own** except for recent New Zealand elections (2020) - a first since MMP was formed

Parties need to **form coalition** or make **confidence-and-supply agreement** before a government is determined

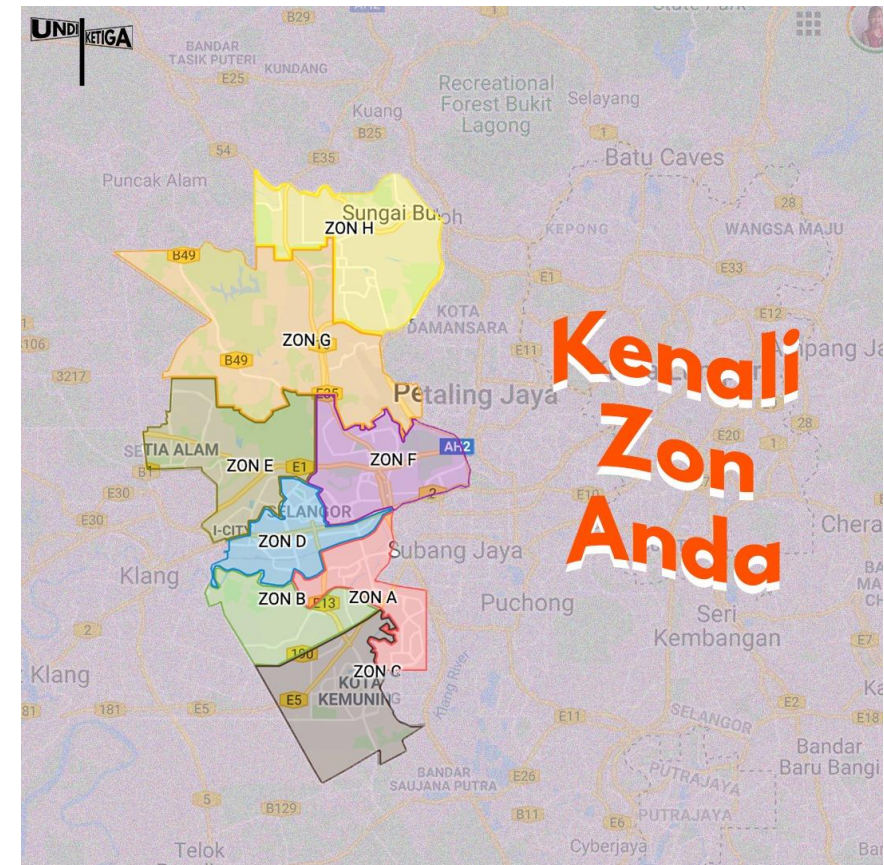


ELECTORAL SYSTEM EXAMPLE: SNTV

Single Non-Transferable Vote (SNTV) (e.g. Undi 18 Shah Alam Simulated Elections)

Features

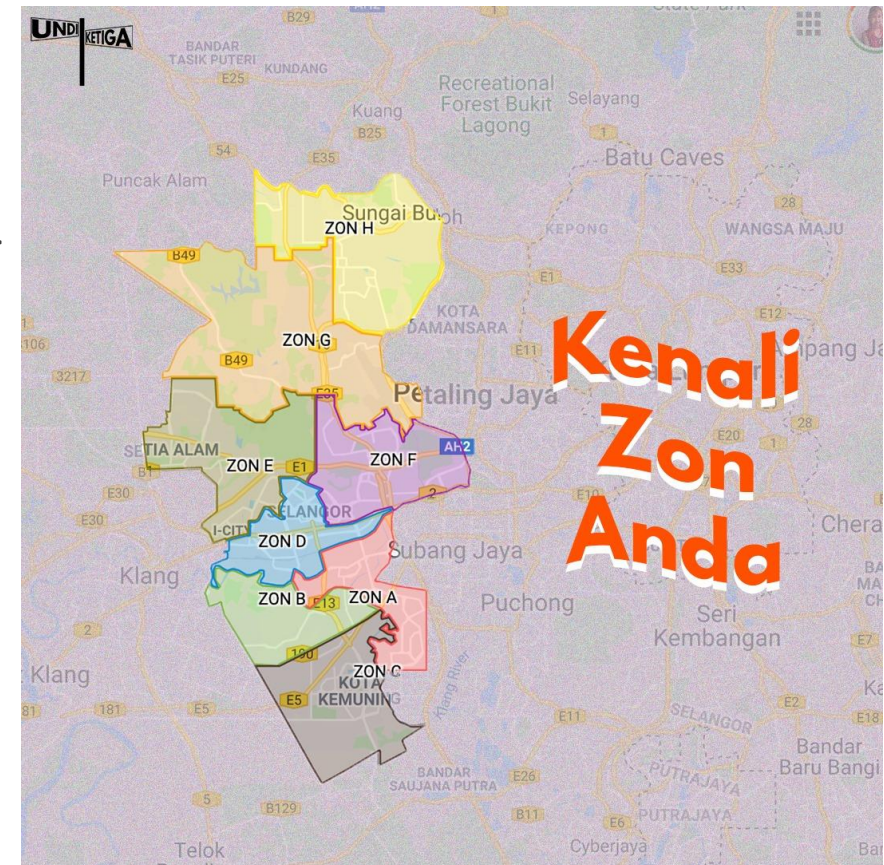
- o Member of Others
- o Each voter has one vote, but a given area has multiple seats to be filled. Candidates with the highest votes in a given area shall take the seats
- o In theory, candidate centric
- o Categorical ballot
- o Geographical representation
- o District Magnitude: Greater than One
- o If the district magnitude increases, SNTV can deliver semi-proportional outcomes



Source: Undi Saksama Initiative by Undi 18

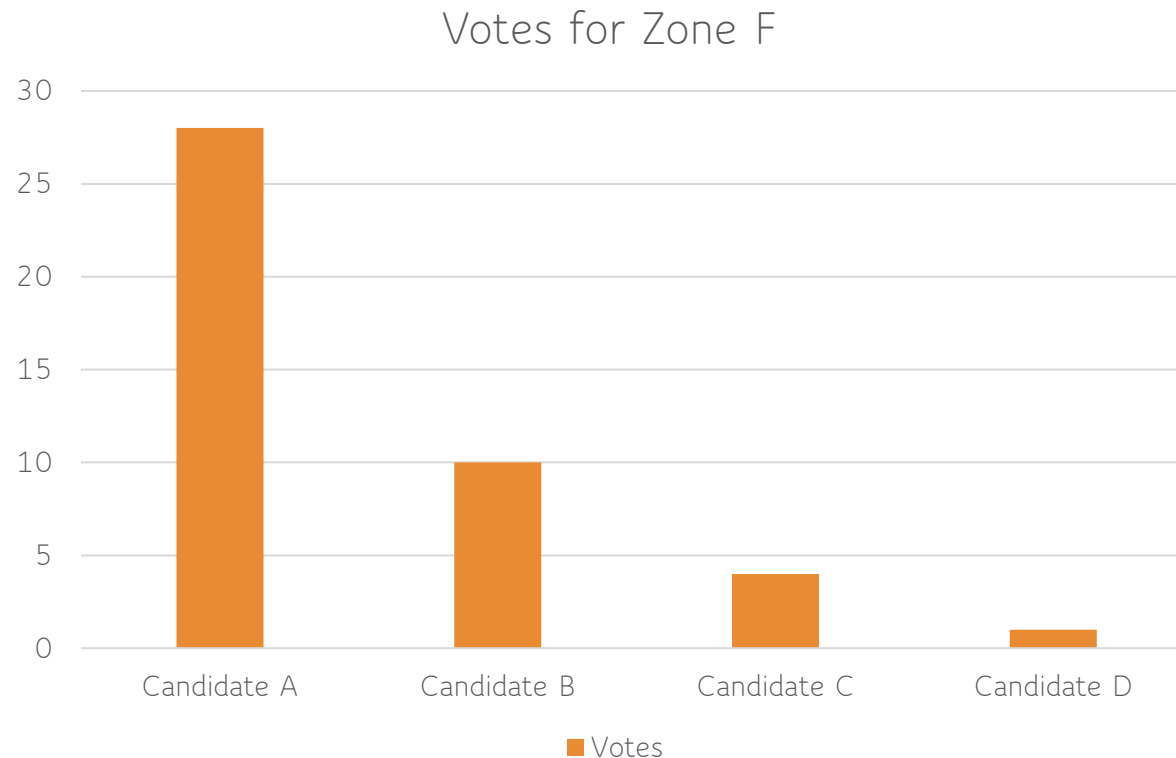
ELECTORAL SYSTEM EXAMPLE: SNTV

Let's use an example from Undi Saksama of Simulated Local Council Elections of Shah Alam (2021)
Shah Alam was divided into eight multi-member wards.
Each ward will have three elected councillors
Multiple candidates contest in a given area
Let say in Zone F, we have four candidates.
You have x voters. An election will be held for the ward as we need to identify top three candidates

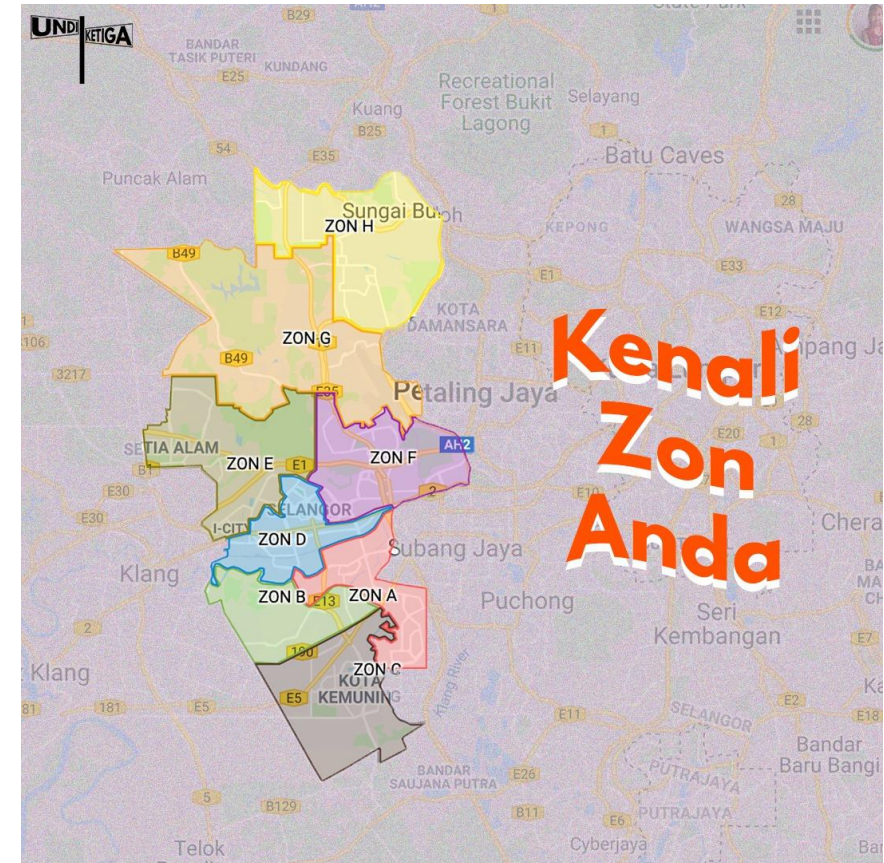


Source: Undi Saksama Initiative by Undi 18

ELECTORAL SYSTEM EXAMPLE: SNTV



Candidate A, B and C gets elected as they received the most votes in the multi-member ward



Source: Undi Saksama Initiative by Undi 18

CONCLUSION

There is no perfect electoral system

We must understand what could be best fit for the country

Food for thought:

- o What are the issues of representation in Malaysia?
- o Have we reached the expiry date for our FPTP?
- o Should we change our electoral system?



Further Readings

- https://www.idea.int/data-tools/data/question?question_id=9382&database_theme=307
- <https://aceproject.org/main/english/es/es.htm>
- <https://www.ifes.org/sites/default/files/electoral-system-design-the-new-international-idea-handbook.pdf>
- <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/oct/12/new-zealands-mmp-electoral-system-what-is-it-and-how-does-it-work>
- Strong Patronage, Weak Parties – The Case for Electoral System Redesign in the Philippines by Paul D. Hutchcroft