

Philosopher Democracy [PhD]

A Tool to Guide Communities to Operate Direct Self-Governance

A Decentralized, Digital and Non-Digital, Scalable, Non-Representative Self-Governance Tool

***Send comments, suggestions, or submissions if you are interested in assisting on this project to info@PhDSelfGov.org , Attn: Don Herres

Conventions

H.G. = Hierarchical Governance or Hierarchical Government (interchangeably)

D.G. = Discovery Group (the group which researches solutions for proposals to the community)

P.O.G. = Project Oversight Group (the group that oversees project implementation and finalization)

You never change things by fighting the existing reality. To change something, build a new model that makes the existing model obsolete.

- R. Buckminster Fuller

Premises...

- Hierarchical Government as in all of its known forms is not only incapable of resolving the worlds' issues, it is proven to be wholly and continually dangerous in its limited methodologies
- Leaving increasingly complex issues to be resolved by a minimal few(the governmental class) is not only an inadequate approach, but it robs the general public of the need to learn about its own society in great detail, losing its opportunity to bring truly creative and resonant resolutions that are greatly absent in the governmental class
- Eric Weinstein called humanity "Gods but for the Wisdom". Wisdom is a trait that comes only with investigation, reflective and introspective examination, curiosity and a level of humility, much of which hierarchical government is, again, incapable of, but which lies abundant in individuals, when tasked and challenged with issues that directly relate to their well-being and future
- "Power tends to corrupt; Absolute power corrupts absolutely" which centralized hierarchical government evidences repeatedly. By keeping power at its source, the people, decentralized and dispersed, only temporarily coalesced for individual projects - corruption, cronyism and lethal detriments are greatly reduced
- By bringing the concentrated power of millions of diverse, infinitely varied viewpoints to bear on the countless issues facing societies, and dividing the trillions of required investigative hours amongst the billions within the population, humanity has a real chance of bringing the best solutions to light, and their wisdom grows with each successful application
- What is vital yet generally missing, is a simple yet powerful, specific process to do this. Such a process must not allow rule by opinion or flippant, shallow perception but rather serious investigation and maximal experience and views to engender truly creative solutions.

- That process must be easily implemented, easily replicable, widely available, and develop within its participants a desire and excitement to achieve solutions. It must also contain a level of adaptability for societal and cultural differences without losing its fundamental efficacy for developing a wiser society.

PhD is a framework to be that tool (really a set of tools). *PhD* proposes a system to develop a **Philosophers' Democracy** – a format where anyone and everyone can be a direct part in developing and progressing their society.

Overview

Technological power increases daily but technology is a blunt instrument in the face of global issues. Technology can assist but cannot lead to proper global solutions. People are problem solvers by nature.

What technology can do is allow people to interact at larger scales – to broaden the use of their innate abilities. We can now apply this to the need for true, direct self-governance. There are numerous examples throughout history of how groups and communities make choices and 'get things done' without a 'leadership' or need for a 'governor' class.

Simply by taking examples of self-governance formats and/or developing best-of-breed hybrids and applying blockchain and non-blockchain technologies that brings efficient scalability and automation to the administration of these methodologies, we can create a tool that should spread rapidly and beneficially to any community of any size, worldwide.

Self-Governance Enriches Us

Participatory environments are inclusive, fertile grounds for creativity. As every good parent knows, include your children in what you do and they learn and grow. Do not include them, they lose confidence and wither unaccomplished and dejected. We define and thrive on what we accomplish and do.

Growth of society, with all of its complex inner workings, is the participatory birthright of the people. Hierarchical governance minimizes this by reducing the only participatory path to a simplistic 'Vote for an individual' procedure, and on rather inadequately rare occasions, to the odd referendum. This segregation of populace from issue involvement often devolves into an Us vs. Them (Gov vs. People) scenarios.

Beyond the long-term unviability of this methodology, there is an incomprehensible waste of human capacity, talent, insight, ingenuity and creativity, all left untapped in the population as government methodically keeps the population out of the decision-making loop.

Something new is needed, or rather, something very much older.

Human history is wrought with cycles, to the degree that, except for technological examples, everything we do today has been done before. Instead of trying to invent new systems to conduct ourselves, we simply need to look into history to see how we have done things successfully in the past.

Just as the answer to centralized banks and debt based monetary systems is the old idea of parallel and community managed credit based monetary systems, which was brought up to date relatively recently with Bitcoin and blockchain technology, we should quite easily bring decentralized, non-hierarchical, or what is known as a Heterarchy, self-governance systems to scale and reach, using these same and similar technologies.

PhD, the Digital Tool

To avoid a 'tyranny of the masses', a good self-governance model requires thorough education/investigation of an issue that includes input from experts and the involved/effected alike. Self-governance is a process of a few key parts...

- Identification and organization of issues and topics
- Selection of a Discovery Group [D.G.] (randomly selected to avoid agendas & maximize viewpoints)
- Education of the Discovery Group by experts and members of the community (2 separate phases)
- Concerted deliberation and formulation of a Solution Proposal developed by the D.G.
- Acceptance/Rejection of the proposal by the community as a whole (to eradicate undue influence)
- Solution implementation should the proposal be accepted

PhD can assist in most of these areas to varying degrees.

Community: Proposes Issues

PhD Tool: Collects the issues, sorts issues by demand/volume

PhD Tool: Notifies randomly selected community members [the D.G.] of their selection and collects affirmations, records results.

PhD Tool: Sets the initial schedule and produces initial expert lists

Discovery Group: Passes through the discovery and deliberation phases

PhD Tool: Records key milestones and results

Discovery Group: Deliberates and produces the final proposal and referendum question

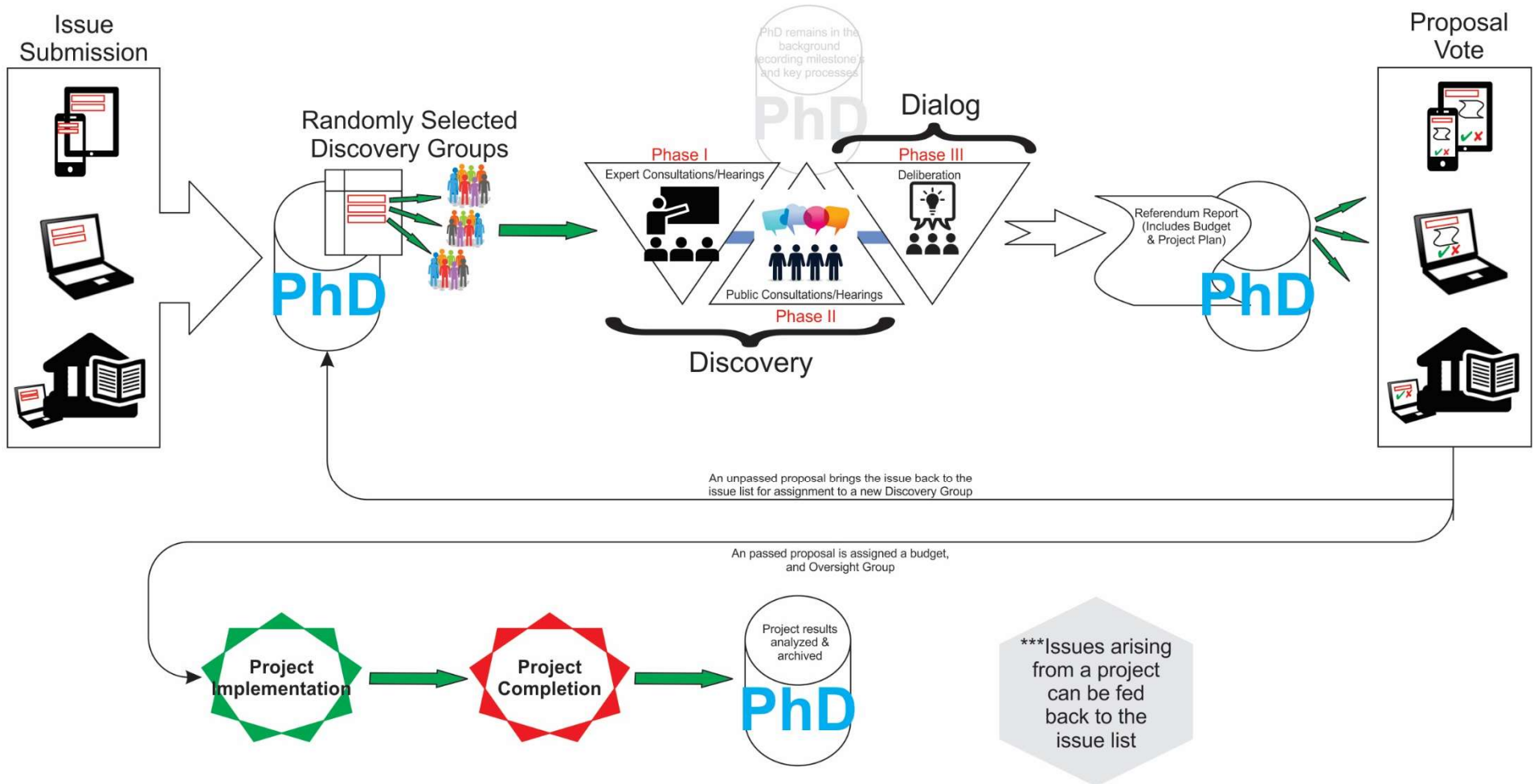
PhD Tool: Records and posts to the community the proposal, referendum question, and records the results, including voter suggestions/responses

PhD Tool: Should the proposal be rejected, recycles the issue for a new discovery group

PhD Tool: Should the proposal be accepted, records and notifies bidders and/or implementers of the acceptance and monitors the project to completion, recording the results. As proposals will vary greatly in complexity and scope, *PhD* will be open-ended, allowing for software add-ons that will handle the vast variety of project and operational requirements.

Any additional issues arising from a project implementation can also be posted back into the process above to be tackled by another D.G.

The PhD Process



Empowering People to Get Things Done

A Citizens' Assembly is a three phase process to allow a randomly selected group of individuals in a community to tackle a single issue with knowledge, consultation and dialogue to produce a proposal which highly resonates with the community.

Phase 1: *Call on experts of a subject to educate the D.G. as much as possible about the issue, options and current solutions to date.* Experts are best sourced from varied backgrounds both inside and outside the community

Phase 2: *Mandatory consultations with anyone from the entire community.* Non-expert community members bring additional knowledge of an issue and its potential solutions that experts often miss. As recipients of the potential solution, their focus on a best solution is heightened and their desire to participate in the solution building is a powerful resource.

Phase 3: *Deliberation.* Conjoining the volume of information from the experts, the community members and their own personal experience (as randomly selected community members, their experience and voices are generally a broad representation of the community) become mixed in the crucible of direct dialogue.

From this process a final report is produced containing the best proposed solution, budget, schedules, resources needed, etc. along with a referendum question for the community to vote on.

The Human Aspect

A vital part of the *PhD* tool is that it has both Digital and Non-Digital components. It is essential that in applying a digital/technological tool, that we recognize the limitations of technology. Dialogue, and the creativity/ingenuity it engenders when allowed to flourish, can only be hindered when technology is used as an intermediary. Face to face interaction is ultimately essential for full communications and any tool must only support this, not subtract from it.

Any study of human interactions reveals that so much of our communications are lost when transferred through an electronic medium which is why direct face to face meetings are so vital especially when sensitive subjects are the focus. Creativity and ingenuity are extracts from direct social environments. Good self-governance systems need to preserve this.

Compensation & Incentives

Hierarchical Government is inherently a bad deal for the people. Often H.G. demands much of its people with little to no compensation, in fact, asking the people to pay for everything (and not in just monetary terms) which contributes to disenfranchisement and diminishing engagement. From voting, to doing taxation paperwork, to paying fines, the financial burden is entirely on the people, yet politicians and entrenched civil servants, who are supposed to be doing a 'public service' often, are the sole rewarded recipients. *PhD* seeks to change this dynamic.

With *PhD*, the people do all the work, and would be compensated to do so. Participating as a Discovery Group member, an Oversight Group member, etc., are jobs and are compensated as such. Since anyone in the community can participate, the community benefits as a whole by being paid to do the work and the funds stay in that community instead of being siphoned to a central government jurisdiction.

Additionally, voting is not a duty; it is also a public service. When voting on proposals, which take time to read through and should take concerted thought, one is compensated to review proposals and vote.

PhD is a blockchain enabled entity and blockchains have proven themselves as stores and communications of value. Therefore, communities can either make use of existing cryptocurrencies to make these payments or they may even create their own community cryptocurrency to fund their operations. Such a choice may very well be the very first use of *PhD* in a community.

Community intelligence

When presented with opportunity, people rise to incredible challenges. H.G. promotes apathy and sloth. It wants docility and subservience among its population. *PhD* promotes participation, involvement, a chance to learn about every aspect of a community and how to problem solve, to EVERY member of the community who accepts to be part of a Discovery Group. And their findings are spread to the entire community to ruminate upon and judge for themselves the merit of the proposals. The entire population becomes very involved in learning even the minutest detail of what it takes to run their community. ***PhD* activates the people.**

Corruption Resistant

A key flaw in H.G. is that the hierarchical nature makes leaders and upper echelons stationary targets for influence and corruption. For those who wish to influence the 'leaders,' armies of lobbyists or targeted bribes/threats are all that is needed to steer the decision makers (or simply install a puppet into these positions.)

The *PhD* structure eliminates such influences and cronyism. Discovery Groups are fleeting, only existing for the short term of their single issue tackling mandate and their results are not binding – the community has the final say. If a community suspects that a D.G.'s proposal is influenced or does not hold to the community standard, it is summarily rejected and another group is convened to bring about a better solution. *PhD* is composed of continuous, decentralized, multiple moving targets that are influence resistant (It is the MIRV of democracies.)

Scalability

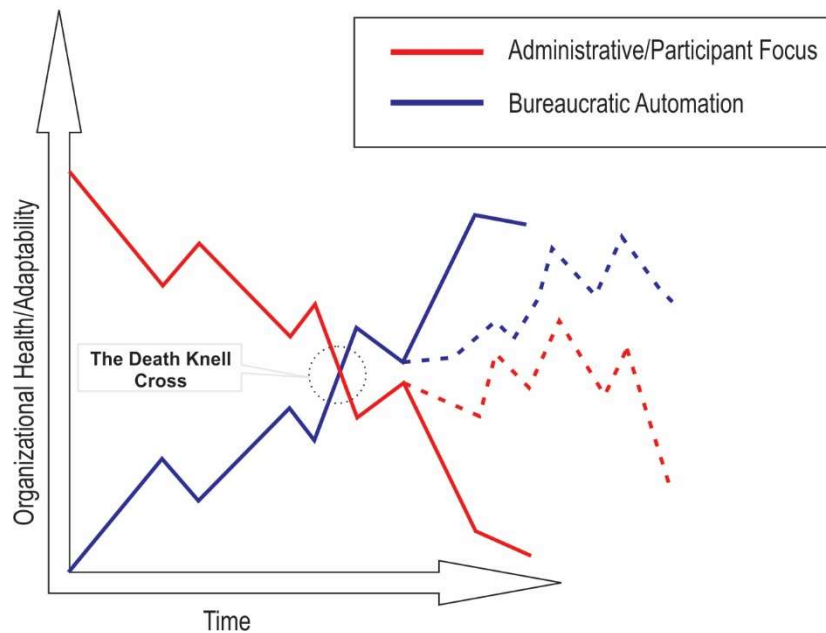
Self-governance models such as the Citizens' Assembly model have been used on scales such as state, provincial and national levels (see the references section). There is absolutely no reason why it could not be used at international and even global scales for an incredibly diverse range of issues and concerns. Technologically, cryptocurrencies are now exemplifying that blockchain scaling can be handled by employing off-chain (i.e. side-chains) solutions to handle incredible transaction numbers. Technological scaling is unlikely to be a serious hurdle and the non-digital aspects of *PhD* are also unlikely to be barriers. The greatest hindrance is most likely to be psychological in that it is such a paradigm shift for most people to consider governing themselves, but then there were and still are, plenty of naysayers against global parallel currencies to which Bitcoin and Alt coins are proving the naysayers wrong, daily. Plenty of naysayers derided Citizens' Assemblies as futile and pointless, would have rapid abandonment, etc., and had to recant their claims in the face of adamant participation and enthusiasm.

Checks and Balances

The flaw of any human system is that it runs off the rails without sufficient ongoing checks and balances.

Traditional Organizations

(such as H.G.)

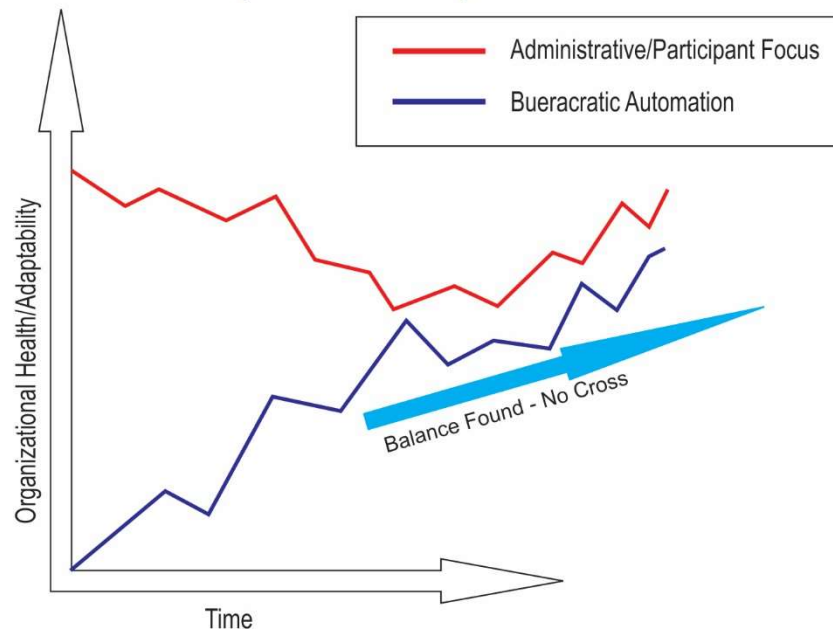


In this graph, organizations start out with lots of participatory enthusiasm and minimal bureaucratic rules. Organizations are finding what works and what doesn't and focus is high, as it should be. Over time, participants, leadership and administration find effort saving bureaucratic rules helpful to automate processes and to allow their focus to move onto other things.

Familiarity sets in and more rules are engaged to automate. Eventually a crossover happens, where static rules begin to have greater control over an organization than the focus of the participants and leaders. There is no precise method of determining when this occurs but there are litmus tests...

- Participants become automatons, not knowing or caring why they do things but continue simply for base rewards like salaries
- The phrases "I can't change that, it's always been that way", "I know it's silly or stupid but that is just the way it is", "not my problem" are ubiquitous
- Suffering becomes endemic, paperwork becomes King
- Innovation goes down the toilet, groupthink and CYA are survival tactics.

Participatory Dialogue Based (such as PhD)



Banality and group think are not allowed to take root. Automated bureaucracy does grow but is never allowed to take over and control. Every principle, premise and idea of a community is up for review and can be challenged by the next Discovery Group. If the idea or premise is sound, it will withstand scrutiny. If there are flaws, recommendations for revision or revocation are appropriate. No tenant is sacred. All tenants should be up for review, including how *PhD* itself, or some variation, serves the community.

- Community Decides for itself -

Why “PhD?”

Aside from the catchy byline “It’s time for humanity to graduate” there is a more substantial reason for the working title.

In Plato’s ‘The Republic’, Socrates, the quintessential philosopher, believes that immersion in the philosophies brings awareness of the concept of ‘enlightened self-interest’ and that a king immersed from an early age would become a benevolent ruler realizing that the interests of his people are essential to his own.

A Philosopher King is simply unsustainable as it entirely relies upon an individual, or a small group (and their limitations) who for a multitude of reasons, could reject or not adhere to that ultimate truth: Individuals are fallible.

PhD proposes that the base premise of mutual self-interest arising from philosophy is correct but must permeate the population as a whole – that immersion in philosophy, the balance brought between the responsibility of management and the power of decision making belongs to the entire community, regardless of size and shape.

What is needed is not a Philosopher King, but rather a Philosopher Population – or for arguments sake – a **Philosopher Democracy**. Hence, **PhD** for short.