TINDAK MALAYSIA 2021 TRAINING

Electoral System # 6 – Part 2 (Four examples of electoral system)

CONTENTS

- Alternative Vote

- Mixed Member Majoritarian

- Mixed Member Proportional

- Single Non-Transferable Vote

Alternative Vote (AV)

- Electoral System Family: Majoritarian

- Ballot Choice: Ordinal

- District Magnitude: 1

- The key essence of the election is the candidate must win a majority of the votes in a given area. This is different to plurality system like FPTP

- Let's examine Australian experience with AV

Alternative Vote (AV)

- Let's study the ballot

- 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 miss marking one box)

Alternative Vote (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)

Alternative Vote (AV)

- How about if no candidates win 50% +1 first preference votes?

Candidate	First Count		Second Count		Third Count		Fourth Count	
	Votes	Share (%)	Votes	Share (%)	Votes	Share (%)	Votes	Share (%)
A	10630	42.5	10732	42.9	10767	43.0	10944	43.7
B	6604	26.4	6814	27.2	7418	29.6	**14096**	**56.3**
C	5737	22.9	6208	24.8	6855	27.4		
D	1174	4.7	1286	5.1				
E	895	3.6						
TOTAL	25040		25040		25040		25040	

Adapted from Australian electoral systems (Research Paper no. 5 2007–08) by Bennett & Lundie (2007)
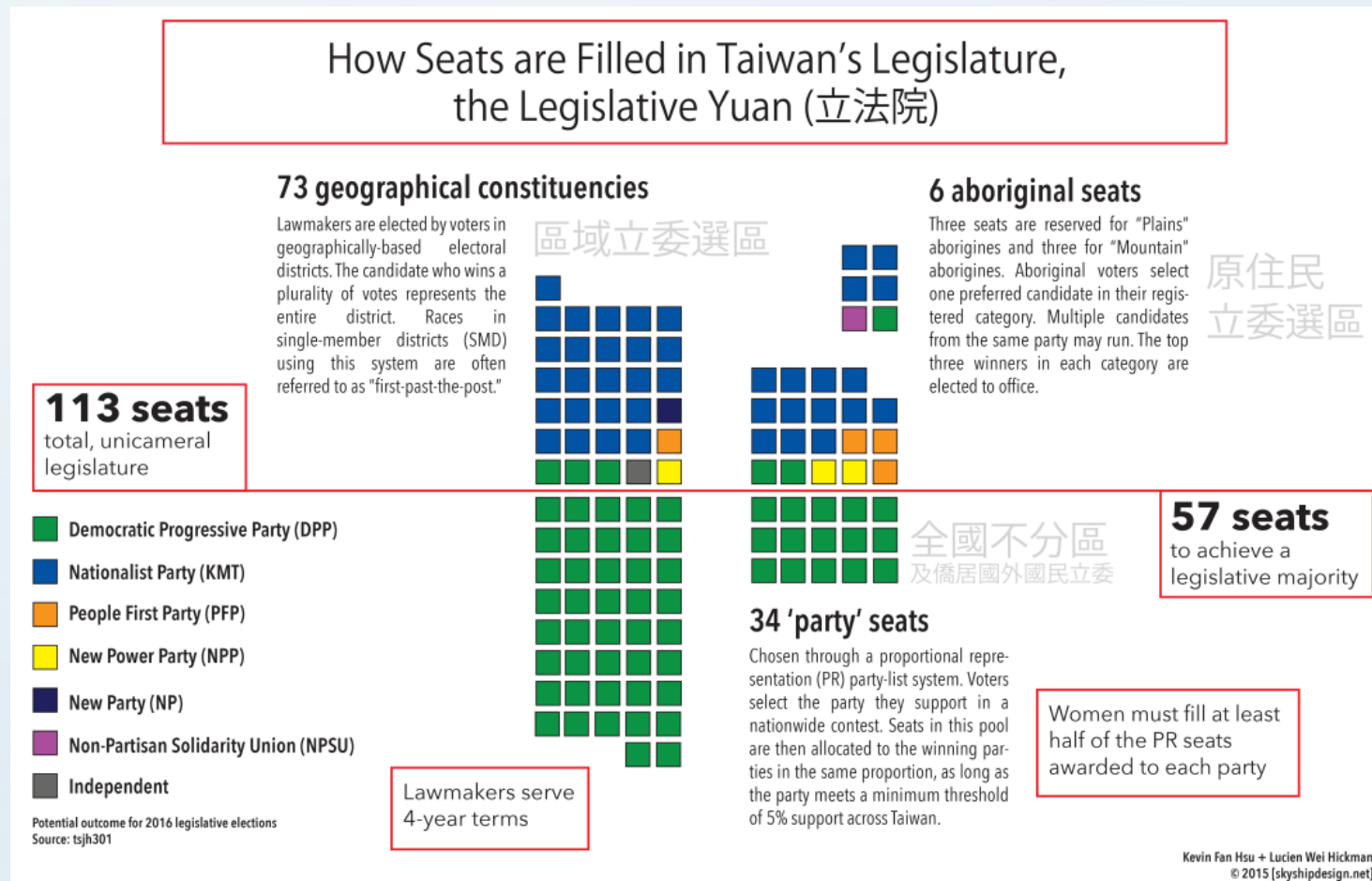
Alternative Vote (AV)

- Why Alternative Vote?
  - Triggered because of a by-election in 1918 yielded a candidate who won a seat with 35% of the votes (due to vote split among conservative forces)
  - Winners correspond to voter's preferences (according to MyKuasa)

- Advantages
  - Potentially produce stable governments (common argument used for plurality system). For Australia, this was the case until 2010
  - Enables candidates to have broad appeal to masses as second preferences are quite important

- Disadvantages
  - Requires level of literacy and numeracy skills
  - May yield unfavourable winner due to flow of preferences

Mixed Member Majoritarian (MMM)

- Electoral System Family: Mixed

- Ballot Choice: -

- District Magnitude: 1 (plurality/majoritarian) and > 1 (for proportional representation)

- Two electoral systems go in parallel. One list of seats of given area is voted using plurality/majoritarian) and another list of seats are elected using party-list PR

- Let's use Taiwan as an example.

Mixed Member Majoritarian (MMM)

How Seats are Filled in Taiwan's Legislature, the Legislative Yuan (立法院)

73 geographical constituencies
區域立委選區
Lawmakers are elected by voters in geographically-based electoral districts. The candidate who wins a plurality of votes represents the entire district. Races in single-member districts (SMD) using this system are often referred to as "first-past-the-post."

113 seats
total, unicameral legislature

6 aboriginal seats
原住民 立委選區
Three seats are reserved for "Plains" aborigines and three for "Mountain" aborigines. Aboriginal voters select one preferred candidate in their registered category. Multiple candidates from the same party may run. The top three winners in each category are elected to office.

57 seats
to achieve a legislative majority

- Democratic Progressive Party (DPP)
- Nationalist Party (KMT)
- People First Party (PFP)
- New Power Party (NPP)
- New Party (NP)
- Non-Partisan Solidarity Union (NPSU)
- Independent

34 'party' seats
全國不分區 及僑居國外國民立委
Chosen through a proportional representation (PR) party-list system. Voters select the party they support in a nationwide contest. Seats in this pool are then allocated to the winning parties in the same proportion, as long as the party meets a minimum threshold of 5% support across Taiwan.

Women must fill at least half of the PR seats awarded to each party

Lawmakers serve 4-year terms

Potential outcome for 2016 legislative elections
Source: tsjh301

Kevin Fan Hsu + Lucien Wei Hickman
© 2015 [skyshipdesign.net]

Source: Ketagalan Media

- Three types of seats which uses three types of electoral systems for elections

- 73 seats are elected using FPTP. Hence 73 geographical seats (like Malaysia)

- 6 aboriginal seats are elected using Single Non-Transferable Vote (SNTV). Whole country is divided into 2 multi member districts – Plain Aborigines and Highland Aborigines

Mixed Member Majoritarian (MMM)

How Seats are Filled in Taiwan's Legislature, the Legislative Yuan (立法院)

73 geographical constituencies
Lawmakers are elected by voters in geographically-based electoral districts. The candidate who wins a plurality of votes represents the entire district. Races in single-member districts (SMD) using this system are often referred to as "first-past-the-post."

113 seats total, unicameral legislature

6 aboriginal seats
Three seats are reserved for "Plains" aborigines and three for "Mountain" aborigines. Aboriginal voters select one preferred candidate in their registered category. Multiple candidates from the same party may run. The top three winners in each category are elected to office.

57 seats to achieve a legislative majority

34 'party' seats
Chosen through a proportional representation (PR) party-list system. Voters select the party they support in a nationwide contest. Seats in this pool are then allocated to the winning parties in the same proportion, as long as the party meets a minimum threshold of 5% support across Taiwan.

Women must fill at least half of the PR seats awarded to each party

Democratic Progressive Party (DPP)
Nationalist Party (KMT)
People First Party (PFP)
New Power Party (NPP)
New Party (NP)
Non-Partisan Solidarity Union (NPSU)
Independent

Potential outcome for 2016 legislative elections
Source: tsjh301

Lawmakers serve 4-year terms

Kevin Fan Hsu + Lucien Wei Hickman
© 2015 [skyshipdesign.net]

Source: Ketagalan Media

- In the Aboriginal seats, electors of indigenous background mark one candidate in their multi-member districts. The top three winners of the multi-member seat will be elected in

- These seats should be viewed as reserved seats

- 34 seats are elected using Closed List Proportional Representation (CLPR) electoral system

Mixed Member Majoritarian (MMM)

Source: *Ketagalan Media*

- Electoral District for 34 Party Seats: Whole Country

- In order for a party to gain seats, it must gain 5% of valid votes

- Each political party will list the order for candidates. If a party gains 2 seats, top two candidates of the party gets into the legislative house

- There is a requirement that half of the PR seats awarded to each party is to be filled by women

Mixed Member Majoritarian (MMM)

An example of how PR seats could be apportioned in 2016 according to Taiwan's electoral system, using hypothetical data

Steps to assign PR seats	Democratic Progressive Party	Kuomintang (Nationalist Party)	People's First Party	New Power Party	Taiwan Solidarity Union	Greens-Social Democrats	New Party	Other
% of valid votes	43.08	30.67	6.59	5.70	2.64	2.64	2.20	6.48
% of total votes for parties passing 5% threshold	49.59	35.25	8.34	6.90	-	-	-	-
seats won out of 34	16.86	11.99	2.84	2.35	-	-	-	-
take only the whole number	16	11	2	2	-	-	-	-
>> This leaves 3 of the 34 seats not yet assigned <<								
leftover decimal	0.86	0.99	0.84	0.35	-	-	-	-
add unassigned seats sequentially, according to size of leftover decimal	+1 (second)	+1 (first)	+1 (third)	+0 (fourth)	-	-	-	-
TOTAL SEATS assigned	17	12	3	2	-	-	-	-

- Identify which parties that will not be allocated any seats via the PR system
- Seat allocation is determined using largest remainder method
- Fundamentally, the outcome of the elections is majoritarian, not proportional

Source: Ketagalan Media (Lucien Wei Hickman)

Mixed Member Majoritarian

- Why Mixed Member Majoritarian (MMM)?
  - Both major parties in Taiwan couldn't get the majority they wanted using purely SNTV [electoral system](#)
  - Potential pathway for increased women representation (being explored in Penang) – [Top Up Women Only Additional Seats (TWOAS)](#)

- Advantages
  - An in between pure proportional system and pure plurality/majority which accords small party representation
  - Party fragmentation should be lesser than pure proportional system

- Disadvantages
  - Two classes of elected representation
  - Complex to understood and may confuse voters

Mixed Member Proportional (MMP)

- Electoral System Family: Mixed

- Ballot Choice: -

- District Magnitude: 1 (plurality/majoritarian) and > 1 (for proportional representation)

- Let's examine New Zealand experience

- Difference between MMP and MMM is MMP is compensatory mixed system and MMM is parallel electoral system

- Outcome of MMP: Proportional

- Outcome of MMM: Majoritarian

Mixed Member Proportional (MMP)

Source: Vox

- 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
- In New Zealand, the party vote is very important as it determines the amount of seats a party gets in the Parliament
- Remember MMP is proportional

Mixed Member Proportional (MMP)

Source: Vox

- 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 wins no 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

Mixed Member Proportional (MMP)

- Let's take the situation of party C. Candidate of Party C who won the geographical seat gets in

- 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

- As a consequence, it is hard for a party to form a government by its own with the exception of 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

Mixed Member Proportional (MMP)

Source: Vox

- Let's examine an election scenario
- New Zealand has 72 geographical seats and 48 party list seats
- In order for a party to get seats
  - Get 5% of the party votes OR
  - Win an geographical seat
- Emphasis : Party votes largely determine the seat allocation to each party
- Each voter will be marking on two parts of the ballot
- Party A won 25% of the votes ~ 30 seats (use formula)
- Among the 30 seats, the first set of seats are to be filled by geographical seat winners, the remainder of seats are to be filled by party list seats

Mixed Member Proportional (MMP)

Source: [Vox](#)

- Party B won 10% of party vote but no winners for geographical seats. Party B is entitled to get 10% of parliament representation ~ 12 seats.

- Party C won 3% of the party vote and has a winner for one geographical seat. Party C is entitled to get 3% of the parliament representation ~ 4 seats. First out of the four seats is filled by geographical seat winner. Remaining 3 seats are filled up by party list of Party C (i.e. choosing top 3 in the list)

- Party D won 4% of the party vote but does not have any winners for geographical seats. No representation for Party D

- IF a party wins more electorate seats than the seats it is entitled under party vote, you create a situation called overhang

- New overhang seats are added into the Parliament

Mixed Member Proportional (MMP)

- Why Mixed Member Majoritarian (MMP)?
  - First the Past the Post system in New Zealand was producing political representation in Parliament contrary. Disillusionment of the major parties could not be channelled into meaningful representation of 3rd force
  - Public Pressure brought about referendum for changes in electoral system

- Advantages
  - Greater Diversity for country's population. More women, minority representation
  - Good option for future local council elections – the balance of local representation and proportionality

- Disadvantages
  - Potential of smaller parties holding government hostage
  - Parliament (temporarily) grows bigger

Single Non-Transferable Vote (SNTV)

- Electoral System Family: Others

- Ballot Choice: Categorical

- District Magnitude:> 1

- 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

- If the district magnitude increases, SNTV can deliver semi-proportional outcomes

- It is also viewed a generalization of First Past the Post System (FPTP)

Single Non-Transferable Vote
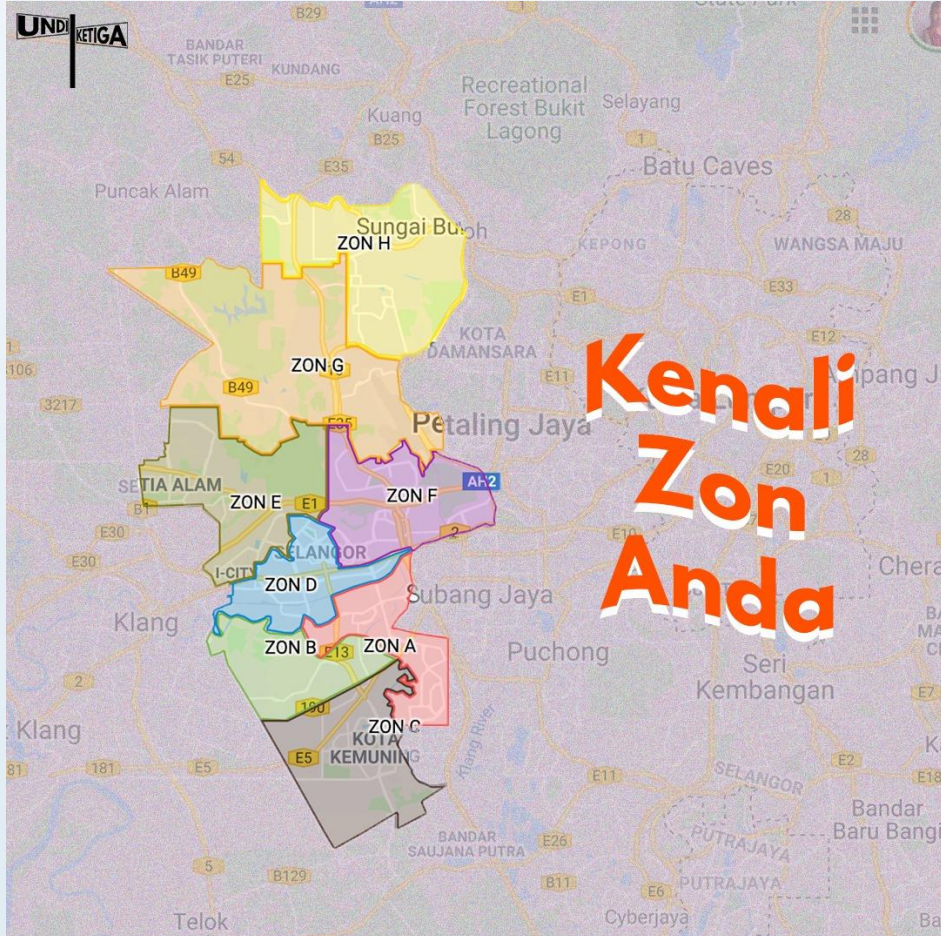
Poster from Undi Saksama

- Let's use an example from Undi Saksama of Simulated Local Council Elections of Shah Alam

- 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 17 voters. An election will be held for the ward as we need to identify top three candidates

Single Non-Transferable Vote
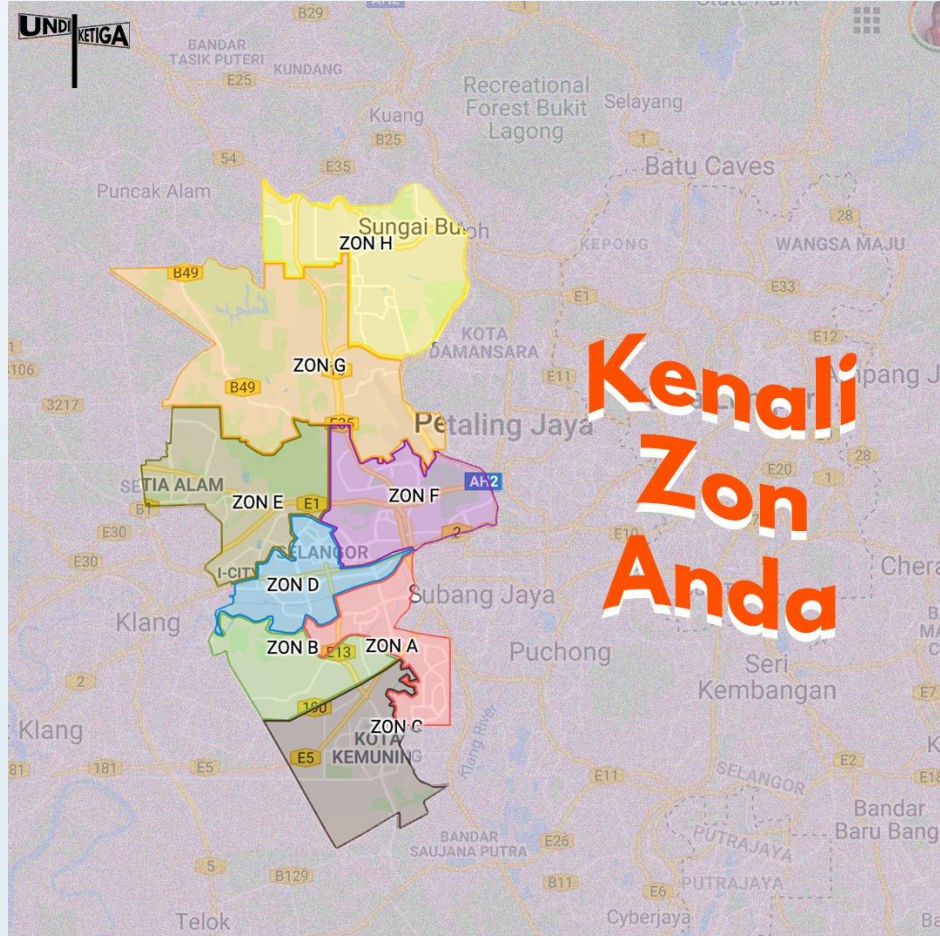
Poster from [Undi Saksama](#)

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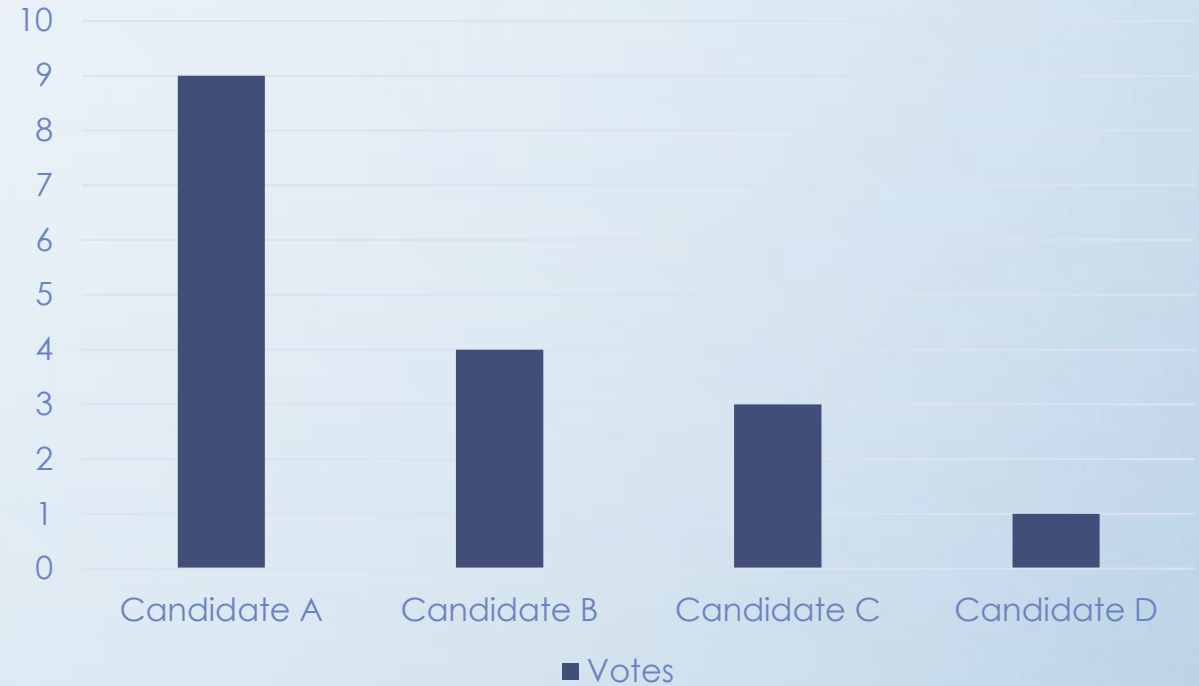
- Candidate A, B and C gets elected as they received the most votes in the multi-member ward

Single Non Transferable Vote (SNTV)

- Why Single Non-Transferable Vote (SNTV)?
  - Easy to use and easy to count

- Advantages
  - Accommodate minority party representation (a disadvantage of plurality system like FPTP)
  - Impact of party fragmentation is less than for parties in proportional representation systems

- Disadvantages
  - If you want proportional outcomes, you need bigger count of elected reps per electoral districts. This reduces the linkage between MP and voter
  - Can cause internal party fragmentation as candidates of same party are competing for same votes

Conclusion

- We have examined four electoral systems

- No electoral system is perfect

- Food for thought: What are the key structural or division-based issues in the country?

- Food for thought: Does our FPTP serves the need of the people?

- Which electoral system is most appropriate for the country?

Sources/ Additional Readings

- https://aceproject.org/main/english/es/esf02.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

- https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/Panel-2-Eric-Chen-hua-Yu-Presentation.pdf

- https://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/House_of_Representatives/Powers_practice_and_procedure/Practice7/HTML/Chapter3/Method_of_voting