

HOW TO VOTE IN A FUZZY DEMOCRACY

The detailed thinking behind Fuzzy Democracy is explained elsewhere on this website. The following presents the process from the perspective of the ordinary voter.

The core principle of Fuzzy Democracy is that you vote for a person whose outlook is very close to your own and who you consider to be of good judgement and character. For this to be possible, there must be a very high number of candidates. A second principle is that every vote counts in one way or another. You never have to vote for the second best candidate, let alone for the least bad.

Immediately, you may see a number of difficulties with this ideal, or else simply not see how it is feasible. Fuzzy Democracy is made possible by electronic voting machines, and it is thanks to this technology that many obvious difficulties and objections can be overcome.

Presented with a choice of several thousand candidates, how will you find your way? The answer is that it depends on how much trouble you want to go to.

In most countries where elections are held, one normally votes for a party or for a candidate selected by a party, with there being geographical constituencies where one has a choice of a handful or a score of candidates/parties. You might decide not to vote for the candidate/party you prefer because you want to prevent another from winning and this involves supporting a compromise candidate/party. For such tactical voting, you have to

guess how others will vote. No-one imagines this is satisfactory.

Under Fuzzy Democracy there are no geographical constituencies, nor indeed are there constituencies that are defined non-geographically. However, all candidates have to live somewhere, and there will be some living near you. This means you are more likely to be able to meet them than candidates living further away. They may make themselves known to you by traditional means, such as with leaflets delivered to your home. If you find someone you are content with, then you decide to vote for them and do not need to give the matter any further thought. You will have made a note of their name and on the day proceed to the polling station accordingly. Thus anyone who finds Fuzzy Democracy too complicated or unfamiliar and prefers a traditional approach to casting their vote will be able to do so.

The main difference is that you do not have the convenience of making your choice on the basis of party affiliation since Fuzzy Democracy does not need parties. However, former party members can (or maybe even must) state their previous party affiliation, and they would be free to align themselves with the policies of their favourite think-tank. The difference is that they could not tap into extra finance and organisational support from a party, since this would upset the level playing-field required by Fuzzy Democracy, nor could any party pre-select them or seek to influence their policies. Any attempts at party discipline would be a criminal offence, akin to price-fixing by cartels.

Since there are thousands of candidates, you will not receive a ballot paper, but must use a voting machine.

You enter the name of your choice, check everything, and cast your vote.

If you are not content with the candidates in your locality, you can look further afield and need not be constrained by any geographical considerations. Perhaps there are candidates from your line of work who you would support. Or you might look among candidates who share some other interest or affiliation. There would be a dedicated website of all candidates where you could search for someone using a variety of criteria. Or you will have heard about someone, maybe from an acquaintance, and possibly it is someone residing at the other end of the country. You might, even, vote for a celebrity. If all else fails, you can, with the support of only a few hundred like-minded citizens, put yourself up for election.

The technology of electronic voting (at a polling station) opens up possibilities that were not conceivable earlier. The technology must of course be secure and known to be secure. There would be audits by reputable organisations taken from civil society.

The second principle of Fuzzy Democracy is that no vote need go wasted. However, there is an important difference to current systems. Under Fuzzy Democracy you do not vote directly for membership of a legislature (i.e. a parliament), but for membership of a pool of elected representatives that may be called the *political class*. The principle is that all persons assuming political office, of whatever kind, must have won a specific level of support, whether direct or by proxy, from the electorate. Exactly what role any member of the political class

assumes is determined subsequently and separately.

Following a random selection procedure, some will enter the legislature and so be able to elect others from the political class to government posts. Some will find themselves so elected. And some will be held in reserve, with behind-the-scenes functions explained elsewhere.

It is against this background that a figure is calculated which is the number of votes a candidate must have in order to enter the political class, i.e. to become a *bone fide* politician (a candidate is not yet a “politician”). A successful candidate will normally have polled votes surplus to this figure, and will be able to redistribute these to candidates who have not polled so well. Similarly, unsuccessful candidates may redistribute votes among themselves.

It goes without saying that there would be no legitimate need for any noticeable discrepancy in spending on campaigns, especially as these could be conducted substantially through the internet, social media and even by word of mouth. Fuzzy Democracy stands for an even playing field.

There are a number of refinements. One is that, partly in order to compensate for the fact that election is not directly to the legislature but only to the political class (from which the legislature is selected randomly), it is proposed that voters should have more than one vote, perhaps three or four. This would also enable better appreciation of the breadth of choice among the thousands of candidates.

A most important and overdue refinement, which is,

strictly speaking, separate to “fuzzy democracy” and need not use electronic voting machines or the random process, is have specialised assemblies, with voting for these many weeks or months apart. These would cover the distinct areas of government, such as transport & infrastructure, health, education, foreign affairs & defence, law enforcement, and the design & levying of taxes. There needs crucially to be a separate elected forum to discuss and decide public policy on ethical controversies, i.e. matters of life & death (such as abortion and euthanasia), drugs, sexual freedoms & protections, rights to privacy versus information rights, and so on.

The many reasons why we need Fuzzy Democracy urgently, the remedies that Fuzzy Democracy offers for the ills of current political culture: these issues are dealt with elsewhere on this website. No form of democratic representation can be precise, but Fuzzy Democracy claims to come closer than any other. The purpose is that the political class should, as closely as possible, be representative of both the entirety and the best of society. It also extends and reinforces the age-old principle that concentrations of power must be avoided as far as is feasible.

You might marry one of the people proposed to you by a local matchmaker. Or you might find someone yourself from your locality. Either might work out well, and both better than a forced marriage. But if either works out less than well, divorce, and look this time further afield, widen your horizon, network, go internet and do not settle for the least bad option.