

PERSPECTIVE

RESEARCHERS AT ISEAS – YUSOF ISHAK INSTITUTE ANALYSE CURRENT EVENTS

Singapore | 15 June 2022

The Paradox of Malaysia's Lowering of Voting Age - Expanded Enfranchisement Devalued by More Unequal Representation

*James Chai**



Malaysia's Petronas Twin Towers in Kuala Lumpur loom in the background as a motorist rides past the ruling coalition party Barisan Nasional's flags on the eve of the last general election (GE14), which was held on 9 May 2018. Picture: Manan VATSYAYANA, AFP.

** James Chai is Visiting Fellow at ISEAS - Yusof Ishak Institute, and a columnist for MalaysiaKini and Sin Chew Daily.*

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The Constitution (Amendment) Act 2019 (“CA2019”), gazetted into law on 10 September 2019, lowered the voting age to 18 years, allowed for younger electoral candidates and introduced automatic voter registration for adults aged 18 and above.
- The lowering of the voting age added 5.8 million new voters, thereby enlarging the electorate to 21.02 million. This wider enfranchisement implied the democratic benefits of greater participation, political accountability and more responsive policymaking. However, this development seemed to have exacerbated the long-existing problem in Malaysia of ‘malapportionment’, which refers to unequal political representation arising from large disparities in the size of electoral constituencies.
- In the Malaysian context, the BN had long benefited from its dominance over the smaller rural constituencies, winning more seats even if they performed poorly in the larger, under-represented urban constituencies. CA2019 has apparently aggravated this phenomenon because the new young voters tend to be located in the urban areas.
- Overall, malapportionment in Malaysia has worsened to its highest level in history, making it the 13th worst-malapportioned country in the world, behind all its regional democratic counterparts. The large-small constituency ratio in West Malaysia has now increased by 11.45% on average. The most extreme example is Bangi and Lenggong, where the electorate size of the former is 8 times the latter.
- Three effects follow from this severe malapportionment: Violation of fair election principles, poorer welfare outcomes, and lower inclination to vote in the supersized under-represented constituencies. Politicians have higher incentive to devote attention and resources to the smaller rural constituencies, where individual votes count more towards electoral outcomes. Voters in larger urban constituencies will see their votes as less consequential and become less inclined to turn out for voting. Since younger voters are more numerous in the urban areas, this may produce a negative long-term effect of fostering political apathy and cynicism among young citizens.

INTRODUCTION

Malaysia's constitutional amendments on two key electoral matters – to lower the voting age from 21 to 18, and to automatically register voters – were greeted with widespread acclaim. One politician called the CA2019 a “game changer” that has the potential to create policy-oriented discussions, discard race-based politics, and dilute the insidious culture of patronage politics. Dissenters' opinions were overwhelmingly drowned, with civil society, experts, academics, and businesses endorsing what is broadly regarded as a policy based on common sense. However, CA2019 also came with a series of unintended consequences, including worsened malapportionment; this had largely been overlooked.

The first part of this paper considers the background and definitions of CA2019, before dissecting the impact of malapportionment in the second. Malapportionment, a form of electoral malpractice designed to create unequal constituency sizes for electoral advantage, is not simply a minor side-effect of the CA2019. Instead, this paper argues that its exacerbation could have far-reaching consequences and could potentially reverse the intended gains of the constitutional amendment.

BACKGROUND: HISTORY DELAYED

Fifteen months after Malaysia's first-ever government turnover, Malaysia once again made history. Upon passing CA2019, through a bicameral unanimity of 211 votes at the lower house (Dewan Rakyat),¹ and 47 votes at the upper house (Dewan Negara),² Malaysia's Federal Constitution (“FC”) was changed to automatically convert every adult above 18-years-old into a voter. This was the first constitutional amendment in 12 years.³

The initial proposal of CA2019 was only to lower the voting age to 18 (“Undi18”),⁴ as Malaysia was one of the 14 remaining democratic countries that have not done so.⁵ The then-opposition bloc, led by Barisan Nasional (“BN”), however, conditioned their support on two additional constitutional amendments, namely lowering the qualification age for elected representatives,⁶ and automatic voter registration (“AVR”).^{7 8}

Eventually, Undi18 and AVR became the most salient provisions of CA2019 for their seismic impact of adding 5.8 million to the voters' roll, expanding it from 15.22 million persons to 21.02 million.

Table 1: Comparing AVR and Undi18

	AVR (excluding 18- to 20-year-olds)	Undi18
Definition	System that automatically includes citizens' names to the electoral roll as eligible voters in elections, removing the need for self-registration	Extension of voting rights to every qualified Malaysian adult 18 and above
Nature	Procedural	Enfranchisement
Number of new voters brought in as of January 2022	4.6 million (eligible, previously-unregistered)	1.2 million (eligible)
Constitutional provision changed	Article 119(4)(b)	Article 119(1)(a)
Inclusion exercise	One-off	Recurring for every adult turning 18
Initiating party	Then-opposition parties: BN, PAS, GPS	Then-government parties: Pakatan Harapan, Bersatu, Warisan

Table 1 differentiates between AVR and Undi18. Notably, the number of registered voters that will be included under AVR – which applies to all citizens regardless of age – is almost four times higher than the eligible voters under Undi18. The difference was also found in the inclusion exercise, where Undi18 requires continuous updates, necessitating a monthly validation check by the Election Commission (“EC”), compared to AVR.⁹ Despite its unanimous outcome, it is important to note that the AVR and Undi18 proposals originated from parties on opposing sides of the aisle, which means CA2019 was realised through a compromise.

Though not explicitly mentioned, the EC was assumed to completely take on the registration role, by transferring data from the National Registration Department. This model is similar to that adopted in Argentina, Germany and Peru.¹⁰

According to the parliamentary Hansard during the CA2019 debates, the AVR and Undi18 are meant to bring key democratic benefits to the electorate in two main ways.¹¹

First, accountability and welfare. CA2019 is a sensible *quid pro quo* for the legal responsibilities expected of Malaysian adults above 18. More voters can hold politicians to account, in turn increasing politicians' incentive to improve voters' welfare and decreasing opportunities for corruption and abuse of power.

Second, voting interest and turnout. Removing self-registration makes voting easier, encouraging voter interest and turnout. Before this, voters had to physically travel to one of the approved destinations to register as a voter.¹² Bureaucratic deterrence such as a four-month wait period, reduction in assistant registrar officers,¹³ and documentary challenges,

will no longer exist under AVR, ensuring that “an eligible voter’s right to vote cannot be taken away.”¹⁴

Notwithstanding this, the implementation of CA2019 proved overwhelming for the EC.¹⁵ The rollout deadline was extended twice, from an estimated 18 to 24 months, to 36 months.¹⁶ Time-consuming obstacles such as data verification, cross-departmental coordination, computer system upgrades, and logistics, prompted the president of the parliamentary upper house to call CA2019 “impractical”.¹⁷

Consequently, 18 youths sued the Malaysian government, compelling the enforcement of CA2019 on or before July 2021 (18-month preparation period), as promised.¹⁸ The High Court judge found that the government was obliged to implement CA2019 “with all convenient speed”, and since “July 2021” was a deadline set by the government, any further delay was considered “irrational” and “illegal”. Another court order quashing the government’s postponement was simultaneously granted.

On 16 January 2022, the new system came into force and was used for the first time in the Johor state election on 12 March 2022. A summary timeline of CA2019 can be found in Appendix A.

CA2019 has however created several unintended consequences through the massive influx of voters; these include exacerbated malapportionment, multiplied electoral roll errors, and logistical difficulty in preparing administrative facilities and officers, among others.¹⁹

This paper focuses only on the critical issue of malapportionment. This is done for three reasons. One, the massively increased number of registered voters and the subsequent worsening malapportionment may ingrain voter disinterest over the long term. Two, the EC had indicated that practical difficulties are largely confined to the first cohort of AVR and Undi18, and with tighter verification routines, future administrative problems are predicted to be “manageable”.²⁰ Three, CA2019 represents a most dramatic exacerbation of malapportionment from a single event, and filling the research void on that question needs to be given higher priority and urgency.

DEEPENING OLD WOUNDS: EXACERBATED MALAPPORTIONMENT AND ITS EFFECTS

Malapportionment is a form of electoral “pathology”²¹ that is worst in countries that are partly-democratic, partly-authoritarian such as Malaysia.²² In a perfectly-apportioned country, like Fiji and the Netherlands, the number of voters in one constituency should be roughly similar to that of another. Acknowledging that perfection is practically unattainable, most countries allow a set deviation level from the national average of voters per seat, called the “electoral quota”. The United Kingdom sets it at 5%²³ and Australia at 3.5%.²⁴ This means that all seats in Australia cannot have a voter size of more or less than 3.5% of the national average. Although Malaysia’s FC provided that seats ought to be “approximately

equal”,²⁵ it also justifies electoral quota in favour of rural seats for administrative efficiency. This limit, however, was increased from 15% to 33%, and was removed entirely in 1973.²⁶

The result is one vote in a small constituency is worth significantly more than a vote in a supersized constituency, resulting in overrepresentation of the former and underrepresentation of the latter. Oliver and Ostwald found that malapportionment and other electoral malpractices created a partisan bias that allowed BN to win “bonus” seats – as high as 65 seats – simply by performing the same (in terms of vote share) as the disadvantaged party.²⁷ BN could take advantage of the immense disparity between parliamentary seat share and popular vote share and focus largely on small, rural seats to secure a winning majority. In 2013, BN clinched a comfortable parliamentary seat majority to form government despite having significantly lower popular votes than the Pakatan Rakyat opposition that held mostly heavily populated seats in urban areas by a wide margin.

Even before CA2019, rounds of biased delimitation exercises had already made Malaysia one of the most malapportioned countries in the world.²⁸ Recent independent exercises in West Malaysia (2018, 2003), Sabah (2017/2019, 2003), and Sarawak (2015,²⁹ 2005) directly exacerbated seat inequality (Appendix B for delimitation history).³⁰ Increasing parliamentary seats require a two-thirds parliamentary majority, and the former BN government was able to do this for all delimitation exercises except 2018, worsening malapportionment at all instances. While Malaysia’s parliamentary borders remain largely unchanged in the recent decade, population growth in urban centres aggravated the urban-rural voter number disparity further.

Adding another 5.8 million predominantly urban voters via CA2019 is akin to a “voter tsunami” that exacerbates already-serious malapportionment problems, and this will have long-term side effects.^{31, 32}

Regarding the largest-smallest constituency ratio, West Malaysia’s increased to an average of 11.45%, Sabah’s at 20.09% and Sarawak’s to 20.57% (Table 2).³³ The worst-malapportioned parliamentary seats in Malaysia are between Bangi and Lenggong, where the former’s are 8 times the latter’s.

Table 2: Largest-smallest constituency ratio of all states in Malaysia in 2016 and 2022

State	Largest (2022)	Smallest (2022)	Largest- Smallest Ratio (2022)	Largest- Smallest Ratio (2016)	Change (%)
Johor	219,243	50,039	4.38	3.43	27.70
Kedah	167,864	59,662	2.81	2.64	6.44
Kelantan	148,746	59,972	2.48	2.34	5.98
Melaka	163,978	69,048	2.37	2.47	-4.05
Negeri Sembilan	156,604	59,724	2.62	2.27	15.42
Pahang	119,099	45,614	2.61	2.77	-5.78
Perak	159,300	37,012	4.30	3.62	18.78
Perlis	74,658	60,101	1.24	1.21	2.48
Pulau Pinang	120,128	53,089	2.26	1.85	22.16
Sabah	105,969	40,342	2.63	2.19	20.09
Sarawak	141,950	28,152	5.04	4.18	20.57
Selangor	298,503	51,458	5.80	4.38	32.42
Terengganu	138,005	87,477	1.58	1.46	8.22
FT Kuala Lumpur	124,439	80,470	1.55	1.44	7.64
FT Labuan	44,319	44,319	1.00	1.00	-
FT Putrajaya	41,195	41,195	1.00	1.00	-
Malaysia	298,503	28,152	10.60	9.13	16.10

Save for Melaka and Pahang, all states in Malaysia experienced a hike in the largest-smallest ratio. The five biggest state gainers had an average increase of 24.59%, indicating a dramatically worsening seat inequality. These states – Selangor, Johor, Pulau Pinang, Sarawak, Sabah – were unsurprisingly also Malaysia’s richest states, contributing 56.01% of the national GDP.³⁴ Economic and employment opportunities draw voters, existing and new, to the urban centres more than do the semi-urban and rural areas.³⁵

Of the 100 largest constituencies, 63% are urban seats, and only 3% are rural. Conversely, of the 100 smallest constituencies, 61% are rural seats, and only 9% are urban. Taken together, urban seats have now become vastly underrepresented, and the value of votes in underrepresented seats has eroded by a national average of 16.10%, after CA2019. If you are a new 18-year-old voter in Bangi, your vote is worth one-eighth that of a new voter in Lenggong.

However, the largest-smallest ratio neither accurately depicts the *degree* of seat inequality nor provides a benchmark for countrywide comparisons. Bangi’s size may be 8 times larger than Lenggong, but if other seats were relatively equal, then the largest-smallest ratio is a bad representation of overall malapportionment. A better measurement is Samuels and

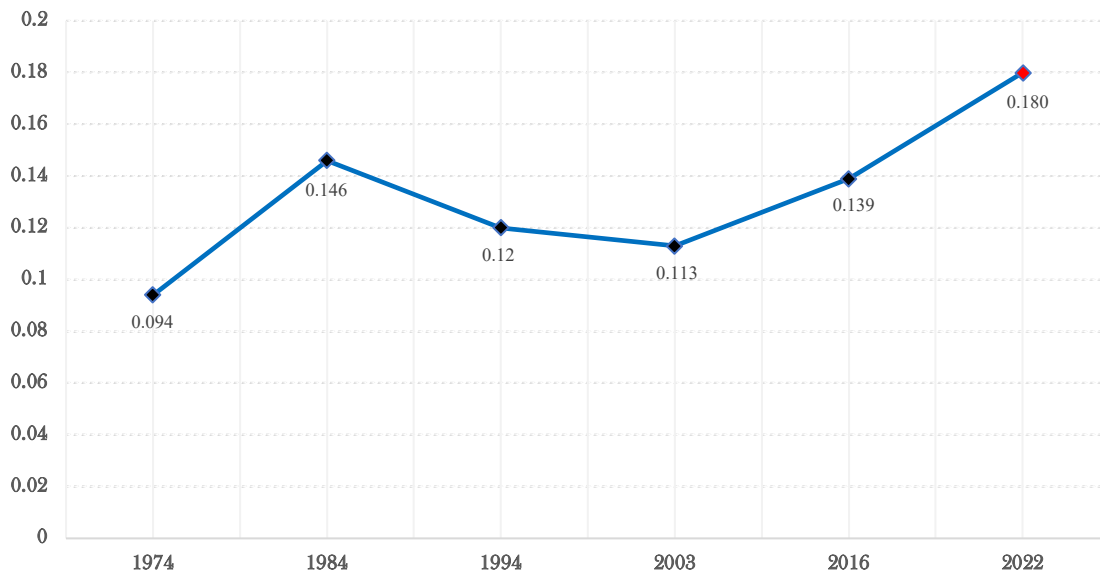
Snyder's adapted Loosemore-Hanby index of electoral disproportionality (hereinafter "SSI" for Samuel's Snyder Index).³⁶

SSI functions as a comparative index for malapportionment, where zero indicates perfect apportionment – all constituencies are equal – and the higher the value, the higher the degree of malapportionment (Appendix C for formula breakdown).

Compared to other countries, a MAL of 0.180 puts Malaysia in 147th place out of 160 countries, making it the 13th worst-malapportioned country in the world. As observed in Table 3 below, Malaysia's electoral manipulation is comparable to low-income countries such as Ghana, Zambia, and Haiti. Malaysia also trailed its Southeast Asian counterparts – Singapore (53rd), Cambodia (62nd), Indonesia (67th) – by a significant margin. Developed countries such as the United States, Malta, and Finland have MAL closer to 0.014 to 0.018, which is at least 10 times lower than Malaysia. The mean MAL for all countries is 0.087, putting Malaysia's shortfall to the mean at a massive 0.103, or 10.3%.

Table 3: MAL comparison with select countries

No.	Country	Malapportionment value	Year
1	East Timor	0.000	2012
...
20	United States	0.014	2010
21	Malta	0.015	2013
22	Ukraine	0.016	2014
23	Hungary	0.018	2015
24	Finland	0.018	2015
...
147	Malaysia	0.180	2022
148	Ghana	0.181	2012
149	SaoTome	0.186	2006
150	Zambia	0.190	2011
...
159	PNG	0.349	1997
160	Haiti	0.401	2015



Graph 1: Malaysia's malapportionment value since 1974

Graph 1 calculates Malaysia's MAL since 1974.³⁷ After CA2019, the malapportionment value rose to a historic high of 0.180. This is 28.6% higher than the previous record of 0.146 from 1984, and almost double the MAL value from 1974. Malaysia's MAL has always been higher than average and persisted over time.

Overall, CA2019 brought MAL to historic highs and Malaysia's rankings to historic lows. Malapportionment is clearly the most significant unintended consequence of CA2019 that needs to be urgently addressed. Ideally, increasing the number of urban seats relative to rural seats is the shortest path to redress malapportionment, though realistically, the bipartisanship required – the same condition that delivered CA2019 – a two-thirds parliamentary majority support – is unlikely in the near term.

Effects of worsened malapportionment: Electoral ethics, welfare, voting interest

Three long-term effects follow from worsened malapportionment. First, malapportionment is considered “ethically unjustifiable” because it severely assaults human dignity by implicitly devaluing one person's democratic voice over another's.³⁸ Severe violation of the “one person, one vote” principle made the disadvantaged voter “less a citizen”.³⁹ Scholars also argue that malapportionment functions as “double voting” i.e. voters in malapportioned seats have differential powers in casting the tie-breaking vote.⁴⁰

Second, malapportionment causes welfare losses by diluting political representation and skewing political behaviour, mainly in large constituencies. Recall that one of the benefits of CA2019 was to improve voters' welfare by changing politicians' incentive structure.

Without a vote, a citizen is voiceless as they are not electorally significant to the politician. CA2019 was designed to change that by extending enfranchisement. However, in a severely underrepresented supersized seat, a citizen's vote is virtually worthless, making the voter as good as a non-voter.

Bhavani argues that politicians in large constituencies are less accessible and accountable to voters, because of reduced voter-politician touchpoints.⁴¹ At a higher level, political parties will choose to focus only on overrepresented seats, typically rural and small, because electoral payoff relative to resources spent would be significantly higher.

Another welfare cost, Bhavani argues, is that large constituencies suffer from double exclusion – they will be underrepresented in the legislature (a vote is worth less) and in the executive.⁴² On the latter, it is speculated that the cabinet will be inclined to pick ministers from smaller constituencies because they are less demanding. It is “cheaper” to amass political capital this way, and the cabinet would be under less pressure to deliver. Thus, policy decisions and developmental distribution would more likely lean towards favouring smaller, overrepresented seats, similar to how the former BN government focused on their mostly small and rural constituencies.^{43, 44} Resultantly, large constituencies suffer poorer welfare outcomes in the long run.

Third is voting interest. As mentioned above, political parties in other malapportioned countries have shifted their campaign focus from large to small seats because the former is less competitive than the latter.⁴⁵ With reduced media attention and canvassing in oversized seats, voters will assume that the stakes and competitiveness of the election are low, thus reducing their interest to vote.^{46, 47}

To a certain extent, this has happened in Malaysia's oversized constituencies even before CA2019. Using pre-CA2019 data, 25 out of the 35 largest constituencies (with at least 100,000 voters) had unregistered voter rate above the mean of 23.71%. On average, the largest constituencies had an unregistered voter rate of 29.86%, with the highest in Kapar, where more than half of its 130,066 constituencies (50.68%) were unregistered. It was pointless for voters in oversized constituencies to even register to vote when their vote would unlikely change the outcome⁴⁸ and more likely be considered a “wasted vote”.⁴⁹

Voter disinterest creates a *possible* effect of lower turnout. Perceived election importance, election closeness, seat disproportionality,⁵⁰ and election integrity have been found to lead to lower turnout in other countries. The latter was noted in a study covering 700 elections held in 85 democracies between 1950 and 2008.⁵¹ Through multiple sources such as word-of-mouth and news reports, voters will learn of the unfairness of malapportionment, and this has a “strong and highly significant impact on willingness to cast a ballot.”⁵² This problem most likely worsens over time. Wong anticipates that since manipulation of voting act (machinery, money, media) and vote choice (phantom votes, miscounting or misreporting votes) has diminishing returns in past election cycles, malapportionment would likely be retained or exacerbated by the hegemonic BN regime.⁵³

Particularly of relevance is the long-term effect of youth voter turnout. Already youths are generally predicted to have low turnout due to problems of early adulthood (lifecycle effect),⁵⁴ Malaysian youth voters are now likely to develop a habit of vote abstention from the unfortunate time of entry. If their first election happened during a time of extreme malapportionment, coupled with an existing climate of political disillusionment, the low turnout of youths will likely leave a “footprint” that will gradually pull down the voter turnout of the country for decades to come.⁵⁵

Table 4: Locality of voters between 18-20 years of age

Locality	Total voters between 18-20 years old	Proportion (%)
Urban	680,117	47.3
Semi-urban	476,677	33.1
Rural	281,559	19.6
Total	1,438,353	100

According to Table 4, voters between 18 and 20 years old are concentrated in urban (47.3%) and semi-urban (33.1%) areas. These areas are hotspots for supersized constituencies with the highest malapportionment incidences. In the name of electoral cost-efficiency, politicians will end up chasing “fewer and older voters” at the expense of young first-time voters.⁵⁶ Wong thus cautioned against the exuberance over Undi18, and suspects that malapportionment would create youth disillusionment, cynicism, and potentially radicalisation instead.

CONCLUSION

In the past few delineation exercises, the BN government had relied heavily on malapportionment as part of its electoral manipulation menu to maintain its election advantage. The shocking BN defeat in 2018 momentarily removed reform attention from malapportionment and other electoral malpractices, but CA2019 has now brought back, into full glare, these problems that have long haunted Malaysia. The intended benefits of CA2019 to create greater political participation and accountability are predicted to be substantially derailed by this fact, leading to potentially poorer outcomes of electoral ethics, welfare, and voting interest. Ironically, the youngest voting group would likely absorb the largest negative hit because of the electoral lifestyle effects and existing political disillusionment that could give birth to a habitual abstention from the political process, and leave behind a “footprint” on future cohorts.

Any corrective work to increase legislative seats and/or redraw boundaries would rely strongly on interparty cooperation and political will to achieve the required two-thirds majority, ingredients that seem wanting in the present political landscape.

A court case successfully prevented CA2019 from delayed implementation, but it did not stop malapportionment from delaying its real benefits indefinitely.

APPENDIX A: Timeline of CA2019

Date	Event
2016 - 2017	Qyira Yusri and Tharma Pillai started a youth movement under the umbrella of Malaysian Students' Global Alliance. They sent a memorandum to the Prime Minister and lobbied opposition politicians to adopt the issue of Undi18 in Parliament
4 July 2019	Former Youth and Sports Minister Syed Saddiq Syed Abdul Rahman tabled a parliamentary bill on Undi18 for the first reading in Parliament
16 July 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Former Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad tabled the Undi18 bill for the second and third reading in Parliament The Undi18 bill was passed as CA2019, with 211 unanimous votes at the lower house
25 July 2019	CA2019 was passed with 47 unanimous votes at the upper house
3 September 2019	EC said Undi18 would be enforceable 18 to 24 months after the CA 2019 was gazetted
4 September 2019	CA2019 received the royal assent by the King of Malaysia
10 September 2019	CA2019 was gazetted into law as Undi18
11 September 2019	One part of CA2019, which is the lowering of qualification age to be an election candidate, came into operation
10 October 2019	Former Law Minister Liew Vui Keong stated in Parliament that the implementation of AVR and Undi18 would come into operation by July 2021 at the latest
10 March 2021	Deputy Chairman of the EC was quoted by the press as saying the EC is on track to ensuring the system for AVR and Undi18 will be ready by July 2021
11 March 2021	Parliament upper house President Rais Yatim said in a Bernama interview that it was "impractical" to implement Undi18
25 March 2021	EC announced that the implementation of AVR and Undi18 shall be pushed back to after September 2022
27 March 2021	The Prime Minister accepted and affirmed the EC's decision to delay to September 2022
2 April 2021	18 youths filed a judicial review against the government and the EC over the delay in operationalising AVR and Undi18
3 September 2021	The Kuching High Court allowed the judicial review application and granted certiorari and mandamus orders, compelling CA2019 to be operationalised by 31 December 2021
15 December 2021	Appointed date by the King of Malaysia for CA2019 to come into operation
16 January 2022	Undi18 came into effect
12 March 2022	Undi18 was used for the first time in an election during the 2022 Johor state election

APPENDIX B: Malaysia's delimitation history

West Malaysia	Sabah	Sarawak
1974	1974	1977
1984	1984	1987
1994	1994	1996
2003	2003	2005
2018	2017/2019*	2015

**Two-year gap between EC's completion of report and tabling to parliament.*

Note: Malaysia's delimitation exercise is conducted in three independent units of review, namely West Malaysia, Sabah, and Sarawak.

Source: TindakMalaysia

APPENDIX C: Samuels Snyder Index formula and explanation

The formula for the SSI is,

$$MAL = (1/2) \sum | si - vi |$$

where sigma is the percentage share of seats, s , deducting the percentage share of registered voters, v , of all seats, i . For Malaysia, the value of s shall be the same for all constituencies, at 1/222, or 0.45. For sigma summation, all negative values are dropped, retaining only the absolute numbers. The sigma summation is finally halved to get the final malapportionment value, MAL .

For example, Bangi, a seat with 298,503 registered voters, has a sigma summation of 1/222 (or 0.45, for Bangi's share of seats) minus 298,503/21,024,055 (or 1.42, Bangi's share of registered voters) to get -0.97. Since we retain only the absolute number, 0.97 is then halved to 0.485 as its MAL value.

ENDNOTES

¹ Annuar, A. 16 July 2019. "History made as Undi 18 Bill passed with bipartisan support," Malay Mail. <https://www.malaymail.com/news/malaysia/2019/07/16/history-created-as-undi-18-bill-passed-with-bipartisan-support/1771996>

² Bernama, 25 July 2019. "Dewan Negara passes amendment bill to lower voting age to 18," News Straits Time. <https://www.nst.com.my/news/government-public-policy/2019/07/507372/dewan-negara-passes-amendment-bill-lower-voting-age-18>

³ Tay, C and Shankar, A.C. 17 July 2019. "House unanimously passes 'Undi 18' Bill," The Edge Markets. <https://www.theedgemarkets.com/article/house-unanimously-passes-undi-18-bill>

⁴ "Undi18" loosely translates to "Vote at 18" from Malay.

- ⁵ BatchGeo, 2 July 2018. "Voting Age Around the World." <https://blog.batchgeo.com/voting-age-around-the-world/>
- ⁶ Article 47 of the FC via Section 2 of the CA 2019.
- ⁷ Article 119(4)(b) of the FC, via Section 3(b) of CA2019.
- ⁸ Annuar, A. 3 July 2019. "Umno, PAS say will back 'Undi 18' if govt okays automatic registration," <https://www.malaymail.com/news/malaysia/2019/07/03/umno-pas-say-will-back-undi-18-if-govt-okays-automatic-registration/1767872>
- ⁹ Email interviews with the deputy chairman of the EC, Dr Azmi Sharom, 13 April 2022 and 19 April 2022.
- ¹⁰ It is, however, not clear if the current AVR in Malaysia allows for non-royalty opt-out; this was only briefly mentioned once by the Election Commission.
- ¹¹ Parliament Hansard, 16 July 2019. <https://www.parlimen.gov.my/hansard-dewan-rakyat.html?uweb=dr&arkib=yes>
- ¹² Suruhanjaya Pilihan Raya Malaysia. Soalan Lazim Pendaftaran Pemilih. <https://www.spr.gov.my/en/node/41>
- ¹³ FMT Reporters. 16 November 2017. "DAP disappointed EC has only 205 assistant registrars," Free Malaysia Today. <https://www.freemalaysiatoday.com/category/nation/2017/11/16/dap-disappointed-ec-has-only-205-assistant-registrars/>
- ¹⁴ Ibid, 12.
- ¹⁵ Ibid, 12.
- ¹⁶ Aziz, A. 28 March 2021. "Undi 18 will only be implemented in Sept 2022," The Malaysian Reserve. <https://themalaysianreserve.com/2021/03/26/undi-18-will-only-be-implemented-in-sept-2022/>
- ¹⁷ FMT Reporters. 11 March 2021. "'Undi 18' impractical for now, says Rais," Free Malaysia Today. <https://www.freemalaysiatoday.com/category/nation/2021/03/11/undi-18-impractical-for-now-says-rai/>
- ¹⁸ Ivan Alexander Ong & Ors v The Prime Minister of Malaysia & Ors [2021] MLJU 1655
- ¹⁹ Ibid, 12.
- ²⁰ Ibid, 12.
- ²¹ Taagepera, R and Shugart, M.S. 1989. "Seats and Votes: The Effects and Determinants of Electoral Systems," CT: Yale University Press. <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/american-political-science-review/article/abs/seats-and-votes-the-effects-and-determinants-of-electoral-systems-by-rein-taagepera-and-matthew-soberg-shugart-new-haven-ct-yale-university-press-1989-292p-2750/C6C83B068915082DE6B1F9D06FA15BA3>
- ²² Ong, K; Kasuya, Y and Mori, K. 2017. "Malapportionment and democracy: A curvilinear relationship," Electoral Studies https://yukokasuya.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Ong-Kasuya-Mori-ES2017_malapportionment.pdf
- ²³ Section 2 of Schedule 2 of the Parliamentary Voting System and Constituencies Act 2011 (UK). <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2011/1/part/2/enacted>
- ²⁴ Section 66 of the Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918 (Australia). http://www.comlaw.gov.au/Details/C2013C00165/Html/Text#_Toc355768167
- ²⁵ Section 2(c) of the 13th Schedule in the Federal Constitution.
- ²⁶ Ibid, 25.
- ²⁷ Oliver, S and Ostwald, K. 7 July 2018. "Not Enough to Win Another Lost Election: Malapportionment and Partisan Bias in Malaysia's 2013 and 2018 General Elections." https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3209653
- ²⁸ Ong, K.M. 19 July 2013. "Malaysia among the most malapportioned countries in the world". <https://ongkianming.com/2013/07/19/media-statement-malaysia-among-the-most-malapportioned-countries-in-the-world/>

²⁹ Sarawak's delimitation exercise, which included a seat increase from 71 to 82 seats, increased the urban-rural malapportionment drastically such that the largest-smallest ratio increased to 4.18.

³⁰ According to Article 113(2) of the FC, at least 8 years must lapse between every delimitation exercise.

³¹ The locality distribution of the 4,180,257 AVR voters, as of January 2022, were: 52% urban, 29% semi-urban, 19% rural.

³² Lee, A. 13 November 2019. "Expect 'voter tsunami' thanks to Undi 18, auto voter registration – expert," Malaysiakini. <https://www.malaysiakini.com/news/499701>

³³ Largest-smallest constituency ratios are compared within each independent parts only, namely West Malaysia, Sabah, and Sarawak, as the latter two were required to have 1/3 of the total parliamentary seats, as agreed under the Malaysia Agreement 1963.

³⁴ Mahidin, U. 5 August 2021. "State Socioeconomic Report 2020," Department of Statistics Malaysia Official Portal.

https://www.dosm.gov.my/v1/index.php?r=column/cthemByCat&cat=102&bul_id=anVobldYUFZLNE5WVIRVRExkSWEyZz09&menu_id=TE5CRUZCblh4ZTZMODZlbnk2aWRRQT09

³⁵ Noteworthy, though, were suggestions by Selangor and Johor, in December 2021, to re-delineate state seats which may trigger a nationwide delimitation exercise.

³⁶ Samuels, D and Snyder, R. 2001. "The Value of a Vote: Malapportionment in Comparative Perspective," Cambridge University Press. <http://users.polisci.umn.edu/~dsamuels/BJPS2001.pdf>

³⁷ The years are selected based on available election datasets.

³⁸ Gudgin, G and Taylor, P.J. September 2012. "Seats, Votes, and the Spatial Organisation of Elections," ECPR Press. <https://rowman.com/ISBN/9781907301353/Seats-Votes-and-the-Spatial-Organisation-of-Elections>

³⁹ Chief Justice Warren in Reynolds v Sims, at 562.

⁴⁰ Persily, N; Kousser and Egan, P. 2002. "The Complicated Impact of One Person, One Vote on Political Competition and Representation," North Carolina Law Review. <https://scholarship.law.unc.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=&httpsredir=1&article=3995&context=nclr>

⁴¹ Bhavnani, R.R. 1 December 2021. "The effects of malapportionment on economic development," Plos

One. <https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0259150>

⁴² Bhavnani, R.R. 23 November 2015. "The Effects of Malapportionment on Cabinet Inclusion: Subnational Evidence from India," Cambridge University Press.

<https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/british-journal-of-political-science/article/abs/effects-of-malapportionment-on-cabinet-inclusion-subnational-evidence-from-india/6A78219DE1FFF3934D21151A940508D7>

⁴³ Ostwald, K. 11 November 2013. "How to Win a Lost Election: Malapportionment and Malaysia's 2013 General Election."

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/00358533.2013.857146>

⁴⁴ 96.51% of the smallest 86 seats were won by BN in 2013.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Stockemer, D. 2017. "What Affects Voter Turnout? A Review Article/Meta-Analysis of Aggregate Research," Government and Opposition.

<https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/government-and-opposition/article/what-affects-voter-turnout-a-review-articlemetaanalysis-of-aggregate-research/2CCC1F9A8B742953B2D10C87C13D9F12>

⁴⁷ Indridason, I.H. 2008. "Competition & turnout: the majority run-off as a natural experiment," Electoral Studies. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0261379408000814>

⁴⁸ Karp, J.A. and Banducci, S.A. 2008. "Political Efficacy and Participation in Twenty-Seven Democracies: How Electoral Systems Shape Political Behaviour," British Journal of Political

Science. https://econpapers.repec.org/article/cupbjposi/v_3a38_3ay_3a2008_3ai_3a02_3ap_3a311-334_5f00.htm

⁴⁹ Gallego, A.; Rico, G. and Anduiza, E. 2012. "Disproportionality and voter turnout in new and old democracies," Electoral Studies. https://www.ibeio.org/disproportionality-and-voter-turnout-in-new-and-old-democracies-electoral-studies-31-1-159-169_42687.pdf

⁵⁰ Gallego, A.; Rico, G. and Anduiza, E. 2012. "Disproportionality and voter turnout in new and old democracies," Electoral Studies. https://www.ibeio.org/disproportionality-and-voter-turnout-in-new-and-old-democracies-electoral-studies-31-1-159-169_42687.pdf

⁵¹ Coma, F.M. and Trinh, M. 2017. "How electoral integrity affects voter turnout in democracies," Australian Journal of Political Science.

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/10361146.2016.1238869?journalCode=cjap20>

⁵² Birch, S. 2010. "Perceptions of Electoral Fairness and Voter Turnout," Comparative Political Studies. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0010414010374021>

⁵³ Wong, C.H. 31 January 2018. "Constituency Delimitation and Electoral Authoritarianism in Malaysia," The Round Table.

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/00358533.2018.1424075>

⁵⁴ Franklina, M.N.; Lyons, P. and Marshd, M. 2004. "Generational Basis of Turnout Decline in Established Democracies," Acta Politica.

<https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1057/palgrave.ap.5500060.pdf>

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Wong, C.H. 21 February 2020. "Might #Undi18 disempower the youth?" Malaysiakini.

<https://www.malaysiakini.com/news/511642>

<p><i>ISEAS Perspective</i> is published electronically by: ISEAS - Yusof Ishak Institute</p> <p>30 Heng Mui Keng Terrace Singapore 119614 Main Tel: (65) 6778 0955 Main Fax: (65) 6778 1735</p> <p>Get Involved with ISEAS. Please click here: https://www.iseas.edu.sg/support/get-involved-with-iseas/</p>	<p>ISEAS - Yusof Ishak Institute accepts no responsibility for facts presented and views expressed.</p> <p>Responsibility rests exclusively with the individual author or authors. No part of this publication may be reproduced in any form without permission.</p> <p>© Copyright is held by the author or authors of each article.</p>	<p>Editorial Chairman: Choi Shing Kwok</p> <p>Editorial Advisor: Tan Chin Tiong</p> <p>Editorial Committee: Terence Chong, Cassey Lee, Norshahril Saat, and Hoang Thi Ha.</p> <p>Managing Editor: Ooi Kee Beng</p> <p>Editors: William Choong, Lee Poh Onn, Lee Sue-Ann, and Ng Kah Meng</p> <p>Comments are welcome and may be sent to the author(s).</p>
---	---	--