

Majoritarianism, A Cause of Conflict: The Rights and Wrongs of Self-Determinism

Peter Emerson

The de Borda Institute, 36 Ballysillan Road, Belfast BT147QQ, Northern Ireland

A Tale of Woe

This article starts with a few of the tragic events which have happened in the last twenty years, and all of them are related, directly, to the right of self-determination and the widely accepted majoritarian interpretation of that right. The most recent story is possibly the worst.

In July 2002, parties to the twenty-year old civil war in Sudan signed the Machakos Protocol. This states that, in six years' time, South Sudan shall have the right to self-determination, a referendum on secession. Within months, there was civil war in Darfur.

In September 1999, the (Catholic) people of East Timor exercised their right to be independent of the (Moslem) people of West Timor.¹ In so doing, they followed the example from Yugoslavia where, in 1991, the Catholic (Croatian) Slavs exercised their right to be separate from the Orthodox (Serbian) Slavs. More of the Balkans in a moment, but the reaction in East Timor was violent, and because of this and conflicts elsewhere in the archipelago, Indonesia has already been dubbed "Asia's Yugoslavia."

In March 1999, international mediators negotiated the Rambouillet Agreement by which Kosovo, in three years' time, would be allowed to exercise its right to self-determination. Milošević refused to sign. Within days, NATO forces were bombing Serbia. Eventually, Chernomyrdin re-negotiated the agreement by, *inter alia*, removing the referendum clause. Whereupon Milošević did sign. So the bombing had not served its stated purpose.

On Good Friday, 1998, the British and Irish governments launched the Belfast Agreement. Accordingly, at some future date, Northern Ireland will be allowed to exercise its right to self-determination by referendum, repeatedly, every seven years or so, until it gets the answer they want. Partly as a direct result, sectarianism in the Province is as bad as ever!

In 1995, Quebec exercised its right to self-determination. The people had determined themselves to be part of Canada in 1980, but the losers of that referendum did not like the result; they wanted independence. So they arranged for another poll. They lost that one too, by 1%. Now they want a third. As in Northern Ireland, the process is not so much a referendum but a "never-end-'em."

In November 1991, the European Union set up the Badinter Commission to study the future of Yugoslavia, and it concluded that every people wishing to determine itself

should hold a referendum. As a result, the disease turned into a plague, and there were two-option votes in Slovenia (1990), Croatia (1991), Macedonia (1991) and Bosnia (1992), which were all recognised. The subject is still a bone of contention in Montenegro, where there's talk of a referendum and then independence on 13 July 2005, but any vote there will probably also be recognised. Other votes, in *Krajina* (1990 and '91), *Republika Srpska* (two in 1991, and one in each of '92, '93 and '94) and *Herzeg-Bosna* (2000), were not recognised. And a few other polls, in Kosovo (1991) and Sandžak (1991 and '92), got a mixed reception. The point, however, to quote Sarajevo's now legendary newspaper, *Oslobodjenje*, is that "all the wars in the former Yugoslavia started with a referendum."²

At about the same time, in December 1991, Nagorno-Karabakh held a referendum. Unlike the Balkans, the Caucasus held their plebiscites *after* their wars, by which time, of course, the minority was either exiled or dead. The vote in Nagorno-Karabakh was 99.9% in favour. Abkhazia also voted retrospectively, with 97% support.

Fourteen Points

The right of self-determination, first put forward by President Wilson during the First World War,³ suggests that every people shall be entitled to exercise this right. At the time, it foresaw the demise of imperial (but not fiscal) colonialism. Its application to-day, however, begs two questions. The first is, "what is a people?" And the second: "how shall a people exercise that right?" There are many academics who study the former, but few if any ask the question "how?"⁴

Accordingly, in this article, we will look at the methodology — the *how?* — and ask if it is right and proper that a people should determine itself on the basis of only a majority of itself. Then we will examine this Western democratic structure, majoritarianism, in more general terms.⁵ And finally, we will consider a rather more inclusive, more peaceful *modus vivendi*, at least in so far as it concerns decision-making, be it in parliament or be it in national plebiscites.

Russian Dolls

If a great big country wishes to exercise the right of self-determination, it may. And if a majority so wishes, then that big country may continue to exist. Unless, that is, a minority, which happens to be concentrated in one particu-

lar part, decides to exercise its right to opt out. And if a majority of the minority so wishes, then it can seek independence and set up its own middle country. Unless, of course, a minority of the minority, which happens to be concentrated in one particular part, decides to exercise its right to opt out of opting out. And if a majority of the minority of the minority so wishes, then it can seek independence of the middle country and set up its own tiny country. Unless, needless to say, a minority of the minority of the minority... and if a majority of the minority of the minority of the minority....

Like the famous Russian dolls, every majority has its corresponding minority, and this formula will only bring peace, harmony and tranquillity to society, when every individual is an independent nation state consisting of only one person! The formula is a nonsense, a madness. For some reason, however, Western politicians are convinced that a decision can only be democratic if it is taken by a majority vote.

In practice, the big country is the UK, the USSR or Yugoslavia. The middle countries are (from the UK) Ireland; (from the USSR) Azerbaijan, Georgia and Moldova; and (from Yugoslavia) Bosnia, Croatia, Serbia and Montenegro. And the tiny “countries” are (from the UK) Northern Ireland; (from the USSR) Nagorno Karabakh, Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Adjara, and Trans-Dnestr; and, (as implied above, from Yugoslavia), *Krajina*, *Republika Srpska* and *Herzeg-Bosna*, Kosova, and the *Sandžak*. The madness continues. Indonesia is already open to division in Aceh, Ambon and Irian Jaya, and that’s just the beginning. And now Sudan looks as if it might split up into South Sudan, Darfur, and maybe East Sudan. Except (so far) from the last named, every one of these places has seen serious, if not horrific violence. God knows what will happen if the disease spills over into the Congo.

The Academic Debate

When the subject turns to electoral systems, politicians talk about lots of themes — majoritarian, proportional and preferential — and lots of variations on those themes — direct and indirect elections, electoral colleges, open and closed PR-list and two-tier systems, the single transferable vote and maybe even the quota Borda system.

On decision-making, however, there is not even a debate. If a decision is to be taken democratically, the voting procedure is, always was, and apparently must remain, a two-option majority vote. Either the decision is taken in consensus, by which is implied a *verbal* consensus; or it is taken by a (simple, weighted, qualified or consociational) majority vote. Furthermore, with the exception of a few special cases in post-conflict plural societies where cabinets are based on a system of power-sharing, governments themselves are invariably majoritarian, either single-party or majority coalition.⁶

In “normal” societies, then, in places like the U.S. and the UK, decisions are taken by simple majority vote. On

some sensitive issues, certain groups use a weighted majority vote. In more complex organisations like the EU, a rather odd formula is concocted so that big and small countries alike can vote together in a qualified majority vote. And in plural societies like Belgium or post-conflict societies like Northern Ireland and Bosnia, a form of consociational majority voting is employed. The question, however, is usually dichotomous. Politics is invariably adversarial. The system is always majoritarian. And this also applies to the right of self-determination, apparently. It is assumed to be a given, almost beyond question.

Majoritarianism

The world, or at least the Western world, is obsessed with a double myth. Firstly, democracy is not majority rule, but they think it is. Democracy should not be a means by which one lot then dominates the rest. Rather, it is, or should be, a process by which all can come to an accommodation, their unanimous viewpoint, common consensus or, at the very least, their best possible compromise.

Secondly, a majority opinion cannot be *identified* by a majority vote, but they think it can. Among populations measured in umpteen millions, one cannot identify the popular will of a few millions by asking all of them a two-option question: something like are you left-wing or right-wing? They might be hard or soft left, hard right or middle right or soft right. Or they might be neither.

If this double myth could be shattered, international (i.e., Western) diplomats would no longer impose this majoritarian decision-making on other peoples, via the Badinter Commission on Yugoslavia, or via the Machakos Protocol on Sudan etc. So before we examine other methodologies, let us take a closer look at this majoritarian nonsense.

If the Labour Party, to take a British example, has a majority of the seats in parliament, it may form the government.⁷ If, subsequently, the Labour Party decides to initiate a certain piece of legislation, it may do so. But the Labour Party, being democratic, takes its decisions by majority vote. The parliament, being democratic, does the same. In this instance, therefore, the outcome depends upon two votes: it needs the majority of the Labour Party, and the majority in parliament. So the actual outcome depends upon only the majority of the majority. But a 51% majority of a 51% majority is just a 26% minority. If you really wanted majority rule, you would have to insist upon 71% of 71%. Which would mean that any 30% minority could veto the proceedings. Either way, therefore, what goes for majority rule is actually, in many instances, a form of minority rule. Majority rule does not even exist.

Now consider a different scenario. Most political questions are multi-optional. There are, invariably, many constitutional arrangements to choose from, an almost infinite range of planning options, numerous variations of budget proposals, and quite a few possible ways of tackling the problems of Iraq, for example. In politics, most questions, if asked in the right way, are indeed multi-optional. It is not

a question of “Capital punishment for murder, yes or no?” It is, “How shall we deal with the convicted murderer?” It is not, “nuclear power, yes or no?” It is, “How shall we create sufficient energy?” It is not, “Northern Ireland in the United Kingdom or a united Ireland?” It is, “What is the constitutional future of Northern Ireland?” It is not, “Resolution 1441, yes or no?” It is, “How shall we deal with the question of Iraq?” And so on.

So what happens when a parliament or a people is given a stark choice between two possibilities — which we will call options **A** and **B** — when in fact there are other possibilities — option **C** at least, and maybe options **D** and **E** as well.

South Sudan, for example, according to the Machakos Protocol, could stay as part of Sudan (option **A**) or it could secede (option **B**). There again, it could be autonomous within a de-centralised Sudan (option **C**). Kashmir, to take another instance, could be incorporated into Pakistan (**A**), incorporated into India (**B**), or declared independent (**C**). In like manner, Northern Ireland could be part of the United Kingdom (**A**), or part of a united Ireland (**B**), or part of an Anglo-Celtic federation (**C**), or under a form of joint British/Irish authority (**D**).

The number of possible options cannot be decided by imposition; rather, the democratic process itself should allow all concerned to consider just what options are possible, and any subsequent vote should be based on a (short) list of, let us say, four to six options.

For present purposes, let us consider a hypothetical situation where an electorate is confronted by a two-option choice between options **A** and **B**, in what is nevertheless a three-option debate of options **A**, **B** and **C**. In the Scottish devolution debate, for example, there were three distinct possibilities: **A** *status quo*, that is, rule from Westminster; then came option **B**, devolution or autonomy; and finally, there was **C**, independence. The vote, Tony Blair decided, would be held between options **A** and **B**. So the Scottish National Party, which wanted option **C** to be on the ballot paper, would just have to go without.

Now it can be assumed that those who wanted **A** probably had preferences **A-B-C**. While those who wanted **B** had preferences **B-A-C** or **B-C-A**. If option **C** had been on the ballot paper, then those who wanted **C** would probably have had preferences **C-B-A**. Because **C** wasn't there, however, some **C** supporters argued that they should vote for **B** because it was their second best, while others said that they should vote for **A** in the hope that **B** would lose and that then all the **B** supporters would campaign for a second referendum, which just might include **C**.

Well, as it happened, they voted on just the two options, **A** or **B**. From the results, however, no one knows for sure how many of the **A** supporters were actually **C** supporters, nor how many of the **B** supporters were actually **C** supporters. So, on the basis of that referendum, there was only one *definite* conclusion: it was not that the people of Scotland wanted devolution, it was that Tony Blair wanted the people of Scotland to want devolution.

Except in comparatively rare cases like citizens' initiatives, then, the outcome of a majority vote *identifies*, not the will of the voters, not even the will of the majority of the voters, but simply the will of he who wrote the motion. Little wonder, therefore, that the majority vote was the chosen instrument of such notables as Napoleon, Mussolini, Hitler, Antonescu, Duvalier, Khomeini, Milošević and Tudjman, to name but some of those who have used this methodology successfully, and only one “democratic dictator,” Pinochet, actually lost his referendum.⁸ Little wonder, too, that the majority vote is used so often by prime ministers in parliaments where, of course, they have the added advantage of a party whip.

In some instances, then, a majority vote is not very democratic. And in practice, some plebiscites on sovereignty have not been very democratic. The classic was in Bosnia where there were definitely more than two options on the agenda. Secondly, there were more than two ethno-religious groups. Thirdly, no one group had a majority, for there were, nominally, 40% Moslem, 30% Orthodox and 20% Catholic, along with a few others, the Jews and the Roma, to name but two. A direct consequence of holding a two-option majority vote in such a society was that any two of the bigger groups could gang up against the third. The whole thing was dangerous and highly divisive. The Moslems ganged up with the Catholics. The Orthodox boycotted. On the day of the vote, the barricades went up in Sarajevo. And within a year, the Catholic/Moslem gang had split up and they too were fighting a war.⁹

A More Inclusive Democracy

When our forebears first opted for democracy, they knew that it was a system of governance which was “of the people, by the people and for the people.”¹⁰ And they meant *all* the people. Democracy was meant to be for everybody, (even if the founding fathers tended to be a fairly small minority of white, free males).

The trouble came when, on some subject of dispute, they tried to identify either “the will of the people,” and/or that which should be its equivalent, “the will of parliament.” The only country which looked at this problem in any depth was France. In England and America, academics tended to favour “the greater good of the greater number,” which, (good or bad), is no more or less than majority rule. In France, however, they realised that you cannot *identify* the will of parliament by a two-option ballot. You can *confirm* it, perhaps. But you cannot *identify* a collective will by a majority vote.

Admittedly, if there is unanimity, it does not matter which (voting or non-voting) procedures are used, the outcome will always be that single, unanimous viewpoint. On matters of some dispute, however, where those concerned try to come to an accommodation, a majority opinion *may* be the same as the common consensus, but Jean-Jacques Rousseau was the first to note that this is not always the case.¹¹ Finally, if the topic is really contentious, the best

possible compromise is almost certainly *not* the same as the majority opinion; indeed, in most majority votes, there isn't even a compromise option to vote for! Again, we come to the conclusion that, in some instances, majority votes, and national plebiscites, are not very democratic!

Accordingly, when members of *l'Académie des Sciences* looked across the English Channel at what was, at the time, almost the only existing parliament in the world, they realised that the House of Commons was actually using the most inaccurate measure of collective opinion ever invented. (It still is!)

Heads were scratched, discussions were held...and two voting procedures were invented. In 1784, M. Jean-Charles de Borda proposed a points system, while Le Maquis de Condorcet preferred a pairings mechanism, a sort of league process. The former won the debate and, as a result, the Borda count was adopted by *l'Académie*, albeit mainly as an electoral system and rather less as a decision-making procedure. It worked well.

It didn't last very long, however, for a new member appeared on the scene and he wanted the simple majority vote. None of this consensus nonsense! It should be pointed out that this particular individual was not especially noted for his democratic idealism; his name was Napoleon Bonaparte.¹² Four years' later, he won his third 99% referendum majority, this time in favour of one of his own "modest" proposals...that he should become Emperor. Another undemocratic majority vote.

Since that time, nearly every Western parliament has chosen to use the same methodology. Admittedly, Norway has made provision for a two-round procedure, while when debating amendments, Finland and Sweden sometimes use a form of serial voting, and so too does the U.S. Elsewhere, however, nearly every parliament uses the two-option majority vote, although, to be fair, at least twenty countries have sometimes allowed their citizens to enjoy a degree of pluralism in multi-option referendums.¹³ For the most part, however, we Westerners impose this primitive two-option methodology both upon ourselves and on the hapless peoples of other countries, either as the means by which peoples may determine themselves, and/or as the methodology to be used in national parliaments. We even do this in places where majority rule should never have even been considered, places like Rwanda. Of which, more in a moment.

Happily, there are some exceptions, and some peoples have chosen to exercise their right of self-determination by means of a multi-option vote, although admittedly, most of these have been in a post-colonial setting.¹⁴ Wherever there is an internal argument about some ethno-religious dispute, however, those involved do not want a compromise. So they use a simple, two-option vote, even, as we have seen, at the risk of war!

An Open Society

A majority vote can only take place if the question is a closed one. It is "Option A, for-or-against?" Or it is "Option

A or option B?" In conflict resolution work, in contrast, mediators invariably rely on *open* questions. No matter whether the conflict is between man and woman, or whether it is of an ethno-religious nature between peoples, they first try to find out just which options exist. Then they establish what are everybody's preferences. And finally, they identify (usually in a verbal rather than in a votal process) that option which is the best possible compromise, i.e., the option which is everybody's highest average preference.

What is needed is a democratic structure which is itself peaceful, which, *inter alia*, allows for compromise. If the question is an open, multi-option ballot, and if everyone is enabled to express their preferences, then it should be possible to identify that option which is everybody's highest average preference.

As noted earlier, a democratic decision is either everyone's unanimous viewpoint, or their common consensus, or their best possible compromise. No matter which, it is always that option which is their highest average preference. An opinion ratified by a majority vote is democratic, sometimes. Everybody's consensus is always so.

Democratic Logic

Let us first examine the theory of open decision-making. If there are five options "on the table," options **A**, **B**, **C**, **D** and **E**, and if everyone expresses their preferences on all five options, then it should be easy to see which one has the highest average preference. If option **D**, say, gets an average preference score of 1, then obviously everyone gave **D** their 1st preference. If option **C** gets an average preference score of 3, then either everyone gave **C** a 3rd preference, or some gave it a 2nd while an equal number gave it their 4th preference. And lastly, if option **A** gets an average score of 5, then obviously, everyone gave **A** their 5th preference.

Now in practice, the chances of every option getting the same mean score of 3 are just about nil. Something is bound to be above the mean score, (and something else below). "The Borda count always gives a definite result."¹⁵

If the winning option gets an average preference score of between 1 and 1-1/2, it can be said to enjoy overwhelming support if not, indeed, unanimity. If the outcome gets a score of about 2, it may be seen as the votal consensus. And if the most popular option is of the order of 2-1/2, then it represents the best possible compromise.

The Gacacas

The traditional form of decision-making in Rwanda is the *gacaca*, a *Kinyarwanda* word meaning "grass." Basically, if your cows were eating my vegetables, both you and I would be called to a meeting of the village elders, who would doubtless be sitting on the grass, under the shade of "the big tree," to quote Julius Nyerere.¹⁶ And they would talk and talk, until they came to a verbal consensus. To the African, "Majority rule was a foreign notion."¹⁷

Rwanda has now adopted this *gacaca* as the means by which to overcome the legacy of the genocide. The ring leaders of that atrocity still go to the UN court in Arusha. But the other suspected criminals, possibly as many as 100,000 people, are being asked to confront their victims' bereaved and, depending on the severity of the crime, the guilty of lesser crimes are sentenced to undergo a community service order which benefits those bereaved. In effect, the *gacacas* are like mini-Peace and Reconciliation Commissions, in every village in the land, and each works on the basis of a verbal consensus.¹⁸

The Modified Borda Count

To reduce the occasions when people in conflict resort to violence, the political process should also consist of open, multi-option questions by which can be identified that option which is the best possible compromise for all concerned. The appropriate methodology is a sort of votal *gacaca*, the modified Borda count. It asks everyone to state their preferences, and it identifies that option which has the highest average preference.

Mathematically, it is a points system. In a 5-option ballot, a 1st preference gets 5 points, a 2nd preference gets 4 points, and so on. And the option with the most points, (which translates into the highest average preference), is the winner.

This methodology allows everyone to cast their preferences, for (one, some or) all the options listed. He who votes for n options exercises

$$n, n-1 \dots 2, 1 \text{ points}$$

while she who casts her preferences for only m options exercises only

$$m, m-1 \dots 2, 1 \text{ points.}$$

In a five-option ballot, this means that he who votes for only one option gives his favourite option only 1 point. She who votes for two options gives her favourite 2 points and her next choice 1 point. While he who votes for all five options gives his favourite 5 points, his second choice 4 points, and so on. In other words, a voter's 1st preference always gets 1 more point than her 2nd preference, whether or not she has actually expressed that 2nd preference.

This methodology actually encourages the voters to cast more than their 1st preference. And if everyone states not only their 1st preference but also their compromise option, it should be possible to identify that option which is the collective best compromise. Which is what democracy is all about.

Furthermore, when every politician knows that the final decision-making process will be a vote in which the outcome is the option with the highest average preference — in other words, when they know that the final vote depends upon the preferences of *everybody* —the nature of the de-

bate will itself change. In majority voting, if there is more of me and mine and less of you and yours, then I win, and debates which precede majority votes are often antagonistic. In consensus voting, on the other hand, if I want my option to win, then I will need not only the 1st preferences of my supporters, but also the 2nd and 3rd preferences of my erstwhile majoritarian opponents. So persuading those who had intended to give my option their 5th preference, to now give it their 3rd or even 2nd preferences, will pay handsome rewards. In consensus voting, the atmosphere changes, completely.

A Democratic Structure for a Plural, Post-conflict Society

Given that majority rule is a myth, there can be no excuse for any majoritarian administration. Therefore, not only should parliament represent the entire country, so too government should represent the *entire* parliament. Accordingly, parliament should elect its government, by a proportional and preferential electoral system,¹⁹ just as the people should elect the parliament by a proportional and preferential system.²⁰ And all decisions taken by that parliament should be based on either a verbal or a votal consensus.

This requires a further aspect to the separation of powers. The government must no longer be the sole author of the motion in question. The choice of options to be included on any ballot for self-determination, must itself be subject to an open democratic process, either in parliament or through the appointment of a special commission. Similarly, in parliament, all parties to the debate must be allowed to propose a motion. Similarly again, in the UN Security Council, all fifteen members should be enabled, either singly or in groups, to make a proposal on Iraq! Indeed, in all democratic chambers, the procedure should be open. There should therefore be an independent team of non-voting consensors, whose job is to determine just how many and which options are to be on the final ballot paper.

Initially, the consensors would allow all concerned (and not just Bush and Blair) to make a proposal. During the course of the debate, questions would be asked, clarifications sought, and ideas suggested, so the number of options "on the table" (and summarised on a computer screen) could rise or fall. At all times, however, the consensors would maintain a balanced list of options, in summary of that debate. A commission into self-determination would be charged with producing a short list of options. A parliament, on the other hand, would need to make just one decision. If, then, in the parliamentary scenario, there were but one option remaining at the end of the debate, it could be assumed that this represented the verbal consensus. If differences remained, however, and if, therefore, there were still a number of options to choose from, the consensors would again draw up a short list of options to reflect the debate, and all would then proceed to a vote. Finally, the consensors would analyse this vote and announce the outcome.

Conclusion

To summarise, all plebiscites on sovereignty should be subject to a preferential multi-option ballot, not only among those who wish to secede, but also with those who are to be the new neighbours. Secondly, any subsequent administration should be a broad-based all-party coalition, so that, no matter what their ethno-religious grouping, no matter whether they had been members of the old majority and were now a new minority, all persons would be able to participate, not only in parliament, but also in government. Thirdly, all non-urgent decisions taken in parliament would be subject, where appropriate, to a multi-option preference vote.

In such a structure, in consensus politics, all may long for the day when the words ‘majority’ and ‘minority’ simply fade from the political lexicon.

Endnotes

1. This one-line interpretation of events does not wish to belittle in any way the appalling violence associated with the 1975 Indonesian invasion of East Timor.
2. *Oslobodjenje*, (Sarajevo), 7 February 1999. For a full list of these referendums, see the author’s *From Belfast to the Balkans* (Belfast: The de Borda Institute, 1999), pp. 62–63.
3. In later life, President Wilson remarked that, at the time, he had not realised there were any Germans in the Sudetenland.
4. In her *Balkan Tragedy: Chaos and Dissolution After the Cold War* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 1995), for example, Susan L. Woodward argues at length about the numerous geographical, historical, religious, linguistic and political reasons for why one group of folk might like to consider themselves to be different from their fellows. She does not, however, question majoritarianism.
5. Majoritarianism was not common to other non-European societies. For example, the “Confucian ethos [in] many Asian countries stressed... the importance of consensus... [in contrast] with the primacy in American beliefs of... democracy” (Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilisations and the Remaking of the World Order* [New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996], p. 225). This suggests, of course, that we Westerners took a majoritarian form of democracy to be not just the best but the only true interpretation. See also footnote 17.
6. Switzerland adopted an all-party form of power-sharing government in 1959.
7. Because of the vagaries of the first-past-the-post electoral system, Tony Blair won a huge majority of seats in parliament in the general election, but only a minority of the votes, 44%.
8. The antics of these “democratic dictators” are described more fully in the author’s *Defining Democracy: Decisions, Elections and Good Governance* (Belfast: The de Borda Institute, 2002). Pinochet got 78% in his first referendum in 1978, but only 43% in the second ballot, ten years later.
9. To be fair to Robert Badinter, his Commission did suggest that the referendum in Bosnia would be valid “only if respectable numbers from all three communities in the republic approved” the result (Woodward, *Balkan Tragedy*, p. 280). Too late.
10. Abraham Lincoln, Gettysberg Address, 19.11.1863.
11. See William Doyle, *The Oxford History of the French Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), p. 53.
12. Duncan Black, *The Theory of Committees and Elections* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1958), p. 180.
13. These include Finland (3-options), New Zealand (5 options) and Guam (6- or even 7-option). See the author’s *Defining Democracy*.
14. Examples are Newfoundland’s 3-option ballot (1949), Singapore’s 3-options (1962), and Guam’s 6-option referendum (1982).
15. Ben Reilly writing in *International Political Science Review* 23 (October 2002): 358.
16. “The elders sit under the big tree and talk until they agree” (Mwalimu Julius Nyerere, in *The Ideologies of the Developing Nations*, Paul Sigmund [New York: Praeger, 1966], p. 197). The Kiswahili equivalent of the *gacaca* is *baraza*, and these forums can be used in courts of law and/or elected chambers.
17. Nelson Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom* (Boston: Little Brown, 1994), p. 25.
18. The imposition of the European concept of majoritarianism has caused major upsets in many African countries, but most of all in Rwanda. A horrible interpretation of majority rule was used by the *Interahamwe* as a “justification” for their genocide which they initiated with the slogan “*rubanda nyamwinshi*,” “the majority people” (Gérard Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis* [London: Hurst and Co, 1997]).
19. A parliament could elect a government by an ordinary system of PR, after which those elected would then sort out the various ministries; but that could be problematic. The better approach would be to use a PR matrix vote in which every member of parliament would vote, in their order of preference, not only for their chosen nominees, but also for the ministerial post in which they wished each nominee to serve.

20. The most consensual electoral system yet devised is the quota Borda system (QBS). It is both proportional and preferential. The quota element ensures that QBS, like PR-STV, encourages parties to nominate only that number of candidates which they

think will get elected. And just as the modified Borda count encourages the voter to express a full list of preferences, so too QBS encourages the voter to cross the gender, the party and even the sectarian divide.

