**PRESS RELEASE**

**IMMEDIATE: 24th May.**

**COMPROMISE**

The inability to find a compromise is not just Mrs May’s fault. Our collective fault lies in our use of a decision-making procedure by which a compromise is next to impossible: binary voting.

The Government, Parliament, the Electoral Commission, many in academia and most of the media, believe in majority voting. It may work if there are only two options. In a multi-option debate, however – as in Brexit – binary voting is usually divisive, often inaccurate, and sometimes ***plain wrong***!

Take a simple example. Option ***A*** is the motion; ***B*** and ***C*** are the 1st and 2nd amendments; ***D*** is the status quo; and an electorate of just three people have preferences as follows:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Preferences | The Voters |
| Ms *i* | Mr *j* | Ms *k* |
| 1st | ***A*** | ***B*** | ***C*** |
| 2nd | ***B*** | ***C*** | ***D*** |
| 3rd | ***C*** | ***D*** | ***A*** |
| 4th | ***D*** | ***A*** | ***B*** |

First things first: a binary vote on which amendment, so it’s ***B*** v ***C***, and ***B*** wins, 2:1. Next comes the motion, so it’s ***A*** or ***B***, which ***A*** wins by the same margin. Finally, the substantive, ***A*** v ***D***, which ***D*** wins, again by 67%! So the democratic decision is ***D***. But wait: all three persons, 100%, prefer ***C*** to ***D***. In this and many other multi-option instances, majority voting is just ***plain wrong***.\*

What is needed is pluralism, (as in the Danish Parliament’s use of three-option voting, or New Zealand’s 1992 five-option referendum). Not just a plurality vote which lets the MP (or voter) choose a compromise option instead of their favourite. Not just a multi-option vote which allows them to state both. But a preferential procedure which encourages everyone to state both their preference option and their compromise option(s), and where the declaration of a 2nd and subsequent preferences does not detract from the voter’s 1st preference – i.e., a preferential points procedure known as the Modified Borda Count, MBC.

Brexit went wrong not only because the 2016 referendum was a no-compromise majority vote, but likewise because the meaningful and other votes in parliament were also binary.

\* This example is taken from the author’s *Majority Voting as a Catalyst of Populism* (Springer, Heidelberg), expected in August, 2019.

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