

GRADANI I DRUŠTVA ГРАЖДАНИ И ОБЩ
ЕСТВА BURGERS EN SAMENLEVINGEN CIT
IZENS & SOCIETIES CITOYENS & SOCIETES

Thinking outside the box

Electing our ministers and our prime minister

Denis Pageau
October 2012

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About Citizens and Societies

Citizens and societies is an organization specialized in identifying, evaluating and promoting societal best practices. At the heart of Citizens and Societies is its international and multidisciplinary citizens' community of practice.

The practice is one of being a citizen, and the context within which we use this practice is our societies. For the purpose of facilitating discussions, we define a citizen in this manner:

A citizen is one who, by his actions to integrate into his collectivities, has an impact on its resources¹.

And a society in these words:

A society is the result of the citizens' actions, be they individual, group or as a collective.

The guidelines we use to evaluate if the proposed practices are good practices are based on this understanding of a good society:

A good society is the result of a collectivity where we, citizens, use individual, group and collective management processes that facilitate both the development of our fellow citizens and the functioning of our collectivities.

We also use this definition of a good citizen:

A good citizen one who uses efficiently and wisely societies' resources to develop:

communicatively, culturally, emotionally, financially, intellectually, ludically, mentally, morally, organizationally, physically, psychologically and socially...

... while effectively using the resources under his/her or her control to assist in the development of his/her or her fellow citizens, no matter where they are in our global village.

With those definitions, we are able to facilitate, moderate and manage the community of practice for citizens.

For more information www.citizensandsocieties.org

¹ This is a summary definition. Not only is there a more precise definition, but it also allows the identification of different types of citizens depending on the privileges they receive or that we take away

About this paper

Although it has been almost 20 years, I think the main idea of this paper probably stems from my prior experience as the first president of l'Assemblée francophone the planification sociale in Ottawa.

As the Assemblée was being conceived, I had convinced the members to develop the Assemblée with an approach that would facilitate social planning per se. This strategy would facilitate planning by having board members play two roles simultaneously. They would be volunteers of l'Assemblée, as regular board members are, but also represent a specific sector, one in which they usually worked. This approach would increase the transfer of knowledge between the representatives. It was seen as a strategic advantage in facilitating planning.

Transfer of knowledge is also important in an electoral process. It is thus fitting that I am publishing this paper as the first major practice for our community of practices. The electoral process should be the main attraction as it comes to proposing practices that facilitate both the development of our fellow citizens and the functioning of our collectivities.

The idea behind this exercise was to find a way to increase the transfer of knowledge between citizens and elected representatives², between elected representatives and citizens and between citizens themselves.

In the process, it should also increase the democratization process of our society, by allowing us to give directions on the many different crucial issues that affect our lives, be they individual, in groups or as a collective.

I hope you enjoy reading.

Denis

Ps.: Note that the recommendations in this paper are derived from the workings of a British parliamentary system. Can it be adapted to suit other electoral processes? Probably. The gains in knowledge management and democracy are certainly worth looking at the question. What better way of having an electoral process of the people, by the people, for the people?

Translation and revision

I would like to thank Bruce Epstein, who helped in the translation and revision of this paper from French to English.

² To maintain geographic neutrality, “representative” will be used rather than MP

Recommendations

1st - Vote by preference

Use the process of voting by preference so that all candidates are elected with actual majorities (at least 50%). (Each elector indicates his 1st, 2nd, and 3rd choices on her ballot.)

2nd - Elect our prime minister

Directly elect the prime minister via the vote by preference model to give him greater legitimacy. She will be elected with at least 50% support of the popular vote, of the entire constituency.

3rd - Elect our (cabinet) ministers

Directly elect the cabinet ministers via the vote by preference model to give them greater legitimacy. They will be elected with at least 50% support of the popular vote, of the entire constituency.

4th - Elect our regional ministers

Directly elect the regional ministers via the vote by preference model to give them greater legitimacy. They will be elected with at least 50% support of the popular vote, of the entire constituency.

5th - Elect one man and one woman per district

Elect one man and one woman per district to ensure parity with respect to masculine and feminine representation.

6th - Decrease by half the number of districts

Decrease by 50% the number of districts to avoid doubling the number of representatives in the (National Assembly, House of Representatives, etc.) as a result of recommendation 5.

7th - Elect three representatives annually for 6 year terms

To avoid having to elect (for instance) one prime minister, sixteen ministers and two representatives at a single election, and especially to facilitate knowledge transfer, develop an electoral cycle spread across a period of six years, with three representatives elected per year.

8th - Candidate financing

To allow candidates to focus on the issues of citizens' needs, rather than on financing a campaign which provides nothing to electors and society per se, find a procedure whereby the costs associated with electoral campaigns are financed by the State.

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Introduction

We have evolved. We became more knowledgeable. Most of us in our western societies have at least a high school education. Most of us know how to read and write. We have access to the internet, to specialised and general television channels, newspapers, specialised and general magazines, discussion forums and blogs.

We thus have what it takes to be informed and make informed decisions. Unfortunately, our electoral process has not followed our evolution. I think it is time it does so.

What follows is a malleable proposal that should increase our democratic process, engage citizens in the daily management of their collectivities, as well as increase the numbers and the quality of our representatives, ministers and prime minister. This approach will increase the validity of the election but also enhance the image of politics and of our politicians.

Think out of the box

To do this, we will reconsider several elements that imprison us in a method of thinking. These elements are tied to the fact that we:

1. Elect a single representative. (Not necessarily the best, but the one who defends the party colors that we care about.)
2. Vote for a party. (Not necessarily the best, but the one whose ideas come closest to ours on two or three key issues.)
3. Collectively accept that we grant power to a party which is rarely in the majority.
4. Indirectly elect a prime minister. (Not necessarily the best.)
5. Vote on average every four years. (Then have nothing more to say about how our society is run.)

This is what we have always done when we vote in provincial and federal elections, and what our parents did. Thinking about it, why must it be so?

Get out of the box, elect our ministers and free our representatives

In this time of complexity and specialization, it is important to adapt our political system for the well-being of the citizen, society, and democracy, as no single man or woman has the time, the interest, the expertise and the energy to manage it all.

In ancient times, when society was relatively simple and populations were fewer, less educated and illiterate, and we lived mostly in the country (only 13% of people lived in cities in 1851 as opposed to more than 75% today), this type of political system based on political parties was enough. Today, however, with more at stake and more complexity, a better educated populace with an important role to play in how society functions, we must find a new

approach enabling us to leverage this fundamental societal resource that is the citizen. For she, irrespective of age, sex, or social class, is co-owner of this societal organization, as well as an essential part of the machinery that is proper societal functioning. It is thus preferable that he fulfill completely his role of co-owner.

If today we are intelligent enough to elect our prime minister, which we do de facto when voting, we should also be intelligent enough to elect our ministers.

Facilitate access to candidates who have the interest, the knowledge and the skills to become ministers or prime ministers.

There was a time when the populace was poorly educated and public infrastructure was lacking in Québec. Today, this is no longer the case. Infrastructure is quite present: school boards, HMOs, Loto-Québec, Hydro-Québec, SAQ (Québec Alcohol Corporation), SAAQ (Quebec Automobile Insurance Corporation), RRQ (Québec social security agency), etc.; we also have quite a few corporate headquarters. These organizations are run by educated, competent and experienced citizens. Many of these same citizens have thus the knowledge, skills and experience to become ministers or prime minister. Certainly some of these people could be interested by this possibility; what's missing is the opportunity.

Implementing a new electoral approach allowing electors to directly elect not only the prime minister but also the cabinet ministers, would create this opportunity and have a major impact to attract additional qualified ministerial candidates. Surely this would also increase the electors' interest for voting.

System of representation by interests, by knowledge, and by skills

A system of representation by interests, by knowledge, and by skills is in fact a system which allows individuals with the interest, the knowledge, and the skills to run for office directly to become minister or prime minister, without having to belong to a political party.

Such a system provides several benefits. Think of the power of attraction of ministerial candidates for one, and the knowledge transfer toward citizens, for two. We can also add to the list the increased esteem the citizens would hold for the political class, since by eliminating the partisan squabbling, the credibility of proposals and objections would be enhanced. This should also impact the overall participation rate.

Power of attraction

The first advantage of this approach is to enhance the power of attraction of our leaders. If we were administrator of a hospital, a school, or a department of the Ministry of Transport, and we wanted to become minister of Health, Education, or Transport, how many of us would run for office? Probably only a tiny minority, as is currently the case. Why? Is it due to there being too many uncertainties leading to this function? Probably.

The current process that a candidate must follow to become minister is the following:

- First, he must choose a party that might win the upcoming elections. Not only must she choose a party, but she must also feel comfortable with the current and future positions of the party, for she must identify fully with its platform and decisions. The party line demands it.
- Then she must find a district, not necessarily where he lives. Ideally, he must also be accepted by the association of the rdistrict where he will run.
- Then he must do whatever it takes to win the election. Not only must she win, but her party also must win more districts than all the other parties, or else face a minority government.

Even if she wins and her party is in the majority, it's still not certain that she would become minister. He must remain in the good graces of the prime minister. And even if she is chosen to be minister, it might not be the ministry she wants, and even if it's the ministry she want, she might not be able to do all she wants, for she must think about the subsequent election that could take place in 2, 3 or 4 years.

Finally, the icing on the cake, the prime minister has the power to reshuffle her cabinet. And just like that, the game of musical chairs starts and our hero might find himself sitting in another chair or a simple representative's bench.

Speaking of the representative, if you are elected and become minister, you must take care of your constituents in your district, even if you are minister. You would be solicited from all sides, as many people caring about social well-being, who have legitimate needs, as organizations and corporations whose ideas might sometimes interest you, but sometimes not. Local and regional case files will land on your desk. You will end up with not one, not two, but three roles: district representative, regional leader, and minister. In addition, you will need to support the ministerial cabinet and participate in numerous fundraising activities. Given all these elements, are you still

How to become a minister?

1. The candidate must choose a party.
2. The candidate must win the nomination in the district.
3. The candidate must win the election.
4. The party must be the one who wins the most seats.
5. The new MP must be part of the small list of people likely to receive a cabinet appointment.
6. If he is chosen; he might not receive the department he wants.
7. Even if he receives the department coveted, since he is handcuffed, he is not in control. His action must be consistent with the path chosen by the Prime Minister, the Cabinet and the deputation of the party, as they are already thinking about the next election..

keen on running for office?

Certainly, there are plenty of folks ready to do it. Many do, and do it very well, but it is still difficult to attract the best candidates. They prefer to stay home rather than poison their life, especially their families' lives, as partisan politics brings out the worst side of human beings, at all party levels: from the leader to simple members. Even those who are not members, but associated with the party, can display very strong signs of partisanship, as we can tell from Internet discussion groups.

Now, how many among us would be more interested in running for minister of Education, Health, or Transport if we could run directly for the position?

The process would be so much simpler for all who would like to run that it would have a definite impact on the number of quality candidates who ran for minister or prime minister. In addition, considering that the role of representative in the National Assembly would change, interest for that position would probably also increase.

Of course, we must find a very rigorous method for ensuring that people who run for office possess the necessary qualities for the position, but these methods are already present in our societies; they are used for nominating judges and other top-level civil servants.

Elect our ministers

Imagine now that after a campaign and a debate, a person is elected to run a ministry that she desires and for which she has the knowledge and skills necessary. This person would have a clear mandate of the population, for he receives more than 50% of the preferential votes. Therefore, beside the fact of working with the other ministers and the representatives of the National Assembly, to whom she is accountable until the succeeding election, she runs only her ministry.

He does not have to manage citizens, for he does not represent a district. She does not accumulate the roles of representative and minister, but only minister.

She is not beholden to a prime minister who can fire her simply because he is not in agreement with her stated positions. The minister is accountable only to the National Assembly, which is composed of representatives who no longer have to respect a party line and who make decisions only for the well-being of Québec and their district.

He no longer has to participate in fundraising activities, since there's no longer a party. Her hands are free and she no longer has to scratch anyone else's back.

Elect our prime minister

Election of the prime minister would follow the same process, but as opposed to ministers who would gain responsibility and autonomy, the prime minister's

power would decrease, which isn't a bad thing per se considering that the risk of the power being used detrimentally to the population would decrease.

Most prime ministers use their power appropriately, but there are also many examples in Canada, the US, Russia, both contemporary and historic, where power was used against the populace.

This is thus a new role for the prime minister. She is no longer responsible for selecting ministers, the populace does it for her. He no longer has to oversee a political party in order to finance elections, society at large covers the costs.

However, even if the power granted to the prime minister decreases, her role remains very important, for her mandate is to ensure that the National Assembly works properly. He must ensure that each minister respects his assignment, while understanding that each does not work in a silo. She must ensure that the ministers collaborate on a budget, that their actions are fair across all of Québec. To do this, the prime minister must ensure that the provincial ministers work with regional ministers and representatives, for they are all accountable to the National Assembly. Finally, the prime minister also conserves the responsibility to represent Québec on the international scene.

Free our representatives

By directly electing our ministers and prime minister, we liberate our representatives from two thorns that hinder their ability to truly represent their electors.

- The party line: currently, the electoral system attracts representatives to a party and they must respect the party line or else resign and become independent or withdraw completely.
- The opposition: in general, around 40 to 48% of representatives, i.e. between 50 and 60, find themselves in the opposition, and although these representatives work anyway for their electors, the fact of being in the opposition, within a system founded on partisanship, hinders their efforts.

In a system of representation by interest, knowledge and skills, representatives would be free from the party line and opposition.

Their mandate would be to represent the constituents of their district at the National Assembly and make the best decisions for their well-being and to improve Québec's overall functioning. Whether it is the functioning of the National Assembly, adopting laws, ministerial operations at both the provincial, regional, and local levels, as well as budget, representatives would be our guard dogs.

Direct election of ministers and prime minister, and liberating representatives from the yoke of party line and opposition, where the party line still plays, would

help to increase the confidence that electors have toward politicians.

Knowledge transfer

Elections are a good time for people to discuss politics. During the electoral campaign, all citizens' eyes and ears are constantly stimulated by electoral messages. It's a great brouhaha that resonates in our senses.

Unfortunately, and it is understandable, in order to give the impression of a united party and a coherent platform, party leaders use a "no fault" approach. We are offered visions that may be interesting, but are very limited in terms of depth and diversity, and presented wrapped in proverbial doublespeak. At the end of a campaign, we have worked on and especially heard about 3 or 4 main issues for which advertising slogans beat the drum. Besides, often the same issues are repeated from election to election: health, economy, education, and deficit. What percentage of these issues is really handled during electoral campaigns, and what really remains in the mind of the electors?

By setting up a system of representation by interest, knowledge and skills, thereby requiring annual elections, we would increase knowledge transfer.

Society is the output of our actions

Knowledge transfer in running our societies is very important, for it has an impact on our actions. Remember that we are collectively and directly responsible for the state of our societies. It is not the government that:

- Makes people sick
- Causes school dropouts
- Pollutes our parks, lakes and rivers
- Drives under the influence of alcohol or drugs
- Forces us to purchase the cheapest products
- Forces us to eat poorly
- Etc.

Knowledge transfer would enable citizens to better understand their role in the running of their society.

Debates, source of knowledge transfer

Debates are unquestionably an important moment in elections. It's often at this moment that we try to get an idea about who says what and who does what. It's especially during the debates that knowledge transfer occurs. The information output from debates is then reported by journalists and repeated for several days.

Unfortunately, the debates that we see between party leaders, even if they convey a bit of ideas, are overall more partisan than constructive, more

cacophony than debate. Notice that this is to be expected in the current electoral system, since if they don't do it, their chances for re-election are reduced.

Imagine now what a debate between candidates for minister of Health or Social services might look like, and especially the impact that such debates might have on knowledge transfer.

Minister of Health

Let's imagine a debate between candidates to become minister of Health. If we have five candidates running, wouldn't there be at least one candidate who would propose an approach based on prevention rather than cure?

Probably at that moment we would understand that it is not necessarily the supply of service that is problematic in Québec, but indeed the demand, which must be decreased.

This insight would have a major impact, for a huge majority of people would then likely understand the need to emphasize prevention, and that they all must pitch in together. This would have an impact on the number of persons who stop smoking, eat better, perform more physical activity, enhancing both their physical and psychological fitness and decreasing the number of people who use health services. Just this act of reducing the demand would help free up doctors and relieve pressure on nurses and other resources of our health ministry.

Minister of social services

Now let's imagine the debates between candidates to become minister of social services. If we have five candidates running for the office, surely there would be at least one who would propose an approach based on prevention rather than cure.

Wouldn't that be a good way for the whole population to know the real situation about poverty, economic, psychological, physical and sexual violence committed to women, children, and men?

Putting these issues in the forefront would probably have a slight impact on the people who commit this violence, maybe 5 or 7 percent, but this would help lessen the pressure on our social services. This knowledge might also lead citizens to volunteer more, to host children in their homes, to be more involved with their own children and their children's friends to prevent violence. Certain parents, or even certain young citizens, would probably change their behaviors. This would surely have an impact on demand for social services.

As we can see, the debates between candidates would be an opportunity to transfer

knowledge about our societies' problems, approaches we might use to resolve them, and especially to show citizens how they could participate in problem resolution.

This knowledge transfer does not currently exist. The party line is that nobody dares blame the populace for societal problems, as the other parties would raise the barricades to protect the segment of the targeted population, and would attack the guilty party. Since partisan politics magnifies trench warfare, such an act would be political suicide.

System of mixed territorial representation

The notion of electing a representative who lives in our district is an important element in our system. Indeed, we prefer having someone from our region to represent us in the faraway capital.

The system of mixed territorial representation is not very different from our current system where we elect one of our compatriots to represent us in the faraway capital. It entails only a few minor changes, but has a major impact.

The first change targets the equitable male/female representation. The second change concerns the number of districts. The final one targets the election of regional ministers by the regional population.

Election of one male and one female representative per district

With the goal of achieving parity in male/female representation, each elector will elect one man and one woman per district. Each district will thus have two representatives who must work together and divide up the issues between them.

Redistricting

In order to not double the number of representatives, the number of districts will be cut in half.

Election of a minister responsible for the region

Besides electing a duo man-woman to be responsible for their district, the electors will also elect a minister responsible for the region. She would have the task of facilitating cooperation between the regional representatives in the development of a regional strategy with the purpose of projects to develop and defend Québec.

Multiple Preference voting

Multiple preference voting is not too different from the way we vote today. The difference is that this approach allows the elector to choose up to three candidates by order of preference by ranking them as first, second and third choice. This system, which has several variants, is in use today in Australia as well as several other countries and cities.

If at the first ballot no candidate receives 50% of the votes, the candidate finishing last in the equation is removed and the votes are recalculated. The process is repeated until one of the candidates receives 50% of the votes.

Note that the elector only votes once, but when he votes he chooses his three preferred candidates.

This system would be used for all elections – prime minister, ministers, and representatives.

Difference between preference vote and proportional vote

Several countries have a system of proportional vote, and although such an approach offers the possibility for small parties to share their voice, the system has its limits:

- Protection against abuse arising from a strong prime minister in a majority party
- Protection against abuse arising from a strong party with a weak prime minister
- Possibility for a citizen to vote according to her values and the different responsibilities that a collectivity must assume. (An elector might very well be to the left socially, but to the right economically, to the left environmentally, and in the center for healthcare.)

Knowledge transfer

While the presence of multiple small parties will certainly increase the number of issues that will be discussed, it will still be minimal with respect to the electors' need for information to make proper decisions for themselves, for the groups to which they belong, and for the collectivity.

The frequency and number of decisions an elector must make in a proportional voting scheme are limited to one vote every four or five years, thereby giving one democratic action.

In the same period, an elector in a system which allows for direct election of ministers and prime minister would have the chance to vote 4 times; each time, he can make three choices, giving 12 democratic actions. Naturally, in one case or the other we could add referendum questions; annual voting would allow us to do more.

Proportional voting is an interesting approach, but not the best.

Electoral processes

This section describes how the electoral processes could work.

Annual elections

A huge majority of private and public organizations hold elections every year: Bombardier, the Credit Union federation, your professional association or union, your health coop, Microsoft or Berkshire Hathaway (Warren Buffet's company). They all allow their shareholders, associates, or members to vote for other members who run to represent them on boards of directors. Even political parties hold annual elections.

Progressively spread out elections

In order to facilitate knowledge transfer from senior members toward newcomers, several boards of directors increase the length of administrators' terms to two, three, four, or even six years, and adopt an electoral cycle allowing for replacing only a few administrators each time.

In general, if the term length is two years, 50% of the administrators are up for election one year, and the other 50% the other year. If the length is three years, then it's a third of the administrators up for election each year. If terms are longer, say four or six years, we can follow the logic of a quarter or a sixth, but can also elect half³ the board.

Process proposed for Québec

In order to allow us to directly elect our ministers and prime minister, we propose to set up an electoral culture where it is understood that each year there is an electoral period of 3 or 4 weeks ending with the elections. Elections could take place the first Wednesday of May each year. During this period, we would elect three ministers per year for six year terms. However, the sixth year would require election of prime minister, regional ministers, and representatives.

Transition

To pass from one system to the other, we need a period of transition. To do this, we must plan for a transition government, i.e. a government which will integrate ministers elected by the people year after year after its term.

Rollout

To better see how the new electoral process would work, here's an example showing how the elections would occur.

Following the election of a transition government, the electoral process for the new system would begin the succeeding year.

1st election

³ An example (in French) at <http://www.elsene.irisnet.be/site/fr/01officiel/autresinstit/fabriqeglises.htm>

Thinking outside the box

Electing our ministers and our prime minister

Elections take place Wednesday May 1st 2013. After an electoral period of 4 weeks during which the candidates have the chance to debate the issues, we elect the following ministers:

- a. Health
- b. Agriculture
- c. Economic development and employment.

2nd election, 2014

Elections are held Wednesday May 7th 2014. After an electoral period of 4 weeks during which the candidates have the chance to debate the issues, we elect the following ministers:

- d. Half the representatives of districts⁴
- e. Sports and recreation
- f. Culture

3rd election: 2015

Elections are held Wednesday May 6th 2015. After an electoral period of 4 weeks during which the candidates have the chance to debate the issues, we elect the following ministers:

- g. Education
- h. Regional ministers
- i. Intergovernmental business

4th election: 2016

Elections are held Wednesday May 4th 2016. After an electoral period of 4 weeks during which the candidates have the chance to debate the issues, we elect the following ministers:

- j. Social services
- k. Transport
- l. Environment

5th election: 2017

Elections are held Wednesday May 3rd 2017. After an electoral period of 4 weeks during which the candidates have the chance to debate the issues, we elect the following ministers:

- m. Half the representatives of districts⁵

⁴ To facilitate the rotation of the National Assembly, it would be preferable to elect either all the women or all the men at the same time

⁵ To facilitate the rotation of the National Assembly, it would be preferable to elect all either the women or all the men at the same time

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- n. College and Universities
- o. Natural resources

6th election: 2018

Elections are held Wednesday May 2nd 2018. After an electoral period of 4 weeks during which the candidates have the chance to debate the issues, we elect:

- p. Prime minister
- q. Finance
- r. Justice

The role of parties

The role of parties is very important in our current system. They enable us to collect and channel the energy of the citizens into an axis that is either extreme left, left, center, right, or extreme right, and then to create an electoral platform. They also allow us to find the necessary financing, choose a leader, attract candidates, and lead an electoral campaign permitting it to present candidates and a leader to the populace. If the party wins the election, the leader becomes prime minister and she chooses her ministers.

But if we elect our prime minister and other ministers, and society defrays the cost of electoral campaigns, what do the parties become? What are their roles? Should we even have any?

The functioning of the National Assembly

With the new distribution of roles, where it is the citizens who elect the ministers and the Prime Minister directly, the role of all the elected representative's changes. Here is a brief description of the roles to be played by the Prime Minister, Ministers, Regional Ministers and representatives.

Prime minister

A candidate becomes prime minister when he receives more than 50% of the votes cast at the last election. He receives a specific mandate to manage the population of Quebec. He must ensure that laws are enacted, and management processes used inside departments, government agencies and even other public or private organizations are compatible with the development of his fellow citizens and the functioning of the communities he helps manage.

The role of the Prime Minister is still very important, even if he no longer decides who will become a minister, and he is no longer party leader. Indeed, the role of the Prime Minister is essential for the proper functioning of the National Assembly.

It is she who must facilitate the work of the Council of Ministers to ensure that ministers

are working together to ensure the proper functioning of Quebec, the drafting of the budget is consistent with departmental needs, while remaining within the limits of Quebec's capacity to pay. It is he who must ensure that the relationship between ministers and representatives are functional and productive.

To accomplish her mission, the Prime Minister shall have the authority to supervise the work of all these people and can, if necessary, force a minister or a member to resign. (This type of situation would be rare and should be guided by clear rules.)

Ministers

When a candidate becomes Minister, he receives more than 50% of the votes cast at the last election. The minister receives three mandates from the population:

1. He must work for the management of Québec as a whole with other ministers, including the budget.
2. He must work for the management of Québec as a whole with the representatives, including the budget.
3. She has the sole responsibility of the management of the department and must ensure that it is effective and functional while being compatible with the development of a good society by facilitating both the development of citizens and the functioning of the different Quebec collectivities.

Regional ministers

A candidate becomes a regional minister when he receives more than 50% of the votes cast in the region she represents.

Their mandate is to:

1. Defend regional issues with ministers.
2. Defend regional issues within the National Assembly.
3. Facilitate collaborative work between the elected representatives in his region.
4. Decide, when there is a disagreement between members of the same constituency and there is a need for a decision. (This type of situation would be rare and should be guided by clear rules.)

Representatives

Representatives are candidates who received more than 50% of the votes of their constituents. Their role would change because they would be two per district, and they would be free from party line and would never be in the opposition.

Their mandate is to be an intermediary, a legislator and a controller.

1. Intermediate

Thinking outside the box

Electing our ministers and our prime minister

- a. The link between voters and government.
- b. Ensure that his district get its fair share.
- c. Petition
- d. Promote regional development.

2. Legislator

- a. Analyze bills, discuss their implications and vote according to their merits, that is to say, they facilitate the development of citizens and the functioning and the collectivities:
 - i. In Quebec
 - ii. In their region
 - iii. In their district
 - iv. Of other societies.

3. Controller: A representative is also a controller. He may oversee governmental actions if she feels actions are inappropriate.

As we can see, the different roles would change, but it would be all for the best.

Costs

Naturally, there are costs associated with this measure, and they need to be evaluated. However, we should also consider the intangible return on investment associated with this measure, such as:

- Increasing our role in setting priorities of our ministers by directly electing our ministers
- Increasing our role in setting priorities in our region by directly electing our regional minister
- Increasing our role in setting priorities in our region by directly electing a representative who is not only freed from the party line, but will never be in the opposition and would have a real power of representation in the National Assembly
- Reducing partisanship and the resulting chicanery
- Increasing the confidence we hold for our politicians and the political class
- Better ability to attract candidates with the interest, knowledge and experience to become prime minister and thus facilitate cooperation among all ministers and all representatives, thus facilitating development of Québec.
- Better ability to attract candidates with the interest, knowledge and experience to assume the various ministries and thus facilitate development and leadership of the ministry.
- Better ability to attract candidates with the interest, knowledge and experience to represent the electors of the region and thus facilitate development and leadership of

the region.

- Better ability to attract candidates with the interest, knowledge and experience to represent a district's electors and thus facilitate development and leadership of the district.
- Better male-female representation in the National Assembly.
- Increasing citizens' knowledge regarding ministerial and National Assembly operations
- Increasing citizens' knowledge regarding the impact of our actions on demand for government services and collective resources needed to respond to these needs.
- Increasing citizens' empowerment in all spheres of management of state affairs
- Improving elected officials' productivity, for they would no longer have to invest time in partisan fundraising activities, which provide nothing to citizens nor to Québec society
- Improving elected officials' productivity, for they would no longer have to tear each other apart during question periods.
- Improving government effectiveness, for the ministers would all have the skills, knowledge and experience associated with the mission of their respective ministry.
- Redistribution of power.
- Reducing risk associated with the presence of a strong prime minister and a weak cabinet.
- Reducing risk associated with the presence of a weak prime minister and a strong cabinet.

Malleable process

The present electoral process by interest, knowledge and skill is malleable. The goal of electing the prime minister, other ministers and representatives' remains, but many other elements may be used to improve the operation:

1. Multiple preference voting
2. Election calendar
3. Election cycle
4. Number of ministers to be elected
5. Presence or not of parties

If after further analysis, we feel that the amount of knowledge to be transferred is too heavy, we could elect only two ministers one year and four in a year where there is less knowledge to be transferred. We could also have two elections per year, one in May and one in October and reduce the mandate to four years. There are numerous options available.

Conclusion

The presented approach is based on empowering citizens, representatives, ministers and prime ministers. Empowerment is achieved by increasing knowledge transfers, giving direct access to high-level political positions, and by increasing our democratic activities.

Knowledge transfers

The knowledge management process facilitates the transfer of knowledge between:

1. citizens and the representatives,
2. representatives and the citizens,
3. representatives, and
4. citizens,

which help citizens to have a better understanding of the issues affecting their collectivities and the role they can play to solve them. It also helps representatives as they work on difficult subjects without obvious solutions. (Health and social issues, for example.)

Access to high-level political positions

Having direct access to high-level political positions will increase the number of interested, knowledgeable and competent candidates to the position of regional ministers, ministers or prime minister. This would affect the functioning of our collectivities by attracting better candidates, giving elected official better credibility and legitimacy.

Increasing our democratic activities

Finally, increasing our democratic lives has an impact on the legitimacy of our representatives, our ministers and our prime minister as they would be elected by a majority of their constituents. Citizens would also have the chance to vote every year, and each time he voted; he would do so to influence the management of his collectivities by selecting those candidates whom he feels are the best to facilitate the development of his district, his region, or be the best minister or prime minister to manage the different departments or his province/state/country.

This approach would definitively increase citizen participation and would give a new life to Abraham Lincoln's "Government of the people, by the people, for the people"