**PRESS RELEASE**

**IMMEDIATE 22.01.2019**

**SOCIAL COHESION?**

**A BINARY REFERENDUM *COULD* *THREATEN* IT…**

yes, and “all the wars in the former Yugoslavia started with a [binary] referendum.”

(*Oslobodjenje*, 7.2.1999.)

Binary referendums also exacerbated the situations in the Caucasus, East Timor, South Sudan and Ukraine. What’s more, they probably would provoke violence if held in Kashmir, Tibet or Xinjiang.

Whereas…

**A MULTI-OPTION REFERENDUM –** (eg, plurality voting, AV or TRS**) - *NEED NOT THREATEN* IT**

No wars have ever been started when jurisdictions have held (usually TRS) multi-option plebiscites,

like Newfoundland (3 options) in 1949; **§**

Singapore (3 options) in 1962;

Guam in 1982 (6 options + 1 blank)\*

**§** So the Westminster precedent has already been set.

\* Complicated? Not at all! The invalid vote was 0.85%.

While, to go one better…

**A PREFERENTIAL MBC REFERENDUM *COULD ACTUALLY ENHANCE* IT**

Plurality Voting voters cast only one preference.

TRS, two-round system voters cast one or maybe two preferences; if no one option gets a majority, have a play-off between the two leading options;

AV, alternative vote voters cast one or some preferences; if no one option gets a majority, eliminate the least popular and transfer its votes, until one option does get a majority;

MBC, modified Borda count voters cast, at best, all preferences; so at best, the outcome is option with the highest average preference – ah, the perfect compromise!

Peter Emerson

Director, the de Borda Institute

36 Ballysillan Road, Belfast BT14 7QQ

[www.deborda.org](http://www.deborda.org/)

pemerson@deborda.org

07837717979 02890711795