

Letter in *The Observer*

Proportional representation fallacies

You advocate a new voting system under which 'voters would number candidates in order of preference instead of merely marking a cross by their first choice'. This is fallacious. Most voters have only one real preference – the party they support. They don't give a fig for any of the other parties. So to put them in order of 'preference' would be bogus.

You complain that under the current system 'governments are formed by parties that have not won a majority of votes'. This will inevitably happen sometimes as a matter of arithmetic where three or more candidates are standing for one seat.

It is absurd to say, as you do, that votes cast for a losing candidate are 'wasted' and that those who cast them are 'disenfranchised'. In any election, there will be winners and losers – that is the nature of elections. The captain who loses the toss at cricket has not 'wasted' his vote – he has been unlucky, but has still participated in a genuine voting process.

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