



E-Participation

Why philanthropy needs to plan for the long game

Policy Paper

April 25, 2018 - Stephen Boucher

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Introduction

230 years ago, almost to the day, John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Alexander Hamilton, John Jay, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison and George Washington, along with 48 other merchants, lawyers, plantation owners and businessmen sat together to draft the Constitution of the United States of America. To this day, this admirable intellectual feat has shaped democracies around the world. But it has also reached its limits. Augmenting representative democracy with digital tools allowing a more continuous conversation with citizens and relevant stakeholders – aka ‘civic tech’ – is now urgent and promising. But do such technologies “provide equal opportunities for the participation of citizens in decisions”, to use the measure of democracy proposed by Robert Dahl, one of its most prominent scholars? Because this is not the case yet, this paper argues how philanthropy should mobilise fast, with determination and over the long-term to maximise the potential of e-participation, as (a) such potential is far from being fulfilled, (b) e-participation is still in its infancy, and (c) new methodologies and technologies will bring additional challenges.

1. We can do so much more with e-participation

These days, a stone-throw away from Paris’ new “Halles Civiques”, inspired by New York’s own Civic Hall, a hub for developers of civic tech, Paris is organising the latest edition of its e-Formula 1 competition. This race shows that adding the suffix e- to anything makes it both more modern and exciting without necessarily changing the nature of the game. And what needs to change in the democratic ‘game’ is not just the means of participation, electronic or not, it’s also the actual outcome that has to change. Citizens expect not only a greater say in policy-making, as demonstrated by countless surveys, they expect their needs to be addressed more effectively.

Climbing up the participation ladder and ensuring quality deliberation

What does this imply for our use of civic tech? That e-participation should contribute to strengthening democracy’s legitimacy as well as yield demonstrably better outcomes than alternative models of government. Consequently, civic tech should enable the co-creation of public decisions, as co-creation can potentially resolve the two terms of this equation, if done properly. This is not necessarily the case, however. The smartphone app GOV for instance, that promises to deliver the “public opinion weather forecast”,¹ does nothing to address those two terms. Nor does the city of Lille when it consults its citizens online whether they want to stick to a 4 vs. 4.5-day school week, and then follows parents’ preference for a 4-day week – despite the advice of paediatricians, pedagogues, and teachers.² In this case, the use of digital tools arguably leads to a bad outcome, that ultimately makes it less legitimate. Both cases remind us that any tool is only good as what we intend to do with it. And because civic tech is so easy to deploy and reach such large audiences, they require even greater clarity of purpose.

When deploying e-participation, we therefore need to make sure that civic tech too meet the core conditions required for meaningful citizen participation and deliberation. The first such condition, as pointed out by Sherry Arnstein already in 1969, is to be clear about one’s intentions. Citizen participation can be mere manipulation, at the bottom of the “participation ladder” she sketched out, or actual sharing of power, at the top.³ In most cases, we are only half way up the participation ladder at best, somewhere around consultation, on the scale from “manipulation”, to “therapy”, “informing”, “consultation”, “placation”, “partnership”, “delegated power” and, finally, “citizen control”.

¹ <http://www.gov-app.net>

² Opening remarks of the city councillor of Lille responsible for citizen participation at the Rencontres Nationales de la Participation, Lille, March 7, 2018.

³ Arnstein, Sherry R. "A Ladder of Citizen Participation," JAIP, Vol. 35, No. 4, July 1969, pp. 216-224.

Take for instance France's acclaimed collaborative drafting of its "Digital Republic bill" in 2016, which even won the 2017 Innovation in Politics Awards.⁴ As the awards catalogue recalls, "for the first time in France and in Europe, a bill initiated by a national government was co-drafted by citizens, during an open, transparent and interactive 3-week online consultation". 21,330 contributors commented on the text, suggested amendments and proposed new articles. Participants expressed deep satisfaction with the process. The text incorporated a few of the crowd-sourced ideas and other bills have since used the same platform. An incubator for democratic innovations, Système D, even emerged out of this experiment to support tech-based civic projects. These are all, unequivocally, real achievements. Yet, looking at Sherry Arnstein's ladder, one measures the scope for progress. Indeed, did participants decide on the agenda? Did they have the right to decide? Were they able to negotiate and engage in trade-offs with Parliament and the government? They didn't. And this was one of the most serious forms of citizen engagement rolled out in recent times in Europe.

Garbage in, garbage out

Furthermore, even when policy makers wish to involve citizens meaningfully in decision-making, great effort needs to be made to ensure that such participation is backed up by quality deliberation that supports informed decision-making. Any recent high-profile referendum in countries that only do direct democracy occasionally, such as the one on Brexit, stresses the point. As Stanford professor James Fishkin concluded from his many experiments, quality deliberation requires at least five ingredients:

- Participants should be given access to reasonably accurate information that they believe to be relevant to the issue.
- Participants in the discussion represent a diversity of opinions and the major positions in the public.
- Arguments offered by one side or from one perspective are answered by considerations offered by those who hold other perspectives. External parties are involved to ensure that the material provided and the whole process allows this substantive balance.
- The deliberation allows equal consideration of all perspectives on a given issue, allowing arguments offered by all participants to be considered on their merits regardless of which participants offer them;
- The participants consider arguments conscientiously, sincerely weighing the merits of the arguments presented to them.

Just like for a database, what goes through any civic tech tool is subject to the "garbage in, garbage out" principle: if the input is of poor quality, the output will be no better, despite our best intentions and technologies. Now, do we really ask of digital devices to foster dissent and challenge unfair situations? Do we make enough effort to ensure a diversity of participants? That participants are well informed, listen to one another and consider all options equally? Did the online debate on France's "Digital republic" bill meet Fishkin's criteria? Clearly, there is room for progress here also.

What should philanthropy do about this?

Foundations can **encourage policy makers to be more demanding of civic tech**. In line with the above, this means:

- **Pushing the use of digital tools up the participation ladder;** and
- **Creating the conditions for meaningful deliberation** that enables "equal opportunities for the participation of citizens in the decision": balanced information, diversity of participants, management of processes allowing a conscientious dialogue and equal consideration of trade-offs and arguments.

Such conditions don't come about by magic. In fact, most politicians don't seem inclined to create such conditions, because they don't seem to believe, by and large, in collective intelligence, while most civic tech companies are busy trying to find their business model.

⁴ In the "Democracy" category. See <https://www.innovationinpolitics.eu/en/awards-2017>, accessed May 1, 2018.

Overcoming our collective distrust of collective intelligence

In their defence, politicians are not the only ones not to be convinced that we can effectively tap into the famed wisdom of crowds.⁵ As Yale professor Hélène Landemore demonstrates, most of us harbour Winston Churchill's suspicion that "the best argument against democracy is a five-minute conversation with the average voter", seen as apathetic, ill-informed and irrational.⁶ Furthermore, policy makers admit that they are not equipped to communicate with their audiences.⁷ It is not a surprise therefore that today's institutions don't understand how to invest properly in collective intelligence technologies. As a result, the conversation does remain ill-informed, unbalanced, unproductive, and indeed no better than a "5-minute conversation", low on the scale of participation, with limited bearing on the official decision-making process, when it is not outright disregarded.

The 2016 WPP study showed that only 31% of government communication officials see citizen engagement as a priority for their government. And only 14% have had

Such distrust or lack of understanding of quality citizen participation has a number of knock-on effects:

- **Fragmented conversation:** the occasional involvement of citizens is structured today around the political cycle (of elections, specific policy battles...), within short-term timeframes, narrow sets of actors (institutions, lobby groups, media...), often working in silos, when we need a sustained effort to mobilise people's ingenuity throughout the policy cycle and with a systemic outlook.
- **Disjointed technologies:** separate tools tackle different aspects of the challenge of bringing large communities together. They are fragmented in terms of geographies (how do we join the conversation up between cities, regions, countries and beyond), issues (the approach is rarely systemic) and throughout the life cycle of public debate, from defining the nature of an issue, to setting priorities, developing alternative solutions, testing them, getting them accepted and scaling them up.
- **Insufficient integration of opposing parties:** truly modifying power structures and inducing change requires more than a neat deliberation. Co-working processes need to be embedded in the political realities in a given context, i.e. stepping out of the trenches built by lobby groups, by political parties, credible experts and other relevant stakeholders, and bringing them together in a partnership mode.
- **Deliberation leaves the participants on the sideline:** most often, we ask the public what it thinks of policy options developed by others. Rarely do we ask the public to co-develop new solutions.⁸ Public consultation exercises, be they online and/or offline rarely seek to tap into the whole group's ideation faculties at different stages of the policy cycle.
- The **direct cost** of managing a proper convening of stakeholders is always seen as higher than letting things unfold without structure.⁹ Public authorities, also afraid to lose control, thus revert to known procedures. Thought needs to be given how to lower costs and increase acceptability for policy makers.

⁵ Surowiecki, James, *The Wisdom of Crowds: Why the Many are Smarter than the Few and How Collective Wisdom Shapes Business, Economics, Society and Nations*, 2005, Abacus.

⁶ Quoted by Hélène Landemore, in *Democratic Reason: Politics, Collective Intelligence and the Rule of the Many*, Princeton University Press: February 2017.

⁷ See "The future of government communication—How can governments better connect with their citizens in today's increasingly polarised world?", a global study of government communication, spanning 40 countries, conducted by WPP in 2017.

⁸ "Deliberation seeks the formation of a consensus view of shared interests and common goods", argue for instance Mark Button and David Ryfe in "What can we learn from the practice of deliberative democracy", in *The Deliberative Democracy Handbook*, 2005. Or, as Jürgen Habermas argued in *Legitimation Crisis* (1975), deliberation has value per se because it is intended to allow "no force except that of the better argument" to be exercised.

⁹ It can be argued, however, that the indirect cost of poorly-managed society-wide conversations is considerably larger, though difficult to estimate.

What should philanthropy do about this?

The remedies we have found so far for our anaemic representative democracies – such as National Issues Forums, occasional consensus conferences, participatory budgeting... – are welcome supplements in the diet of a poorly nourished political body. They help sustain a level of civic education, engagement and a public sphere. They are not yet sufficient however to counter demagogues and other threats to democracy. Instead:

- Philanthropy is uniquely placed to **push for a systemic approach to citizen participation**, online and offline.
- Thanks to their ability to thinking outside specific disciplines, foundations can **bring different schools of thought together** to improve the impact of collective thinking: citizen participation and deliberation, of course, but also conflict mediation, innovation management, creativity techniques, design thinking, social psychology, community organizing, mindfulness, neuro-cognitivism and many other fields of study and practice. There is great scope for cross-learning, as shows the success of Otto Scharmer’s Theory U which draws upon different social science fields.

Fixing Earth now rather than planning for an escape to Mars

In the face of the terrible consequences of climate change, suggests Elon Musk, one should both lower emissions here by fixing our transport system, and plan an escape route to Mars. Should we do the same for democracy? Some political scientists have sketched out blueprints for a radical revamp of our institutions, without the route to get there however. Terrill Bouricius for instance has caught the eye of successful writer David van Reybrouck, calling for a replacement of elections with a “multi-body sortition” model.¹⁰ Such thinking is highly stimulating, but impractical now. The difference therefore with Elon Musk’s vision is that Musk has developed a successful solution with immediate benefits in the here and now: Space X, which has considerably lowered the cost of launching advanced rockets and spacecraft into space, and Tesla, which seeks to democratise electric cars. Similarly, as we should probably not abandon representative democracy in the near future, we need to figure out fast how it can be improved in a demonstrable way.

Grand schemes that cannot be tested may in fact further undermine the legitimacy and impact of our institutions in the eyes of citizens. Meanwhile, one can build on the worldwide movement of democratic experimentation and learning that is underway. Indicators show that citizen participation is on the rise across Europe over the past two decades, even as electoral turnout rates are falling. Through online or offline boycotts, petitions, demonstrations and other forms of action, we have all been used to criticising and participating in all areas of life. Even if digital participation is sometimes superficial, best practices are spreading fast around the world.

There are three types of “civic tech”:

- **civic tech** proper, which refers to initiatives by civil society or private companies to facilitate citizen participation, put pressure on public authorities or offer services to public authorities to better work with data. The range of civic tech tools is itself very wide, ranging from the more cooperative to the more disruptive;
- **gov tech**, which refers to digital technologies put in place by government to involve third-parties in public business;
- **pol tech**, which is the use of digital means to improve electoral processes.

Philanthropy, again, is uniquely placed to help democratic innovations spread faster and to support lesson sharing.

- Foundations should **support continuous democracy R&D**.
- Foundations can **encourage the sharing of best practices (though online platforms and actual teams) across venues**. It is striking for instance how policy labs pop up in different countries, but are so resource-constrained that they don’t learn from one another’s policy conclusions or processes.¹¹ Various bodies do a great job of

¹⁰ David Van Reybrouck, *Against Elections: The case for Democracy*, Brussels: 2017.

¹¹ This is one of the striking conclusions of the European Commission’s review of policy labs conducted in 2016 by La 27e Région: “Public Policy Labs in European Union Member States”, June 2016.

spreading innovations, such as Nesta in the UK, the OECD's Observatory of Public Sector Innovation or the global network of public servants Apolitical. A lot more can nevertheless be gained from these and other sharing platforms.

Take the Irish Citizens' Assembly. This structure, initiated by the government, brings together 66 citizens chosen by lot and 33 MPs since 2016, along with any citizen who wishes to contribute online, to discuss issues such as the right to abortion and the aging of the population. Following the Citizen Convention convened between 2012 and 2014, the Citizens' Assembly's conclusions will be put to a referendum on May 25 this year. While the process could be improved, this approach draws itself on lessons learnt from the 2011 Icelandic Constitutional drafting attempts and other such crowdsourcing efforts in Ontario and British Columbia.

Similarly, more than 1500 cities in the world have now learnt from Porto Alegre's first participative budget in 1989. These cities form a learning network that supports the continuous improvement of participatory budgeting. Consensus conferences and policy labs invented by the Danes in the 1980s have likewise led to many other experiments, refining processes and improving impact. One can trace for instance such efforts all the way to the recent long-form deliberations carried out by Australia and Canada involving large random samples of citizens and rigorous dialogue protocols over many months, with visible impact on policies.¹² Regarding open data, the Open Government Partnership has gone from 8 countries at its inception to more than 70 today.

On the civil society side, the **global movement of diffusion** of democratic innovations is also spectacular. In 2012, Argentine activist Pia Mancini initiated a movement based on open-source software. Such thinking has spread across the world. "Democracy festivals" originally only held in Denmark and Sweden are now spreading to Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway and beyond. Around the world, democracy activists and academics are learning and building on one another's teachings. Such innovations are concrete answers to the allure of "illiberal democracy" and the pessimism nurtured by populists. They remain, however, marginal and need to be brought to scale.

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¹² For a description of these 50+ processes and analysis of the impact they've had, see Claudia Chwalisz, *The People's Verdict: Adding Informed Citizen Voices to Public-Decision Making*, Policy Network: 2017.

¹³ This is one of the striking conclusions of the European Commission's review of policy labs conducted in 2016 by La 27e Région: "Public Policy Labs in European Union Member States", June 2016.



Do we want to go there or fix things here? Photo by Nicolas Lobos on Unsplash

2. E-participation is in its infancy

Many foundations have supported experiments with different forms of deliberative and participatory democracy. What has clearly emerged is that **citizen participation can work**, in terms of demonstrated benefits for citizen engagement and learning. It's also clear that **the impact on public decisions has more often than not been limited**, as policy makers are rarely committed, as mentioned before, to go high up the participation ladder.

Some foundations have therefore come to the conclusion that they should only fund future deliberative and participatory endeavours when the interest from policy makers is clear. Reaching such a conclusion is, however, premature.

Been there, done that? Not quite.

The digital technologies and methods we are talking about are very recent. Facebook is only 13 years old. In France, Regards citoyens and its website Nosedéputés.fr was launched in 2009. The "doyenne" of French civic tech start-up firms, Cap Collectif, was created three years ago in the wake of the first experiment of the Parlement & Citoyens platform, which idea was first formed in 2008. As for deliberative and participatory democracy, a key landmark was James Fishkin's article calling for a "deliberative day" published in 1988 in The Atlantic Journal. We therefore have 30 years on one side of scattered and, to-date, mostly marginal experiments in deliberative and participatory democracy, and, on the other, no more than 10 years of initial testing of digital tools for policy-making.

The recent conference on innovations in participatory democracy held in Phoenix, Arizona, shed light on the potential for building on the lessons learned so far.¹⁴ Annie Pottorff of the Jefferson Center argues in this vein for "making participation more deliberative, and deliberation more participatory".¹⁵ She stresses how current methodologies can be combined and deepened: "At the Jefferson Center, we are implementing this approach with our dialogue-to-action model. First, we co-define: we build relationships with stakeholders and community members to gain a deeper understanding of the issue at hand. Next, we co-design: working with project partners, we develop and implement an engagement process to unleash creative ideas which also provides participants with the expertise, tools, and time they need to develop solutions. Finally, we co-create: our partners use the public input to advance local actions, reform practices and processes, and guide policy development and decision-making."

What should philanthropy do about this?

- Foundations can support more **subtle ways of injecting citizen participation in the political machinery**. When policy makers cannot be convinced to implement on- and offline participation meaningfully for the sake of strengthening democracy, we should try to "sell" it to them for more immediate reasons. This could involve not talking about citizen participation per se, but including citizens in wider multi-stakeholder engagement processes. This could also mean supporting such processes not under the guise of democracy, but to achieve better results in particular sectors. This could lead to creative combinations of efforts between foundations supporting democratic decision-making and thematic foundations, working for instance on the fight against climate change, poverty alleviation or any other specific cause.
- This requires that foundations support **strict evaluation of outcomes**, as they have triggered in various fields. The fact that the impact of citizen participation is hard to measure is an impediment for policy makers who see first and foremost the risks associated with citizen involvement (or the shallow benefits associated with the appearance of participation) more than the more indirect and long-term positive impacts. This justifies being more demanding and mobilising the experience of foundations in measuring e-participation's ability to impact individuals, communities, networks, organizations, governments, and, ultimately, policy decisions.
- In turn, this requires **shifting the focus from citizen engagement (we know this works) to policy impact**.

¹⁴ More about this conference here: <https://www.ipdconference.org>

¹⁵ Article published on April 4, 2018, accessed on May 1: <https://jefferson-center.org/making-participation-more-deliberative-and-deliberation-more-participatory/>

The fun's only just started

Many new opportunities will arrive thanks to new technologies such as artificial intelligence, blockchain, and surely, many other technologies that we have not yet anticipated and that could vastly increase our ability to involve citizens and civil society organisations in decision-making. Existing technologies already give rise to exciting start-ups, which harness massive data to support population analysis (e.g. Civis Analytics or Synoptos), support voting (e.g. blockchain start-up Agora's recent involvement in the Sierra Leone elections¹⁶ or various experiments in liquid democracy using blockchain), or even allow the creation of a "Decentralized Borderless Voluntary Nation", as Bitnation promises.

The idea that Artificial Intelligence and super calculators contribute to making public decisions in fact seems quite readily accepted, as the technology unfolds in the security, health or environmental fields. So much so that one in fact wonders whether people may not accept robot input more readily than common human intelligence. Yet, such technologies also raise a whole new set of challenges: what accountability and transparency for what algorithms? When to mobilise human and/or artificial intelligence, according to what criteria? If new e-participation technologies are 100% privately-owned and proprietary, how can we build on them? If they're all open-source, can sustainable business models be formed to keep investing in research? If the public sector controls e-participation platforms and technologies, how do we ensure their oversight and independence? Etc. Much for philosophers and all of us to think about. Not forgetting that, outside new questions raised by new technologies, the age-old challenge will remain how to ensure quality deliberations among citizens and a real dialogue between citizens and public authorities.

What should philanthropy do about this?

In this fluid context for many years to come, foundations (as well as venture philanthropists and venture capital) can play a crucial role in **supporting a healthy relationship between civic tech start-ups and public authorities** and **fostering a culture of research, experimentation and evaluation**. In this light:

- Philanthropy can help **resist the temptation to define prematurely proprietary methodologies and technologies**, instead pushing for continued experimentation and new combinations of approaches.
- Foundations should provide **access to adequate funding for private players to experiment**, while keeping an eye on results, in order to circumvent marketing efforts that suggest that a given approach is the state-of-the-art approach that should be adopted by all, as well as hairy experiments that reinvent the wheel or complicate matters unnecessarily, as denounced by Bill Hunt, who was responsible for civic tech in the White House under President Obama.¹⁷
- Public authorities need to adopt new methods and technologies developed by the private sector, institutionalising some while remaining agile and letting outside parties challenge established ways.
- Foundations **can support the complex thinking needed to work out the new governance models that will allow a healthy relationship between innovators and the public sector**, as, without its active involvement, e-participation makes no sense.

¹⁶ "First Results of Sierra Leone's Blockchain Vote Are In", <https://www.coindesk.com/early-returns-sierra-leones-first-blockchain-vote/>, accessed May 1, 2018.

¹⁷ Bill Hunt laments the fact that many new start-ups reinvent the wheel, while others complicate solutions unnecessarily. He points out that "many projects are under-designed and lack foresight into technical sustainability" while "more experienced developers [want] to try out new, trending technologies — leading to us over-engineering solutions for niche problems written with ephemeral technologies", adding: "In both cases, any likelihood of reusability or sustainability is dramatically reduced by poor planning and decision-making.", <https://medium.com/@krues8dr/the-end-of-the-second-act-of-civic-tech-2d8d9c766309>

Constantly reinventing democracy (but not the wheel)

The Founding Fathers had the luxury to isolate themselves for a few weeks and develop the institutional template that's outlived considerable changes in society. We cannot hope to set definitive rules for citizen participation and we will not define the perfect set of processes, tools and institutions that will take us from Democracy 1.0 to Democracy 2.0. Representative democracy and e-participation in the new age still have much to learn and require a constant process of adaptation to changing circumstances and contrasting demands.

A policy matter that requires convergence between stakeholders for fast resolution and action will require a very different approach to a broad consultation on principles for an issue in the future, for instance. Likewise, Micah Sifry of Civic Hall regularly reminds us that “thick engagement doesn't scale, and thin engagement doesn't stick”,¹⁸ requiring ad hoc combinations of the two depending on one's objectives. Matt Leighninger of Public Agenda points out that the former (i.e. deliberation) can produce highly constructive results but requires lots of time and resources, while thin (participatory) approaches, like asking for input on social media may be easier and quicker, but require little ongoing involvement or further opportunities for deeper engagement.

What should philanthropy do about this?

As both the private and the public sector have vested interests in promoting particular approaches, neutral players acting in the interest of the public good are needed to **encourage the development, testing, evaluation, improvement and dissemination of new approaches**. This again calls for the involvement of the philanthropic sector.

Collective creativity is the new common good

Finally, the next frontier for e-participation will be the facilitation not just of dialogue, opinion-formation and decision-making, but collective ideation. Creativity is indeed in dire need in policy making.¹⁹ It is crucial to solve society's issues faster and more effectively, but our current institutional set up and political processes stifle creativity more often than they encourage it. In order to address this, we should foster policy-making processes throughout the policy cycle that maximise the diversity of participants; that enable effective collaboration between participants; and that help overcome the fear of failure, obstacles and objections based on the fact that resources are constrained. E-participation will need to meet such standards also if we want to meet democracy's dual imperative of increased legitimacy and effectiveness.

The need to foster creativity in society and a culture of proactive citizens in turn calls for audacious and creative foundations, argue Helmut Anheier and Diana Leat in their book *Creative Foundations*.²⁰ The authors stress how foundations, free from the shackles of electoral ambition or the demands of shareholders, are uniquely placed to mobilise our collective creativity to solve the world's problems faster. They present some 50 case studies demonstrating various foundation approaches to innovation and creativity, and the subsequent implications for their management and funding. They highlight how “endowed foundations are uniquely placed to bring genuinely creative, innovative ideas to the intransigent problem of our age... They are uniquely able, if they choose, to think the unthinkable, ignoring disciplinary and professional boundaries... They can change the way we think about things, our priorities and our ways of creating a truly civil society characterised by respect and dignity for all.” However, the authors also postulate that, because of a “low key malaise”, foundations are failing to fulfil their “great potential” to contribute to the betterment of the world. This is not a question of resources, or because foundations are perceived negatively, they

¹⁸ As quoted by Matt Leighninger who serves on the board of e-democracy.org in “How Public Engagement Needs to Evolve”, <https://medium.com/on-the-agenda/how-public-engagement-needs-to-evolve-part-3-42e7b9aeae49>, accessed May 1, 2018.

¹⁹ As I analyse in the *Petit manuel de créativité politique – Comment libérer l'audace collective*, Paris : Le Félin, 2017.

²⁰ Helmut Anheier, Diana Leat, *Creative Philanthropy*, Routledge, 2006.

argue. Rather, the issue lies with foundations' failure to accept that they have huge potential to create positive social change and to adopt appropriate modes of action to that objective.

What should philanthropy do about this?

Foundations are uniquely placed to **focus on the essential ingredients of a creative society**. To that effect, point out Anheier and Leat, foundations need to be ready to:

- **Nurture their own creativity;**
- **Communicate effectively their new ideas** and approaches to the people targeted, while providing workable solutions to problems;
- **"Run marathons and not sprints"**, sometimes working on issue for 10 years or more;
- Not be content with isolated experiments, but **make sure new approaches are shared** and implemented in different contexts.

Democracy 2.0: work in progress!

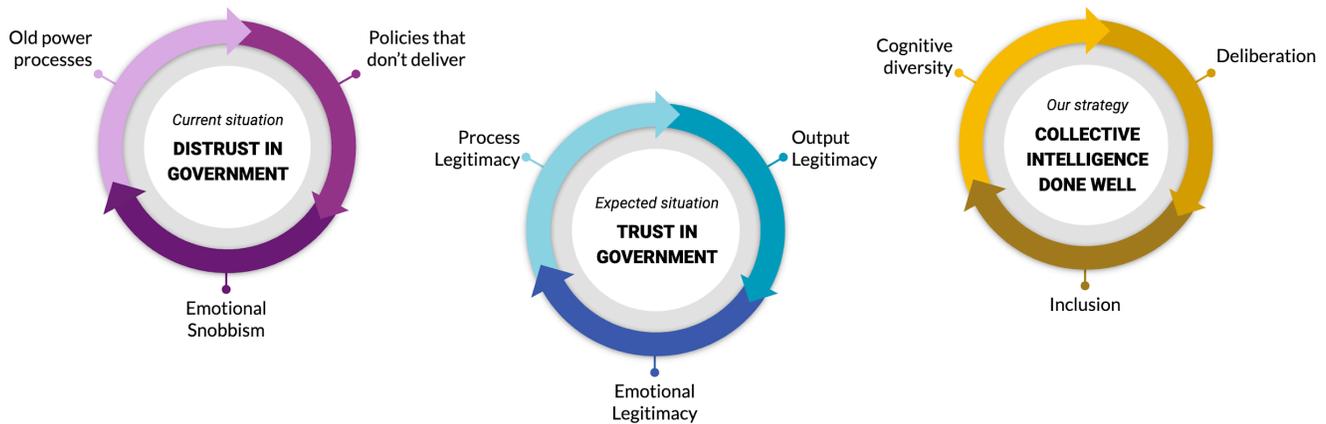
We are only at the beginning of what civic tech has to offer to rejuvenate democracy. In order to maximise e-participation's potential, however, philanthropy needs to play a key role as only it can:

- Dare take risks and address the neglected common that's people's creativity;
- Foster a middle ground between private endeavours, public institutions and all those acting in the public interest;
- Mobilise its know-how and resources to push for greater impact evaluation and demonstration;
- Do all of this over and beyond the time and geographic horizons of policy-makers and the interests of private players.

THANKS FOR YOUR COMMENTS AND IDEAS! stephen.boucher@dreamocracy.eu

About Dreamocracy

Dreamocracy is a think-and-do-tank that fosters collective intelligence and collective creativity for the common good through analysis, advice to organizations, and by developing and implementing innovative stakeholder management experiments. Through adequate collaboration methods, public authorities in democratic regimes can, if they are serious about it, harness the collective intelligence and creativity of many individuals. Collective intelligence and creativity done well provides the following three key ingredients of trust in government:

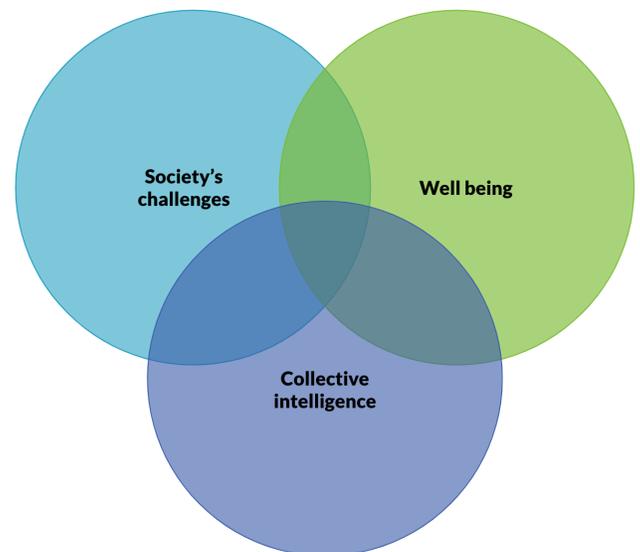


Collective intelligence done well can thus counter the imminent danger of [democratic deconsolidation](#) stressed by Harvard scholar Yascha Mounk.

Mission Statement

We aim at Dreamocracy to:

- Help public authorities and stakeholders address pressing challenges faster and more effectively...
- ...through cutting edge collective intelligence and creativity methods...
- ...that enhance collective and individual well-being, foster creative public solutions and mobilize positive collective energies.





MAKE
GREAT

GREAT

AGAIN



Brussels, Belgium

+32 493 123 718

info@dreamocracy.eu