

Session 8. Agenda, 10/23/03. Sociology 929. *Envisioning Real Utopias*. Deliberation Day

1. **Orienting questions:**

- What problems in existing institutions is the proposal for Voting with Dollars supposed to solve?
- What problem in existing institutions is Deliberation Day supposed to solve?
- What are the *precise mechanisms* through which each of these proposals are supposed to solve the problems they address?
- Are there *unspecified side conditions* that would have to be fulfilled for the proposals to have the effects that they envision?

2. Homogeneity/heterogeneity of Deliberation Day discussions. How would the degree of homogeneity affect the quality of the deliberations? Wouldn't, in general, building deliberation meetings around neighborhoods generate too homogeneous a group? (Elizabeth, Jay) **Number of parties participating.** Wouldn't restricting D-D to two main parties truncate the democratic potential of deliberation? But wouldn't opening it up to all parties generate overload? (Elizabeth, Linda)

3. The role of parties as organizations. How dependent for success is D-Day on the role of parties and the relationship of citizens to parties? For it to really work well, do we need stronger party associations that mediate between citizens and politicians and elected officials? (Adam) Would D-Day & VwD strengthen or weaken parties?

4. Civic engagement. Is it really plausible that D-Day would actually generate enhanced civic commitments? If the public is so distracted by consumerism, etc., what would get them to take D-D seriously? (Matias)

5. Quality of politicians' contribution to D-Day. Why should we expect politicians to seriously engage the issues in the D-Day discussions, as opposed to simply spout platitudes and empty promises as they do now? (Adam)

6. Interdependency of D-Day & Voting with Dollars. Would D-Day have value in the absence of the funding accountability of VwD? (Adam)

7. Youth involvement. What sorts of ways might D-Day be enhanced by including youth activities directly in the events? (Stuart)

8. What is the real need for D-Day and Voting with Dollars? If people are rational, why don't they just engage in civic activity and discussion on their own? \$50 isn't much money – why don't people just contribute this if they want to? (Eric)

9. Market Logic. Doesn't the Patriot Card just reproduce a market logic, and wouldn't this still allow the rich to have more influence? Wouldn't direct public funding be better? (Patrizia)

10. Costs & Benefits. If 80% of the electorate basically has made up its mind or is strongly affiliated with a party, is it really worth all this trouble just to affect the views of 20%? (Richard)