**Fully-Proportional Representation, and ‘Optimising Democratic Governance’**

This paper presents an analysis of the processes by which democratic governance is (or ought to be) effected. It starts from first principles, and uses process re-engineering techniques in an attempt to define a coherent paradigm for the issues which must be addressed.

Many presuming to an opinion on this issue focus on electoral/appointment processes in general, and on proportional representation in particular. However, an electoral/appointment process can only ever be a ‘means’ to an ‘end’. The merits of a given electoral/appointment process can be assessed only in the context of the quality of the resulting democratic governance. Hence the title of this paper, and the ‘frame of reference’ for this paper, is ‘Optimising Democratic Governance’.

A democratic regime can have only a single Political Chief Executive (e.g. the Prime Minister in the UK, the President in the US, and the First Minister of Wales), with the authority to appoint and manage the rest of the Political Executive (e.g. the Cabinet, etc. in the UK). Thus, the concept of fully-proportional representation is not relevant for the electoral/appointment processes for a Political Chief Executive. However, the concept of democracy requires that the Political Chief Executive should have to secure and maintain the support of a majority of the electorate. Unless the electorate is prepared to subject itself to an overwhelming sequence of campaigns, elections and referenda, the electorate needs a Representative Assembly to moderate the Political Executive on behalf of that electorate.

Proponents of fully-proportional representation argue that democratic moderation of a Political Chief Executive by a Representative Assembly requires that power within that Representative Assembly must be based on the concept of fully-proportional representation. However, we should perhaps consider more thoroughly the nature and consequences of fully-proportional representation, and the nature of the relationship between a ‘paired’ Political Chief Executive and Representative Assembly, before adopting a ‘myopic’ insistence on fully-proportional representation as a panacea for ‘Optimising Democratic Governance’.   
  
In particular, we should perhaps consider the potential for synergy between two related ‘constitutional reform’ propositions on the current political agenda:

* 1. Honourable democrats of all Parties are already promoting the concept of fully-proportional representation. Opinions vary:
     1. Honourable proponents highlight the perceived benefits of ‘true/fair democracy’.
     2. Honourable opponents highlight the perceived dangers of ‘coalition chaos’.
  2. The Conservative Government is already promoting the concept of Mayoral governance in general, and Mayoral City Regions in particular; each with a directly-elected Political Chief Executive (i.e. a Mayor). Opinions vary:
     1. Honourable proponents highlight the perceived benefits of ‘purposeful leadership’.
     2. Honourable opponents highlight the perceived dangers of ‘too much power in one pair of hands’.

1. However, there has been very little discussion of the potential for synergy between these two propositions.

Of course, many opponents of fully-proportional representation in the current ‘Conservative’ ‘covert coalition’ Party and the current ‘Labour’ ‘covert coalition’ Party oppose fully-proportional representation out of a self-serving concern to maintain their privileged position with the current non-proportional electoral processes.

1. However, **in every Party**, there are many **‘honourable’** democrats who oppose fully-proportional representation, but who are **not** anti-democratic per-se. Indeed, most would agree with the **concept** of fully-proportional representation **in principle**. Their opposition to fully-proportional representation **in practice** is based on their belief that the effectiveness of the Political Executive is more important than the last ounce of proportional democracy in the associated Representative Assembly, and they have concerns about the **presumed** weakness of the ‘coalition chaos’ Political Executive which they **presume** would have to ‘emerge’ from a Representative Assembly without a (disproportionally-)dominant supportive Party in the associated Representative Assembly.   
     
   However, if the Political Chief Executive was independently-elected (e.g. as for the President of the US, the President of France, the Mayor of London, the Mayor of each of the 9 UK Mayoral City Regions, and the Mayor of each of the 18 UK Mayoral local authorities), that Political Chief Executive would have an independent and decisive democratic mandate to (try to) **lead** the Political Executive, and could and should be free to appoint and manage the rest of the Political Executive on the basis of ‘best persons for the jobs’ (i.e. rather than being pressured to find executive jobs for the ‘big beasts’ from the dominant ‘covert/overt coalition’ in the associated Representative Assembly). Of course, anyone who joined such a Political Executive should have to resign all positions of power and influence in the associated Representative Assembly (and indeed in all of the Parties aspiring to power and influence in the associated Representative Assembly). This **‘separation of powers’** is similar to the provisions of the US Constitution; whereby Barack Obama had to resign as Senator for Illinois when he was inaugurated as President of the US in 2009, and whereby Hilary Clinton had to resign as Senator for New York when she was offered and accepted the position of Secretary of State in Barack Obama’s Political Executive of the US government in 2009.
2. Thus, a **‘paired combination’** of **a directly-elected Political Chief Executive** and **a fully-proportional Representative Assembly** (i.e. **‘constitutionalising’** the **‘separation of powers’**) would constitute a ‘net win’ for both the ‘honourable’ proponents and the ‘honourable’ opponents of both of the propositions defined above.   
     
   Given the above **overall** paradigm (for the relationship between a ‘paired combination’ of a Political Chief Executive and Representative Assembly), there are three potential sub-paradigms for ‘ongoing leverage against ongoing power’ (by Electors):   
   1. A **Base Paradigm** would comprise the following processes:
      1. Periodically (i.e. in elections), each elector would have a vote to nominate a ‘default’ Proxy Party for themselves (based on culture, class, track record, leading personalities, public pronouncements, manifestos, etc.).
      2. On a rolling basis, each elector would benefit from delivery of manifesto commitments by the Constitutional Representatives of their Proxy Party in Select Committees and in the ultimate votes in the Representative Assembly.

However, this paradigm is valid **only** with **fully‑**proportional representation. It requires Constitutional Representatives in the Representative Assembly empowered to act as a fully-proportional Proxy for their electors.

* 1. An **Activist Paradigm** would comprise the following additional processes:
     1. On a rolling basis, each elector would have ad-hoc access to ‘sympathetic discussions’ with sympathetic ad-hoc local representatives of their Proxy Party (Constitutional or not), and with the (non-constitutional) policy-development processes of their Proxy Party.
     2. On a rolling basis, each elector would benefit from delivery of the above input through to the Constitutional Representatives of their Proxy Party in Select Committees and in the ultimate votes in the Representative Assembly.

However, this paradigm also is valid **only** with **fully‑**proportional representation. It requires Constitutional Representatives in the Representative Assembly empowered to act as a fully-proportional Proxy for their electors.

* 1. A **‘Constituency-Link’ Paradigm** would comprise the following alternative processes:
     1. On a rolling basis, each elector would have ad-hoc **‘access’** to the (de-facto) Constitutional Representative for that elector's Constitutional Sub-Constituency.
     2. So, what?

This paradigm is valid **regardless** of proportional representation. However, one has to ask how much ‘ongoing leverage against ongoing power’ it actually offers to each individual elector. The electors ‘enclosed by’ the Constitutional Representative for a given Constitutional Sub-Constituency will have a wide range of radically-conflicting views. A given single Constitutional Representative for a given single-member Constitutional Sub-Constituency (or a given small set of Constitutional Representatives for a given multi-member Constitutional Sub-Constituency) might (in one’s dreams) be able to ‘listen to’ every constituent (i.e. all 80,000 – 320,000 of them!?), but cannot hope to actually represent the views of them all proportionally in the Representative Assembly. Thus, with fully-proportional representation, one has to ask why would anyone bother to ‘engage with’ this paradigm (i.e. rather than with the far more sympathetic and effective Base and Activist paradigms defined above)?

1. Thus, fully-proportional representation is a pre-requisite for ‘Optimising Democratic Governance’, and the whole concept of ‘a constituency-link’ is a deceit (a form of ‘tokenism’), and should be abandoned. All democratic regimes could/should adopt a List-Full electoral process; leaving each Party to devise its own (non-constitutional) policies for geographically-aligned representation (and all other sectional interests such as gender, disability, age, religion, etc.) through (non-constitutional) management of its candidate-lists, and through (non-constitutional) deployment of its (proportional) Constitutional Representatives.
2. Given the insights on the previous pages, the analysis for which this paper provides an overview leads to the following overall paradigm for ‘Optimised Democratic Governance’:   
   1. Political power in a democracy should be balanced between a ‘junior’ Political Chief Executive and a ‘senior’ Representative Assembly (i.e. ‘constitutionalising’ the ‘separation of powers’). This relationship can be characterised within a many-to-one one-to-many ‘hourglass’ of delegation; as illustrated in the following diagram.



* 1. There should be a single Representative Assembly (i.e. no Lords in the UK Parliament, and no Senate in the US Congress).
  2. The democratic processes by which the Political Chief Executive and the Representative Assembly were appointed should be independent but synchronised (i.e. Political Chief Executive first, then Representative Assembly a month or so later).
  3. The Political Chief Executive should be free to appoint and manage the rest of the Political Executive on the basis of ‘best persons for the jobs’ (i.e. rather than being pressured to ‘find executive jobs for the political classes from the Representative Assembly’). However, anyone who joined such a Political Executive should have to resign all positions of power and influence in the Representative Assembly (i.e. ‘constitutionalising’ the ‘separation of powers’).
  4. The Political Chief Executive should be appointed through an independent democratic process which consolidated the ordered preferences of the electorate, in which weaker Candidates ‘dropped out’ in turn, and in which votes for Candidates who ‘dropped out’ were transferable to stronger Candidates (i.e. STV‑1).
  5. The whole concept of a Constitutional ‘sub-constituency-link’ should be abandoned. Representatives in the Representative Assembly should be appointed through an independent democratic process designed to achieve full-constituency representation fully-proportional to the Party preferences of the electorate (i.e. List‑Full); leaving each Party to devise its own (non-constitutional) policies for geographically-aligned representation (and all other sectional interests such as gender, disability, age, religion, etc.) through (non-constitutional) management of its candidate-lists, and through (non-constitutional) deployment of its (proportional) Constitutional Representatives.