**PRESS RELEASE**

**IMMEDIATE 8.12.2018**

**MAKE POLITICS POLITE (AGAIN)**

**THE EMPEROR IS NAKED**

To find the average age, we first identify everyone’s individual age, (to the nearest year will do). All positive data. Information as to what age people are *not* is unhelpful. Likewise, to identify a collective opinion, we need to know only what people actually want. Data as to what they do *not want* is again unnecessary. Therefore, by definition, a democratic will can’t best be identified in a ‘yes-or-no?’ vote.

The 2016 referendum did not *and could not* identify the collective will *IF* some of the 52% who voted *for* ‘leave’ were not voting *for* a positive policy but rather *against* ‘remain’. (Or *against* Brussels, immigrants, or ‘*je ne sais quoi’*.) That referendum did not identify the general will, *le volonté général* – if it had, we would not have spent the last 30 months arguing about what that general will actually is!

**SIMPLISTIC BINARY BALLOTS**

**CANNOT BEST COPE WITH QUESTIONS OF COMPLEXITY**

Binary voting is over 2,000 years old, the most inaccurate measure of collective opinion ever invented! Be it in parliament or any future referendum, our future should be based on a (short) list of options.

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**THE MODIFIED BORDA COUNT, MBC**

In an MBC – first mooted by Ramón Llull over 800 years ago – people vote only *for*, and nobody votes *against* anybody or any thing. In a four-option ballot:

+ he who abstains gives nothing to anything;

+ she who casts one preference gives her favourite just 1 point (and nothing to anything else);

+ he who casts two preferences gives his favourite 2 points (and his 2nd choice 1 pt). Etc., so:

+ she who casts all four preferences gives her favourite 4 pts (her 2nd choice 3, her 3rd 2, and 4th 1 pt).

The winner is the option with the most points. The protagonist will therefore want, not only her supporters to cast full ballots, but also her (erstwhile, majoritarian) opponents to give her option at least a 3rd if not a 2nd preference. So politicians will be polite.

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**THE WAY FORWARD**

The MBC is robust, inclusive and, most importantly, accurate. So, (as in New Zealand in 1992), Mr. Speaker or an independent commission should draft, say, a four-option referendum – eg, ‘WTO’, ‘May’s withdrawal’, ‘Norway +’ and ‘remain’ – for the MPs/people to have a multi-option vote. (The precedent was set in 1948 when Westminster legislated for Newfoundland to have a three-option poll.) (The Danish, Norwegian and Swedish parliaments have provision for multi-option voting.)

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