

## The Ragged Edge of Anarchy: Direct Democracy

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The paper argues anarchism is synonymous with direct democracy and explores ways of implementing such a system in practical terms without the destruction of the existing system. Many utopians either envision a slow evolutionary transformation of society or an abrupt revolutionary break with existing systems. I argue that both can be achieved simultaneously by selecting personnel for positions of authority in political and economic institutions via lottery. Such changes would not destroy what *is* overnight only to replace it with a possibly worse nightmare than what preceded it. Yet, the changes proposed here would usher in a new era centered on citizens, not elites, horizontal rather than hierarchical social relations. [Article copies available for a fee from The Transformative Studies Institute. E-mail address: [journal@transformativestudies.org](mailto:journal@transformativestudies.org) Website: <http://www.transformativestudies.org> ©2020 by The Transformative Studies Institute. All rights reserved.]

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Athenian democracy in classical Greece is considered the epitome of a political structure where the demos actually ruled. Of course, there was the caveat of who qualified as a citizen. Slaves, immigrants, and women were excluded from public life. The fundamental tenet of direct democracy is that every citizen comprising the demos or community ‘represents’ themselves as sovereigns in decision-making, meaning in Greek that they are *autonomos* (self-legislating), *autodikos* (self-judging), and *autoteles* (self-governing). They did not vote for someone to vote for them. The political unit, therefore, for Greeks was not the ‘State’ (a word that did not exist), but the polis (city, meaning the

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