



WORKING PAPER 16

TEN GOALS AND ONE SOLUTION FOR WESTMINSTER ELECTORAL REFORM: MARRYING CONSTITUENCY LINKS WITH PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION

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June 2010 – reissued November with extended Implementation Guide

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Abstract

There is little debate over the goals of electoral reform, yet goals should determine the choice of a new system. This paper proposes ten goals that are wider than merely giving more seats to the Liberal Democrats. In a society made up of women and men, both need balanced representation. In an educated society, citizens need to be kept abreast of their MPs' performance as legislators, so as to engage with parliamentary affairs. In an increasingly diverse society, the electoral system needs to improve who gets to be represented by whom. Majority government must be encouraged.

A new system is proposed, which keeps constituencies as they are, but teams them up into groups of 10-12 to form new Electoral Districts where votes are counted and seats distributed to parties in a more proportional way. The moderately disproportional D'Hondt method ensures a governable majority to the leading party unless voters spread their votes unusually widely. Parties could offer a suitably diverse list of 10-12 candidates on the ballot to help voters feel represented by people reflecting society and the skills required of parliamentarians.

The new system requires only minimal change, keeps MPs attached to constituencies, adds desirable features of proportional representation, and ensures a dramatic reduction of wasted votes.

Keywords

Electoral reform, members of parliament, proportional representation, constituency links

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank Jane Boote, Frank Bongiorno, David Metz, and Donald Sassoon for their contribution to various aspects of this paper.

TEN GOALS AND ONE SOLUTION FOR WESTMINSTER ELECTORAL REFORM: MARRYING CONSTITUENCY LINKS WITH PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION

Introduction	2
I. What should electoral reform be for?	4
Ten priority goals for a reformed electoral system	6
II. How electoral systems can help or hinder such goals.	7
Goal 1. Simplicity and transparency.	7
Goal 2. Avoiding 'wasted' votes	9
Goal 3. A fair share to the 3 rd party	9
Goal 4. Allowing a 4 th nationwide party into parliament?	10
Goal 5. Keeping the constituency link	11
Goal 6. Improving the political dialogue between MPs and constituents	14
Goal 7. Reducing the burden on MPs	14
Goal 8. Representing women equally	15
Goal 9. Representing ethnic minorities in an inclusive way	16
Goal 10. The desirable qualities of representatives	17
III. A new electoral system for minimal upheaval: Constituencies + PR	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Step 1. Create new Electoral Districts for the purpose of vote count and seat allocation. Error! Bookmark not defined.	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Step 2. Parties draw up lists of their candidates for each Electoral District.	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Step 3. Allocate seats to parties within Electoral Districts (EDs)	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Step 4. Announcing the winning party	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Step 5. Allocate seats to named MPs	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Conclusion	Error! Bookmark not defined.
IV. Annex 1. The Australian Alternative Vote Ballot Paper.	Error! Bookmark not defined.

INTRODUCTION

Given the current coalition government's promise to call a referendum on electoral reform for Westminster in 2011, it is high time the implications of this were made clear. Yet there is no clarity over what features the referendum's proponents seek to introduce nor to abolish, nor how it would reshape British democracy. Is the purpose of reform only to be fairer to the Liberal-Democrats? Is it to allow other smaller parties to obtain MPs? To get more women into parliament? To get more ethnic minorities into parliament? To save the 'constituency link'? To strengthen opposition parties in the face of the power of a Prime Minister enjoying parliamentary dominance, thereby leading to more consensual government? Or perhaps to reinforce parliamentary scrutiny of government by legislators currently overburdened by constituency casework? ¹

Answers to these key considerations do not come neatly pinned to each electoral system, and especially not the current misnomer 'FPTP', nor indeed by 'AV+'.² Yet if any referendum is to be won, the purposes of the change should be crystal clear and form part of a parliamentary consensus and a public understanding regarding the benefits that it will bring - not just an announcement that one system will substitute the other, leaving the implications unknown. The fact that the Ontario referendum to move from FPTP to a mixed-member system was lost because voters suspected that the reform would lead to the parties becoming 'yet more remote and powerful', signals the dangers that lie ahead.³ Or perhaps our promised referendum is a trick to provoke the public's rejection? For non-cynics, there is a need for a consensus over the purpose of reform. What should these priority goals be? What is electoral reform *for*?

This paper proposes a set of priority goals linked to the desired improvements on our present defective system of representation. It then examines how far these goals can be met by a simple new hybrid system that protects key merits of the existing FPTP/single-member-plurality system while reforming it to include key merits from a proportional representation system – all with minimal change and disruption.

WHAT SHOULD ELECTORAL REFORM BE FOR?

Electoral reform advocacy has mainly focused on making the system more proportional, due to the long-standing under-representation in the House of Commons of the Liberal-Democrat vote. Chief objections to the change towards alternatives used in other countries have focused on the allegedly especially strong, British 'constituency link' phenomenon, which refers both to the frequent presence of MPs in their constituencies in order to hear grievances, and their work of servicing them and finding redress for individual cases; and also encompasses, as seen in numerous surveys, constituents' expectations that their MP will represent their views and the constituency's 'interests' in the course of their parliamentary duties. In addition much has been made of the need for strong government in contrast to the allegedly unstable government that PR is thought – erroneously as it turns out - to lead to.

There are good reasons to want to preserve desirable features of single-member/single winner systems, but there are other less debated arguments against them. These are, briefly:

- i) The problem that single-member MPs are poorly placed compared to multi-member teams of MPs - *because they operate on their own* - to both represent the social, gender and ethnic diversity of the area's residents, and to represent the conflicting interests of contrasting economic lobbies and policy communities within their constituency while at the same time following the policy dictates of their party.
- ii) In addition, between elections the voters for any of the other parties that did not manage to occupy the single seat available are left without *political* representation, especially when such voters remain attached to losing parties. Worse, such politically unrepresented voters are nearly always the *majority* of the residents of the constituency, because rarely does one candidate obtain over 50% of the vote.⁴
- iii) Given the single-member plurality system creates a large amount of safe seats, a vast number of voters can remain politically unrepresented for life. Thus the values and policy priorities represented by these voters (all, except the supporters of the single-winner) are deprived of any formal political platform in the constituency, decade after decade – to the point where citizens claim they are disenfranchised. By contrast in multi-member systems it is likely that most constituencies will have MPs from two or three parties (e.g. 2 nationwide and 1 regional, or 3 nationwide parties).
- iv) Single-winner/SMP/FPTP systems also widely disadvantage the chances of women candidates being selected to stand and winning. This is because when they stand

individually for the one and only top post, women are less likely to gain support, whereas when they are presented as part of a team of candidates (the party lists), or as a running mate, they are more welcome.⁵ With its single MPs, the UK, even counting its recent achievement of 22% of women MPs, still ranks only around 50th in the world, in the company of Pakistan, Senegal, United Arab Emirates, Uzbekistan, and Canada (another SMP/FPTP user).

v) In addition, the Westminster system is widely dominated by male incumbents in safe seats: only 117 seats (18% of 646), were predicted to change⁶ and in fact only 107 did,⁷ leaving around 543 'no change' seats, many of these experiencing no change over a number of elections ('safe'). Of the latter, an estimated 400 are occupied by men - over 60% of Parliament. Is impregnable security of tenure desirable in contrast to reselection on the basis of job competence as a legislator or persuasive advocacy of political/policy solutions?

vi) True, ethnic minority candidates can get representation under single-winner/SMP/FPTP if they stand for constituencies with high levels of ethnic minority inhabitants, because this concentrates local support. For instance in Ealing Southall, all 6 candidates, including those for the Conservative, Christian, and English Democrat parties, had Asian-origin surnames (there are no photos on ballot papers). But British ethnic minority citizens should also be able to have representatives who suit them when they live dispersed across the country, yet ethnic minority candidates are far less likely to be selected as the single candidate for a party in low ethnic concentration constituencies.

Thus the Westminster single-winner system has considerable drawbacks, with the issue of political disenfranchisement being the most serious at the formal level, closely followed by the continued constraints placed on women trying to enter the representation system, in so far as both issues affect many millions of people.

Ten priority goals for a reformed electoral system

1. Selecting a straightforward and transparent system that can be understood and used by the public with minimum effort, and which is easy to administer and quick to count.⁸
2. Avoiding systems that systematically 'waste' votes and those that encourage tactical voting.
3. Giving the third nationwide party in the UK a fairer share of the seats for the votes it regularly receives.
4. Allowing a fourth party to gain a seat there where the electorate give it a politically significant proportion of the vote, e.g. 10-15%.
5. Keeping the constituency link in which MPs are accountable to residents of a small geographic area with a population similar to the current average of about 94,000 people per MP.
6. Ensuring the constituency link provides a channel for two-way political communications and dialogue between MPs and constituents, in order to inform, persuade and foster feelings of being included.
7. Ensuring MPs are not over-burdened with constituency affairs of a servicing nature given their duties to legislate, to scrutinise government activity, and to account for their actions to their constituents and party.
8. Ensuring equitable representation of women by women⁹, given that society is evenly made up of two genders with different and comparable needs that still do not receive equal treatment.
9. Ensuring the presence of an adequate number of MPs who represent substantial ethnic minorities according to the latter's preferences.
10. Facilitating and maintaining a high quality of representation, with a range of MPs who are able to represent the social groups in society that currently require protection from social exclusion, discrimination and abuse, and are able to deploy expertise in recent and upcoming economic, technological, scientific and environmental developments, so as to foster fair and enforceable legislation and effective scrutiny of government.

HOW ELECTORAL SYSTEMS CAN HELP OR HINDER SUCH AIMS.

Goal 1. Simplicity and transparency.

Selecting a straightforward and transparent system that can be understood and used by the public with minimum effort, and which is easy to administer and quick to count.

System simplicity and transparency to the public will be key to achieving popular support for electoral reform, since this will be put to a referendum. On these grounds alone, all preferential systems should be discounted, such as AV, used only in Papua New Guinea and Australia or STV used in the Irish Republic. Because they are complicated to work out, counting of ballots takes up much time and computerisation, which makes the process dependent on administrators expert in the reassigning of the losing party votes to winners and runners up in millions of ballot papers.¹⁰ It is also questionable that second, third and fourth etc preferences should ever determine outcomes. They encourage woolly thinking (such as when parties campaign to be the *second* preference) and personalisation¹¹ (more independents, and individuals selected from several parties). They detract from the democratic need for voters to back one party or another so as to give them clear mandates, particularly important in parliamentary systems run by parties, such as ours. Under AV, both the 'full preferential' and 'optional preferential' options have counting complications that were already flagged up as problematic by the Jenkins Commission.¹²

In terms of transparency of counting, the Party List with the D'Hondt and the Sainte-Laguë seat allocation methods - the *not-so-proportional* versions of PR - have the distinct advantage that the vote count can be done manually without a calculator, as Table 1 below shows. After choosing a party offering a list of candidates (1 vote), ballots are counted within each multi-member constituency (in this example it has 8 seats allocated according to its size of population). The 8 seats are distributed to the parties as follows:

Table 1. Transparency in Allocation of Seats to Parties with the D'Hondt Method in a Multi-Member Constituency

Columns divide each party's total votes by 1, then 2,3,4,5,6,7,8 to obtain 'distribution numbers'. The highest 8 numbers (underlined) show which party get the 8 seats allocated to the 8-member electoral district.										
Turnout in example: 120,000 votes	1 Party total votes	Divide by 2	Divide by 3	Divide by 4	Divide by 5	Divide by 6	Divide of 7	Divide by 8	Seats won	% of seats
Party A 41,6%	<u>50,000</u> seat 1*	<u>25,000</u> seat 3	<u>16,666</u> seat 5	<u>12,500</u> seat 8	10,000	8,333	7,143	6,250	4	50%
Party B 33,3%	<u>40,000</u> seat 2	<u>20,000</u> seat 4	<u>13,333</u> seat 7	10,000	8,000	6,333	5,714	5,000	3	37,5%
Party C 12,5%	<u>15,000</u> seat 6	7,500	5,000	3,750	3,000	2,500	2,142	1875	1	12,5%
Party D 4,1%	5,000	2,500	1,666	1,250	1,000	833	714	625	0	0

Source: Table re-designed by M.Threlfall for greater degree of clarity than that offered in other manuals and websites. See also The Electoral Knowledge Network, www.aceproject.org

Note: *The seat numbers merely indicate the order of the top numbers - the seats themselves bear no number.

As Party A has 4 of the highest distribution numbers, which allocate the seats, it gets 4 seats to give to the top 4 candidates on its list. Party B has 3 of the highest distribution numbers, so it gets 3 seats. Party C has only 1 of the highest distribution numbers, so it gets only 1 seat. Party D has no top distribution number, so its gets 0 seats.

The table is presented is an illustration to dispel the notion that only FPTP is easy to count and transparent. Other issues of PR are discussed below, where relevant.

Goal 2. Avoiding 'wasted' votes

Avoiding the systematic waste of votes by not counting nor using the votes cast to designate the winners if voters choose parties other than the leading two contenders.

Avoiding the wasted vote problem necessarily means discarding all 'single-winner', 'single-member', 'plurality' or 'majoritarian' systems, since only one party can win a seat, making it a two-horse race, with votes to other parties having no effect on who becomes the next Prime Minister. In safe constituencies, even votes for a second party are wasted as they have no effect. Making every vote count is achieved in PR with the D'Hondt (or its variant Sainte-Laguë) seat allocation methods, since they are based on each party achieving high 'distribution numbers' (see above) in which a single vote can make the difference between allocating a seat to one party or another.

However it remains the case with Party Lists + D'Hondt or Sainte-Laguë that voting for parties that are unlikely to achieve about 10% of the constituency vote will have no effect on the outcome and could be considered wasted, but the systems do not impose a threshold as such. In the context of the British political culture, this could be a welcome feature, as it prevents a rash of small parties holding a handful of seats in parliament.

Goal 3. A fair share to the 3rd party

Giving the third nationwide party in the UK a fair share of the seats for the votes it regularly receives.

Clearly the situation of the Liberal Democrats under our single-winner system is not an equitable one in a democracy. They gained only 67 seats in 2005 (10,4%) for 21% of the popular vote, and 57 seats in 2010 (less than 9%) for 23% of the vote,¹³ a situation that reflects an even grater amount of 'wasted' votes than before, and the anomaly that they won less seats for more votes in 2010 – a clear fault of the Westminster system. If the major goal of electoral reform were no more than giving the Liberal Democrats their 'fair' share, a move towards PR Party List system with D'Hondt as the seat allocation method would meet this goal, for it is still quite disproportional, as Figure 1 showed. It would give the Lib Dems a bigger share of seats while still favouring Labour and the Conservatives. Just how many seats would require some estimating, but in a hypothetical electoral district of South East London covering ten current constituencies (see Part III) they would gain 2 seats instead of

none. However, the Liberal Democrats are not our only concern.

Goal 4. Allowing a 4th nationwide party into parliament?

Allowing a fourth party to gain a seat, there where the electorate give it a politically significant proportion of the vote, e.g. 10-15%.

Many supporters of electoral reform would like to give a fourth nationwide party such as an environmental party the chance of entering parliament, so this possibility should be envisaged. But is it a case of 'the more the merrier' or should there be limits? PR does not automatically open the way for many small parties to enter parliament - it all depends on the seat allocation method. The 'fragmentation' of preferences for parties and the need for coalition governments that give ammunition to PR's detractors are *not* characteristic of the constituency Party List with D'Hondt or Sainte-Laguë seat allocation as seen in Figure 1. D'Hondt is unfriendly to fourth, still less to fifth countrywide parties as it is *not proportional enough* for this and instead, reinforces the number of seats of larger parties, and it becomes more proportional the greater the number of seats there are to allocate. And ultimately the outcome depends on the electorate: should it spread its vote widely, giving even the fourth party at least 10% of the vote in a given constituency, the latter stands a chance of a seat.

True, for supporters of the Green party, a second preference system such as that used in the London Assembly elections may offer it a better chance, especially under 'presidential' elections like that for Mayor of London where the Green candidate got nearly 17% of second choices.¹⁴ But in general PR is the Greens' only hope, and the more proportional the better for them. However, their main problem remains: the Greens need to obtain greater support to become an influence in Westminster.

As to the fear of coalition government resulting from having more smaller parties in the House¹⁵, possibly this is less of a concern now that coalition has become familiar. Avoiding it need no longer be a priority goal of reform. As shown on 6 May 2010, even single winner/SMP/FPTP can lead to the outcome most feared because as to a large extent it depends on voter choices. Minority government with parliamentary support from various small parties, or with a parliamentary pact over its policy programme made before the Queen's Speech, or a two-party coalition, are alternative configurations for government deriving also from the electorate's preferences, which need to be respected and not just from

the electoral system.

Nonetheless, the two dominant British parties may anyway resist a system change that might allow seats to a fourth nationwide party. The point is to offer parliament the choice, for instance, to adopt a system that might grant a seat to a Green party but not to the BNP or UKIP unless these have a very concentrated vote in a given constituency. Multi-member constituencies with D'Hondt and Sainte-Laguë allocation methods can allocate seats to *either expand or narrow* the number of parties to be let in to parliament without needing separate formula or calculations. In a political culture with a long tradition of two-party rivalry, those who want minimal change, such as the Conservatives, would do well to offer the Liberal Democrats PR + Party List + D'Hondt seat allocation to keep the outcome as similar to the current FPTP/SMP as possible.

Goal 5. Keeping the constituency link:

Keeping the constituency link in which MPs are accountable to residents of a small geographic area with a population similar to the current average of about 94,000 people per MP.

The concept and practice of the constituency link enjoys political support in the UK, despite having been called a 'myth' some 25 years ago with substantial evidence.¹⁶ While MPs are known to be quick to defend their record on constituency service work, in-depth interviews with hundreds of MPs in the 1990s showed that the constituency was not their main concern in career terms. Casework is time-consuming and does not constitute the basis for political preferment unless it is accompanied by broader and more visible policy successes. Neither does constituency work guarantee re-election. Studies have shown it is impossible for individual MPs to buck their party's trend and save their seat except to a minor extent, since voters are committed to a party or to a certain party leader's chances of becoming Prime Minister. And if the MP retires and is replaced, the vote the party gets does not change, it remains constant or follows the national swing, with few exceptions.¹⁷ Despite research on disaffection with parties and on the alleged increasing volatility of the electorate, which suggests much might depend on the individual, even popular constituency MP can rarely withstand the weight of the voters' support for, or rejection of, their party leader as a potential Prime Minister.

In addition, detractors of PR fear that if MPs no longer have their own constituency to fight for

at every election they will be increasing beholden to the party for preferment in order to get onto the Party List of candidates at the next election, something that would allegedly give party managers too much power. This is based on three faulty presumptions. The first is that the MPs efforts alone gain them re-election, as discussed above, rather than the party. Clearly, many Labour losers blame Gordon Brown for losing them the seat, just as many winners recognised the role of Blair in getting them theirs in 1997. Liberal Democrats who lost their seat in 2010 will be troubled by the fact this happened despite their leader's popularity but will not want to blame themselves – rightly, as they are the victims of other factors however hard they worked in their constituency.

The second false presumption is that selections for Party Lists are overly centralised, made by the leadership alone. This would be strongly contested by parties in PR systems who would claim that the party branch in every electoral district is always involved in the confection of their list, since all parts of the party are keen to attract votes by fielding local representatives as well as national figures. The differences are mainly a matter of degree of involvement and in this the question of the political influence of party HQs over the selection procedure for Westminster MPs – especially for obtaining a safe seat – would have to be included. On the other hand, the subtext of those who object to PR Party List on the grounds of the potential loss of the constituency link may be their awareness that it would mean rebalancing the current gender imbalance. Parity within a flexible range of no more than 60% and no less than 40% of candidates from each gender is a hallmark of PR in many other countries, where gender parity is a party rule for a wide range of parties especially the Social Democrat and Labour parties (103 parties), with 110 countries boasting some method or other to promote the access of women to parliament.¹⁸

The third faulty presumption is that Party List systems mean that there are no links between deputies and localities. This is also contestable as Lists may indeed represent geographically large or highly populated areas, but the number of residents per deputy/MP may actually be fewer than the UK, such as in the case of Poland and Macedonia.¹⁹ Furthermore, political links to the constituency do develop and can be cultivated under Party List systems,²⁰ as there are more MPs to attend to a variety of problems, and they can each be approached according to the resident's political preference, giving them assurance that their concerns will be heard because they share priorities or outlook. And in both single- and multi-member systems, representatives make choices of whether to settle for being a good local MP or to cultivate political advancement through the party.

Notwithstanding these arguments, a new Westminster system would do well to preserve the constituency link because it is cherished by many MPs themselves. How can this be achieved without the dis-proportionality and wasted votes of the current system? Much discussion so far has ended up endorsing the more complicated mixed-member and preferential systems because they include large proportions of single-winner/SMP/FPTP seats - thought to be the only way to preserve the constituency link - and accept rebalancing the outcome with more proportional 'national-list' representatives. Thus disadvantages have been overlooked for the sake of preserving the constituency link. Yet the top-up lists of the mixed-member systems involves creating two types of MPs, one who can relate to a constituency and a second tier of unattached, free-floating representatives flagging up the party colour at election time and beholden to the party for the rest.²¹ While this may be technically satisfying (i.e. constituency + proportionality), in the British context there is a risk of such MPs lacking legitimacy and being seen as the cause of any failing coalition government. In Germany there are 328 'floating' and 328 'grounded' MPs.

Fresh thinking on the advantages of offering voters several representatives is needed. It is often forgotten that Party Lists of candidates have merits. They are a good opportunity to field a variety of candidates that voters can identify with, whether local, women, men, or a member of a minority group, while still allowing those who do not know any individual MP (who in the UK are the majority) to simply choose their preferred party, or the party of their preferred leader, just like under the single-member system. The importance of diversity within the multiple-member list is discussed further under goals 7-9.

Given these considerations, Westminster needs its own new system as no other will meet goals 1-5 above, nor goals 6-10 discussed below. It needs it to have: simple vote counting, multi-member electoral districts offering a diversity of representatives, a not-fully proportional/slightly-disproportional seat allocation method, and a way of ensuring some political accountability between parliamentarians and the areas of (preferably) less than 100,000 residents.

Goal 6. Improving the political dialogue between MPs and constituents

Ensuring the constituency link provides a channel for two-way political communications and dialogue between MPs and constituents, in order to inform, persuade and foster feelings of being included.

Goal 7. Reducing the burden on MPs

Ensuring MPs are not over-burdened with constituency affairs of a servicing nature given their duties to legislate and to scrutinise government activity, and to account for their actions to their constituents and party.

Given the extensive concern for citizens' growing disaffection with politicians and party politics, a reform of the system needs to seize any opportunity for engaging residents with the political process. A number of ideas have been produced for encouraging political activism in interest groups and advocacy organisations as well as parties. *But few have addressed the revitalisation of the formal representation process.* Here it is proposed that the constituency link should play a part in kindling interest in politics. MPs should engage with constituents in a two-way dialogue over substantial issues of public concern. How? By devoting less time to servicing the cases of constituents who could be helped through local councillors, the many statutory bodies and specialist charitable support groups.²² The fact that they do devote so much effort is thought to be an indication, not just of their commitment and hard work, but also of poorly functioning council departments and lack of public knowledge about who to turn to. But this is not a good reason for taking up large amounts of a parliamentarian's time. MPs are legislators who need to account for - and report back on - their legislative activity and scrutiny of the government – these are their constitutional functions.

In an increasingly educated, opinionated and rights-aware society, furthering political understanding of policies and law through a web-based dialogue and emailed reports to individuals who sign up for them is key to obtaining public consent and promoting constituents' feelings of inclusion in the political system.²³ Efficient ways to do this are not hard to find since impecunious pressure groups currently do it, e.g. with effective (electronic and printed) mail shots. So do some parties, showering their members with messages purporting to be from a party leader. MPs could receive administrative help from public funds for responding to constituents, not least because outreach is now a House of Commons priority.²⁴ MPs do need to be seen at meetings in their constituency but having their photograph up in all public libraries, buildings and CABs would increase the feeling of their presence among the least informed constituents and augment crucial face recognition.

Otherwise MPs remain invisible to residents other than at special functions and surgeries.

Goal 8. Representing women equally

Ensuring equitable representation of women by women, given that societies always comprise two genders with different and comparable needs deserving of equal treatment.

One of the major advantages of the PR Party List system is its ability, unique among electoral systems, of allowing all parties to present an offer of full representation to all or most of the electorate in an electoral district. The need for women to take on at least 40% (if not half) of the task of representing a male-female society has been recognised and implemented worldwide. On Party Lists candidates are placed in rank order according to the party's priorities and suitably matched to the areas they are standing for. This gives party leaderships some control over the implementation of gender balance and enables them to negotiate the inclusion of women with local leaderships throughout the country; indeed local leaderships may already have an array of women candidates they wish to field. The Labour Party conference in 1990 adopted a target of reaching 50% of women MPs within ten years – long passed, despite the policy of having all-women short lists in selections for half of the vacant seats. But the number of women did double in 1997 to 18.5 % due almost exclusively to the use of such short-lists. They were again responsible for stemming the decline of Labour women in 2010.²⁵

No single-winner system whether SMP/FPTP, Preferential, Alternative or Ranked Voting, nor any single or mixed member system that includes making the electorate choose individual candidates rather than parties, will help boost women's presence as much as the multi-member Party List will. And if local and national-level party leaders negotiate the rank order of candidates creating a 'zip-list' of alternating male/female candidates all the way down the list, then gender parity will result. There is considerable research evidence on this, though the voting system is by no means the major factor determining the equality of women's access to representation - much depends on the political will of parties. But *all single-winner systems end up over-representing middle-class white men to the detriment of women, minorities, working class men and women and other discriminated or disadvantaged groups.*

Goal 9. Representing ethnic minorities in an inclusive way

Ensuring the presence of an adequate number of MPs who represent substantial ethnic minorities according to the latter's preferences.

Historically ethnic minorities, as working people on low-incomes, have mainly chosen to vote Labour without making strong demands to be included. But the 1980s saw claims for the inclusion of minority candidates and Labour's victory in 1987 brought 4 ethnic minority MPs to Westminster, rising subsequently to 15 in 2005 (5 of them women, including 2 Conservatives). But they were still only 2.3% of the House of Commons. The call was renewed in 2007 with a key demand being to 'Make parties subject to Race Relations Legislation and introduce all-Black shortlists in wards and constituencies with significant Black communities'. Based on a survey, the 1990 Trust concluded that 'Black people feel that without better representation, local or national politics at best fails to understand the concerns of Black communities and at worst does not care'.²⁶ This approach echoes the arguments for the full representation of women, and resonates with the feelings of the British workers who set up the Labour Party as they felt they could not be represented by the Tories or Liberals. The claim to being represented by 'one of your own kind' is reiterated today by Operation Black Vote, the organisation devoted to recruiting potential Black candidates and persuading the parties to field more of them. In addition, the growth of the resident Muslim population to 2.4 million has also led to demands for Muslim MPs, which have been met to the extent of obtaining 8 seats, mainly though not exclusively through the Labour Party, who has also just secured 3 Muslim women MPs.²⁷ In total the 2010 elections led to an increase of ethnic minority MPs to between 18 and 21²⁸ just 2.8-3.2% of the House of Commons in the context of a 'non-white' population of 7.9%²⁹ including children.

At first glance therefore, it could be argued the current system is not entirely unfriendly to ethnic diversity, against the conclusion of the Ministry of Justice report which states: 'No voting system in the UK has led to significant improvements in the representation of black and minority ethnic (BME) groups. Party selection processes for fielding candidates are much more important for improving social representation than voting systems'.³⁰ But is only semi-friendly because most of the 'non-white' MPs have stood in, and been supported by, constituencies with concentrated ethnic minority residents,³¹ a fact which can also reflect the relative 'ghettoisation' of ethnic minority households³². While it is the right of ethnic minority communities to be represented by people whom they feel to be one of their own, they should still have that right if they live dispersed across the country. Yet with any single-winner

system, this will not happen. Only with Party Lists can parties ensure that diverse ethnic representation occurs across the country. Furthermore, ethnic minority communities are also internally diverse and the representation of those of African-Caribbean heritage should not be overlooked.

Goal 10. The desirable qualities of representatives

Facilitating and maintaining a high quality of representation, with a range of MPs who are able to represent the social groups in society that currently require protection from social exclusion, discrimination and abuse, and are able to deploy expertise in recent and upcoming economic, technological, scientific and environmental developments, so as to foster fair and enforceable legislation and effective scrutiny of government.

The final goal in the change of the electoral system should be a greater renewal of the body of MPs, to ensure their ability to represent the groups who would benefit from stronger advocacy by MPs coming from their own ranks (in addition to the unusual examples of David Blunkett, and Chris Smith). Ever fewer Labour MPs lack university education or come from severely disadvantaged backgrounds, perhaps due to the professionalisation of the job and rising public expectations of MPs' educational attainment levels and technical competence. But this represents a change away from a time when a Labour MP could safely claim legitimacy just on the basis of his or her working class roots. Yet the D and E socio-economic categories remain largely Labour voters and even if they did not, continue to have a claim on political representation. Where is this to come from? As the Electoral Reform Society Women's Officer put it,³³ 'Long careers, safe seats and a reliance on generational change are unfortunate by-products of an antique political system' - giving little hope for a more diverse body of MPs.

Therefore an electoral system is required in which parties are able to deploy teams of candidates who are able to be more than just hard-working in general; namely, are able to represent those who need representing; are able to specialise in economic, technological, scientific, social or environmental issues so as to ensure the quality of legislation; and are able to reach out to communicate with the public, in addition to their personal and political qualities. The Westminster system is known to provide safe seats with very little change (even with swings of 5% overall), and to encourage a focus on constituency service in the hope of being voted back in, in preference to a focus on social representation, competence in legislation and scrutiny of government, let alone education of the public. While there is

evidently a case for supporting MPs to make a career of representation, this should be, as with all jobs, the product of their individual abilities rather than the quirks of the system. In this sense the PR Party List system is more open to a renewal of candidates, as these can be proposed by a wider selectorate of constituency-level party members and local and national party selection committees. But this facility for a higher turnover is also governed by party politics and government performance. Nothing prevents the Party Lists from fielding the same top candidates at every election, nor prevents the winners from repeating their mandates over and over again if their party wants to field them and the electorate is thereby more likely to vote for this List.

Proposal for a New Electoral System

To Marry the First-Past-the-Post (Single-Member Plurality) System with Proportional Representation in order to Keep Constituency Links and Allocate Seats Fairly:

Constituency-based Voting with Proportional Allocation of Seats

Implementation Guide

Executive Summary

*A better electoral system is possible:*³⁴

Lovers of First-Past-The-Post (real name: Single-Member Plurality-SMP) and proponents of Proportional Representation (PR) can rest assured. There is a way of having a better electoral system that would keep the British tradition of MPs maintaining strong constituency links but also make the results more proportional, and be fair to any third-ranking party. The answer is to marry FPTP with PR in this way:

- Group all constituencies into 'Electoral Districts' composed of 8 to 10 contiguous constituencies each.
- Aggregate each party's constituency votes from the Electoral District area.
- Distribute seats in a fairly proportional manner to the parties, at the Electoral District level.
- Allocate the seats to the party candidates who have won the highest % of votes at constituency level.

Continuity and Innovation

To make it both effective and acceptable, the new system combines continuity and innovation in equal measure by:

- Keeping each MP's link to a small geographical area of no more than 100,000 residents.
- Keeping campaigning, voting and counting in the current constituencies.
- Introducing new Electoral Districts for allocating seats.
- Introducing a new single ballot paper for each Electoral District.
- Keeping candidates standing for election in a named constituency.
- Introducing the *moderately disproportional* seat allocation method called D'Hondt to allocate seats to parties.

- Keeping constituency votes as the criteria for candidates to win (as opposed to a party ranking) within the parties' allocation of seats earned.

An electoral system that meets social and political goals

No current electoral system is perfect in the sense of achieving all technical, political and social objectives. In designing this new one, consideration was given to the laudable purposes of the proposed electoral reform in Britain and the desirable goals that any polity would wish to achieve from the new system. These are discussed in detail for the case of the UK in Threlfall (2010) and (2010 forthcoming) and underpin the design of this new system.

The combination of elements of FPTP and PR - *Constituency-based Voting with Proportional Allocation of Seats to Candidates* - combines the best of the traditional virtues of FPTP while meeting the 21st century needs of more educated and more diverse electorates who now expect more for and from their vote.

An electoral system that removes all major weakness of FPTP

The independent new system would liberate the process of electing Members of the House of Commons from all the major criticisms it receives, by offering:

- A substantial reduction in the current excessive disproportionality between a party's votes and the seats it wins.
- No seats for parties with less than around 9% of the vote.
- Dramatic reductions of the 'wasted votes' and 'excess votes' syndromes.
- High incentives for electors to turn out, because every vote makes a difference.
- Incentives for the greater representation of women and of Britain's diverse society.
- Elimination of a single party's domination over large areas of the country and of the 'electoral deserts' this creates for other parties.
- A reduction of the entrenched safe seats that leave citizens feeling politically disenfranchised.

An electoral system that produces desirable effects

Specifically, *Constituency-based Voting with Proportional Allocation of Seats* produces the following desirable effects:

- Increases the lead in seats of the most popular party.
- Increases the incentive to vote.
- Motivates parties to field an array of candidates in every Electoral District.
- Facilitates the entry of more women into electoral politics as part of political teams.
- Facilitates a degree of parliamentary renewal by breaking up electoral deserts.
- Makes campaigning worthwhile for candidates from 2nd and 3rd ranked parties in safe seats.
- Increases the incentive for all candidates to campaign both for their party and for themselves.

- Facilitates a smoother changeover: all incumbents can stand again in their own constituency.
- Performs better than mixed systems that use FPTP (Single-Member Plurality) plus Additional Members (top-up lists) in relation to desirable goals.
- Remains simpler to apply, and produces more transparent and technically fairer results, than the Alternative Vote.

Constituency-based voting with Proportional Allocation of Seats

Implementation Guide

Step 1. Create new Electoral Districts for the vote count and for allocating seats to winners.

The Electoral Commission would have to group the existing 650 constituencies into new Electoral Districts (ED). Here 10 constituencies per ED makes a round number of 65 new Electoral Districts³⁵, keeping the existing constituency boundaries and respecting those of traditional regions and nations as far as possible. The Boundary Commission would continue its work of ensuring the relative homogeneity of the population sizes represented.³⁶

The new Electoral Districts (EDs) Returning Officers would be in charge of seat allocation to parties after aggregating the votes of its 10 constituencies by party. It would then allocate each of the party's seats to the highest-voted party candidates whose name figures on the ballot paper (see Example 1. and the following Steps below).

Step 2. Parties field their constituency candidates on Electoral District level ballot papers.

At election time, all candidates are presented on a ballot paper under the name of their party, as now. But the ballot paper is for all the candidates in the new Electoral District with its 10 constituencies. The example below shows a partial view of a ballot paper with only 3 party lists for illustrative purposes but the proposal is for a large ballot paper showing all Party Lists on one piece of paper, to avoid the need for several ballot papers per voter.

Example 1. A New Ballot Paper

(partial view with only with 3 parties of the proposed single ballot paper for each Electoral District)

Electoral District "Birmingham South East"							
YOU MAY ONLY MARK ONE OF THESE PARTIES' WITH AN 'X'							
Conservative Party	Mark here	'X'	Labour Party	Mark here	'X'	Liberal Party	
						Mark here	
Constituency A ⁽¹⁾ – Mervyn	photo		Constituency A - Grace	photo		Constituency A - Darren	photo
Constituency B - Tamsin	photo		Constituency B - Mehmet	photo		Constituency B - Vivien	photo
Constituency C - Bikkhu	photo		Constituency C - Carolina	photo		Constituency C - Faisal	photo
Constituency D - Diana	photo		Constituency D - Russell	photo		Constituency D - Joan	photo
Constituency E - Greg	photo		Constituency E - Gloria	photo		Constituency E - Lloyd	photo
Constituency F - Surinder	photo		Constituency F - Jason	photo		Constituency F - Amira	photo
Constituency G - Larry	photo		Constituency G - Rachel	photo		Constituency G - Richard	photo
Constituency H - Eva	photo		Constituency H - Firoz	photo		Constituency H - Carmen	photo
Constituency - John	photo		Constituency I – Jenny	photo		Constituency I - Howard	photo
Constituency J - Seila	photo		Constituency J - Allan	photo		Constituency J - Carol	photo

Source: Designed by M. Threlfall. Note (1) Constituencies A, B, C etc mean that existing constituencies are listed alphabetically by name. Re the space for a candidate photo, I have included this to help voters put a name to a face and increase the visibility of women and men, though the merits of this are not known as yet.

As seen above:

- a) Candidates stand individually for constituencies. They campaign in, are voted for in, and win/lose in their constituency – *but candidates only get to represent the constituency if they are successful in being allocated the seat by the Electoral District according to the rules of the new proportional count (see below).*
- b) Constituencies are placed in alphabetical order on the party's list of candidates for the Electoral District.
- c) Ballot papers are distributed within constituencies, voted on according to the constituency register of voters and counted up in the constituency first, with the results passed to the ED.
- d) Voters vote for one party list only, at their local polling station in the constituency they are registered for.
- e) From the ballot paper, voters can see all the other parties' candidates for their local constituency, so as to choose between them.
- f) Voters can also view each party's 10 candidates for the whole Electoral District. They can choose the party with the list that is most to their liking, for whatever reason - party political, geographical or social.

- g) The design of the ballot caters for voters who want to vote for an individual standing for their constituency *and* for those who want to vote for a party in general.³⁷
- h) Voters only mark the ballot once, with a cross against one party.
- i) The same ballot paper is used throughout the Electoral District, but each constituency keeps its own ballots and counts the X vote marks towards their own candidates only.
- j) The results are communicated to the Electoral District.

Step 3. Allocating the seats at Electoral District level.

Returning Officers at Electoral District level

- a) Receive the ballot results from each of the 10 constituencies.
- b) Aggregate the results from each constituency of the ED by party (and independent candidates).
- c) Apply the D'Hondt method of finding out which party should get how many seats (see below).
- d) Allocate the seats to the parties' winning candidates in each constituency.

The D'Hondt method of allocating seats to parties introduces some disproportionality between the percentage of votes and the percentage of seats obtained by each party. It strengthens the leading party considerably, and the runner-up somewhat. The third-ranking party receives a more balanced proportion as long as it has won around 20% of the vote. Fourth and smaller parties do not manage to be allocated any seats unless they obtain around 10% or more of the vote. Thus, no fringe parties receive any seats until they have built up a following of about 10% in the Electoral District.

Constituency-based Voting with Proportional Seat Allocation is designed to maintain some disproportionality, but far less than FPTP or any other Majoritarian system. It can also be adapted to offer more or less proportionality to suit political ends, e.g. 8 constituencies per ED will produce less proportionality (closer to FPTP) than 10 will, and 12 will produce stronger proportionality. PR experts recommend a 'district magnitude' of over 8 seats.

Example 2. Allocating the seats to parties in an Electoral District "South East London"

A fictitious Electoral District was designed to follow the boundaries of two London Assembly seats (Greenwich & Lewisham, and Bexley & Bromley), grouping 10 constituencies into a so-called "London South East" Electoral District. An Electoral District does not have to have 10 seats (see above) but 10 were chosen as there are 650 seats at Westminster, which would make a round number of 65 Electoral Districts. With 10, it is also clear at a glance whether a party that obtains 30% of the votes wins 30% (3 out of 10) of the seats, or not. The actual votes emitted in for the 2010 Westminster parliamentary elections have been used below to recalculate the results according to the new procedure for *Constituency-based Voting with Proportional Seat Allocation*. Each party's vote in 10 constituencies has been added up (see column Total Votes Divided by 1), and the totals divided according to the D'Hondt method.

ELECTORAL DISTRICT "LONDON SOUTH EAST "										
Party: Seats % Vote % seats	Total votes Divided by 1	D'Hondt method distribution numbers								
		Divide by 2	Divide by 3	Divide by 4	Divide by 5	Divide by 6	Divide by 7	Divide by 8	Divide by 9	Divide by 10
CONSERVATIVES 4 seats 37% of vote 40% of seats	<u>163,703</u> 1 st seat	<u>81,851</u> 4 th seat	<u>54,568</u> 6 th seat	<u>40,926</u> 9 th seat	32,741	27,281	23,386	20,463	18,189	16,370
LABOUR 4 seats 34% of vote 40% of seats	<u>149,751</u> 2 nd seat	<u>74,875</u> 5 th seat	<u>49,917</u> 7 th seat	<u>37,438</u> 10 th seat	29,950	24,959	21,394	18,719	16,639	14,975
LIB DEMS 2 seats 19% of vote 20% of seats	<u>83,949</u> 3 rd seat	<u>41,975</u> 8 th seat	27,983	20,987	16,789	13,991	11,993	10,494	9,328	8,395
Total Electoral District turnout/vote = 442,984 votes					3-party % of total vote = 90%					

Source: Compiled by M. Threlfall from the 2010 results from Beckenham, Bexleyheath & Crayford, Bromley & Chislehurst, Eltham, Erith & Thamesmead, Greenwich & Woolwich, Lewisham & Deptford, Lewisham East, Lewisham W. & Penge, Old Bexley & Sidcup constituencies. Note 1: Distribution numbers have been rounded up to a complete integer. Note 2: The "1st", "2nd", "3rd" etc seat indicates the numerical order in which a 'distribution number' is identified as becoming an 'allocation' number, i.e. one of the 10 top numbers.

How to work out the winning parties:

- Write down one party's total vote, then divide it repeatedly by 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10 (for 10 seats, or 8 times for 8 seats etc) and set out these 'distribution numbers' in a row (the proverbial back of an envelope is sufficient).
- Create a new row for every party, forming columns of 'distribution numbers' under the divisors 1, 2, 3 etc.
- With 10 seats to allocate, pick out the 10 top 'distribution' numbers from the whole set. These become the key seat 'allocation numbers'.
- If they fall in a party's row, that party gets as many seats as it has 'allocation numbers'. Number them in order of descending magnitude for giving the seats to winning candidates in that order (see below).
- Parties with less than 10% of the vote do not have a chance of winning a seat, so there is no need to divide their total votes by 1, 2, 3 etc to create these 'distribution numbers'.

Results in this example

Conservatives have got 4 of the top 10 distribution numbers in their row, so they get:
4 seats (the 1st, 4th, 6th, 9th seat allocated) - 40% of seats for 37% of the ED vote

Labour has got 4 of the top 10 distribution numbers in their row, so they get:

4 seats (the 2nd, 5th, 7th, 10th seat allocated) - 40% of seats for 34% of the ED vote

Liberal Democrats have got 2 of the top 10 distribution numbers in their row, so they get:

2 seats (the 3rd and 8th seat allocated) - 20% of seats for 19% of the ED vote

Change compared to FPTP in 2010

- a. Conservatives would have undergone no change. Their 4 seats would remain.
- b. Labour would have lost 2 seats to the Liberal Democrats because their candidates did not get a majority and the Liberal Democrat's overall ED vote merited 2 seats from within the 10 available.
- c. Liberal Democrats would have gained 2 seats on the grounds of their 10% of the vote.

However, this does establish a pattern of a kind: in Conservative areas, Labour would gain seats, and in large Labour areas, Conservatives will gain seats. Liberal Democrats will gain seats according to their performance. It is impossible to predict the overall national change under this "Constituencies + PR" system because the boundaries of the new Electoral Districts are not known. But the following Examples will give clear pointers.

Example 3. Allocating the seats to parties in a Labour 'electoral desert': Electoral District "Norfolk"

The East of England, East Anglia or Eastern Region currently represents an 'electoral desert' for Labour in 2010 as it won no seats at all except for two in proximity to London. For this example, Norfolk was chosen as a likely entity given the natural coastal boundaries and Waveney in Suffolk was added to make up the 10th constituency needed. The seats are allocated to the parties in the same way as above. UKIP has been added to show how it comes nowhere near obtaining a distribution number that might get it a seat.

ELECTORAL DISTRICT: "NORFOLK"										
PARTY	D'Hondt method: divide party totals by 1,2,3, etc to create distribution numbers									
seats	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total
% votes	÷1	÷2	÷3	÷4	÷5	÷6	÷7	÷8	÷9	÷10
% seats										
CONSERVATIVE	210,416	105,208	70,139	52,604	42,083	35,069	30,059	26,302	23,380	21,042
5 seats	1 st	3 rd	5 th	8 th	10 th					
43% of votes										
50% of seats										
LABOUR	102,890	51,445	34,297	25,723	20,578	17,148	14,690	12,861	11,432	10,289
2 seats	4 th	7 th								
21% of votes										
20% of seats										
LIBERAL DEMOCRAT	128,517	64,259	42,839	32,129	25,703	21,419	18,360	16,064	14,280	12,852
3 seats	2 nd	6 th	9 th							
26% of votes										
30% of seats										
TURNOUT in Electoral District = 489,367, 3-party % of turnout = 90%										

Note 1. The Electoral District is made up of the constituencies of Broadland, Great Yarmouth, Norfolk Mid, Norfolk North, Norfolk North West, Norfolk South, Norfolk South West, Norwich South, Norwich North, and Waveney. The 4th party in the ED, UKIP, obtained 22,866 votes (4.7% of the ED turnout) and therefore comes nowhere near the final 10th seat, for which it would have needed a minimum of 42,084 votes, and so does not figure in the seat distribution.

Prospective Results for "Norfolk" ED

- Conservatives: 5 allocation numbers = 5 seats (1st, 3rd, 5th, 8th, 10th seat allocated)
50% of seats for 43% of the ED vote.
- Labour: 2 allocation numbers = 2 seats (4th, 7th seat)
20% of seats for 21% of the ED vote.
- Liberal Democrats: 2 allocation numbers = 3 seats (2nd, 6th, and 9th seat allocated)
0% of seats for 26% of the ED vote.

Change compared to FPTP in 2010

- a. Conservatives would have lost 3 seats out of their actual 8 seats (2010) because their candidates only won these with pluralities, and Labour's overall vote of 21% in the Electoral District entitled it to 2 seats.
- b. Labour would have taken 2 seats from the Conservatives as their overall vote in the ED entitled them to 2 seats instead of 0.
- c. Liberal Democrats would have taken 1 seat from the Conservatives, as their overall vote in the ED entitled them to 3 seats instead of 2.
- d. Instead of being an 'electoral desert' for Labour, East Anglia would become a mixed area. Residents would have access to 2 Labour, 3 Liberal Democrat and 5 Conservative MPs - in a

system that encourages MPs of the same party to collaborate within the Electoral District, as they will stand listed on the same Ballot paper, and as every vote counts towards the key distribution numbers that will affect each party collectively, and previously disenfranchised voters gain an incentive to vote.

Example 4. Allocation the seats to parties in a Conservative 'electoral desert' and Labour heartland: "South East Yorkshire".

The Electoral District was put together for illustrative purposes from the Labour heartland around Sheffield, using the western and southern boundaries South Yorkshire region as boundaries point and adding ten contiguous constituencies eastwards including Sheffield. The questions are therefore: How many seats might Labour lose in one of its heartlands? Can Conservative voters gain representation in a Labour heartland? Each party's vote in 10 constituencies has been added up, and the totals divided according to the D'Hondt method.

ELECTORAL DISTRICT "SOUTH EAST YORKSHIRE"										
PARTY	D'Hondt method: divide party totals by 1,2,3, etc to create distribution numbers									
seats + % of votes in ED + & of seats	Total ÷1	Total ÷2	Total ÷3	Total ÷4	Total ÷5	Total ÷6	Total ÷7	Total ÷8	Total ÷9	Total ÷10
CONSERVATIVE	<u>89,346</u>	<u>44,673</u>	29,782	22,336	17,870	14,891	12335	11168	9927	8935
2 seats 20.7% of votes 20% of seats	3 rd seat	7 th seat								
LABOUR	<u>175,585</u>	<u>87,793</u>	<u>58,528</u>	<u>43,896</u>	<u>35,117</u>	29,264	25084	21948	19509	17559
5 seats 40.8% of votes 50% of seats	1 st seat	4 th seat	5 th seat	8 th seat	10 th seat					
LIB DEMOCRAT	<u>111,446</u>	<u>55,723</u>	<u>37,149</u>	27,862	22,289	18,574	15,921	13931	12383	11145
3 seats 25.9% of votes 30% of seats	2 nd seat	6 th seat	9 th seat							
TURNOUT : 430,122 - 3-party % of turnout = 87.4%										

Note 1. The Electoral District is made up of the constituencies of Sheffield Hallam, Sheffield Heeley, Sheffield Central, Sheffield Brightside, Sheffield South East, Rother Valley, Rotherham, Penistone & Stockbridge, Wentworth & Deane, Don Valley.

Note 2. UKIP received 18,953 votes (4,7% of the ED). To win even the 10th seat, UKIP would have had to obtain a minimum of 35,118 votes in this ED.

Prospective Result for "South East Yorkshire" ED

- Labour: 5 seats (1st, 4th, 5th, 8th, 10th allocated) - 50% of seats for 40.8% of votes
- Liberal Democrats: 3 seats (2nd, 6th, 9th allocated) - 30% of seats for 25.9% of votes
- Conservatives: 2 seats (3rd and 7th allocated) - 20% of seats for 20.7% of votes

Change compared to the 'electoral desert' for the Conservatives under FPTP in 2010

- a. Conservatives would obtain 2 seats where they had 0 in the 2010 election, because they got over 20% of the vote in the Electoral District. This gives them a proportional outcome.
- b. Labour would have to cede 4 of the 9 seats it won in this part of Yorkshire in 2010 because it obtained only 40.8% of the Electoral District vote, entitling it to 50% of the seats, but no more (i.e. not 90%). As the leading party of the ED, it remains advantaged by the system, getting rather more seats than votes.
- c. Liberal Democrats would be entitled to 3 seats instead of 1 since they received 25.9% of the vote. As the second-placed party in the ED, they would benefit from a slightly greater share of the seats than votes.

Therefore the proposed new hybrid "Constituencies + PR" system could put an end to the phenomenon of electoral deserts and heavily reduce the political disenfranchisement of citizens in the South Yorkshire area who would have access to 2 Conservative MPs and 3 Liberal Democrats instead of only Labour MPs and 1 Liberal Democrat.

Example 5. Allocating the seats in a Conservative heartland and Labour 'desert': Electoral District

"South West Midlands"

This Electoral District was chosen for illustrative purposes from within the wholly Conservative-held area stretching between Wales and the Birmingham-Coventry industrial complex. Its boundaries are the Welsh border and the traditional administrative borders of the West Midlands region. So it is named 'South West Midlands'. The constituencies included are: Herefordshire South, Herefordshire North, Worcester West, Worcester, Worcester Mid, Redditch, Bromsgrove, Wyre Forest, Halesowen & Rowley Regis, and Stourbridge.

"SOUTH WEST MIDLANDS" ELECTORAL DISTRICT										
PARTY	D'Hondt method: divide party totals by 1,2,3, etc to create distribution numbers									
Seats % votes % of 10 seats	Total ÷1	Total ÷2	Total ÷3	Total ÷4	Total ÷5	Total ÷6	Total ÷7	Total ÷8	Total ÷9	Total ÷10
CONSERVATIVE	220,095	110,048	73,365	55,024	44,019	36,682	31,442	27,512	24,455	22,010
5 seats 45% of votes, 50% of seats	1 st seat	3 rd seat	5 th seat	7 th seat	9 th seat					
LABOUR	95,410	47,705	31,803	23,852	19,082	15,902	13,630	11,626	10,601	9,541
2 seats, 19.6% votes 20% of seats	4 th seat	8 th seat								
LIB DEMOCRAT	114,681	57,3416	38,227	28,670	22,936	19,114	16,383	14,335	12,742	11,468
3 seats 23.5% of votes 30% of seats	2 nd seat	6 th seat	10 th seat							
TURNOUT for whole ED = 487,657					3-party total % of votes = 88.1%					

Note 1. Party totals are the actual number of votes received in 2010 in the constituencies: 2) UKIP received 21,739 votes (4.5% of the ED total turnout). To gain the 10th seat, it would have had to obtain a minimum of 32,228 votes.

Prospective Result in "South West Midlands" ED

- Conservatives: 5 seats (1st, 3rd, 5th, and 9th allocated) - 50% of seats for 45% of votes
- Labour: 2 seats (4th and 8th allocated) - 20% of seats for 19.6% of votes
- Liberal Democrats: 3 seats (2nd, 6th and 10th allocated) - 30% of seats for 23.5% of votes

Change compared to the 'electoral desert' for Labour under FPTP in 2010

- a. Conservatives lose 5 seats, keeping half of the 10 they won in 2010, since they only won 45% of the vote in this electoral district. Under FPTP, they took 100% of the seats in this area with less than half the popular vote.
- b. Labour gain 2 seats where they had none, owing to the fact they gained nearly 20% of the vote, a proportional result.
- c. Liberal Democrats make a surprising gain of 3 seats instead of none under FPTP, which shows how distorting FPTP can be in view of the fact that the Liberal Democrats had gained 23.5% of the vote. Liberal Democrats also benefit in this example from coming second-place since the D'Hondt system adds to the two leading parties' seats. Therefore they get more seats for their votes, as shown above.

This Example constitutes another case that shows that 'electoral deserts' are merely products of FPTP and not the parties' performance. Under the proposed "Constituency + PR" system, the apparently 'solid' Conservative "South West Midlands" area would become mixed, no longer a desert for Labour

and the Liberal Democrats, with residents enjoying a far greater chance of being represented by someone whom they voted for and identify with. It would cut the incentive for protest votes and tactical voting.

Step 4. Announcing the winners

- a. With this hybrid system *Constituency-based Voting with Proportional Allocation of Seats*, there would be a departure from FPTP with regard to announcing the winners. Candidates obtaining a *plurality* in their constituency cannot immediately be given the seat. Only those who have obtained an outright majority of the vote can do so – which is in fact one of the 'legitimacy' benefits sought by most electoral reformers.
- b. Candidates who have obtained only a plurality must wait for Electoral District Returning Officers to announce the seat allocation to candidates across the 10 constituencies.
- c. The overall winning party with a duty to try and form a government will not be known till all the Electoral Districts have allocated all their seats, possibly a few hours later than under FPTP.³⁸

Step 5. Allocating a party's seats to named constituency candidates

The new system represents a breakthrough in electoral design because at this point the PR/D'Hondt method is applied to the Majoritarian system of single MPs linked to an individual constituency. A decision was taken to avoid the Party Lists of PR systems in which candidates are ranked by their party in a fixed order with no link to a particular area of their large multi-member constituencies - the feature that is often considered a weakness of PR. Instead, it links candidates to constituencies on the ballot paper but asks voters to choose a party only, not individuals. The virtue of the new system is that *Constituency-based Voting with Proportional Seat Allocation* retains the MP's direct attachment to a specific area (within the seat allocation method described in Step 3.). It then allocates seats to MPs according to their performance in terms of the % of the constituency vote they have obtained. Therefore, MPs are not ranked by party selection committees, as under the usual PR Party List system, but by the vote of the electorate.

- a. As we saw in Example 1. The Ballot Paper (above), candidates' names appear on the ballot among their party's list of candidates in the alphabetical order of the constituency they are standing for.
- b. Every vote for a party on the ballot counts towards the candidate in whose constituency the voter has registered, and in which the vote has been emitted. All voters voting in, for instance, Beckenham and marking the ballot with an X for the Conservatives are counted as votes for the Beckenham Conservative candidate.
- c. When the ballots are counted and the results communicated to the Electoral District, the latter should enter the results from each constituency into a table like the one in **Example**

6. MPs win/lose a Seat (below).

- d. Then the ED Returning Officer distributes the district's 10 seats to 10 candidates as follows:
- e. All the seats are distributed to candidates in the order of each candidate's % of vote in their constituency. No party can receive more than their share of seats allocated by the PR-D'Hondt method.
- f. When a party has received the number of seats it has been given in the ED-level seat allocation (4 or 2 in Example 6.) no more of its candidates can be given a seat, whatever their % of the constituency vote.
 - o The exception would be if a party obtained more constituency absolute majorities than seats allocated. Then there would be a case for granting that extra seat before continuing with the distribution of the rest, so that all constituencies electing candidates by a majority are represented by those candidates. This means some higher degree of disproportionality would be allowed in such cases, should they occur.
 - o If during the allocation by candidate % ranking, the next most popular candidate A is in the same constituency as party B's candidate B who has already received the seat on account of having a higher % of votes than A, then A does not get the seat because s/he has already lost it to a rival from another party, and the allocation moves on to the next highest-ranked candidate.

In **Example 6** below, the list of constituencies in the Electoral District "London South East" is shown, with the number of (real 2010) votes received by each candidate of the 3 parties which have gained seats via PR/D'Hondt method, in this case: Conservatives 4, Labour 4, and Liberal Democrats 2. Other parties receive insufficient votes to be part of the distribution of seats.

Example 6. How MPs win/lose a seat in the Example Electoral District "London South East".

CONSTITUENCIES	TURNOUT	LIBERAL DEMOCRAT		CONSERVATIVE		LABOUR	
		Seats allocated: 2 Votes:		Seats allocated: 4 Votes:		Seats allocated: 4 Votes:	
Beckenham	47,686	9,813	20.6%	27,597	57.9%	6,893	14.5%
Bexley Heath & Crayford	43,182	5,502	12.7%	21,794	50.5%	11,450	26.5%
Bromley & Chislehurst	44,037	9,669	22.0%	23,569	53.5%	7,295	16.6%
Eltham	41,964	5,299	12.6%	15,753	37.5%	17,416	41.5%
Erith & Thamesmead	42,476	5,116	12.0%	13,365	31.5%	19,068	44.9%
Greenwich & Woolwich	41,188	7,498	18.2%	10,109	24.5%	20,262	49.2%
Lewisham & Deptford	41,220	9,633	23.4%	5,551	13.5%	22,132	53.7%
Lewisham East	41,719	11,750	28.2%	9,850	16.4%	17,966	43.1%
Lewisham West & Penge	54,020	12,673	23.5%	11,489	21.3%	18,501	34.2%
Old Bexley & Sidcup	45,492	6,996	15.4%	24,625	54.1%	8,768	19.3%
<i>Total ED Turnout</i>	<i>442,984</i>	<i>83,949</i>		<i>163,702</i>		<i>149,751</i>	

Source: compiled by M. Threlfall, using results for each constituency found in BBC, Election 2010, Results, Find your result > Constituency List. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/shared/election2010/results/> [May 7th onwards]

Prospective results in "London South East" ED

- a. The Conservatives would thus get Beckenham, then Old Bexley & Sidcup, then Labour would take Lewisham & Deptford, then the Conservatives take Bromley & Chislehurst and Bexley Heath & Crayford – their 4 seats. Labour would then also be entitled to Greenwich & Woolwich, Erith & Thamesmead, and Lewisham East – making 4 seats for Labour. This leaves the Liberal Democrats with the 2 seats they are entitled to, which are in this example Eltham, and Lewisham West & Penge, even though the Liberal Democrat was the 3rd choice in both.
- b. Parties get a fair share of MPs for the District according to established principles of proportionality as explained in Example 2.
- c. MPs are rewarded for their proportion of the vote obtained in the constituency where they campaigned in, but only within their party's allocation of seats. However, no MP with an absolute majority fails to get a seat.
- d. In 8 constituencies, the winning MP is the most popular candidate, as under FPTP. In 2 it is the third choice.

Change compared with FPTP in 2010

- a. Only 2 seat changes out of 10 would have taken place in Electoral District "South East London" under "Constituency Links + PR".
- b. The electors of Eltham and Lewisham West & Penge might have been disappointed not to get their first choice of MP, but this candidate did not win a majority. Under *Constituency-based Voting with Proportional Allocation of Seats*, individual candidates are only entitled to a seat if they obtained an absolute majority of the vote – and rightly so according to many views. *Candidates obtaining pluralities of the vote are not of themselves entitled to the seat, as the dominant rule is that the parties get a fair proportion of seats.*
- c. Evidently the Labour candidates in these 2 constituencies might have felt disappointed at not winning them with 41.5% and 34.2% of the vote, respectively. But this must be seen in the context of the facts: a) their party colleagues received a greater % of votes; b) Labour only received 34% of the vote throughout the Electoral District, yet won 40% of the seats, an advantageous result for the party.
- d. Constituency politics remain as before, but the new system also introduces a bigger district-level party politics, which is more representative due to its larger size. The aggregated Electoral District party committees can take a wider view of their offer to a bigger cross-section of citizens than in the less representative constituencies.
- e. 6th May 2010, Labour won 6 and the Conservatives 4 of the constituencies grouped together in this hypothetical Electoral District – and did so with nearly 14,000 fewer real votes than the Conservatives. This is the kind of anomaly that Majoritarian Single-Member Plurality systems produce and that many wish to see corrected. Labour was not entitled to more than 4 seats: in such a context, affected Labour MPs can look at the bigger picture. The same is true of the Conservatives who won all 10 seats in the South West Midlands area and would, if it were transformed into an Electoral District under "Constituency Links with PR", lose half of them because they only get 45 % of the vote (and still keep 50% of the seats).

Summary of the outcomes from using *Constituency-based Voting with Proportional Seat Allocation*

Proportionality and Majority Government

- a) Slightly more proportional outcome in 2010 than under FPTP: Clearly, the fact that the examples are based on 2010 results (where the two big parties ended up on 36% and 29% of the vote) is reflected in the new system's seat allocations, i.e. the disparity between the two leading parties is not great. But under FPTP the Conservatives got 47.2% of the seats (a 12 percentage point gain) and Labour got 39.7% of the seats (nearly an 11 percentage point gain), leaving the Liberal Democrats (23% of votes but 8.8% of seats) - an unfair 14 percentage point loss. FPTP remained highly disproportional even when voters spread their votes more evenly than before. By contrast, the proposed system would have evened out the seats more fairly, creating a lesser degree of disproportionality, of the order of 5-10

percentage points. A minority or coalition government would also have been necessary.

- b) However, if the British electorate returned to their previous more polarised voting, the proposed new system would not sweep away those majorities.
- c) But if policymakers are primarily concerned about producing parliamentary majorities, there is the option of adjusting the seat allocation method to increase the leading party's lead. To concentrate more seats on the leading party in each ED, thereby encouraging single party dominance and majority government, all that needs to be done is to create Electoral Districts with only 8 seats in each, or less (lower 'district magnitude') –while keeping the other benefits of the new system.
- d) 8-seat constituencies would provide an outcome closer to FPTP and offer the bonus of making Electoral Districts geographically smaller, which some might find more reassuring in general.
- e) If on the other hand, policymakers wish to make it easier for a 4th nationwide party to gain seats, then the D'Hondt calculation method can be replaced by the similar 'Sainte-Laguë' method³⁹ which spreads seats more widely across parties, though any vote under 10% is in danger of getting no seat.

No more 'electoral deserts': The effect of using a *moderate* degree of disproportionality (as opposed to the *extreme* distortion of FPTP) is to break up electoral deserts, while respecting the relative dominance of the most popular party.

No more 'excess majorities': Labour in some areas has a very concentrated vote producing huge majorities for a few MPs, and losses in other constituencies. This is the 'excess votes' syndrome that wastes votes. Under *Constituency-based Voting with Proportional Allocation of Seats*, all these votes would come into play across the Electoral District, boosting the party's 'distribution numbers', and allowing it to obtain seats in these 'deserts'. If the same phenomenon occurred to the Conservatives or Liberal Democrats or any other party, they would benefit in the same way.

Seat allocation at Electoral District level: Clearly the major change is that MPs and voters would have to accept this innovation, recognising its merits:

- a) It facilitates fairer outcomes overall (At National and ED level) than the constituency plurality method.
- b) It encourages a wider outlook among candidates. A plurality of the vote does not guarantee them a seat, since Single Member Plurality/FPTP has been abandoned. They win a seat if they are top-ranked across the ED and within their party, and fall within their party's performance-based allocation of seats. Candidates are subject to a degree of intra-party competition as well as mutual support as each other's votes count towards the party's district-level gain. The result is less predictable than under FPTP, but fairer.
- c) ED-based seat allocation creates much more incentives than FPTP to candidates who oppose incumbent MPs with huge followings. Instead of working for a lost cause, every one of their votes will boost the party's total and its distribution numbers. With 10 candidates named on the same ballot, they can also campaign in any of the other constituencies in the district. If a constituency's votes are more evenly spread than average for the District, 3rd-ranked

candidates may find themselves called upon to represent the constituency on the grounds of their party's support across the ED.

- d) ED-based ballot papers allow the parties with their teams of candidates to offer the electorate the right kind of representation for the area, which invariably requires some gender balance. This is impossible for one person to do. They also create or reinforce intermediary party structures, opportunities for collaboration between MPs for the benefit of the District, a rationalisation of tasks and savings of party and personal resources.

Conclusions

No current electoral system can be perfect in the sense of achieving all technical, political and social objectives. In designing a new one, choices were made regarding the laudable purposes of the reform and the desirable goals that the polity in question wishes to achieve from the new system. These are discussed in detail for the case of the UK in Threlfall (2010) and (2010 forthcoming) and underpin the design of this new system.

Bearing these goals in mind it was found that elements of the Majoritarian and Proportional Representation systems could be combined and integrated into an independent new system, which would allow the Westminster parliamentary elections to overcome the major criticisms it receives. Constituency-based Voting with Proportional Allocation of Seats offers:

- A substantial reduction in the current excessive disproportionality between a party's votes and the seats it wins.
- No seats for parties with less than around 9% of the vote.
- Dramatic reductions of the 'wasted votes' and 'excess votes' syndromes.
- High incentives for the electorate to turn out, because every vote makes a difference.
- Incentives for the greater representation of women and of Britain's diverse society.
- Elimination of a single party's domination over large areas of the country and of the 'electoral deserts' this creates for other parties.
- A reduction of the entrenched safe seats that leave residents feeling politically disenfranchised.

More specifically, *Constituency-based Voting with Proportional Allocation of Seats* produces the following desirable effects:

- a. Increases the lead in seats of the most popular party by maintaining some disproportionality, to enable majority governments to be formed if the electorate displays a strong preference for one party, thereby avoiding the pitfalls of *exact* proportional representation.
- b. Increases the incentive to vote of every single supporter of the three largest nationwide parties in every Electoral District, given their good chances of getting a seat, and the fact that every extra vote could lead to an extra seat.
- c. Motivates parties to field an array of candidates in every Electoral District who clearly represent the interests and diverse profiles of its population including women and men, and

- ethnic and other minorities where relevant.
- d. Facilitates the entry of more women into electoral politics as part of political teams, and by reducing the number of safe seats with male incumbents not subject to re-selection.
 - e. Facilitates a degree of parliamentary renewal because it breaks up electoral deserts.
 - f. Offers worthwhile campaigning to candidates from 2nd and 3rd ranked parties who are contesting incumbents in safe seats. Votes for 2nd and 3rd-ranked parties contribute to their overall Electoral District totals, increasing their chances of winning a seat through the proportional seat allocation method. Parties such as the Greens would need to gain 10% of the ED vote to win a seat (instead of a plurality of one constituency's vote under FPTP).
 - g. Increases the incentive for all candidates to campaign both for their party and for themselves as every vote counts both for the candidate at constituency level and for the party at Electoral District level.
 - h. Remains simple to administer: only requires a one-off delineation of new Electoral Districts; can identify winners by simple additions, divisions and percentages with no other formulas; can save on administrative and distribution costs by reducing the 650 different ballot paper designs by about 90% (to around 65); though requires additional District-level Returning Officers
 - i. Performs better than mixed systems that use FPTP (Single-Member Plurality) plus Additional Members (top-up lists). Mixed systems retain all the unfairness inherent to FPTP (MPs winning with only a small plurality of the vote, the wasted vote syndrome, severe disproportionality, etc). Scotland and Wales only produce relatively proportional outcomes by adding extra Members elected on a 'loser-take-all' basis that contradicts the popular vote.
 - j. Remains simpler to apply and to produce results than the Alternative Vote (AV) preferential system, which is anti-proportional. Recent Australian results show parties with 44% and 38% of the vote receiving 73 and 72 seats respectively, even though there is a 6.3 point difference between them. While such a result is technically possible under FPTP, normally under FPTP certainly with the new system the leading party would have been advantaged with more seats, making it easier for it to form a majority government. The AV method count the 2nd, 3rd and subsequent preferences of voters to *minor* parties and gives them the same value of 1 as a 1st preference. Yet voters for the 2 leading contenders do not have their preferences taken into account. Furthermore the Australian system takes weeks to administer properly: a whole week after the election, still only 83.4% of the vote had been counted.
 - k. Any changeover from FPTP to Constituency-based Voting with Proportional Allocation of Seats would be facilitated by the fact that all incumbents could stand again in their own constituency.

As to drawbacks, these tend to emerge after a system has come into use and a political practice has developed around it. From the MPs point of view, the greater unpredictability of the winners may be an issue, especially when it comes to allocating seats to candidates. With regard to the 3rd-ranked parties (for whom electoral reform is called for), they may have relatively fewer votes in *each*

constituency yet still deserve to be given the seat in *one* of them, and so find themselves the MP despite being the 3rd choice. All this can turn on a small number of votes, but so can winning or losing under FPTP, so it is not evident that this should be a major sticking point, especially once it is understood that the constituency only has the 'right' to claim a candidate if s/he obtained over 50%. All seats remain in play if a 50% majority cannot be secured.

Rather than drawbacks, there would be changes of culture, such as the parties' need to be concerned about the look of their list of candidates across the Electoral District. This has implications for internal party recruitment procedures, for party organisation at ED level, and for MPs' campaigning and teamwork within it.

From the point of view of the two leading parties, the new system may be seen as overly proportional. This view is anticipated here with references to the possibility of instituting 8-seat Electoral Districts, which would produce more disproportionality while still being fairer to the 3rd party. The proposal can be adjusted to fit such preferences.

The fundamental point is that the new system can be improved if better procedures are invented; and that it needs to be taken up as a serious proposal, piloted and tested through nationwide projections. As it stands, it goes a very long way to introducing the necessary improvements to meet many of the goals of reform and many of the complaints about the existing system. On balance, therefore, it appears there would be a great deal more gains than losses for British parliamentary life if *Constituency-based Voting with Proportional Allocation of Seats* were adopted.

Further Information:

For a discussion of the desirable goals of electoral reform see: M. Threlfall (2010) [Ten Goals and One Solution for Westminster Electoral Reform, or How to Wed Constituency Links with PR](http://www.londonmet.ac.uk/research-units/iset/wps/wps_home.cfm). ISET Working Paper Nr.16, London Metropolitan University, http://www.londonmet.ac.uk/research-units/iset/wps/wps_home.cfm

For a discussion of the problems associated with the government's proposed referendum on adopting the AV system, see: Threlfall, M. (2010) **Electoral Reform Briefing Nr.1 'What is Wrong with the Alternative Vote?'** <http://www.londonmet.ac.uk/research-units/iset/staff/monica-threlfall.cfm#Publications>

Forthcoming Threlfall, M. (2010) 'The Purpose of Electoral Reform', *Political Quarterly*, Vol.81, Nr.4, December 2010.

¹NOTES

¹ The Ministry of Justice's review of the functioning of the new electoral systems in the devolved administrations of the UK and the new PR system for European Parliament introduced in 1997 chose as its themes proportionality, voter participation, stability and effectiveness of governance, impact on the voter, social representation, political campaigning, impact on administration. These mostly do not correspond to the questions asked at the start, nor do they come ranked or tied to each system.

² First Past The Post is a truly misleading common name since there is no post, or quota, or 50% mark that party candidates have to achieve. The fact of coming first is not the point, it is that the winner takes all the available seats. So, 'single-winner system' and 'Single Member *Plurality*' (its official

name) are accurate descriptions that remind us that, too often, the seat is occupied by an MP who did not win a majority.

³ Kent, Tom (2007) 'Electoral Reform For Constructive Competition', *Policy Options/Options Politiques*, November 2007, p.31, Quebec: Institute for Research on Public Policy.
www.irpp.org/po/archive/nov07/kent2.pdf

⁴ Reviewing the 532 Labour and Conservative held constituencies in 2005, I found only 40 Labour MPs and 102 Conservatives elected with 50% or over of the turnout, using Electoral Calculus > Ordered Seats > Majority Sorted Seats by Martin Baxter. <http://www.electoralcalculus.co.uk/> Accessed at various dates, April-May 2010. Some estimates for 2005 claim 52% of votes were wasted on candidates with no chance of winning the seat.

⁵ Research on the posts of mayors find that these remain overwhelmingly male even in countries where women are prominent as MPs and cabinet members, e.g. in Spain. In England, of 18 directly elected mayors, only 2 have been women (calculated from Wikipedia 'Elected mayors in the UK', 9.05.2010.)

⁶ Electoral Calculus website, May 2010.

⁷ Author calculation using lists in The Observer, 9 May 2010, p.12, p.24.

⁸ Expert advice for designers states that electoral systems that are likely to be easily understood by the voters and the politicians are more effective and sustainable, and that "Too much complexity can lead to misunderstandings, unintended consequences, and voter mistrust of the results." See Advice for Electoral Systems Designers, <http://aceproject.org/ace-en/topics/es/esg?toc>

⁹ The Plant Committee (1991) already reported the need for 'fairness to groups, such as ethnic minorities, and women currently under-represented in the Commons'. See *Democracy Representation and Elections*, The Labour Party, *Report of the Working Party on Electoral Systems* (chaired by Lord Plant).

¹⁰ In Australia, the only good example, almost half the ballots have had to be redistributed. An expert website concludes 'The decline of what was a very stable two party system, the rise of minor parties, and the increasing influence of independent candidates' is the impact of preference voting since the 1990s. 'Australia: The Alternative Vote System', ACE: The Electoral Knowledge Network, http://aceproject.org/ace-en/topics/es/esy/esy_au

¹¹ As seen in Japan See McKean, Margaret and Scheiner, Ethan. 2000. 'Japan's new electoral system: plus ça change ...', *Electoral Studies*, 19:447-477.

¹² In Australia, compulsory marking of all preferences (itself a violation of the voter's right not to contribute to any party's vote) was so tricky to implement that parties took to distributing leaflets with pre-marked 'drafts' of the ballot for voters to take with them and copy. Non-compulsory marking leads to the need for the leading candidate to obtain 50%, thus excluding smaller parties again. See 'Australia: The Alternative Vote System', ACE: The Electoral Knowledge Network, http://aceproject.org/ace-en/topics/es/esy/esy_au . See also Jenkins Report, pp.97-8.

¹³ See BBC, Election 2010, Results, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/shared/election2010/results/>

¹⁴ See Data Management and Analysis Group (2008) *The 2008 Election Results Summary*, London: Greater London Authority, p.12.

<http://www.london.gov.uk/archive/gla/publications/factsandfigures/dmag-briefing-2008-19.pdf>

¹⁵ As the Ministry for Justice report states: "Support for PR decreases in survey results when questions suggest that PR would result in more small parties in Parliament, indicating that there is concern and public uncertainty about the influence of small parties and coalitions on government." §48, Ministry of Justice (2008), *The experience of new voting systems in the United Kingdom since 1997*. Governance of Britain series, Cm 7304, presented to Parliament by the Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice by Command of Her Majesty the Queen, January 2008.

¹⁶ See Crewe, Ivor (1984) 'British MPs and their constituents: how strong are their links?', *Essex Papers in Politics and Government*, Nr.10,
http://www.essex.ac.uk/government/Essex_Papers/essex_papers_new2004.shtm . Also

published in Bogdanor, V. (1985) ed., *Representatives of the People? Parliamentarians and constituents in Western democracies*, London: Gower.

¹⁷ Manin, Bernard (1997) *The Principles of Representative Government*, Cambridge: CUP.

¹⁸ Author count using the database of the Quota Project, International IDEA Institute, Stockholm University, maintained with the contributions of the Inter-Parliamentary Union –IPU.
<http://www.quotaproject.org/systemParty.cfm>

¹⁹ Poland has 82,900 inhabitants for each of their 460 deputies; Macedonia has 16,900 inhabitants for each of their 120 deputies and the UK 94,400 for each MP.

²⁰ There is evidence that there are different cultures of dealing with casework under many Party List systems. This is often because the local government, local ministerial social security and labour departments, regional governments and several other channels for grievances are seen to be appropriate channels of redress operating at the service of citizens. These free the legislator from this duty.

²¹ In Thailand this has created 'two classes of politicians with radically divergent career incentives for election', Benjamin Reilly (2004) *Democratization and political reform in the Asia-Pacific: Is there an 'Asian model' of institutional design?*, Discussion Paper 04-04, Australia National University,
<http://apseg.anu.edu.au>

²² Although the Scottish Parliament explicitly recognises the constituent's right to expect one of their MSPs to take on a case, it adds that it is up to the MSP to decide how best to deal with it, and implies that constituents should have approached other bodies first before the MP takes on a case. This is even more relevant at Westminster level. See Scottish Parliament (February 2010), *MSPs and their Work*, 5th edition, 20885/02.2010/5000, p.7.
<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/vli/mspwork/documents/MSPs5thedFeb2010.pdf>

²³ Drawing on the contents of 20 discussion groups in four countries carried out during the research project reported in M. Threlfall (2009) 'What makes citizens feel politically represented? Results from qualitative research in the UK, Spain, Poland and Macedonia', Working Paper.

²⁴ House of Commons Outreach Unit, public statements; The Speaker's public statements, eg. on 30 November 2009 to The Hansard Society.

²⁵ See Krook, M-L., Lovenduski, J. and Squires, J., (2006) chapter 8 of *Women, Quotas and Politics*, ed. D. Dahlerup, London and New York: Routledge; and Centre for Women and Democracy (2010) News item, 7 May 2010 ('Derisory increase in number of women MPs') in which it claims "The unusually high number of MPs retiring at this election meant that the loss of Labour women in marginal seats was balanced out by [the rule of] 50% of Labour candidates in seats where the Labour MP was retiring being women. Had this not been the case [the rule] the number of women in the House of Commons would have declined significantly". <http://www.cfwd.org.uk/news/28/61/Derisory-increase-in-number-of-women-MPs>.

²⁶ See The 1990s Trust (2007) *A Black Manifesto 2007*, p.4, p.26.

²⁷ They include: former Labour Transport Minister Sadiq Khan, Tooting; Khalid Mahmood, re-elected for Labour in Birmingham Perry Bar); Anas Sarwar, Glasgow Central. The 3 Muslim women are Labour: Yasmin Qureshi, Bolton South East; Shabana Mahmood, Birmingham Ladywood; and Rushnara Ali, with a huge majority of 11,000 in Bethnal Green and Bow. The first Muslim Conservatives to be elected were Sajid Javid, who retained Bromsgrove, and Rehman Chisti, who won in newly-created Gillingham & Rainham. Nadhim Zahawi, chief executive of online market research agency YouGov, became the first Iraqi Kurd to become an MP defending the Conservative majority in Stratford-on-Avon. See *Radiance News*, 1 June 2010,

<http://www.radianceweekly.com/204/5420/Why-Silence-on-Madhuri-Gupta's-Espionage-for-Pakistan/2010-05-16/Muslim-World/Story-Detail/Suspects-In-Killing-Of-Hamas-Official.html>

²⁸ My own list of names is 21, but 18 appears in *The Muslim News* online, Issue 253, Friday 28 May 2010, accessed 1 June 2010.

²⁹ Using Dorling, Danny (2004, p.45) who states that in the 2001 census, 92.1% or 54.2 million people reported themselves or their family members to be White. See *People and Places: A 2001 Census Atlas of the UK*, Bristol: The Policy Press.

³⁰ Ministry of Justice (2008), *The experience of new voting systems in the United Kingdom since 1997*. Governance of Britain series, Cm 7304, § 31.

³¹ As Guardian correspondent Hirsh claimed 'The link between constituencies with a high proportion of minority voters and longstanding black and Asian MPs remained firm in many places. Diane Abbott in Hackney North and Stoke Newington and David Lammy in Tottenham both won with large majorities, increasing their share of the vote.' (Afua Hirsch, Guardian.co.uk, Friday 7 May 2010). The case of Ealing Southall mentioned earlier, reinforces this interpretation.

³² Re 'ghettoisation', the 2001 census showed that in three-quarters of districts, more than 95% of the population are White; in half of districts, more than 98 % are White (Dorling 2004 p.45, *People and Places: A 2001 Census Atlas of the UK*, Bristol: The Policy Press.

³³ Beatrice Barleon (2009) 'Reform parliament, for diversity's sake', <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2009/jul/17/speakers-conference-proportional-representation-diversity> Guardian.co.uk 17.07.09,

³⁴ My thanks to Jon Barlow for his editing work on this document.

³⁵ As the Electoral Knowledge Network states "...when designing an electoral system, district magnitude is in many ways the key factor in determining how the system will operate in practice, the strength of the link between voters and elected members, and the overall proportionality of election results". See 'District Magnitude', ACE, <http://aceproject.org/ace-en/topics/es/esd/esd02/esd02e/esd02e01?toc>

³⁶ For instance, the London area's 73 constituencies make for 7 new Electoral Districts (3 of them with 11 seats) if the current boundaries of the London region are to be kept. Alternatively, there could be 8 EDs of 8 seats and one of 9.

³⁷ A substantial proportion of residents in a constituency, sometimes over half, are not aware of their MP's name.

³⁸ This is definitely a matter of hours not weeks as under AV in Australia.

³⁹ The Sainte-Laguë method is similar except that it only uses the distribution numbers from columns 1, 3, 5, 7, 9 to allocate the seat. And Column 1, instead of being the same as the party's total, is its total divided by 1.4 (no specific explanation for this integer has been found).