

Chapter 1 : Difference Between Ideal and Real | Difference Between

Explores the political implications of Habermas's theory of discourse ethics through a resurrection of its radical potential when applied to participants in decision-making groups.

He said that it was a patriotic good for young American poets to become college teachers, if they had a gift for it. Democracy, he told us, needed a population that had learned to use and understand language as well as possible. In other words, Winters proposed the old unrealized ideal of a democratic culture: A democratic culture, whatever it might be – that is what I wish for those young Americans torn between Trump or Sanders, and those others declining to vote. The fate of that unrealized ideal is a great, unidentified crisis of my lifetime. Social media; reality TV; the tweeting, authoritarian demagogue; xenophobia; fascist rallies; race as the most egregious of many divisions – all may be mere episodes or alarm signals in our larger national story: Advertisement By a culture I mean not a list but a form of desire. When I was 17, I entered my state university. Many of my teachers were war veterans educated by a revolutionary law, the GI Bill. The state or land-grant universities were established by another law, the Morrill Act. Senator Justin Smith Morrill of Vermont proposed this legislation, only to have it defeated many times, beginning in 1837. In 1862, thanks to the secession of states whose senators had opposed it, the bill creating state universities – a landmark in American culture – passed and was signed by President Abraham Lincoln. I knew almost nothing. I had never seen a feature-length movie by Charlie Chaplin or Buster Keaton. But now I was surrounded by talk about such things. My intelligent, articulate parents had not tasted the heady collegiate discovery of intellectual and also important pseudo-intellectual conversation. Tuition cost next to nothing, a few hundred dollars per semester. Freshman composition opened glorious, high-class portals to what felt like everything. His war book is dedicated: He grew up rich, in Southern California. He has written that he was grateful for basic training as the first time he met people who worked for a living. Sergeant Hudson was an older working-class man who was a kind instructor to his well-off, inexperienced officer – a personal history I learned decades later. Fussell, I understand now, believed in the effort for a democratic culture. Maybe we, his students, were indebted to Sergeant Hudson. Certainly we resembled the ethnically mixed infantry squad in the war movies of that era. The black member of our working-class group, Henry Dumas, became a poet praised by Toni Morrison and published by Random House. Fussell encouraged us to compete with one another as writers. Like Winters, he believed good writing was good thinking, and he convinced us. Thousands of teachers continue that work. But state universities, rising and expanding then, are somewhat strangled today, much more expensive, and less well supported. Also neglected are the most important institutions of all, community colleges. In 1968, the idealistic project I benefited from was thriving inside the academy. In 2010, Mark Zuckerberg and his age group may have been less fortunate. Generations of tenured professors have turned in other directions, with different underlying convictions, than my teachers Fussell and Winters. Skepticism, seeing through texts, may have displaced seeing into them. Composition, which seemed a democratic portal, has become another academic specialty. These changes may be good. But I grieve for that birthright.

Chapter 2 : Is Democracy An Ideal Form Of Government?

*Democracy, Real and Ideal: Discourse Ethics and Radical Politics (SUNY series in Social and Political Thought) [Ricardo Blaug] on calendrierdelascience.com *FREE* shipping on qualifying offers.*

The Kouroukan Fouga divided the Mali Empire into ruling clans lineages that were represented at a great assembly called the Gbara. However, the charter made Mali more similar to a constitutional monarchy than a democratic republic. However, the power to call parliament remained at the pleasure of the monarch. The English Civil War “ was fought between the King and an oligarchic but elected Parliament, [51] [52] during which the idea of a political party took form with groups debating rights to political representation during the Putney Debates of After the Glorious Revolution of , the Bill of Rights was enacted in which codified certain rights and liberties, and is still in effect. The Bill set out the requirement for regular elections, rules for freedom of speech in Parliament and limited the power of the monarch, ensuring that, unlike much of Europe at the time, royal absolutism would not prevail. In North America, representative government began in Jamestown, Virginia , with the election of the House of Burgesses forerunner of the Virginia General Assembly in English Puritans who migrated from established colonies in New England whose local governance was democratic and which contributed to the democratic development of the United States ; [56] although these local assemblies had some small amounts of devolved power, the ultimate authority was held by the Crown and the English Parliament. The Puritans Pilgrim Fathers , Baptists , and Quakers who founded these colonies applied the democratic organisation of their congregations also to the administration of their communities in worldly matters. The taxed peasantry was represented in parliament, although with little influence, but commoners without taxed property had no suffrage. The creation of the short-lived Corsican Republic in marked the first nation in modern history to adopt a democratic constitution all men and women above age of 25 could vote [62]. This Corsican Constitution was the first based on Enlightenment principles and included female suffrage , something that was not granted in most other democracies until the 20th century. In the American colonial period before , and for some time after, often only adult white male property owners could vote; enslaved Africans, most free black people and most women were not extended the franchise. Athena has been used as an international symbol of freedom and democracy since at least the late eighteenth century. This was particularly the case in the United States , and especially in the last fifteen slave states that kept slavery legal in the American South until the Civil War. A variety of organisations were established advocating the movement of black people from the United States to locations where they would enjoy greater freedom and equality. Universal male suffrage was established in France in March in the wake of the French Revolution of Fascism and dictatorships flourished in Nazi Germany , Italy , Spain and Portugal , as well as non-democratic governments in the Baltics , the Balkans , Brazil , Cuba , China , and Japan , among others. The democratisation of the American, British, and French sectors of occupied Germany disputed [82] , Austria, Italy, and the occupied Japan served as a model for the later theory of government change. However, most of Eastern Europe , including the Soviet sector of Germany fell into the non-democratic Soviet bloc. The war was followed by decolonisation , and again most of the new independent states had nominally democratic constitutions.

Chapter 3 : "Democracy, real and ideal: Discourse ethics and radical politics." by B Cruikshank

x democracy, real and ideal is frequently losing control, the moral principle that one should not, say, abuse people, must either be abandoned, or so modified as to allow for.

There are several nations that have adopted democratic form of government. It indicates supreme power that is vested in the hands of the citizens. It is people who elect the leaders that will represent them. Democracy can be termed as orientation and political system by the people or for the people. The most famous form of government entails several advantages but is also tied to some drawbacks. Let us debate on the topic, Is Democracy an ideal form of government? Yes - Real power remains with people as they have the right to elect their representatives. The economic, social and political interests of individuals are best met under the democratic system. It classifies all the citizens of a nation or a state as equal and no discrimination is made on the basis of caste, sex, religion or property. The representatives are elected by people and therefore relatively a stable government is formed. Individuals learn about their rights and duties starting from birth. People feel as an integral part of system. It restrains several instances like powerful small minority exploits a disenfranchised, large majority. It takes time in law formulation and lots of money is spent during election. Some of the people are not even aware with political issues and therefore can elect wrong leaders. Also, any wrong selection can lead to incompetent government. Also, decisions may suffer due to voter retaliation or intimidation. There are no reasons for dissent in an autocratic government and therefore no one can obstruct large infrastructure projects. The United States is the apparent example where millions of dollars are spent on elections and glitzy advertising campaigns. Slobodan Milosevic left a legacy of over , people dead in Bosnia and ethnically wiped out over , Albanians from their houses in Kosovo. Democracy can not be called as an ideal form of government. However, it is comparatively better than other forms of government. The role of government is not to govern people and this is what democracy is all about. At least people have a chance to speak up their minds or elect their representatives, which is not feasible option in other forms of government.

Chapter 4 : democracy real and ideal | Download eBook PDF/EPUB

Get this from a library! Democracy, real and ideal: discourse ethics and radical politics. [Ricardo Blaug] -- By focusing the various difficulties encountered in applying theory to practical concerns, this book explores the reasons for the absence of a radical politics in Habermas's work.

Democracy, Youth, and the United Nations Democracy: Overview Democracy is a universally recognized ideal and is one of the core values and principles of the United Nations. It provides an environment for the protection and effective realization of human rights. Democracy has emerged as a cross-cutting issue in the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits since the s and in the internationally agreed development goals they produced. At that summit governments renewed their commitment to support democracy and welcomed the establishment of a Democracy Fund at the United Nations. The International Day of Democracy On 8 November , the General Assembly proclaimed 15 September as the International Day of Democracy , inviting Member States, the United Nations system and other regional, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to commemorate the Day. The International Day of Democracy provides an opportunity to review the state of democracy in the world. Democracy is as much a process as a goal, and only with the full participation of and support by the international community, national governing bodies, civil society and individuals, can the ideal of democracy be made into a reality to be enjoyed by everyone, everywhere. This was hardly surprising. Others laid claim to it but did not practise it. And yet, in the seven decades since the Charter was signed, the UN as an institution has done more to support and strengthen democracy around the world than any other global organization -- from fostering good governance to monitoring elections, from supporting civil society to strengthening democratic institutions and accountability, from ensuring self-determination in decolonized countries to assisting the drafting of new constitutions in nations post-conflict. This brings home the fact that democracy is one of the universal and indivisible core values and principles of the United Nations. It is based on the freely expressed will of people and closely linked to the rule of law and exercise of human rights and fundamental freedoms. People have a say in decisions that affect their lives and can hold decision-makers to account, based on inclusive and fair rules, institutions and practices that govern social interactions. Women are equal partners with men in private and public spheres of life and decision-making, and all people are free from discrimination based on race, ethnicity, class, gender or any other attribute. In essence, therefore, democratic governance is the process of creating and sustaining an environment for inclusive and responsive political processes and settlements. It is also important to note that the United Nations does not advocate for a specific model of government, but promotes democratic governance as a set of values and principles that should be followed for greater participation, equality, security and human development. The Secretary-General tasked the Democracy Working Group of the Executive Committee on Peace and Security " established in May " to ensure regular follow-up on the issue of democracy and, more specifically, on strategy development. Since its adoption, the Declaration has inspired constitution-making around the world and has contributed greatly to the global acceptance of democracy as a universal value and principle. The Covenant is binding on those States that have ratified it. As of July , the number of parties to the Covenant was , which constitutes approximately 85 per cent of the United Nations membership. The political work of the United Nations requires that it promote democratic outcomes; the development agencies seek to bolster national institutions like parliaments, electoral commissions and legal systems that form the bedrock of any democracy; and the human rights efforts support freedom of expression and association, the right to peaceful assembly, participation, and the rule of law, all of which are critical components of democracy. They resolved to strive for the full protection and promotion in all countries of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights for all and to strengthen the capacity of all countries to implement the principles and practices of democracy and respect for human rights. Democracy and Human Rights The human rights normative framework The values of freedom, respect for human rights and the principle of holding periodic and genuine elections by universal suffrage are essential elements of democracy. In turn, democracy provides the natural environment for the protection and effective

realization of human rights. This led to the articulation of several landmark resolutions of the former Commission on Human Rights. Respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms Freedom of association Freedom of expression and opinion Access to power and its exercise in accordance with the rule of law The holding of periodic free and fair elections by universal suffrage and by secret ballot as the expression of the will of the people A pluralistic system of political parties and organizations The separation of powers The independence of the judiciary Transparency and accountability in public administration Free, independent and pluralistic media Since its establishment in 1946, the Human Rights Council successor to the Commission has adopted a number of resolutions highlighting the interdependent and mutually reinforcing relationship between democracy and human rights. Addressing democracy deficits Democracy deficits, weak institutions and poor governance are among the main challenges to the effective realization of human rights. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights OHCHR and the United Nations Development Programme UNDP seek to address these challenges through their advisory services and programmes, which focus on strengthening the legal framework for human rights protection and promotion institutional and legal reform ; capacity building for stronger national human rights systems; implementation of the Universal Periodic Review recommendations, promoting human rights-based approaches, including empowering vulnerable and disadvantaged segments of the society to claim their rights; advocacy, awareness raising and human rights education. In transitional democracies and countries emerging from conflicts, OHCHR collaborates with national governments and actors to build a strong and independent judiciary, a representative, efficient and accountable parliament, an independent and effective national human rights institution, and a vibrant civil society. Promoting democratic governance Democratic governance, as supported by the United Nations emphasizes the role of individuals and peoples “all of them, without any exclusion” in shaping their human growth and the human development of societies. But individuals can only make such contributions when their individual potential is unleashed through the enjoyment of human rights. UNDP supports one in three parliaments in the developing world and an election every two weeks. In 2010, UNDP programmes strengthened electoral processes around the world and helped register 18 million new voters. UNDP also works to foster partnerships and share ways to promote participation, accountability and effectiveness at all levels, aiming to build effective and capable states that are accountable and transparent, inclusive and responsive “from elections to participation of women and the poor. OHCHR promotes democratic governance by providing sustained support to democratic institutions, including national actors and institutions involved in the administration of justice; enhancing the capacity of parliamentarians to engage in human rights protection, supporting civil society, facilitating constitution-making, and conducting human rights monitoring in the context of electoral processes. Supporting transitional democracies Popular uprisings across the world were led by youth, women, and men from all social strata and are opening greater space for civic engagement in decision making. These events have reaffirmed the pivotal importance of democratic governance as a system premised on inclusion, participation, non-discrimination and accountability. In transitional democracies and countries emerging from conflict, OHCHR collaborates with national governments and other actors to confront the past in order to rebuild public confidence and restore peace and the rule of law. OHCHR has actively supported transitional justice programmes in more than 20 countries around the world over the past decade. Its support includes ensuring that human rights and transitional justice considerations are reflected in peace agreements; engaging in the design and implementation of inclusive national consultations on transitional justice mechanisms; supporting the establishment of truth-seeking processes, judicial accountability mechanisms, and reparations programmes; and enhancing institutional reform. The Council called upon States to make continuous efforts to strengthen the rule of law and promote democracy through a wide range of measures. Further to this resolution, OHCHR, in consultation with States, national human rights institutions, civil society, relevant intergovernmental bodies and international organizations, published a study on challenges, lessons learned and best practices in securing democracy and the rule of law from a human rights perspective. OHCHR also works to underline the close relationship between human rights and democracy within the United Nations system. The round table discussed democracy movements and their characteristics in a number of States, including those involved in the Arab Spring. It

underlined the importance of working with regional and sub-regional organizations when dealing with unconstitutional changes of Government, and when promoting democratic movements and democracies more generally. Elections sit at the heart of this, making possible the act of self-determination envisaged in the Charter of the United Nations. During the subsequent era of trusteeship and decolonization, it supervised and observed plebiscites, referenda and elections worldwide. Today, the United Nations continues to be a trusted impartial actor providing electoral assistance to approximately 60 countries each year, either at the request of Member States or based on a Security Council or General Assembly mandate. Electoral assistance is based on the principle established in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights that the will of the people, as expressed through periodic and genuine elections, shall be the basis of government authority. Electoral assistance also recognizes the principles of state sovereignty and national ownership of elections, and that there is no single model of democracy. The main goal of United Nations electoral assistance is to support Member States in holding periodic, inclusive and transparent elections that are credible and popularly perceived as such and establishing nationally sustainable electoral processes. The provision of electoral assistance by the United Nations is a team effort involving a number of programmes, funds, agencies and departments under the mandate provided by the General Assembly. The Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs is designated by the Secretary-General as the UN Focal Point for Electoral Assistance Activities, with a leadership role in ensuring system-wide coherence and consistency and in strengthening the institutional memory and the development, dissemination and issuance of United Nations electoral assistance policies. This includes undertaking electoral needs assessments, recommending parameters for all United Nations electoral assistance, advising on the design of projects, developing electoral policy, maintaining institutional memory, and providing technical guidance and support in the implementation of electoral projects. In peacekeeping or post-conflict environments, electoral assistance is generally provided through components of field missions under the aegis of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations DPKO or the DPA. Military and police components of peacekeeping missions support national law enforcement agencies in providing security for electoral processes. UNDP provides electoral assistance to develop sustainable electoral management capacities, to foster inclusive participation in elections, particularly of women and youth and other underrepresented groups, and to coordinate donor support to electoral processes. This includes seven countries where special political missions are deployed, and eight where peacekeeping missions are deployed. United Nations electoral assistance has been a crucial and successful component in peacekeeping, peacebuilding, and in establishing and deepening democratic governance. As democracy has spread, so has the role of elections as the means to establish legitimate government. The United Nations has been engaged in elections in all regions of the world, with assistance provided recently in the Afghanistan, Mali, Somalia, Jordan, Nepal, Bangladesh and Iraq, to name just a few. In Tunisia for example, the UN supported civil society in the October National Constituent Assembly elections and continues to provide technical assistance to the national authorities. In , the United Nations provided technical and logistical support to Malian authorities in the conduct of Presidential elections. In addition, the United Nations is currently in the the process of supporting electoral reform in Afghanistan. Other partners are the many international non-governmental organizations working in the field of electoral assistance. These relationships provide opportunities for collaboration on electoral support activities as well as for sharing lessons and experiences. It is recognized that addressing the capacity of an electoral management body in isolation will not necessarily produce credible elections. There also needs to be a focus on the overall political environment in which the elections take place. The United Nations therefore also makes efforts to build capacity outside the electoral authorities. This involves working with voters, the media, political parties and civil society, as well as other actors and institutions of democratic governance such as parliament and the judiciary. This is the basis for regular training for field and headquarters based staff. However, for civil society activists and organizations in a range of countries covering every continent, space is shrinking “ or even closing. Governments have adopted restrictions that limit the ability of NGOs to work or to receive funding. As the Secretary-General has said, the hallmark of successful and stable democracies is the presence of a strong and freely operating civil society -- in which Government and civil society work together for common goals for a better future, and at the same time, civil society helps

keep Government accountable. Since Secretary-General Kofi A. These have ranged from supporting civil society efforts for accountability and transparency to building capacity for strengthening good governance and the rule of law. The large majority of UNDEF funds go to local civil society organizations in countries in both the transition and consolidation phases of democratisation. It targets the demand side of democracy, rather than the supply side. UNDEF projects are in seven main areas:

Chapter 5 : Democracy - Wikipedia

Real and Ideal Democracy (1) - Free download as PDF File .pdf), Text File .txt) or read online for free. Scribd is the world's largest social reading and publishing.

By Camilla Hansen As representative democracy sinks into crisis, we need to go back to democracy in its original meaning as rule of the people. It is time to imagine what real democracy would look like and to create institutions and mechanisms that could be the building blocks of genuinely democratic societies. But this system is now in a deep crisis. In established representative democracies, the trust in political elites and conventional institutions is crumbling. Participation in elections is shrinking, and political parties are losing their members. More and more people are now realizing that their elected representatives do not represent them. Rather, governments of both left and right bow to the dictates of the big banks, the financial institutions and the multinational corporations and their powerful lobbies. In this situation, the ballot has little meaning because we have no real choice. We can only change political elites that rule us, but we do not have the right to decide upon the development of the society in which we live. A real democracy, however, is a direct and participatory democracy, in which all citizens have the possibility and the right to participate in the decisions that affect our lives and our communities. While the powers that be and mainstream media and pundits argue that such a citizen-based democracy is not possible or even desirable, there exist in fact a range of new institutions and experiments - as well as some old ones - that show that a direct and participatory democracy is both possible and feasible today. These democratic innovations, however scattered and limited, could, if improved, strengthened and spread, be tools for a radical democratisation of society. In this article I will take a look at some of these democratic institutions and mechanisms, discuss their strengths and weaknesses, and explore their potentials.

Participatory Budgeting The popular assembly where citizens meet face to face to discuss, vote and make collective decisions is the original form of democracy. Historically different kinds of popular assemblies have existed in many communities across the world, from village assemblies in North Africa to the Assembly of ancient Athens, the Landsgemeinde of the medieval Swiss cantons, and the town meetings of 17th century New England. The most famous of these is participatory budgeting. It was first developed in the city of Porto Alegre in Southern Brazil in the late 1980s when the Brazilian Labour Party, PT, won the municipal elections after the end of the military dictatorship. Since then, it has spread to hundreds of cities and municipalities in Latin America, Europe and the United States. In the neighbourhood assemblies all residents have the right to participate and to vote on the budget priorities of their neighbourhood. These assemblies then elect delegates to regional assemblies and to a budget council, which puts together a budget for the whole city, based on the priorities made in the neighbourhood assemblies. Large numbers participate in the process; in some places over 80%. Usually the majority of the participants are women, poor and other sections of the population that are marginalized in conventional political institutions. Participatory budgeting has led to many positive results, including poverty reduction and redistribution of budget resources to the poorest neighbourhoods, a large reduction in corruption, and to more transparency as well as a more vibrant civil society. However, there are large variations in the institutional design of the different models of participatory budgeting that have spread across the world. The strong models give the residents decision-making power over the entire or large parts of the municipal budget and are based on neighbour assemblies where all residents can participate and vote on priorities. It is these strong models that have produced the best results in the form of poverty reduction, decline in corruption and large participation from the residents. This mechanism mobilized many, especially from the poor and marginalized neighbourhoods to participate. To prevent the establishment of a professionalized political class, all delegates were recallable and their terms were limited and short years. The mayor and the municipal administration participated in the meetings, so that the residents could hold them to account. And to ensure transparency, all meetings were open to the public and all information was made accessible. A major dilemma of participatory budgeting is the question of legislative power. Most cases of participatory budgeting around the world though, have no direct legislative power. In Porto Alegre, participatory budgeting was not codified into the municipal law. The reason for this was to keep

it flexible and this made it possible to gradually expand the process to give citizen power over larger parts of the budget. On the other hand, when participatory budgeting is not codified into law, the municipal administration can abolish or restructure the process at any time. Participatory budgeting, as it was first conceived of in Porto Alegre, is also facing other challenges. As weak models have been promoted by international agencies like the World Bank, the term participatory budgeting has been emptied of content. It is now being used to cover any kind of participation, including consultation, information sharing or giving feedback to government. Also in Porto Alegre itself, the process has become diluted the last decade. If participatory budgeting is to be a tool for genuine democratisation of society, the citizens must be given decision-making power over the entire or at least a large part of the municipal budget, and the process must be a bottom-up process where the sovereign power lies with the citizens in the assemblies. Local authorities must be willing to give away power to the residents in the assemblies, and there is a need for decentralization of power from national and international levels to the municipal and local levels. Communal councils are small local participatory institutions, composed of approximately families in urban areas and families in rural areas, which make decisions about initiation and implementation of local projects. Projects include basic services like water and sewage systems, electricity, medical centres, housing and road building, as well as cultural activities. All decisions are made through popular assemblies composed of at least 10 percent of residents over 15 years. The assemblies also elect committees tasked with financial management, monitoring of government, and local priorities like health, education and land management. The government has transferred billions of dollars to the councils, and thousands of projects have been implemented. As with participatory budgeting in Brazil, decentralization was a crucial step in moving power downwards to ordinary citizens at the grassroots level. Although The Communal Councils Law was passed in , a decentralization process started already in the s, paved the way. Through this process, considerable power was moved from national and regional levels to municipal governments. In , the decentralization was continued and deepened by the Chavez government, by moving power further down, from local governments to the citizens in the neighbourhoods. This gives the central government in Caracas the final power to decide which projects will be funded. National agencies also determine the rules which guide the communal councils and these rules limit the power of the councils. The communal councils have met opposition both from local and national bureaucracy, and the national government has been criticized for trying to centralize and dominate the process. None of these weaknesses are unfixable; the communal councils have potential to be strengthened and further democratised. Council participants and social movements are actively struggling to take power back from the central government to the communities and are demanding more power over funding, rules and other parts of the process. Participatory budgeting and communal councils are two of the most well known cases of participatory institutions in which popular assemblies play a key role. By studying these institutions, we can identify their strengths and limitations; how they can be improved and spread; and in which ways they can contribute to a radical democratisation of society. Sortition and Mini-publics Certain democratic mechanisms are essential to participatory institutions, as they prevent the establishment of a cemented and professionalized political class insulated from ordinary citizens and local communities. Such mechanisms include short and limited terms for elected delegates, and delegates being recallable at any time. Rotation of delegates is another way to prevent creation of elites and to ensure diversity and mass participation. Another mechanism that effectively prevents establishment of elites and ensures the participation of ordinary citizens in decision-making and as holders of political offices, is sortition, or selection by lot. The use of lot played an important role in the democracy of ancient Athens, where most positions of political authority were selected this way. For Aristotle, selection by lot was central to democracy, while elections were the mark of oligarchy. In modern representative systems, however, selection by lot is absent. Sortition was also recently used in the first part of the process to write a new constitution in Iceland. In mini-publics, deliberation is usually guided by independent facilitators; the participants hold hearings in which they hear evidence from and question expert witnesses; and deliberations usually take place both in plenary and in small groups. Participants are selected for mini-publics through the use of statistical sampling to ensure that citizens from all social groups are represented. Sortition differs from popular assemblies in that equal opportunity to participate is replaced by equal probability to being selected to

participate. This way, no citizens or social groups are systemically excluded from participation. Another weakness of most mini-publics is the role of organizers usually governments, who set the agenda and choose experts and thus are able to influence the outcome of the deliberations. In this way mini-publics can be manipulated by existing political institutions and elites to legitimise decisions made elsewhere. And, as Pateman points out, most mini-publics are only temporary and are usually advocated as a mere supplement to the existing electoral system. Several democratic theorists have recently made proposals for different kinds of political bodies, including legislative bodies, based on sortition that would not just be complements to the existing electoral institutions, but constitute alternatives. Citizens Initiatives Citizen initiatives are democratic mechanisms that let citizens propose and vote on laws and policies. By gathering a certain amount of signatures, citizens can demand a binding vote on a proposed policy or legislation. Citizen initiatives differ from referendums in which citizens only can accept or reject a law or policy proposed by parliament. Switzerland was the first country to introduce citizen initiatives as well as referendums, and several countries, especially in Europe and Latin America have since introduced them at national, state or local levels. The promise of citizen initiatives is the way in which they can give citizens power to initiate and to directly decide upon large-scale issues. But like the other democratic institutions and mechanisms discussed above, citizen initiatives also have their limitations. A common problem is that the large numbers of signatures required and the short time frame ensure that only those who can afford to use expensive professional signature-gathering firms can submit an initiative. Another problem is that citizen initiatives are often subverted by the manipulations of wealthy and powerful interests and political elites. Big business frequently pours huge sums of money into misleading campaigns to influence the outcome of the vote a recent example of this is the proposition 37 to label food containing GMOs in California that was defeated by agribusiness which spent 45 million dollars on misleading ad campaigns. This does not mean that citizen initiatives cannot be valuable democratic tools, but there is a need for careful consideration of how these are designed, to prevent their subversion by the wealthy and the powerful. Improvements could include lower number of signatures required and longer timelines, and eliminating campaign contributions. Also it is important to ensure that citizens get sufficient information about the issues to be voted upon and to ensure a broad and inclusive public deliberation. Citizen initiatives are effective instruments for decision, but not for deliberation. While direct democracy also should include other tools and arenas for decision making than popular assemblies, a system based mainly on voting would be atomistic and insufficient. In face-to-face assemblies and other forms of collective decision-making, citizens are exposed to and required to recognize and take into consideration the views of other citizens with different perspectives and backgrounds and are thus better able to make considered judgements. A Grassroots Network for Participatory Democracy A radical direct and participatory democracy will not be handed down to us by the elites, but has to be struggled for by ordinary citizens and social movements. Martin emphasize, institutional reforms must be accompanied by popular struggle and direct action. This is exactly what happened in the municipality of Torres in Venezuela, where hundreds of citizens occupied City Hall to demand implementation of participatory budgeting. For a radical democratic change to happen, there must be large popular movements demanding and struggling for this change. But unless ideas of direct and participatory democracy are known and familiar to most people, such movements will not emerge. So a first step then, is to spread these ideas and make a strong argument for how direct and participatory democracy can be feasible today. Perhaps the time has come to create an international network from the bottom-up of social movements and activists campaigning for and struggling for direct and participatory democracy. While there already exist some networks and initiatives, most of these are sponsored by or supported by agencies like the World Bank and by governments and other elite institutions. Few of these aim for participatory institutions as tools for radical democratisation, but see these as mere additions to the existing political system. What is lacking is a more radical agenda, an international grassroots-based network promoting and struggling for participatory democracy as an alternative and ultimately a replacement to the existing system.

Real democracy is not a fiction, it is also not merely a project for the future, rather it is a reality that exists here and now, as a collective imagination, in the form of democratic activities that are guided by an ideal of radical democracy, as a potential that has to be developed in, beyond and against the dominant state and society, as a.

Chapter 7 : Democratic ideals - Wikipedia

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Chapter 8 : What Would Real Democracy Look Like? | New Compass

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Chapter 9 : Democracy, Real and Ideal

"Real" is a term that displays originality. If a thing is described as real, it means it is very original and concrete. When talking about culture, real culture means what happens in everyday life, and ideal culture means how one is supposed to behave on the basis of cultural values and norms.