

The quality of Direct Democracy (DD) depends from it's design

*DD as a modern achievement and an important
way to overcome the crises of democracy*

A presentation for a Mongolian delegation

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We should overcome the banalisation of the terms Freedom and Democracy

- ✓ Democracy enables us to be free.
- ✓ Freedom enables us to act together on our common life
(«Life is not a destiny»)
- ✓ Democracy constitutes the rules, rights and procedures
to prevent conflicts to be solved violently
- ✓ Democracy is the only source for legitimate power

Modern DD was not made in CH - it was only most practised in CH

- ✓ Assembly selfruling traditions in New England States 17. century
- ✓ Modern Referendum is a innovation of the French Revolution 1793
- ✓ Citizens Initiative: An innovation of french and german Radical Democrats 1830ff

Modern DD was in CH and US an product of the opposition: By the people for the people

- ✓ Liberal founders of modern CH from 1848 were elitists - as many in many countries today again
- ✓ Many people (farmers, artisans, working class) saw themselves not represented by their parliament
- ✓ They created broad peoples movements who asked for the “last word”

**Direct Democracy is about
people voting on issues
(Constitut. or legislat. changes)**

**The Right to Vote on important issues
creates a particular culture of democracy
and changes the political and the
communicative culture of a country
(More substance, more alternatives, more
differentiation, more deepness, more knowledge)**

Direct Democracy makes politics more communicative

- ✓ Citizens will try to convince each other
- ✓ In order to be convincing they have to listen and to speak with each other
- ✓ Public Discourses get more substance
 - ✓ People see, hear and learn more
- ✓ A learning society may solve problems quicker and more in the interest of the people.

Representative democracy is an essential part of Democracy.

But it should not have the monopole of D.

Indirect Democracy enables you to vote your representatives;

Direct Democracy enables you to vote on important issues you don't want to leave to your Representatives

The 3 cornerstones of modern Direct Democracy

- ✓ Secret vote by ballot-box, mail or internet : No assemblies
- ✓ Some citizens decide when all citizens may decide: No plebiscites
- ✓ Issues (const./legisl. Reforms): No personal decisions

DD is a set of participatorial citizens rights - much more than just a referendum

- ✓ **Const.Referendum (1848)**
- ✓ **Optional legislat. Referendum (1874)**
 - ✓ **Const.pop.Initiative (1891)**
- ✓ **Treaty Referendum (1921/77/03)**
 - ✓ **legislat. Initiative**
 - ✓ **Konstruk. Referendum**

Which are the basic (“principal”) products of Direct Democracy’s best practices?

- √ Individual. / collective communication&deliberations
- √ better informed citizens and public
- √ Increasing collective learning potentials
- √ political openness et legitimate polity
 - √ integration of diverse societies by participation
- √ Identification with the DD process
(« Democratic patriotism »)

The quality of the design of the process determines the quality of DD, the outcome and the quality of the side - effects

- √ **The design of the process is essential for the «usefulness» of DD for any community.**
- √ **Each level (local, regional, national, trans-national) requires a special design**

What DD is not:

- √ Quick fix and fast food
- √ An instrument to rule the people
- √ No consultation or public relation
 - √ No internet-forum

How the Swiss DD might be improved:

- √ **Public financing of the political parties and active participants in Initiatives and Referendas**
 - √ **More professionalism in the parliament**
- √ **Transparency and more Fairness in the campaign rules**
 - √ **Communal democracy centres and clubs**
 - √ **More pluralistic regional and local press**
 - √ **Building of transnational (EU-) democracy**