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3rd Chamber in the Parliament: Popular Sector

Issue

It is known that nowadays the perspectives on democracy are basically divided into two main labels: democracy as direct democracy and democracy as representative democracy. Obviously the first one is not at all a practical idea today and hardly can any rational mind opt for a pure direct democracy as pragmatic solution no matter what its merits are. Nevertheless, one of the very important issues that the idea of direct democracy promotes and that is trying to be implemented as good as possible in the existent representative democracy is *legitimacy*. Legitimacy is one of the essential concepts of any democracy and certainly the more legitimacy is associated with a certain democracy, the more desirable that democracy itself. The question that arises is how can we increase legitimacy without deteriorating too much the existing representative systems of democratic countries, given that unsuccessful tries have been lots in the direction of approaching ideal direct democracies.

Proposal

The answer to the dilemma above is strikingly easy. We do not have to look too far away from the core, the initiator and practically the controller of legitimacy issues, which is the legislative structure, i.e. the Parliament in most of the democracies. What if, in addition to the existing two elected chambers (or one chamber) of the Parliament, a new chamber would be added and each of the chambers would have equal rights in deciding over implementing a law or not, whether approving government issues or not and so on? What if this last chamber would be called “The Popular Sector” and its members, approximate in the same number as the other chamber(s), would be ordinary citizens called in periodically, by rotation, somewhat similar to the jury system in US, for example? This popular parliament would have a certain mandate of a fixed term of 1 months and in this period its members would have the same rights as any of the other elected MP’s. We will further argue that this system is not at all far-fetched and it could be implemented as a solution to the legitimacy issue in the representative democracy.

Implementation

As briefly stated above, the Popular Sector of the Parliament would be the 3rd chamber of the Parliament (or the second in several cases) and it would have exactly the same legislative rights as the existing Senate and Deputy Chambers or whatever the names of the other chambers in the Parliament would be. The composition of this Popular Sector would be adult ordinary citizens without a criminal record and without doubts regarding their mental faculties chosen from among all the citizens that do not fall in the categories above mentioned as excluded. It is important to state clearly that the Popular Sector would be composed of citizens aged at least 18, no matter of their racial, religion, sexual or other characteristic determination. All the citizens are compelled to their duty as in the case of a criminal jury, i.e. they will be selected randomly. The individuals denominated can refuse one designation at a certain time (given that they have other obligations), but they are obliged to carry out the second

one or they will be punished with either a huge fine or with spending a certain period in jail. The mandate of the Popular Sector would be one month, period in which they have all the rights of the other members of the parliament, including the juridical immunity and the parliamentary wage. Thus, from a rational point of view, no citizen should repeatedly oppose his selection in the Popular Sector given the fact that this “job” is paid, he does not have to pay anything and after the temporary mandate he can continue his usual life. During the mandate the members of the Popular Sector participate in all the sessions of the Parliament, decide upon laws and might also propose laws to be discussed by the other chambers. The Popular Sector would have two supervisors, from the other chambers of the Parliament. The President of the Popular Sector would be a member elected by and from the other members of the Popular Sector.

Apparent dilemma within the implementation of the Popular Sector

Everything is nice and beautiful, critics would say, except that the members of the Popular Sector can be completely ignorant regarding politics and their intelligence level could also be significantly low (system of random selection generates arbitrary results). Therefore apparently by trying to solve the legitimacy issue we get into huge problems of efficiency and professionalism.

Solution to the dilemma regarding the implementation of the Popular Sector

A solution exists also for this apparently tragic end of the idea. The people chosen as future members of the Popular Sector would know about their nomination one month earlier. Thus, in one month they will have to prepare to become politicians. Lectures of specialists would be held a certain amount of hours per week and the future MP's would also be compelled to attend some sessions of the existing Parliament (all the chambers). They would have all the interest to perform these duties, given that in this period they have a certain wage and it will take only 2 months (this month of preparation the effective mandate period) that they will have to perform this “civic duty”. Stubbornness and inutile resistance to prepare for the temporary mandate in the Popular Sector would be punished with a huge fine or a certain period in jail.

Final word

The solution of the Popular Sector could be implemented with reasonable costs from the budget of the state (covering the wages of the MP's in the Popular Sector and the costs of organizing the preparation and the process of randomly selecting and nominating citizens) and it would be a reasonable answer to the trouble of legitimacy in nowadays representative democracies.

The experience will show that people only have to be offered the chance and they will love the opportunity of becoming official politicians with full rights without any material costs. Two months of intense politics once at a time would certainly not harm anybody and the legitimacy of a certain representative democratic regime would increase considerably.