**taiThe de Borda Institute: 2022 ANNUAL REVIEW**

An Taisce the Irish environmental lobby, <https://www.antaisce.org/>

aup - American University in Paris ccr Centre of Conflict Resolution in Munich

ceps - Centre for European Policy Studies cop Conference of the Parties

crs - Conflict Research Society dcc - Dublin City Council

deb - de Borda epsa European Political Science Association

gmt Greenwich Mean Time ih21 https://www.ih21.org/en/about-us

innate Irish Network for Non-violent Action & Training ips Irish Political Studies

it - *Irish Times* jrct Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust

ngo non-governmental organisation nigp - Northern Ireland Green Party

nihrc - NI Human Rights Commission ojps Open Journal of Political Science

pr-stv Proportional Representation – Singe Transferable Vote

psai Political Studies Association of Ireland

rip Rest in Peace tcd - Trinity College Dublin

td - *Teachta Dála,* a Deputy in *Dáil Éireann*

ucd University College Dublin ucl University College London

uu University of Ulster

To: (i) Patrons: Professors Angela Mickley (Potsdam), Arend Lijphart (California), John Baker (ex ucd), Maurice Salles (Caen), Paul Arthur (uu) and 杨龙 Yáng Lóng (Nánkāi, Tiānjīn); Doctor Judith Stephens; {Irina Bazileva (Moscow) rip}, and the former td, Trevor Sargent (Dublin).

(ii) Serving board members: Professor Katy Hayward (Queen’s), Edwin Graham, Mark McCann**,** Phil Kearney and Vanessa Liston; plus some former members: Grace Walsh, Roseann Seale and Sieneke Hakvoort.

(iii) Copies to: Profs. Don Saari (Irvine), Fuad Aleskerov (Moscow), Hall Gardner (aup), Hannu Nurmi (Turku), John Morison (Queen’s), Peter Stone (tcd), Sonny 盧兆興 Ló Shìu Hīng (Hong Kong), and 送迎发 Sòng Yíngfǎ (Xúzhōu); along with Anna Tulin Brett, Andy Pollak, Charles Stanley-Smith, Ciarán Cuffe mep, dcc’s Cllr. Dermot Lacey, Joe Humphreys of the it, Marian Farrell (cfc), Rob Fairmichael, Mal O’Hara (NIGP), {Rosemary Bechler rip of openDemocracy}, Simon Wood, Tim Jones (jrct), Tommy Sands and Wes Holmes; while beyond these shores are Albert Frantz in Vienna, Elca Stigter and Leo Joosten in Leiden; Eva Wolf, Gregor Berz, Manfred Holler of the CCR and Alfred Tolle in Munich; Jeremy Wates and Michael Emerson (no relation) of ceps in Brussels; Tom Brake of Unlock Democracy, Michael Sinclair and Perry Walker in Britain; 方英 Fāng Yīng in Beijing; Jan Oreský and Mirek Libal in Prague, while Vera Stoyarová is in Brno; Marcin Gerwin in Gdansk; Nato Kirvalidze in Tbilisi; Paddy McEvoy in Cambridge; Valery Perry in Sarajevo; Vicky Selwyn in France… and in New Zealand – Paul Tarrant and Nigel Pearson; old and new, all good friends of deB.

**(Those named in the text are shown underlined in bold.)**

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Dear Everyone,

I’ve only just realised, we are now 25 years old! So is it fair to say that the JRCT, which gave us £3,000 back in 1997, made a sound investment? Here are the sounds of 2022!

**CHINA** It started last December when the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences invited deB to join a massive international webinar, for which **Simon** had produced a superb video – <https://player.vimeo.com/video/643482388?h=e0ebe68a4d> – in which (modesty aside) I start with a sentence in, well, almost fluent Chinese. At that four-day event, half of which was in the Chinese day but middle of the Irish night, the Academy decided to set up an NGO... or should I say a GO: the Global Think Tank Network for Democracy Studies. In October, it produced its first newsletter, with lots of news from China of course, and just one mention of a non-Chinese Institute... ourselves... wow! Sounds good:

<http://www.deborda.org/home/2022/9/26/2022-15-china.html>

Accordingy, I have just submitted my fourth article to OJPS: *Consensus, Computers... and Climate Change*, which talks about decision-making in the COP and openly criticises Putin’s referendums in...

**UKRAINE** February: Russia invaded Ukraine! I got to know the local Ukrainian community and together we organised their first rally, on March 5th, getting a stage and two complete loudspeaker systems (for free); we did it again in July; I also managed (eventually) to persuade the NIGP to host a session on Ukraine at their AGM, and I wrote a few articles for INNATE and the PSAI, not least on how the use of imperfect voting procedures has been a cause or a tool of war: the highly divisive two-round electoral system in 2004 and 2010 – Yushchenko and then Yanukovich, each winning a narrow majority to then claim majority rule – and then the referendums of 2014 and 2022 (see below).

**NI** In May, NI held its Assembly elections, and I was yet again an election observer... and yet again again, our NI elections failed to comply with international standards! Hence my report: http://www.deborda.org/home/2022/5/10/2022-7-ni-assembly-elections.html

This was duly sent to the relevant persons – the Electoral Office, etc – where it was acknowledged… and all but ignored. Again.

The report refers to the way the PR-STV count is conducted – in effect, it sometimes transfers votes to candidates, even though the relevant voters have not cast any preferences for these candidates; this, I think, is an infringement of the voters’ democratic rights, so I also sent the paper to the NIHRC, who have reacted positively… albeit a little slowly.

**FRANCE** So I went to stay with **Vicky** to observe the French elections, which did comply! I was on my way to the EPSA conference in...

**CZECH** ... Prague, where I managed to be the discussant at one seminar – (yet another conference designed to give PhD students a chance to perform, and everyone the opportunity to travel) – but it allowed me to meet up with **Mirek**, and we decided to organise a book launch for later in the year. First of all, of course, I had to produce the book.

***The Punters’ Guide to Democracy***, (Springer, Heidelberg)

, A hell of a lot of time was spent on this, not least by **Rob** who did the proofs! But then came the hassle, because Springer’s typesetters made a complete horlicks of everything; **Johannes** and I had agreed to the format, but they, the typesetters, unilaterally changed it! So it all had to be redone, more than once! Eventually, they told me, it would be ready in July, so I began to plan for the launches. The first was at the CRS annual conference in September which, by chance, was in Belfast. The book wasn’t ready, so I used yet another video which **Simon** had prepared, and that was fine, although CRS didn’t show much interest. Next, I was the opening speaker for a conference organised by Sustainable Narratives ’22, a Hindu organisation based in England (whose webpage is currently not available); the event was fine, and they did say there would be a follow-up, but… there’s nothing yet. Then **Peter**, **Vanessa** and I were due to make a presentation of the book to the President, Michael D Higgins, but it still wasn’t ready; so that was postponed.

Then came the major book launches, in Dublin in Mansion House with the Lord Mayor and **Andy**, the well-known retired journalist, but the latters’ presence failed to attract any members of the press (so, with €600 to pay for the refreshments, the event was not a sound investment). In contrast, with **Katy** and **Peter** both performing, the launch at the PSAI conference in Waterford was given top billing, and about 50 attended… though still no books!

They arrived, at last, for the Belfast launch, and immediately sold out! It was a great evening, what with **Katy** again, David Ford (Alliance), Tom Hartley (SF), Alban Maginness (SDLP), **Mal** O’Hara (GP), a few academics and so on... and, of course, no press!

, Meanwhile, others are at work: **Phil** is busy using the MBC in An Taisce, trying to get COP26 and now 27 to adopt the MBC! That’s a huge task, but recent developments are positive – it all sounds very exciting, and we watch this space! **Vanessa** too is promoting both the MBC and the matrix vote, not least in her role as an elected councillor – so we watch that space too! So yes, 2022 has been busy!

Of disappointments, there are of course quite a few: **Wes** donated a sum to pay for and distribute copies of the book to individual members of the press, BBC Radio 4 and so on, the effect of which was another great big zero! That’s the media; meanwhile, academia. UCL and quite a few other academics in Queen’s and UU still don’t respond to anything. IPS has rejected yet another article, (so I’ve now been published in leading political journals in seven different countries... but not in Ireland!); this one is on the matrix vote and IPS has yet to even mention this Irish invention! At the same time, I’ve been trying to persuade the Community Relations Council CRC for years to actually promote some sort of debate on decision-making, but no!

Worst of all I suppose is the absence of any criticism of binary decision-making, even when it is so obviously a load of manipulation... as in Ukraine! In 2014, remember, Putin asked Donetsk if it wanted to be independent, and he acted as if a majority of its residents said ‘yes’; but in 2022, he changed his mind and asked if they wanted to be part of Russia, and he now acts as if a majority has also changed their minds in exactly the same way! Heavens, is it not obvious that, at worst, binary voting is only a means by which those in power manipulate those with less? Sounds just like Napoléon in 1803... which brings us back to...

**FRANCE** (again) I went to Paris in November to hold a seminar in the AUP with **Hall**, and then to Strasbourg, the Council of Europe’s World Forum for Democracy. Which **Valerie** was also attending. They invited me to talk on decision-making in one of the labs, and it went quite well (I think).

Then, on the final day, everyone gathered in plenary to decide from a short-list of three presentations, which was the best. Now of course, they were using electronic voting; after all, this was the World Forum for Democracy, a gathering of whiz-kids to look at all the modern, nay leading-edge, democratic stuff... and – yes, you’ve guessed it – they used the most ancient measure of collective opinion ever invented: three binary votes! How (b......) mad can you get?!

I raised my hand to speak, but no, I was not called. Of course. Forum my foot! So afterwards, I hit the proverbial e-roof... messages to all and sundry... and the director has now replied to say, “Thank you for your message... [on] the voting methods... As plans take shape... for the 2023 World Forum, [we] will be in touch with you to discuss this further.” So, that sounds good too, better watch this space as well, (and Strasbourg is lovely).

, On a more positive note, the numbers watching the deB TEDx talk is now up to 67,000; would that the pennies in the bank were equally numerous.

**CZECH** (again) Then, after a lovely evening with **Alfred** in Munich, a book launch with **Mirek** of IH21 in the old parliament buildings in Prague! Couldn’t be better (though still not good enough for the press). No sales here, I’m afraid, but they showed some interest in the matrix vote, and the word is spreading. (After a little relaxation in the *Vysoke Tatry* mountains in Slovakia), the trip finished with an evening with **Vera** in Brno.

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So, the year is at an end, and the world is in a mess. Consensus is just so necessary, everywhere... so let me send you all my thanks for your continued support and lots of seasons’ greetings! 2023 can only be better... I hope.

Peter