



Strange EU Logic: ‘Combine Technocracy With Democracy To Reduce The Democratic Deficit’

It is an oxymoron and worse, to combine democracy (which is a political system) and Technocracy (which is an economic system). The ‘experts’ who demand to run society are simply deluded by this kind of thinking. □
TN Editor

The popular rebuke to reason that was Britain’s vote to leave the European Union is a wake-up call. Our world requires an urgent rethinking of social progress. The sciences, social sciences and humanities should collaborate and open up their research agendas for public engagement and interdisciplinary dialogue to work towards a diversity of possible solutions to address the troubles of our time.

In the debate about the consequences of Brexit, the EU is often conflated with Europe. But the start of international governance with a strong

European outlook came long before — during the nineteenth century — with industrialization and globalization. The EU is hence part of a greater ‘Europeanization’ process involving a web of multiple organizations and dependencies. Leaving the EU does not mean leaving Europe.

The deliberations about Europe’s future should therefore look more widely to the crucial question of how to organize and manage the international flows of goods, people, information, pandemics and pollution — inevitable in our globalized world.

Many have, rightly, criticized the EU for its technocratic character. Yet this is present in all international organizations — from the United Nations and the Council of Europe to the European Space Agency and CERN, Europe’s particle-physics lab. These bodies have been built on the belief in the rule of experts — people like us — our rational decision-making and, if we’re honest, our preference for avoiding overt political and public deliberation.

It is time to reappraise these axioms of both European and global governance. Current designs reflect the old dream of building a European, or even global, state that would eventually surpass nation-states. Public support for this is clearly faltering: many issues need localized solutions. New constructs for local, national and international governance are needed that combine technocracy and democracy to reduce the democratic deficit of which Brexit is a symptom.

This is crucial if we are to address challenging interconnected issues such as rising inequalities, unemployment, growing migration, climate change, human rights, arms control, cyber-insecurity and terrorism. Brexit must not simply prompt organizations in Europe to engage in yet another round of navel-gazing discussion focused on the future of their own interests, particularly funding and trade.

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