

Linked Democracy Foundations, Tools, and Applications

Description

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“It is only by mobilizing knowledge that is widely dispersed across a genuinely diverse community that a free society can hope to outperform its rivals while remaining true to its values.”

(Ober 2008, 5) cited on page v

Chapter 1 Introduction to Linked Data Abstract This chapter presents Linked Data, a new form of distributed data on the web which is especially suitable to be manipulated by machines and to share knowledge. By adopting the linked data publication paradigm, anybody can publish data on the web, relate it to data resources published by others and run artificial intelligence algorithms in a smooth manner. Open linked data resources may democratize the future access to knowledge by the mass of internet users, either directly or mediated through algorithms. Governments have enthusiastically adopted these ideas, which is in harmony with the broader open data movement.

Chapter 2 Deliberative and Epistemic Approaches to Democracy Abstract Deliberative and epistemic approaches to democracy are two important dimensions of contemporary democratic theory. This chapter studies these dimensions in the emerging ecosystem of civic and political participation tools, and appraises their collective value in a new distinct concept: linked democracy. Linked democracy is the distributed, technology-supported collective decision-making process, where data, information and knowledge are connected and shared by citizens online. Innovation and learning are two key elements of Athenian democracies which can be facilitated by the new digital technologies, and a cross-disciplinary research involving computational scientists and democratic theorists can lead to new theoretical insights of democracy

Chapter 3 Multilayered Linked Democracy *An infinite amount of knowledge is waiting to be unearthed.* Hess and Ostrom (2007) Abstract Although confidence in democracy to tackle societal problems is falling, new civic participation tools are appearing supported by modern ICT technologies. These tools implicitly assume different views on democracy and citizenship which have not been fully analysed, but their main fault is their isolated operation in non-communicated silos. We can conceive public knowledge, like in Karl Popper’s World 3, as distributed and connected in different layers and by different connectors, much as it happens with the information in the web or the data in the linked data cloud. The interaction between people, technology and data is still to be defined before alternative institutions are founded, but the so called linked democracy should rest on different layers of interaction: linked data, linked platforms and linked ecosystems; a robust connectivity between democratic institutions is fundamental in order to enhance the way knowledge circulates and collective decisions are made.

Chapter 4 Towards a Linked Democracy Model Abstract In this chapter we lay out the properties of participatory ecosystems as linked democracy ecosystems. The goal is to provide a conceptual roadmap that helps us to ground the theoretical foundations for a meso-level, institutional theory of democracy. The identification of the basic properties of a linked democracy eco-system draws from different empirical examples that, to some extent, exhibit some of these properties. We then correlate these properties with Ostrom's design principles for the management of common-pool resources (as generalised to groups cooperating and coordinating to achieve shared goals) to open up the question of how linked democracy ecosystems can be governed

Chapter 5 Legal Linked Data Ecosystems and the Rule of Law Abstract This chapter introduces the notions of meta-rule of law and socio-legal ecosystems to both foster and regulate linked democracy. It explores the way of stimulating innovative regulations and building a regulatory quadrant for the rule of law. The chapter summarises briefly (i) the notions of responsive, better and smart regulation; (ii) requirements for legal interchange languages (legal interoperability); (iii) and cognitive ecology approaches. It shows how the protections of the substantive rule of law can be embedded into the semantic languages of the web of data and reflects on the conditions that make possible their enactment and implementation as a socio-legal ecosystem. The chapter suggests in the end a reusable multi-levelled meta-model and four notions of legal validity: positive, composite, formal, and ecological.

Chapter 6 Conclusion Communication technologies have permeated almost every aspect of modern life, shaping a densely connected society where information flows follow complex patterns on a worldwide scale. The World Wide Web created a global space of information, with its network of documents linked through hyperlinks. And a new network is woven, the Web of Data, with linked machine-readable data resources that enable new forms of computation and more solidly grounded knowledge. Parliamentary debates, legislation, information on political parties or political programs are starting to be offered as linked data in rhizomatic structures, creating new opportunities for electronic government, electronic democracy or political deliberation. Nobody could foresee that individuals, corporations and government institutions alike would participate (continues)

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