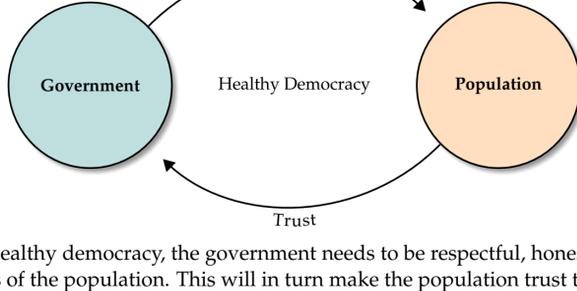


# CRITERIA FOR A HEALTHY DEMOCRACY

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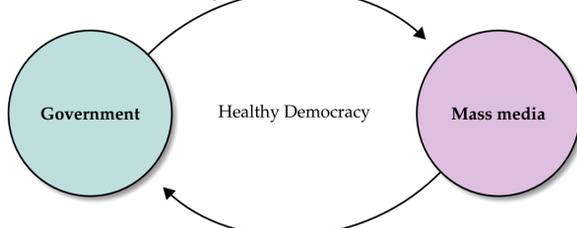
One of the most important criteria for a healthy democracy, is for the general population to have some level of trust in the government. Without any such a trust, the general population will tend to work against whatever the government is trying to achieve, and the society will frequently turn into a battleground between the government and the general population. However, in such societies there is usually a reason why the general population is distrustful of the government. A government that steals from and lies to the general population, will of course have problems earning any trust from the general population. A government that completely ignores demands from the general population will also have a hard time earning trust<sup>[1]</sup>. In order to earn trust from the general population, the government needs to be respectful, honest and responsive to the demands of the general population.



**Figure 1:** In a healthy democracy, the government needs to be respectful, honest and responsive to the demands of the population. This will in turn make the population trust the government.

## Democracies are dysfunctional without freedom of the press

In nations where there is very little freedom of the press, people are easily brainwashed by the media, which does not write anything contradicting the government. So people are likely to re-elect a corrupt government, simply because they are unaware of all the corruption in the government. Freedom of the press is also important, to provide negative feedback to the government (Figure 2). Without negative feedback, our understanding tend to grow into conceptual bubbles that lose touch with reality, as portrayed in the Danish fairy tale about the Emperor's new clothes<sup>[2]</sup>. This is probably one of the main reasons why western democracies have tended to become more developed than authoritarian regimes.



**Figure 2:** How mass media provides negative feedback to the government in a healthy democracy.

Without freedom of speech, people also tend to become more anxious, which reduces life-quality. In Eastern Germany during the cold war, the Stasi used mass surveillance to induce a chronic state of anxiety in the population. This seems completely counterproductive for a government that works to promote a healthy society.

## Political advertisements are detrimental to the health of a democracy

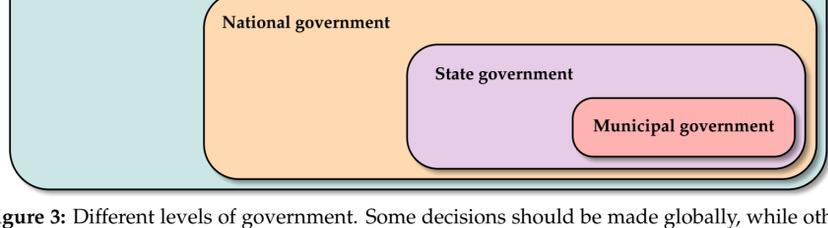
Political advertisements are detrimental to a healthy democracy, since the audience isn't exposed to counterarguments, and since they tend to oversimplify political matters. Political advertisements also increases the influence of money in politics, since wealthy parties can afford much more advertisements than less wealthy parties. In order for the population to get better informed about what they should vote for, there needs to be high quality political debates, rather than political advertisements.

## Investigative journalism should get subsidized

The more attention news media gets from people, the more money they earn on commercials. And since sensational news tends to attract most attention, many news sources seek out sensational news. On the other hand, investigative journalism is expensive to perform, but does not necessarily get as much attention as sensational news. So in order to get more investigative journalism, the government should subsidize it. It is however very important that news sources do not get subsidized just because they write favorably about the government, since negative feedback is one of the essential criteria for a healthy democracy (Figure 2). Rather, investigative journalism should be economically rewarded for revealing corruption in the government.

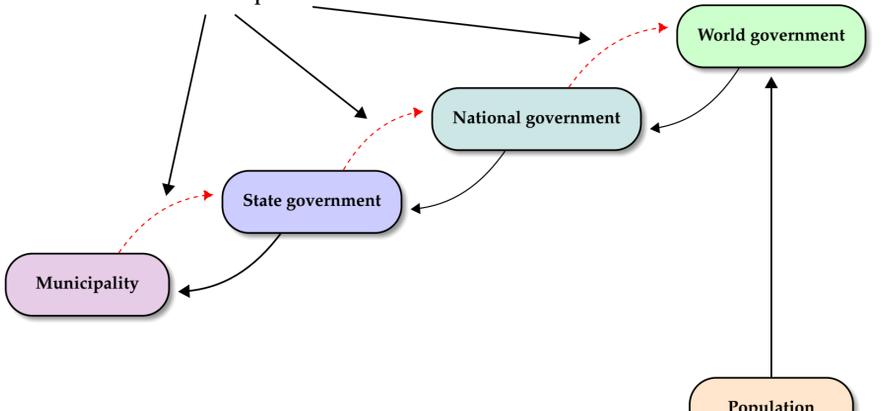
## There is more room for corruption in more centralized societies

Global oversight might be important to establish certain ground rules about environmental protection and civil rights, or to prevent harmful tax competition and military buildup between countries. However, for many other societal issues, it seems appropriate to make decisions more locally. A national government might have more insight into domestic issues than a world government. It might also be able to react more rapidly and dynamically to national circumstances. A high degree of centralization also tends to make people feel alienated from society, and this can be detrimental to the health of a society. So many societal decisions should be taken locally (Figure 3) just to make people more involved in society and make them feel less alienated.



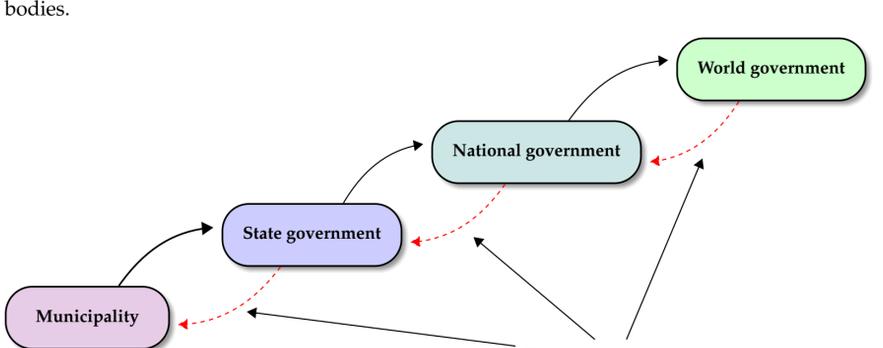
**Figure 3:** Different levels of government. Some decisions should be made globally, while others more locally.

Electing people that are going to represent us in other elections is generally not a good idea, since this creates room for corruption (Figure 4, Figure 5). One example would be a system where the population is involved in electing the leader of the world government, but is not involved in electing the governors of their state, and the mayor of their municipality. In such a system, people will also tend to be distrustful of the lower governing bodies, since they aren't involved in electing the leaders of the lower governing bodies.



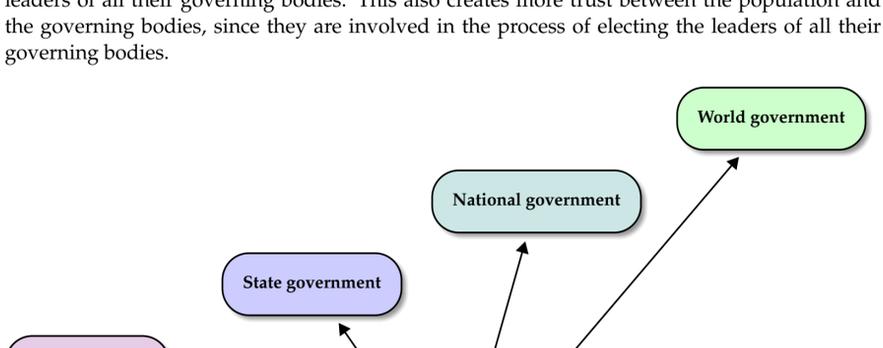
**Figure 4:** A scenario where the population votes to elect the leader of the world, but cannot vote directly to decide who is going to be the president of their country, the governor of their state, or the mayor in their municipality.

The same would be the case for a system where the population is involved in electing the mayor of their municipality, but not in the election of leaders for higher governing bodies; such as the governor of their state, the president of their national government, or the leader of the world government. Such a system will also create distrust between the population and higher governing bodies, since they aren't involved in the process of electing the leaders of the higher governing bodies.



**Figure 5:** A scenario where the population votes to elect the mayor in their municipality, but cannot vote directly to decide who is going to be the governor of their state, the president of their country, or the leader of the world.

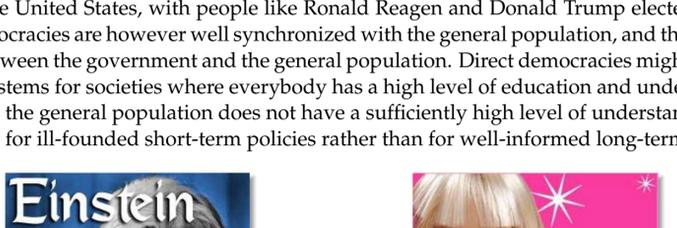
In order to minimize any room for corruption, the population should be involved in electing the leaders of all their governing bodies. This also creates more trust between the population and the governing bodies, since they are involved in the process of electing the leaders of all their governing bodies.



**Figure 6:** A scenario where the population votes to elect the leaders of all their governing bodies.

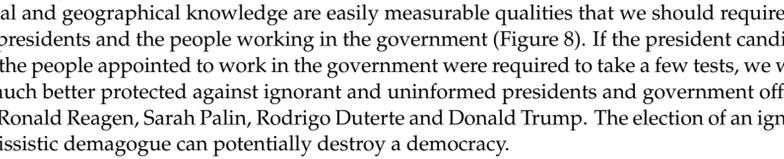
## Popularity does not always correlate well with ability to rule

One of the weaknesses with western democracies, is that popularity does not always correlate well with ability to rule a society (Figure 7). The most popular individuals are elected to rule, but not necessarily the people with most insight. Celebrities tend to be more popular than professors today, but usually also have much less insight. The favoring of celebrities have occurred several times in the United States, with people like Ronald Reagan and Donald Trump elected to president. Democracies are however well synchronized with the general population, and this prevents tension between the government and the general population. Direct democracies might therefore be ideal systems for societies where everybody has a high level of education and understanding. If however the general population does not have a sufficiently high level of understanding, they might vote for ill-founded short-term policies rather than for well-informed long-term policies.



**Figure 7:** How popularity and ability to rule a society might differ.

A meritocracy<sup>[3]</sup> is a system where people with merit rule. The definition of merit might be somewhat ambiguous, but a basic mathematical, scientific and economic understanding and some historical and geographical knowledge are easily measurable qualities that we should require from our presidents and the people working in the government (Figure 8). If the president candidates and the people appointed to work in the government were required to take a few tests, we would be much better protected against ignorant and uninformed presidents and government officials, like Ronald Reagan, Sarah Palin, Rodrigo Duterte and Donald Trump. The election of an ignorant narcissistic demagogue can potentially destroy a democracy.



**Figure 8:** Topics that president candidates and government officials should have a basic understanding of.

## Bibliography

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