

GLOBAL DIRECT DEMOCRACY PASSPORT

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Issued at the 2009 Global Forum on Modern Direct Democracy
in Seoul, Korea

- 9/14 (Monday) Opening ceremony and plenary session
- 9/15 (Tuesday) International day of democracy
- 9/16 (Wednesday) Concluding plenary

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Table of Content

- 03** Personal Information Page
- 04** Editors' Note
- 09** The Global Forum Information:
Agenda, Directions, Host Organizations, Participants
- 22** The World of Direct Democracy (Map)
- 24** The State of Global Direct Democracy Report
- 60** Notes

Personal Information Page

GLOBAL DIRECT DEMOCRACY PASSPORT HOLDER INFORMATION

Name:

Given names:

Citizenship(s):

Date of birth:

Place of origin:

Native language(s):

Spoken language(s):

Favourite food:

Favourite drink:

Participation in popular votes since:

Main reason for taking part in the 2009 Global Forum:

Date of issue: 13.09.2009

Issued by the 2009 Global Forum on Direct Democracy Host Committee

Welcome Address

EDITORS' NOTE:

An updated democracy for the globalized 21st century

Dear Global Direct Democracy Passport Holder,

A warm welcome to the 2009 Global Forum on Modern Direct Democracy in Korea/Asia and our cordial congratulations to you as one of the very first holders of a Global Direct Democracy Passport. This small booklet is intended to guide you to four exciting and essential days of briefings and deliberations at this world gathering of activist professionals from across the globe. This passport, containing key information on the schedule, the participants and the issues at stake, shall later be a continuous reminder and reference of modern participative and direct democracy to the world.

We have come a long way. Just twenty years ago, many of us were still living in the midst of a regime change turmoil which replaced autocratic regimes with basic democratic rules. This is true in the case of Korea, the host country of the 2009 Global Forum on Modern Direct Democracy, as well as many other countries across the globe - especially in South East Asia, Central Europe and Latin America. At that time we learned that democracy needs our active participation in order to be realized. However, there was and is no

blueprint on how non-democratic countries can be transformed into democratic ones and how our democracies can become stronger and more sustainable - or simply put: more democratic!

But let us be very clear on one point: proliferation of democracy is never popular with those in power, whether they have been elected into office or not. The reason for this tendency is that democracy not only calls for popular rule in principle but also the separation of powers in practice. We need, in fact, a much more fine-tuned separation of powers in the future on all political levels - locally, regionally, nationally and transnationally. Hence what we need to learn together is how to shape our tools of democratization. In order to be able to democratize our democracies we must make our representative political systems more representative - by introducing and strengthening the procedures and practices of modern direct democracy.

Modern direct democracy is a vigorously updated version of popular power. By overcoming the limitations of both classical assembly democracy (e.g. old Athens) or early parliamentary democracy (also known as the Westminster system) under which sovereignty was exercised by small groups of citizens or elected officials, we have to establish democracies for the globalized 21st century. Nowadays, political citizenship implies taking responsibility in many ways: as electors in elections, agenda-setters and decision-makers in popular votes on substantive issues. Furthermore, migration, globalization and the borderless digitalization of our spheres of communication indicate that our predominantly indirect and nation-state-based democracies have to be upgraded - by becoming more direct and more transnational.

The 2009 Global Forum on Modern Direct Democracy is the second world conference dealing exclusively with the challenging issue of a democratized democracy. Ironically, it is Korea, a divided country situated in the middle of a region still struggling with modern concepts of democracy, that has become a power house for the development of participative citizen structures and shares its democratization experiences with the rest of Asia and the world. At this year's Global Forum we want all participants to take account of the Korean experience and to map the procedures and practices of modern direct democracy in Asia and worldwide. In addition, this Forum offers unique opportunities to network and to establish criteria and recommendations for citizen-friendly direct-democratic structures on all political levels.

Well-designed and citizen-friendly direct-democratic procedures are, indeed, of critical importance at this time, when the global financial crisis has reached every corner of the world, making the poor even poorer and putting modern democracy to its hardest test thus far. The 2009 Forum shall formulate concrete procedures of direct citizen participation, which can strengthen global financial governance. It is our sincere hope that it becomes both possible and necessary to involve everybody in a polity in the policy-making of such polity. Furthermore, we believe that as current financial markets and globalized economic structures have shown the limitations of a nation-state-based polity, we have to develop transnational strategies to balance our markets. In other words, a super-capitalistic world requires a super-democratic framework in order to keep its functionality.

Such a globalized super-democracy is not just a favorable vision

but a concrete mission to pursue systematically. What may be a gradual democratization may produce a revolutionary form of democracy as citizens across the world come to understand that they themselves are the most important players in the process. But be aware of the idea that a strong popular electorate will and shall be able to replace the roles of political parties, parliaments or governments in a democracy; it is the contrary! Under more direct and transnational forms of modern democracy, both elected and non-elected intermediaries will have even more important roles than today, not as decision-makers but as facilitators and communicators, prepared to assist all of us, the citizens, in our important role as agenda-setters and decision-makers on substantive issues.

As a Global Direct Democracy Passport holder, you are warmly invited to access the most comprehensive network of direct democracy activist professionals around the world. This passport gives you an overview of the key materials and discussions and invites you to actively prepare and participate in the hard work ahead. Start by completing the personal information form on page 3, then check out the updated Global Forum schedule, directions and participant list before diving into our global survey, which not only features facts and trends on the use of direct-democratic procedures, but also presents a new classification key to the most important forms and types of modern direct democracy and introduces one of the most significant future issues - the prospects for the development of genuine transnational direct democracy.

Our world is at a crossroad. The crises of the past and present offer lessons from which we can learn how our methods to find

consensual solutions for common problems have succeeded or failed. One such lesson learned is that we need to democratize our democracies much more than before. The 2009 Global Forum on Modern Direct Democracy provides us with a unique and comprehensive starting platform - let us put ourselves in pole position and together empower ourselves to face current and future challenges in democratization. Again, welcome to Seoul and welcome to the Global Direct Democracy Forum!

Yours sincerely,

Bruno Kaufmann,
President
Initiative and Referendum
Institute of Europe

Lee, Jung-Ok,
Chairperson
Committee for International
Cooperation Program of KDF

2009 Global Forum Information

AGENDA

Date/Time	Events	Location
9/13 (Sunday)	<p><u>Day1. MODERN DEMOCRACY IN KOREA</u></p> <p>Full Day Briefing Tour to DMZ (Demilitarized Zone) to understand of Korean history, current affairs and future prospects of modern democracy</p> <p>19:00 The Global Forum on Modern Direct Democracy arrives in Seoul: Welcome and handing-over reception from the host of the 2008 Global Forum, Switzerland, to the 2009 Host, Korea, given by the Swiss Embassy in Korea</p>	DMZ
9/14 (Monday)	<p><u>Day 2. OPENING CEREMONY AND PLENARY SESSION</u> (Chair: Prof. Jung-Ok Lee)</p> <p>09:00 Registration</p> <p>09:15 Introduction Video on the 2008 Briefing Tour in Europe and the Global Forum on Direct Democracy in Aarau/Switzerland</p> <p>09:30 <u>Welcome addresses</u> - Fr. Sei-ung Ham(President of KDF) and the leader of a political party - Video addresses by Hans-Rudolf Merz (President of Swiss Confederation), Arnold Schwarzenegger (Governor of California State/USA) and Diana Wallis (Vice-president of EU)</p>	Seoul Press Center

10:00 **Introduction statement** “The Democratization of Democracy - a Global Task”
Bruno Kaufmann(President/IRI-Europe)

10:15 **World Tour to Modern Direct Democracy**
 - Regional Assessments & Outlooks
 - Asia: Ramon Casiple/Institute for Political and Electoral Reform(IPER) in the Philippines
 - Europe: Theo Schiller/Marburg University in Germany
 - Latin America: David Altman/Universidad Católica in Chile (by videolink)
 - North America: / New America Foundation in USA

10:45 **Opening Keynote address:** Modern Direct Democracy in times of financial turmoil
 - lessons and keys towards sustainability
 by Urs Rellstab, Deputy Head of Economiesuisse

11:10 Q&A

11:35 **Into new territory:** Why Korea could pave the way towards a better democracy across the globe. Reflections by former United States Senator Mike Gravel

11:50 **The Global Forum Process:** Introduction to the Korea Forum Note and Action Plan and the five thematic workshops

12:00 End

13:00 Lunch

(Chair: Bruno Kaufmann) Hiwon Village

14:30 **Into the World of Modern Direct Democracy** - Brief stories, reports and updates from across the world

16:00 Q&A

16:30 **The Democracy of Asia’s Emerging Democracies**
 - Working program presentation for Asia by Raj Liberhan(IRI Asia & India Habitat Center/India)

16:45 **Direct and Participatory Democracy in Korea** - Presentation by Prof. Seung-Su Ha/Jeju Univ.

18:30 **Reception hosted by Eun-duk Cultural Center**

9/15 (Tuesday) Day 3_INTERNATIONAL DAY OF DEMOCRACY (Chair: Bruno Kaufmann) Hiwon Village

09:30 **Introduction of the thematic workshop and participants**

10:00 **Thematic Workshops - Session 1**
 a) Education Forum
 b) Local DD Forum
 c) Activist Forum
 d) Transnational Democracy Forum
 e) Administration and Infrastructure of Modern DD

12:00 Lunch

13:30 **Thematic Workshops - Session 2**

18:00 **Public event on the International Day of Democracy** with brief statements (including video messages) and cultural elements

9/16 (Wednesday) Day 4_CONCLUDING PLENARY (Chair: Bruno Kaufmann) Hiwon Village

09:00 **Reports** from the thematic forums & Discussion

11:00 **Concluding plenary keynote:** “Popular Sovereignty & Globalization” by Adam Lupel (Int’ l Peace Institute/USA)

11:30 **Into the future of modern direct democracy**
 - **plans and priorities**
 - “Bringing American Initiative & Referendum Process Forward” :
 on the way from Korea to California,
 by Robert Stern (Center for Governmental Studies/USA)

12:00 **Towards the 2010 Global Forum on Modern Direct Democracy**
 Conclusion note & Action plan

12:30 End

13:00 Lunch

14:00 Free afternoon

19:00 **Farewell Reception** at Bong-eun Temple

Seoul

Bong-eun Temple

9/17 (Thursday) DEPARTURE DAY

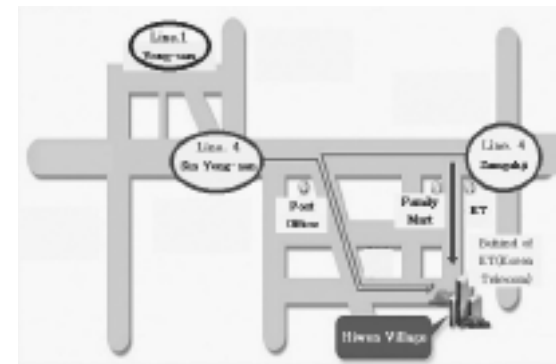
Departure of most international participants from Incheon Airport

DIRECTIONS

Forum Venue & Accommodation



International Conference Hall, Korea Press Foundation 20th FL.
 (100-750)1-25, Korea Press Foundation,
 Taeyongno, Jung-gu, Seoul, Korea



Hiwon Village

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 Website: <http://www.highwon.kr/> (Only in Korean)

THE GLOBAL FORUM ON MODERN DIRECT DEMOCRACY IS HOSTED BY

IRI Europe - Europe's Global Direct Democracy Think-Tank

www.iri-europe.org

The Initiative and Referendum Institute Europe (IRI Europe) is a transnational think-tank dedicated to research and education on the procedures and practices of modern direct democracy. Modern direct democracy facilitates popular sovereignty within the framework of a representative system by giving every citizen the right to initiate new proposals (e.g. new laws or constitutional amendments) and to take part in the final decision-making process. As modern direct democracy has become much more common in Europe and worldwide, IRI Europe conducts research activities, offers educational programmes and is involved in analytical and consultancy work.

IRI Europe is a non-partisan, non-profit association with headquarters in Marburg, Germany and brings together some of the best experts and practitioners of the initiative and referendum process across Europe and the world. IRI Europe is part of the emerging global network of IRI think-tanks, which also includes the U.S.-based IRI and IRI Asia.

Korea Democracy Foundation

www.kdemocracy.or.kr

Korea Democracy Foundation (KDF) was created with the legislation of Korea Foundation Act on June 28, 2001, which was passed by National Assembly with the belief that the spirit of democracy movement should be extended, developed and acknowledged as a critical factor in bringing democracy to Korea. The foundation is a non-profit organization set up for the purpose of enhancing Korean democracy through a variety of projects aimed at inheriting the spirit of the movement.

To realize its vision “to become a model integrated service institution for democracy research and development in Asia,” KDF works together with all those around the world working to develop democracy, promote human rights and spread peace. KDF is expanding diverse collaboration activities for Korean, Asian and world democracies and connecting with more global citizens who are still suffering.

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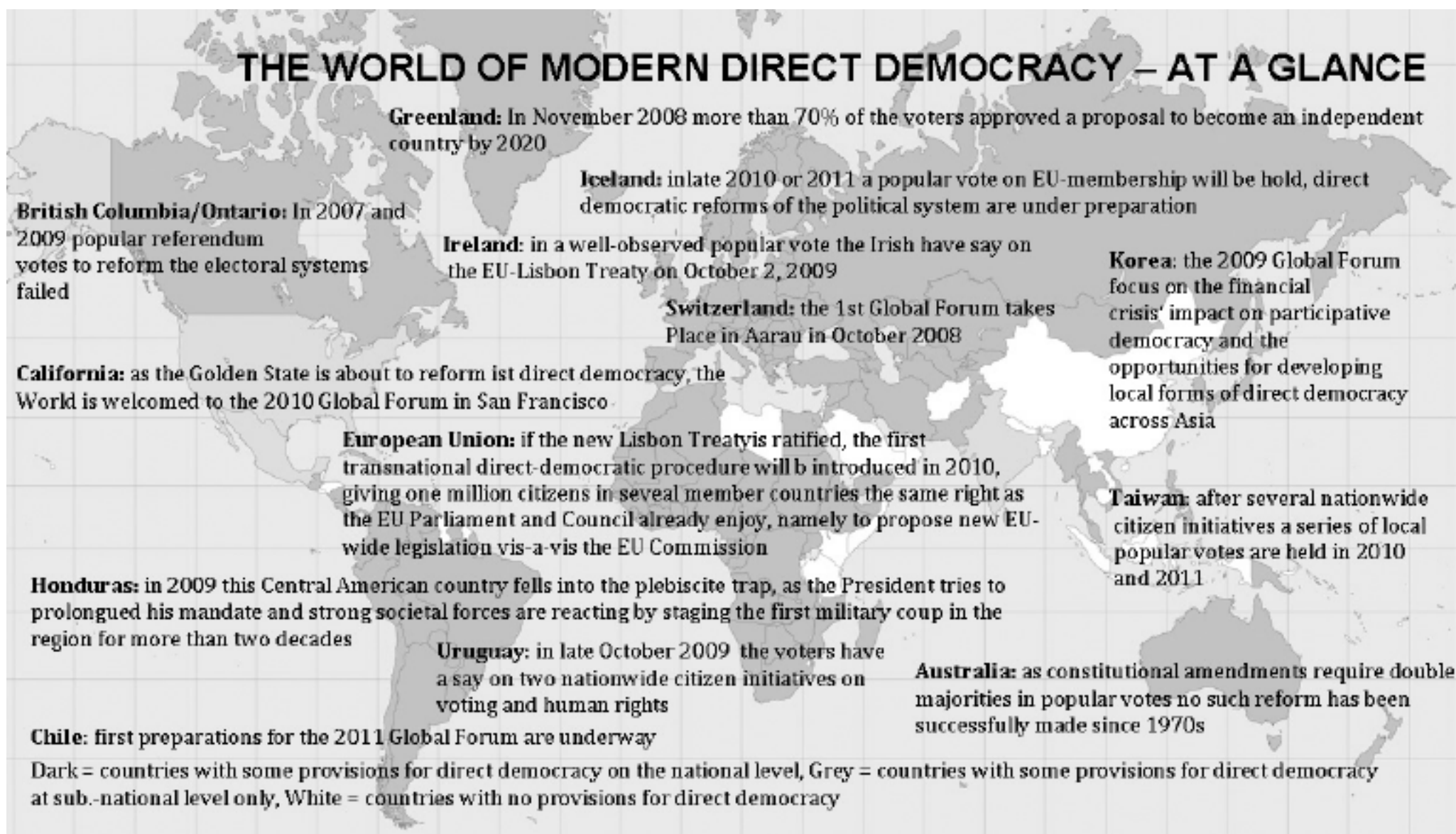
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THE WORLD OF MODERN DIRECT DEMOCRACY



STATE OF GLOBAL DIRECT DEMOCRACY REPORT 2009

A brief introduction to the worldwide practice of initiatives, referendums and popular votes on substantive issues

When citizens in Argentina gather signatures to change the school law of their country, when the people of Taiwan vote on whether their country should apply for a UN membership, or when Italians collect half a million signatures to put a parliamentary legislative act to a referendum - we talk about the use of direct democracy. At times, even votes to recall an elected official, as in the cases of the Californian Governor back in 2003 and the Jeju Governor in Korea this year, are also categorized as the practice of direct democracy. The direct democracy label is also applied when presidents or other authorities call for a popular vote, a plebiscite - with a recent example being Honduras, where an attempt to call for a re-election led to a military coup in summer 2009.

The world of direct democracy has definitely grown dramatically in recent years. By now, what may be labelled as direct-democratic procedures have been introduced in most countries, and the number of the so-called direct-democratic practices has increased

greatly. Consider this statistic: more than half of all nationwide popular votes on substantive issues in history have taken place within the last twenty-five years!

All this poses a challenge to our knowledge and understanding of the use of language, classifications and terminology of direct democracy. As the number and use of direct-democratic procedures grow, the possibilities for confusion and misunderstanding do so as well. Therefore we are in need of a global overview of the available procedures and the concrete experiences, as well as a coordinate system for the proper use of language in the field of modern direct democracy.

This Global Passport survey aims to offer some inputs and ideas to all of these efforts. But as such assessment has not existed before, please use this survey as an invitation to discuss, give feedback and examine the state of worldwide direct democracy with all the other holders of Global Direct Democracy Passports. Finally, let us know your opinion on the information presented and do not hesitate to point out mistakes and misunderstanding. This is a work in progress!

Towards a Grammar of Modern Direct Democracy

The Korea Democracy Foundation (KDF) and the Initiative and Referendum Institute Europe (IRI Europe) invite all participants of the 2009 Global Forum to become part of the process of creating a common language of direct democracy, in preparation for a much more intense global debate: the options and limits of direct citizen participation in the political agenda-setting and decision-making

processes.

This introduction offers the very first universal coordinate system, covering all procedures of popular votes on substantive issues. Popular votes on persons and parties, such as recall procedures, for example, are not included. While the present classification system is the result of a multi-year development process, its implementation, practical use and operationalization are just about to begin. The basic grammatical structure of modern direct democracy is based on the division of popular vote procedures into three different types: initiative, referendum and plebiscite. The initiative comprises procedures in which the author of the ballot proposal is the same as the initiator of the procedure, whereas the referendum comprises procedures in which the author of the ballot proposal is not the same as the initiator of the procedure. Finally, the plebiscite comprises procedures in which the majority of a representative authority is both the author of the ballot proposal and the initiator of the procedure. There exist other procedures and practices, however, that complicate this classification and fall under the grey zones between the different types. With this in mind, the following briefing is intended to guide you step by step through the approach taken by this system.

Typology of popular vote procedures

Popular vote procedures can be considered as political tools, of which different types can be identified: initiative, referendum and plebiscite. Just as a hammer or a screwdriver exists in different forms, each initiative, referendum and plebiscite also exist in

different forms for different applications. A referendum can be, for example, triggered by law or initiated by citizens. In the following, different forms of popular vote procedures and their characteristics will be described.

We use the term “popular vote” to designate a voting system on a substantive political issue practiced by voters, as opposed to one practiced by elected representatives. The term does not indicate the type of the designated procedure, and no particular definition of direct democracy is implied.

What is typology of popular vote procedures?

It is a classification of popular vote procedures into different types and forms according to their common characteristics.

Why do we need such typology?

First of all, typology is needed to avoid confusions in the discussions of direct democracy. Confusions arise when different types of procedures are given the same name, such as when the word “referendum” is used indistinguishably for authority-controlled popular votes and for real referendums. Inversely, a good deal of confusion results if the same procedure is given many different names, such as when an agenda initiative is also called the people’s petition, popular initiative and people’s proposition.

Secondly, different countries use different juridical terminologies. Without typology, it is not possible to compare the repertoire of popular vote procedures between countries.

What is the aim of this typology?

The aim of this typology is to classify the existing procedures in not only a formal but also a realistic way. The words “initiative” and “referendum” designate two different types of procedures; the use of these procedures are controlled by minorities except the use of an obligatory referendum, which is determined by law. The word “plebiscite” is used to designate a third type of procedure: authority-controlled popular votes (plebiscites). The distinction between referendums and authority-controlled popular votes is crucial; whereas referendums are tools for the people, plebiscites operate as tools for power holders to legitimize, mobilize or to bypass other representative institutions, or to disengage from tough policies.

What does this typology look like?

This classification of popular vote procedures includes votes only on substantive issues and not on people (e.g. recall elections). It distinguishes popular vote procedures according to who assumes each of the three roles below:

- 1) the author of the ballot proposal = a group of citizens, a minority of a representative authority, a representative authority;
- 2) the initiator of the procedure = a group of citizens, law, a minority of a representative authority, a representative authority;
- 3) the decision-maker = the whole electorate, a representative authority;

In Table 2, the forms of procedure are listed under column 1. The following columns indicate who the author of the ballot proposal is (column 2), who has the right to initiate the procedure (column 3), and who has the right to decide the outcome of the procedure (column 4). The last column denotes the type of procedure in question. Citizen- and law-initiated procedures are in color (green for the initiative, yellow for the referendum) and procedures triggered by an authority are in grey.

What about the forms and types shaded in grey?

Genuine, direct-democratic procedures are designed for the electorate as instruments of agenda-setting and decision-making on substantive issues. However, in political reality, many procedures, especially practices of popular vote processes, are partly or fully controlled by elected authorities. These mixed forms, which combine indirect and direct democracy, are shaded in our classification table in grey. While procedures initiated by a minority of an elected authority (e.g. one-third of parliament in Denmark or Sweden) may be the initiative or the referendum type, procedures initiated by the majority of an elected authority are labelled as the plebiscite type of popular vote procedures.

Table 1.

TEN FORMS OF DIRECT-DEMOCRATIC PROCEDURE

popular or citizens' initiative	PCI
citizens' initiative + counter-proposal	PCI+
agenda initiative	PAI
authorities' minority initiative	AMI
popular or citizen-initiated referendum	PCR
popular referendum + counter-proposal	PCR+
referendum proposal	PPR
authorities' minority referendum	AMR
obligatory referendum	LOR
plebiscite	ATP

Abbreviations

The abbreviation for the form of procedure consists of three characters. The first character designates the initiator of the procedure (P = popular/citizens; A = authority; L = law) and the last character indicates the type of procedure (I = initiative, R = referendum, P = plebiscite). The middle character specifies the form of procedure (A = agenda, C = citizen, M = minority, O = obligatory, P = proposal, T = top-down). The "+" sign indicates that the initiative or referendum procedure is combined with a counter-proposal.

Table 2.

Form	Author of the proposal	Initiator	Decision-maker	Type
citizens' or popular initiative	a group of citizens	the same group	the whole electorate	INITIATIVE
+ authorities' counter-proposal	a group of citizens	the same group	the whole electorate	INITIATIVE
agenda initiative	a group of citizens	the same group	a representative authority	INITIATIVE
authorities' minority initiative	minority of a representative authority	the same minority	the whole electorate	INITIATIVE
citizen-initiated or popular referendum	a representative authority	a group of citizens	the whole electorate	REFERENDUM
+ counter-proposal	a representative authority	a group of citizens	the whole electorate	REFERENDUM
referendum proposal	a representative authority	a group of citizens	a representative authority	REFERENDUM
obligatory referendum	a representative authority	Law	the whole electorate	REFERENDUM
authorities' minority referendum	a representative authority	minority of a representative authority	the whole electorate	REFERENDUM
authority-controlled popular vote / plebiscite	a representative authority	a representative authority	the whole electorate	PLEBISCITE

When agenda initiatives and referendum proposals are addressed to and decided by a representative authority, they may lead to a popular vote, but this is often not the case. Despite this aspect, these two forms of procedure are included in our typology.

All in all we get three types and ten forms of popular vote procedures; around them we shall be able to categorize almost all existing procedures and practices across the globe.

The following provides a brief definition on each of the types and forms.

Type 1. INITIATIVE

The initiative is the right of a minority, normally a specified number of citizens, to propose to the public the introduction of a new or renewed law. The decision on the proposal is made through a popular vote.

Note that the agenda initiative fits into this type of procedure only with respect to its initial phase. What happens next is decided by a representative authority.

Form 1.1. PCI Citizens' initiative (popular initiative)

This procedure is initiated by a prescribed number of eligible voters. The sponsors of a popular initiative can force a referendum vote on their proposal (assuming that their

initiative is formally adopted); they may also withdraw their initiative (if there is a withdrawal clause).

This procedure may operate as a means of innovation and reform: it allows people to step on the gas pedal. In principle, initiatives enable people to get what they want.

Form 1.2. PCI+ Citizens' initiative + authorities' counter-proposal

The authorities have the right to formulate a counter-proposal within the framework of a popular initiative process. Both proposals are then decided on simultaneously by popular vote. If both proposals are accepted, the decision on whether the original proposal or the parliament's counter-proposal should be implemented can be made by means of a special deciding question.

Form 1.3. PAI Agenda initiative (popular initiative proposal)

The agenda initiative is the right of a specified number of eligible voters to propose to a competent authority the adoption of a law or measure; the addressee of this proposal and request is not the whole electorate but a representative authority. In contrast to the popular initiative, it is this authority who decides how to handle the proposal.

An agenda initiative can be institutionalized in a variety of ways; for example, as an agenda initiative without popular vote, as an agenda initiative followed by a consultative or

binding plebiscite, or as a popular motion (“Volksmotion”). The popular motion can be the equivalent of a parliamentary motion; if adopted, it can also be treated as a popular initiative (this is the case in the canton of Obwalden).

Form 1.4. AMI Authorities’ minority initiative

The authorities’ minority initiative is initiated by a minority of a representative authority (e.g. one third of the parliament), who can put its own proposal on the agenda and let the people decide on it.

Type 2. REFERENDUM

A referendum is a direct-democratic procedure which includes popular vote on substantive issues (ballot proposal) such as, for instance, a constitutional amendment or a bill. The voters have the right to either accept or reject the ballot proposal.

The procedure is triggered either by law (i.e. obligatory referendum) or by a specified number of citizens (i.e. popular referendum) by a minority of a representative authority (i.e. authorities’ minority referendum).

Form 2.1. PCR Popular or citizen-initiated referendum

This procedure refers to the right of a specified number of citizens to initiate a referendum and let the whole electorate decide whether a particular law should be enacted or

repealed. This procedure acts as a corrective to the parliamentary decision-making process in representative democracies and as a check on the parliament and the government. The people (i.e. those with the right to vote) have the right to rule on decisions made by the legislature. Whereas the popular initiative works like a gas pedal, the popular referendum gives people the option to step on the brake.

Form 2.2. PCR+ Popular referendum + counter-proposal

This procedure combines a popular referendum against a decision by an authority with a referendum on a counter-proposal. If both proposals are accepted, the decision between the two can be made by means of a deciding question.

Form 2.3. PPR Referendum proposal

Referendum proposal refers to the right of a specified number of eligible voters to propose the calling of a popular vote. The proposal is addressed to a representative authority (usually the parliament - local or national) who then decides on further course of action.

Form 2.4. LOR Obligatory referendum

A law (usually the constitution) requires that certain issues must be presented to the voters for approval or rejection. A

conditional obligatory referendum means that a specified issue must be put to the ballot only under certain conditions (e.g. if more than half but less than four-fifths of the parliament accept the proposal). An unconditional referendum occurs without exceptions.

Form 2.5. AMR Authorities' minority referendum

This procedure refers to the right of a minority of a representative authority to put a decision made by the majority of the same authority before the voters for approval or rejection. This procedure enables the minority group to step on the brake and give the final say to the voters.

Type 3. PLEBISCITE

A public consultation controlled “from above,” a plebiscite is a procedure in which “powers that be” (e.g. the president, prime minister or the parliament) decide when and on what subject the people will be asked to give their opinion. Usually, such polls are merely consultative (i.e. their results are not formally binding on the parliament or government). In reality, plebiscites serve as instruments which those in power use in an attempt to reinforce or salvage their own power with the help of the people. Their aim is not to implement democracy, but to provide a kind of legitimacy for decisions they have already taken.

Form 3.1. ATP Authority controlled popular vote (plebiscite)

An authority-controlled popular vote, or plebiscite, is a popular vote procedure whose use is determined exclusively by the authorities.

The time of reshaping global democracy

After having defined and categorized the key types and forms of modern direct democracy, let us have a look into the procedures available and practices experienced across the globe.

In recent years, the worldwide use of direct-democratic instruments have been shaped by a series of power-challenging popular votes in Asia, Europe and Latin America. Many of those votes, which were introduced from above, were examples of plebiscitarian failures while others could not be validated because of overwhelming limitations and hurdles in the process. In many countries, however, including Venezuela, Taiwan, Hungary, Ireland and Bolivia, governing presidents and governments were defeated in their endeavour to obtain majority support for their political proposals. While the Venezuelan president Hugo Chavez first lost and then won a plebiscite to enhance his powers, a similar attempt in Honduras produced a military coup in middle of 2009. In Taiwan, two popular initiatives in favour of a closer affiliation with the UN failed to pass the participation quorum and thus the positive decisions were

invalidated. In Hungary, two citizen initiatives against the government's plan to introduce new health and university fees was successful, provoking a dissolution of the social-liberal coalition of Prime Minister Ferenc Gyurcsany.

Other more mature democracies experienced roller coaster style popular voting tendencies, as was the case in Italy, where yet another reform package to the electoral law failed to reach the 50 percent turnout quorum, or in Switzerland, where the citizens had to vote in September 2009 on the abolishment of a general initiative right, introduced by popular vote as late as 2003. In the North American West Coast, the citizens of many states, including California, Oregon and British Columbia, were involved in reforming their democracies after earlier failed attempts at reform. In Europe, everyone has been awaiting the second Irish vote on the European Union Lisbon Treaty, due to take place on October 2, 2009.

Recent developments have brought another wave of important local and subnational experiences with initiatives and referendums: in Germany, the people in Berlin for the very first time could vote on a substantive issue, and in the United States, the most recent election cycle was accompanied by hundreds of state-wide measures covering many different issues.

As we near the end of the first decade of the new millennium, a growing number of citizens around the world

are speaking out, adding their own questions to the political agenda and becoming increasingly involved in the decision-making process on substantive issues. Over the past twenty-five years, participatory democracy has experienced an enormous boom. More than half of all the referendums and plebiscites ever held in history fall into this period. Only very few countries now remain without forms of direct-democratic participation at national or regional levels.

Nine out of ten countries in the world now have one or more instruments of modern direct democracy. These instruments include the genuine direct-democratic right of initiative and referendum, but in many countries also include the possibility of removing elected representatives before the end of their mandate (recall) and also the plebiscite, which is more an instrument of the rulers than of the citizens.

The trend is clear: direct-democratic instruments are an essential part of today's representative democracy. In many cases, however, as a result of unfavorable background conditions - such as limited freedom of information and lack of free expression of opinion, or impractical direct-democratic procedures - mean that initiatives and referendums are not necessarily seen as a positive complement to representative democracy, but rather as a competitor or even a threat.

For example, if a 50 percent turnout quorum is required before a referendum result can be declared valid, the usual

“Yes” and “No” campaigns may easily be joined by calls for a boycott. If the boycott action is successful, the “non-voters” will effectively be counted with the “no” voters, the turnout quorum will not be reached, and the democratic outcome will be perverted (the result of the vote is invalid, even if a clear majority of the actual voters have voted “Yes”).

The risks of misuse

The risks of misuse also require our attention. Decidedly undemocratic regimes may make use of the plebiscite and attempt to manipulate the opinion-forming and decision-making process by organising a “top-down” popular vote (perhaps bypassing an elected parliament). Other problems can also occur when financially powerful interest groups exploit initiative and referendum laws in the absence of compensating provisions, which can help to ensure a free and fair referendum process.

Seventy-five nationwide popular votes on substantive issues have taken place worldwide in the last two years, bringing the total number of nationwide popular votes to 1,516 since 1793, the year when six million French citizens obtained an unprecedented opportunity to vote on their new national constitution. Thus, the idea of bringing in the people around an issue is not a new phenomenon: it has made its way around the world.

When, at the end of the 19th century, the constitutional founding fathers of Australia were faced with the question of how to create a democratic political system for their newly established country, they borrowed ideas from American and Swiss immigrants: they adopted the American bicameral system - which had also been a model for the young Swiss federal state - and they introduced the mandatory constitutional referendum on the Swiss model. Since then, Australian voters have been able to vote on 49 issues at the national level and on other 29 in the eight federal states.

In demanding the introduction of direct rights of participation in political decision-making in the 1890's, the farmers of the U.S. state of Oregon quoted from a report by the New York journalist John W. Sullivan on the development of direct democracy in Switzerland. Their demand was accepted, with the result that since 1902 no less than 340 popular initiatives have gone to the ballot in referendums in this west coast state. A century after that blossoming in Oregon, the idea of direct democracy as a major component of a modern representative democracy took strong root in other parts of the world.

Table 3.

National popular vote on substantive issues practical across time and space (1793-2009)

time	Europe	Asia	Americas	Oceania	Africa	Total	Average
1793 -1900	58	0	3	0	0	61	0.6
1901 -1910	14	0	0	4	0	18	1.8
1911 - 1920	21	0	3	5	0	29	2.9
1921 - 1930	36	1	2	6	0	45	4.5
1931 -1940	40	0	7	6	0	53	5.3
1941 -1950	36	2	3	11	0	52	5.2
1951 -1960	38	13	3	5	9	68	6.8
1961 - 1970	44	22	4	7	19	96	9.6
1971 -1980	116	50	8	14	34	222	22.2
1981 1990	129	30	12	7	22	200	20.0
1991 - 2000	235	24	76	15	36	385	38.5
2001 - 2009	157	28	39	20	32	276	30.0
Total	924	170	160	100	151	1516	7.0
Share in %	60.9%	11.8%	10.5%	6.6%	10.2%	100.0%	

The global trend towards the growing introduction of direct-democratic procedures challenges, as well as the practical use of them, challenges both the governmental and non-governmental actors concerned, as they have to adapt to these developments within the framework of an existing representative democracy. These actors include:

- governments and administrations: involved in the management and administration of direct-democratic procedures, as well as in the ongoing debates on the potential and the limits of direct democracy;
- parliaments and political parties: important players in the preparation and passing of legislation and regulations on the initiative and referendum process;
- courts and members of the legal profession: occupants of a central role in many countries in assessing the use of direct-democratic instruments;
- think-tanks and service-providers: independent or contractually engaged professional organisations with the task of ensuring that other professional groups are better informed in their dealings with direct-democratic procedures; and
- academic researchers and media professionals: key actors when it comes to observing, analyzing, investigating and commenting on direct-democratic events.

As the countries with citizen-triggered popular votes illustrate, civil society groups are often the most highly motivated specialists for taking the development of democratic instruments forward and using them frequently and enthusiastically. The existence of an efficient interface between civil society groups and the authorities, as well as the quality of the dialogue between them, are of the utmost importance. There is a growing emergence worldwide of civil society groups that specifically focus on supporting and fostering the spread of direct-democratic tools, with many of these groups already having had considerable practical experiences with these tools.

Asia & Oceania

Asia is struggling to strengthen its democratic forces after a period of autocratic backlash, as seen in Thailand, Malaysia and Bangladesh. A great potential for the democratization of Asian democracy exists but also existing are strong forces and interests to hamper such development. Countries and regions especially worth keeping a close eye on include Korea, Japan, Malaysia, Taiwan, the Philippines, Thailand, Bangladesh and India, where recent - often successful - electoral processes have been accompanied by proposals and requests to strengthen popular vote opportunities on substantive issues. Furthermore, hopeful signs have emerged in Mongolia,

where a peaceful shift of presidential powers happened in 2009.

In Korea, a series of controversial domestic and international topics, including the Free Trade Agreement issue and the plans for a cross-country canal construction, was followed by profound requests for a more participatory democracy. Taiwan found itself in a similar situation: the Free Trade Agreement with China led to signature gathering campaigns by the Taiwanese people to trigger a popular vote. In the Philippines and Thailand, their existing procedures of modern direct democracy - such as the citizen initiative (PH) and the mandatory constitutional referendum (TH) - were the ingredients of a democratic reform debate, whereas in India, several states, including many urban areas, have just begun to introduce new forms of participatory - but not yet direct - democracy in recent years.

The new experiences at the subnational level may encourage the possibility of reform at the federal level as well. Further southeast, several countries in Oceania have a wide range of direct-democratic provisions, including popular initiatives in New Zealand and mandatory constitutional referendums in Australia. The most practical experiences, however, have been reported from small island-states such as Palau, Tokelau and New Caledonia, where national independence and post-colonial autonomy

are issues to be decided by the electorate.

North America

Across the Pacific Ocean, many U.S. states have witnessed dozens of citizens' initiatives (i.e. propositions) make it to the ballot box along with the recent general election in late 2008. As done previously, many groups used these initiatives in an attempt to produce spin-off effects for their candidate or their issue. In California, among other issues, planning (California Property Owner and Farmland Protection Act), transportation (funding), high-speed railways, education (funding) and new taxes (on wealth) were on the ballot. Another important item was gay marriage, which had been deemed legal and allowed by a court decision in the spring of that year. In Oregon, voters got the last word on a building law ("Measure 49") and a constitutional amendment to fund healthcare for children. Further north, the citizens of the Canadian province of British Columbia, voted a second time in four years on a proposed change of their electoral system from the first-past-the-post (UK-style) to a single, transferable voting system. Once again, the reform vote failed. In Ontario, a similar process to change to a mixed-member proportional system led to a referendum on October 10, 2007. In this historic vote (the first popular vote on a substantive issue in the province since 1921), Ontarians

opted for the status quo. The existing first-past-the-post system earned 63.3% of the ballots and the turnout reached 53%.

The current financial crisis has provided an opportunity to re-assess the functioning of the direct-democratic procedures across North America - especially in the most populous state of California. The next Global Forum, planned to be held in the first week of August 2010 in San Francisco, will certainly offer many possibilities to get acquainted with the developments in this part of the world.

Latin America

In Latin America, the 1980s were characterized by the return of civilian government control after a prolonged period of an authoritarian military rule. However, the hope of many people that a representative democracy would better serve their interests was disappointed and the discontent with the political parties and representative government grew. Such widespread disappointment contributed to the emergence of direct democratic procedures in Latin America, as it had happened in Switzerland in the second half of the 19th century and in the U.S. at the turn of the 19th century. However, strong popular demands for direct democracy are not widespread. In Latin America, most of the new constitutions adopted since the late 1980s included direct democratic rights, as

well as plebiscites and sometimes the right to recall (e.g. in Bolivia, Columbia, Peru, and Venezuela).

With respect to direct democracy, the Latin American countries can be divided into different categories:

- 1) Modern direct democracy is well-established and used regularly.
- 2) Modern direct democracy is newly established and is usually coupled together with plebiscitarian forms of participation; until now it has been seldom or never used.
- 3) Modern direct democracy is not yet established.

Only Uruguay can be placed in the first category. It is the only Latin American country with a well-working direct democracy of a long tradition, and as such, it is a special case. It is one of the few countries that adopted the Swiss model of direct democracy rather than the Italian or French model. Accordingly, it implemented the following forms of procedure: obligatory referendum, popular initiative with counter-proposal, authorities' minority initiative for constitutional issues, and the popular referendum for statutory matters. And, as is the case in Switzerland, Uruguayan authorities do not have the right to plebiscite.

The emergence of direct democracy can be caused by various processes, short and long-term, normative and

other. In Uruguay the development of direct democracy went hand in hand with processes of concentrating executive power. Between 1985 and 2009 direct-democratic procedures have been used 17 times; there were 7 referendums, 5 popular initiatives, 3 obligatory referendums and 2 authorities' minority initiatives. Comparing Switzerland and Uruguay, we can observe similarities as well as differences. In Uruguay direct democracy was introduced from above in a strongly unitary and centralized state; in a decentralized federal nation of Switzerland, direct democracy was introduced from below. Although both countries use the direct-democratic procedures in a typical way, the legal design of these instruments differs considerably between the two countries. In Switzerland merely 2% and 1% of the electorate are required to bring about a popular initiative and a popular referendum, respectively, whereas in Uruguay 10% and 25% of the electorate are needed. In practice, this contingency means that the tools of direct democracy in Uruguay are limited only to strong actors, whereas in Switzerland less powerful actors can also make use of them. This is one of the reasons direct democracy is exercised much more frequently in Switzerland than in Uruguay.

Africa

Many countries across Africa have inherited some basic

principles and forms of direct democracy from their former colonializers. This is especially true for most of the former French colonies in Western Africa, where referendums “from above” (French-style plebiscites) are both part of the constitutional arrangements and also, more seldomly, of the political practice. But there is also another growing practice of instituting referendums - as seen in South Africa, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Zambia and Madagascar - which has made a significant contribution to greater democratic stability. In North Africa, strong Islamic leaders have misused the referendum instrument in many ways. In 2007, President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt granted his people only seven days to discuss and agree on a list of 34 constitutional amendments. Less than 30% of the registered voters took part in the plebiscite. Despite such experiences, which lie outside a free and fair framework, many Africans forecast a much more frequent use of direct-democratic instruments in the near future: the Eastern African Community - a regional intergovernmental organisation with five member states - plans a transnational referendum to be held at some time after 2010 on the establishment of a political union in East Africa. An even more extensive direct-democratic event is envisaged by the Pan-African Council and the All-African People’s Organisation: the two groups have called for a pan-African popular vote on a union government for 53 states encompassing a population

of over 800 million.

Europe

The majority of direct-democratic events are reported still from Europe, where most countries today have initiative and referendum processes at least on the local and/or regional levels. On the other end of the spectrum, the European Union, composed of 27 member-states, is deeply involved in an effort to bring the citizens onto the transnational political stage. As the majority of all national legislations now originate at the European level, a transfer of participatory democratic instruments to the relevant legislative level has become a key reform necessity. This is not so easy in practice, as the ideas of national and popular sovereignty frequently clash with the need to make the European Union more democratic. Nevertheless, the ongoing constitutional debate in Europe has produced many transnational activities, which may impress even the long-term critics of the European integration process.

As early as 2004, the EU heads of state and government agreed to include the principle of direct democracy in the then-proposed constitutional treaty. While this so-called constitution did not pass the popular vote test in all member states - the French and Dutch voted against it - the participatory principle survived to become part of the new Reform Treaty, which will be the subject of a lengthy

ratification process across the EU in the years to come. Article II-8b.4 of the Reform Treaty provides for the right of one million EU citizens to propose a new European law or regulation.

This is the agenda initiative (PAI) procedure, which does not give rise to the possibility of a pan-European popular vote. But even before any regulation for implementing an initiative had been drafted by the EU, at least twenty transnational European Citizens' Initiatives were launched between 2006 and 2009, addressing issues such as human rights, energy and European democracy.

A brief assessment of these twenty pilot initiatives shows that the new instrument is being used by many various groups from different sectors of society, including politicians, human rights groups, conservation organizations, economic foundations, and broad alliances of non-governmental groups. The concept of the European Citizens' Initiative, however, is still new and the culture and practice of an initiative are not yet fully developed in many European countries; several initiators are still calling their attempt to collect one million signatures a "petition."

Furthermore, the fact that a regulation on implementation does not yet exist means that all kinds of methods for collecting signatures are being used, including the simple registration of names on the Internet without clear identity verification. At the same time, it is undeniable that the

Internet offers a unique transnational platform for launching and conducting such initiatives. Interestingly, most of the initiatives launched so far understand the need to publish their information in as many European languages as possible.

This early but dynamic development of transnational direct-democratic practice offers many opportunities, both for academics and political practitioners, to test and assess the first steps towards a transnational direct democracy. In the near future, however, it will be essential to carefully establish a democratic infrastructure beyond the raw tool of the initiative. This will include some kind of European electoral management body that will assist, test and follow up with the European Citizens' Initiatives, as well as implement a comprehensive voter education program across the region.

In the last decade, Europe has made its first steps towards becoming a modern transnational democracy. The integration process serves as a prime case study of practical democratization beyond the nation-state - hence a preview of what is likely to happen around the globe in other contexts. This direct-democratic experience includes almost 50 nationwide popular votes on European issues in 27 European countries.

As popular votes on substantive issues have been prevalent in many European nations over a long period of

time, the effects of popular votes in Europe on its citizens have recently become a subject of extensive research. The results of these comparative and empirical studies are encouraging. Citizens in charge of important decisions become far better informed than people without such voting opportunities. Moreover, a team at the European University Institute of Florence has shown that referendum votes by European citizens predominantly deal with the subject matter at hand: “Direct democracy has fostered a high degree of politicisation of integration,” according to political scientists Andrew Glencross and Alexander Trechsel at European University Institute in Florence.

Under reasonably well-designed and citizen-friendly circumstances, direct-democratic procedures can deliver precisely what is most deficient in a quasi-transnational polity such as the EU today: an intense dialogue between the institution and the citizens, a feeling of ownership of the politics by the voters, and a solid legitimacy of the decisions made at the transnational level.

Table 4.

INTRODUCTION OF DIRECT-DEMOCRATIC INSTRUMENTS AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL IN SWITZERLAND

Mandatory referendum(LOR)	
1848	Introduction of mandatory constitutional referendum
1949	Introduction of mandatory referendum for urgent, general federal decrees which are not based on the constitution
1977	Introduction of mandatory referendum on international treaties for accession to international organisations
Optional referendum(PCR)	
1874	Introduction of optional legislative referendum
1921	Introduction of optional referendum on international treaties; extended in 2003
Citizens' initiative(PCI+)	
1848	Introduction of the initiative for total revision of the constitution
1891	Introduction of the popular initiative for a partial revision of the constitution

The discussion of transnational direct democracy should, of course, be embedded in the contexts of wider issues, such as basic human and civil rights, the rule of law,

regional and possibly overlapping transnational entities, manifold levels of autonomy, as well as structures and support necessary for deliberative international processes. In contrast to the local and national levels, in which a broad set of direct-democratic instruments is already known and (mis)used, it would be ideal to launch the European level of direct democracy with a starter set of initiative and referendum instruments, such as the proposed European Citizens' Initiative (the agenda initiative) and the mandatory constitutional referendum, as a way of engaging the people from the very beginning in a new process of democratization.

Turning back to evaluating the prospects of direct democracy at the national and subnational levels across Europe, an overview of existing direct-democratic procedures in Europe shows that three-quarters of the countries are familiar with popular votes triggered by the ruling authorities - the so-called plebiscites. Moreover, almost half the countries have introduced the democratically more legitimate tool of constitutional referendum: unlike in the prevailing plebiscite, whether or not the citizens shall have a say is determined not by the will of the authorities' majority, but the rule of law. Just one-third of the European countries practice the form which most enhances democracy and power-sharing: citizen-initiated popular votes.

People enter center stage

Dear Global Passport Holder,

At the beginning of the new decade, we stand on nothing less than a (super-)democratic imperative. Either we will be able to democratize democracy in a direct and transnational way or it will inevitably lose its charismatic potentials developed under the last 30 years.

A look back to the first months of the year 2009 can illustrate this. We find ourselves in Reykjavik, the capital of Iceland. On a bitter cold, wintry Saturday, about 10,000 people are gathered at Austurvöllur, the main square in Iceland's capital. A hundred days have passed since Iceland's first-class banking system, which in just a few years garnered a turnover of ten times the national gross domestic product, had imploded and had to be nationalized. The crash threw the Icelandic middle class into the worst economic crisis since the country's independence in 1944 and made a large part of the population unemployed and deeply indebted. Now, the weekly protest proclamation is taking place for the 17th time in succession, organized by the "Voice of the People," an Icelandic citizens' platform. One of those attending suggests to the crowd that they should return home only when the government would step back, a new parliamentary election be announced and the chair of the

Central Bank resign. The triumphant cries of the people signal assent. Long days and nights of protest ensue until finally, one morning, at half past three, an ear-deafening noise erupts. The Icelandic people hug each other as Hordur Torfason, a musician and one of the coordinators of the democratic movement, says: "We have triumphed and this is only the beginning."

The Icelanders in fact succeeded in implementing a democratic revolution one hundred days after the outbreak of the national finance crisis: the government got their hats, the Central Bank chair was finally dismissed and the requisite early elections of the Allthingi, the Icelandic parliament, took place in late April. The replacement of the responsible personnel alone, of course, would not constitute a democratic revolution: the winter protest of Reykjavik also stimulated a constitutional process, which, as Iceland's President Olafur Ragnar Grimsson said, should put "people at the center" and bring about a modern representative democracy with direct democratic rights to the North Atlantic island. An additional element in the democratic revolution in Iceland was that the question of membership in the European Union, always avoided by those previously in power, suddenly took on great relevance. In late July 2009, newly elected Prime Minister J?hanna Sigurdardottir could deliver the Icelandic EU membership application to the Swedish Presidency of the

Union. In this way, little Iceland sets an example for the big world of how a timely response to a financial breakdown should look: it needs to be more democratic ? more direct and transnational.

To link these needs and requirements with our everyday local and regional experiences is one of the key tasks to address at the 2009 Global Forum on Direct Democracy in Korea.

NOTE

THE GLOBAL FORUM PROCESS

The premier Global Forum on Direct Democracy took place in Aarau, Switzerland in October 2008. It brought together practitioners, activists and professionals from across the globe and featured a world tour of direct-democratic hotspots. Special thematic forums and public events covered educational issues, developments in North America, Latin America and Asia, as well as the importance of initiatives and referendums in the European integration process. While the 2009 Forum is taking place in Korea/Asia, future forums are scheduled to take place in the U.S. in 2011 and Chile in 2012.

In recent years, many states around the world have introduced direct-democratic procedures; in Europe, there has been a massive increase in the use of popular rights since 1989, and within the framework of the European Union, consideration is being given to the first ever implementation of a transnational instrument of direct democracy - the European Citizens' Initiative. Since 1990, initiative and referendum procedures have been introduced in nearly all the countries of Latin America; in Asia, too, citizens in more and more countries are now able to take part in decisions on substantive political issues.

As a result, there is a growing focus, not only within politics, but also in the fields of administration, academia, media and civil society, on the qualitative aspects of modern democracy and questions are being asked about the legal potential and limits of modern direct democracy. The Global Forum on Modern Direct Democracy gathers professionals from politics, government, academia, civil society, business and media, and is hosted by IRI, a special think-tank on citizens' rights, together with many of its partners including the Korea Democracy Foundation.

This global process explores the grounds for a worldwide network and aims to achieve various goals, which include:

- preparing a **global inventory** of the procedures and praxis of citizens' rights;
- launching a **public debate** on the potential and the limits of direct democracy within the process of European integration;
- presenting ideas and proposals for a **global curriculum** and agenda in the fields of education and research;
- exploring the foundations and next steps for the establishment of a **World Democracy Forum**, a new permanent meeting place for the development of global modern direct democracy.

Interview

Joe Mathews, Los Angeles

Journalist

Why are you involved in activities on modern direct democracy?

I report on California politics, and direct democracy is at the center of politics in my state. I also blog about direct democracy around the world.

What are the key challenges for the further democratization of our democracies?

The opposition to direct democracy by elites. And in my state (and country), we've seen poorly designed rules and process for ballot initiatives have undermined support for direct democracy. Reforming direct democracy is crucial to preserving it in the U.S., but there's no constituency for reform. That's a major challenge.

What do you expect/wish from the 2009 Global Forum in Korea?

To learn more about how direct democracy is practiced around the world, particularly in Asia. And to find best practices that could be applied to reform efforts in the U.S. and in California, where a constitutional reform process is underway.

I also hope to lay the groundwork for a future global forum in California.

Angelika Gardiner, Hamburg

Democracy Activist

Why are you involved in activities on modern direct democracy?

I think it is our basic right as citizens to be involved in the political decision-making process.

What are the key challenges for the further democratization of our democracies?

We need transparency on all political levels to fight manipulation of the masses, greed and corruption. Political awareness should be taught more thoroughly in schools throughout the world to come to a common understanding that we, the people, are the employers of all those politicians. The power we lend them is not there for them to do as they please.

What do you expect/wish from the 2009 Global Forum in Korea?

More and better networking.

David Altman, Santiago de Chile

Political Scientist

Why are you involved in activities on modern direct democracy?

Research and professional interests and personal motivations.

What are the key challenges for the further democratization of our democracies?

Although each democracy has its own native and particular problems, it seems clear that some troubles, such as civic disaffection, alienation, and apathy, cross most democracies in a rather even way. Direct democracy offers a window of opportunity to tackle some of these contemporary evils. Yet, at the same time, it would be naive to believe that direct democracy is a panacea for all these shortcomings.

What do you expect/wish from the 2009 Global Forum in Korea?

Three main points: A. To exchange ideas and facts of direct democracy with practitioners and academicians from the most diverse corners of the world. B. To strengthen both the formal and informal network of people interested in the subject. C. To show the particularities of the new wave of direct democracy in the Latin American continent. I will not be able to participate on the spot but will surely follow and contribute by the modern means of communication.

Saskia Hollander, Utrecht

PhD. Student at Radboud University Nijmegen

Why are you involved in activities on modern direct democracy?

I am writing my thesis on modern direct democracy and focus on the factors that explain the recent rapture for using and implementing direct democratic institutions in Europe. In doing this, I aim to go beyond the conventional agency-level explanations that explain the usage of DD-institutions in terms of motivations and behaviour of political actors and argue that structural constraints imposed by (a.o.) processes of Europeanization, regional integration and globalization need to be taken into account as well, since they increasingly affect the availability and range of national political choices. I focus on these processes both in terms of institutional constraints and in terms of the process of political transfer, the latter implying that such structural constraints upon national polities can also come in a more discursive way in terms of the international and supranational of institutional “best practices” and norms.

What are the key challenges for the further democratization of our democracies?

I believe that the main challenges for contemporary democracies are imposed by processes of transnationalization. Due to these processes, new layers of authority are being created, due to which decision- and policy-making processes

are increasingly shifted to the European and international level without creating new venues for processes of democratic representation, control and accountability on either the national or these new international or supranational levels. This, in my opinion, is increasingly creating problems with respect to democratic legitimization of national representative democracies, which is also being marked by declining levels of citizens' participation and involvement in politics. I therefore think that these democratic losses need to be compensated by creating new venues for citizens' participation and control and as such to deepen the representative framework as such.

What do you expect/wish from the 2009 Global Forum in Korea?

For me, the Global Forum in Korea will be an interesting opportunity to get more insight into the concept of political learning and processes of political transfer and diffusion of direct democratic institutions. In the first place, the Forum in itself (as research object) can be perceived as an example of international diffusion and the learning & sharing of democratic devices. Secondly, however, the Forum also engenders a substantial contribution for my research, as it offers opportunities for me as an academic to learn from and connect with other academics within the field of direct democracy, but also to get insight into the more practical part by connecting with policy-makers working with direct democratic devices and to share experiences.

An interesting question is indeed how Europe and Asia can learn from each other and how they react to similar or comparable challenges coming from their involvement in processes of regional integration or from the process of global market integration in general. On a more comparative discursive level, I find it very interesting to see how the debate on direct democracy evolves in other (non-Western-European) parts of the world. Is direct democracy there believed to impose the same advantages and disadvantages? What actors can be considered as direct democracy protagonists and who are opponents of direct democracy? And, what are their arguments for supporting or opposing direct democracy? Etc. etc. These are all extremely relevant questions. I hope and believe that the international character of the Forum will provide a very interesting opportunity to get insight into these questions.

FIRST STEPS TOWARDS MODERN DIRECT DEMOCRACY IN KOREA

The latest general election held in Korea, in 2008, had a record low electorate turnout of 46%. Can a member of the National Assembly, elected in an election where little more than half of the voters participated, ensure legitimacy as a representative of the people? The outlook on whether the National Assembly will adequately reflect the interest and demand of the people remains considerably pessimistic. In order to achieve a democracy of substance that goes beyond electoral democracy, it is more urgent than ever that Korea should actively introduce and establish a direct democracy system aimed at supplementing the shortcomings of representative democracy.

In general, a direct democracy system, as an apparatus to enhance political responsiveness, accountability, and transparency, is regarded as supplementing the limitations of representative democracy. Therefore, it is necessary to revive through direct democracy hope for politics and democracy in the people who are steeped in apathy and aversion toward politics.

The mechanisms of the direct democracy system introduced in Korea can be broadly classified as follows:

On the national level:

Obligatory Referendum (LOR) and Plebiscite (ATP)

On the local level:

Agenda Initiative (PAI) - enables residents to propose draft ordinances they wish enacted to local councils (residents' request for the enactment, amendment or abolishment of ordinances).

Popular votes (ATP) - enables residents to decide on local policies by direct vote.

First introduced under the Local Autonomy Act amended in August 1999, citizen agenda initiative procedures have been enforced since March 2000. Discussions on the system have begun in earnest since the enforcement of the popularly-elected local self government in 1995. With 'citizen participation' and 'decentralization' as its major elements, the popularly-elected local self government has provided a momentum for civil society, academia, local politicians, and the central government to take up the legislation of citizens' direct participation system as their rightful task.