[Commentary] An Alternative Polity

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Abstract

In practically all Western countries one may observe that the
government and its agencies do not function properly and even seem to be
hostile towards its citizens. What is immediately evident from the
outside is that the ministers and politicians are seldomly qualified for
the ministry they are supposed to manage, that in most cases they do not
have a proper beta education, and that frequently they have never worked
in real life such as industry, small or big business. Usually, they are
only bureaucrats who try to make a career in the administrative circuit,
in which they never have to think about the question of who pays the bill
for their decisions. But there are many more reasons why democracy in
Western countries is in big trouble. In the first section, we shall point
out a number of weak aspects of Western democracies. In the next section,
we shall introduce an alternative polity which is due to Rients Hofstra
[1], with the intention to make Western democracies really
democratic again.

1. Flaws in Western Democracies

In what follows we refer to the political situation as it is in the Netherlands, but we strongly have the impression that the problems and flaws indicated in this section also apply to most, if not all, other Western so-called democracies.

The general political picture in Western countries is that in each country there are a number of political parties and citizens may cast their vote on (only) one of them once every four or five years. In this way, parties get a number of seats in Parliament, more or less proportional to the number of votes they get. Because usually no party obtains a majority of the seats, one (out of many) majority coalition is formed which chooses a cabinet consisting of ministers and secretaries of state.

This brief description of the state of affairs already hides a large number of problems that need to be solved in practice, and which currently seem to be dealt with in the wrong way.

1.1. Composition of party lists

To begin with, if a party obtains, say ten, seats, which party members will occupy these seats? Usually, the first ten members on the party list. But who determines the order of the candidates on this list? This is often the party leadership, usually unknown to the public. Party members who want to be elected will therefore have to please the party leadership. It also means that they have to follow the party line with every bill; if not, they may forget a seat in the next election. In order to make the party members in the House of Representatives less dependent on the often-anonymous party leadership, it would be better if the members of the party, instead of the party leadership, determine the order of the candidates on the party list in accordance with, for instance, the number of votes that each candidate receives from the party members. This state of affairs also makes clear that in fact, the party leaderships determine the policies, although these party leaderships are unknown and anonymous to the citizens.

It is also worth noticing that parties have only relatively few members, much less than say 20 years ago, and hence cannot be said to represent large parts of society.

Conclusion No wonder that many, if not most, members of parliament are not representatives of the citizens, but instead representatives of the party leadership.

1.2. Present election procedure

Once every four or five years the citizens may cast their vote by putting a cross for the party or candidate of their choice. Note that one cannot ask a voter for less information, apart from asking for no information at all. One cross and not more, otherwise your vote is not valid. But what if I rate two parties or candidates equally? Then I will have to make an improper choice, choose one of them, and disown the other one. No wonder that this way of holding an election, in which the voter may give only minimal information that in addition often is improper, leads to paradoxical outcomes, as illustrated in the following examples.

Example 1. Consider the case of three parties *Cen*(*ter*), *Con*(*servatives*) and *Soc*(*ialists*), where 40% prefers *Soc* to *Cen* and *Cen* to *Con*, 35% prefers *Cen* to *Con* and *Con* to *Soc* and the last 25% prefers *Con* to *Cen* and *Cen* to *Soc*.

40:	*Soc*	*Cen*	*Con*
35:	*Cen*	*Con*	*Soc*
25:	*Con*	*Cen*	*Soc*

Then in the Dutch system, in which the Plurality Rule (PR) (most votes count) is used, *Soc* gets 40% of the seats, *Cen* 35% and *Con* 25%, since the second and third choices of the voters are not taken into account. Consequently, *Soc* is called the winner of this election. Is this fair? Let us compare *Soc* with *Cen*: 40% of the voters prefer *Soc* to *Cen*, but 35 + 25 = 60% of the voters prefer *Cen* to *Soc*. In other words, in a pairwise comparison between *Soc* and *Cen*, *Cen* beats *Soc*, i.e., a majority of the voters prefer *Cen* to *Soc*. Next let us compare *Soc* with *Con*: 40% of the voters prefer *Soc* to *Con*, but 35 + 25 = 60% of the voters prefer *Con* to *Soc*. In other words, in a pairwise comparison between *Soc* and *Con*, *Con* beats *Soc*.

So, in this example *Soc* gets the most seats, 40%, but in a pairwise comparison both *Cen* and *Con* beat party *Soc*, while party *Cen* only gets 35% of the seats and party *Con* only 25%. *Soc* wins the election with 40% of the seats, but for 35 + 25 = 60% of the voters *Soc* is the least preferred, maybe even an unacceptable, party. Therefore, it is also not fair that party *Soc* may deliver the prime minister. In this example, it would be much more reasonable if *Cen* were the winner of the election, because *Cen* beats *Soc* with 35 + 25 = 60% of the votes and *Cen* beats *Con* with 40 + 35 = 75% of the votes. In other words, in this example, a majority of 35 + 25 = 60% of the voters prefer *Cen* to *Soc* and another majority of 40 + 35 = 75% prefer *Cen* to *Con*.

Example 2. Consider the case of 4 parties *Cen*(*ter*), *Con*(*servatives*), *Dem*(*ocrats*) and *Soc*(*ialists*), and the following preferences of the voters:

40:	*Soc*	*Dem*	*Cen*	*Con*
35:	*Cen*	*Dem*	*Con*	*Soc*
25:	*Con*	*Dem*	*Cen*	*Soc*

In the Dutch election system, *Soc* becomes again the winner with 40% of the seats and *Dem* gets no seat at all, because the second, third, and fourth preferences of the voters are not taken into account. But 35 + 25 = 60% of the voters prefer *Dem* to *Soc*; 40 + 25 = 65% of the voters prefer *Dem* to *Cen* and 40 + 35 = 75% of the voters prefer *Dem* to *Con*. In other words, in a pairwise comparison with any other party, there is a majority of at least 60% that prefers *Dem* to the other party, but nevertheless, *Dem* gets no seat at all. This looks very undemocratic and is very much against our intuition.

Conclusion The Dutch electoral system may lead to very paradoxical seat distributions, because it does not take into
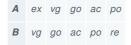
account the second, third, etc. preferences of the voters. Historical studies [2] show that the phenomena just mentioned occur rather frequently.
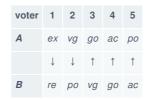
1.3. A more fair electoral system

The natural question to ask is then whether there does exist a better electoral system. Many proposals for electoral systems have been made in the past, but each of them turns out to have counterintuitive properties. Already in 1950 Arrow proved that, in the framework where voters' inputs consist of individual preference orders over the alternatives, there cannot exist a social ranking rule that satisfies a small finite number of at first sight quite natural and desirable properties, because these properties together turn out to be logically inconsistent.

Fortunately, in 2010 Balinski and Laraki found a way out of this devastating result by asking voters for their *evaluation* or *judgment* of each candidate instead of their preference order over the candidates. Next, they determine the median value of the individual evaluations of each candidate, called the majority grade of this candidate, resulting in a ranking of all candidates. They call their method *Majority Judgment*, because the individual judgments of the candidates are the input of the election method and majorities play a role in determining the median value of a candidate. Notice that a voter's evaluation of all candidates is much more informative than his preference order over the candidates: saying that one prefers A to B says nothing about one's evaluation of A and B, but conversely, knowing a voter's evaluation of A and B informs us of his preference order of A and B.

In order to make this paper self-contained let us briefly explain how Majority Judgment (MJ) works. Suppose there are two candidates, say A(lice) and B(ob), and five voters. These voters give an evaluation of each candidate in terms of *ex* (cellent), *vg*(very good), *go*(od), *ac*(ceptable), *po*(or) or *re*(ject). Next suppose that A and B receive the following evaluations:

A	ex	vg	go	ac	po
B	vg	go	ac	po	re

Balinski and Laraki call this table the *merit profile* for A and B: it lists the evaluations of A and B from high to low. Clearly, it is A who has the better evaluations. So, clearly, A should be the winner, and any system that designates B as the winner is not fair. However, Plurality Rule (PR) (most votes count) may designate B as the winner in case the opinions of the voters are as indicated in the following *opinion profile* for A and B:

voter	1	2	3	4	5
A	ex	vg	go	ac	po
	↓	↓	↑	↑	↑
B	re	po	vg	go	ac

In this opinion profile, three voters (slightly) prefer B to A, while only two voters (strongly) prefer A to B. So, the Plurality Rule (most votes count) would erroneously declare B the winner.

Majority Judgment, on the other hand, takes the *median value*, also called the *majority grade*, of the evaluations of A, respectively B. The majority grade of A is *go*: there is a majority (three-out-of- five) who thinks A deserves a grade at least *go* and there is another majority (three-out-of-five) who thinks that A deserves a grade at most *go*. But the majority grade of B is only *ac*: there is a majority (three-out-of-five) who thinks that B deserves a grade at least *ac* and there is another majority (three-out-of-five) who thinks that B deserves a grade at most *ac*. Because the majority grade of A is higher than the one of B, the Majority Judgment declares A the winner. In case A and B would have the same majority grade, Balinski and Laraki look at four-out-of-five majorities that are different for the two candidates, as explained in [3][4]. Notice that Majority Judgment is proof against strategic manipulation in the following sense: a voter, who gave A an *ac* and thinks the majority grade *go* of A is too high, cannot lower the majority grade of A by giving A an evaluation lower than *ac*; similarly a voter, who gave B a *go* and thinks the majority grade *ac* of B is too low, cannot raise the majority grade of B by giving B an evaluation higher than *go*. So, Majority Judgment does not reward strategic behavior! In other words, Majority Judgment is strategy-proof with respect to the majority grade.

Although the electoral system devised by Balinski and Laraki, presented in[3][4] and called Majority Judgment (MJ), looks ideal for determining a ranking of the candidates and hence in particular for choosing a president or mayor, it has not been designed to determine a seat distribution in parliament. Below we adapt Balinski and Laraki's Majority Judgment in order to do so, by replacing the evaluations by points and next determining the average score of each candidate instead of taking the median of all evaluations of a candidate. Unfortunately, by replacing the median of all evaluations of a candidate with the average score of that candidate, in fact, we replace Majority Judgment by Range Voting (see Smith [5]) and hence the safeguards of Balinski and Laraki's Majority Judgment against strategic voting, mentioned above, are lost: by giving less points to a candidate, its average score is lowered, while its majority grade would remain the same.

So, instead of asking voters for their first choice or their order of preference over the candidates (parties), we ask them to give an evaluation of *all* candidates in terms of digits from 1 to 10. Everyone in the Netherlands is familiar with the meaning of these digits, because they are used in the Dutch education system: 10 stands for excellent, 8 for good, 6 for sufficient or acceptable, 4 for poor, 2 for extremely poor or reject, etc. Of course, the voter may also decide to give no digit to one or more parties. Next for each candidate (party), we determine the average score it has got from the voters, i.e., the total number of points obtained divided by the number of voters who gave an evaluation of this candidate or party. Finally, we make a seat distribution that is - as close as possible - proportional to these average scores. In this way, one gets a seat distribution that reflects much better what the voters have in mind. Let us illustrate this electoral system with a simple example.

Example 3. Suppose that the 40% voters in Example 1 evaluate *Soc* as excellent (10), *Cen* as good (8) and *Con* as sufficient (6); that the 35% voters in Example 1 evaluate *Cen* as excellent (10), *Con* as good (8) and *Soc* as poor (2); and that the 25% voters in Example 1 evaluate *Con* as excellent (10), *Cen* as sufficient (6) and *Soc* as insufficient (4).

40:	Soc (10)	Cen (8)	Con (6)
35:	Cen (10)	Con (8)	Soc (2)
25:	Con (10)	Cen (6)	Soc (4)

Next, we compute the scores of *Soc*, *Cen* and *Con*:

Soc obtains (40 x 10) + (35 x 2) + (25 x 4) = 400 + 70 + 100 = 570 points,

Cen obtains (40 x 8) + (35 x 10) + (25 x 6) = 320 + 350 + 150 = 820 points,

Con obtains (40 x 6) + (35 x 8) + (25 x 10) = 240 + 280 + 250 = 770 points.

In this example, we have assumed that all hundred voters have given each of the three parties a grade or rating. So, the average grade for *Soc* is 5.70, for *Cen* 8.20, and for *Con* the average grade is 7.70.

The total average score of *Soc*, *Cen* and *Con* together is now 5.70 + 8.20 + 7.70 = 21.60 points. Hence *Soc* gets 5.70 / 21.60 = 26% of the seats, *Cen* gets 8.20 / 21.60 = 38% of the seats and *Con* gets 7.70 / 21.60 = 36% of the seats. So, in this example, using an adaptation of Balinski and Laraki's Majority Judgment (which determines a ranking of the candidates), *Cen* gets the most seats, 38%, which is very plausible because *Cen* scores well with everyone, *Con* gets 36% of the seats and *Soc* gets only 26% of the seats, because *Soc* scores poorly at 60% of the voters. This result looks far more reasonable than the seat distribution in Example 1 according to the Dutch electoral system, where *Soc* was the winner with 40% of the seats, while *Soc* was the least preferred alternative for a 60% majority of the voters, who all prefer *Cen* to *Soc*.

Below we will illustrate Majority Judgment using an example which is very similar to Example 3, if we replace the parties *Soc*, *Cen* and *Con* respectively by the candidates *A*, *B* and *C*, and identify the evaluation *ex*(cellent) with 10 points, *go* (od) with 8 points, *ac*(ceptable) with 6 points, *po*(or) with 4 points and *re*(ject) with 2 points.

Example 4. Suppose one hundred voters give their evaluation of three candidates *A*, *B*, and *C* for a certain position, such as a minister. Suppose the evaluations are as follows:
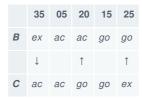
	ex	go	ac	po	re
A	40			25	35
B	35	40	25		
C	25	35	40		

So, 40 voters evaluate *A* as *ex*(cellent), 25 voters evaluate *A* as *po*(or) and 35 voters evaluate *A* as *re*(ject). Then the median value, also called the majority grade, of *A* will be *po*(or): there is a majority of voters who think that *A* deserves at least a *po*(or) and there is another majority of voters who think that *A* deserves at most a *po*(or). Similarly, the majority grade of *B* will be *go*(od) and the majority grade of *C* will be *go*(od) too. Clearly, *B* and *C* are socially preferred to *A*. But who is the winner in this example? That will be *B*, because 35 voters give *B* a grade higher than *go*(od), while only 25 voters give *C* a grade higher than *go*(od), and at the same time, only 25 voters give *B* a grade lower than *go*(od), while 40

voters give C a grade lower than go(od). How to distinguish candidates with the same majority grade is explained precisely in [3][4].

It is important to notice that B has the better evaluations and hence should be elected. But if one would use the Plurality Rule (most votes count) or Majority Rule (which in the case of two alternatives is the same as the Plurality Rule), then C might beat B, for instance, if the opinion profile of the voters is as follows:

	35	05	20	15	25
B	ex	ac	ac	go	go
	↓		↑		↑
C	ac	ac	go	go	ex

In this case, 35 voters prefer B to C, and 20 + 25 = 45 voters prefer C to B, so Plurality Rule would make C the winner, while B has clearly better evaluations than C.

Conclusion Majority Judgment instead of Majority Rule gives a much better picture of what the citizens or voters really want.

1.4. Coalition formation

The next major problem is the formation of a majority coalition. In the Netherlands, it is an unwritten rule or at least a custom that the party leader of the party with the most seats in parliament forms a majority coalition of which he or she becomes the prime minister. A number of objections can be raised here. First, he may be the leader of the party with the most seats, but a majority of the citizens may disapprove of him or even totally reject him. So, would not it be better if the citizens not only vote for a party, but also for a prime minister? Second, usually, many majority coalitions might be formed, but the intended prime minister has his own preferences and will be inclined to exclude even large parties that are critical of him, although the word democracy is explicitly mentioned in the name of his party. Again, also in this respect, it would be better if the citizens would explicitly elect their prime minister. Another and probably even better solution would be that, like in Switzerland, the four largest parties form a cabinet. In this way, no major party can be barred from cabinet participation for a long time.

Once the coalition formation has started, all parties must break promises previously made to voters in order to be able to join the coalition. Also, many interest groups and large companies try to influence the agreements made in the coalition, but all discussions and negotiations in the coalition formation process are kept indoors. Even worse, during the process of coalition formation, all kinds of policy decisions are agreed upon that played no role whatsoever in the election campaign and which citizens could therefore not take into account in their voting behavior.

Once a coalition has been formed, the members of parliament belonging to the coalition are under great pressure to follow the party line, even if their own judgment is very different. Preceding the voting in parliament, the party has decided how

its members should vote; the discussions in parliament are just for the show and will never change the voting behavior of the party members, no matter how convincing the counterarguments are. If they do not follow the party line, they can forget about an additional period in parliament, simply because they will not appear anymore on the party list or at a very low place. Consequently, the coalition functions in practice as a dictatorship.

Because power corrupts, it seems wise to limit the maximum duration of the premiership to 2 times 4 or 5 years, as is the case in many countries, but not in the Netherlands, where a prime minister can stay in power for 12 years or longer, with the exclusion of large groups of voters.

Conclusion The coalition formation process is very opaque and once a coalition has been formed it works like a dictatorship.

1.5. Competence

Probably the most serious problem in Western so-called democracies is the lack of competence or quality of the politicians. They may have a university education, but usually not a very demanding one and not one in the exact sciences. They usually have little or no experience in real life, by which they might have gathered a certain wisdom. Mostly, they see politics as a way of making a career with a good salary and a certain power, something they probably would not achieve in real life due to a lack of sufficient qualities. Consequently, parliament looks frequently like a henhouse, in which the members quarrel about almost everything except the essential issues. In particular, they are not aware that by assuming false premises, i.e., premises which contradict the facts, or which simply are a lie, any other statement logically follows. However, not the political party the minister belongs to is important, but the competence of the minister, appropriate for his ministry, is relevant. It cannot be that someone who has no knowledge or experience with healthcare becomes a minister of the Ministry of Health. This is no exception, at the moment of writing this text almost all ministers in the Netherlands have no experience whatsoever in the field of their ministry. In other Western countries, the situation seems to be not much better. Due to their lack of quality and competence, our ministers often have to resort to lying or telling half, and therefore misleading, truths. This is, of course, completely unacceptable, but they keep getting away with it, because the parliament also has too little quality or because the coalition keeps its hand above their heads. In order to become a minister of the Ministry of health, the person should be a professor of medicine or someone with comparable qualifications. So, if a party has no member who can qualify for a certain minister post, one should look outside the political arena for a qualified person.

Conclusion The members of the cabinet and also of the parliament should be qualified to do their job. Unfortunately, in practice, with a few exceptions, our ministers and members of parliament have little or no competence, no life experience, and no wisdom; they will do anything that seems good for their careers instead of representing the interests of the citizens.

1.6. Party discipline

In most cases, the parties belonging to the majority coalition approve the laws proposed by the cabinet, no matter what the other parties vote, while proposals of the opposition are usually rejected by that same majority coalition. Because of the party discipline, even parliament members belonging to the coalition, who - sometimes after hearing the objections of the opposition - resist the proposal in question, will vote in favor of it, in order to keep their seat. This is a very weird situation. Party members should follow their insight, not their party leadership. Why does a cabinet not govern with varying majorities? The cabinet, preferably consisting of very qualified ministers, develops proposals or bills, offers them to parliament, and sees whether there is a majority in favor of the bill, where the majority may vary per bill. In this way, also the opposition is taken seriously and can play a role in governing the country. At this moment, at least in the Netherlands but probably also elsewhere, the majority coalition functions as a kind of dictator: any bill proposed by the cabinet is approved and any other proposal is rejected.

Conclusion The party discipline is at odds with the notion of a representative democracy. The party may have set out the broad outlines, but in concrete situations, party members must be able to follow their own insights, after having considered all arguments for and against.

1.7. Jobs carousel

A widespread phenomenon is that former ministers and other politicians after their function in government are appointed as mayor of a city, chairman or director of some government-affiliated institution, like the railway company or the national airline company, or even become chairman of a university board or a university hospital. In many cases, these appointments have little to do with their achievements in the past or with their specific qualities or competence. On the contrary, after having failed as a politician, they get a new job at some government-affiliated institution in order to guarantee that the policies of this institution will be in line with those of the government. This may become particularly dangerous when the institution is one for health care, because the result may be that the authorities, instead of the physicians, decide on medical matters, as we have seen during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Conclusion Too frequently former ministers and politicians become directors of some government-affiliated institution, not because of their former achievements or their specific competence, on the contrary, but simply because of their network.

1.8. Western societies do not function any longer as a demo cracy

Our present politicians keep telling us that we live in a democratic constitutional state. Although that used to be true in the past, it is no longer the case. The cabinet, at least in the Netherlands, makes many binding agreements with supranational institutions like the European Union (EU), the World Economic Forum (WEF), and the World Health Organization (WHO) without consulting the parliament, let alone with the consent of the parliament. Even worse, the government refuses to inform the parliament about what was discussed at meetings of these organisations, even when explicitly asked for. And in the few cases that parliament is aware that the cabinet has intentions to sign certain agreements and with an overwhelming majority explicitly telling the government not to do so, the will of parliament is

simply ignored. From the fact that parliament takes such an undemocratic attitude for granted, one may conclude that parliament does not take itself seriously. The EU was meant for economic cooperation, but its board, the European Commission, is an inner circle, not chosen by the citizens. Even worse, their only or main goal seems to be expansion of the EU to the East. And although there is a European parliament with roughly 750 members chosen by the citizens, its actual power is extremely small and its only function is to approve proposals of the Commission, it may not make proposals itself. It is like a henhouse, where the chickens are not even allowed to lay their own eggs. The WEF and WHO are private organisations, their chairmen are appointed by nobody, but they are paid largely by the contributions of the member states and hence by the taxpayers. Even worse, the WEF seems only interested in changing human beings into robots programmed by them and the WHO seems only interested in vaccinating as many people as possible with experimental, frequently deadly, so-called medicines.

Together these institutions, the EU, WEF, and WHO, keep telling us that mankind has caused a climate catastrophe and that we should drastically change our way of life because of our CO2 emissions. But many scientists of high standing and reputation tell us otherwise, see https://clintel.nl, in particular the movie Climate: The Movie (The Cold Truth). If one realizes that CO2 is only four percent of the atmosphere and that mankind is responsible for only 3 percent of this CO2, one knows that these stories serve another purpose: control of mankind.

Apart from a few exceptions, our politicians do not feel responsible towards the citizens. They aim at a career at one of these international institutions, so naturally they are inclined to please them. No wonder the citizens come at the last place: for our politicians, it is much more attractive to please international institutions than to serve their citizens.

Appointments of judges are also politically biased, with the result that judges are generally more likely to listen to the government than to the citizen who is litigating against the government. Another important controlling power is supposed to be the mainstream media, but they have reduced themselves to spokesmen for the government. Moreover, they rely on one or two news agencies, run by a few multi-billionaires, and just copy the messages of these agencies without doing their own research. For independent news, one must read and listen to the so-called alternative media, which are under heavy censorship. Censorship and democracy are contradictory, and cannot go together. So, from the fact that there is so much censorship, it follows logically that we do not live in a democracy anymore.

Summarizing Parliament is supposed to be the legislative body, but allows itself to be sidelined by the cabinet. The cabinet, which is supposed to be the executive power, consists of ignoramuses who do what they want. De facto, the cabinet dictates what the parliament should or should not decide. The members of the cabinet listen to the international institutions that have not been chosen by anyone, because that is where an interesting future is waiting for them. Finally, the judiciary should be one of the two controlling powers, but - because the appointments are politically motivated - the citizen has virtually no chance in cases against the government; the judges tend to think of their own careers. The other controlling power, the media, is completely in the hands of a few multi-billionaires, and is just telling the narrative of the government and if not, they are under heavy censorship, contradicting the notion of democracy. In short, little is left of the famous Trias Politica.

2. An Alternative Polity

In the preceding section, we have pointed out a number of flaws occurring in most Western democracies. Together, these flaws do raise the question of whether one may still speak of a democracy: apart from putting one cross once every four or five years, the citizen is asked nothing, the party he has voted for does not keep its promises and on many items, decisions are made which never were a point of discussion in election time. Even worse, governments do the opposite of what the citizens have advised in referenda, without giving a good explanation. For all these reasons we present below an alternative polity as proposed and developed by Rients Hofstra in . In this new polity most, if not all, flaws of the present Western so-called democracies are eliminated: parties are there to support their members, not to command them how to vote; no party political appointments anymore, instead the ministers, secretaries of state, judges, mayors, etc. should be professionally very competent in their field and they are chosen by the members of parliament preferably by using Balinski and Laraki's Majority Judgment; after the elections, one does not have to form a coalition anymore; no falling cabinets anymore; no silenced and powerless opposition anymore; career politicians are exchanged for real representatives of the people and the party discipline is partly cancelled.

2.1. Political parties

Before the elections, political parties should formulate their general points of view with respect to all foreseeable issues in every department or ministry. Because of these general points of view, it may be attractive for a candidate of parliament to join a political party with a private program without being bound by all party positions. He should make clear at which points he deviates from the official party line by specifying certain nuances. This private program guarantees his independence from the party and at the same time is a binding commitment to his own voters. New-style parties serve, support, and connect, but are absolutely no longer leading.

Before the election, it should be clear whether a candidate supports fully the party line or keeps some reservations and if so, which ones. In the first case, he or she is supposed to vote in accordance with the party. In the second case and also when the issue was not foreseen in the party program, the member of parliament is free to vote according to his or her own insights. In such cases, he may consult the citizens who voted for him, via a kind of mini referendum.

One is not obliged to become a member of a political party or, equivalently, one may create a political party consisting of just one candidate.

2.2. Elections

Since the number of representatives in a parliament is relatively large, in the Netherlands 150 for instance, it seems practically impossible to use Majority Judgment as the electoral rule. Every voter would have to give an evaluation of all candidates and since there are too many candidates for membership of parliament, this does not seem to be a realistic option. Instead, citizens may vote for one (maybe, more?) candidate(s) and the candidates with the most votes become members of Parliament.

After the implementation of this polity, elections for the House of Representatives will be held once every 4 years on a recurring fixed date. Preferably in spring, far from holiday periods. Perhaps on a Sunday.

2.3. Parliament

The parliament is the pivot of our democracy, the spider in the state web, and the most important organ of the state. This will always have to stay that way. Its members are directly elected by the people for a period of four years. That too remains essential.

Elected members are representatives of the people, elected on a purely personal program or a party program with room for various personal accents. These personal accents may deviate from the general party program.

Elected members of parliament receive a thorough course in constitutional law, collectively and absolutely without any party politics.

Decisions in parliament are taken with a majority of the votes. This makes sense, since usually there are only two alternatives: in favor (yes) or against (no).

Parliament cannot be dissolved prematurely. Representatives are elected by the citizens for a four-year term. The parliament, the provincial councils, and the municipal council are sacred.

The long-term planning is reasonably guaranteed. Continuity is in the interest of the country, in contrast to frequently changing policies motivated by party political motives.

2.4. Ministers and secretaries of state

The starting point is always to find for every vacancy the very best person from all over the country, someone who has earned his or her spurs in the field for which a minister is sought. He or she must have theoretical, practical, and administrative experience, in principle more than any (top) official in the department in question and must of course be of impeccable conduct. (Maybe minor childhood sins excepted.) The country deserves the best possible candidate for every state vacancy. Administratively, the country must not be inferior to any multinational!

Ministers are democratically approached and appointed for a period of eight years, monitored, and possibly also democratically dismissed. Applying oneself is one of the options. A second period of eight years is excluded in order to prevent the corruption of power.

The party chairmen make jointly a nomination of three to five candidates for a ministerial vacancy, similarly for each state secretary. The candidates do not have to be affiliated with a party; the only thing that counts is quality and competence in the respective field. Every Dutch citizen who has the right to vote may be eligible.

All members of parliament jointly select and appoint the ministers and state secretaries from the nominations, using Plurality Rule (most votes count) or Majority Judgment. Every member of parliament is supposed to choose completely

freely without party discipline.

The minister of general affairs is by definition the prime minister. The chairmen of the different parties should take that into account in making the list of nominations. Next, the members of parliament make a choice or alternatively, the citizens themselves choose their prime minister from the list via elections.

Give ministers a salary in line with the market, but fire them immediately if they demonstrably make a mistake or do not do what the parliament has instructed them to do. In such a case, only one minister and/or state secretary needs to leave. A government crisis is therefore practically impossible. Falling cabinets are a thing of the past and there will be no need for early elections anymore.

If we assume 8 ministers, each appointed for eight years, a rotation system can be introduced, whereby every year one minister is replaced. If a minister is dismissed after six years because of disfunction, his successor must still be replaced after two years. Reappointment is not a rule, but also not excluded if two-thirds of the members of parliament and half plus one of the senates are in agreement. A third term of eight years is impossible.

Each ministry has a number of secretaries of state, competent in their field, who are appointed for two or three days a week, and the other days remain employed in their original job, staying in touch with their field of specialization. For instance, the Ministry of Education might have a secretary of state for elementary education, one for secondary education, and one for higher education.

In the case of planned legislation, ministers can shop with all members of parliament to get a majority. However, exchanging certain items with other topics is not an option: an extra Joint Strike Fighter can never be at the expense of education or health care. However, it is possible to negotiate within an issue. For example, suppose 1/3 is in favor of 0% VAT on fruit and vegetables, 1/3 is in favor of 6% and 1/3 prefers 21%. Then the first two groups may negotiate and perhaps agree on 3 to 4% and if they cannot come to an agreement, the last two groups may negotiate and perhaps reach a consensus on 10% (possibly with the consent of their supporters, through a mini referendum). Consequently, per legislative proposal, each party may belong to a majority, while it may belong to a minority in another legislative proposal.

Conversely, members of parliament can form alternating coalitions to submit bills to the ministers or to pass or reject laws.

In response to a certain subject or event, ministers and secretaries of state can be dismissed by parliament in a democratic manner. However, a minister or secretary of state does not have to resign if it is shown that officials in his ministry have failed, if a predecessor has made demonstrable mistakes, or if he does not know everything. Because ministers are no longer tied to a party, no party will feel obliged to continue supporting such a minister with all possible means.

Well before the elections, the minister should indicate subjects that will be discussed in the following years. Next, all parties and members of parliament should include a detailed position on these issues in their election manifestos. This gives voters a real choice and parties and members of parliament cannot afford to take a different position after the election, when the government comes up with concrete proposals after the elections.

2.5. Senate and judges

The Senate should not repeat the work of parliament and is not meant to give former politicians and lobbyists a well-paid honorary job.

The Senate should assess whether laws and proposals are correct and feasible and whether they do not contradict already existing laws. The Senate should also assess whether a law is not at the expense of minorities. Also of great importance: every conceivable loophole is there to be tracked down and eliminated by the senators.

Therefore, the Senate should only consist of a relatively small number of legal experts, experts in the fields of constitutional law, criminal law, and civil law, with specializations such as citizenship, family law, tax law, etc.

These legal experts do not have to be affiliated with a party and are chosen from a list of three to five nominees - made up of the chairmen of the different parties - by the members of parliament via Majority Judgment, in the same way, that the ministers are chosen. The Senate in its new format may also function as a constitutional court.

The senators can continue to work with their original employer, but they must be available for senate work from time to time. For each bill, they may consult external experts. Other types of additional functions are undesirable or even unacceptable. Here too, absolutely no party-political appointments.

Judges should be chosen in a similar way as the senators. If, in addition to the truly democratic representatives of the people (the legislature) and the ministers (executive power), the judges (the controlling power) are also appointed independently of the parties, then the trias politica finally has an independent status and is then free from party interests.

2.6. Cabinet

The cabinet consists of eight ministries or another desirable or workable number. Each minister is democratically appointed for eight years. Each minister gets a different starting moment: with eight ministers a new face every year for eight years. As a result, a cabinet will never change completely at any time. Every minister or state secretary receives a job guarantee, which prevents long and high redundancy payments and removes a barrier to making oneself available to the community for a period of eight years. Likewise for mayors and aldermen.

Candidate ministers and secretaries of state can publicly explain their motivation and strengths, without being opposed to fellow candidates. The media also has a task to objectively inform the citizens about all candidates from all sides. The chairmen of the different parties make for each ministry a shortlist with 3 to 5 names and the parliament chooses a minister, respectively a secretary of state, via Majority Judgment. Each member of parliament may consult and/or inform the citizens who voted for him via a kind of mini referendum.

Once a year the Council of Ministers comes up with a budget, taking into account expected revenues and expenses. Each ministry specifies its package of wishes and defends it in the cabinet. As soon as there is consensus in the cabinet, the budget goes to the parliament, where each minister seeks a majority for each measure. Per topic, there may be varying

majorities. Only within a ministry one item may be exchanged for another, as long as it remains within the financial margins. Of course, members of parliament may propose alternatives or new initiatives under the condition that their plans stay within the budget.

2.7. Civil servants

Ministers must be able to trust their civil servants blindly. It should not be the case that important files are withheld from a minister or state secretary by civil servants. If a civil servant is responsible for not fully or incorrectly informing the parliament or a minister, he or she - and not the minister - should be fired immediately without such a thing as a golden handshake. A minister may not be judged on his presentation and/or lack of full knowledge of all details. If a minister or state secretary is called to parliament, civil servants who have studied the matter to be discussed can come along and assist the minister or state secretary. Presentation and knowledge of all details are less important than the quality and knowledge of the minister and the national interest.

2.8. Benefits of the alternative polity

Expertise, continuity, and consistency are three holy principles of the alternative polity, in which parliament can carry out its controlling task and accept or reject proposals in a truly democratic way. Real democracy, (top) expertise, and the best possible transparency are three other sacred characteristics.

- Expertise speaks for itself. The country deserves for every post the best possible - in terms of content - candidate.
- Consistency. Because the composition of the cabinet changes only gradually, its policies will be much more consistent, assuming that the cabinet members themselves are consistent.
- Continuity or uninterrupted coherence in terms of policies is vital for a country.

In the alternative polity, long-term policies are guaranteed, expertise is at the top of the country and every representative in parliament can be important on every subject. There is no longer a minimal nodding majority that silences a maximum power-hungry minority. In this alternative polity, at most one or two ministers or state secretaries can be forced to resign, but never the entire cabinet. A fixed coalition is no longer needed, instead varying majorities accept or reject proposals. Outgoing ministers do not have to be deployed in the election campaign to make all kinds of empty promises there. In the alternative polity, there will be less strategic voting, while in the traditional system in the Netherlands in the past socialists have cast their vote in favor of the Labor Party (PvdA) instead of the Socialist Party (SP) in order to bother the Liberals (VVD) and citizens who adhere to PVV have voted for the Liberal Party (VVD) in order to keep the Labor Party (PvdA) out of government, albeit without success. In the alternative polity, there is no longer political opportunism following the delusion of the day or as a result of polls. Handing out presents at election time is a thing of the past. In the alternative polity also the indirect election of the senate belongs to the past.

Broken election promises, watery compromises, swapping positions, ad hoc policies, months of formation talks, silencing minorities, excluding parties, a cordon sanitaire, partisan interests over national interests, incompetent career planners,

nepotism, etc. will all become a thing of the past. No more caretaker periods, in which a fallen cabinet essentially has more power than before its fall, because it cannot fall once more.

During formation discussions in backrooms, party leaders no longer hand in party positions in order to please a party with completely different points of view and in order to reach compromises, whereby the wishes of their own supporters are squandered with the aim of being able to take part in the cabinet formation. Lobbyists will have a hard time: in the current system they can 'edit' the prime minister, but in the alternative polity they will have to approach many members of parliament, who cannot be influenced, because they have a commitment to their own supporters.

Many members of parliament have studied public administration or political science, but have no affinity whatsoever with important population groups. There are hardly any members of parliament with a beta background. In terms of content, the current ministers are often no match for the substantive stronger officials. At the moment, the same person can serve as Minister of Education for four years, then as Minister of Healthcare for four years, and subsequently as Minister of Economic Affairs for four years, even if they fail in each of these positions. In the alternative polity, all these things will no longer occur. Polls will no longer lead to early elections and if a politician or a party makes a mess of it, it will no longer have any influence on provincial or municipal elections.

In the alternative polity, there are no longer any party-political barriers for potential administrators. Ministers and secretaries of state do not have to think about the next elections and do not have to spend precious time on a long-lasting election campaign.

Finally, the alternative polity can or should also be applied to provincial councils and municipalities.

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