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1.0 Introduction

According to Kam et al. (2020), "the choice of a particular electoral system a country decides to use holds profound effects on the county's political future. An electoral system refers to how citizen votes are used to elect governments and government officials (p.750)". An electoral system contains three main components; the number of delegates chosen in each electoral zone, the specifications or electoral dictates for ascertaining the winner, and the type of ballot. The topic of electoral systems, though dry-as-dust to some and arcane to many, this subject is often assumed to be an area of interest to only those concerned with filling posts in government seats. Elections are the defining periods in any democracy and representative democracies. Braun and Schmitt (2018) remind us that elections serve two main functions; they confer authorization upon those elected to represent the voters and hold representatives to account for their actions while in office.

2.0 Principles of a Good Electoral System

2.1 Legitimacy

An effective electoral system must have the faith of voters and their benefits. Legitimacy cannot be measured, but a practical test is the degree of public participation in the election process. Public involvement entails and is not limited to voting, joining a political party, and taking interests in election drives. It makes sense that citizens are often willing to participate in an election if they have faith in the electoral system. As a result, legitimacy is the outcome or outgrowth of a sound electoral system. If the system exhibits most of the other principles, it is compelled to be legitimate. Therefore, an electoral system must invigorate confidence in both

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means and effects so that even if one party loses elections, it will still accept the system's legitimacy.

2.2. Fairness of Representation

For fairness of representation, a good electoral system should support three categories; ² demographic representation, proportionality, and representation by population. Demographic representation means that members are allowed to vie despite their gender, age, social class, and ethno-cultural identity. The system should also allow political parties committed to run as diverse groups (Guiding Principles, n.d.). Proportionality implies that the system should be effective so that the proportion that a party acquires should be approximately equivalent to the ratio of electoral votes that the party receives. Finally, representation by population signifies that every member of the parliament should represent approximately the corresponding number of electors.

2.3 Voter Choice

A sound electoral system should improve voters' decisions regarding the quantity and quality of alternatives open to the electors. Choice quantity and quality are both critical peculiarities ² of an effective electoral system. Quantity attributes to the scope of options electors have on the poll. For example, an electoral system can allow voters to pick only a candidate, while other systems may allow voters to vote directly for a political party. On the other hand, ² quality of choice means that a voter can feel that they can have a meaningful choice to make when voting.

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2.4 Stronger Voter Participation

Citizens may have various reasons for polling or not voting. It is critical to consider whether these causes link to how they feel about the electoral system and how it effectively transposes their tallies into government seats. In any election, individuals may only be willing to vote if they; have faith in the system, assume their vote will make a difference, believe that the administration cares about their interests, and if they believe that voting is a critical part of being involved in the public life.

2.5 Accountability

The line of accountability differs depending on if the electoral system allows electors to choose a political candidate, a party, or both. Voters can attempt to hold the government answerable for their tallies, but this is not often simple; only the system can directly hold the government responsible by having the confidence to support the winning candidate. Hence, a dependable electoral system must allow voters to identify decision-makers and hold them accountable.

3.0 Types of Electoral Systems

Universally, there are three basic types of electoral systems employed to elect legislatures. But, every country has unique features of its electoral processes. The three common types are discussed below;

3.1 Leader-Takes-All Electoral System

According to Gulino (2020), in a Leader-Takes-All electoral system, the candidate with the majority of the votes at the end of the election process wins regardless of the rate of the cumulative votes h/she secures. In this type of system, electors are allowed to choose only one

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candidate. Given this system's nature, this electoral system generally favors the formulation of two dominant political parties. The minority political party becomes disadvantaged because ¹ coalitions are only formed to increase a specific candidate's chances of success. Out of the 195 countries worldwide that conduct elections, 64 of these use leader-take-all electoral system, including The United States, United Kingdom, and Canada.

¹ 3.2 Majority Wins Electoral System

In a majority wins' electoral system, a contestant can only win an election if h/she gets the majority of the cumulative votes (Gulino, 2020). A majority is usually marked by the 50% + 1 vote of the total tallies. In an event where no nominee gets the majority of the tallies, a second election sequence is conducted. But, this second election involves a smaller combination of only those contestants who were top nominees from the first course. Since this type of system allows ¹ candidates with a lower rate of votes to win in the second course, they provide an advantage to the minority political parties. Out of the 195 countries worldwide that conduct elections, only 42 of these use majority wins' system.

¹ 3.3 Proportional Representation (PR) System

In a proportional representation system, a nominee or a political party wins' votes in balance to the portion of cumulative votes they get in an election. These systems are usually employed for choosing parliamentary parties with various delegates. If a political party were to get 40% of the entire votes, they would acquire roughly 40% of the selected seats. There are ¹ three main types of PR systems used; Party-list PR, Single transferable vote (STV), and mixed-member PR (MMP) (Gulino, 2020). In a Party-list PR, political parties create a list of competitors, and seats are obtained in relation to the rate of votes won. Additionally, candidates

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are also voted on undeviatingly in this system, with each vote being counted towards their associated party.

According to the STV PR system, voters place applicants according to their degree of choice. If a voter's first candidate is disqualified, then his or her vote is reassigned to other endorsed nominees on their list based on the dictates of the electoral system. Lastly, according to the MMP system, every vote earns two choices on the ballot. One vote for a candidate, and the other vote for the party. Some seats are filled with candidates with the highest percentage of the votes, while the remaining seats are taken in line with each candidate's party's percentage of the total to obtain proportional representation. Globally, PR is the commonly used electoral system. Of the 195 countries that conduct elections, 89 uses the PR system. Of the 89, 34 uses the STV PR system.

4.0 Kuwait Electoral System

4.1 General Information

Kuwait is a country with a Unicameral formation of government. Kuwait is an emirate with an autocratic political system. The political system includes a selected judiciary, delegated government (governed by the Al Sabah family), and nominally elected parliament. The country's last ruler is Sabah al-Ahmad al-Jaber al-Sabah, who came into ruling from June 16, 1929, to September 29, 2020, and was the 15th Ruler of Kuwait and the 6th Emir of the State of Kuwait. After his death, Kuwait's Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmed Al-Sabah was declared the replacement to his half-brother Kuwaiti Emir Sheikh Sabah al-Ahmed al-Sabah (IPU PARLINE database: KUWAIT (Majles Al-Ummah), Electoral system, n.d.). According to Kuwait's constitution, most of the country's National Assembly must support each new crowned prince. The country's elections are conducted for both the National Assembly and for the Municipality.

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Kuwait's constitution declares for elections to the unicameral National Assembly at a maximum interim of four years. Elections can be conducted earlier if the Constitutional Court or Emir terminates the legislature.

According to the country's election rules, 50 members of parliament are publicly elected, and at least one of them will serve in the Cabinet. It is not allowed for one to concurrently attend in the Cabinet and at the same time as a member of parliament (MP). Thus, the number of publicly voted-in MPs will be reduced by the number of those appointed to serve in the Cabinet. Those MPs who enter the Cabinet can quit at any time and claim back their parliamentary post. Apart from the 50 MPs who are elected directly, there are other 15 cabinet ministers who are not elected as members of the National Assembly but are regarded as former office members, and they can vote at the National Assembly only if in votes of reliance. The cumulative number of cabinet ministers cannot exceed one-third of the National Assembly members. However, they must contain at least one member of the National Assembly. In total, Kuwait's parliament membership should total to a maximum of 65 members.

4.2 Electoral System

Generally, Kuwait uses the SNTV (Single Non-Transferable Vote) system. There are five multi-member constituencies with ten seats each. During an election, every single voter selects only one nominee in a district. Of the ten contestants from each district, the candidate with the largest votes is declared the winner. If two contestants get an equivalent number of votes by any chance, the polling committee picks lots, and the champion is announced elected. According to Kuwait's electoral system, there is no inception in winning an election. There are no reserved seats for female politicians, minorities, or other sections. Any openings that can arise between general elections are officially appointed through by-elections. But, no by-elections can be

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conducted when a vacancy happens within six months of the expiry of the parliamentary course.

To the public, voting is not mandatory.

For a Kuwait citizen to vote, h/she must meet the following requirement. One, h/she must be above the age of 21 years, h/she must be a citizen of Kuwait with Kuwait father, and must be residing in the country at the time of elections because citizens overseas are not allowed to participate in elections. Generally, there are rules that can disqualify one from voting. They include; a person with any jail term or acclimated within the last 20 years, army personnel and police officers, and unrehabilitated people condemned with a felon or infamous offense. For applicants vying for a seat in the National Assembly, the person must meet the following requirements before being allowed to view. One, he must be a qualified voter, meaning h/she must fulfill the above-mentioned voter requirements.

Additionally, h/she must be the age of 30 years and above with the ability to read and write in Arabic. According to the Kuwait constituency, specific groups of people cannot vie for a seat in the National Assembly. These include; any member of the head of state, minister of state, judges or any holder of judicial offices, executives and members of the electoral commission, members of the armed forces and police forces. These discordances are legitimate only during the course of office. Additional application specifications require that candidates vie as individual candidatures and not parties. Besides, the candidate must deposit 500 dinars which are often reimbursed if the candidate obtains at least ten valid votes cast in the constituency. If the candidate withdraws or fails this, the money is spent on charity (Staff, 2013).

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5.0 European(EU) Election System

The voting dictates for the elections of European legislators vary significantly over the European countries, allowing every member country to freely select its own electoral system, the scope of clarity of lists, and related voting inceptions. However, the inclusive harmonization of constituent laws across Europe has assisted in preventing disunity, provide fair ordinances for the registration of candidates and parties, common voting rights, and reduce election thresholds. Generally, the European electoral system is based on rules like the freedom to vote, one to stand as a candidate, funding of election campaigns, and incompatibility rules (The Voting System, n.d.). The European treaty signed in Maastricht, 1962, allows any individual with European citizenship residing in any member state to vote and vie as a candidate even if they are not nationalists. However, no one is allowed to vote more than once; one cannot vie as a candidate in more than one member country while voting is voluntary. The minimum voting age in the European member countries is 18 years except for Austria, which is 16 years.

According to the European electoral system, European citizens living abroad are also allowed to vote. However, this benefit is rigidly restrained to public servants, members of the armed forces, and civilians who left the state not more than 15 years before, provided they have presented the Overseas Elector's Declaration form. Member states like France, Italy, Spain, Sweden, and Belgium allow citizens to vote from any country they are in. Stipulations governing the qualification to vie as a contestant differ across the European member states, excluding the provision to be an EU member state. In some countries like Germany, the minimum age is 18; for Austria, the minimum age is 21, Italy 25 while Sweden 19. There is also a difference in the conditions of candidate registration. In some countries like the United Kingdom, a candidate must deposit payments that are refundable, while others like Netherlands only ask for the price to

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incur the costs of printing ballot papers; such a fee is not refundable. Additionally, there is a percentage of seats reserved for women on the electoral lists.

6.0 Comparison between Kuwait's and the European Electoral system

If you compare the electoral system of Kuwait and that of the European region, there are a few similarities. According to both systems, voting is not mandatory, and a citizen is only allowed to vote if willing. Another similarity is that both systems allow a voter to vote only once and vote for only one contestant. Additionally, in both systems, candidates are required to pay some amount for registration which is refundable. On the other hand, there are also few differences between the two systems. The Kuwait system's voter age requirement is 21 years, while the European system is 18 years. According to the Kuwait system, for an individual to stand as a candidate, h/she must be of the age of 30 and above, while for European countries, the age varies from 18-21 depending on the member state. The Kuwait system requires that a voter can only vote when residing in the country during elections. But for the European system, any individual with European citizenship is allowed to vote from where they are provided they have presented Overseas Elector's Declaration form. Last but not least, in the Kuwait electoral system, there are no reserved seats for women, but for the European system, there is a certain percentage of seats reserved for female politicians. Lastly, the Kuwait electoral system does not allow the army and police members to participate in elections, while the European system does. Of the two systems, I would say that the European system is far way better as it gives citizens exclusive rights to exercise their voting rights.

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7.0 How Good is Kuwait's Electoral System?

³ Kuwait has the most autonomous elections and the most vibrant national assembly of the Gulf Arab governments. But, the ruling al-Sabah family, which has dominated the country's politics since the 18th century, delegates the Cabinet. Cabinet members are also a portion of the National Assembly besides its 50 elected legislators. The emir has the authority to terminate the assembly and if arrangements for new elections are conducted. Generally, Kuwait's electoral system is not adequate. If Kuwait's government requires that one must have a national ID at the age of 16, why should voting right be granted at the age of 21? Why would the military personnel and policemen be denied the right to participate in elections? Besides, the Kuwait constitution does not allow a person with any jail term or acclimated within the last 20 years to vote. This means that if you are a Kuwait citizen and you get imprisoned and later released, you will have to wait for 20 years before voting ever again. The domination of the country's politics by one family is something of the past that should be eliminated. The Kuwait electoral system in the future may need to be reformed.

8.0 Conclusion

In conclusion, the best electoral system that I would recommend for Kuwait is the Majority Wins Electoral System. This system requires that the winning candidate must win at least 50% + 1 vote of the total votes. If the first election does not produce a candidate with 50% + majority votes, re-election is organized. The participants in this second election are the only top two candidates who had the highest votes. The re-elections can be repeated until the candidate with the majority vote is attained. This system is the best for Kuwait as it gives openings for the minority group to have a place and the chance to win. It also fosters fair elections (Raabe & Linhart, 2017).

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