



Extracted from *Electoral System Design: the New International IDEA Handbook*

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The Electoral Systems of 213 Independent Countries and Related Territories (2004)

Country or Territory ¹	Electoral System for National Legislature ²	Electoral System Family	Legis- lature Size - Total Number of Directly Elected Representatives	Legis- lature Size - Total Number of Voting Members	Number of Tiers	Electoral System for President
AFGHANISTAN	SNTV	Other	249	249	1	TRS
ALBANIA	MMP (FPTP&List PR)	Mixed	140 ⁰	140	2	-
ALGERIA	List PR	PR	389 ^P	389	1	TRS
ANDORRA	Parallel (List PR & PBV)	Mixed	28	28	2	-
ANGOLA	List PR	PR	220	220	2	TRS
ANGUILLA	FPTP	Plurality/Majority	7	11	1	-
ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA	FPTP	Plurality/Majority	17	17	1	-
ARGENTINA	List PR	PR	257	257	1	TRS ^L
ARMENIA	Parallel (FPTP&List PR)	Mixed	131	131	2	TRS
ARUBA	List PR	PR	21	21	1	-
AUSTRALIA	AV	Plurality/Majority	150	150	1	-
AUSTRIA	List PR	PR	183	183	3	TRS
AZERBAIJAN	Parallel (TRS&List PR)	Mixed	125	125	2	TRS ³
BAHAMAS	FPTP	Plurality/Majority	40	40	1	-
BAHRAIN	TRS	Plurality/Majority	40	40	1	-
BANGLADESH	FPTP	Plurality/Majority	300	300	1	-
BARBADOS	FPTP	Plurality/Majority	30	30	1	-
BELARUS	TRS	Plurality/Majority	110	110	1	TRS
BELGIUM	List PR	PR	150	150	1	-
BELIZE	FPTP	Plurality/Majority	29	29	1	-

¹ Territories are included where they have no direct representation in a legislature of the country with which they are associated.

² For countries with bicameral legislatures, system for the lower house.

³ A qualified majority of two-thirds is required for a candidate to be elected in the first round.

Country or Territory	Electoral System for National Legislature	Electoral System Family	Legislature Size – Total Number of Directly Elected Representatives	Legislature Size – Total Number of Voting Members	Number of Tiers	Electoral System for President
BENIN	List PR	PR	83	83	1	TRS
BERMUDA	FPTP	Plurality/Majority	36	36	1	-
BHUTAN	'N'	-	-	-	-	-
BOLIVIA	MMP (FPTP&List PR)	Mixed	130	130	2	TRS ⁴
BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA	List PR	PR	42	42	1	FPTP
BOTSWANA	FPTP	Plurality/Majority	57	62	1	-
BRAZIL	List PR	PR	513	513	1	TRS
BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS	FPTP and BV	Plurality/Majority	13	13	2	-
BRUNEI DARUSSALAM	'N'	-	-	-	-	-
BULGARIA	List PR	PR	240	240	1	TRS
BURKINA FASO	List PR	PR	111	111	2	TRS
BURMA ⁵	FPTP	Plurality/Majority	485	485	1	-
BURUNDI	List PR	PR	81	179 ⁶	1	-
CAMBODIA	List PR	PR	123 ^P	123	1	-
CAMEROON	PBV/List PR&FPTP ⁷	Plurality/Majority	180	180	'H'	FPTP
CANADA	FPTP	Plurality/Majority	301	301	1	-
CAPE VERDE	List PR	PR	72	72	1	TRS
CAYMAN ISLANDS	BV	Plurality/Majority	15	18	1	-
CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC	TRS	Plurality/Majority	105	105	1	TRS
CHAD	PBV/List PR&TRS ⁸	Plurality/Majority	155 ^P	155	'H'	TRS
CHILE	List PR	PR	120	120	1	TRS
CHINA	'N'	-	-	-	-	-
COLOMBIA	List PR	PR	166 ^P	166	1	TRS
COMOROS	TRS	Plurality/Majority	18	33	1	FPTP ⁹
CONGO, REPUBLIC OF THE (BRAZZAVILLE)	TRS	Plurality/Majority	137	137	1	TRS
CONGO, DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF (KINSHASA)	'T'	-	-	-	-	-
COOK ISLANDS	FPTP	Plurality/Majority	24	24	1	-
COSTA RICA	List PR	PR	57	57	1	TRS ^L
CÔTE D'IVOIRE	FPTP and PBV	Plurality/Majority	225	225	'H'	TRS

⁴ If no candidate receives an absolute majority of the vote in the first round, the top two candidates are put to the National Assembly for a vote.

⁵ The UN name is Myanmar.

⁶ Forty representatives have been appointed for a transitional period.

⁷ PBV in the multi-member districts if a list gains an absolute majority of the votes, otherwise List PR.

⁸ PBV in the multi-member districts if a list gains an absolute majority of the votes, otherwise List PR.

⁹ The federal presidency rotates between the three main islands. A first round of elections is held on the island which currently holds the presidency and the three top candidates move on to a second round in which the voters on all three islands are entitled to vote.

Country or Territory	Electoral System for National Legislature	Electoral System Family	Legis- lature Size - Total Number of Directly Elected Representatives	Legis- lature Size - Total Number of Voting Members	Number of Tiers	Electoral System for President
CROATIA	List PR	PR	151	151	1	TRS
CUBA	TRS	Plurality/Majority	609	609	1	-
CYPRUS	List PR	PR	56	56	1	TRS
CYPRUS (NORTH)	List PR	PR	50	50	1	TRS
CZECH REPUBLIC	List PR	PR	200	200	1	-
DENMARK	List PR	PR	179	179	2	-
DJIBOUTI	PBV	Plurality/Majority	65	65	1	TRS
DOMINICA	FPTP	Plurality/Majority	21	30	1	-
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	List PR	PR	150 ^P	150	2	TRS
ECUADOR	List PR	PR	100 ^P	100	1	TRS ^L
EGYPT	TRS ¹⁰	Plurality/Majority	444	454	1	- ¹¹
EL SALVADOR	List PR	PR	84	84	2	TRS
EQUATORIAL GUINEA	List PR	PR	100	100	1	FPTP
ERITREA	'T'	-	-	-	-	-
ESTONIA	List PR	PR	101	101	2	-
ETHIOPIA	FPTP	Plurality/Majority	547 ^P	547	1	-
FALKLAND ISLANDS	BV	Plurality/Majority	8	8	1	-
FIJI	AV	Plurality/Majority	71	71	1	-
FINLAND	List PR	PR	200	200	1	TRS
FRANCE	TRS	Plurality/Majority	577	577	1	TRS
GABON	TRS	Plurality/Majority	120	120	1	TRS
GAMBIA	FPTP	Plurality/Majority	48	53	1	TRS
GEORGIA	Parallel (List PR&TRS ^L)	Mixed	235	235	2	TRS
GERMANY	MMP (List PR&FPTP)	Mixed	598 ^O	598	2	-
GHANA	FPTP	Plurality/Majority	200	200	1	TRS
GIBRALTAR	LV	Other	15	17	1	-
GREECE	List PR	PR	300	300	2	-
GRENADA	FPTP	Plurality/Majority	15	15	1	-
GUATEMALA	List PR	PR	158 ^P	158	2	TRS
GUERNSEY	BV	Plurality/Majority	45	47	1	-
GUINEA (CONAKRY)	Parallel (List PR&FPTP)	Mixed	114	114	2	TRS
GUINEA-BISSAU	List PR	PR	102	102	1	TRS
GUYANA	List PR	PR	53	65	1	FPTP
HAITI	TRS	Plurality/Majority	83	83	1	TRS
HOLY SEE (VATICAN CITY)	'N'	-	-	-	-	-

¹⁰ Block Vote in two rounds if necessary.

¹¹ The president is elected for a five-year term by the legislature and confirmed in a referendum by the people.

Country or Territory	Electoral System for National Legislature	Electoral System Family	Legis- lature Size - Total Number of Directly Elected Representatives	Legis- lature Size - Total Number of Voting Members	Number of Tiers	Electoral System for President
HONDURAS	List PR	PR	128	128	1	FPTP
HUNGARY	MMP (List PR&TRS)	Mixed	386	386	3	-
ICELAND	List PR	PR	63	63	2	FPTP
INDIA	FPTP	Plurality/Majority	543	545	1	-
INDONESIA	List PR	PR	550	550	1	TRS ¹²
IRAN, ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF	TRS ¹	Plurality/Majority	290	290	1	TRS
IRAQ	List PR	PR	275	275	1	-
IRELAND, REPUBLIC OF	STV	PR	166	166	1	AV
ISRAEL	List PR	PR	120	120	1	-
ITALY	MMP (FPTP&List PR)	Mixed	630	630	2	-
JAMAICA	FPTP	Plurality/Majority	60	60	1	-
JAPAN	Parallel (FPTP&List PR)	Mixed	480	480	2	-
JERSEY	BV & FPTP	Plurality/Majority	53	53	3	-
JORDAN	SNTV	Other	104 ¹³	110	1	-
KAZAKHSTAN	Parallel (TRS&List PR)	Mixed	77	77	2	TRS
KENYA	FPTP	Plurality/Majority	210	222	1	TRS ¹⁴
KIRIBATI	TRS ¹⁵	Plurality/Majority	40	42	1	FPTP
KOREA, DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF	TRS	Plurality/Majority	687	687	1	-
KOREA, REPUBLIC OF	Parallel (FPTP&List PR)	Mixed	299	299	2	FPTP
KUWAIT	BV	Plurality/Majority	50	65	1	-
KYRGYZSTAN	TRS	Plurality/Majority	75	75	1	TRS
LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC	BV	Plurality/Majority	109	109	1	-
LATVIA	List PR	PR	100	100	1	-
LEBANON	BV	Plurality/Majority	128	128	1	-
LESOTHO	MMP (FPTP&List PR)	Mixed	120	120	2	-
LIBERIA	'T'	-	-	-	-	-
LIBYAN ARAB JAMAHIRIYA	'N'	-	-	-	-	-
LIECHTENSTEIN	List PR	PR	25	25	1	-
LITHUANIA	Parallel (TRS&List PR)	Mixed	141	141	2	TRS

¹² 50% +1 of all votes plus a minimum of 20% in half of all provinces is required for a candidate to be elected in the first round.

¹³ If at least six women are elected there are 110 directly elected representatives, otherwise up to six women are indirectly elected by an electoral panel.

¹⁴ A minimum of 25% in five of eight regions is required for a candidate to be elected in the first round.

¹⁵ Ordinary TRS in single-member districts and Block Vote with second round if necessary in a few multi-member districts.

Country or Territory	Electoral System for National Legislature	Electoral System Family	Legis-lature Size – Total Number of Directly Elected Representatives	Legis-lature Size – Total Number of Voting Members	Number of Tiers	Electoral System for President
LUXEMBOURG	List PR	PR	60	60	1	-
MACEDONIA, THE FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF	List PR	PR	120	120	1	TRS
MADAGASCAR	FPTP&List PR	Plurality/Majority	160 ^P	160	'H'	TRS
MALAWI	FPTP	Plurality/Majority	193	193	1	FPTP
MALAYSIA	FPTP	Plurality/Majority	219	219	1	-
MALDIVES	BV	Plurality/Majority	42	50	1	- ¹⁶
MALI	TRS ¹⁷	Plurality/Majority	147 ^P	147	1	TRS
MALTA	STV	PR	65	65	1	-
MAN, ISLE OF	BV & FPTP	Plurality/Majority	24	24	'H'	-
MARSHALL ISLANDS	FPTP & BV	Plurality/Majority	33	33	'H'	-
MAURITANIA	TRS	Plurality/Majority	81 ^P	81	1	TRS
MAURITIUS	BV ¹⁸	Plurality/Majority	70	70	1	-
MEXICO	MMP (FPTP&List PR)	Mixed	500	500	2	FPTP
MICRONESIA, FEDERATED STATES OF	FPTP	Plurality/Majority	14	14	2	-
MOLDOVA, REPUBLIC OF	List PR	PR	101	101	1	-
MONACO	Parallel (List PR&BV)	Mixed	24	24	2	-
MONGOLIA	TRS ¹	Plurality/Majority	76	76	1	TRS
MONTSERRAT	TRS ¹⁹	Plurality/Majority	9	11	1	-
MOROCCO	List PR	PR	325	325	2	-
MOZAMBIQUE	List PR	PR	250	250	1	TRS
NAMIBIA	List PR	PR	72	78	1	TRS ²⁰
NAURU	Modified BC	Other	18	18	1	-
NEPAL	FPTP	Plurality/Majority	205	205	1	-
NETHERLANDS	List PR	PR	150	150	1	-
NETHERLANDS ANTILLES	List PR	PR	22	22	1	-
NEW ZEALAND	MMP (FPTP&List PR)	Mixed	120 ⁰	120	2	-
NICARAGUA	List PR	PR	90	92	2	TRS ¹
NIGER	List PR&FPTP ²¹	PR	83	83	'H'	TRS

¹⁶ The president is elected for a five-year term by Parliament and confirmed in a referendum by the people.

¹⁷ PBV system with provisions for second round if necessary.

¹⁸ Eight seats are reserved for the highest-polling unsuccessful candidates or 'best losers' from those predefined communities which are under-represented after the allocation of the first 62 seats.

¹⁹ Block vote with second round if at least 6% support for candidates is not reached.

²⁰ There are provisions for repeated rounds if no candidate receives an absolute majority of the votes.

²¹ Eight representatives are elected in single-member national minority districts.

Country or Territory	Electoral System for National Legislature	Electoral System Family	Legis- lature Size - Total Number of Directly Elected Representatives	Legis- lature Size - Total Number of Voting Members	Number of Tiers	Electoral System for President
NIGERIA	FPTP	Plurality/Majority	360	360	1	TRS ²²
NIUE	FPTP & BV	Plurality/Majority	20	20	2	-
NORWAY	List PR	PR	165	165	1	-
OMAN	FPTP	Plurality/Majority	83	83	1	-
PAKISTAN	Parallel (FPTP&List PR)	Mixed	342	342	2	-
PALAU	FPTP	Plurality/Majority	16	16	1	TRS ²³
PALESTINE	BV	Plurality/Majority	89	89	1	FPTP
PANAMA	List PR & FPTP	PR	78 ^P	78	'H'	FPTP
PAPUA NEW GUINEA	AV	Plurality/Majority	109	109	2	-
PARAGUAY	List PR	PR	80	80	1	FPTP
PERU	List PR	PR	120	120	1	TRS
PHILIPPINES	Parallel (FPTP&List PR) ²⁴	Mixed	²⁴ 260	260	2	FPTP
PITCAIRN ISLANDS	SNTV	Other	4	8	1	-
POLAND	List PR	PR	460	460	1	TRS
PORTUGAL	List PR	PR	230	230	1	TRS
QATAR	'N'	-	-	-	-	-
ROMANIA	List PR	PR	345 ^P	345	1	TRS ²⁵
RUSSIAN FEDERATION	Parallel (List PR&FPTP)	Mixed	450	450	2	TRS
RWANDA	List PR	PR	53	80	1	FPTP
SAINT HELENA	BV & FPTP	Plurality/Majority	12	14	'H'	-
SAINT KITTS AND NEVIS	FPTP	Plurality/Majority	10	15	1	-
SAINT LUCIA	FPTP	Plurality/Majority	17	17	1	-
SAINT VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES	FPTP	Plurality/Majority	15	21	1	-
SAMOA	FPTP & BV	Plurality/Majority	49	49	'H'	-
SAN MARINO	List PR	PR	60	60	1	-
SAO TOME AND PRINCIPE	List PR	PR	55	55	1	TRS
SAUDI ARABIA	'N'	-	-	-	-	-
SENEGAL	Parallel (PBV&List PR)	Mixed	120	120	2	TRS
SERBIA & MONTENEGRO	T' ²⁶	-	126	126	-	-
SEYCHELLES	Parallel (FPTP&List PR)	Mixed	34	34	2	TRS
SIERRA LEONE	List PR	PR	112	124	1	TRS ²⁷

²² An absolute majority or at least 25% in two-thirds of the states is required for a candidate to be elected in the first round.

²³ The first round acts as a primary election from which the top two candidates move on to a second round regardless of level of support.

²⁴ Number of seats varies between 208 and 260 depending on outcome of election. A sectoral interest group or marginalized group which polls over 2% receives a maximum of three additional seats. Established political parties cannot benefit from this provision. Not all additional list seats are necessarily filled.

²⁵ Support from 50% of the electorate is required for a candidate to be elected in the first round.

²⁶ At the time of writing no federal electoral law was in place although elections are held in the constituent republics.

²⁷ A qualified majority of 55% is required for a candidate to be elected in the first round.

Country or Territory	Electoral System for National Legislature	Electoral System Family	Legis- lature Size – Total Number of Directly Elected Representatives	Legis- lature Size – Total Number of Voting Members	Number of Tiers	Electoral System for President
SINGAPORE	PBV & FPTP	Plurality/Majority	84 ²⁸	94	'H'	FPTP
SLOVAKIA	List PR	PR	150	150	1	TRS
SLOVENIA	List PR	PR	90	90	2	TRS
SOLOMON ISLANDS	FPTP	Plurality/Majority	50	50	1	-
SOMALIA	'T'	-	-	-	-	-
SOUTH AFRICA	List PR	PR	400	400	2	-
SPAIN	List PR	PR	350	350	1	-
SRI LANKA	List PR	PR	225	225	2	SV
SUDAN	FPTP	Plurality/Majority	270	360	1	TRS
SURINAME	List PR	PR	51	51	1	-
SWAZILAND	FPTP	Plurality/Majority	55	65	1	-
SWEDEN	List PR	PR	349	349	2	-
SWITZERLAND	List PR	PR	200	200	1	-
SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC	BV	Plurality/Majority	250	250	1	- ²⁹
TAIWAN	Parallel (SNTV&List PR)	Mixed	225	225	2	FPTP
TAJKISTAN	Parallel (TRS&List PR)	Mixed	63	63	1	TRS
TANZANIA, UNITED REPUBLIC OF	FPTP	Plurality/Majority	231	295	1	TRS
THAILAND	Parallel (FPTP&List PR)	Mixed	500	500	2	-
TIMOR-LESTE	Parallel (List PR&FPTP)	Mixed	88	88	2	TRS
TOGO	TRS	Plurality/Majority	81	81	1	TRS
TOKELAU	'T'	-	-	-	-	-
TONGA	BV	Plurality/Majority	9	30	1	-
TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO	FPTP	Plurality/Majority	36	36	1	-
TUNISIA	Parallel (PBV&List PR)	Mixed	189 ^p	189	2	FPTP
TURKEY	List PR	PR	550	550	1	-
TURKMENISTAN	TRS	Plurality/Majority	50	50	1	TRS
TURKS & CAICOS ISLANDS	FPTP	Plurality/Majority	13	18	1	-
TUVALU	BV	Plurality/Majority	15	15	1	-
UGANDA	FPTP	Plurality/Majority	214	295	1	TRS
UKRAINE	Parallel (List PR&FPTP)	Mixed	450	450	2	TRS
UNITED ARAB EMIRATES	'N'	-	-	-	-	-
UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND	FPTP	Plurality/Majority	659	659	1	-

²⁸ The number of appointed opposition members may vary from election to election from none to three depending on the number of seats won by opposition parties. The president may also appoint a maximum of nine additional representatives.

²⁹ The president is elected for a five-year term by Parliament and confirmed in a referendum by the people.

Country or Territory	Electoral System for National Legislature	Electoral System Family	Legis-lature Size - Total Number of Directly Elected Representatives	Legis-lature Size - Total Number of Voting Members	Number of Tiers	Electoral System for President
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA	FPTP	Plurality/Majority	435	435	1	FPTP ³⁰
URUGUAY	List PR	PR	99	99	1	TRS
UZBEKISTAN	TRS	Plurality/Majority	250	250	1	TRS
VANUATU	SNTV	Other	52	52	1	-
VENEZUELA	MMP (FPTP&List PR)	Mixed	165 ^P	165	3	FPTP
VIET NAM	TRS ³¹	Plurality/Majority	498	498	1	-
YEMEN	FPTP	Plurality/Majority	301	301	1	TRS
ZAMBIA	FPTP	Plurality/Majority	150	158	1	FPTP
ZIMBABWE	FPTP	Plurality/Majority	120	150	1	TRS

³⁰ President is elected by an absolute majority of an electoral college. The members of the electoral college are elected on the state level, and the candidate with the plurality of the vote in a given state normally receives all of that state's electoral votes.

³¹ Block Vote in two rounds if necessary.

Key:

D: Distribution requirements apply.

H: Hybrid system. Electoral system family classification by the system under which the largest number of seats in the legislature is elected.

L: Lower level of support than 50% +1 required for a candidate to be elected in first round.

N: No provisions for direct elections.

O: Actual size of legislature may vary between elections because of provisions for overhang mandates.

P: Legislature size varies based on population size.

SV: Supplementary Vote.

T: Country or territory in transition: new electoral system not decided at time of publication.

FPTP – First Past the Post
TRS – Two Round System
AV – Alternative Vote
BV – Block Vote
PBV – Party Block Vote
Parallel – Parallel System
MMP – Mixed Member Proportional
List PR – List Proportional Representation
STV – Single Transferable Vote
SNTV – Single Non-Transferable Vote
LV – Limited Vote
Modified BC – Modified Borda Count

Glossary of Terms

Absentee voting – Another term for *remote voting*.

Additional Member System – Another term for a *Mixed Member Proportional system*.

Alternative Vote (AV) – A *candidate-centred, preferential plurality/majority* system used in *single-member districts* in which voters use numbers to mark their preferences on the ballot paper. A candidate who receives an absolute majority (50 per cent plus 1) of valid first-preference votes is declared elected. If no candidate achieves an absolute majority of first preferences, the least successful candidates are eliminated and their votes reallocated until one candidate has an absolute majority of valid votes remaining.

Apparentement – A term of French origin for a provision which can be included in *List Proportional Representation (List PR)* systems which enables two or more parties or groupings which fight separate campaigns to reach agreement that their votes will be combined for the purpose of seat allocation. See also *Lema* and *Stembusaccoord*.

Average district magnitude – For a country, local authority or supranational institution, the number of representatives to be elected divided by the number of *electoral districts*. See also *District magnitude*.

Ballotage – Another term for a *two-round system*, used primarily in Latin America.

Ballot structure – The way in which electoral choices are presented on the ballot paper, in particular whether the ballot is *candidate-centred* or *party-centred*.

Bicameral legislature – A legislature made up of two houses, usually known as an *upper house* and a *lower house*.

Block Vote (BV) – A *plurality/majority* system used in *multi-member districts* in which electors have as many votes as there are candidates to be elected. Voting is *candidate-centred*. The candidates with the highest vote totals win the seats.

Borda Count (BC) – A *candidate-centred preferential* system used in either *single-* or *multi-member districts* in which voters use numbers to mark their preferences on the ballot paper and each preference marked is then assigned a value using equal steps. For example, in a ten-candidate field a first preference is worth one, a second preference is worth 0.9 and so on, with a tenth preference worth 0.1. These are summed and the candidate(s) with the highest total(s) is/are declared elected. See also *Modified Borda Count*.

Boundary delimitation – The process by which a country, local authority area or area of a *supranational institution* is divided into *electoral districts*.

Candidate-centred ballot – A form of ballot in which an elector chooses between candidates rather than between parties and political groupings.

Circonscription – The term most frequently used for *electoral district* in francophone countries. See *Electoral district*.

Closed list – A form of List PR in which electors are restricted to voting only for a party or political grouping, and cannot express a preference for any candidate within a party list. See also *Open list* and *Free list*.

Communal roll – A register of electors for which the qualification for registration is a determinable criterion such as religion, ethnicity, language or gender. All electors who meet the criterion may be entered in the communal roll automatically, or each such elector may be able to choose whether or not to be entered. This register is used for the election of representatives of the group defined by the criterion from *electoral districts* specified for that purpose.

Compensatory seats – The *List PR* seats in a *Mixed Member Proportional* system which are awarded to parties or groupings to correct disproportionality in their representation in the results of the elections held under the first part of the *MMP* system, normally under a *plurality/majority* system.

Constituency – A synonym for *electoral district* used predominantly in some anglophone countries. See *Electoral district*.

Contiguous district – An *electoral district* that can be enclosed in a single continuous boundary line.

Cross-cutting cleavages – Political allegiances of voters which cut across ethnic, religious and class divisions in a society.

Cumulation – The capacity within some *electoral systems* for voters to cast more than one vote for a favoured candidate.

Democratic consolidation – The process by which a country's political institutions and democratic procedures become legitimized, stable and broadly accepted by both political actors and the wider population.

D'Hondt Formula – One of the options for the series of divisors used to distribute seats in List *PR* systems which adopt the *Highest Average Method*. The votes of a party or grouping are divided successively by 1, 2, 3... as seats are allocated to it. Of the available formulas, D'Hondt tends to be the most favourable to larger parties. See also *Sainte-Laguë Formula*.

Distribution requirements – The requirement that to win election a candidate must win not merely a specified proportion of the vote nationally but also a specified degree of support in a number of different states or regions.

District – Used in this Handbook to mean *electoral district*.

District magnitude – For an *electoral district*, the number of representatives to be elected from it. See also *Average district magnitude*.

Droop Quota – A variant of *quota* used in *proportional representation systems* which use the *Largest Remainder Method*, defined as the total valid vote divided by the number of seats to be filled in the *electoral district* plus one. Also known as *Hagenbach-Bischoff Quota*. See *Quota (a)*. See also *Hare Quota* and *Imperiali Quota*.

Electoral – A person who is both qualified and registered to vote at an election.

Electoral district – One of the geographic areas into which a country, local authority or *supranational institution* may be divided for electoral purposes. See also *Circonscription*, *Constituency*, *Electorate (b)* and *Riding*. An electoral district may elect one or more representatives to an elected body. See *Single-member district* and *Multi-member district*.

Electoral formula – That part of the *electoral system* dealing specifically with the translation of votes into seats.

Electoral law – One or more pieces of legislation governing all aspects of the process for electing the political institutions defined in a country's constitution or institutional framework.

Electoral management body (EMB) – The organization tasked under *electoral law* with the responsibility for the conduct of elections. The EMB in most countries consists either of an independent commission appointed for the purpose or of part of a

specified government department.

Electoral regulations – Rules subsidiary to legislation made, often by the *electoral management body*, under powers contained in the *electoral law* which govern aspects of the organization and administration of an election.

Electoral system – That part of the electoral law and regulations which determines how parties and candidates are elected to a body as representatives. Its three most significant components are the *electoral formula*, the *ballot structure* and the *district magnitude*.

Electorate – May have one of two distinct meanings:

a. The total number of *electors* registered to vote in an *electoral district*.

b. A synonym for *electoral district* used predominantly in some anglophone countries. See *Electoral district*.

External voting – A mechanism by which voters who are permanently or temporarily absent from a country are enabled to cast a vote, also called *out-of-country voting*.

First Past The Post (FPTP) – The simplest form of *plurality/majority electoral system*, using *single-member districts* and *candidate-centred voting*. The winning candidate is the one who gains more votes than any other candidate, even if this is not an absolute majority of valid votes.

Free list – A form of *List PR* in which voters may vote for a party or grouping and in addition for one or more candidates, whether or not those candidates are nominated by that party or grouping. Also known as *panachage*. See also *Closed list* and *Open list*.

Gerrymandering – The deliberate manipulation of *electoral district* boundaries so as to advantage or disadvantage a particular political interest.

Hagenbach-Bischoff Quota – Another term for the *Droop Quota*.

Hare Quota – A variant of *quota* used in *proportional representation systems* which use the *Largest Remainder Method*, defined as the total valid vote divided by the number of seats to be filled in the *electoral district*. See *Quota (a)*. Also known as Hare-Niemeyer. See also *Droop Quota* and *Imperiali Quota*.

Heterogeneous district – An *electoral district* in which, either by design or as a result of the operation of other criteria for *boundary delimitation*, the *electorate* manifests social, ethnic, religious or linguistic diversity.

Highest Average Method – A principle for converting votes into seats in *List PR* systems. One seat is allocated in a *district* at each of a series of counts to the party or grouping with the highest vote total. When a seat is allocated, the original vote of the

party that wins it is reduced by division. The most common series of divisors used are *D'Hondt* and *Sainte-Laguë*. The Highest Average Method tends to be more favourable to larger parties than its alternative, the *Largest Remainder Method*.

Homogeneous district – An *electoral district* in which, either by design or as a result of the operation of other criteria for *boundary delimitation*, the *electorate* manifests substantial social, ethnic, religious or linguistic uniformity.

Hybrid System – The result of dividing a country into two or more non-overlapping areas, in each of which a different *electoral system* is used.

Imperiali Quota – A variant of *quota* used in *proportional representation systems* which use the *Largest Remainder Method*, defined as the total valid vote divided by the number of seats to be filled in the *electoral district* plus two. See also *Droop Quota* and *Hare Quota*.

Index of disproportionality – A figure which is designed to measure the degree of deviation from proportionality in the allocation of seats to parties or groupings which participated in an election. It is most commonly defined as the square root of the sum of the squares of the differences for each party or grouping between the percentage of votes received and the percentage of seats gained.

Invalid votes – Votes which cannot be counted in favour of any participant in an election due to accidental or deliberate errors of marking by the voter.

Largest Remainder Method – A principle for converting votes into seats in *List PR* systems. After parties and groupings have been allocated seats in an *electoral district* because they have received full *quotas* (*a*) of votes, some seats will be unfilled, and some votes remain—for each party, less than a full *quota* (*a*). The remaining seats are then awarded to parties and groupings in order of the number of left-over votes they possess. The Largest Remainder Method tends to be more favourable to smaller parties than the alternative approach, the *Highest Average Method*.

Lema – A term used in Latin America for an umbrella list including two or more sub-lists which receive votes separately but whose votes are counted together for the purposes of seat allocation in some *List PR* systems. See also *Apparentement* and *Stembusaccoord*.

Limited Vote (LV) – An *electoral system* used in *multi-member districts* in which electors have more than one vote, but fewer votes than there are candidates to be elected. The candidates with the highest vote totals win the seats, in the same way as in a *Block Vote* system and in *SNTV*.

List Proportional Representation (List PR) – A system in which each participant party or grouping presents a list of candidates for an *electoral district*, voters vote for a party, and parties receive seats in proportion to their overall share of the vote. Winning

candidates are taken from the lists. See *Closed list*, *Open list* and *Free list*.

Lower house – One of the two chambers in a *bicameral legislature*, usually seen as comprising ‘the representatives of the people’. It is the more powerful chamber when the powers of the two chambers are unequal.

Majoritarian – Designed to produce an absolute majority (50 per cent plus 1) of votes.

Malapportionment – The uneven distribution of voters between *electoral districts*.

Manufactured majority – An election result, more commonly found where a *plurality/majority* system is used, in which a single party or coalition wins less than 50 per cent of the valid votes but an absolute majority of the seats in an elected body.

Member state – A country which is a member of a *supranational institution*, for example the European Union.

Mixed Member Proportional (MMP) – A *mixed system* in which all the voters use the first *electoral system*, usually a *plurality/majority system*, to elect some of the representatives to an elected body. The remaining seats are then allocated to parties and groupings using the second *electoral system*, normally *List PR*, so as to compensate for disproportionality in their representation in the results from the first *electoral system*.

Mixed system – A system in which the choices expressed by voters are used to elect representatives through two different systems, one *proportional representation* system and one *plurality/majority* system. There are two kinds of mixed system: *Parallel systems* and *Mixed Member Proportional systems*.

Modified Borda Count – A *candidate-centred, preferential* system used in either *single- or multi-member districts* in which voters use numbers to mark their preferences on the ballot paper and each preference marked is then assigned a value calculated by using the series of divisors 1, 2, 3 For example, in a ten-candidate field a first preference is worth one, a second preference is worth 0.5, a third preference 0.3333, and so on. These are summed and the candidate(s) with the highest total(s) is/are declared elected. See also *Borda Count*.

Multi-member district – A *district* from which more than one representative is elected to a legislature or elected body. See also *Single-member district*.

Multiple-tier system – An *electoral system* in which two or more sets of representatives are elected to the same chamber by the entire electorate of a country. The multiple tiers may be *electoral districts* defined at different levels within a country, for example, *single-member districts* and regions, or regions and the country as a whole. Systems in which two distinct sets of representatives are elected from the same level are also multiple-tier systems. All *mixed systems* are multiple-tier systems.

One Person One Vote One Value (OPOVOV) – A principle of representation in which each elected representative represents the same number of electors, and under which *malapportionment* is minimized.

Open list – A form of *List PR* in which voters can express a preference both for a party or grouping and for one, or sometimes more, candidates within that party or grouping. See also *Closed list* and *Free list*.

Out-of-country voting – A mechanism by which voters who are permanently or temporarily absent from a country are enabled to cast a vote. See *External voting*. See also *Remote voting*.

Overhang mandate – See *Überhangsmandat*.

Panachage – The term used in francophone countries for the version of *List PR* in which voters may vote for a party or grouping and in addition for one or more candidates, whether or not those candidates are nominated by that party or grouping. See also *Free list*.

Parallel System – A *mixed system* in which the choices expressed by the voters are used to elect representatives through two different systems, usually one *plurality/majority* system and one *proportional representation* system, but where no account is taken of the seats allocated under the first system in calculating the results in the second system. See also *Mixed-Member Proportional*.

Party Block Vote (PBV) – A *plurality/majority* system using *multi-member districts* in which voters cast a single *party-centred* vote for a party of choice, and do not choose between candidates. The party with most votes will win every seat in the *electoral district*.

Party-centred ballot – A form of ballot in which a voter chooses between parties or groupings, rather than individual candidates.

Party magnitude – For an *electoral district*, the average number of representatives elected by each party and grouping. For a country, the average of the party magnitudes for all electoral districts.

Personation – The fraudulent casting of the vote of a registered *elector* by another person.

Plurality/majority systems – Plurality/majority systems are based on the principle that a candidate(s) or party with a plurality of votes (i.e. more than any other) or a majority of votes (i.e. 50 per cent plus one—an absolute majority) is/are declared the winner(s). Such a system may use *single-member districts*—for example, *First Past The Post*, *Alternative Vote* or the *Two-Round System*—or *multi-member districts*—for example,

the *Block Vote* and *Party Block Vote*.

Preferential voting systems – Electoral systems in which voters rank parties or candidates on the ballot paper in order of their choice. The *Alternative Vote*, the *Borda Count*, the *Single Transferable Vote* and the *Supplementary Vote* are all examples of preferential voting systems.

Proportional Representation (PR) – An *electoral system* family based on the principle of the conscious translation of the overall votes of a party or grouping into a corresponding proportion of seats in an elected body. For example, a party which wins 30 per cent of the votes will receive approximately 30 per cent of the seats. All PR systems require the use of *multi-member districts*. There are two major types of PR system, *List PR* and the *Single Transferable Vote (STV)*.

Quota – May have one of two distinct meanings:

a. The number of votes which guarantees a party or candidate to win one seat in a particular *electoral district* in a *proportional representation* system. There are three variants in common use, the *Hare*, *Droop* (or *Hagenbach-Bischoff*) and *Imperiali* quotas.

b. A number of seats in an elected body or a proportion of candidates nominated by a party or grouping which are required by law to be filled by representatives of a particular kind; most commonly used to ensure the nomination and election of a minimum number of women.

Regional fiefdom – A situation in which one party wins all, or nearly all, of the seats in a particular geographic region of a country.

Remote voting – A mechanism by which voters are enabled to cast a vote which does not involve their attendance at a polling station on the day or days fixed for voting. See also *Out-of-country voting*.

Reserved seats – Seats in which a determinable criterion such as religion, ethnicity, language or gender is a requirement for nomination or election.

Riding – A synonym for electoral district used in some countries. See *Electoral district*.

Sainte-Laguë Formula – one of the options for the series of divisors used to distribute seats in *List PR* systems which adopt the *Highest Average Method*. The votes of a party or grouping are divided successively by 1, 3, 5... as seats are allocated to it. See also *D'Hondt Formula*.

Single-member district – An electoral district from which only one member is elected to a legislature or elected body. See also *Multi-member district*.

Single Non-Transferable Vote (SNTV) – An *electoral system* in which voters cast a single *candidate-centred* vote for one candidate in a *multi-member district*. The candidates with the highest vote totals are declared elected.

Single Transferable Vote (STV) – A *preferential candidate-centred proportional representation system* used in *multi-member districts*. Candidates that surpass a specified *quota* (see *Quota (a)*) of first-preference votes are immediately elected. In successive counts, votes are redistributed from least successful candidates, who are eliminated, and votes surplus to the *quota* are redistributed from successful candidates, until sufficient candidates are declared elected.

Spoilt votes – See *Invalid votes*.

State – Used in this Handbook to denote a sub-national unit of a country, often in the context of a federal constitution.

Stembusaccoord – A term of Dutch origin for a provision which can be included in *List PR* systems which enables two or more parties or groupings which are fighting separate campaigns to reach agreement that their votes will be combined for the purpose of seat allocation. See also *Apparentement* and *Lema*.

Supplementary Vote – A *candidate-centred, preferential plurality/majority* system, similar to the *Alternative Vote*. If no candidate achieves an absolute majority of first preferences, all candidates except the two leading candidates are eliminated and their votes reallocated according to the second, third and so on preferences expressed. The candidate with the highest number of votes is declared elected.

Supranational institution – an organization created by a number of countries by treaty where power is held by independent appointed officials or by representatives elected by the legislatures or people of the member states.

Threshold – The minimum level of support which a party needs to gain representation in the legislature. A threshold may be a formal threshold, which is a figure laid down in the constitution or the law, usually in the form of a percentage of the valid votes cast, or an effective or natural threshold, which is a mathematical property of the electoral system in use.

Two-Round System (TRS) – A *plurality/majority* system in which a second election is held if no candidate achieves a given level of votes, most commonly an absolute majority (50 per cent plus one), in the first election round.

A *Two-Round System* may take a majority-plurality form, in which it is possible for more than two candidates to contest the second round. An example is the French system, in which any candidate who has received the votes of over 12.5 per cent of the registered electorate in the first round can stand in the second round. The candidate who wins

the highest number of votes in the second round is then declared elected, regardless of whether they have won an absolute majority. Alternatively, a *Two-Round System* may take a majority run-off form, in which only the top two candidates in the first round contest the second round.

Überhangsmandat – An additional seat in a legislature which results in an *MMP* system when a party or grouping wins more seats in a region under the first, usually *plurality/majority*, electoral system than the number to which it would be entitled in total on the basis of its proportion of the vote. Also known as *excess mandate* or *overhang mandate*.

Upper house – One of the two chambers in a *bicameral legislature*, often seen either as containing ‘the representatives of regions/federal states’ or as ‘a chamber of review’. The less powerful chamber when the powers of the two chambers are unequal.

Wasted votes – Valid votes which do not ultimately count towards the election of any candidate or party.

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Electoral Systems' Impact on the Translation of Votes into Seats

Example 1

Here is a hypothetical election (of 25,000 votes contested by two political parties) run under two different sets of electoral rules: a plurality/majority FPTP system with five single-member districts, and a List PR system with one large district.

	Electoral Districts							Seats Won	
	1	2	3	4	5	Total	%	FPTP	List PR
Party A	3 000	2 600	2 551	2 551	100	10 802	43	4	2
Party B	2 000	2 400	2 449	2 449	4 900	14 198	57	1	3
Total	5 000	5 000	5 000	5 000	5 000	25 000	100	5	5

Key: FPTP = First Past The Post; List PR = List Proportional Representation system using the Largest Remainder Method of seat allocation with a Hare Quota.

Party A receives far fewer votes than Party B (43 per cent as opposed to 57 per cent), but under an FPTP system it wins four of the five seats available. Conversely, under a List PR system Party B wins three seats against two seats for Party A. This example may appear extreme but similar results occur quite regularly in plurality/majority elections.

Example 2

In the second example the two hypothetical electoral systems remain the same but there are now five parties contesting the election and the distribution of the votes is changed.

	Electoral Districts							Seats Won	
	1	2	3	4	5	Total	%	FPTP	List PR
Party A	2 000	2 000	2 000	200	50	6 250	25	3	1
Party B	500	500	500	3 750	500	5 750	23	1	1
Party C	500	250	750	1 000	3 000	5 500	22	1	1
Party D	1 000	500	1 700	25	1 025	4 250	17	0	1
Party E	1 000	1 750	50	25	425	3 250	13	0	1
Total	5 000	5 000	5 000	5 000	5 000	25 000	100	5	5

Key: FPTP = First Past The Post; List PR = List Proportional Representation system using the Largest Remainder Method of seat allocation with a Hare Quota.

Under the List PR system every party wins a single seat despite the fact that Party A wins almost twice as many votes as Party E. Under an FPTP system the largest party (A) would have picked up a majority of the five seats with the next two highest-polling parties (B and C) winning a single seat each. The choice of electoral system thus has a dramatic effect on the composition of the legislature and, by extension, the government in a parliamentary system.

Example 3

In the third example there are again two parties competing; but there are now 50,000 votes and ten seats to be allocated. The two electoral systems are a Parallel (five List PR seats and five FPTP seats) system, and an MMP (five List PR seats and five FPTP seats) system.

	Electoral Districts							Seats Won		
	1	2	3	4	5	National District 5 Seats	Total	%	Parallel	MMP
Party A	2 600	2 600	2 600	2 600	3 100	13 500	27 000	54	Party A total: 8 (FPTP: 5 and List PR: 3)	Party A total: 5 (FPTP: 5 and List PR: 0)
Party B	2 400	2 400	2 400	2 400	1 900	11 500	23 000	46	Party B total: 2 (FPTP: 0 and List PR: 2)	Party B total: 5 (FPTP: 0 and List PR: 5)
Total	5 000	5 000	5 000	5 000	5 000	25 000	50 000	100	10	10

Key: Parallel = Parallel system with the elements List PR and FPTP; MMP = Mixed Member Proportional system with the elements List PR and FPTP. (The List PR systems use the Largest Remainder Method of seat allocation with a Hare Quota.)

Under the Parallel system Party A wins eight seats and Party B gets the remaining two seats. All five of the FPTP seats and three of the five List PR seats go to Party A, which thus wins a total of 80 per cent of the seats with 54 per cent of the vote. Under the MMP system, with the List PR element compensating for the disproportionality under the FPTP element, the same vote distribution gives both parties five seats each. In this example, under MMP, Party A wins all five of the FPTP seats and hence all the five List PR seats are allocated to Party B.

The result of the MMP system is a much more proportional 50 : 50 per cent seat distribution with a 54 : 46 per cent vote distribution compared to the outcome of the election under the Parallel system. This clearly shows the difference between the List PR element simply running parallel to the plurality/majority system on the one hand, and actually compensating for the disproportionalities produced by it on the other.

Boundary Delimitation

These two figures are designed to illustrate the principle that there is no independent approach to boundary delimitation. Like many other facets of electoral system design, apparently technical methods and decisions inevitably have political consequences, and those with political interests can be expected to argue for solutions which are politically beneficial to them.

The figures show the results of two different approaches to boundary delimitation in an area which contains a town and surrounding countryside. The total population qualifies the area for two seats in the legislature. Forty per cent of the population live in the town, and 60 per cent in the countryside. (These numbers may equally refer to the total electorate, which is also used as the basis of seat entitlement in some countries.)

For the sake of simplicity, it is assumed that everyone in the town votes for the Workers' Party, and everyone in the countryside votes for the Farmers' Party. The real world is obviously more complex, but this does not change the principles of the mathematics.

In Model 1, the Doughnut principle, the town is retained as a single community in one relatively homogeneous SMD, to which a small amount of adjacent countryside is added to equalize the electorates of the two districts. Most of the countryside makes up a homogeneous second SMD. The result is victory in the town district for the Workers' Party, and victory in the countryside district for the Farmers' Party.

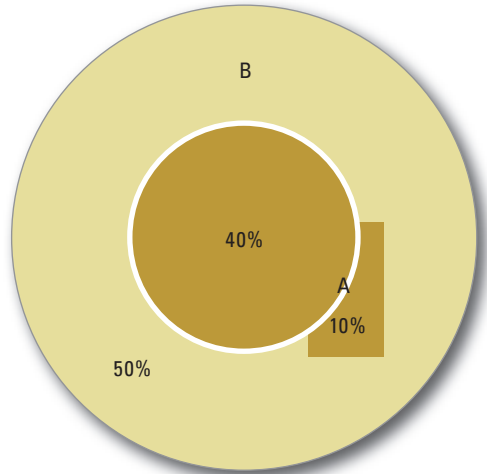
In Model 2, the Burger principle, the area is divided along the river which runs through the centre of it. Two heterogeneous SMDs are created, one containing the northern half of the town and the surrounding northern countryside, the other the southern half of the town and the surrounding southern countryside. In both districts, the Farmers' Party gains victory by 60 per cent to 40 per cent and is given both seats.

Unsurprisingly, the Workers' Party will attempt to persuade the delimitation authority of the technical virtues of homogeneity and the unity of the town, while at the same time the Farmers' Party will be arguing the case for heterogeneity and the undesirability of a seat with a hole in it!

Town and Country: Two Seats
Model 1: Doughnut

Everyone in town votes Workers' Party
 Everyone outside votes Farmers' Party

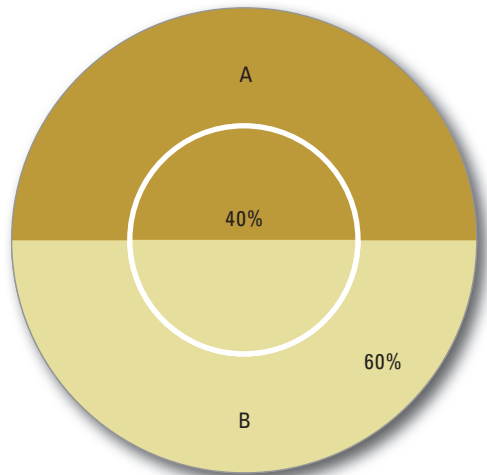
	District A:	Workers 80%
		Farmers 20%
	District B:	Farmers 100%
	Result:	Workers 1 seat Farmers 1 seat



Town and Country : Two Seats
Model 2: Burger

Everyone in town votes Workers' Party
 Everyone outside votes Farmers' Party

	District A:	Workers 40%
		Farmers 60%
	District B:	Workers 40%
		Farmers 60%
	Result:	Farmers 2 seats



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About International IDEA

Created in 1995, the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA), an intergovernmental organization with member states from all continents, has a mandate to support sustainable democracy worldwide. IDEA operates at an interface between those who analyse and monitor trends in democracy and those who engage directly in political reform or act in support of democracy at home and abroad. IDEA works with both new and long-established democracies, helping to develop and strengthen the institutions and culture of democracy. It operates at an international, regional and national level, working in partnership with a range of institutions.

IDEA aims to:

- Assist countries in building capacity to develop and strengthen democratic institutions
- Provide a forum for dialogue between academics, policy makers and practitioners around the world
- Synthesize research and field experience, and develop practical tools to help improve democratic processes
- Promote transparency, accountability and efficiency in election management
- Facilitate in-country democracy assessment, monitoring and promotion by local citizens.

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