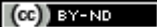# **Panocracy**

Rule by everyone

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<u>Panocracy</u>

Rule by everyone

What is panocracy

Panocracy is an approach to personal, organisational and political decision making that holds that everyone has the right to participate in the making of decisions that affect them.

Panocracy follows from the recognition that everyone has the right to decide what to do in any situation in their lives and supporting them to do so.

Why do we need it

The many difficulties that we face individually and collectively in the world do not lack solutions. The underlying problem is that we make bad decisions, decisions that are not in our own best interests. This is both as decision makers on behalf of others and as individuals, including how we support those decision makers.

To make better decisions we need to be more in our own power. That means being aware of more of the possibilities in any situation, developing the knowledge and abilities to act on more possibilities and being more able to choose for ourselves which possibilities to pursue.

Panocracy encourages people to be more in their own power and to make good decisions.

How does it work

For a system to enable everyone to participate in the making of decisions that affect them, each person needs a way to be heard and to be taken notice of. This can be achieved by gathering and consent.

Gathering is gathering together all the different information, needs and opinions on an issue. It can be done in various ways and it must be an open process so that everyone concerned can see that it is done.

Consent under panocracy is an inexact concept. It involves having from those concerned enough support, enough lack of opposition and the assent of everyone else for any decision. It is not the same as consensus.

Panocracy is practical

A panocratic approach offers various ways of working within existing structures and organisations that aid better decision making. The road to panocracy is evolutionary rather than revolutionary. A revolution just goes round and back to where it started.

Panocracy is a new way of doing things, yet it is a change in attitudes rather than structures. It means supporting people to act in their own power and not trying to control them, continuously taking everyone's needs and opinions into account and acting in sympathy with this information.

Problems with democracy

Democracy is the dominant political system in the world today and yet it is fundamentally flawed. As a result it prevents most of the problems in the world from being effectively solved.

The fundamental flaw in democracy is the idea that there is such a thing as the "will of the people". In reality "the will of the people" is only ever an idea, an abstraction, a summary, an approximation to the opinions of some of the people involved, generally those who are most influential or aggressive.

Once a set of people have gained the mantle of "the will of the people" they impose their will on everyone else. People are "bound" by decisions arrived at democratically.

This leads to increasing oppression in which people are coerced into feeling that they have few choices beyond those permitted by those in charge.

Panocracy

Panocracy is an approach to personal, organisational and political decision making that holds that everyone has the right to participate in the making of decisions that affect them.

This right is not limited in time or scope. There are no artificial cut-off points by which representations have to be made. Everyone is free to choose to do whatever they are able to do to influence a decision. Of course things move on and decisions are made and that rarely means that there is nothing more that can be influenced. A decision to, say, build a power station, is not the end and much can be done to influence subsequent decisions.

Panocracy supports personal freedom, i.e. autonomy or empowerment. It recognises that everyone has the right to choose for themselves what to do in any situation in their lives. There is no expectation under panocracy that anyone is bound by the decisions of others. Hence panocracy involves letting go of trying to control other people or having "power over" them.

When people are free to do so, they tend to cooperate. This may seem counter intuitive in a world that is dominated by acquisitiveness, where it is seen as acceptable to acquire wealth at other people's expense and in which the pursuit of ever greater wealth is seen as rational and desirable. But these drives are examples of people's lack of freedom, of what is called internalised oppression. People feel that they have to pursue these goals, they have no choice, they compulsively pursue riches, or accept that is acceptable to be poor while others are rich, even though it makes little sense and is as harmful to themselves as it is to others.

On the other hand, the experience of people who work in the field of personal development, who help people to become more in their own power, to become more free, is that the more people genuinely put themselves first the better they relate to others and cooperate. This is, quite simply, because it is in their interests to do so.

A million different people have a million different wills.

"The will of the people" is only ever an idea, an abstraction, a summary, an approximation to the opinions of some of the people involved. Panocracy aims to give a voice to and respond to every individual will. This can be done by collecting or gathering together all the different wills and by supporting people to act in their own power and in their own best interests.

Groups do not make decisions, only individuals do.

If a number of people agree on something, that is not a collective

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decision. It is a collection of decisions. Each person has made a similar decision.

Groups working panocratically often "vote with their feet". A point can be reached in a discussion when there is a general realisation that it is time to move on, sometimes literally, with everyone getting up and doing whatever each of them decided. It may be that everyone goes on to do the same thing, but it is still the decision of each individual to do this rather than a decision of some sort of collective entity. At another time people will go off and do different things.

For example, if a meeting is being disrupted by a group that has entered, once anyone feels that they have enough information, particularly about other people's needs and opinions, they may go and take action. Some people may go and talk individually to the disrupters, some may talk to the venue's staff, some may form a barrier, some may enter into a debate with the disrupters, some may move to a different location.

Why do we need panocracy

The world needs panocracy

Most people would agree that there are many, serious problems in the world. On the other hand we are not short of solutions. To take the practical problem of climate change, we cannot prevent world temperatures going up over the next few decades. But to limit the change and even to start bringing temperatures down by the second half of the century is eminently solvable. Or if we take the problem of hunger, we produce enough food to feed the entire population of the world, and indeed to feed a significantly greater population. The problem that we have, for which many solutions exist, is how to distribute the food so that everyone gets fed.

The difficulty that we have is in making good decisions about which solutions to try and how. This is often referred to as a lack of political will, which suggests that it is the politician's faults and we will have to rely on them to change their ways. In practice, it is a lack of "political will" in all of us. More accurately, it is all of us making decisions that are not in our own best interests.

Politicians will say that they do their best within the circumstances

that they are presented with, they are not able to enact measures that they may even believe are necessary. The rest of us think that we live in a democratic world, that we elect these people and we can only put up with what we get. In particular, we collude with creating the conditions in which politicians think that they have limited scope in which to act.

In practice none of these positions are rational, they are rationalisations. The reasons why people do these things is because they feel that they have to. This is the phenomenon of internalised oppression.

Power

Power is not the same as might, authority, control and the like. These are sometimes referred to as "power over" and many of the discussions about power are about these phenomena, which are really about trying to control others. As Hannah Arendt wrote:

"It is, I think, a rather sad reflection on the present state of political science that our language does not distinguish between such key terms as power, strength, force, might, authority, and, finally, violence—all of which refer to distinct phenomena. To use them as synonyms not only indicates a certain deafness to linguistic meanings, which would be serious enough, but has resulted in a kind of blindness with respect to the realities they correspond to."[1]

One of those realities is that if you tell people that they do not have power if they do not have authority or the means to control others, they give up their power.

Internalised oppression

Oppression is the process by which we are coerced into giving up our power. We feel that we have no choice, or only the choices that are prescribed. We feel that we cannot do anything about it.

In short, we feel powerless.

Internalised oppression is central to why people make bad decisions. Why people vote for politicians whose policies are wholly not in their interests, and why they allow those politicians to get

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1   Arendt H (1969) "Reflections on Violence" *The New York Review of Books.* Vol 12., No. 4

away with putting those policies into practice. Why politicians behave in the ways and make the decisions they do. Why people in bad relationships feel unable to get out of them – and go on to repeat the same mistakes. Why people drink too much and eat too much. Why people buy things they don't need and follow the latest fashions. And just about everything else we do that is not in our best interests.

Empowerment

Real, personal power is about having the ability to choose and to act. The word "power" has the same roots as the French word "pouvoir" - to be able. The more a person is able to choose and act for themselves the more powerful they are, the more they are in their own power. This has three elements:

- The ability to be aware of more possibilities in any situation

- Having the knowledge, skills and other abilities to be able to act on more possibilities

- Being, i.e. feeling, able to choose for oneself what action to take.

Panocracy supports empowerment.

There is an expectation under panocracy that people make decisions for themselves, that they act autonomously, in their own power. This is not in the dismissive, oppressive sense of "if you didn't do anything you'll just have to put up with what you get" but a genuine encouragement and acceptance of people's decisions.

There is a positive feedback in this. The more empowered people are the more they will select empowered decision makers. The more decision makers are in their own power the more they will have the confidence and wish to encourage people to be in their own power.

Panocracy encourages creative problem solving.

The gathering process tends towards good analysis of problems. It also produces a range of possible solutions and a good basis for selecting those which are likely to work.

In business an ongoing process of gathering enables workers, customers, suppliers and other stakeholders to contribute their ideas and insights. Management by consent means that decisions will

need to make sense to the people involved. So on the one hand the knowledge and thinking of everyone involved can be brought to bear on every issue and on the other hand everyone is engaged in the solutions that are adopted.

Panocracy supports pursuing alternative solutions.

Because panocracy does not try to constrain people, if someone thinks they have a good way of approaching an issue they can go ahead. They will know from the gathering process how other people will be affected as well as who might join them.

This means that possible approaches to an issue are not thrown out in the process. Alternative approaches can be tested, even if they may appear to be in opposition.

How does panocracy work?

The problem for panocracy is how to make decisions in groups, organisations, nations or indeed the whole world when everyone can have their own, individual ongoing influence on all decisions that affect them. Two ideas can facilitate this, gathering and consent.

Gathering

Gathering is a process of bringing together and summarising all the issues, needs and opinions on a topic. This is a dynamic process, the gather will change as the situation changes. There are established techniques for gathering in groups small enough to meet face to face in a room. With modern technology it is now reasonably easy to gather from larger groups right up to everyone on the planet. Whilst the numbers of people affected may be large, the number of issues and the options for each will not be so large. Anyone can gather.

On one hand gathering is about collecting together all the information, needs and opinions about an issue. On the other hand it is about people feeling heard and feeling that they are genuinely part of the decision making process.

Consultations may have the appearance of gathering, but they tend to have a couple of problems. One is that the people doing the consulting control the questions asked. For example, when

organising electoral boundaries for a local authority the boundaries were decided first then there was a consultation about what name to give to each division. Rather like a consultation about building a nuclear power station being confined to what colour to paint it.

Another problem is that the information tends to disappear. The people doing the consulting receive the information, but the consultees often never know whether their information has been registered or taken into account.

So two principles in gathering are that the boundaries of the discussion should be reasonably flexible and the whole gather should be available to everyone concerned.

Gathering in face to face groups

It is important to support people to try to ensure that all points of view are heard. This can be done by going round and giving everyone a chance to speak if they want to. Less formally, if some people are keeping an eye out for who is not contributing to a discussion, they can create opportunities for them to speak.

A method for gathering in groups that can meet together in person runs as follows. Anyone can start a gather at any time. They aim to give a summary of all the information, issues and opinions relevant to the topic under discussion. As well as the different opinions and actions the gather may include indications of how many people support particular views or have similar intentions.

If anyone thinks that the gather is inadequate in any way, e.g. missing some opinion or information out or getting something wrong, they can regather. The only rule is that a regather should be a complete gather, not just "correcting" things that were "wrong" with a gather.

The process of regathering continues until no one feels that that they want to improve on the latest gather. At that point everyone is effectively saying that the last gather is good enough and everyone's point of view has been acknowledged.

Whilst the regathering process may seem cumbersome, it usually does not happen. Whoever starts a gather does their best to make it accurate and comprehensive so that it is good enough and no one feels the need to regather.

With an ongoing issue a gather can replace the need for any other discussion. The current situation is outlined in a gather and no one thinks it is necessary to discuss the issue further at this time.

A gather may enough for everyone to decide what to do, possibly in cooperation with other members of the group or possibly not. Frequently a gather provides a useful summary of the current stage of a discussion and everyone may think that the discussion needs to continue, or some may leave while others continue discussing.

Gathering in Groups that do not meet

For larger groups or groups that do not get together very often, if at all, gathering can be carried out dynamically and in writing. The written gather can be made available on line either publicly or just to those affected. Otherwise updated versions of the gather need to be disseminated to those people through, for example, giving them physical copies or by email.

In this case information is obtained by whoever is doing a gather and put in writing. Once an initial gather has been disseminated people can feed in more information. As with face to face gathering, it may be desirable to continue to canvass information from those who are less forthcoming.

The promise should be that if anyone thinks that their point of view is not adequately represented, or that some information is incorrect or missing, the gather will be amended accordingly. There may, of course, be a need to resolve disagreements about whether a point of view is adequately represented and these should be resolved in favour of items being included as someone wants them. If necessary it will be generally possible to include something along the lines of "one person stated the following ..." the only downside being, possibly, the length of the gather.

Whilst the people who are taking responsibility for gathering should be known to all those affected and, of course, contactable the contributions to the discussion are anonymous. A gather is about issues and not personalities. If an opinion is held that should be in the gather, but who holds that opinion is not relevant. An indication of the numbers of people holding particular opinions may be useful, but it is still not necessary or desirable to identify individuals.

For something relatively small like the design of alterations to a

building for a small organisation the gather may fit on a few sides of paper. For larger issues, or much larger ones like national education policy, a more structured approach is needed. Whilst the aim is to be comprehensive at the same time someone who is not an expert should be readily able to find the particular aspects that they may be interested in, be able to understand what is written, see if their point of view is represented and see how an issue relates to other issues.

A way of doing on line gathering is to use something that could be called a policy wiki. This would be a bit like Wikipedia but with some important differences. The first would be that where Wikipedia aims for a neutral point of view a policy wiki aims for all points of view.

Secondly it needs to be easy to find information in the web site. The whole site, not just individual pages, will need a clear hierarchical structure (topic, sub topics, sub sub topics and so on). As well as a good search facility it will need breadcrumb trails. There may be several conceptual hierarchies that can apply to the site, so there may be several trails that apply to one page, e.g.:

Education > Primary Education > Subjects > Sport > Football

Education > Subjects > Sport > Football > Primary Schools

Education > Resources > Land > Sports pitches > Football > Primary schools

Another difference with Wikipedia is that the site would be edited. This may vary between one person or a team of people making all the entries on the site to allowing anyone to make entries with editorial oversight. It would not be open to anyone to delete or distort particular points of view.

The intention would be that everyone's point of view would be covered on the site, erring towards inclusion within reason if someone thinks their point of view is not adequately represented.

Consent

Organisation, leadership, management and government can then operate on the principle of consent.

Consent involves having enough support from those concerned, enough lack of opposition and the assent of everyone else concerned for any decision. It is not an exact phenomenon as compared with something like a majority, in other words it can't be

measured or counted It involves having enough agreement, enough assent and enough lack of disagreement.

Consent is not the same as consensus. There is no requirement for general agreement and no one can block decisions.

If a decision has insufficient consent then either of two things can happen, it will be ignored or there will be trouble. An example of things being ignored because there is insufficient agreement is many speed limits. Indeed, in the UK, the government guidance is that speed limits should only be applied at the speed at which most people drive anyway on a particular stretch of road, in other words most people would consent to it.

Examples of trouble writ large are when governments of one particular religious persuasion attempt to impose their religion's culture on people of different religious persuasions. In other words when they attempt to govern without the consent of all of the population.

Gatherings will give a good indication of what proposals are likely to have enough consent. For, say, national issues opinion polls may be helpful. In the main, though, people who are listening, who have their "ear to the ground", will have a good idea about what will have sufficient consent. They will be aware of which proposals seem to make sense to most people and which are likely to cause trouble.

The question a lawyer might ask is "would the passenger on the Clapham omnibus think there is enough consent".

Panocracy is practical

Panocratic methods can be used now.

The methods of gathering and the panocratic approaches to decision making are practical approaches that can be used in existing organisations now.

By its very nature, no one needs to give permission or even know that panocratic methods are being used. For example, if someone in a meeting does a gather it will help the meeting to move forward. It will tend to stop people repeating themselves since they will know that they have been heard and it may well lead the meeting to early, good decisions.

If someone does an online gather about an issue under discussion in a larger organisation, probably talking with people involved and making sure that their points of view are represented, this can similarly support the decision makers to make good decisions.

If decision makers try to make sure that their decisions have enough consent then those decisions will work better.

Panocracy in existing organisational structures.

Panocracy involves a fundamental shift in attitudes and the principles that underlie decision making. It does not, however, necessitate replacing or overthrowing current systems of organisation.

We can still have parliaments, it is the the emphasis that would change. Instead of being concerned about whether MPs fairly represent people's opinions, with arguments about things like proportional representation, the emphasis would be on choosing people with competence and integrity.

People would not be giving up their power to their representatives, people can speak for themselves. They can, for instance, contribute to gatherings or protest against things they disagree with. The legislators' job becomes one of finding good solutions that have sufficient consent. There may still be political parties reflecting genuine divisions in society. They enhance the process by helping to ensure that all points of view are represented in gatherings and taken into account.

As stated above, decisions are only made by individual people. Leaders, managers, organisers and legislators are all people who are appointed, selected or elected to make decisions. What they decide is their personal responsibility. They are not entitled to say "I was only obeying orders" or "my party's mandate" or "I was obeying the will of the people". Nor, on the other hand, do they need to get involved in processes of consultation or research before making decisions. The processes of gathering are ongoing and so decisions makers have access to all the information that can be available. When a decision is needed they can just make it.

Panocracy is more an evolution than revolution Revolution does what the word says, goes around and comes back to where it started. The movement towards panocracy will be an evolution, a

development of new ways of thinking and doing things.

Panocracy supports legitimate rules and authority

Panocracy does not imply chaos where everyone goes around doing whatever comes to mind. This is mainly because that is not how most people want to be, they want to be in some sort of ordered society. It is the opposite of anarchy or no government, no one in charge. In panocracy everyone is in some way in charge.

The principle that "I can do whatever I choose" also applies to everyone else. So if I decide to act in a way that is contrary to the interests of others they are free to respond in whatever way they choose. If I choose to make a lot of noise in a place where others want quiet then they can act in a whole range of ways to restrain me, or not.

In wider society we appoint people to make decisions; managers or legislators, for example. As long as their decisions have sufficient consent they have legitimate authority. They have the authority to make laws and to decide what to do if people break those laws.

Panocracy and the law

The legitimacy of the law is underpinned by the right of everyone to do as they choose. People are free to choose to break the law and they may be punished if they do so. But if many people break a law it may not have enough consent and, under panocracy, it fails. The legislators would need to think again.

The idea that the law provides us with choices rather than compulsions provides protection in existing societies. We can choose to break the law, accepting that we may be punished if we do so. Civil disobedience is an organised way of doing this but even for the individual knowing that they can choose to break the law gives them more options for dealing with, maybe difficult, situations. If enough people break the law this can lead to change under any system.

Panocracy is efficient.

A lot of time is spent in today's organisation in adversarial discussion. Everyone will keep arguing until the one decision, or limited range of decisions, comes down their way or they recognise

that they have lost the argument. Even when decisions are decided by vote, time will be allowed for the arguments to take place before the vote is taken.

With panocracy, as soon as anyone believes they have enough information they can decide what to do and move on. In groups, individuals may want to know about other members' intentions before they decide, but if not they do not have to wait.

Panocracy works in horizontal and hierarchical organisations.

The idea for panocracy came, in fact, from one particular horizontal organisation, Co-Counselling International (CCI). This is an international network of individuals working on their own self development. They have developed well understood but informal processes for gathering and supporting individuals to make their own decisions. There is no structure by which decisions can be made that are binding on the whole organisation. If ever such decisions needed to be made it would be by individuals putting forward suggestions, discussion and gathering and if an idea had enough consent it would get adopted by virtue of people going along with it.

On the other hand in hierarchical organisations, as described above, hierarchical decision makers supported by gathering processes make decisions that have sufficient consent.

The Problems with Democracy

Democracy, both as an idea and in the ways in which it is practised, is:

- Fundamentally flawed
- Oppressive
- Inefficient

The flaw in democracy

The basic flaw in democracy is the concept of demos, or the people. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights promotes democracy in these terms (Article 21 (3)):

"The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures."

The problem is that there is no such thing as the will of the people. A million different people have a million different wills.

The job of distilling these wills into one single will inevitably leads to an adversarial process. "The will of the people" becomes synonymous with "the will of the majority" or more accurately "the proposal that can get the most votes". When there are more than two proposals or candidates representing proposals it frequently becomes "the proposal that gets the biggest minority".

The processes tend to encourage dogma or simplistic solutions such as privatisation or "giving people choice" rather than any proper analysis of problems and development of solutions.

Democracy is tied to group decision making, the idea that groups can make decisions. In reality only individuals make decisions. A "group decision" is only some sort of abstract of the decisions of a number of people at a particular time. Such "decisions" may have little relevance as they depend entirely upon the individual decisions that people make afterwards. In a simple example, a group may "decide" that it will gather at 9:30 the following morning but the individual decisions mean that the group does not actually gather until 10:15.

The obvious problems of majority voting democracy have led to many alternative forms – participatory democracy, consensus decision making, proportional representation and so on. All of these, however, come down to trying to make group decisions that represent "the will of the people". Inevitably these processes are skewed towards those people who have the most influence or are the most aggressive.

The history of democracy has been the history of groups or individuals competing for the mantle of representing "the will of the people". At its best this involves people being given a choice between sets of proposals or manifestos each of which will be a compromise between the wishes or wills of its proponents. Hardly anyone would be satisfied with all elements of the complete

package. More often the choice has been distorted through combinations of manipulation, coercion and bribery, including their modern forms of media manipulation, tax breaks and pork barrel politics.

The result is, and always has been, to coerce people into giving up their power to the same sort of people who would rule under any system. For example, few people get to be prime minister in the UK unless they have been to public school and Oxbridge, president of the USA unless they are multimillionaires or heads of government in many states unless they are commanders of an army or a state security service.

The losers in a democracy depend on the benevolence of the winners for any influence and frequently this is not forthcoming. Indeed there are many examples of democratic bodies enacting rules or legislation to suppress dissent.

Democracy also enables the rulers to deny responsibility for their decisions on the grounds that they are "the will of the people". We rarely hear politicians saying "I decided that ..." or "I believe that this is the best option". The UK parliament is supposed to support measures that were in the winning party's manifesto. There is no hint of "we coerced the party into putting it in the manifesto".

Though to all intents he is a dictator, Robert Mugabe was elected by democratic processes leading him to claim "My people say I am right in the things I do and that's what I listen to."[2]

Autocracy is in effect more honest than democracy. At least it is clear who is responsible.

Oppression

Democracy functions as a tool of oppression.

Oppression is different from persecution or treating people badly. Oppression is coercing people into feeling that they do not have options that, objectively, they do. "Feeling" refers to deeply held, not even conscious, internalised beliefs. People feel that they must do this or they cannot do that even though others (sometimes not many

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2   See: http://mg.co.za/article/2006-02-21-papers-fete-living-legend-mugabe

people) can see that this is not the case. In other words they have internalised their oppression.

Sometimes people will argue why they should or should not do things, they will give a rationale for what they feel. At other times they just behave compulsively, even sometimes when they know it does not make sense.

Persecution is often oppressive because it reinforces victims' feelings of helplessness. However there are times when it is not, particularly when it is obviously unjust. In such cases the people who are targets of the persecution may find good strategies for coping with it or become more empowered and rise up against the persecution.

Democracy provides a positive feedback loop for oppression. Oppressed people elect oppressors who further oppress the people.

This comes about because people are not, in fact, divided into oppressors and victims. The less empowered people are, in other words the more oppressed they are, the more they will behave as both victims and oppressors. They will behave as victims towards people they see as superior, or up hierarchy, but persecute people they see as inferior or down hierarchy.

The idea that someone who has been treated badly would not treat others as they have been treated is a myth. Very few people make that switch. The general experience is that people who have been bullied will often bully others who they experience as being down hierarchy from them. The history of immigration is of each wave of immigrants persecuting the following waves.

Unassertiveness

Assertiveness is closely linked to confidence and being in our own power. Using the language of assertiveness, non assertive behaviour is passive, aggressive or both (manipulative behaviour is hidden, and so passive, aggression). The less assertive someone is the more they will behave passively towards those who they feel are up hierarchy and aggressively to those they feel are down hierarchy. This can typically be observed in the ways people relate to authority (up hierarchy) and children (down hierarchy).

This weaves into the ways democracy works in practice. In the UK we see people tending to elect those who seem up hierarchy, people

who are rich, toffs or Eton and Oxbridge educated. These are people who are not, in fact, particularly self empowered. They consequently enact oppressive measures, measures that will tend to lead people to be more oppressed. Most of these people will remain under the thumb but some of them will find their way up hierarchy and become the even more oppressed and oppressive, disempowered, elected representatives. Hence the increasing prevalence of conformist, identikit or corrupt politicians.

Oppression under democracy

There is a range of ways in which people are oppressed that are found across all forms of organisation under democracy. Some of these are directly to do with democracy, others are things that democratic organisations do.

In the following list each action reduces people's ability to see the options that they have, to act on those options, to feel that they are free to choose or some combination of these.

1. Say you are doing the opposite of what you actually are doing

Not quite the same as lying, the headline says one thing but when you read the detail it is clear that it will have the opposite effect.

2. Misinform

For example propaganda.

3. Denigrate the people at the bottom.

If anything is wrong, it is your fault. You have not exercised your democratic rights properly, if you had everything would be all right. Problems are nothing to do with the democratically elected government. It is all down to incompetent or lazy teachers, nurses, doctors, refuse workers and everyone else doing the actual work of providing services.

4. Scapegoating

The failures of democratic regimes in the middle east is the fault of "Islamists" and terrorists, it is nothing to do with governments failing to gain sufficient consent for their actions or the corruption and

coercion of international plutocracy.

5. Pass responsibility down to a level below which it can be effectively managed.

E.g. making school governors responsible for managing schools or voluntary organisations being expected to carry out the work that was previously delivered by professionals employed by government (national or local).

6. Keep changing the goalposts

A characteristic of oppressive organisations is that they keep tinkering. For example repeated changes to targets and the organisation of the National Health Service (NHS). Voluntary sector organisations providing services on short term contracts. School curricula changed at the whim of government ministers.

7. Prescribe in detail how services are to be provided

Micromanagement is another feature of oppressive organisations.

8. Promote fear

Keep everyone insecure and exaggerate threats.

9. Restrict resources

Austerity.

10. Money is everything

You cannot have anything unless you pay for it.

Inefficiencies

Democratic processes tend not to allow for:

• dissent

These are consequences of so called group decision making and the idea that there is a, single, "will of the people". Dissent is often repressed. In many democratic countries attempting to overthrow the government or democracy are treated as near or actual treason.

• the losers to constrain the majority

Although having an effective opposition is seen as desirable in

advanced democracies, in practice they often have little influence unless they can outvote the government. There is little sense of governments needing the consent of all sections of the population. There is little constraint on governments persecuting minority groups.

- **alternatives to be pursued in parallel**

Under democracy it is unusual to pursue more than one approach at the same time, particularly if they seem to be in opposition. This can mean that people feel unable to act in their own best interests even though it may have little impact on others. People are constrained not to pursue alternative possibilities. This means that solutions cannot be optimised by discovering multiple actions that work in harmony or testing actions by competition.

- **problem solving.**

Democracy supports people's tendencies to jump to solutions. Often these involve reacting to the symptoms of a problem rather than addressing its causes. So if crime goes up the answer is harsher penalties or more police intrusion to detect offenders. These set the agenda and the debate focusses on them. There is no proper problem analysis or search for a wide range of possible approaches to solving problems.

Democracy cannot be fixed

Many people are well aware of these failings and there have been various initiatives to try to overcome some of them. Direct democracy gives people more opportunities to take part in decision making but it still ends up with voting for competing proposals. Various forms of proportional voting have been explored in order to try to ensure that policies have the support of a clear majority or that representatives represent the true balance of opinion in an electorate. Whilst these are some improvement they do not overcome the fundamental flaws of democracy and at worst they give credence to the idea that any democracy is "a good thing".

What people want or think they are getting with democracy is the opportunity to influence whichever they want of the decisions that affect them. Probably the nearest that anything called democracy comes to achieving this is Participatory Democracy. The problem

here is that it is not really democracy because it moves away from the will of the people to taking account of different wills. By calling it "democracy" it lends credibility to the idea that it is possible for democracy to enable everyone to participate.

If what you have is a horse then you do not call it a modified zebra. What has been missing is a word for a truly participatory system of government and organisation that clearly indicates what it is, and that is not some version of democracy.

We can now call that panocracy.