

NEW DIRECTION

THE FOUNDATION FOR EUROPEAN REFORM

More justice in democracy

Is more justice within democracy
possible?

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Democratic deficits

- Lack of transparency
- Lack of subsidiarity
 - European parliaments replacing national ones
- Lack of justice

Democracy, justice and public goods I

- Public goods
 - rule of law, but also roads
- Characteristics of public goods
 - Non-rivalry
 - Non-excludability
 - Subclasses: toll goods, commons

Democracy, justice and public goods II

- Public goods are allegedly just,
 - Reflecting one of the fundamental principle of justice:
 - Treat equals not unequal unless you have sufficient reason to do so

Democracy, justice and public goods III

- Public goods often do so
 - Equal access to public positions
 - Equal rights to vote, to be elected & so forth

Question

- What is a sufficient reason to treat equals unequal?
- Sex, religion, race, etc. are not sufficient reasons. They are arbitrary.

Answer

- A sufficient reason for unequal treatment of equals is given if the very reason is constitutive for the reference-good.
- In markets, payment is constitutive for goods to be offered and traded.
- In public, payment is constitutive for public goods to be provided.

Hence

- Treating buyers and non-buyers differently is justified.
- To do so with respect to public goods is more difficult, for financing and consumption of public goods is more opaque than selling and consuming traded goods.

Reason being ...

- We have to distinguish (at least) four groups
 - Paying users (PU)
 - Non-paying users (NPU)
 - Paying non-users (PNU)
 - Non-paying non-users (NPNU)

Having said this ...

- We have to look at six possible group pairings and the possible injustice they might imply
 - (PU, NPU), (PU, PNU), (PU, NPNU)
 - (NPU, PNU), (NPU, NPNU)
 - (PNU, NPNU)

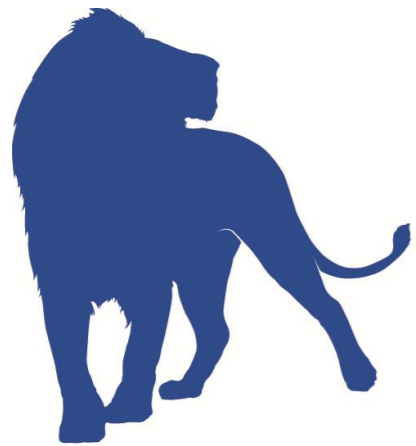
Out of those six ...

- Only one is just

Group pairing	Privileged group	Unequal treatment in face of pay use ratios
PU, NPU	NPU	unjust
PU, PNU	PU	unjust
PU, NPNU	none	just
NPU, PNU	NPU	unjust
NPU, NPNU	NPU	unjust
PNU, NPNU	NPNU	unjust

As a consequence ...

- For public goods to be just, they need to be converted into toll goods
 - With identifiable individual pay-use-ratios
 - Calling for unequal treatment in proportion to those individual pay-use-ratios



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Thank you!