**IS MAJORITY VOTING DEMOCRATIC?**

**WOULD PREFERENCE POINTS VOTING BE MORE DEMOCRATIC?**

**PRESS RELEASE**

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**A BRIEF HISTORY OF BINARY DECISION-MAKING**

The year dot The beginning: Cain killed Able.

Athens, c. 500 BC War replaced by a non-violent but still binary procedure, majority voting.

Rome, AD 105 Pliny the Younger: but binary voting can’t well cater for more than two options.

France, 1774 The end? Non-binary preferential points voting, modified Borda count, MBC.

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**THE LESSONS OF BREXIT**

Majority voting is binary; so debates are dichotomous; so politics is adversarial. It need not be so. Majority voting needs reform because

a) it cannot measure consensus; with so many ‘for’ and others ‘against’, it measures dissensus;

b) just as it would allow children to vote ‘no’ to parsnips, broccoli, swedes *ad nauseam*, so too it lets MPs vote ‘no’ to ‘no deal’, ‘May’s deal’, ‘a second referendum’ etc., add more *nauseam*;

c) an “***X***, yes or no?” vote identifies, not so much the will of the people, more the will of the leader who sets the question: dictators, Napoléon, Lenin, *et al*, or democrats like Blair, Cameron, etc. In most cases, the answer is the question… but not with Pinochet or Brexit;

d) binary majority rule is a cause of war; it also means that the Arab List may *never* be in the Israeli government, nor the Kurds in Turkey’s, and nor, as was, Catholics in Stormont;

e) instead, tails can then wag dogs. Theresa May concocts a majority with the worst possible partner, the DUP; or Benjamin Netanyahu with Jewish Home;

f) a majority can whip and rule; or just a majority of the majority? But 51% of 51% = 26%!

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**BREXIT AIN’T BINARY, SO DON’T USE BINARY VOTING!**

Rather, as per the advice of Jean-Charles de Borda, Lewis Carroll and others: let (i) everything be on the table; (ii) a (short) list of 4-6 options be on the ballot; and (iii) MPs/voters cast their preferences. Along with the Condorcet rule, the MBC preferential points system is one of the “two best interpret-tations of majority rule,” (*Oxford Concise Dictionary of Politics,* Iain McLean, 2013, OUP, p 139).

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Accordingly, the de Borda Institute calls for (a) parliamentary votes, any indicative vote, and any second referendum, all to be preferential; and (b) when Brexit is all over, further democratic reform:

 **I preferential PR elections, for a truly multi-party democracy,**

 **II un-whipped preferential points voting in decision-making, for an inclusive polity,**

 **III all-party power-sharing, for a better example to be given to our youth.**

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