The "digital" in democracy and citizenship: back to basics

Martin Schmalzried
Policy and Advocacy Manager
Twitter @COFACE_EU
COFACE-Families Europe

• Many areas of work:
  • Fake news and media literacy (DG CNECT)
  • Child online protection and cyberbullying
  • Digital Citizenship Education (expert at the Council of Europe)
  • European Pillar of Social Rights (notably the work life balance)
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• Back to “basics” and exploring the future:
  • Digital citizenship: what’s that?
    • The current online environment
    • Blockchain and decentralized technologies
  • Democracy and the financial system:
    • The “missing link”
    • Money as a voting mechanism
Citizenship

• Citizenship in a Democratic regime:
  • Sovereignty: a certain “group” or population gains control over a certain territory
  • Institutions: this group creates institutions which are mandated with applying a social contract adopted by the people (typically a constitution)
  • These institutions also have a mandate to enforce rules on belonging to that group/territory and the rights and responsibilities which are tied to such “belonging”.

A BETTER SOCIETY FOR ALL FAMILIES
Digital citizenship

• The “digital” in citizenship:
  • We can consider the digital or “virtual” online space as a new territory where various actors gain “control” over certain parts.
  • Some territories, controlled by private companies can be seen as a mix between an autocracy and a democracy.
Digital citizenship

• Key developments:
  • Blockchain technology and decentralized online spaces
  • Control of a “digital space” by a group which collectively decide what the “rules” are going to be (embedded into an unbreakable piece of software: blockchain).
  • This is why making sure that the current values of our “offline” democratic systems gets transposed online, or we will have to start “from scratch” (experimenting with online “dictatorships”…)
Democracy and the financial system

- We assume that voting is the “main” mechanism for changing our society.
- The current economic and financial system, however, has arguably a much greater impact than politics.
- Let’s first look at how it works.
3 Producers want to trade in a circle.

- The baker wants fish
- The farmer wants bread
- The fisherman wants corn

They cannot use barter and there is no money in the economy.
Democracy and the financial system

- 300€ (credit)
+ 300€ (deposits)

Lends 300 units of currency: 100 to each.

Put their money in the bank

5 fish + 100 €

5 bread + 100 €

5 corn + 100 €
Democracy and the financial system

- Buys new boat: 50€
- Sells 5 fish: 50€
- 10 fish: 100€
- 10 bread: 100€
- 10 corn: 100€

- Economic growth and productivity growth
What about the interest?

R repay the loan

10% interest rate

Issues a new loan of 110€, to pay the interest!

Democracy and the financial system
The current monetary system is therefore a **roll over of debt into infinity**.

- **Dependent on economic growth**
- **Dependent on banks and credit**
- **Stability of the economy depends on a parallel growth of the economy and the money supply** (otherwise: inflation/deflation, crisis…)
- **Choice of indicators: debt/GDP ratio.**

Economic crisis: Debts cannot be repaid, economy slows, etc.

Amount of money in the economy

Time

Economic growth
Democracy and the financial system

- How did it work before banks?
- Barter wasn’t really a “thing”.
- Small scale economies (villages) with “tabs”.
- Banks are just a way to “outsource” the creation of “tabs” of who owes what to whom in a “trusted” way (ideally).
Democracy and the financial system

- Blockchain and the Relative Theory of Money
- A new financial system, where everyone co-produces the money.
• Everyone produces an equal share of the monetary base, not only in space (location) but also in time.
Money as an equal “voting right”

The philosophy underlying this theory is the equal right of each individual to determine what has value and what doesn’t equally across time, meaning that each generation has an equal voting weight in determining what has value (their relative control of the monetary mass).
• Mirroring biology and how our body works
  • Each red blood cell receives the same amount of oxygen/energy.
  • The energy is distributed in your body depending on needs (what you are doing) based on a collective distributed intelligence.

Concluding remarks
Get in touch with us!

COFACE Families Europe
Tel: +32 2 511 41 79
Email: mschmalzried@coface-eu.org
Website: www.coface-eu.org

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and Facebook /COFACE.EU

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