



SCOTLAND'S DEMOCRATIC DEAFICIT A MODEL SIGNING PARLIAMENT

Graham H. Turner & Stefanie Reher



- **Introductions:** Organisers, SUII, SPICe
- <https://www.scottishinsight.ac.uk/Programmes/ThemedCall201819/DemocraticDeaficit.aspx>
- **@DemDeaficit #DemocraticDeaficit**
- **Housekeeping & Communication**
 - Emergencies
 - Comfort breaks
 - Refreshments
 - Multimodal interaction
 - Microphones & text
 - Role of the Chair
 - Filming bit.ly/2XfFAFM

The project

- **May 31st (Edinburgh)**
 - This event focused on **WHY** we are talking about the idea of a ‘Signing Parliament’? Do BSL users feel well represented in society? Are changes ‘in the air’ that make now a good time to discuss this question?
- **August 23rd (today!)**
 - Our second workshop asks **WHAT** might be the best way to bring BSL users’ views forward in democratic processes? Can we take inspiration from other communities in Scotland (eg Gaelic speakers) or Deaf communities around the world?
- **November 22nd (Edinburgh)**
 - In our final workshop, we address the question of **HOW** the changes you want to see could really happen. What action is needed and who needs to take it?

Today's Programme

- 10.00 Welcome & reminder from May 31st
- 10.30 **Alasdair MacCaluim**
- 11.00 **Goedele de Clerck**
- *11.30 Open Discussion*
- *12.30 Lunch*
- 13.30 Reflections from the chair
- 13.45 **Oliver Escobar**
- 14.15 **Mark Shephard**
- *14.45 Coffee*
- *15.15 Open Discussion*
- 16.15 Closing remarks by **Maree Todd MSP**
- 16.30 Close



WHEN DECIDES



A

C

A

B

This project is interested in...

1. The lives of **Deaf** people – which, for today's purposes, means *people who use signed language*.
2. Both *representation* and *participation* –
 - i. **who** can most appropriately 'speak for' Deaf people in public affairs;
 - ii. **how** can Deaf citizens contribute most fully to public decision-making.

Two levels

1. Mainstream politics

(national, regional, local)

**2. Deaf/BSL community
politics & policy**



Insights from Workshop #1

WHY are we talking about the possibility of a Signing Parliament?

Contributions by:

Ben Fletcher

John Conama

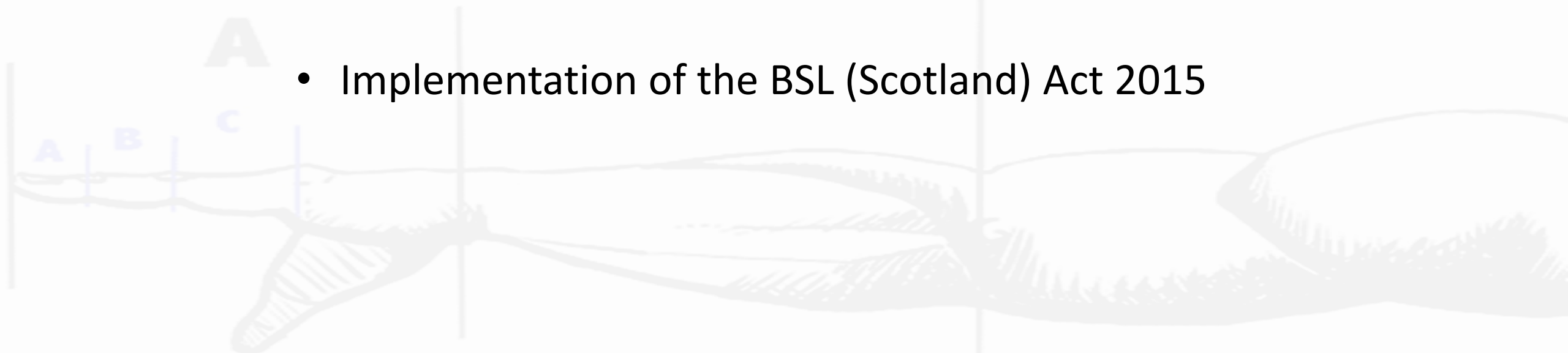
Alison Phipps

Graham Turner

... and all of you

Why does the BSL community need political representation?

- Social justice and equal participation in society
- Policy that takes the needs and views of the BSL community into account
- Implementation of the BSL (Scotland) Act 2015



Who decides on policy?

- Parties and elected representatives
 - Barriers to political participation faced by Deaf people:
 - Financial costs (e.g. interpreters)
 - Inaccessible material and communications
 - Negative attitudes (of parties)
 - Lack of role models
- Interest groups/civil society organisations
 - No unified representative body of the BSL community in Scotland
 - Variety of identities, interests and views in the BSL community

**Would a representative body (*Signing Parliament*)
empower the BSL community or isolate it?**

Agenda for today

What could a representative body for the BSL community look like?

- Who should/may be part of it? How should members/participants/representatives be selected?
- What issues should it discuss? How are the issues selected?
- How should decisions be made? What should the output/decisions look like?
- How should the decisions be channelled into the “mainstream” political process?

Parliament

Directorate

Assembly

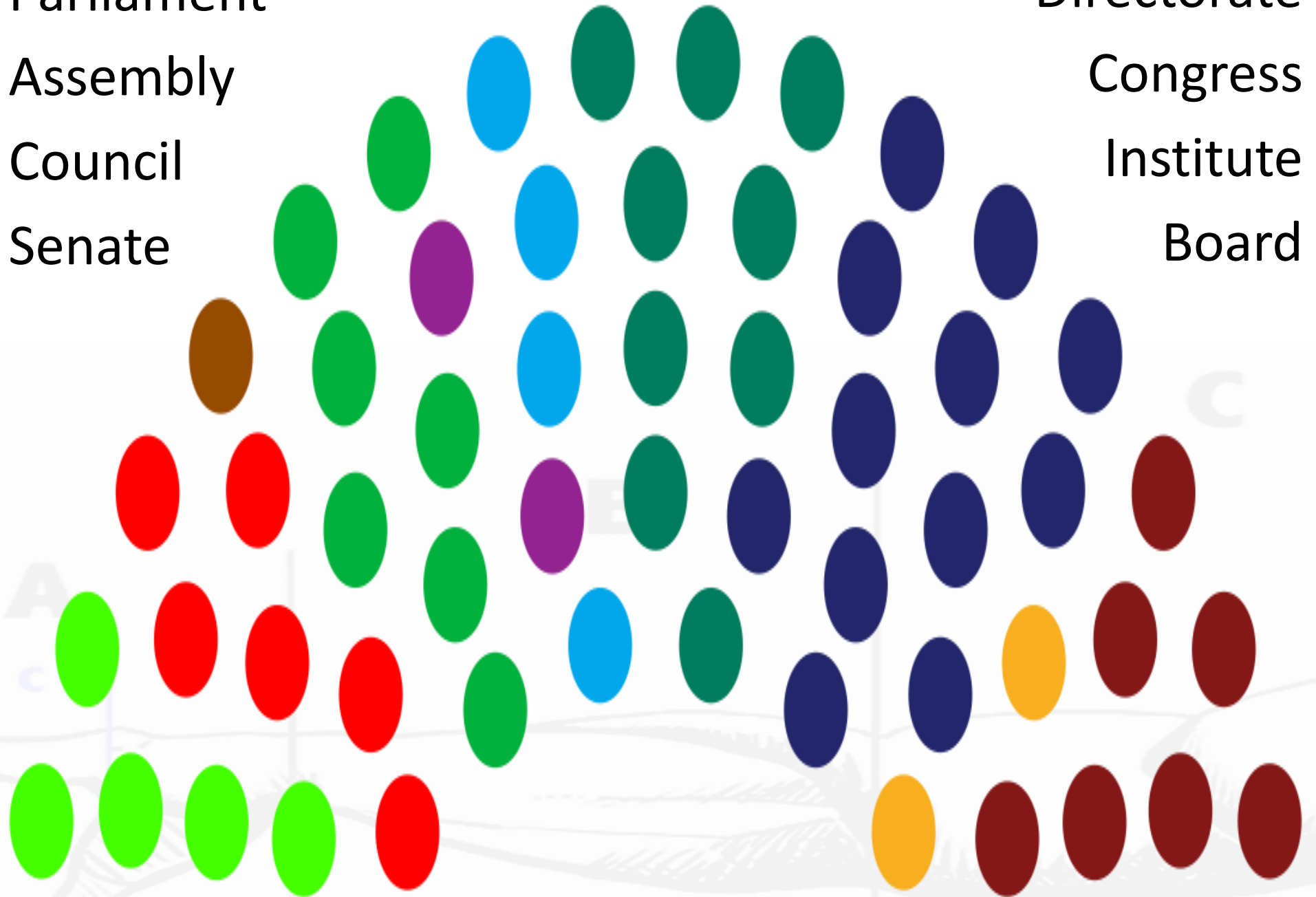
Congress

Council

Institute

Senate

Board



Implementing bodies

- **Governmental advisory board** (eg Flanders, New Zealand, Wallonia + Scotland's 'NAG')
- **Sign language council** (eg Iceland, Malta, Turkey)
- **National languages council/institute** (eg Korea, Norway)
- **Language commission/academy** (eg *Académie française*, *Svenska Akademien*)

Status and membership

- Directly administered by government?
- 'Arms-length' from government departments?
- Part of national institute on language/culture?
- Think-tank? Quango?



Aims and functions

- Give strategic **advice** to public authorities?
- Manage **research** on corpus planning etc?
- Allocate **funding** for language initiatives?
- Planning and commissioning **projects**?
- Setting **standards** ('language police')?
- **Monitoring** demand and delivery?
- Promoting/directing **acquisition**?
- Changing **attitudes**?
- Collecting **data**?
- **Some, all or none of the above?**

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