Possible unintended consequences from changing the Canadian electoral system.

Geoffrey Kemp

Guiding Principles from Ministry website.

The Government is proposing five principles that would be used to guide the parliamentary committee's study and act as a framework for the Government's eventual policy decisions:

1. Restore the **effectiveness and legitimacy** of the voting system by reducing distortions and strengthening the link between voter intention and the electoral result;

2. Encourage greater **engagement** and participation in the democratic process, including by fostering civility and consensus building in politics and social cohesion;

3. Support **accessibility and inclusiveness** for all eligible voters, including by avoiding undue complexity in the voting process;

4. Safeguard the **integrity** of our voting system; and,

5. Take into consideration the accountability of **local representation.**

The principles do not prejudge an outcome but help encourage Canadians and parliamentarians to engage in a thoughtful, substantive debate on changes to our voting system.

All parties are vying to form government and set policy and it has been demonstrated that some will engage in criminal activity in order to win. Most of the systems work well when being described by its advocates.

The preferred electoral system would eliminate the possibility or incentive for manipulation of the voter's opportunity to vote and create a strong possibility of votes translating into representation.

When considering changes to the existing system it is essential therefore to consider the unintended consequences when the system fails to operate as planned or is subject to a deliberate attempt to benefit from any inherent opportunity to manipulate the rules.

The basic problem with predicting how people will choose to act, in the case of alternate choice systems, is that people are unpredictable.

How will people choose to vote in an election based on an alternative vote system cannot be forecast with any reasonable degree of accuracy. For example, it is common for the explanatory graphics to show all votes being redistributed until someone meets the quota.

Ireland has used an STV system since 1922 and yet in the recent election there are examples of people being elected, after the ninth count, without meeting the quota. Their law allows the quota to be ignored if it is clear that no more votes will be transferred to those leading for the available seats.

How might the possible systems be open to manipulation resulting outcomes unintended by those who are trying to make the seat count reflect the votes received.

OBJECTIVE	FPP and MMP	AV	STV Multi-member	PR multi-member
Effective and legitimate, strengthening the link between voter intention and the electoral result;	FPP been the subject of proven, criminal attempts at voter suppression. MMP has same exposure	WILL BE GAMED BY THE MAJOR PARTIES	WILL BE GAMED BY THE MAJOR PARTIES	Would achieve the objective
Greater engagement by fostering civility and consensus	NO	NO	Coalition would produce some degree of consensus	Coalition will produce some degree of consensus
Avoid complexity	NOT COMPLEX	Some will struggle with more choice. Avoid the Donkey Vote	Some will struggle with larger ballot and more choice Avoid the Donkey Vote	NOT COMPLEX but selection would be from a large choice of candidates
Safeguard integrity	Secure with paper ballot . internet not secure	Secure with paper ballot . internet not secure	Secure with paper ballot . internet not secure	Secure with paper ballot . internet not secure
Consider local representation	Local representation exists but can be partisan and unresponsive	Local representation would exist but could be partisan and unresponsive	Multi member riding allows greater possibility of support from a candidate of your choice, if system has not been gamed.	Multi member riding allows greater possibility of support from a candidate of your choice, even an Independent

Mississauga as a virtual multi-member riding

To get a feeling for STV, consider a virtual multi-member riding combining all current ridings in Mississauga into a single multi-member riding. This is something to which I can relate.

There would be 6 seats and 29 people listed on the ballot. (Same as the last election) The first 6 preferences would be counted but **if electors chose to only make one choice, the result would likely have been the same as under FPP** and none of them would have attained the quota!

I suggest that all parties will manipulate the system and encourage people to show preference for them with no alternates.

Assume the electors chose to follow such advice, everyone selected just one option and therefore no votes are available for transfer.

SINGLE TRANSFERABLE VOTE ELECTORAL SYTEM - SAMPLE BALLOT						
Ballot - Instructions: Rank candidates in the order of your preference by placing a number in the box to the right of each candidate's name. "1" shows your first choice, "2" your second choice, "3" your third choice, and so on. **You must select at least one candidate and may rank up FIVE additional** candidates. Alternates can be from any party.						
Omar Alghabra	Liberal			Farheen Khan	NDP	
Peter Fonseca	Liberal			Ali Naqvi	NDP	
Iqra Khalid	Liberal			Michelle Bilek	NDP	
Sven Spengemann	Liberal			Eric Guerbilsky	NDP	
Navdeep Bains	Liberal			Dianne Douglas	NDP	
Gagan Sikand	Liberal			Fayaz Karim	NDP	
Julius Tiangson	Conservative			Linh Nguyen	Green	
Wladyslaw Lizon	Conservative			Jaymini Bhikha	Green	
Bob Dechert **	Conservative			Andrew Roblin	Green	
Stella Ambler **	Conservative			Ariana Burgener	Green	
Brad Butt **	Conservative			Heather Mercer	Green	
Jagdish Grewal	Conservative			Chris Hill	Green	
Paul Woodworth	Libertarian			Tim Sullivan	Marxist-Leninist	
Naresh Tharani	Independent			Dagmar Sullivan	Marxist-Leninist	
Yegor Tarazevich	Christian Heritage					

Possible outcome using 2015 election results

STV WITH EVERYONE CHOOSING TO SELECT <u>ONLY ONE</u> CANDIDATE AND THERFORE NO VOTES AVAILABE FOR TRANSFER				
	Total votes cast			318644
			6+1	45521
	Quota		plus 1 vote	45522
Number seats available	First count votes	Additional votes required to meet quota	Votes for transfer	
6	First count			
Liberal	28372	17150	0 but elected	
Liberal	28279	17243	0 but elected	
Liberal	28154	17368	0 but elected	
Liberal	27520	18002	0 but elected	
Liberal	26792	18730	0 but elected	
Liberal	26165	19357	0 but elected	
ALL OF THE CANDIDATES WOULD BE ELECTED WITHOUT MEETING THE QUOTA				
Conservative	24435			
Conservative	22621			
Conservative	21716			
Conservative	18353			
Conservative	17431			
Conservative	11701			
NDP	5450			
NDP	5206			
NDP	5040			
NDP	4920			
NDP	4735			
NDP	4481			
Green	1397			
Green	1293			
Green	1129			
Green	905			
Green	766			
Green	737			
Libertarian	316			
Christian Heritage	253			
Independent	203			
Marxist Leninist	163			
Marxist Leninist	111			

ALTERNATIVE VOTE (AV)

In an election using Alternative Vote (AV) the ballot would only show the candidates in the existing riding structure. Votes would be transferred from the candidate with the least to the other candidates until one candidate has 50 percent plus one. Some parties will suggest their supporters only make one choice and many people will not find an acceptable alternate. The outcome would be the same as FPP.

ALTERNATIVE VOTE		SAMPLE BALLOT			
Ballot - Instructions: Rank candidates in the order of your preference by placing a number in the box to the right of each candidate's name. "1" shows your first choice, "2" your second choice, "3" your third choice, and so on. You may rank as many candidates as you wish, from as many parties as you wish, but **YOU MUST RANK AT LEAST ONE**.					
Electoral district	Candidate	Affiliation	First preference	Alternate preference 1	Alternate preference 2
Mississauga Centre	Omar Alghabra	Liberal			
	Julius Tiangson	Conservative			
	Farheen Khan	NDP-New Democratic Party			
	Linh Nguyen	Green Party			

We have no way of knowing how many people cast strategic or negative votes or would have indicated other than one choice but the example above is the worst case.

This problem applies to any system that allows choice or preference voting.

In Multi-member ridings it may be necessary to change the sequence of the candidates and maybe the party groupings on blocks of ballots to avoid the "donkey vote". This is done in some countries. The donkey vote describes the situation where an elector just chooses the first group on the ballot

Proportional Representation in a multi-member riding.

If the candidates in this virtual multi-member riding had been elected by PR applied at the multi-member riding level, instead of all Liberal MPs there would now be 3 Liberal, 2 Conservative and 1 NDP. At the 2011 election all seats were held by Conservatives.

The ballot would still have 29 names but you would only select one person and by default, the party they represent. The candidates would form an open list for each party and those who attracted the most votes for their party would be those elected. It may be necessary to change the sequence of the candidates and maybe the party groupings on blocks of ballots to avoid the "donkey vote". This is done in some countries.

		SAMPLE BALLOT				
Pure Proportional Representation based on a multi-member riding **(using Mississauga 2015 as example.)**						
Ballot - Instructions: **Select ONE candidate only.** By selecting the candidate you also select the party that they represent. The total votes accumulated for all candidates for each party, as a proportion of the total votes cast, determine the number of candidates elected for each party. Candidates who attract the most votes for their party are awarded the seats						
Omar Alghabra	Liberal			Farheen Khan	NDP	
Peter Fonseca	Liberal			Ali Naqvi	NDP	
Iqra Khalid	Liberal			Michelle Bilek	NDP	
Sven Spengemann	Liberal			Eric Guerbilsky	NDP	
Navdeep Bains	Liberal			Dianne Douglas	NDP	
Gagan Sikand	Liberal			Fayaz Karim	NDP	
Julius Tiangson	Conservative			Linh Nguyen	Green	
Wladyslaw Lizon	Conservative			Jaymini Bhikha	Green	
Bob Dechert **	Conservative			Andrew Roblin	Green	
Stella Ambler **	Conservative			Ariana Burgener	Green	
Brad Butt **	Conservative			Heather Mercer	Green	
Jagdish Grewal	Conservative			Chris Hill	Green	
Paul Woodworth	Libertarian			Tim Sullivan	Marxist-Leninist	
Naresh Tharani	Independent			Dagmar Sullivan	Marxist-Leninist	
Yegor Tarazevich	Christian Heritage					

6 MEMBERS SELECTED FROM ACROSS THE WHOLE OF MISSISSAUGA				
THE ONLY OFFICE SELECTED IN THIS MANNER IS THE MAYOR WHO IS SELECTED BY FPP				
Open list PR				
	Liberal	Cons	NDP	Green
	28372	**17431**	**5450**	1129
	28279	**11701**	5206	766
	28154	18353	5040	905
	27520	21716	4920	1397
	26792	22621	4735	737
	26165	24435	4481	1293
	165282	116257	29832	6227
	51.9%	36.5%	9.4%	2.0%
Elected	3	2	1	0

Of the options shown, only PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION at the multi-member riding level avoids the possibility of voter manipulation while meeting the objectives stated by the Ministry.