I have serious concerns that boundary changes may reduce the number of female MPs and thus be a retrograde step. We need 50:50 representation in parliament and a strategy needs to be adopted to make this happen. Making structural changes that lock in imbalance or worsen the situation is actually par for the course where inequality is entrenched: part of the dynamic processes of inequality through which inequality is reasserted and passed on (routinely with attendant claims that organisations were not aware of or responsible for the heightened inequality that their actions have caused). A balancing regulation that ensures 50:50 representation should precede/accompany any change.

It is interesting and part of the dynamics of inequality, that attention is being focused on reducing the number of MPs just at the point where the number of female MPs has risen. This point should not be taken lightly, especially at a time when we have a hugely bulging second chamber (the House of Lords) that is stuffed with males appointed through the patronage of the powerful past and present. To this part of our parliament we continue to allow annually the appointment of a largely male new cohort, largely without comment. We need to reduce the numbers in our second chamber immediately, and we need to impose a 50:50 gender split as part of that reform.

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