What is
"Direct Democracy"?

OIDP
18ª CONFERENCIA
BARCELONA 2018

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Occupy Wall Street's 'Direct Democracy'

Consensus illuminates the complex, slow-moving, deliberative p[...] protesters discuss and make decisions.

KASIA CIEPLAK-MAYR VON BALDEGG OCT 17, 2011

OPINION

Direct democracy is not the answer to our political problems

Why the Brexit referendum shows us direct democracy fails

○ 0

[...]ork/, last accessed February 18, 2018

Calls for and against "direct democracy"

TRUST THIS PAIR WITH YOUR FAMILY'S FUTURE?

Vote Leave

OMNIBUS FÜR DIREKTE DEMOKRATIE IN DEUTSCHLAND

VOLKSABSTIMMUNG

[...]us voulons construire un autre modèle d'Europe" 19h30 / 3 min. / le 08 février 2018

[...] du Mouvement 5 étoiles (M5E), Beppe Grillo, évoque dans un entretien à [...]ulversements politiques en Europe et aux Etats-Unis, dans la perspective [...] législatives du 4 mars en Italie.

[...]us de 25% des suffrages selon plusieurs sondages, le Mouvement 5 étoiles, [...]ié de populiste, est un des phénomènes de la campagne électorale qui bat son

[...] un modèle pour nous", a affirmé Beppe Grillo au 19h30. Et de citer le [...] la démocratie directe en exemples. "Avec le vote internet, on pourrait [...] référendum par jour", s'est-il exclamé.

[...] beppe grillo la generation internet balaie partout l'ancienne politique html, last accessed February 21, 2018

"Direct democracy is the dimension of the political system that allows citizens to participate directly in the taking of institutional political decisions by means of a free, universal and secret vote"

http://barcelona2018.oidp.net/en/thematicblocks

1. Popular Votes
Formal devices of democratic systems that enable all citizens to take part in ballot votes to make decisions about political issues

Referendum and initiative processes

2. Consultation of Citizens
Formal devices of democratic systems that enable a sub-part of assembled citizens to give inputs in decision-making processes on issues

Open assemblies, mini-publics

3. Governing Open Assembly
Political systems in which all citizens can assemble to design and make political decisions themselves
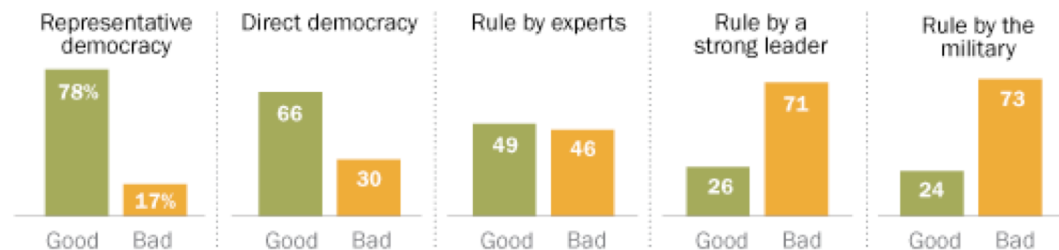
Ancient Athens

Landsgemeinde, town hall meeting, communal assembly, participatory budgeting

IODA Conference

4. Implementation of Popular Opinion Political systems in which empowered actors implement popular opinion

(Opinion polls, recall, imperative mandate, primaries, …)

Widespread support for democratic systems of government, but many open to nondemocratic alternatives

Would ___ be a good or bad way of governing our country?

Representative democracy	Direct democracy	Rule by experts	Rule by a strong leader	Rule by the military
Good 78% / Bad 17%	Good 66 / Bad 30	Good 49 / Bad 46	Good 26 / Bad 71	Good 24 / Bad 73

Notes: Percentages are global medians based on 38 countries.

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Types of "direct democracy"		Empowerment	
		Decision	**Input**
Breadth of Inclusion	**Assembly**	3. Governing open assembly *System* *No representation*	2. Consultation of citizens *Devices* *Discussion*
	Mass public	1. Popular vote processes *Devices* *Vote*	4. Implementation of popular opinion *System* *As representation*

So what? (I)

Diversity

Of processes

Of normative assumptions

→ **Away from "direct democracy";
Discuss specific processes**

"Innovative political processes"		Empowerment	
		Decision	**Input**
Breadth of Inclusion	**Assembly**	*Town hall meeting* *Communal assembly* *Landsgemeinde* *Participatory budgeting*	*Popular assemblies* *Mini-publics*
	Mass public	*Mandatory referendum* *Top-down referendum* *Facultative referendum* *Popular initiative*	*Opinion polls* *Recall,* *Imperative mandate* *Primaries* *+ Crowdsourcing* *+ Agenda initiative*

Source: PhD manuscript, Alice el-Wakil, University of Zurich

For each, variety of designs

Table 1: Four Main Popular Vote Processes

		Trigger		
		Constitution	Governing majority	Nonelected minorities
Origin of text	Elected representatives	Mandatory referendum	Top-down referendum	Bottom-up referendum
	Nonelected minorities	-	-	Popular initiative

Table 2: Lines of Variation of Popular Vote Processes

	Yes	No
1. Legal basis		
Pre-existing legal basis	Pre-regulated	*Ad hoc*
2. Scope		
Issues of popular votes (legal nature, level of specificity, issue)	-	-
Law implemented or not	Abrogative	Rejective
Unity of substance	Yes	No (Packages)
3. Trigger requirements		
Approval by another actor (parliament, courts)	Yes	No
Time available for signature collection	-	-
Signatures threshold	-	-
4. Time		
Triggering moment	Yes (Specified)	No (Unspecified)
Date of the vote	Yes (Specified)	No (Unspecified)
Time in longer decision-making sequence	-	-
Frequency of popular votes	Yes (Specified)	No (Unspecified)
5. Ballot		
Question design	-	-
Various ballot format (yes/no, proposal/counter-proposal, multichoice, preferendum)	-	-
Limitation of number of issues	Yes	No
6. Information		
Campaign finance regulations	Yes (Specified)	No (Unspecified)
Provision of information regulations (by whom, how, what information)	Yes (Specified)	No (Unspecified)
7. Decision rule		
Status quo preserving	Yes	No
Outcome	Binding	Non-binding

Source: el-Wakil, Alice and Cheneval, Francis. 2018. Designing Popular Vote Processes to Enhance Democratic Systems. *Swiss Political Science Review* 24(3): 350-351.

So what? (II)

Shift in questioning:

from "Is direct democracy good or bad?" to "How best to implement democracy?"

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Chair of Political Philosophy

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