

Legislators' Temporary Permanence and the Revocable Vote

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Abstract

This article argues that the link between the modern wave of democratisation and elitism lies in *legislators' temporary permanence*. Legislators get elected on pre-election platforms, which they are not directly accountable for fulfilling after election. This political structure allows the elites to capitalize on their economic power and influence political decisions through propaganda, lobbying and/or bribing. The primary contribution of this article regards the introduction for the first time in academia of the notion of *en masse revocable voting* within the framework of liberal democracy, as a response to *legislators' temporary permanence*. *Revocable voting* means that a voter would be granted the opportunity to revoke or reassign his or her vote directly, when he or she feels misrepresented by the legislators. The revocable vote is a process envisioned to be incorporated within representative democracy as a means to transform it into a more direct form of democracy without necessarily ousting the concept of representation.

The philosopher can be objective with regard to nature, but he cannot be
neutral with regard to politics
Hannah Arendt

The disproportionate power of elites today is factually confirmed by a recent Oxfam study, suggesting that the richest 1% will accumulate more wealth than the rest of the world put together; a staggering confirmation of global injustices.¹ Marxists would immediately say that such injustices are the result of the unjust control of means of production and, therefore, the solution lies in reversing capitalism. However, the economic system is simply the outcome of political decisions, unless of

¹ Oxfam, *An Economy For The 1%*, Oxfam Briefing Paper (Oxfam, 2016), <http://www.oxfam.org>, 1.

course it has been imposed via coercion. That said, capitalism is the result of the dominant political system, with democracy (or various form of democracy) currently being the hegemonic political system globally. *If one aims to correct economic injustices, he or she should first target correcting political injustices.*

One would also fairly argue that absolute wealth egalitarianism does not need to be a society's exclusive goal. Nevertheless, the profound inequalities and extreme poverty even in democratized societies is a moral decadence in a world of abundant resources that needs to be addressed more radically. In that respect, I adopt Hannah Arendt's view that a philosopher can be objective regarding nature, but one should not limit oneself to neutrality, when it comes to politics² and such moral decadence necessitates action in order to be reversed. Looking for a potential remedy to wealth imbalances and poverty at the global scale, one needs to locate precisely the source of *de facto power inequality* within liberal democracy, which gradually becomes the dominant political system globally.

It is evident by now that, unlike other theorists, who attack capitalism directly as the primary evil of poverty and wealth imbalances, that *I only see such substantial inequality as the result of major injustices in the political sphere.* I partially derive this approach from Castoriadis, who despite being keen on socialism, has gradually distanced himself from Marxism and focused his critique of modern societies on political institutions. Castoriadis suggests that political power enforcement has always existed and will continue to exist in collective decision-making, unless one believes in the poor anarcho-Marxist utopia that one day humans will take collective decisions spontaneously, without the enforcement of some form of power.³ Nevertheless, Castoriadis calls for a more autonomous and just distribution of such political power. He praises ancient Greece and Western political institutions for organizing the first autonomous political communities, but he remained extremely critical of modern liberal democracy, mainly due to the element of representation. Castoriadis believes that there is no form of democracy other than direct

² Hannah Arendt, *Essays In Understanding, 1930-1954* (New York: Schocken Books, 2005).

³ Cornelius Castoriadis, *Democracy And Relativity - Δημοκρατία Και Σχετικότητα* (Athens: Στάσει Εκπύπτοντες, 2015), 41.

democracy, which was the main reason of his appreciation of the ancient Athenian regime. Representation appears for the first time in the medieval West in self-governed cities of the 11th-12th centuries and was not known in antiquity. Representation is an insult to the represented and constitutes a modern idea with roots in political heteronomy and alienation, Castoriadis says,⁴ and further recalls Rousseau's "The British are free once in five years" (i.e. on election day).⁵ The moment voters grant political power permanently and irreversibly to a representative, they immediately alienate themselves politically, Castoriadis adds.⁶

Even though, I share Castoriadis's view that modern liberal democracy is far from an authentic democracy, I do not locate the democratic insufficiency in representation, but rather I would like to argue that injustices rise from the temporary permanence of representation or in other words in *legislators' temporary permanence*. By that I mean that the embodiment of one's will in another person for several years through a parliamentary election is not a direct source of alienation, as Castoriadis thought. Instead, liberal democracy's injustice stems from the usual absence of a direct control mechanism that would disrupt a government's *permanence* by ending its tenure, when the voter feels inadequately represented. The source of de facto power imbalances in favour of the elites is precisely located in the *permanence* of legislators for several years (temporarily) between elections (four to five years usually), which empowers the efficiency of lobbying, propaganda, targeted party-financing and bribing. To consider the latter's essence, one should wonder; which are the means in liberal democracy that bind politicians and parties to commit to pre-electoral promises that brought them to power in the first place? The answer is simply none; there is no *binding* mechanism that would force a politician to fulfil his promises or else to step down from power. The only such *non-binding* mechanism is the indirect control of a parliament. However, the few legislators of a parliament can be easily influenced by elites' financial power.

⁴ Ibid., 90.

⁵ Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract* (Baltimore, MD.: Penguin Books, 1968).

⁶ Cornelius Castoriadis, *The Ancient Greek Democracy And Its Importance For Us Today* - *Η Αρχαία Ελληνική Δημοκρατία Και Η Σημασία Της Για Μας Σήμερα* (Athens: Ύψιλον, 1999), 34.

The primary mean of democratic manipulation by the elites, which leads to power imbalances, is propaganda, as the elites bear substantially stronger capacity than the poor to promote their ideas in society. The second very important tool for the elites is lobbying, such as keeping close ties with politicians, financing parties or even bribing legislators, if necessary. In fact, sometimes politicians themselves are part of the domestic elite. It is not a coincidence that incumbents in many liberal democratic countries are usually rich people and entrepreneurs, as usually they are the ones who can finance or seek peer-financing to propagate their electoral campaigns. Notably, elite propaganda is utilised mainly prior to elections, in order to distort public sentiment and elect the politicians favoured by the elite. If we could mathematically graph propaganda with time, the levels of propaganda would spike prior to elections when propaganda is necessary to maintain high re-election chances, and would then drop again during the tenure of the government. On the other hand, lobbying is more essential after an election, as the relatively long period of a government's tenure (*temporary permanence*) allows the elites to influence politicians towards legislating elite-friendly policies.

The more complicated the structure of representation, the less powerful the voters are in monitoring the government's compliance with its pre-electoral commitments to the people. In other words, in liberal democracy the people have no legitimate, direct way of evaluating the government's performance after election, while their representatives in parliament might be following their own personal or party agenda, or worse, they could be influenced financially by the domestic elite. On the other hand, modern legislation is so complex that parliamentary representation indeed bears benefits for the efficient coordination of the collective will. However, indirect government control through parliaments has proved extremely susceptible to corruption and the economic power of elites, which allows them to increase their de facto political power within liberal democracy by manipulating the few legislators that constitute a parliament. The *temporary permanence* of legislators is a mechanism of major social injustices that should be corrected, without necessarily ousting the parliamentary system. In any case, any reform towards further democratization will take gradual steps that will meet the fierce opposition of elites, who favour less democratized societies. *A potential transcendence from liberal democracy to direct democracy seems to be an unrealistic utopia at this historical stage for most parts of the world.*

Nevertheless, one should envisage small dialectical steps towards more autonomous societies that would remove the responsibility of governmental control from the parliament and would transfer it to the people.

To sum up, for Castoriadis ancient Athens was the first society that showed willingness to form an authentic political community and took historical steps forward towards *autonomy*. In fact, Castoriadis says that ancient Athens was the first society to show elements of political and institutional *autonomy*, while such elements re-emerged in Europe during the Enlightenment after a long historical break and only after the end of Medieval times and feudalism.⁷ *Autonomy* derives etymologically from the Greek *auto-nomos*, which means to provide to oneself one's laws. Nevertheless, historically, societies have almost always been heteronomous. When referring to his view of autonomy, Castoriadis says:

I call heteronomous the society where *law*, the institution, is provided by someone "other" (*heteron*). Of course, as we know, the law (*nomos*) is never provided by someone "other," but it is always a creation of the society. However, in the vast majority of cases, the creation of institutions is assigned to an extra-societal authority that exceeds the power of the people (e.g. God, ancestors, historical necessity).⁸

Despite this article's criticism of modern representative democracy, some modern societies have already taken more considerable steps towards autonomy, such as Switzerland, which has constituted a liberal democracy with the relatively frequent use of referendums. A gradual democratization path that would transform modern liberal democracies into referenda democracies similar to the Swiss political system, would indeed be a solid dialectic step forward towards more just and *autonomous* societies. Even though a referendum democracy similar to the Swiss political system almost surely constitutes a democratic improvement over liberal democracy, it is still an indirect way of executing governmental control. Due to the usual finality of referendum decisions, a referendum democracy would still lack the dynamic element of direct democracy, where legislators (and consequently policies) would constantly be evaluated. That said, the elites would still hold disproportion-

⁷ Cornelius Castoriadis, *The Rise Of Insignificance - Η Άνοδος Της Ασημαντότητας* (Athens: Ύψιλον, 2000).

⁸ Ibid., 193.

ate de facto political power in a referendum democracy, as they would bear incentives to invest substantial capital in influencing a referendum decision prior to the vote through propaganda or bribing. That said, the power of propaganda remains extremely strong in a referendum democracy, as the likely *permanence* of any referendum decision for a substantial period, allows considerable manipulation by the elites, which in most cases controls the dominant media and communication means in a market economy. On top of that, politicians (and hence elites) still bear relative freedom in a referendum democracy to ignore an “undesirable” referendum decision, by only proceeding with minor adjustments. A popular case is the well-known Greek referendum in 2015 in Greece, when the people voted against a bailout agreement with the EU, but the government still accepted a new bailout, only through a minor adjustment to the initial proposal, which Greek people had turned down in the first place! In other words, societies should dialectically transcend not only liberal democracy in its current form, but also referendum democracy, which remains a form of democracy that allows substantial manipulation by the elites. As an idea for such a dialectical transcendence, *en masse revocable voting* will be introduced for the first time in academia, in the second part of this article.

The revocable vote

“Revolution does not mean torrents of blood, the taking of the Winter Palace, and so on. Revolution means a radical transformation of society's institutions. In this sense, I certainly am a revolutionary.”

Cornelius Castoriadis

The *revocable vote* entails a voter's ability to revoke or reassign his vote directly and immediately, when he or she feels misrepresented by the chosen legislators.

Revocability is today an essential part of the modern private sphere, with the most typical example being private sector employment. It is broadly accepted on the global level that an underperforming employee is sacked swiftly from his or her company in market economies. On the other hand, revocability remains a taboo for the public sphere and in particular for democracy, as governments are able to remain in

power, even after substantial mistakes, whether those were intentional or not. I should remind that the power of a government after an election, is strictly subject to the will of the few legislators comprising a parliament. Nevertheless, those same legislators are directly affected by personal interests, party interests and the interests of the elites. The fewer the legislators, the more powerful the elite, which necessitates the franchising of direct government control to the people.

The idea of en masse revocable voting within representative democracy is novel. As envisaged, revoking a vote should be taking place without the intervention of any indirect form of democratic institutions, such as a parliament or a senate. The revocable vote is a process aiming to be incorporated within representative parliamentary democracy, transforming it into a more direct form of democracy without ousting the concept of representation.

We should begin by tracing historically the notion of *revocability* within political systems. *Revocability* of delegates is a known electoral concept since the ancient Athenian democracy.⁹ Karl Marx also praised the Parisian Commune for adopting the notion of *revocability* in its decisions, while revocability was also present in election of delegate the Soviet workers' councils prior to their subordination to the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Finally, forms of revocability have also been recorded in workers' councils in Italy and Germany in 1920-1921 and in within the context of US and Swiss democracies, while some forms of revocability have also been recorded in Canada, Ukraine and Venezuela. What we call today a recall election or recall referendum has been applied in the US since 1631 and in Switzerland since 1846. A recall election differs from *en masse revocable voting*, in the sense that it consists of collecting signatures with the aim of recalling a delegate either directly or through a referendum. On the other hand, the *revocable vote*, as introduced in this paper, consists of the direct revoking by the voter of a parliamentary vote (including parties and delegates). A considerable amount of revocation would eventually lead the government to fall.

Since the revocable vote is a concept almost newly introduced in

⁹ Cornelius Castoriadis, *The Ancient Greek Democracy And Its Importance For Us Today* - Η Αρχαία Ελληνική Δημοκρατία Και Η Σημασία Της Για Μας Σήμερα (Athens: Ύψιλον, 1999), 39.

this paper, we should elaborate on theoretical specifics, without however going deep into pragmatic details that go beyond the purpose of this study. *The revocable vote is envisaged as a radical addition to existing democracies, but does not constitute an idea for a completely new democratic system. The revocable vote would take effect after elections and the after formation of a government, which is ratified by the parliament. After the enforcement of the revocable vote a citizen would be allowed to revoke and immediately reassign his initial vote to another party/president/delegate (subject to the given democratic structure). This would lead to a dynamic democracy, where the government would constantly have to sustain a specified majority across the voters to remain in power and to be allowed to legislate its desired policies. It is important to note that all voters would be allowed to revoke and reassign their votes, including opposition party voters, who could reassign their votes to the government to enforce its policy agenda. In case an adequate number of government voters reassign their votes to opposition parties, without the same number of opposition voters reassigning their votes to the government, then the government falls and the country heads to national elections. I should stress here that the revocable vote does not regard individual delegates, but the revoking of a full administration. That said, the power of controlling a government is removed from the parliament and passes to the hands of the voters. If a government maintains in power throughout its official tenure (four to five years), then national elections should take place as foreseen by each national Constitution.*

Revocable voting is admittedly a radical idea. It prioritizes equal democratic participation and political involvement to be *the primary right and obligation* of every citizen. However, given that the revocable vote is a concept that targets reducing the power of oligarchies, it would not be welcomed by the elites. Let us remember, how unwelcome ideas such as abolishing slavery, granting voting rights to the poor or franchising democracy to women, once sounded – the latter being excluded from voting across the world until the early 20th century. The rise of liberal democratic hegemony on the global scale is in the hands of corporatocratic elites that hold disproportional de facto political power, due to their ability to influence liberal democratic institutions. In turn, the Left and the poor are still organising their struggle on the traditional socialist approach of prioritising their social requests with respect to wealth im-

balances, targeting specific economic policy decisions and, to a great extent, neglecting that wealth imbalances are directly the result of political injustice. The revocable vote is a concept that targets providing the poor and the intellectuals with the right theoretical tools to reorganize their struggle and combat social injustices at the root of the problem; the elitism of politics. Think of a normal non-elite citizen; does he or she hold the same political power as a TV channel owner, or the owner of a big bank, or an oil tycoon, even though they all might be citizens of the same state? Well, according to liberal democracy they all hold equal democratic power, which they can exercise once every four or five years with their vote. In theory, all citizens hold equal *de jure* political power through voting. In practice though, the oligarchs hold all means possible (propaganda, lobbying, bribing) to impose their interests on politicians over the four to five-year tenure of the elected government. On the other hand, the simple citizen can do nothing but wait until the next election, where under immense propaganda pressure he or she will be called to cast a vote again. The poor and the Left need to prioritise reallocating their resources into combating the political power of the elites, as the social struggle for wealth redistribution is vain, without addressing the source of such imbalances, which is political injustice. The revocable vote aims exactly at addressing political elitism and equipping the hands of the poor with stronger political power.

Let us now address the advantages of an *en masse revocable voting democracy*, when comparing it to the outstanding known models of liberal democracy. We should start with the most important deficiency of liberal democracy, *legislators' temporary permanence*, which simply means that a politician can promise a certain number of policies, without being directly accountable for their implementation after election. In fact, he or she can be elected and implement the exact opposite policies with some—usually—unfounded political excuse. The parliament is an inadequate control mechanism of politicians' policy consistency, as usually the government holds a majority and individual delegates, usually do not diverge from their party's official line, due to personal interests. In a nutshell, *direct political accountability* is absent from liberal democracy. The latter is the source of a series of undemocratic evils within representative democracy; propaganda, bribing, lobbying or simply making political mistakes as a legislator without being directly accountable for them.

Beginning with propaganda, we already know that the elites control a vast amount of resources that they could invest prior to elections to influence the voters' choice. This means that not only voters come to the ballot rarely, but they are also obliged to make a crucial long-term choice under the influence of heavy elitist propaganda. If we could mathematically graph propaganda with time, the levels of propaganda would spike prior to elections and would then drop again during the tenure of the government, when lower levels of propaganda are necessary to maintain strong re-election chances. However, *a revocable voting democracy would prevent this phenomenon*. Revocable voting would reduce elites' incentive in investing so many resources in pre-election campaigns, as any administration could be revoked at any time. One would fairly argue that average propaganda levels would rise in the long run, but they would almost surely not reach the usual extremely high pre-election levels, as this would be financially unsustainable for the elites. Moreover, even with elevated average propaganda levels, we need to understand that a society, that would be politically engaged constantly (through the revocable vote), would become a trained receptor of propaganda and would adjust accordingly. In the end, *revocable voting would reduce the effectiveness of propaganda in affecting policy in favour of the elites*, without of course eradicating propaganda fully. Still, a more politically engaged society would adapt more efficiently and would eventually make wiser political choices with time.

Bribing and lobbying also belong to the same category of shady acts that the elite can adopt when it wishes to influence politicians. However, they both come with costs. Would the elite be willing to assume those costs, if it knew that a government could be immediately revoked at any time within its tenure? The revocable vote once again, like in the case of propaganda, would reduce the efficiency and effectiveness of bribing and lobbying, without however eradicating it. Most importantly, under a revocable vote democracy corruption scandals would now be at the discretion of the people and not of the parliament, through which corrupted legislators usually find ways to avoid the retributions for corruption acts.

The revocable vote is not only a democratic protective valve against elitism and corrupted politicians. Politicians and governments, even if not corrupted, are not all wise and they certainly do make mistakes, over which sometimes they escape accountability by unfounded

clarifications. Judging the validity of such clarifications after a mistake, or even the ability to foresee an upcoming mistake, should lie in the hands of the people, who are in the end the subjects of all policies. Democracy is founded in an aristocratic way, where politicians are allegedly wiser than the masses. Well, even if the latter is indeed the case, the will of the people should transcend the wisdom of politicians, if wisdom is not communicated convincingly to the people. On the other hand, if we believe that adults are not adequately capable of making credible political decisions, then why do we have democracy in the first place? The revocable vote is a democratic tool that would franchise political power to the people. Several times we have witnessed politicians making substantial political mistakes and remaining on power until the next election, simply because the people have no say over politicians' or government decision for several years. *Periodical voting is aristocratic, elitist and unjust!*

Crises (economic, political etc.) is yet another element of democracy where the revocable vote would contribute to less aristocratic and more popular decisions that would reflect the peoples' will. In most cases, a crisis emerges amidst a government's tenure. However, a government is elected under different circumstances and does not always bear the democratic legitimacy to make decisions at times of crisis. Some governments have the political honesty to call for snap elections in case of a crisis or to call for a referendum. But in plenty of cases, governments unilaterally assume the legitimacy to act at times of emergencies, based on a vote they received months or years ago. Governments might even manipulate the events of a crisis to achieve political gains. The *state of emergency* is a common excuse that governments utilise to cease acting democratically and to make decisions without considering the peoples' will. The is yet another factor that renders contemporary democracy an elitist political system.

Let us now delve into a specific example of revocable vote democracy. For reasons of simplification assume that elections take place under a simple proportional voting system. This means that a party or ruling coalition needs 51% of the vote to form a government, and if for example it gets elected on 55% rate, this translates to 55% of the voters and 55% of the parliament seats. Let us take the latter as our case scenario. One party or ruling coalition come to power with 55% of the vote and consequently forms a government that is ratified by the parliament,

where it controls 55% of the delegates. In the revocable vote model, this government would have to sustain at least 51% of the vote in order to avoid revocation and consequently snap elections, where a new government would be elected. We should note here that each voter in revocable vote democracy would be allowed to revoke his or her vote and reassign to another party. However, this would not hold only for the voters who backed the government, but also for opposition voters, who could revoke their vote from opposition parties and reassign it to ruling parties, if they deemed that the government's policy trajectory favourable. As a result, assuming a 55% rate as a starting point after elections, this would mean that if 5% of government voters revoked and reassigned their votes, while 1% of opposition party voters revoked and reassigned their votes to the government, then it would still sustain the 51% threshold, which would be necessary to remain in office. In other words, revocation and reassignment voting flows are free through an electronic dynamic democratic platform and the government maintains power as long as it remains above the 51% threshold. The moment a government's appeal in the electronic platform drops below 51% at any point of its tenure, the government is immediately dissolved and the country heads to snap elections to elect a new government. Following the explained mathematical rule, a series of revocation examples are presented in flowchart A.1 (see Appendix).

The revocable vote does not only bear benefits, but would come at costs. The primary one is the risk of multiple consecutive elections, where people decide to revoke governments too frequently. However, there are remedies to this problem, by introducing for example brief grace periods of a few months after the election of a government, or by allowing people to revoke their vote periodically, as discussed earlier. Also, democracy is a social system of mostly rational agents and as such, even after a brief period of destabilisation, it would tend towards reaching an equilibrium or equilibria. In the end, people would be displeased with a potential prolonged destabilisation and would begin to utilise their revocable vote right wisely (if at all) across longer interims. Over the same period, politicians would become trained to the fact that if they lie or do not deliver on their promises, and fail to explain why to the people, they would be facing the risk of having their mandate revoked. *The latter would cause a virtuous cycle of gradually more honest politicians and in turn of citizens, who would have a decreasing need to*

revoke politicians, as long as they make sound pre-elections promises and stick to them. (Flowchart A.2, see Appendix).

A government cannot always anticipate the circumstances of its tenure. If those change and it cannot deliver its promises, it would either have to call snap elections or explain to the people, why they should not revoke their earlier votes. If the explanations are convincing, revocation would be avoided, but this would still be the outcome of a dialectical democratic process between the rulers and the ruled. *I should stress here that in the hypothetical case that people do not use their revocable vote right at all, we would be back at the contemporary representative democratic model that we know so far.* That said, the revocable vote is a direct democratic *addition* to representative democracy not a reform that changes the essence of democracy. *Even though political participation of a conscious citizen is an obligation and a right in my view, the revocable vote would be a right, but not necessarily an obligation.* In the end, a government's deeds might be righteous and the voters would choose not to revoke it, thus not destabilising the political system. The revocable vote would be an incentive for honest policies and a threat for dishonest governments.

Another anticipated criticism to the revocable vote would be to claim that with revocable voting politicians would only campaign for short-term policies, as long-term policies are sometimes misunderstood by the people, or that politicians would not be able to push forward some necessary unpopular reforms due to fear of revocation. If we are to have democracy, the policies that are to be implemented need by definition to be popular. If the people are displeased with a certain policy, no matter how necessary that policy might be, then it shall not pass. Assuming that the people are less intelligent or hold weaker expertise than politicians is a common claim, and in fact it might be true. But allowing politicians to legislate against the will of the people is again aristocratic and far from being democratic. If the people are not wise enough to allow a beneficial policy to pass, so be it!

When discussing *public wisdom*, it is useful to consider a significant dialogue between my two main inspirations Chantal Mouffe and Cornelius Castoriadis, from December 1994, when Castoriadis was still a Professor at the Sorbonne in Paris and Mouffe was a member of the

political team MAUSS (Mouvement Anti-Utilitariste dans les Sciences Sociales).¹⁰ Briefly, I recall that Castoriadis was a great proponent of the revocability of legislators, without however favouring my view that revocability could be incorporated within representative democracy, as I am arguing in this paper. In their discussion, Mouffe and Castoriadis agreed on the necessity of radical direct democracy, but openly disagreed on the potential implications that a majoritarian direct democracy would bear on minorities. In an effort to defend partially modern representative democracy, Mouffe begins the argument by claiming:

There is no other democracy, other than direct democracy, agreed; but does democracy protect individual liberties? So, in order to protect individual liberties, shouldn't there be next to democratic institutions other institutions parallel to democracy related to pluralism? In the end, Switzerland has achieved the most democratic regime, but this does not prevent it from making extremely troubled decisions in relation to immigration. If your position is that more democracy would necessarily lead to the right decisions, then I do not agree with you on that.¹¹

The ideal institution remains a mixed regime of direct democracy with some constitutional protection of minorities, according to Mouffe. Castoriadis's response to Mouffe was as follows:

Do you [Chantal Mouffe] suggest that we should have a Constitution that cannot be revised under any circumstances? Of course, we cannot do that. The idea of a non-revisable Constitution is practically and logically nonsense. In the same way you cannot forbid the Swiss people to limit migration inflows with a referendum, in the same way you cannot forbid the people from saying (I will say something intentionally stupid here): 'We remove voting rights from people with height below 160cm and above the height of 190cm.' The majority here surely falls between the 160-190cm height, so they could in theory adopt this prohibition in a majoritarian democracy. What can one do? I would of course personally oppose this amendment and I would fight against it. If we accept the rule of the majority, we also accept necessarily, despite all guarantees, that there is always the chance that people will go crazy and might do one thing or the other. Hitler came to power in a way by a majority. What should we do

¹⁰ Cornelius Castoriadis, *Democracy And Relativity - Δημοκρατία Και Σχετικισμός* (Athens: Στάσει Εκπύπτοντες, 2015), 7.

¹¹ Ibid., 99

then? Forbid German people to vote? This is the evolution of history. We can fight against wrong democratic decisions, but we cannot limit democracy through judicial amendments.¹²

So, should citizens acquire special or general knowledge (in order to be eligible to participate in democracy), Castoriadis was once asked and he answered: *the specialists should be at the service of citizens not at the service of politicians. Citizens can only learn to rule, via ruling...* Such a simple thought by Castoriadis, yet so essential. If we do not allow people to rule, how can one learn to become a responsible legislator. It is common to blame the masses for being unintelligent or incapable of making wise decisions, when the whole democratic system in the west is dominated by propaganda, elitism and lobbying, coupled with a new-wave life of consumerism, which aims to disorient the people, instead of engaging them in political processes.

People need to assume political responsibility, exercise their political rights and bear the consequences of their decisions. This is the definition of democracy; not the rule of some all-wise political aristocracy that makes the “right” decisions for the people irrespective of their wishes. In the end, politicians should be the representatives of the people, not their rulers. That said, revocability would be an essential tool to restore, at least partially, the political balance between the elites and the poor in modern democracies.

Before concluding, it should be noted yet again that the *en masse revocable voting* model, as presented in this article, constitutes indeed a radical reform, but still only an addition to the currently prevailing liberal representative democratic model. That said, if voters do not exercise their revocable voting right, we would find ourselves back at the known representative democratic model, without any change (see Flowchart A.1). In other words, the revocable vote aims at improving representative democracy and correct its structural deficiencies, such as legislators' temporary permanence and elitism, but does not distort the foundations of representative democracy. Instead, it adds one additional layer of governmental control on top of the parliament. It should also be clarified here, that the parliament sustains its full functionality and would also be able to withdraw its support for the government under the revo-

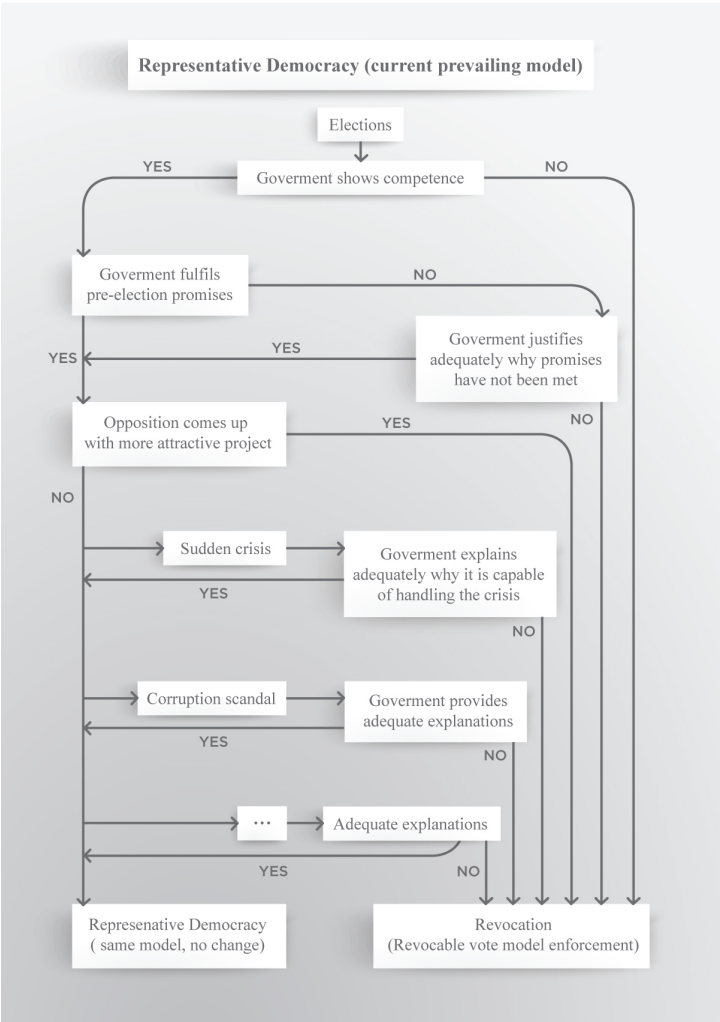
¹² Ibid., 103-104.

cable vote model, in the same way as in the currently prevailing model. The revocable vote is an additional control mechanism that franchises government control from the parliament to the people, in case legislators are not competent or honest enough to conduct their tasks. However, legislators do sustain the *same authority*, as members of the parliament *but with less power*. This means that their expertise is still being utilised, but not without the control of the people. Legislators might indeed be constituting a superior skilled technocracy compared to the median voter (though not always), but under the proposed revocable vote democratic model, legislators need to provide adequate explanations to the people (see flowchart A.1) and justify their actions comprehensively in order to avoid revocation and maintain the right of exercising their expertise. *Legislators should be civil servants, not rulers!*

Appendix

Flowchart

A.1



Flowchart
A.2

