**Explanation Electoral Systems:**

Electoral systems, in their basic concept, work to translate the votes cast in elections into the number of seats won by political parties and candidates participating in them. The fundamental variables in this process include the electoral equation used (whether a plurality/majority, proportional, mixed system, or others, and the specific mathematical formula used to allocate seats to winners), the structure of the ballot (whether voters choose one candidate or a party list, and whether they can express a single choice or multiple choices), as well as the size of the electoral district (not related to the number of resident voters within a single district, but rather the number of representatives elected in each electoral district). Although this section of the encyclopedia does not focus on the administrative aspects of the electoral process (such as polling station distribution, candidate nomination, voter registration, electoral administration, etc.), these matters are of great importance as ignoring them can undermine the desired benefits of any electoral system chosen. Moreover, the design of the electoral system affects other aspects of electoral laws: the choice of the electoral system has its impact on the method of drawing electoral boundaries, voter registration, ballot design, vote counting, and many other aspects of the electoral process.

The selection of the electoral system is considered one of the most crucial decisions for any democratic system. Often, the choice of a specific electoral system can have significant consequences for the future of political life in the country in question, as electoral systems chosen tend to shape democracy, while the focus of political interests around them revolves around how they can benefit from the incentives provided by these systems. Although the selection of electoral systems is now done through a well-thought-out process, it has not always been so. In many cases, the selection process was arbitrary, a result of unusual circumstances, common preferences, or sudden historical shifts, not to mention the legacy of colonialism and the influence of the environment as powerful factors.

Emerging democracies need to select (if not inherit) a particular electoral system to elect their legislative authority. Political crises in established democracies can also lead to changing or retaining the adopted electoral system. Even in the absence of these crises, supporters of political reform may raise the issue of changing the adopted electoral system in a particular country. Typically, the decisions made to change or maintain the adopted electoral system are influenced by two main factors:

Lack of political forces' sufficient awareness of electoral systems, resulting in a lack of full awareness of the various available options and the consequences of each.

Conversely, the exploitation by political forces of their knowledge of the details of electoral systems to push for the adoption of systems they believe align better with their partisan interests.

In addition to the predetermined outcomes, the selection of the electoral system can lead to consequences that were not anticipated at the time of selection. Therefore, the choices made may not be the best for the long-term health of political life and may sometimes have disastrous consequences for the democratic process in the country in question.

Hence, the background behind the selection of the electoral system may be as important as the chosen option itself. The selection of the electoral system is primarily a political matter, not a technical one that can be addressed by a group of independent experts. Political interests are often, if not the only consideration, taken into account when selecting the electoral system from among the available options, and therefore, there are usually only a few choices. At the same time, short-term political calculations can obscure the long-term consequences of electoral systems, at the expense of the larger interests of the overall political system. Therefore, this section aims to address the issue of electoral systems and their selection as comprehensively and inclusively as possible.

As long as the process of organizing political institutions is considered a fundamental issue, not only for emerging democracies but also for established democracies that seek to better align their institutions with the changing political reality, this topic addresses those responsible for designing or redesigning their electoral systems in established democracies, as well as those responsible for designing these systems in emerging and transitional democracies. Given the broad audience concerned, most academic literature on the topic has been simplified, without neglecting the consideration of more complex aspects in this field. The selection of electoral systems and the design of institutions are in continuous development, and this section of the encyclopedia seeks to provide lessons and insights drawn from many practical examples around the world regarding this process.

Many efforts to design and build constitutional systems have been made in relatively recent times, as the democratic movements in the 1980s and 1990s encouraged the search for more stable and suitable forms of representative institutions, including a new evaluation of electoral systems. This was motivated by the growing awareness that the choices made regarding the organization of political institutions can have a significant impact on the overall political system. For example, there is a growing understanding that electoral systems can be designed in a way that provides geographical representation, encourages proportionality in representation, promotes active national-level political parties, and offers more opportunities for women and local minorities to be represented. It can also be used to encourage cooperation and consensus-building in divided societies through innovative means, using the electoral system both as an incentive and a constraint at the same time. Therefore, electoral systems are now seen as having a decisive impact on the construction of the political system, as well as their crucial importance in all aspects related to broader governance issues.