

Agenda #5, March 6, 2008

Session 5. Social Empowerment and the State

1. Citizen's Assembly
 - Information control (Catharine)
 - How are the social/demographic criteria for random selection decided? (Sung-Ik, Molly)
 - Is this more an instance of "representative democracy" or "direct democracy"? (Guillaume)
 - Random selection may be less desirable than other forms of politics because "honest fighters" are unlikely to get selected (Roxana)
2. Participatory Budgets
 - Scalability (Edo, Eduardo)
 - Core elements of the model (Edo)
 - Institutional design for recombinant decentralization (Edo, Molly)
 - Need for government support, initiatives (Ricardo)
 - How are conflicts resolved and priorities set? (Ruth, Santiago)
 - Majority rule vs deliberation and consensus formation. (Sung-Ik)
 - Conflicts with economic growth and capital accumulation (Pablo)
 - Time constraints and information constraints on participation (Molly)
 - How much participation is needed – 8%? (Molly)
3. Democracy card & Representative democracy
 - Is this mainly a US proposal? (Julian)
 - Perhaps just free campaign and limited expenses would be better? (Ricardo, Julian)
 - What is the advantage over direct public financing of elections? (Tod)
 - Some general skepticism about representative democracy in general (Charity, Guillaume)
 - The rich will find other ways of influencing elections; scams; etc, wouldn't democracy cards generate corruption – exchange for favors? (Roxana)
4. Associational democracy
 - How democratic is this really? Where is rule "by the people"? (Sung Ik)
5. General issues
 - How do you assess flaws in proposals? (Molly)
 - Individual rights vs democratic decisions (Molly)
 - Is there any hierarchy of democraticness across the three forms? Is there any specification of how they fit together? (Wes, Eduardo)
 - None of these proposals for social empowerment and democratic deepening can have a meaningful impact as long as capitalism exists. All of these reforms would end up only strengthening bourgeois democracy. (Ricardo)
 - Isn't it the case that the more desirable is a proposal the less viable it will be? (Rodolfo)