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.
• 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group pairing</th>
<th>Privileged group</th>
<th>Unequal treatment in face of pay use ratios</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PU, NPU</td>
<td>NPU</td>
<td>unjust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PU, PNU</td>
<td>PU</td>
<td>unjust</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>PU, NPNU</strong></td>
<td><strong>none</strong></td>
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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
Thank you!