

Thin Democracy vs. Living Democracy

THIN DEMOCRACY

LIVING DEMOCRACY

What is it

Democracy is a set system: elected government plus a market economy. We may have to keep cleaning it up around the edges, but our democracy is basically complete—it's the culmination of human history.

Living Democracy is a set of system-qualities that shape daily life. Its values of inclusion, fairness, and mutual accountability infuse not only political life but economic and cultural life as well. Living Democracy is always evolving; it's never finished.

How does it work

The free market, along with government and corporate executives and experts, determines what happens. Citizens vote, work, and shop. A single rule—highest return to shareholders—drives the market, which does tend to concentrate wealth and power...and then influence the political process. But there's no other way; tampering with the market would kill its efficiencies and our way of life.

Citizens use their voices and values to shape public choices. They set rules to keep wealth continually circulating and to keep its influence out of politics. They decide what is a market commodity and what is a right of citizenship because it is essential to life. Moving beyond a one-rule economy (highest return to existing wealth), "values boundaries" guide the market, from environmental protections to anti-monopoly laws. Citizens' conscious shopping choices also foster healthy communities.

Who gets involved

Only officials and celebrities have public lives.

All citizens have public lives. As buyers, savers, investors, voters, advocates, students, employers, workers, and members of social benefit organizations, our actions create the quality of our communities and the wider world.