

Session 8. Reading Interrogations. October 22.
Sociology 929. *Envisioning real Utopias.*
Revitalizing Representative Democracy: Deliberation Day

1. Elizabeth Holzer

The authors offer a detailed institutional design for the deliberative process that I'd like to take a closer look at. I agree with the authors (and others) that the results of deliberation vary in part according to the institutional design that structures the deliberation. But I think that institutional design will have different affects when it guides interaction among strangers rather than interaction among friends or enemies or casual acquaintances. Did the Deliberative Poll primarily study strangers? I'm not sure what the different affects would be, but it seems plausible that there would be a significant amount. **[The deliberative polling experiments that Fishkin has done did involve deliberation among strangers, although the participants had opportunities to get to know each other a bit in the course of the deliberation.]**

As people living in a rural community are more likely to know their fellow townspeople than those living in urban or suburban communities, I wonder if the model will end up succeeding in some areas and not others—this is vague, because I don't know what the outcomes would be, but it would be most unfortunate to unintentionally exacerbate the rural decline. To ask the question more generally, is it reasonable to treat the participants in as diverse a democracy as ours as interchangeably responsive to specific strategies of deliberation? **[I don't know if the principle involved would need to stipulate uniform procedures across all deliberation day venues – one could imagine a set of procedural guidelines which would then be modified in various ways in order to facilitate deliberation in different places. Off hand, however, I do not see why rural places would be particularly disadvantaged in this project, nor how this might intensify rural decline.]**

Two other details, since the authors took the time to make such a detailed plan: First, timing: The different time zones, especially Alaska and Hawaii, are going to interfere with plan to start between 8 and 9 o'clock with a live broadcast debate. Second, rather than specifying a moderated debate between the "two political parties" (24), it would be nice if the design included representatives from all the parties that have candidates in the election under contention—I think that DDay could have the very nice (unintended?) consequence of bring more visibility and legitimacy to other parties. **[But, of course, there is also the issue of conditions that might make the deliberation unwieldy and reduce the focus and capacity of people to actually engage in discussion. I agree that a two party model is probably too restrictive, but open-ended participation would also (perhaps) undermine the usefulness of the enterprise.]**

2. Richard Thomson

Although I am very politically supportive of D-Day legislation, I offer these friendly constructive critiques as an attempt to make D-Day legislation more effective:

1. Too little benefit for too much cost – In contrast to the figures Ackerman provides, Lakoff and several political strategists have contended that nearly 80% of American votes are relatively persistent, with 40% consistently voting Republican and 40% consistently voting Democrat (and results from Presidential races collaborate this argument – excluding the Ross Perot races) which means that commonly, political strategies are aimed to the 20% of the American population that do not have strong political affiliation one way or the other, and are more-easily able to be swayed in an election (the marginal voter, if you will). Is the cost of D-Day worth the benefit of increasing the political capital of the 20% of the population without strong political affiliation? **[You are assuming that the pivotal effect of DD is on unaffiliated voters. I am not sure that this is correct. Because DD, in combination with Patriot Cards, would fundamentally change the strategic setting for party politics, it might be expected that it would change the views of affiliated voters as well. Democratic voters, for example, might become more coherently liberal in a world with these mechanisms in place. And, of course, it might massively affect the political behavior of nonvoters.]**
2. Initiatives vs. candidate campaigns – A case could be made that D-Day-type deliberation would be more cost-effective for informing citizens on issue campaigns which require voters to choose for or against a specific policy proposal vs. a choice between only two candidates who are usually differentiated by political party affiliation (with accompanying party platform of issues). Ackerman talks about how initiatives sometimes come with brochures to explain the legalese, reinforcing the need for D-Day-type deliberation for this type of democracy. But Presidential candidates from the major two parties usually adhere to a common set of party platform issues that are historically well-known and do not change drastically. Additionally, D-Day could improve citizen knowledge on issues, but this may not be enough to change their vote on a candidate given that there are only two choices in the U.S. two-party system (so would it be worth the cost if the result is the same)? **[Again, I think the pivotal issue here is to think about these problems dynamically: would having DD+PC in place change the character of candidates, change the kinds of appeals they made, change the degree to which electoral politics was organized more around issues than around personalities, etc.]**
3. Could D-Day be easily labeled as “political welfare” by those who are against it? Those against D-Day could make the case that it is only for those who: are poor (and need the money), do not keep up with the issues (not good citizens), or are less-educated? Could those who attend be stigmatized? **[The stress in a DD**

- system should not primarily be informational in the simple sense of transmitting facts and position, but *deliberative*: the dialogue is the pivot, and this should not bring in its wake any particular negative image.]**
4. Lack of neighborhood diversity and ability to speak freely – D-Day might be better positioned if conducted amongst non-neighbors; which would increase diversity and people’s willingness to speak freely, especially concerning politically-unpopular speech. In cities under 10,000 – everyone knows everyone else which could severely hamper the ability to speak freely on topics. **[This, of course, raises a much broader set of issues about the conditions for constructive/authentic dialogue and whether it is remotely plausible that this sort of setting will accomplish this for most people.]**
 5. Role of personal assumptions – Although D-Day can deal with issues, arguments and positions; but it is limited in dealing with personal assumptions (e.g. markets are always good, social justice is always good, religious issues, etc.)
 6. What if a candidate doesn’t play, like Arnold did? It didn’t stop him from getting 50% of California’s vote although he only participated in one public debate. Do voters (and politicians and strategists) sometimes prefer unknown candidate to a known one (who has built up enemies through their voting and behavior in office)? Would this play especially to those candidates who could afford to pay for expensive crafted ads without dealing with citizen questions? Could this hamper the effectiveness of D-Day? **[I think DD would work very differently if it were linked with patriot cards than if it were simply added to the current political system. Under a Patriot Card financing system, politicians would not have vast amounts of \$\$ to spend just because they were well-connected – they would still need to recruit dollars from voters.]**

Random Thoughts – These random thoughts do not need comments, I provide them in case anyone else wants to discuss them:

7. Issue extremism - Wouldn’t D-Day be plagued by the same problems as we face currently with one political party unceasingly contending an extremist stance? D-Day research uses non-partisan background papers, but real politics is no-holds-barred and frequently the “manufacture and creation” of the background is the dispute. Since citizens are not experts, they will likely have trouble identifying what is “real” science and what is “pseudo” science (e.g. global warming and cigarettes - despite overwhelming scientific evidence to the contrary). Fear and the creation of non-existent problems could still be manufactured. Attempts by the opposing party to highlight this “pseudo” science could be dismissed by the other party as mere politics. **[I think the issue is whether or not this problem would be intensified under a DD regime. It would be a problem, but perhaps less severe than now.]**

8. Is it still possible that political candidates could still rely on sloganism, over-generalizations, and “hot button” issues during D-Day? National candidates could rely on local officials to take any heat, and defer any question to “local context, control, and/or solutions.” Examples that comes to mind are Dean’s stance on guns, “guns is a state issue: gun control in urban areas, but not in rural areas” or Republican “local solutions” to “local problems.” An hour video on 2-4 topics with opposing candidates speaking, candidates can easily fill fifteen minutes of slogans and empty talk on each issue (they do it now quite well).
 - a. Devil in the Details – The national candidate could stay positive, general and above the fray; while the local officials would have to delve into the thorny details, specifics, and implementation.
 - b. Good cop / Bad cop - Wouldn’t this also be hampered by incentive problems (e.g. the Presidential candidate believes X, but we here on the local level support Y – either way we are still different than the other political party position of Z)? In this type of situation, the Presidential candidate would not be able to be held to the statements made by the local representative who could later be classified as “mistaken” or “misunderstood” the President’s views.
9. Costs of loss in political stability and predictability – A case could be made that D-Day would result in more political instability and a decrease in political predictability which could increase costs (e.g. for financial markets).
10. Why would D-Day participants who keep up-to-date with political issues and have a lot of political capital, be willing to endure a lot of questions and discussions by those who don’t? Wouldn’t it just be easier for them to ask a local party official one-on-one? I know a lot of people who would only listen to experts, and dismiss just about anything by a non-expert.
11. Two hours of video of Presidential candidates and two days of deliberation may not be much of an improvement for the cost vs. a few national debates over a couple hours that we have now – I could easily see people choosing the status quo over an hour or two of video of the candidates and some localized discussion. Recognizing the significant costs – maybe it would be easier and more deliberative to do this process over the course of a week – since five hours of candidate video is preferred to two hours. Companies and organizations could get publicity (and/or a small tax-cut) for providing volunteers, food, building space, video equipment, etc.
12. Promote negative campaigns – Could D-Day enhance the effect of negative campaigns, by providing an incentive to bring up and discuss these issues-to-death and to ensure that citizens know about these negatives of the opposing candidate?

13. Turning a day off into a “political work” day – more overwork for the country that is already way overworked (based on ILO figures)?
 14. Do the authors pre-assume too much coherence and consistency of national and local political platforms? This consistency may occur in Europe, but less so here.
 15. Excessive concentration on detriments of focus groups – Focus groups are also used to fashion a more efficient economy (and I’m sure some would argue the same for politics) that avoids providing goods or services that consumers don’t want. Given the extended space in the paper devoted to focus groups detrimental effects, to avoid being labeled a “focus group” hater, it might be wise to spend more time playing up the positive aspects to focus groups, and to it would be especially important to separate the “scientific instrument” from the “mindset and use” deployed by political strategists and capitalists.
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3. Chang

Bruce Ackerman suggests a new paradigm for campaign finance. As Erik points out, Ackerman considers the question how representative democracy can be rendered more deeply democratic.

In *Voting with dollars*, Ackerman proposes Patriot & the donation booth. I wonder, ‘what is the meaning of money for him?’ \$50 Patriot? Of course, I admit the agenda effect of his proposal, though. In his other proposals, for example, deliberation day and basic income & stakeholder grants, Ackerman uses money as a means to achieve more ‘real’ utopia. It seems to me that Ackerman regards politics (or political activity) as the transaction in the political marketplace. So, I want to ask him about the meaning of money in his proposal. Is it kind a commodification of ‘true’ democracy? **[Isn’t money here just a way of talking about allocating resources to political activity? Political activity involves mobilizing two sorts of resources: time/effort and material resources. The distribution across people in the ability to allocate time to politics is much more equal than the distribution of the ability to allocate other resources, so the Patriot card is a way of equalizing that way of contributing to politics. I don’t quite see what the problem is here.]**

Second, I want to discuss on a reconstruction of institutions to encourage more active and informed citizenship. Institutions really matter! But, as Ackerman says, “Patriot may empower citizens, but it cannot create them (p.33)” Maybe, that’s the reason why he proposes Deliberation Day. How to create a broader cultural enterprise to encourage more democratic participation? Again through another form of democratic institution such as D-Day? I think D-Day is really meaningful. But, I wonder, in his scheme, about the feasibility of radical third party’s success under American two-party system although Ackerman discusses on the merit of deliberation (pp.50-51 in D-Day). (Social choice theory reveals that “majority rule can fail to pick out a unique winner from the range of

possible public policy.” Ackerman, however, explains that voting cycles can be prevented if all voters place the competing options on a single dimension of value (p.50)). What’s a single dimension of value? How is it possible though deliberation? I think accepting differences should be distinguished from a single dimension of value. **[I think the issue here is the ways in which deliberation changes the ways in which conceive of the policy options. Ackerman stresses the ways in which deliberation increases the structuration of policy options – meaning basically the extent to which they are understood as falling along a coherent dimension of some sort. When this happens, then cycling can be avoided. But more generally, when policy arrays are rendered more coherent it is possible to engage in more coherent forms of trade-offs, compromises, policy innovation, etc., so that democratic will becomes more meaningful.]**

4. Matías D. Scaglione

*We take citizens as they are, not as they are supposed to be.
Ackerman and Fishkin, Deliberation Day (142)*

Ackerman and Fishkin (AF) proposal of Deliberation Day (D-Day) aims to solve “the problem of *distraction*... by providing a civic holiday that will focus the errant attention of *private citizens* and create a focal point enabling them to perform as *responsible citizens* in conjunction with their fellows” (160, emphasis added). The “private citizen” is “a political animal who seeks to modulate his commitments to the public and private good over time –sometimes choosing self-interest, and sometimes sacrificing it to the public good” and represents the majority of residents of Western democracies (150). The “problem of distraction” is a consequence of “competing hopes and aspirations” that divert the attention of the private citizens “from their sense of political responsibility” (160).

I think that AF do not provide a convincing argument for the “problem of distraction”, the crucial disruption that D-Day is supposed to ameliorate. The lack of “civic commitment” (or “civic engagement”, “civic concern”) appears to be an *exclusive* result of the *individual choice* of the private citizen and not an *expression* of his/her interaction with the *society* (see p. 160, again). Given that the time and energies are finite, the AF private citizen *rationaly* devote more time and energies to “the lots of other good things in life” (150), that is, rationally decides a level of ignorance of civic matters, and therefore, a level of civic commitment.

I would rather suggest another approach to the “problem of distraction”. It could be argued that the private citizens live in a world in which “civic commitment”, or, better, civic consciousness, is not precisely a virtue that the state and the capitalist institutions reward. **[But isn’t this precisely something which might be shifted by virtue of D-**

Day, especially when combined with Patriot Cards for political financing? That is, if civic commitment is a problem in an affluent market economy in which people are atomized and sumerist, then wouldn't at least part of the process of revitalizing civil society consist of creating opportunities and incentives for people to engage in civic activity? And wouldn't the combination of these two new institutions encourage that?] Furthermore, it could be argued that such civic consciousness is systematically and deliberately fought as long as it represents a potential threat to the reproduction of the *status quo*. **[This might be a reason why both Patriot Cards & D-Day would be opposed by powerful elites: they don't want civic engagement. But if this is so – if they oppose for this reason – this implies that these institutions would potentially be a basis for civic revitalization.]** How can we explain that half of the surveyed people in a poll conducted in January 2003 thought that Iraqis were among the 9/11 hijackers? It is a random convergence of “ignorance” –in the sense of AF– or there is something else? *Hypothesis:* A close scrutiny of the mass media since September 2002 (the G.W: Bush speech at the UN), along with the evolution of the poll results, give us sufficient evidence to understand how it greatly contributes to what we can call “ignorant opinion”, and, therefore, how it help to perpetuate massive lack of civic consciousness.

Is a D-Day solution appropriate under this alternative approach to the “problem of distraction”?

5. Adam

For the most part, I like Ackerman and Fishkin's Deliberation Day (henceforth DD) proposal. My major concern with DD is that although it raises the level of discourse and engagement among citizens, I'm not as sure it will change the behavior of politicians. In the example of widespread concern on environmental quality (pp. 69-71), I agree that this mobilization could force candidates to substantively discuss the issue(s). But what binds them to their stances and promises? Both candidates acknowledge the environment and offer concrete plans; one is elected and fails to do anything he promised. How does DD compel the politician to take his own rhetoric more seriously? Alternatively, what compels politicians and parties to really listen at all? If both parties have essentially unsatisfactory positions on free trade, I still have little option but to vote for one of them. **[Two thoughts here: 1) remember D-Day is combined with Patriot Cards which makes it easier for people to challenge candidates within parties, since incumbents would have much less of an advantage in fund raising, and this deviating from announced positions might become more costly for politicians. 2) it is sometimes argued that public transparency and clear public stands actually do constrain politicians because of (perhaps) the moral pressure of consistency. It is not that hypocrisy is always fatal to politicians, of course, but hypocrisy is an issue that impacts on people.]**

I think the authors would respond twofold: first, that the citizenry is much more informed under DD, and might not stand for such duplicity; secondly, that the institution of the Patriot dollars proposal would allow voters to very effectively punish a politician who

flagrantly ignored the promises of the campaign. To what degree does DD address politicians' non-compliance without the associated voting with dollars scheme? **[Good point: these may be mutually interacting proposals – one without the other will have much weaker effects than both together].**

Overall, I thought this proposal was interesting in the context of real utopias because it might be the only proposal to have stopped George Bush's election in 2000. As appealing as, say, Philippe van Parijs' basic income proposal is, there is no guarantee that it provides more civic engagement than we currently have (although I think it probably would). But DD really changes politics by attempting to level out age and class differences in political participation, alterations that could really shift the political landscape. Two elements that I find especially beneficial about DD: first, that the capacity to game the electoral college is reduced by needing to address the polity all at once on the same level. Secondly, that the opinions of young people are brought into the fold very quickly.

Is DD too politician-centric? Ackerman and Fishkin discuss the same benefit that Rogers and Cohen presented in 'Associations and Democracy,' the idea that 'the homogeneity of focus groups encourages the emotional expression of in-group solidarities while the heterogeneity of D-Day encourages the elaboration of public-regarding reasons.' (180) Rogers and Cohen offered us a scenario where, in addition to this 'other-regarding' behavior within diverse groups, the groups themselves have agency in enforcing policy. D-Day heightens the level of discourse and deepens understandings, but the voters still work through the arguably unreliable conduit of politicians. The citizen has more agency in the process than before by virtue of better formed opinions, but is still reliant upon the implementation of programs from elected officials and the attendant bureaucracy.

[Perhaps the pivotal missing ingredient here is *parties*: In some political systems it is parties which provide the crucial forms of discipline over politicians, and the main role of constituencies is in the possible democratic control over parties. Maybe what needs to be thought through here is the ways in which DD might strengthen or weaken parties]

This is not to besmirch DD: I agree that it's still far better than what we have, and surprisingly feasible compared to most proposals we've examined in this class. And I think this is where the voting with dollars proposal really deepens the process, by gradually widening the political spectrum and legitimating third parties.

One criteria we've used in assessing real utopias is scalability, and DD seems to do well on this count. Unlike, say, John Roemer's proposal for coupon socialism and wholesale redistribution of assets, DD could be tried and then rescinded. However, I think it would need concurrent, nationwide implementation to really achieve its goals. Would piecewise deliberation day, happening in 20 states, still reap the benefits? **[I would think this could even be tried on a local or state level for local and state elections. This seems entirely scalable as an idea.]**

6. Stuart Meland

I would like to discuss the following points:

- 1) I wonder if the existing plans for child care are insufficient
- 2) I wonder if the inclusion of children in D-Day would both boost overall attendance and promote civic awareness among America's youth

First, I must clarify what I see as a factual error on page 100 where the authors state, "Recall that we are not giving Americans a new day off for D-Day, the school buildings would be empty as the government closes for business on President's Day. Since the buildings would be empty anyway, there is no 'opportunity cost' involved in using them for deliberative purposes..." This is not true with regard to school closing since children would receive two days off of school instead of one. This additional day would have to be added at the end of the school year which involves an assortment of additional costs.

These two days off of school also present a problem with regard to child care. On page 102 the authors suggest that the burden of child care on parents can be minimized by "artful scheduling arrangements" that involve sharing child care responsibilities with a friend or relative. This plan assumes that neither of these individuals work or that they are able to take an extra day off of work to care for the children. If this practice is widespread, D-Day becomes an unofficial two day holiday instead of one.

On the whole, children are conspicuously absent in the current plans for Deliberation Day. We are told that at the end of D-Day, participants will be wondering, "how their kids managed to spend the day" (33). Later, the authors suggest that "the new civic holiday will become a great market opportunity for teenagers from 15 to 18 years of age" (102). I have to ask why kids are not somehow included in D-Day? A national Deliberation Day should be an opportunity for kids to either participate in civic discussions of their own or observe adults in such discussions. If D-Day were held on Thursday and Friday, schools could spend the first part of the week studying American history, democratic governance, etc. In the days prior to D-Day, children all over the nation would come home with various civic-related homework assignments, art projects, and questions about our system of governance. I believe that by involving children in D-Day, or even D-Week, parents will feel obligated to participate. If children are simply given two days off school, parents may be more likely to plan a vacation. Why not use D-Day as an opportunity to teach civic responsibility to future generations and include entire families in the festivities?

[This is a nice additional dimension to the idea of Deliberation Day and civic renewal. One might even want to see this as a component of a broader agenda of youth empowerment in democratic decision-making more broadly. There was a period in London, for example, where there was a "youth council" with some real powers to discuss civic matters of specific relevance to youth and to be involved in discussing alternative solutions.]

On the childcare issue: this strikes me as a logistical detail that would require a solution but which doesn't really bear on the core idea of the proposal or its feasibility.]

7. Linda M. Zech

Deliberation Day describes a very appealing and plausible method of initiating citizens into a habit of fuller participation in normal politics. The processes and procedures devised to make this new holiday workable are carefully considered and carefully considered in light of other experiences (Deliberative Polls, mock and actual juries, the Iowa Caucuses etc.)

What I do find troubling is that the system will, without careful modification, exclude individuals and candidates. Assuming that concerns about differences in education will not prevent full participation, and that those who are simply shy to participate will be few, other groups should be given consideration.

First, many Americans have significant differences in their ability to make use of written materials. They may suffer from learning disabilities, language barriers are vision problems. To accommodate these differences, the materials distributed on candidates' opinions before Deliberation Day should be made available in alternative formats – such as audio and video. (perhaps mailed upon request, kept at libraries or other buildings or on the internet). These barriers may be less of a problem in the small sessions – unless the problems are physical or psychological in nature (vision and hearing impairments, agoraphobia, etc.). With careful planning - plus additional expense - readers, hearing aids, text services, translators, etc., can – and should -- be made available to encourage full participation. Those with impairments may need extra time beyond the rigorous limitations imposed by the day's very full schedule. In the large group sessions individuals with special needs may again need some kind of equipment or an aid to make the experience meaningful. Again time may need to be allotted to give those with physical impairments time to move from one area to another.

There are examples for such accommodations in our court system. Juries must be accommodated for a variety of limitations. But it is not just important that these issues be considered and provisions made for dealing with them, but that these accommodations be advertised ahead of time so that all will feel welcome. The elderly, the infirm and those with specific disabilities are an important part of the citizenry with very important concerns that need to be a part of the dialogue and deliberation. We have come a long way in tearing down barriers that exist for such individuals - this promising new proposal should include a design that continues this progress. **[I think these suggestions flow naturally from the logic of the system, as would other kinds of accommodations – like Spanish language deliberations in certain parts of the country.]**

I am also concerned that the focus on a Deliberation Day with only two candidates – Republican and Democrat - would cause a further entrenchment of our current two party system, and would render other voices mute. Who would even attempt a third party candidacy – whether serious about a run at the office or simply interested in providing alternative views on issues not reflected in the party platforms of the main parties? While there is a reference to the expansion of the Deliberation Day to a Parliamentary Day, there are substantial differences that would attach to an American setting. Perhaps the time frame would be too constrained to allow a large number of candidates to participate, but there should be some guidelines and some consideration made in the procedures for when and where a third party candidate might be made a part of the new holiday proceedings. The impact on the entire process as envisioned by the authors would affect these other views and the candidates' ability to make use of the more attentive and informed citizenry that might result as the cycle of Deliberation Days repeated. I would like to see more attention given to the impact the process might have on other parties and how they might be made a bigger part of the process. **[This is an important issue and it is not obvious how it can be dealt with in the context of the intensive event proposed here as a solution to the civic revitalization problem. Of course, some of the virtues of public deliberation would be accomplished even if the political spectrum were restricted – the enhancement of broad ranging discussion of issues, the greater attention people would give to the news, etc. -- but restrictions to a two-party format would also undercut the sense that this was in fact a way of deepening democracy. Especially if this is combined with the Patriot Cards – which could contribute to an expansion of small parties in particular places – the agenda of the deliberation needs to be more open than this.]**

Finally, one other comment that has nothing to do with exclusion. There are a large number of citizens who do not have Presidents Day off. As a consequence, both the opportunity and real costs are likely to be higher than anticipated. While that should not render the costs overwhelming, it seems important to be as attentive the actual impact on the treasury and the public as possible.

8. Eric Freedman

One of the questions these readings on enhancing electoral democracy bring up is that if we see the citizens as autonomous, rational actors, why do we need institutions that encourage them to become involved in politics? Why don't they just get involved on their own? **[You can be a rational actor and not be involved because of collective action failures. This is a chronic problem in political contexts: I would participate more if other people participated more, but there is no device for assuring me of this and thus no one participates very much. There are also standard arguments about the costs of participation: participation will go up if it is less costly to participate, and then in the aftermath of participation, I develop a greater taste for participation.]**

Of course, one could respond by saying that citizens are not, in fact, rational actors. For example, certain citizens may have a strong interest in voting against a candidate proposing to build a toxic waste dump in their community, but instead they devote much of their time to watching football. One might say that in this case these citizens have traded in a long-term gain (not breathing toxic fumes in the future), for a short-term benefit (the pleasure of watching football). How, then, do we define rational behavior? Is it maximizing short term-benefits as they arise or is it maximizing long-term gain? If we choose the latter definition, we might say that these citizens' true interest is in taking the long-term perspective, and that someone, or some institution, needs to help them overcome their shortsightedness to help them achieve this interest. **[This is precisely one of the reasons for the deliberation day proposal – it would allow for more vigorous public dialogue around political issues and thus enable people to change their own views through discussion. Deliberation should improve the extent to which people reflect on their own choices and prioritize them more effectively.]**

There is a problem with this argument, however. If citizens cannot determine their own best interest, than who is supposed to assume this role? Why will someone else be any better at determining it than the person, him- or herself? In relation to these readings, the question then becomes, why do we need to give people a patriot account? Nearly everyone in the country can spare a mere fifty dollars once every four years to fund their favorite candidate. If they choose not to, who are we to say that they are not acting in their best interest? Or if they don't take the time to become educated on the issues at stake in the campaign, who are we to say that it is in fact in their best interest to learn more by going to deliberation day? **[The pivotal purpose of the Patriot card, I think, is to find a way of providing public funding of political campaigns (so as to reduce the role of Big Money) while at the same time assuring popular democratic control over the process of selecting candidates. And there is also the problem of how to do this in a way that satisfies constitutional constraints on the free speech interpretation of campaign contributions. The Patriot card accomplishes these goals simultaneously. The Patriot card is a solution to the campaign finance problem where we want to drive big contributions – including big self-contributions from rich people who fund their own campaigns – out of the game. Your implicit proposal – everyone can just spend their own money with a \$50 limit – would not accomplish this.]**

I think there is an answer to this question, but it requires that we give citizens more credit than I have been giving them in the last two paragraphs. Going back to the toxic dump example, it may be that they in fact do understand their interests (at least better than anyone else does), but that they are unable to mobilize around the dump issue because of the free-rider problem. They do in fact want to stop its construction, but they assume that if they step up and fight it, no one else will join in the struggle. They have good reason to be skeptical of their citizens' civic spirit, as well: Why would any rational person put energy into fighting the dump if they could get away with sitting at home and watch TV, knowing that someone else will fight against it for them. The distrust caused by this free-rider problem essentially paralyzes the community members from acting. They know their best interests but are unable to act on and achieve them.

I think one can make a similar argument in favor of the proposals in this week's readings. In terms of campaign finance, poorer citizens would naturally be skeptical that

their meager 50-dollar contributions will have any great effect next to the million dollar contributions made by corporations and the rich. However, they might be quite willing to contribute if they knew enough other citizens (with similar tastes in candidates as they had) would do so, so as to counteract the influence of the corporations. That is what Patriot accomplishes: by forcing everyone to contribute (since they cannot use their Patriot dollars for anything else), the free-rider problem is overcome. **[Patriot Cards don't actually force you to spend the card – you can just ignore it as well]** Similarly, citizens may be hesitant to get informed about political issues if they think their votes won't make much of a difference. "So what if I inform myself about these issues?" someone might think. "If everyone else is voting based on the TV ads, how will my vote make a dent in this huge mass of ignorant votes?" But if they knew that others would be getting informed as well, they might be more willing to do so themselves, particularly if they thought this help them form a coalition of likeminded, informed voters that could successfully elect a candidate who represented their interests. Thus, a strong case can be made that citizens currently do act pretty rationally, but that the free-rider problem convinces them not to expend the energy and resources to get involved in a political campaign. The Patriot system and Deliberation Day help overcome this free-rider problem and enable citizens to realize the interests in practice.

9. Patrizia Aurich

The main concern of the authors of "Voting with Dollars" is to change the resource allocation problem in financing political parties. Noting that the matter of money in politics is all too often related to or at least conceived of as a corruptive business the authors suggest two new mechanisms: the secret donation booth and the patriot dollars. In recognizing the potential of private resources Ackerman and Ayres plead for a reform of the existing institutions of private financing rather than changing it towards public funding. **[This is public funding: the Patriot Card allocation of \$50/person is paid for by taxes. It is public funding but not public allocation to candidates.]** One of the main reasons for this is their belief in the allocative abilities of markets (Ackerman/Ayres: 14). They want the citizens to decide which party is worthy of funding, while being able to contribute to the preferred parties funding through patriot dollars. This, so Ackerman and Ayres, makes the political arena more responsive to the judgements of the citizens. Of equal citizens that is, because everybody can only spend the 50\$ voucher, apart from donating to a secret donation booth, which reduces the incentives to donate in order to become favored by the candidates.

It is true, that the distribution of 50\$ vouchers only to spend on campaign finance does reduce the inequalities in funding a political preference, but only if there is a secret donation booth. Otherwise the rich could still use their monetary power too easily. **[How could the rich use their money so effectively? The Patriot Card infuses a huge amount of money into campaigns and, remember, a candidate is prohibited from accepting private funding if he/she accepts patriot card funding. You are either in or out of the system. This makes it much more costly for the rich to use their own money, and furthermore, once the Patriot card system is in place, the refusal of a**

candidate to use patriot money would itself become an issue in campaigns. I don't see how there is all that much room for the rich to opt out of the system]. In that sense Ackerman and Ayre are right in making the case for a mixed system (Ackerman/Ayres: 33). But I wonder if the patriot dollars can actually achieve a more just allocation of the resources and whether public funding should have to be so abandoned. In order to answer this the question needs to be raised: what does the market mechanism really achieve? **[The word "market mechanism" is really being used metaphorically. This is more just a question of decentralized individual allocation. It isn't really a market in that the patriot money is not being "exchanged" for something; it is given to candidates for their campaign, but there is no quid-pro-quo.]**

Ackerman and Ayres assume that the choice given to the people in form of their patriot dollars changes the experience of political life. They believe that because people are invited to take part in the election campaign, the campaign will receive a new social meaning, enhancing a culture of citizenship such as "citizens engaging in democratic deliberation" (Ackerman/Ayres: 15). Why would the opportunity to give money to a candidate enhance more deliberation than giving a vote to the candidate on election day? **[I don't think that the voucher per se generates a huge increment of deliberation, although it now gives voters two sources of influence on elections rather than one, and it may help increase the identification of voters with candidates. The real device for the deepening of deliberation is the deliberation-Day proposal]**I cannot recognize a deeper incentive to engage in considering more deeply which candidate to choose in having the opportunity to spend a voucher than in giving a vote. There is no greater sacrifice or any other pressure to consider the spending more carefully, especially since the voucher is received completely free. Ackerman and Ayres assume that because of the ability to spend a voucher on candidates advertising will receive more attention (Ackerman/Ayres: 15), but at the same time they attribute the American citizens an idleness to spend energy on political learning. Where do they see the incentive to change such idle behaviour in just giving people one more chance to vote? Because the voucher doesn't really seem to be more than a prevote for it entails no more advantage to the citizen than the vote. Ackerman and Ayres also believe that with this type of private financing, which raises more money than before, the candidates will be more able to overcome the knowledge barrier (Ackerman/Ayres: 27). But don't we already have many, many efforts of the parties to reach the public? Has this changed any of the willingness to engage in political deliberation? I am not sure, that more promotion will strengthen the willingness to engage. The outreach level might increase, but the audience will still be as idle, if they don't get pulled in by the candidates in a different way than the already much trodden path of advertising. What we need are people who really engage, who make up their minds instead of being influenced by a hundred more adverts. There would need to be more incentives either financially or in giving peoples voice a stronger say and therefore make them feel more responsible in order to achieve a more serious engagement in political learning.

There is one other aspect about the supposed market mechanism: the authors say it makes the candidates more responsive to the citizens judgement. **[Remember: the comparison**

here is between current patterns of funding, in which appeals to the Rich & Powerful are needed to get funding for candidates vs a situation in which you have to appeal to ordinary citizens both for funding and for votes. It is against the backdrop of contributions by the rich that the proposal is seen as a gain for citizen involvement and deliberation.] But if they can advertise so much, how can the public receive knowledge of their failures? How can the people get information about smaller parties as alternatives if these parties don't receive as much money to advertise? **[smaller parties would still be on a much more equal footing than at the present.]** How will they be able to distinguish lies from truth?

I think the patriot dollars don't really improve equality in being able to fund candidates, they just encourage more people, and probably the ones who wouldn't have done so before at all, to join the financing. (I would really like to know how Ackerman and Ayres got to the number of 5 billion \$ to be raised through patriots. What kind of predictions of funding behaviour were made in order to get this result? **This is simple: the funding is through taxes. \$50 x 100 million voters = 5 billion dollars. Taxes pay for the cards but individuals allocate the cards]** But in order to ensure genuine information I wonder if it wouldn't be useful to have some sort of public funding for every party regardless their size with private funding only possible through the secret donation booth. Really engaged citizens could still spend their money, even if it isn't that much. In order to enhance the culture of civic engagement I think there would have to be done something more to provoke citizens to engage.

10. Jay Burlington

Issue: Impact of residential segregation on Deliberation Day

I found Ackerman & Fishkin's *Deliberation Day* exciting to read and think about. I was on the whole convinced of the merits of deliberation (so structured) in better informing the electorate and thereby increasing the substantive quality of political discourse and discussion. If the public could be convinced of its benefits relative to the cost of facilitating it, it seems to me that it would be very hard for politicians of most stripes to take a position against a Deliberation Day holiday. (How could one be publicly against demonstrably improving the quality of our democracy? It would be practically un-American.)

But while I am on the whole convinced of the merits of Deliberation Day for the national political discourse, I am not sure how well it would work to inform and transform citizen viewpoints in homogeneous neighborhoods. Residential segregation by class and race (on the variable race, see for example *American Apartheid* by Massey & Denton) are quite prominent and salient facts of American life, and to the extent that these are indicators of homogeneity of political beliefs, it seems the quality of deliberation would be less than optimal.

To the extent that this is the case, would it be better to do more of a random assignment of citizens (within reason given geographic constraints on commuting) to a number of regional Deliberation Day sites to counteract this potential reification of beliefs and opinions that homogeneity of groups would seem to foster?

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Minor proofreading note for *Deliberation Day* manuscript: On page 29 (our pagination, which doesn't correspond to the pagination listed in the Table of Contents), a sentence in the third full paragraph reads "So long as voters cannot cast their ballots in their local communities, each campaign requires lots of local workers to encourage voter turnout."
→ This does not make sense to me. Should the word 'cannot' be removed from the sentence?