"Reinventing" Government - Part I: Voting

It is a premise of this series of articles that workable solutions to many societal problems are simple. That is not to say that conceptually simple solutions are easy to execute. Indeed, it can often be the case that simple solutions require a hand that is both saintly and severe. For instance, there is a good deal of historical evidence that a solution to certain kinds of criminal behavior is quite simple -- terrible punishments. Another approach that is difficult to implement -- and especially so in an officially secular state -- is to help reform and rehabilitate the sinner. A practical (but expensive) alternative to either of these approaches used by many modern societies is to instead create a vast and complicated monitoring network.

In these articles, only the topic of "voting" will be discussed. It is a process that is quite simple both in concept and in implementation.

Who Should Vote:
It has become an assumption in our modern era that the right to vote and the exercise of that right is a cornerstone to good government and a free society. A second assumption often following closely upon the first is that this right to vote should be given to as many as possible, with exclusions being limited to the very young and to those very few who have been convicted of severely anti-social behavior. There is a certain logic and even philosophy underlying these assumptions, and it is this: it is a good thing for a person to have some input into those things that shape his society and his future.

It is at this juncture that a question should be asked: Is there any evidence to support this idea that quasi-universal enfranchisement is good for society? What things can we show that support the aforestated assumptions? What are the "fruits", so to speak?

An analysis of this subject would perhaps have been a difficult matter a century ago, with many gray areas and much room for subtleties of interpretation. However, modern society has made this interpretation an exceedingly simply task. In a demographically particularized kind of way, it is fortunate that we now have massive societal problems from which clearly drawn conclusions can be drawn.

First, let it be stated that the topic needs further analysis. However, preliminary indications are quite interesting, based on surveys and polls conducted by Zogby and Gallup on American (a) voting patterns, and (b) views on abortion, and their correlation with religion, race & ethnicity, age, sex, occupation, income & assets.

At this point in the analysis, it looks like the situation in the USA could be improved significantly if there was voting reform. Specifically, the right to vote should be taken away from several groups of people as a step to improve the

state of the union. A relatively simple and fair way to implement this would be to allow only those over age 60 to vote. Although this group does tend to have a monetary conflict of interest because of government payments, it has nevertheless been a stable voting bloc that has avoided the extremist anti-social voting patterns found in certain other groups (examples: young single women, Jews, and Blacks[1]).

Not only would this facilitate good governance by allowing those with the most wisdom to have the greatest say in our future, but it would also automatically discriminate in favor of clean living. Perhaps the greatest benefit of this would be that society would turn toward the elderly as the measure of propriety, rather than to an amorphous "future" that has no existence. Basing the design of society on a non-existent future rather than on a real past can be viewed as an intrinsic evil, a choosing of a nothingness in place of something. Modern society follows the sin of Cain, who named a city after his son -- rather than after his father Adam, who was his closest link to God.

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[1] Opinion surveys indicate that Blacks are one of the most socially conservative groups. However, actual voting patterns indicate otherwise. The standard explanation for this discrepancy is the Democratic Party's exploitation of affirmative action. See abortion attitudes here http://www.halfsigma.com/2006/11/why_do_jews_vot.html (scroll down to the last chart).

Part II: Voting as a "Right" vs. a "Duty"

Comment: The problem with Democracy is the idea that voting is a right separate from a duty. The duty to vote also demands the Duty to be informed and the duty to work to the common good within natural law. It is asinine to license drivers but let anyone determine the course of government.

Comment: I wonder if this separation of "right" from "duty" in the case of voting is almost a forced necessity. Perhaps this duty of being informed is simply too great a burden to impose on people who already are expending almost all of their time on paying the bills and trying to raise a family. I myself do not usually know or understand what my elected representatives are doing. As a shortcut to bypass this lack of knowledge, I often filter the little bit that I do know through the lense of the political party. I tend to most strongly distrust the politician if he is a Democrat, less strongly distrust if he is Republican, and make a dart-board guess that he is an intentional quack if an Independent. Realistically, the party system then becomes a necessary part of government, almost another branch that sits between the office-holders and the populace.

The whole thing is a mess.

Part III: Voting "Format"