

The (mis)interpretation of democracy

The foundation of democracy is egalitarianism; every people is equal therefore they all have equally valued opinion as vote.

According to the classical view, egalitarianism reflect legal and moral equality. During the course of history the ultimate aim was to achieving this goal. Although the founders of democracy, the Greeks, did not generalise on that broad scope and closed off many groups (women, slaves, sick). Its roots in social value difference is well-known but system theoretical aspects could have laid behind the segregation as well. I should know more about the thinking of ancient philosophers to clearly justify this proposal.

The practical implementation of democracy is voting to make a fair choice between available alternative options, the one most supported by equal voters. But in order to make this concept work in long term and avoid catastrophic outcomes, the egalitarianism should be interpreted differently on this case. It is not an equal vote like in law and moral judgement but equal decision making potential.

This equal potential as a fundamental requirement unfortunately is not fulfilled and cannot be fulfilled at all from objective reasons as you understand it bellow.

Any decision making has two base pillars: intellect and knowledge. Depending on the combination of these basics at a given individual (decision threshold), he/she can make informed and responsible decision.

Every problem has its own understanding threshold; if the individual's decision threshold doesn't match, one is not able to make responsible decision (the individual decision threshold lower then the understanding threshold). If he/she is still forced to do so, it will be more and more an emotional choice as we getting further down from the threshold which could wildly defer from facts and reality.

On the contrary to the common belief the goal of democracy is not to find the optimal solution. This is simply an expectation what every person with good mindset should desire. The goal is to find the choice supported by the majority. The given choices are presented by groups in minority and there is no guarantee at all that it includes the best possible option. Although democratic systems are open for all solution at the preparation phase and at this level broad understanding of democracy is desirable. The majority though is incapable to figure out what is best as it requires special knowledge. Nonetheless they have to choose and by making a good choice we return to the problem of decision threshold and knowledge.

One of the pillars of decision making, natural intelligence, is an inherited feature of the population. This cannot be altered, this is what we have, we have to live with it¹. Like every biological feature (eg. foot-size, thermo-tolarence), intelligence is not even across the population, it is symmetrically distributed along a bell shaped curve, called normal distribution. The average of all individual gives the population average which is arbitrarily taken as 100 point in psychology. Half of the population lay below the average while the other half is above acquiring a symmetric shape. It happens that 50% of the population falls between 90-110 points. That means 25% is under 90 and 25% is over 110. What does it mean in practice? The recruitment limit at USA army is 84 point meaning that bellow that even the army cannot use those people not even for kitchen work. They are considered socially dumb and they take up 15% of the population (1) (see blue line on the graph).

Obvious therefore that as the understanding threshold rises for any problems more and more people fall out from the possibility of informed, responsible decision making.

1 That is not completely true, some parts of the intelligence can be improved with practice but the magnitude is small compared to the whole problem.

As I pointed out in the essay of “Crisis of the Systems” (4), the same way as economical systems have to transform due to the created ‘close system’ on Earth, alike the social system is urgently needs development. The common feature of the two systems is that they have to be consciously driven to cover and handle the most aspects of human nature. They have to be able for self-correcting and handle the inevitably occurring deviancies. Earlier historical systems evolved to serve the benefit of a certain leader group regardless of the human psyche or environmental circumstances. Today we know ourself to the degree via psychology, sociology, economy that building on these knowledge we could design a more improved – even if is not flawless – system to fulfil the basic legal and social egalitarianism paradigms combined with efficacy.

Among the democracy’s weaknesses (eg, under-representation, weak civil control, tolerance for illiberalism) the voting system is the most fundamental.

One of the possible approach for improvement could be an introduction of a credit score system. Credit scores are widely used in many areas like university lecture weighting. The main idea is that a secret score is attached to the individual’s vote which is unknown even for the individual itself aka secret. This credit score is part of the personal data. The credit score is calculated from the individual’s information and decision making capability which his assessed by an academic test. Something like an A-level exam, you do the test before you get to voter age. Unlike the A-level, this test is renewable. If you have the aspiration to get a better score because you got wiser and you care, you can retake the test at certain intervals. Still the result is unknown, so you take a blind approach but then the result is attached to your subsequent votes. The test should not filter point of views or opinions it only measures your ability for decision making and your general and information knowledge. It tests for facts, knowledge of alternative opinions and their outcome effects so no lopsided brainwashing could concur. There is no discrimination neither on gender, race, religion nor any other way.

Noone is restricted from voting but it can be avoided that an emotionally overheated individual with 85 decision threshold could have the same weight then a field expert with 115 point on a question with understanding threshold of 110.

The technical background of implementing such a system is available as of today.

With this framework the direction of political campaigns would from emotional influencing shift to reasoning. Hence the power of ignorance loses its value compared to today’s system, the benefit of the politics would be a more educated, well-informed society.

This in long term is the benefit of the whole humankind.

Even the above outlined system is not without faults and possible exploitation but would work better as the recent. It could be a good baseline for further discussions and improvement.

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1. <https://www.iqcomparisonsite.com/IQtable.aspx>
2. <https://www.sciencealert.com/iq-scores-falling-in-worrying-reversal-20th-century-intelligence-boom-flynn-effect-intelligence> (They called intelligence but actually refers to education as well)
3. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Psychohistory> (fictional)
4. <http://www.oprem.co.uk/science.php> or <http://simsa.hu>