A European Democracy on a Domestic Level

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Literature rejecting the "democratic deficit" in the EU argues that either the EU is as democratic as it should be (because democracy would subordinate the EU's Pareto-efficient activities to the majoritarian rule) or as democratic as it could be (due to the constitutional checks and balances, indirect democratic control via national governments, and the increasing powers of the European Parliament in place).

In positing that a potential democratic deficit is not a problem, the literature extols the virtues of 'enlightened' bureaucracy against the dangers of majoritarian democracy.

Instead, we argue that EU should be more democratic and could become so, by examining the nature of the democratic deficit, exploring the usefulness of categorisations which divide the deficit into levels (Sprungk, 2013), which reveal multiple distinct democratic deficits within the EU, and suggest that targeted solutions should be implemented to acknowledge the polylithic nature of the problem.

We evaluate the efficacy of different proposed solutions to the problem of the democratic deficit, concluding that representation in the Parliament (e.g. transnational parties and the European Citizens Initiative) is too utopic, in the Commission is undesirable and in the European Counci/Council is not enough.

As such, we need to strengthen the democratic character of national representative institutions and their transnational relationships with reference to the EU (e.g. EU manifestos). Therefore, we side in favour of arguments which suggest that we must shift our perspective on the prospect of a European democracy, finding validity in the democratic proposals.

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