



MAKE EVERY VOTE COUNT—ALWAYS!

PPR123: 'Perfect Proportional Representation' + 'Instant Runoff Voting' = 'True' Democracy!

YES, PPR123 CAN MAKE DEMOCRACY 'MORE HONEST'!

The claim here is that **PPR123** ('Perfect Proportional Representation' with 'Instant Runoff Voting') would produce 'More Honest' Democracy!

Really? More honest than what, and how is that possible? The short answers are:

Yes, really! More honest than all other voting systems, and it's because of how **PPR123** works—and how it exerts a shaping influence on the minds and behavior of the citizens, voters, politicians and parties.

This raises some basic questions about how voting systems should be evaluated and objectively compared. The following questions are proposed for consideration as suitable criteria:

1. Does a voting system stimulate or suppress voter turnout?
2. Does a voting system enable citizens to *freely* express their *true* preferences? Or does it cause many voters to feel coerced into so-called 'strategic voting', (i.e. for the perceived 'lesser of evils')?
3. Does a voting system impose the unjustified handicap of 'vote splitting' on some candidates and parties, and on their supporters?
4. Does a voting system always elect the 'rightful' representatives, i.e. those with the most support of the electorate? Do those elected all have truly democratic legitimacy of *majority* support?
5. Does a voting system always elect the 'rightful' party to form government (or with first right to form a coalition), i.e. the party with the most total votes?
6. Does a voting system reward positive political practices (e.g. positive and issues based campaigning; consensus building; constructive cross-party relationships; etc.)? Or does it reward negative political practices (e.g. negative campaigning, personality rather than issues based; divisiveness and personality attacks; gerrymandering; etc.)?
7. Does a voting system provide a greater (or lesser) degree of accountability of the elected representatives to the citizens, or greater control by political parties?

Most people would probably agree that a voting system that fulfilled all of these criteria could honestly claim to produce 'honest democracy' (as **PPR123** does). So let's examine the prominent voting system alternatives to see how they measure-up to the 'honest democracy' challenge.

Does PPR123 really make Democracy 'more honest'?

PPR123 is in fact the only voting system that fulfills all of the above criteria. This alone is sufficient to justify the claim that it would produce 'more honest democracy' than all other voting systems! But of course the benchmark standard of comparison for all proposed voting systems is to measure them against our existing 'First-Past-the-Post' (FPTP) system.

How well does FPTP measure-up in the 'honest democracy' challenge?

Very poorly. It badly fails all of the above criteria.

1. FPTP suppresses voter turnout by wasting so many votes, and making many others irrelevant. Any vote for a losing candidate is essentially thrown away. And any vote in a so-called 'safe seat' riding makes no

difference—even for the winner. These realities are understood by many citizens who see no reason to vote.

2. FPTP seems designed to disempower citizens by preventing them from *freely* expressing their *true* preferences? Many voters feel coerced into so-called ‘*strategic voting*’, giving their single vote to a candidate or party they don’t really like, as their best hope of preventing the election of a party they really don’t like.
3. As undemocratic as FPTP’s ‘*strategic voting*’ defect is, it’s ‘*vote splitting*’ defect is arguably an even worse and truly anti-democratic defect. In contrast to preferential voting systems, FPTP strongly discriminates against similar candidates and parties, often causing the defeat of both; it is fundamentally unfair to those candidates, parties, and their supporters. As recent example: when the Reform Party split off from the Progressive Conservative Party, democracy in Canada was held hostage by FPTP’s ‘*vote splitting*’ defect for more than a decade, given that the fragmented opposition under FPTP effectively ensured that only one party (Liberal) could possibly win—utterly failing the ‘*honest democracy*’ challenge. Alas, the eventual fix was a forced remarriage of the two right-wing parties—rather than fixing the electoral system to better serve our democratic needs with more differentiated political alignments.
4. FPTP does not always elect the ‘*rightful*’ representatives, i.e. those with the most support of the electorate. The ‘*vote splitting*’ defect is just part of the problem. Beyond that, the lower standard of a *plurality* rather than a *majority* (i.e. 50%+) for election sometimes elects representatives with less than 30% of the votes; undoubtedly some plurality winners would not be able to get the 50% support needed with a preferential voting system like IRV.
5. FPTP can sometimes even elect the ‘*wrong*’ party as government, i.e. not the party with the most total votes, as occurred in the 1996 BC election of an NDP government with only 39% vote share, with the Liberal opposition having 41%.
6. Under FPTP, negative practices have become the norm, because those strategies have proven to be successful: negative campaigning based on personalities rather than issues; divisiveness and personality attacks; gerrymandering; etc.
7. Under FPTP, even though elected representatives are nominally accountable to the public, they are in reality tightly controlled by the parties. In the so-called ‘safe seats’ (perhaps about half the total), candidates are particularly beholden to the party as their nomination effectively makes them an MP, with the popular vote being little more than a rubber stamp.

Failing every criteria above, FPTP is obviously a dismal failure that just doesn’t measure-up to the ‘*honest democracy*’ challenge.

With all of its atrocious defects, one may wonder why FPTP is still the voting system used in Canada, the UK, the USA. The main explanation is that it’s very unusual for a government to want to change the voting system under which they were elected. And sadly, most citizens have no idea how bad the FPTP voting system is, what problems it has caused, and the availability of clearly superior alternatives. Hopefully this inertia will now be overcome, as Canada’s new government has restated their commitment to fulfill their promise of electoral reform before the 2019 election.

How well does MMP measure-up in the ‘honest democracy’ challenge?

Mixed Member Proportional (MMP) is the most commonly proposed and most widely used alternative to FPTP. While MMP is clearly far superior to FPTP, it is nonetheless quite inferior to **PPR123**.

MMP works with FPTP. The purpose of MMP is to remedy the disproportional results produced by an FPTP election. To fully offset FPTP's distortion of the '*will of the people*', MMP requires some number of additional members (typically about one-third) to be taken from the '*party lists*' of parties under-represented by the FPTP election outcome. One disadvantage of MMP is that it either requires more total seats in parliament, or correspondingly larger riding sizes, or some combination of both.

1. MMP is a major improvement on FPTP by making all votes relevant. However, FPTP still applies to all members elected as representatives directly by voters. Hence the problems inherent in FPTP remain, including the 'safe seat' ridings.
2. MMP does not save voters from the problems created by FPTP, including its disempowerment of citizens by preventing them from *freely* expressing their *true* preferences? The '*strategic voting*' problem still remains.
3. MMP, in contrast to preferential voting systems, does not resolve FPTP's '*vote splitting*' defect, with its potentially devastating anti-democratic consequences.
4. MMP, by leaving FPTP in control of the elections in all ridings, does not eliminate its defect of sometimes not electing the '*rightful*' representatives, i.e. those with the most support of the electorate. The '*vote splitting*' defect is just part of the problem. Beyond that, the lower standard of a *plurality* rather than a *majority* (i.e. 50%+) for election sometimes elects representatives with less than 30% of the votes; undoubtedly some plurality winners would not be able to get the 50% support needed with a preferential voting system like IRV.
5. MMP does deliver approximately proportional voting power to all parties in parliament. So it almost eliminates FPTP's defect that sometimes the '*wrong*' party may assume power. However, the inherent flaws of both MMP and FPTP leave two small risks that the wrong outcome might still occur: (1) the MMP corrective to the FPTP disproportionality is imperfect; (2) FPTP still sometimes elects a '*wrongful*' representative. Hence, in a close race, one could not be certain that MMP+FPTP would produce the '*rightful*' government. While such risk is probably undetectable and quite remote, it's also unnecessary, and a reflection of cobbling an imperfect fix for a single problem onto a voting system that has multiple serious flaws.
6. MMP probably shifts the focus of election campaigns somewhat, from personalities to issues. But MMP leaves FPTP intact, as the voting system under which all elected representatives are determined. So most of FPTP's negative practices would persist.
7. Under MMP, the elected FPTP representatives would remain tightly controlled by the parties, especially in the 'safe seats' (perhaps about half the total) where candidates are particularly beholden to the party. But such party control is even worse under MMP, as all of the 'top up' members are entirely beholden to the party and not accountable to the public.

Despite the numerous and significant defects of MMP, it is clearly much more fair than FPTP. By far its worst defect is that it still leaves FPTP in place as the system by which all of the *elected* representatives (about two-thirds of the total number of Members of Parliament) are chosen. In contrast with MMP, a partial remedy bolted onto FPTP, all preferential voting systems eliminate FPTP with all its defects. Most of the democracies of the world have rejected FPTP, and most of them have adopted some form of MMP. As to why anyone who recognized the fundamental unfairness and unacceptability of FPTP would choose a partial solution that didn't replace FPTP, the explanation may be that the parties preferred it because it gave them more power, and voting reform advocates accepted it because it at least provided approximately proportional representation.

As to how MMP measures-up in the '*honest democracy*' challenge, it's clearly better than FPTP but leaves many if not most of its serious flaws in place.

How well does IRV measure-up in the ‘honest democracy’ challenge?

‘**Instant Runoff Voting**’ (IRV) is an established alternative to FPTP and MMP, that has been used in Australia for about a hundred years. While IRV is clearly far better than FPTP, it unfortunately shares its worst defect of producing disproportional outcomes that are serious distortions of ‘*the will of the people*’. (The proportionality issue is remedied by adding ‘**Perfect Proportional Representation**’ (PPR), resulting in **PPR123**.)

IRV replaces FPTP, and raises the requirement for election from a simple plurality (i.e. the most votes) to a majority (i.e. more than 50%). IRV is based on a ‘*preferential ballot*’ that enables voters to rank order the candidates, and it uses an iterative vote counting procedure by which the bottom candidate is eliminated on each round, with their votes being reallocated to each voter’s next choice, until the winner is elected with a majority. (This is just like the procedure used by every party to elect its leader.)

1. IRV should result in some increased voter turnout, given that votes for defeated candidates are reallocated to a remaining candidate (i.e. each voter’s next choice), rather than being automatically wasted by the system (as occurs under FPTP). But there remains a problem of irrelevant votes (e.g. ‘*safe seats*’).
2. IRV liberates citizens to *freely* expressing their *true* preferences, thereby resulting in ‘*honest*’ voting. It empowers citizens to cast a ‘*risk-free*’ 1st-choice vote for the candidate/party that they would most like to win, and also to cast 2nd-choice and 3rd-choice etc. votes for their next preferred candidates, with the understanding that their vote will be transferred to their next choice if and only if their preferred choice is eliminated. In this way it enables voters to gain the benefits of ‘*strategic voting*’ without compromising their true preferences. This should also have a positive effect on citizen participation.
3. IRV also eliminates FPTP’s most anti-democratic defect of ‘*vote splitting*’. IRV’s majority requirement prevents ‘*minority rule*’ by a third party in the situation where two similar parties together had majority support but eliminated each other as a result of ‘*vote splitting*’; under IRV, one of the two parties would be eliminated, enabling the other party to win with a majority. IRV would have prevented the ‘*vote splitting*’ that plagued Canada’s democracy for more than a decade, when the Reform and PC parties defeated one another, thereby assuring Liberal victories as virtual certainties even before the elections were held.
4. IRV always elects the ‘*rightful*’ representatives, with true democratic legitimacy based on its *majority* criterion (i.e. 50%+) for election.
5. IRV, with its majority requirement for the election of all representatives, is extremely unlikely to elect the ‘*wrong*’ party as government (i.e. a party that did *not* get the most votes).
6. IRV, with the crucial importance of attracting as much secondary support as possible from voters who prefer other parties, should result in more positive and less negative campaigning, as well as more cooperative and constructive cross-party relationships in Parliament.
7. Under IRV, all representatives are elected by and nominally accountable to the public. The issues of party control and ‘*safe seats*’ are similar to FPTP and less than MMP.

IRV is an under-appreciated alternative. It empowers citizens with much better options and liberates voters so that they can vote ‘*honestly*’ and ‘*risk-free*’. It resolves all of the major defects of FPTP except for its disproportionalities—which unfortunately remains as IRV’s greatest defect. Apart from that, IRV measures-up quite well to the ‘*honest democracy*’ challenge.

How well does **PPR123** measure-up in the ‘honest democracy’ challenge?

‘**Perfect Proportional Representation**’ with ‘**Instant Runoff Voting**’ (i.e. **PPR123**) is a new and better alternative to the established FPTP, MMP and IRV voting systems.

PPR123 and MMP are similar in their fundamental purpose. MMP is designed to work with FPTP, specifically to produce proportional outcomes as a corrective to a host electoral system (FPTP) which by itself generally produces very disproportional results. Similarly, **PPR123** is designed to work with IRV, specifically to produce proportional outcomes as a corrective to a host electoral system (IRV) which by itself generally produces very disproportional results.

That said, **PPR123** has many substantial advantages over MMP. Firstly, IRV’s host electoral system IRV provides many strong advantages over MMP’s FPTP (as previously explained). Secondly, PPR provides *Perfect* PR which avoids all of the negative aspects of the ‘Party List’ PR as used by MMP (i.e. imperfect PR; two classes of members, one elected by voters and the other appointed by a party; either more members, or larger ridings, or some combination of both; less accountability to voters and more control by the parties).

1. **PPR123** should result in some increased voter turnout. Through IRV, votes for defeated candidates are reallocated to a remaining candidate (i.e. each voter’s next choice), rather than being wasted by the system (as occurs under FPTP). But **PPR123** goes further, by ‘*making every vote count—always!*’
2. **PPR123** (being based on IRV) *liberates* citizens to *freely* expressing their *true* preferences, thereby resulting in ‘*honest*’ voting. It empowers citizens to cast a ‘*risk-free*’ 1st-choice vote for the candidate/party that they would most like to win, and also to cast 2nd-choice and 3rd-choice etc. votes for their next preferred candidates, with the understanding that their vote will be transferred to their next choice if and only if their preferred choice is eliminated. In this way it enables voters to gain the benefits of ‘*strategic voting*’ without compromising their true preferences. Indeed it is each voter’s honest 1st-choice vote that is always counted—with every vote in Parliament!
3. **PPR123** (being based on IRV) also eliminates FPTP’s most anti-democratic defect of ‘*vote splitting*’.
4. **PPR123** (being based on IRV) always elects the ‘*rightful*’ representatives, with true democratic legitimacy based on its *majority* criterion (i.e. 50%+) for election.
5. **PPR123** (because of PPR) always elects the ‘*rightful*’ party as government (i.e. the party with the most votes).
6. **PPR123** (being based on IRV), with the crucial importance of attracting as much secondary support as possible from voters who prefer other parties, should result in more positive and less negative campaigning, as well as more cooperative and constructive cross-party relationships in Parliament.
7. **PPR123** (being based on IRV) ensures that all representatives are elected by and nominally accountable to the public. The issues of party control and ‘*safe seats*’ are similar to FPTP and less than MMP.

PPR123 combines all of the strong advantages of both IRV and PPR. It empowers citizens with much better options and liberates voters so that they can vote ‘*honestly*’ and ‘*risk-free*’. It eliminates all of the defects of FPTP and MMP.

PPR123 fulfills the ‘*more honest democracy*’ challenge, and it’s the only voting system that can make the claim of ‘*Making Every Vote Count—Always!*’