

Submitted by: Raymond Leon

Summary:

This solution allows for local representation as well as proportional representation that is simple to understand and easy to implement. More importantly, I believe there is a strong reason to back this proposal, which is as follows:

- a) There must be local representation. In order for government to function effectively, there should only be one candidate.
- b) This method of representation gives voice to strong minority parties in a manner proportional to the received support.

How it works:

There are two types of representatives: local representatives(Type 1), and non-local representatives(called Type 2). During an election, people vote for one person only from a list of candidates. The candidate with the most votes in a riding becomes the local representative.

If the proportion of the popular vote does not match with the number of seats won by the various political parties, then additional non-local seats not associated with any riding are added until the distribution of seats is proportional to the percentage of the popular vote. Non-local representatives are not associated with any particular riding, but are allowed to be in parliament and take part in discussions. They are appointed by the political parties they belong to.

Example:

Canada has 100 ridings, each riding has 120 voters, and the vote distribution for the 12,000 votes is as follows:

Party A: 40%(4800 votes) of the total votes across all of Canada

Party B: 30%(3600 votes)

Party C: 20%(2400 votes)

Party D: 10%(1200 votes)

Due to the geographic distribution of votes, Type 1 representatives can be allocated in different ways across the country, which would affect the distribution of Type 2 representatives. Consider the following cases:

Case 1:

Party A wins 100% of the ridings across all of Canada because in each riding, 48 people vote for Party A, 36 for B, 24 for C, and 12 for D. Party A would then get 100 local representatives at parliament. Then, to make representation proportional, 150 non-local candidates are appointed by the various parties. Parliament then has 250 seats. Party A now has 40% of the total number of seats in parliament, reflecting its proportion of the vote. Party B, with 30% of the vote would get $30\% * 250 = 75$ seats. Since Party C has 20% of the votes, it would get 50 Type B seats. Party D would get 25 seats.

Case 2:

Party A again gets 40% of the votes across Canada, Party B gets 30%, Party C gets 20%, and Party D gets 10% of the votes, but this time, votes are distributed differently geographically.

Party A gets even support across the nation and gets 48 votes in every riding.

Party B gets 72 votes in 50 ridings and wins in 50 ridings.

Party C gets 72 votes in 33 ridings, and 24 votes in 1 riding(Westdale). Party C wins 33 ridings.

Party D gets 72 votes in 16 ridings, and 48 votes in one(Westdale). Party D wins 16 ridings.

Party A ends up tied with Party D for one riding, even though it got 40% of the popular vote. The way the tie-breaker happens is not crucial to this scenario, but Party A graciously offers to give the riding to party D. A ends up with no local candidates in this election. The final local seat distribution is as follows:

A: 0

B: 50

C: 33

D: 17

A is then given 66 seats, and there are a total of 166 seats in parliament for that session.

Discussion:

The purpose of an electoral system, if fairness is to be the goal, should be to distribute power in proportion to the makeup of society. This proposal accomplishes that, and solves the problem of providing local representation through an election. This system is no more complex than the current first past the vote system, and in fact, voting occurs in the same way as before. It is the interpretation of the meaning of the vote that is different.

Compared to the FPTP system where strong minority opinions have been given less power than the proportion of their proponents, this system gives the minority parties a voice. This should be seen as an advantage because the country with access to the best information from its people will be able to govern it better. Though a small factor, in the long run, chances are that a change towards proportional representation would put Canada ahead of other nations that do not have a proportional representation system due to having a more accurate portrayal of the concerns of its citizens.

In addition, a national government must have local accountability, and I believe that there can be only one voice from a riding. If there were two voices, how would decisions get made if the two candidates had opposing views? No, there must be only one candidate from a riding.

One criticism of this system is that the non-local representatives are not elected. However, on closer inspection, one will realize that while this point of view has strong merit, it is important to acknowledge that they are in a way indirectly elected, and in the end, are accountable to the people who can control their number. On further contemplation, the whole purpose of electoral reform is to give voices to people who would otherwise not be elected to power. This system would give them that voice.