

1: 10 Reasons Why Democracy Doesn't Work - Listverse

Inclusive democracy is a political theory and political project that aims for direct democracy in all fields of social life: political democracy in the form of face-to-face assemblies which are confederated, economic democracy in a stateless, moneyless and marketless economy, democracy in the social realm, i.e. self-management in places of work.

Those arguing for the UK to vote to leave in the June referendum present it as an opportunity to hand control of British affairs back to the British parliament, the only body with a mandate to make decisions for the country. On the face of it, the EU has a democratic structure. The European Commission is not elected but it is fully accountable to the European Parliament. And all the EU member states are represented in the Council of Ministers. But does that make it democratic or does it have, as some argue, a democratic deficit? I suggest that we expect certain characteristics to be present in the structures of any liberal democracy. They should be representative, transparent and accountable. If these characteristics are present then the democratic institutions will normally enjoy legitimacy and authority. So I propose to discuss the presence or absence in the EU of these characteristics. The European Parliament is made up of MEPs from all 28 EU member states, each elected using various forms of proportional representation unlike the House of Commons, which is elected through a widely criticised first-past-the-post system. The European Commission itself is made up of civil servants recruited from all the member states, although there are always difficulties in recruiting Commission officials from Britain because so few qualified candidates can speak another European language. Transparency and accountability The EU does fall down on transparency. The parliament is transparent enough and I have always found Commission civil servants to be much more open to enquiries than those working in the British government. Although the Council of Ministers now holds public sessions, the elected governments of the member states are not keen to grant access to debates in the Council, which are held behind closed doors and where most important decisions are made. Not even representatives of the European Parliament can attend. This is difficult to square with the claim of being democratic, but the remedy mostly lies with the national parliaments. It could and should be their job to call their own government ministers to account for what they do in Brussels, but most national parliaments do a very poor job in this regard the House of Commons being one of these poor performers. Leaders mingle before shutting themselves away for a council meeting. Once again most national level media especially in the UK do a patchy, inconsistent and often misleading job. But there are opportunities for direct citizen involvement in EU matters. Citizens can lobby their own MEPs, or all MEPs if they wish and it is often individual complaints from citizens that lead to groundbreaking legal judgments by the European Court of Justice. If an EU-wide petition attracts more than 1m signatures from a range of countries, the European Commission must bring proposals about that subject before the European Parliament. The verdict Clearly the EU structure has defects when assessed by the normal standards of Western democracy but I would argue that the British parliament, with its unelected House of Lords and an unrepresentative House of Commons in terms of the balance of political parties to votes cast, is even less democratic. Eurosceptics have for a long time questioned the legitimacy of the EU but that charge is difficult to sustain. Of course national parliaments have all agreed to pool sovereignty in the EU institutions, but they are entitled to do that and have done so with their eyes wide open. Many even asked their citizens to vote on the decision in a referendum. They have the right to raise a yellow card about EU legislation, which can cause the Commission to change it. And the EU is in the process of strengthening the ability of national parliaments to call a halt to EU legislation if they object to it. So all in all, the EU is, or is at least working to be, a democratic organisation. It has its failings but national governments have just as many if not more.

2: How democratic is the European Union?

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Opposition politicians, judges, journalists and academics have been thrown in jail – all following a successful referendum that saw the office of president shed many of the restraints of parliament. Given this climate of fear and censorship, the people cannot be said to have voted freely. But the fact that they did vote raises a fundamental question: The people have spoken – sort of. First of all, there are important distinctions between general elections and constitutional referendums, and each comes with its own set of democratic dangers. In Turkey and the UK, narrow referendum results have endorsed fundamental constitutional change. But these referendums are not, like general elections, exercising the democratic right to select leaders. Instead, they are making complex governmental decisions that often require understanding of specialist information, way beyond what could reasonably be expected of an ordinary person. Voting on such questions – usually concerning fundamental long-term change – ought to, and often does require a super majority. Some Turks have heralded the threat to their democracy. Frequently, the popular vote is not reflected in the number of seats a party wins. In the US Hillary Clinton gained more votes overall, but lost the presidency under the electoral college system. These divergences are well-established, and when elections are contested between two moderate parties trying to appeal to the middle ground as has been the case across Europe for many years, such anomalies have not caused too much instability. Tale as old as time Napoleon III was elected in, but declared himself emperor four years later. Marx observed how easy it was for an already centralised power to centralise further, and remove the institutions that might stop it from doing so. The appeals are of course hollow, but they can harness the support of those seduced by charisma and strength. To suggest that electorates deliberately, or consciously vote for autocracy is another matter. The standard explanation is that people know not what they do – that they are swept up in a desire to be part of something greater than themselves. This is partly true, but there are certainly those that support autocracy and hold extreme views. When these elements represent a significant enough minority they can sometimes sweep enough people into their narratives to elect an extreme leader whose views do not represent the body politic. More than a vote But even in a vote with high turnout, an electorate free of disproportionately powerful minorities, and a legislative assembly aligned entirely with the popular vote, the results of an election could be wholly undemocratic. Many recent votes have been blighted by constraints on the press, manipulation of social media and data note the Cambridge Analytica story, and defamatory campaigns that have strangled the free flow of information. These provide a reason or excuse for consolidation of executive power, allowing the governing class to make decisions without having to go through regular legislative channels. And once in place, these can be difficult to reverse. Rather, they were exercises in projecting an image of democracy, since states that run elections are popularly assumed to be democratic. Democracy is about more than just voting. It is about freedom of speech, the separation of executive from legislative power, judicial independence, and political equality. Democratic institutions exist to keep power from becoming centralised in a single, despotic location. Once these institutions begin to weaken, and the only remaining element of democracy is the pretence of elections, then democracy in its meaningful form is already gone. Powerless votes perpetuating pre-existing autocracies are barely votes at all.

3: How senators voted on Brett Kavanaugh - CNNPolitics

Voting is the heart of democracy. As long as people are given the chance to vote, to choose their representatives, and their stance on social and political issues, then democracy is working. That is why it is important to ensure that every eligible voter is registered and will exercise their right of suffrage because if not, it defeats the.

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.

4: Democracy | Definition of Democracy by Merriam-Webster

That sort of overstatement has long been noted by researchers; the comparisons and charts in this analysis use the House Clerk's figure, along with data from the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA) and individual nations' statistical and elections authorities.

He is the author of *The Happiness Hypothesis: Finding Modern Truth in Ancient Wisdom*. What makes people vote Republican? Why in particular do working class and rural Americans usually vote for pro-business Republicans when their economic interests would seem better served by Democratic policies? But now that we can map the brains, genes, and unconscious attitudes of conservatives, we have refined our diagnosis: People vote Republican because Republicans offer "moral clarity"â€”a simple vision of good and evil that activates deep seated fears in much of the electorate. Democrats, in contrast, appeal to reason with their long-winded explorations of policy options for a complex world. Diagnosis is a pleasure. It is a thrill to solve a mystery from scattered clues, and it is empowering to know what makes others tick. In the psychological community, where almost all of us are politically liberal, our diagnosis of conservatism gives us the additional pleasure of shared righteous anger. We can explain how Republicans exploit frames, phrases, and fears to trick Americans into supporting policies such as the "war on terror" and repeal of the "death tax" that damage the national interest for partisan advantage. But with pleasure comes seduction, and with righteous pleasure comes seduction wearing a halo. Our diagnosis explains away Republican successes while convincing us and our fellow liberals that we hold the moral high ground. Our diagnosis tells us that we have nothing to learn from other ideologies, and it blinds us to what I think is one of the main reasons that so many Americans voted Republican over the last 30 years: To see what Democrats have been missing, it helps to take off the halo, step back for a moment, and think about what morality really is. A then-prevalent definition of the moral domain, from the Berkeley psychologist Elliot Turiel, said that morality refers to "prescriptive judgments of justice, rights, and welfare pertaining to how people ought to relate to each other. There is no rational or health-related way to explain these laws. Why are grasshoppers kosher but most locusts are not? The emotion of disgust seemed to me like a more promising explanatory principle. The book of Leviticus makes a lot more sense when you think of ancient lawgivers first sorting everything into two categories: For my dissertation research, I made up stories about people who did things that were disgusting or disrespectful yet perfectly harmless. Or how about a family whose dog is killed by a car, so they dismember the body and cook it for dinner? I read these stories to young adults and eleven-year-old children, half from higher social classes and half from lower, in the USA and in Brazil. I found that most of the people I interviewed said that the actions in these stories were morally wrong, even when nobody was harmed. A few even praised the efficiency of recycling the flag and the dog. This research led me to two conclusions. First, when gut feelings are present, dispassionate reasoning is rare. In fact, many people struggled to fabricate harmful consequences that could justify their gut-based condemnation. If people want to reach a conclusion, they can usually find a way to do so. The Democrats have historically failed to grasp this rule, choosing uninspiring and aloof candidates who thought that policy arguments were forms of persuasion. The second conclusion was that the moral domain varies across cultures. Conservative positions on gays, guns, god, and immigration must be understood as means to achieve one kind of morally ordered society. When Democrats try to explain away these positions using pop psychology they err, they alienate, and they earn the label "elitist. In September I traveled to Bhubaneswar, an ancient temple town miles southwest of Calcutta. I brought with me two incompatible identities. On the one hand, I was a 29 year old liberal atheist who had spent his politically conscious life despising Republican presidents, and I was charged up by the culture wars that intensified in the s. On the other hand, I wanted to be like those tolerant anthropologists I had read so much about. My first few weeks in Bhubaneswar were therefore filled with feelings of shock and confusion. I dined with men whose wives silently served us and then retreated to the kitchen. My hosts gave me a servant of my own and told me to stop thanking him when he served me. I watched people bathe in and cook with visibly polluted water that was held to be sacred. In short, I was immersed in a sex-segregated, hierarchically stratified, devoutly

religious society, and I was committed to understanding it on its own terms, not on mine. It only took a few weeks for my shock to disappear, not because I was a natural anthropologist but because the normal human capacity for empathy kicked in. I liked these people who were hosting me, helping me, and teaching me. And once I liked them remember that first principle of moral psychology it was easy to take their perspective and to consider with an open mind the virtues they thought they were enacting. Rather than automatically rejecting the men as sexist oppressors and pitying the women, children, and servants as helpless victims, I was able to see a moral world in which families, not individuals, are the basic unit of society, and the members of each extended family including its servants are intensely interdependent. In this world, equality and personal autonomy were not sacred values. Looking at America from this vantage point, what I saw now seemed overly individualistic and self-focused. I could never have empathized with the Christian Right directly, but once I had stood outside of my home morality, once I had tried on the moral lenses of my Indian friends and interview subjects, I was able to think about conservative ideas with a newfound clinical detachment. They want more prayer and spanking in schools, and less sex education and access to abortion? Conservatives think that welfare programs and feminism increase rates of single motherhood and weaken the traditional social structures that compel men to support their own children? Hmm, that may be true, even if there are also many good effects of liberating women from dependence on men. I had escaped from my prior partisan mindset reject first, ask rhetorical questions later , and began to think about liberal and conservative policies as manifestations of deeply conflicting but equally heartfelt visions of the good society. Might we do better with an approach that defines moral systems by what they do rather than by what they value? First, imagine society as a social contract invented for our mutual benefit. All individuals are equal, and all should be left as free as possible to move, develop talents, and form relationships as they please. The patron saint of a contractual society is John Stuart Mill, who wrote in *On Liberty* that "the only purpose for which power can be rightfully exercised over any member of a civilized community, against his will, is to prevent harm to others. Psychologists have done extensive research on the moral mechanisms that are presupposed in a Millian society, and there are two that appear to be partly innate. First, people in all cultures are emotionally responsive to suffering and harm, particularly violent harm, and so nearly all cultures have norms or laws to protect individuals and to encourage care for the most vulnerable. Second, people in all cultures are emotionally responsive to issues of fairness and reciprocity, which often expand into notions of rights and justice. Philosophical efforts to justify liberal democracies and egalitarian social contracts invariably rely heavily on intuitions about fairness and reciprocity. The basic social unit is not the individual, it is the hierarchically structured family, which serves as a model for other institutions. Individuals in such societies are born into strong and constraining relationships that profoundly limit their autonomy. The patron saint of this more binding moral system is the sociologist Emile Durkheim, who warned of the dangers of anomie normlessness , and wrote, in , that "Man cannot become attached to higher aims and submit to a rule if he sees nothing above him to which he belongs. To free himself from all social pressure is to abandon himself and demoralize him. My recent research shows that social conservatives do indeed rely upon those two foundations, but they also value virtues related to three additional psychological systems: These three systems support moralities that bind people into intensely interdependent groups that work together to reach common goals. Such moralities make it easier for individuals to forget themselves and coalesce temporarily into hives, a process that is thrilling, as anyone who has ever "lost" him or herself in a choir, protest march, or religious ritual can attest. People who call themselves strongly conservative, in contrast, endorse statements related to all five foundations more or less equally. You can test yourself at www. We think of the moral mind as being like an audio equalizer, with five slider switches for different parts of the moral spectrum. Democrats generally use a much smaller part of the spectrum than do Republicans. The resulting music may sound beautiful to other Democrats, but it sounds thin and incomplete to many of the swing voters that left the party in the s, and whom the Democrats must recapture if they want to produce a lasting political realignment. The Democrats, in the process, have become the party of the profane" of secular life and material interests. Religion and political leadership are so intertwined across eras and cultures because they are about the same thing: Durkheim long ago said that God is really society projected up into the heavens, a collective delusion

that enables collectives to exist, suppress selfishness, and endure. The three Durkheimian foundations ingroup, authority, and purity play a crucial role in most religions. When they are banished entirely from political life, what remains is a nation of individuals striving to maximize utility while respecting the rules. What remains is a cold but fair social contract, which can easily degenerate into a nation of shoppers. The Democrats must find a way to close the sacredness gap that goes beyond occasional and strategic uses of the words "God" and "faith. God is useful but not necessary. The Democrats could close much of the gap if they simply learned to see society not just as a collection of individuals—each with a panoply of rights—but as an entity in itself, an entity that needs some tending and caring. Our national motto is *e pluribus unum* "from many, one". Whenever Democrats support policies that weaken the integrity and identity of the collective such as multiculturalism, bilingualism, and immigration, they show that they care more about *pluribus* than *unum*. They widen the sacredness gap. A useful heuristic would be to think about each issue, and about the Party itself, from the perspective of the three Durkheimian foundations. Might the Democrats expand their moral range without betraying their principles? Might they even find ways to improve their policies by incorporating and publicly praising some conservative insights? Democrats should think carefully, therefore, about why they celebrate diversity. If the purpose of diversity programs is to fight racism and discrimination worthy goals based on fairness concerns, then these goals might be better served by encouraging assimilation and a sense of shared identity. Sanctity does not have to come from God; the psychology of this system is about overcoming our lower, grasping, carnal selves in order to live in a way that is higher, nobler, and more spiritual. Many liberals criticize the crassness and ugliness that our unrestrained free-market society has created. There is a long tradition of liberal anti-materialism often linked to a reverence for nature. But even as liberal bumper stickers urge us to "question authority" and assert that "dissent is patriotic," Democrats can ask what needs this foundation serves, and then look for other ways to meet them. The authority foundation is all about maintaining social order, so any candidate seen to be "soft on crime" has disqualified himself, for many Americans, from being entrusted with the ultimate authority. Democrats would do well to read Durkheim and think about the quasi-religious importance of the criminal justice system. The miracle of turning individuals into groups can only be performed by groups that impose costs on cheaters and slackers. They should then consider whether they can use more of that spectrum themselves. The Democrats would lose their souls if they ever abandoned their commitment to social justice, but social justice is about getting fair relationships among the parts of the nation.

5: U.S. trails most developed countries in voter turnout

If Democracies Need Informed Voters, How Can They Thrive While Expanding Enfranchisement?. than those already eligible to vote. to Vote: The Contested History.

One might expect the term "demarchy" to have been adopted, by analogy, for the new form of government introduced by Athenian democrats. In present-day use, the term "demarchy" has acquired a new meaning. It is unknown whether the word "democracy" was in existence when systems that came to be called democratic were first instituted. The word is attested in the works of Herodotus Histories 6. Around BC an individual is known with the name of Democrates, [2] a name possibly coined as a gesture of democratic loyalty; the name can also be found in Aeolian Temnus. Aristotle points to other cities that adopted governments in the democratic style. However, accounts of the rise of democratic institutions are in reference to Athens, since only this city-state had sufficient historical records to speculate on the rise and nature of Greek democracy. The members of these institutions were generally aristocrats who ruled the polis for their own advantage. In BC, Draco codified a set of notoriously harsh laws designed to reinforce aristocratic power over the populace. What soon followed was a system of chattel slavery involving foreign slaves. Athenian citizens had the right to participate in assembly meetings. By granting the formerly aristocratic role to every free citizen of Athens who owned property, Solon reshaped the social framework of the city-state. Cleisthenes Not long afterwards, the nascent democracy was overthrown by the tyrant Peisistratos, but was reinstated after the expulsion of his son, Hippias, in Cleisthenes formally identified free inhabitants of Attica as citizens of Athens, which gave them power and a role in a sense of civic solidarity. Every male citizen over 18 had to be registered in his deme. At the same time or soon afterwards, the membership of the Areopagus was extended to the lower level of the propertied citizenship. Their efforts, initially conducted through constitutional channels, culminated in the establishment of an oligarchy, the Council of, in the Athenian coup of BCE. The oligarchy endured for only four months before it was replaced by a more democratic government. Democratic regimes governed until Athens surrendered to Sparta in BCE, when government was placed in the hands of the so-called Thirty Tyrants, who were pro-Spartan oligarchs. His relations with Athens were already strained when he returned to Babylon in BC; after his death, Athens and Sparta led several Greek states to war with Macedon and lost. However, the governors, like Demetrius of Phalerum, appointed by Cassander, kept some of the traditional institutions in formal existence, although the Athenian public would consider them to be nothing more than Macedonian puppet dictators. However, by now Athens had become "politically impotent". However, when Rome fought Macedonia in, the Athenians abolished the first two new tribes and created a twelfth tribe in honour of the Pergamene king. The Athenians declared for Rome, and in BC Athens became an autonomous civitas foederata, able to manage internal affairs. They were elected, and even foreigners such as Domitian and Hadrian held the office as a mark of honour. Four presided over the judicial administration. The Council whose numbers varied at different times from to was appointed by lot. It was superseded in importance by the Areopagus, which, recruited from the elected archons, had an aristocratic character and was entrusted with wide powers. From the time of Hadrian, an imperial curator superintended the finances. The shadow of the old constitution lingered on and Archons and Areopagus survived the fall of the Roman Empire. Athenion allied with Mithridates of Pontus and went to war with Rome; he was killed during the war and was replaced by Aristion. The victorious Roman general, Publius Cornelius Sulla, left the Athenians their lives and did not sell them into slavery; he also restored the previous government, in 86 BC. During the 4th century BC, there might well have been some "people in Attica. In the mid-5th century the number of adult male citizens was perhaps as high as 60,000, but this number fell precipitously during the Peloponnesian War. From a modern perspective these figures may seem small, but among Greek city-states Athens was huge: Around BC the orator Hyperides fragment 13 claimed that there were 100,000 slaves in Attica, but this figure is probably no more than an impression: Given the exclusive and ancestral concept of citizenship held by Greek city-states, a relatively large portion of the population took part in the government of Athens and of other radical democracies like it, compared to oligarchies and aristocracies. It could also be granted by the assembly and

was sometimes given to large groups. However, by the 4th century, citizenship was given only to individuals and by a special vote with a quorum of 6. This was generally done as a reward for some service to the state. In the course of a century, the number of citizenships so granted was in the hundreds rather than thousands. These are the assembly in some cases with a quorum of 6, the council of boule, and the courts a minimum of 6 people, on some occasions up to 12. Crucially, citizens voting in both were not subject to review and prosecution, as were council members and all other officeholders. In the 5th century BC there is often record of the assembly sitting as a court of judgment itself for trials of political importance and it is not a coincidence that 6 is the number both for the full quorum for the assembly and for the annual pool from which jurors were picked for particular trials. Greek democracy created at Athens was direct, rather than representative: The officials of the democracy were in part elected by the Assembly and in large part chosen by lottery in a process called sortition. The assembly had four main functions: As the system evolved, the last function was shifted to the law courts. The standard format was that of speakers making speeches for and against a position, followed by a general vote usually by show of hands of yes or no. Though there might be blocs of opinion, sometimes enduring, on important matters, there were no political parties and likewise no government or opposition as in the Westminster system. Voting was by simple majority. In the 5th century at least, there were scarcely any limits on the power exercised by the assembly. If the assembly broke the law, the only thing that might happen is that it would punish those who had made the proposal that it had agreed to. Military service or simple distance prevented the exercise of citizenship. This could cause problems when it became too dark to see properly. However, any member could demand that officials issue a recount. At the end of the session, each voter tossed one of these into a large clay jar which was afterwards cracked open for the counting of the ballots. In the 5th century BC, there were 10 fixed assembly meetings per year, one in each of the ten state months, with other meetings called as needed. In the following century, the meetings were set to forty a year, with four in each state month. One of these was now called the main meeting, *kyria ekklesia*. Additional meetings might still be called, especially as up until BC there were still political trials that were conducted in the assembly, rather than in court. The assembly meetings did not occur at fixed intervals, as they had to avoid clashing with the annual festivals that followed the lunar calendar. There was also a tendency for the four meetings to be aggregated toward the end of each state month. In the 5th century, public slaves forming a cordon with a red-stained rope herded citizens from the agora into the assembly meeting place *Pnyx*, with a fine being imposed on those who got the red on their clothes. This promoted a new enthusiasm for assembly meetings. Only the first 6 to arrive were admitted and paid, with the red rope now used to keep latecomers at bay. Most importantly, the Boule would draft *probouleumata*, or deliberations for the Ecclesia to discuss and approve on. During emergencies, the Ecclesia would also grant special temporary powers to the Boule. A member had to be approved by his deme, each of which would have an incentive to select those with experience in local politics and the greatest likelihood at effective participation in government. All fifty members of the *prytaneis* on duty were housed and fed in the tholos of the *Prytaneion*, a building adjacent to the *bouleuterion*, where the boule met. A chairman for each tribe was chosen by lot each day, who was required to stay in the tholos for the next 24 hours, presiding over meetings of the Boule and Assembly. The boule coordinated the activities of the various boards and magistrates that carried out the administrative functions of Athens and provided from its own membership randomly selected boards of ten responsible for areas ranging from naval affairs to religious observances. The age limit of 30 or older, the same as that for office holders but ten years older than that required for participation in the assembly, gave the courts a certain standing in relation to the assembly. Jurors were required to be under oath, which was not required for attendance at the assembly. The authority exercised by the courts had the same basis as that of the assembly: Unlike office holders magistrates, who could be impeached and prosecuted for misconduct, the jurors could not be censured, for they, in effect, were the people and no authority could be higher than that. A corollary of this was that, at least acclaimed by defendants, if a court had made an unjust decision, it must have been because it had been misled by a litigant. For private suits the minimum jury size was increased to 20 if a sum of over drachmas was at issue, for public suits 30. The cases were put by the litigants themselves in the form of an exchange of single speeches timed by a water clock or *clepsydra*, first prosecutor then defendant. In a public

suit the litigants each had three hours to speak, much less in private suits though here it was in proportion to the amount of money at stake. Decisions were made by voting without any time set aside for deliberation. Jurors did talk informally amongst themselves during the voting procedure and juries could be rowdy, shouting out their disapproval or disbelief of things said by the litigants. This may have had some role in building a consensus. There was however a mechanism for prosecuting the witnesses of a successful prosecutor, which it appears could lead to the undoing of the earlier verdict. Payment for jurors was introduced around BC and is ascribed to Pericles, a feature described by Aristotle as fundamental to radical democracy. Politics a Pay was raised from 2 to 3 obols by Cleon early in the Peloponnesian war and there it stayed; the original amount is not known. Notably, this was introduced more than fifty years before payment for attendance at assembly meetings. Running the courts was one of the major expenses of the Athenian state and there were moments of financial crisis in the 4th century when the courts, at least for private suits, had to be suspended. No judges presided over the courts nor did anyone give legal direction to the jurors; magistrates had only an administrative function and were laymen. Most of the annual magistracies at Athens could only be held once in a lifetime. There were no lawyers as such; litigants acted solely in their capacity as citizens. Whatever professionalism there was tended to disguise itself; it was possible to pay for the services of a speechwriter or logographer *logographos*, but this may not have been advertised in court. Probably jurors would be more impressed if it seemed as though the litigant were speaking for themselves. From BC political trials were no longer held in the assembly, but only in a court. Under this, anything passed by the assembly or even proposed but not yet voted on, could be put on hold for review before a jury which might annul it and perhaps punish the proposer as well. Remarkably, it seems that a measure blocked before the assembly voted on it did not need to go back to the assembly if it survived the court challenge: To give a schematic scenario by way of illustration: The quantity of these suits was enormous: In the 5th century there was in effect no procedural difference between an executive decree and a law:

6: Expanding Democracy: Voter Registration Around the World | Brennan Center for Justice

The Senate confirmed Brett Kavanaugh to the US Supreme Court Saturday on a vote.

About the authors The United States is one of a few democratic nations that place the entire burden of registering to vote on individual citizens. Today, one-quarter to one-third of all eligible Americans remain unregistered “ and thus are unable to cast ballots that will count. Even Americans who are registered risk being blocked from casting a ballot because of problems with our voter registration system “ unprocessed registrations, inaccurate purges of names from the voter rolls, and other administrative and human errors. The registration system is as much a problem for the dedicated civil servants who administer our elections as it is for voters. It is costly, inefficient, and insufficiently accurate. Now, after a decade of controversy over election and voting problems, the United States is again considering reforms to voter registration. For the first time, the Congress is considering voter registration modernization that would enlist empower state governments to assure that all eligible voters, and only eligible voters, are on the rolls. Such a step would add tens of millions to the rolls, and better ensure that the information on the rolls stays accurate and up-to-date. Yet one obvious question arises: Can this, in fact, be done? In fact, it has been “ in several other major democracies. In every one of these countries, government itself assumes the responsibility of creating and keeping voter rolls, rather than relying on citizens to register themselves and navigate a clunky, outdated, and often inaccurate system. Of greatest relevance, Canada shares our decentralized federal system. There, provinces create and maintain their own voter rolls, and a federal election authority builds a separate voter roll for use in federal elections that is based in significant part on the provincial rolls and in part on other government lists. When an individual turns eighteen, or becomes a citizen, he or she is added to the rolls. A voter who moves remains on the rolls. The system works efficiently and with no allegations of fraud. The experience of these other democracies suggests building a modern voter registration system is a surprisingly straightforward task. In recent years, several democracies have moved to take advantage of new technologies to help build more complete and accurate voter lists. Their experiences are encouraging. These restructured systems reduce administrative costs and improve the accuracy of voter rolls. This report is a multi-nation examination of the details of voter registration systems. It examines the way sixteen other countries create and keep voter lists. Many of the nations studied are similar to ours in diverse populations, cultural values, and government structures. Their experiences show the clear benefits to voters, overall taxpayer savings, and best practices that can be employed in the United States as Congress drafts reform legislation and some pitfalls of concerted reform. The following appendices provide additional information on the voter registration systems in the rest of the 20 jurisdictions studied. Some offer greater detail than others due to the availability and accessibility of reliable information. Because many jurisdictions use substantially similar methodologies for compiling and maintaining their respective voter rolls, we have not written an appendix for every jurisdiction studied. In the interest of avoiding redundancy, we have selected a representative jurisdiction to describe in detail in an appendix and suggest relevant parallels and distinctions in jurisdictions with similar voter registration systems in the endnotes. This is followed by descriptions of how voters are added to the voter rolls and how existing entries on the rolls are updated to account for changes in registration information or voting eligibility. We also include information on fail-safes and opportunities to correct errors should registration methods result in inaccuracies in registration records or omissions from the voter rolls. Unless otherwise stated, voting and registration are voluntary.

7: Democracy - Wikipedia

In a democracy, every vote counts. Punched card ballots are where these two universes coincide. On November 4, , in Ferndale, Washington, the difference between two candidates for city council came down to one bit of difference on one card.

Statistician and health economist for the United Nations; Teacher, Columbia University American Voter Turnout Lower Than Other Wealthy Countries Regardless of which metric of eligibility you use, the United States has one of the lowest voter turnouts of any of the comparator countries, while Australia and Belgium have the highest. The numbers can be measured in various ways: Regardless of which metric of eligibility you use, the United States has one of the lowest voter turnouts of any of the comparator countries, while Australia and Belgium have the highest. The high voter turnout in Australia is due to its strictly enforced laws ; no-shows at the polls are fined. Belgian law has a provision for disenfranchising voters who repeatedly fail to appear at the polling station. After all, as the saying goes, "not voting is a vote," and making it mandatory would strike most Americans as removing a right. Moreover, people driven to the polls out of fear of a fine will vote with an indifference that in no way advances meaningful participation in the democratic process. There are countless explanations: Convenience impacts voter turnout. In the United States, in all but one state, voters must go through a separate registration process before voting, and the vast majority of states do not allow Election Day registration. This two-step process -- register, then vote -- is more complicated than the process in many other countries and discourages some Americans from voting. In Austria, Canada, Germany, France and Belgium, voter lists are generated from larger population databases or by other government agencies, thus simplifying the voting process. For example, Germans who are eighteen or older on voting day automatically receive a notification card before any election in which they are eligible to vote. In Canada, the income tax returns are used for voter registration. In the United Kingdom, every residence receives a notice of those registered within the household, and additional voters can be registered by mail. After all, using government-run population databases to develop voter lists has succeeded in Austria, Germany, France, Belgium, and Canada. Until America eliminates this two-step process, allowing for Election Day registration would help increase voter turnout. Voter turnout in was about 15 percent higher in states that had Election Day registration than in those that did not. There are other measures that can also be taken to increase voter turnout. Oregon has embraced convenience in two major ways: Electronic voting is also likely to increase participation by younger voters. Across most nations, younger citizens are less likely to vote than older voters. With the United States being one of the youngest countries among its competitors, it seems reasonable that electronic voting could have a significant impact on the younger, more tech-savvy American voters. India not one of the competitor countries has succeeded in holding national elections using computer technology that was developed, is owned, and is operated by the Indian government. A key goal in Measure of a Nation is to compare the United States to other wealthy countries, with the idea being to identify which countries are performing the best in each area of interest: In each of those areas, the countries that are performing the best are examined to determine which best practices might be applied here in America. Leading countries were labeled Stars and lagging countries were labeled Dogs. This comparison group consists of 14 countries:

8: Voting is the Heart of Democracy | Project Vote

Register to Vote and Check or Change Registration. Learn if you're eligible to vote, how to register, check, or update your information. Find the deadline to register to vote in your state.

Hillis developed the algorithms that made possible the massively parallel computer. He began in physics and then went into computer science where he revolutionized the field and he brought his algorithms to bear on the study of evolution. He sees the autocatalytic effect of fast computers, which lets us design better and faster computers faster, as analogous to the evolution of intelligence. At MIT in the late seventies, Hillis built his "connection machine," a computer that makes use of integrated circuits and, in its parallel operations, closely reflects the workings of the human mind. Simple entities working together produce some complex thing that transcends them; the implications for biology, engineering, and physics are enormous. Here is a simple, successful election. The graph shows how many voters are at each point on the political spectrum. It also shows the positions of the candidates. The Good candidate is the one whose opinions are closest to the will of the voters. Voters choose the candidate that is closest to their own position, so the Good candidate wins. The dividing line shows where the vote splits. Voters to the left of the line will vote for the Good candidate, voters to the right of the line will vote for the Bad candidate. The picture works the same way if we flip it around. Either way, the Good candidate wins, and the election is successful. Some voters are unhappy, but even more voters would have been unhappy if the Bad candidate had won. In some cases most of the voters may be unhappy with the results. This depends on the shape of the opinion curve. Here is one type of unpleasant outcomes: Almost half the population will be extremely unhappy with the result. Here is a less unhappy variation: Almost all of the voters are relatively unhappy. As unpleasant as these outcomes may seem, they still represent successes of the democratic process. No other choice of leader would have led to a better result. If we add a third candidate, the democratic process does not even necessarily produce the best result. In this case the Spoiler candidate takes away enough votes from the Good candidate to allow the Bad candidate to win. This is very likely to happen if there are three parties. In a many-party system, the voters are more likely to be happy with the choice of candidates, because they can find a candidate that is close to their own position. Unfortunately, the voters are less likely to be happy with the result of the election, because it will not necessarily choose the Best candidate. This situation is even worse when there are many viable candidates. In a multiple party vote, each voter will be able to choose a candidate with opinions close to his or her own, but the candidate who gets elected will be the one that has the broadest constituency, not the one who best represents the will of the all the voters. Because the worst candidates pick up the outliers, it is relatively easy for a very bad candidate to win. If the candidates are willing to be flexible, then either candidate can gain votes by moving toward the Best Position. The Best Position is where an equal number of voters are to the left and to the right. A candidate in the Best Position is unbeatable. A candidate in the Best Position also does the best job of making the voters happy, or at least making them less unhappy than they would be otherwise. If the candidates have some flexibility in their opinions and good information about what the voters want, they will move their own positions towards the Best Position, because it increases their chances of being elected. The closer one candidate moves towards the Best Position, the closer the other candidate will have to move to remain electable. With good pre-election polling, both candidates will be able to determine very accurately how much they need to move. If they are both willing to adjust their positions near the Best Position the outcome of the race will depend on the accuracy of the polling. If the polling is perfect, all elections will end in near ties. This process of adjusting position in response to polling may seem to compromise the integrity of the candidate, but it does produce candidates whose opinion is very close to the Best Position. This may be regarded as a successful outcome, because a candidate in the Best Position also does the best job of making the voters happy. In the previous illustrations, the best position was also the most popular position. This is not always the case. In this final example, the voters are polarized and the Best Position is highly unpopular. Still, it represents the most electable position, and also the position that makes the fewest people very unhappy. This is the best result that any system can produce. So in the end, two-party democracy is not necessarily good at

giving voters a chance to elect a candidate that they like. If the polls are very accurate and the candidates are flexible, a successful election is likely to produce two candidates whom the voter will regard as equally imperfect. The election results will be very close. For all its problems, the two-party democracy does a good job of producing and selecting candidates that represent an acceptable compromise between a wide spectrum of opinions. If the process is working well, then by the time of the election many voters may feel that they have very little real choice. This may seem like a failure, but actually it is a sign of success. It means that the system has produced candidates that represent the most acceptable compromise of the conflicting opinions of the voters. If this process has worked perfectly, the results of the election will be a tie. Judging from the recent results of the American presidential election, democracy is working well. However, I do not believe that the factors he describes interfere with feedback mechanisms described in the essay. It is certainly true that voter preference is determined by many factors, and that many of these factors are not under control of the candidates. This means that the candidate must use the variables that are under their control to achieve electability. If the candidates have many such issues to choose from, they may very well adopt different stances on particular issues to achieve the same net effect. Thus, both candidates may be in the optimally electable position in spite of holding very different positions on a particular issue, and spite of other voter preference factors that are beyond their control. I thought you might enjoy it. To be more specific, the argument relies on a fundamentally unrealistic assumption: In fact, one has only to read the opinion polls or listen to interviews with voters to know that, overwhelmingly, voters cite much more qualitative reasons for choosing one candidate over another. Of course, one cannot simply blame an uninformed electorate for this phenomenon. In many cases, the candidates purposely obfuscate their position on popular issues to improve their chances of getting elected. And then there is the fondness among politicians for stating their position on issues at such a level of abstraction as to become virtually meaningless. Hence, we have Republicans who claim to be "pro-family values", which leads one to the absurd conclusion that Democrats are "anti-family values". Conversely Democrats often claim to be "pro-environment" as if to say that Republicans are categorically "anti-environment". One reason for this is the fact that being perceived as wishy-washy and unprincipled may be more damaging to the candidate than supporting the "wrong" side of an issue. In other words, candidates are widely perceived to be more than the sum of their positions. Instead, we look to them to be principled leaders and steadfast in their convictions. Two other reasons for candidates to ignore the polls are the influence of special interest groups in election politics, and in the case of presidential politics, the quirky nature of our now infamous electoral college system. While the majority of Americans clearly support tighter gun control laws, Al Gore rarely mentioned his support for such laws on the stump. Because he knew the importance of winning the swing votes of Rust-Belt Reagan Democrats, many of whom happen to be gun owners. I think American Democracy is both better and worse than the idealized description Danny provides. On the one hand, I am, like many others, often dismayed by the influence of special interests in American electoral politics; I am frustrated by the sometimes superficial and haphazard manner in which the American electorate comparison shops for candidates; and I am frankly puzzled by the need to maintain our seemingly antiquated electoral college system. But I am also moved by the humanity of the American electoral process. Americans bring all sorts of rationales with them to the polls -- some sound, some misinformed. But on one day in November, they have an opportunity to pull a switch one way or the other, and God help those who try to predict the outcome. There will be only about one chance in a thousand that this will lead to a difference of more than 10, thousand votes. A difference of a million or more would be inconceivably unlikely. What could it mean, if anything, that in Florida, the popular vote differed by only a few hundred? In other words, the more bias in the bias, the less chance to see for a close tie in the popular vote. A deeper analysis suggests that what happened in Florida was indeed an extremely unlikely event. For example, assume that the "will" of the 6 million Floridians might range uniformly from say 2 million to 4 million for each party. Then there would be only one chance in a thousand for this to lie within a thousand of votes of the center. If this is what happened, it asks for an explanation I suspect that two new phenomena have entered the scene that has cause these numbers to come so close. So now, campaigners can better predict where spending their money will be most effective. They can pinpoint the critical districts in which voters will respond to particular issues, and then

target them with more personalized persuasion techniques. In other words, lie. This pushes the vote toward the center. The Electoral College exacerbates this, because the campaigns can save money by not spending it in districts where the differences are too large to reverse. Consequently, huge amounts of money get focused at regions where they can be effective. One formerly almost unknown new senator is said to have done this by spending what is estimated to be about dollars per vote. And as soon as the difference changes its sign, the funding gets focused somewhere else. One approach to a remedy is political: The presidency is an office that is now open only to lifelong hypocrites of limited imagination, willing to surrender privacy and personal life in order to achieve limited power, the undivided attentions of potential assassins, and remarkably paltry financial reward. There is no system of counting votes that is accurate enough to determine a winner when six million votes are cast and the difference is less than a thousand.

9: American Voter Turnout Lower Than Other Wealthy Countries | HuffPost

As usual in ancient democracies, one had to physically attend a gathering in order to vote. Military service or simple distance prevented the exercise of citizenship. Voting was usually by show of hands (ἰσχυρισμὸς, kheirotonia, "arm stretching") with officials judging the outcome by sight.

Share18 Shares 2K It is an accepted fact that liberal democracy is the worst possible political system—except for all others thank you, Sir Winston. We are not perfect—and neither are our governments, since they are made by humans too. It is most advisable to be skeptical, even of democracy itself. It assumes that all opinions are worth the same, which is quite a big leap of faith, since we are putting the same value on the opinions of the educated and the ignorant, and the law-abiding citizens and crooks. Even if you think that all people are created equal, it is obvious that their environments are very different—and as a result, so is their character. By assuming that all opinions are equal you are also assuming that most people are able to reach a rational, informed decision after seriously exploring all pros and cons. As a result, many candidates to political office resort to populism, pursuing policies that focus on the immediate satisfaction of whims instead of long-term improvements. Yes, we have tamed the forces of nature and discovered a lot of things—and this Internet business is amazing. But human nature remains the same, more or less. Call it class struggle, xenophobia, nationalism, or whatever you like—the thing is that most of us identify with one group or another, and almost every meaningful group has alliances or enmities with other groups. This is part of human nature, and can work peacefully. But that possibility also favors a very specific kind of corruption: It can be as simple as paying money to someone in exchange for their vote, or giving someone a job in the office of the politician who commands the machine. So if someone tries to stop providing it—well, they just made a large number of deadly foes. When Margaret Thatcher cut coal subsidies, for example, coal miners felt that their jobs had been threatened and became bitter enemies of Thatcher and her ilk. This leaves the minority relatively powerless—and the smaller it is, the less power it wields. Which means that the smallest minority of all—the individual—is effectively depending on his agreement with the majority. It is certainly easier than in a democracy, since in that case, officials have been elected by the people. If those officials have committed a crime in opposition to their official platform and without the knowledge of the public, it is simply their own fault and the people who voted for them are innocent. But if a candidate advocates curtailing human rights for a minority, and upon finding himself elected to office, carries out his plan. In a dictatorship they are just discreetly hidden, sometimes in plain sight. In a democracy, which tends to rely on moral superiority, this is difficult to carry out. People have a right to know—at least in theory. Spying and covert operations are part of the daily workings of the state, admittedly sometimes for the greater good such as when the police infiltrate a criminal organization to put their members on trial. But their efficiency runs against their transparency. A perfectly democratic system would be transparent, and as such, no covert operations could be effectively carried out. In many democratic countries, your vote only measures up against other votes in your district. So if your district runs a majority system and you vote for a losing runner, then your vote was useless. According to this theorem, so long as there are more than two candidates, there is no possible voting system that can ensure the satisfaction of three crucial criteria for fairness: If these criteria are left unsatisfied, it effectively means that democracy—at least in its purest form—cannot work.

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