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***DEMOCRATIC*  DECISION-MAKING**

Consider three topics: (i) the Westminster electoral system,

(ii) the UK’s relationship with Europe, and

(iii) a football championship.

(i) As in New Zealand in 1992, the UK in 2011 could have had a choice of more than two electoral systems, something like:

***A*** pr-list,

***B*** fptp,

***C*** av, or

***D*** pr-stv.

(ii) In June last year, there were four possibilities, the UK in the:

***A*** EU,

***B*** EEA,

***C*** Customs Union, or

***D*** WTO.

(iii) And this year, there *could* have been a competition with just these four teams:

***A*** Arsenal,

***B*** Chelsea,

***C*** Lincoln, and

***D*** Sutton.

In (iii), there could be a knock-out, two semi-finals and a final; in which case, as in the FA Cup, much would depend on the draw. Or there could be a fairer, more robust league system, with emphasis on goals scored and/or matches won in *all* matches.

In (i), the ref, David Cameron, a ***B*** fan, decided only two teams could play, ***B*** v ***C***, fptp or av.

In (ii), now an ***A*** supporter, he chose ***A*** versus the rest. In effect, the question was, “***A***, yes or no?” So ***A*** lost. But so too, ***B***, ***C*** or ***D*** would probably have lost if the question had been, respectively, “***B***, yes or no?” “***C***, yes or no?” or “***D***, yes or no?”

OK, (iii) Sutton *could* have won the Cup… but it would have been a quirk. OK, (i) fptp did beat av, but pr might have been more popular. OK, (ii) ‘remain’ lost, but we still don’t know the will of the people… we know only what 52% *don’t* want.

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On contentious issues, then, democratic decision-making should not be binary; rather, it should be based on robust preferential voting, so to identify the option with the highest average preference.

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