

lab10 - Research #32

Democracy - Where to go?

01.01.2017 13:42 - didi

Status:	In Progress	
Priority:	Normal	
Assignee:		
Description		
<p>2016 has seen a lot of discussion about the fate of democracy, especially liberal democracy as we know and have it in the <i>West</i>. There's a strong trend towards illiberal democracy, as seen at different times and to various degrees e.g. in Russia, Hungary, Turkey, and now probably even in the US.</p> <p>One reason (of many) for this may be the limited ability of our democratic system and institutions to adapt to and embrace technical advances.</p> <p>What needs to be preserved and be updated to better function in the 21th century? What's obsolete and needs to be replaced? And by what?</p> <p>A core question is what type of democracy makes most sense: we currently have a mostly representative system, with varying degrees of direct democracy (e.g. in the form of referendums).</p> <p>Currently many argue that more direct elements are needed in order to combat lobbyist interests and detachment of the public from political processes and decisions. A counter-argument is that most political decisions to be taken nowadays are too complex for that approach.</p> <p>An intermediate form is Delegative Democracy, nowadays better known as <i>Liquid Democracy</i>, mostly in the context of Pirate Parties.</p> <p>Part of the debate is also the role of a democratic state in the 21th century.</p> <p>Traditionally (in the pre-digital world) the concept of territoriality was central. The mix of digitalisation and globalisation lead to a situation where the territorially defined state is limited in its power and ability to enforce rules. Examples for this are tax avoidance tactics (mainly associated to international companies) and difficulties to enforce state-specific limits to free speech in the virtual sphere.</p> <p>It's popular (and easy) to blame increasing shortcomings on incumbent actors (or the political class in general), but this just leads to growing de-legitimisation and questioning of the democratic system and principle itself.</p> <p>Probably the world and its complexity have out-grown the capacity of the existing political system to handle it.</p> <p>Digitalisation highly increases complexity because of the resulting increase in interconnection and speed. The wide adoption of the Internet has additionally amplified the non-linearity inherent to human beings (being complex systems themselves).</p> <p>So, unless we are willed to roll back complexity (meaning: giving up individual freedoms, transitioning to more collectivist forms of society, something which hasn't worked tremendously well in the past century), we need to find something which resembles a Complex adaptive system.</p>		

History

#1 - 01.01.2017 14:28 - didi

- Description updated

#2 - 01.01.2017 15:05 - didi

Italy: The [Movimento 5 Stelle](#) (M5S) aims for more direct democracy. The way they present it, the party is more like a trojan horse for direct democracy than a party in the traditional sense.

They recently introduced a web based software ([Rousseau](#)), labeled their *Operating System*, which is supposed to become a central tool for democratic discussion and decision making.

The credibility and intentions of the self proclaimed movement are subject to much controversy. E.g. the founder and self proclaimed *guarantor* [Beppe Grillo](#) is at the same time said to have no and all power.

Most or all of the digital infrastructure is made and controlled by a private company ([link](#)) or entities closely related to it. This company was founded and owned by the recently deceased co-founder of M5S [Gianroberto Casaleggio](#) who achieved a guru-like status because of his bold predictions about the future - see e.g. [Gaia - the future of politics](#).

No wonder [some](#) even compare the M5S with Scientology.

The M5S may win the next parliamentary elections in Italy (expected in 2017 or early 2018) according to [current polls](#).

Is Italy preparing the stage for the next political innovation after fascism (perfected in Germany) and berlusconism ([perfected in the US](#))?

#3 - 01.01.2017 22:39 - didi

TED Talk [How to upgrade democracy for the Internet era](#) by Pia Mancini.

TED Talk [Capitalism will eat democracy](#) by Yanis Varoufakis.

[DiEM25](#) is a pan-European, cross-border movement of democrats.

#4 - 18.01.2017 03:33 - didi

related projects:

- <http://democracy.earth/>
- <http://democracyos.org/>

#5 - 27.01.2017 11:17 - didi

Proposal of Piratenpartei: [Demokratieschilling](#).

I like this. It can be generalized to let the public make more economic decisions in a crowd way. Could even be extended to include tokens representing a share of public resources (TODO: link to where I better describe this idea).

#6 - 09.05.2017 10:03 - didi

[Cicada](#) is a sub-project of the [Fermat](#) (*Internet of People*) platform.

It aims to implement direct democracy.

It uses a "Human unique identifier", built via [Recovable Biometric Features](#).

Criticism:

They refer to [this Princeton study](#) showing the disconnect between what people want and what representatives do and then jump to the conclusion that direct democracy fixes this.

The consensus algo is supposed to be energy efficient, yet it's based on PoW (something they call *distributed proof of work*). It's supposed to pay an UBI. I doubt if an UBI based on block reward is such a good idea.

The initially supported biometric feature are IRIS scans, supposedly doable via Smartphone cam. Imo currently popular biometric features aren't at all suited for securing something of value, see e.g. [this hack](#).

The project has a very large scope, going as far as discussing a blockchain of blockchains (something like Polkadot). Smells like it's never going beyond PoC state.