Presidential Elections 2017: The government robbed us of what should have been a major celebration

Description

Itâ??ll be a bit of an understatement to say Iâ??m disappointed by how our Presidential Elections happened.

Is it still considered an election if the winning candidate was selected for us, instead of being elected by us?

What really disappointed me wasnâ??t the #notmypresident hashtag (which I see as an overreaction) or the fact that a minority election runs counter to our city stateâ??s meritocratic ideals. And obviously I donâ??t really care that we lost a potential public holiday.

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Iâ??m disappointed that we were robbed of the chance to celebrate.

For the same outcome, this week could have well turned out to be vastly different. Singaporeans head to the polls, choosing between Halimah Yacob, Salleh or Farid. We tune into the television eagerly, waiting with bated breaths for the results announcement. Halimah wins, and news headlines will scream, Singapore voted for their first female President! We throw confetti; we shout and celebrate.

Instead, given the same outcome, the news headlines now read:

- *â??People feel muzzled and angry because they could not voteâ?• (CNA)*
- *â??PAP prepared to pay political price for reserved Presidential Electionâ?• (Mothership)*
- *â??How Singapore elected a president without a voteâ?• (CNN)*
- *â??Why Singaporeans arenâ??t all glad to get the President they wantedâ?• (BBC)*

Iâ??ve no doubt that Halimah would have won over the other nominees. We could be celebrating yet another successful Singaporean story spurred by our system of meritocracy, and how any Singaporean daughter or son (even if youâ??re born from a poor family with no powerful connections) can rise up the ranks to become the nationâ??s symbol of power.

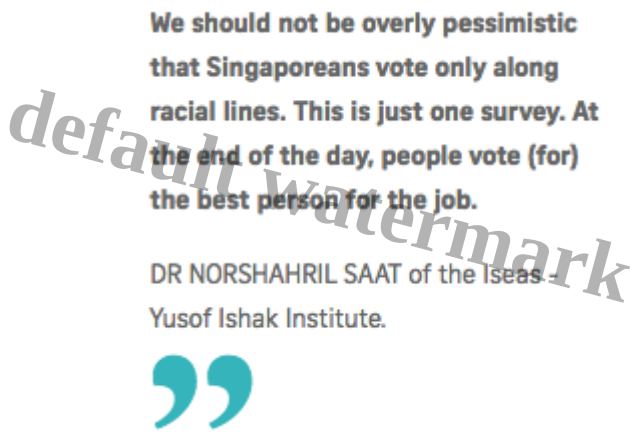
The Internet would have been abuzz with tweets and Facebook statuses of â??OMG we really elected our first female President! TAKE THAT AMERICA!â?• or â??big breakthrough for feminism! Female power FTW!â?•. #proudtobeSingaporean could have been trending, instead of #notmypresident

But as a result of how our government chose to run this yearâ??s elections, and by disqualifying the other two candidates, it is no wonder that Singaporeans are unhappy.

My friend who lives overseas said that we can still celebrate anyway, because the fact remains that we now have our first female President, but I reckon a celebration in lieu of the circumstances surrounding her appointment to office is moot.

Iâ??ve written previously about how I didnâ??t vote for the opposition, but also why I feel the PAP is still far from perfect. This incident is one of the scars that will continue to taint the PAPâ??s reputation, and Iâ??ve no doubt that its critics will continue to quote #PE2017 against them for years to come.

Thereâ??s a strong case to be made for the government to select who is to become President : that allowing the people to vote may not always lead to the best person being nominated in. Certainly, not all democratic elections have resulted in the best or most qualified candidate being elected, but **I wish our government had trusted us enough to vote in our first female President.**



Source: The Straits Times

Some argue that a reserved Presidential Election should not have been held in the first place, and you may throw apples at me for this unpopular opinion, but I was one of the few rooting for a minority election this year.

Did having a reserved election run counter to meritocratic ideals? Yes.

Did we compromise meritocracy for representation? Perhaps, but ours is a country that does impose an ethnic integration policy on public housing anyway, so why should we be surprised?

Did it violate our right to vote as citizens of a democracy? Yes, but come on, academic scholars have long described our governing model as that of an authoritarian democracy instead.

In a country where the government has to contend with balancing multi-racialism, democracy AND meritocratic ideals, sometimes trade-offs have to be made.

(Iâ??m not saying I support how our government conducted the elections, but Iâ??m trying to understand why they did what they did.)

But why not allow Salleh and Farid to run against Halimah Yacob? Iâ??ve no doubt Halimah would have won.

Today, thereâ??s little cause for celebration, people are protesting, and Singaporeans are lashing out at the PAP.



Source: Channel News Asia

We werenâ??t given the chance to vote Halimah Yacob in.

I wanted to vote in our first female President, and the government took that away from me.

With love,
Budget Babe

Category

1. Family