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Editors' Note

THE *Virginia Journal for Political and Social Thought* is pleased to publish our Fall 2025 issue, presenting four papers that demonstrate the diversity and depth of thought relating to politics, political philosophy, and sociology. This Journal is published twice annually and run by the Political and Social Thought Club at the University of Virginia.

In "Evaluating the 'Creoleness' of Multicultural London English", Atticus Sagilir examines the unique development of Multicultural London English (MLE) and its relation to the academic definition of a Creole language, arguing MLE suggests a rethinking of Creolist terminology.

In "The American Dream That Never Was: A Marxist Analysis of the Bracero Program", Yukta Ramanan forwards a Marxist analysis of the subjugative nature of the Bracero Program, an agreement between the United States and Mexican governments that permitted Mexican citizens to take temporary, seasonal agricultural work in the US.

In "Surviving Capitalism, Outliving Marx", Marianna Sherry provides an individualistic counterfactual to dialectical materialism, considering the conflicting evidence for the scientific veracity of the Marxist understanding of historical progress.

In "Reexamining Lottocracy: Electoral Democracy and Its Alternatives", Sterling Peterson considers the possibility of replacing elected legislative bodies with a specialized set of issue-focused sortition legislatures, before ultimately concluding sortition is more promising as a potential oversight mechanism to traditional electoral democracy.

We appreciate all the submissions we received in anticipation of this issue and the work of our editorial board. We also appreciate the ongoing guidance and support of Professor Isaac Reed, Director of the Political and Social Thought program at UVA, who has been immensely helpful in realizing this vision. On behalf of our entire team, we sincerely hope you enjoy reading the Fall 2025 issue of the *Virginia Journal for Political and Social Thought*.

Evaluating the "Creoleness" of Multicultural London English

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For sociolinguists, the development of Multicultural London English (MLE) offers a prudent test case for identifying ambiguities in the traditional academic definition of a Creole language. In the latter half of the twentieth century, MLE originated as a multiethnolect in urban London, specifically in neighborhoods with frequent and prolonged contact between speakers of Caribbean, West African, South Asian, and regional British English language varieties. Cheshire et al. (2011) and Kerswill (2014) describe MLE as a fluid and innovative language variety driven by the linguistic practices of second and third-generation British youth in multicultural urban communities. MLE emerged within a robust multilingual environs, among several language varieties each carrying with them varying levels of overt prestige and differing ideologies. It is here, when examining MLE's origins, it becomes tempting to compare MLE to Creole languages, which typically arise in contexts of intense language mixing, demographic mobility, and power disparity.

It is true that MLE shares several sociohistorical and structural characteristics typologically consistent with most Creole language varieties. MLE emerged in a multilingual setting rife with demographic tensions, serves as an identity marker for many of its speakers, and blends linguistic features from input varieties while generating novel morphological and phonological patterns. These parallels lead to a logically sound argument that it may be apt to apply the terms "Creole" and "Creolization" when describing the cultural and linguistic processes that shaped MLE.

Despite these similarities, however, using the label "creole" in a description of MLE is ultimately misleading. Amidst widespread academic disagreement, Creoles are still generally understood to arise from an abrupt or severe demographic shift, often due to specific historical conditions. These conditions typically involved plantation, trade, or colonial settings with distinct

power asymmetries and an urgent need for a functional lingua franca. By contrast, MLE, a language variety of English, emerged within an established English-speaking environment that lacked the social upheaval characteristic of Creole formation. Further, it did not serve any functional or spiritual purpose within the context of a colonial power imbalance and vast language gap. Wiese (2015) argues that these fundamental differences in sociohistorical context and structural development render it linguistically and culturally inappropriate to classify MLE as a Creole.

Defining Creole: A Review of Literature

Determining whether MLE can be accurately characterized as a Creole necessitates first understanding the commonly accepted linguistic definition of the term. Traditionally, academics in the twentieth century defined Creoles as languages that emerged from pidgins formed in social contexts marked by extreme demographic disruption. Creolist Derek Bickerton's (1981) "Language Bioprogram Hypothesis" posits a theory in which a population of speakers of distinct language varieties develop a grammatically reduced pidgin for use in restricted domains. This pidgin is then acquired natively by a subsequent generation of children, rendering it a full-fledged Creole. Within this model, Creole grammar is abruptly restructured within generations and develops unique structural features that invariably distinguish them from non-Creoles.

The idea that Creoles are always typologically distinctive from non-Creoles, commonly known as "Creole exceptionalism," has been thoroughly challenged. Creolist Michel DeGraff (2005) argues that the notion of creole exceptionalism is empirically and theoretically unsound. DeGraff and others demonstrate that several structural traits Creole exceptionalists identified as "Creole features" (e.g., reduced morphology, analytic constructions) are indeed present in non-Creole languages. More importantly, Degraff asserts that Creole formation involves the same linguistic processes that drive all human language change. Accordingly, many scholars view Creoles not as structurally unique, but as language varieties developed from distinct and logistically irreplicable sociohistorical conditions.

Thus, contemporary scholarship surrounding the Creole debate includes both typological and sociohistorical criteria. Typologically-focused definitions, as laid out in McWhorter (1998, 2018), are centered upon structural traits traditionally associated with Creoles. Conversely, sociohistorical definitions emphasize the unique demographic structure and colonial power imbalance present within certain contact situations (Chaudenson 2003, Thomason & Kaufman 1988). When considered together, these theories highlight a prevailing idea in sociolinguistics: the classification of a language as a Creole depends not only on its grammatical makeup but also on the historical context of its formation. Synthesizing these debates will form the basis for evaluating whether MLE aligns with the modern academic understanding of Creole languages.

Origins and Sociohistory of MLE

The formation of MLE was rooted in the widespread social transformation of twentieth-century London. The first signs of a distinct language variety originated from historically working-class districts such as Hackney, Lambeth, Southwark, and Brent. From the end of the Second World War and through the ensuing decade, these areas saw sustained immigration from the Caribbean, West Africa, South Asia, and later, Eastern Europe and the Middle East. Thus, pockets of London contained dense, multilingual, and multiethnic urban communities without a clear linguistic or cultural epicenter. By the turn of the century, these neighborhoods provided the heterogeneous conditions necessary for what Kerswill (2014) describes as "youth-led innovation under high-contact conditions."

MLE began to develop among adolescents and young adults who shared common social circles (e.g. schools, work environments, athletics, peer networks), even if their native languages differed. Marking a distinct departure from earlier London varieties formed by white-racialized working-class citizens, MLE contains lexical items from Jamaican Patois, Trinidadian English, Somali, Yoruba, Punjabi, and various West African Englishes. Crucially, this landscape of multilingualism did not create a pidgin stage, as most speakers already had fluency in English. The subsequent linguistic innovations characteristic of MLE were the result of selective adoption, leveling, and stylistic recombination. Cheshire et al. (2011) emphasize that MLE's development was gradual and a result of deliberate social coordination, not an abrupt and intrinsic process.

Structurally, hallmarks of MLE include lexical items ('mandem,' 'tings,' 'wasteman'), discourse-pragmatic features ('innit,' 'you get me'), and phonetic shifts (e.g., reallocation of vowel qualities, changes in diphthongs) that indicate the wide range of input varieties. Gradually, these features coalesced into a recognizable multiethnolect associated with urban youth in London. By the twenty-first century, MLE had become popular enough to appear in mainstream British media and music, often with oversimplified and misleading labels such as "Jafaican." The history of MLE clearly reflects sustained intense multilingual contact, peer-group convergence, and an emphasis on identity reclamation. MLE's sociohistorical origins appear distinct from those of Creole languages, but their respective linguistic developments share many commonalities.

MLE as a Creole

Although MLE did not emerge from the sociohistorical conditions most commonly associated with Creole formation, several linguistic and sociocultural characteristics provide compelling evidence for categorization as a Creole. First, the contact environment surrounding MLE's formation resembles, to a certain extent, the multilingual socially-stratified environments in which many Creoles developed. Late-twentieth-century London contained speakers of

Caribbean, African, South Asian, and local British English varieties within densely populated youth peer groups. As Wiese (2015) claims, these settings had high linguistic diversity, an imperfect and inconsistent command of the target language (English in the case of MLE and a Western colonial language in the case of many Creoles), and the implicit dominance of English as the societally unmarked language. These conditions echo the asymmetrical contact and power dynamics that underpinned "traditional" Creole genesis, even if they lack the same historical significance and harrowing context.

A second parallel lies in the processes of innovation, leveling, and social convergence that was typical of early MLE formation. Creole languages often emerged through the reduction of linguistic variation among speakers in a given colonial environment followed by the creation of new structural features. When examining MLE development, analogous mechanisms are revealed: feature selection, simplification in some pragmatic and phonological domains, and the emergence of new structural conventions among a specific demographic. Cheshire et al. (2011) argue that these processes are critical to viewing MLE as an organized and stable linguistic system rather than a haphazard aggregation of varied ethnolectal influences.

The manner in which MLE functions socially further strengthens the comparison with other Creole languages. As Rampton (2015) observes, MLE serves as an identity marker for multicultural and often marginalized youth, and thus carries a degree of covert prestige that signifies solidarity against conventional linguistic authority. This does exhibit similarity to the widely accepted notion that postcolonial Creoles embody resistance, local authenticity, and cultural autonomy against the various groups considered linguistically and culturally unmarked (and in power).

Furthermore, modern language ideologies surrounding the term "Creole" complicates an immediate rejection of a sound comparison. Omoniyi (2006) demonstrates that "Creole" is becoming increasingly associated with intangible ideas like social hybridity, resistance, and cultural legitimacy of marginalized groups, rather than a concrete and empirical linguistic label. These concepts of course align closely with how MLE is perceived by speakers and academics alike, and highlight many of its key functions. In this purely ideological framework, labeling MLE a Creole rightfully emphasizes its role as a symbol of urban multicultural identity and multilingual pride.

The Invalidity of the Creole Label

Despite reasonable surface-level similarities, there is strong linguistic, sociohistorical, and ideological evidence to ultimately refuse labeling MLE as a Creole. The most fundamental objection surrounds the absence of a pidgin or similarly reduced stage during the development of MLE. As Kerswill (2014) illustrates, MLE emerged among youth who already had full linguistic

access to English. Classical creole formation is typically understood to arise from situations of communicative deficit, wherein adult speakers with limited or no access to a lingua franca develop a grammatically reduced and domain-restricted pidgin. This pidgin often subsequently expands and stabilizes, most commonly when natively acquired by children. By contrast, MLE emerged among speakers who had no linguistic gap to bridge or social imperative to communicate in a target language. Its development was predicated upon contact-driven innovation and stylistic convergence, aided by an increasing technological interconnectedness, rather than the restructuring of reduced lexical input. Without any form of pidginization process, MLE cannot be judged to follow the essential historical trajectory of a creole.

MLE also remains fully within the continuous dialect sphere of standard English. Wiese (2015) notes that MLE's lexical, phonological, and pragmatic innovations did not ever produce systemic grammatical reorganization, and it is fully mutually intelligible with other British English varieties. Further, Creole languages are often thought to enter a theorized post-Creole continuum, where basilectal, mesolectal, and acrolectal varieties undergo a sort of decreolization over time. No such continuum exists or has been predicted for MLE. Rather, its classification in this framework more closely aligns with a multiethnolect or dialect undergoing typical processes of change within an English-speaking environment.

Another distancing factor is the historical and generational scale of MLE's development. Creoles generally appear to stabilize over multiple generations, even if they underwent rapid grammatical restructuring at the outset. MLE, however, is still undergoing linguistic development several generations after its formation. Its grammatical and phonological patterns remain comparatively fluid, showing marked variation across neighborhoods, personal backgrounds, and even individual repertoires. Rampton (2015) discusses the high degree of stylistic variability within individual speakers' repertoires, suggesting an ongoing process of indexical negotiation at the expense of wholesale structural stabilization. The inclusion of modern technology into linguistic development also renders MLE an anomaly, and places further stress on the identification of rigid similarities to classic Creoles. The lack of generational distance makes any firm conclusion premature and inherently imprecise. As such, it is academically irresponsible bordering on impossible to classify MLE as a stabilized linguistic variety analogous to creoles.

Respective sociopolitical contexts further distinguish traditional Creoles from MLE. Creoles invariably emerged from paradigms of colonial domination, enslavement, and compulsory linguistic suppression. In these environments, any innovation to language occurred under severe social and domestic constraints. Mufwene (2008) prudently argues that these landscapes are central to understanding the development and stabilized forms of many Creoles. DeGraff's (2005) notable critique of Creole exceptionalism warns against projecting colonial-era social models onto modern contact varieties that lack comparable historical pressures. The difference between Creoles and MLE in this respect can be viewed through the lens of the prestige they carried: many Creoles

carried intense negative stigma before acquiring prestige, whereas MLE emerged from a context of cultural expression and youth-driven overt prestige.

Finally, considering MLE a Creole risks reinforcing outdated or reductive ideologies. The label "Creole" has historically been racialized and used to exoticize speakers. Applying it to MLE may reintroduce these associations and suggest an unwarranted cultural distance from "standard" English. As Rampton (2015) notes, MLE's significance lies in its functionality as an identity marker, not in any typological uniqueness from English. These social risks certainly outweigh the academic benefit of linguistically grouping MLE with other Creole languages.

Discussion on Creolization and MLE

Although MLE does not, or perhaps should not, meet the traditional criteria for categorization as a Creole, it remains relevant to ask whether Creolization processes can at least partially inform its development. Chaudenson's (2003) law of Creolization highlights two central conditions of the process: sustained social contact among speakers with varying access to a target language, and a landscape in which different speakers contribute inconsistently to the new variety. In the case of MLE, dense, multiethnic youth networks satisfy both conditions to a certain extent. Adolescents from Caribbean, African, South Asian, and local English backgrounds collectively determine linguistic norms, so lexical items from diverse language varieties are selectively adopted. While this does not constitute classical Creolization, it provides evidence of linguistic innovation in a contact situation that certainly shows elements of Chaudenson's theory.

Beyond linguistics, the idea of Creolization has emerged in cultural studies to describe situations of hybridity, multinational identity, and culturally diverse urban life (Gilroy, 1993; Glissant, 1997). In this sense, Creolization does not require any sort of pidginization or native acquisition. Rather, it refers to the creative blending of cultural and linguistic practices across communities. MLE certainly aligns with this understanding of the process. It indexes mixed, multiethnic urban identities, serves as a marker of cultural solidarity, and reflects a marketplace of cultural and linguistic ideas in a multiethnic setting (Rampton, 2015).

Therefore, while MLE is not structurally or linguistically a creole, it assuredly takes part in Creolizing processes of postcolonial linguistic and cultural hybridity. MLE demonstrates how multicultural environments can foster linguistic innovation, cultural pride, and social norms, many of the products traditionally associated with Creolization.

Conclusion

MLE enjoys a somewhat novel position in modern sociolinguistics. Firstly, it exhibits clear Creolizing tendencies. It emerged from continuous multilingual contact, displays selective innovation and leveling of linguistic features, and functions as a clear identity marker. Clearly,

MLE contains some linguistic and functional aspects of traditional Creoles, and is an excellent case study in how language encodes identity, resistance, and cultural pride. The processes at work in this case reflect dynamics that Chaudenson (2003), Gilroy (1993), and Glissant (1997) associate with Creolization, even without a classical colonial context.

However, MLE fundamentally differs from traditional Creoles in terms of structural and historical background. A pidginization stage did not occur, it remains fully intelligible within the entire English continuum, and has not yet stabilized over several generations. These differences make the label "Creole" linguistically invalid. MLE is better defined as an urban multiethnolect that exhibits Creolizing processes, illustrating how language contact and social mixing can produce new language varieties absent the structural requirements of Creoles.

The case of MLE suggests a rethinking of Creolist terminology. It shows that the concept can be applied metaphorically to contemporary urban contact languages, extending its academic value beyond traditional colonial and post-slavery contexts to the study of modern multilingual environments.

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The American Dream That Never Was: A Marxist Analysis of the Bracero Program

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The Bracero Program was an agreement between the United States and Mexican governments that permitted Mexican citizens to take temporary, seasonal agricultural work in the US.[1] The word bracero literally translates to 'arm-men' which depicts the type of manual labor that would be required of them. Established in 1942 amid World War II, the objective was for the Mexican 'bracero' to fill agricultural productivity gaps in the American South for 3 to 6 months before returning to their homelands. The program's notable provisions are trifold:[2]

I. Mexicans entering the US as a result of this agreement shall not suffer discriminatory acts of any kind
II. Mexicans entering the US shall enjoy free sanitary housing, transportation, medical treatment, living expenses, and repatriation, including a 50 cent minimum wage
III. Mexicans shall not be employed to displace other workers, or for the purpose of redoing rates of pay previously established

Though purported to be a mutually beneficial contract system, the Bracero Program achieved its productivity benchmarks at the expense of the humanity of the migrant worker. In examining the program under a Marxist lens, we see clearly its failure to fulfill the material and moral promises that underpin its very design.

The most fundamental shortcoming of the Bracero Program comes from the despotic conditions of capitalism it is situated within. According to Marx, capitalist society cannot exist

[1] Thurber, D. (n.d.). Research Guides: A Latinx Resource Guide: Civil Rights Cases and Events in the United States: 1942: Bracero Program [Research guide].
[2] Ibid.

without alienation of the laborer from both the product of his labor, and the act of labor itself. He argues that labor confronts itself "as a power independent of the producer"[3] and one that exists outside of the locus of the worker's own control. The worker is separated from the product because he does not own what he produces; instead, it is congealed in an object and sold as a capitalist commodity. Since the migrant worker does not own the means of production, he cannot stake a claim on that which he produces and, thus, could not leverage their positioning in the labor force as a site of renegotiation or reassertion of their humanities. As a migrant's labor is not his own, there is no care for his being other than as a site of production. When no "physical or other compulsion exists, labor is shunned like the plague."[4] Thus, it is central only to the self-preservation of man, not his essential being. His assertion begs the question: if migrants did not believe the American dream to be a true 'need,' would they migrate at all?

Under capitalism, laborers exist in "inverse proportion to the power and magnitude of [their] production."[5] Under economies of scale, the more a worker produces, the cheaper the value of each unit of production. While the collective benefits economically from mass production, the laborer's value gets relatively smaller. This market mechanism drives American industry, allowing it to prioritize profit over the well-being of its workers. In the context of the Bracero Program, the subjugation of workers is seen most clearly in wage controls. A key provision of the initial agreement between the US and Mexico established a minimum wage and stated that the employment of braceros shall not be used to "reduce rates of pay previously established"[6] for native-born workers. However, farm managers often paid braceros sub-minimum wages and took a percentage out of their monthly checks on the promise that they would be repaid once they got back to Mexico. These controls weaponized one of the prime motives of migration against the migrant worker: money. Marx describes money as "the common pimp of all people and nations."[7] As the active concept of value under capitalism, money could turn visions of a perfect American life into reality for migrants who lacked opportunity in their homelands. Coerced to believe that even a small sum of money was a vehicle for achieving the illusory American dream, braceros were largely complacent with illegal wage controls. While the bracero desperately hoped that the output he created would be reinvested into his enfranchisement, a great deal went, instead, into the expansion of the means of production, and the corresponding wealth of the owners of said means. Thus, while the bracero contributed to the agricultural and material endowment of the United States ad infinitem, the institution of capitalism barred him from reaping the true value of what he sowed.

[3] Marx, K., & Engels, F. (1978). *The Marx-Engels Reader* (R. C. Tucker, Ed.; Second edition). Norton, 71.
[4] Marx, 74.
[5] Marx, 70.
[6] Bracero Agreement (1942-1964). (n.d.). *Immigration History*. Retrieved September 16, 2024, from https://immigrationhistory.org/item/bracero-agreement/
[7] Marx, 104.

The subjugative nature of the Bracero Program can also be explained, in part, by Marx's ideas on man's alienation from nature. For men unwittingly shackled to capitalist structures, the "richness of subjective human sensibility"[8] is rendered inaccessible because of its pre-emption by basic needs. These human sensibilities do not simply refer to the physical senses of touch, taste, smell, sound, and sight, but also to the intangible senses of will, love, and morality that come to be by virtue of human nature. The care-burdened bracero "in need has no sense for the finest play" — his expectations for the quality of his conditions are bounded by crude, practical needs of survival. He forgets that food is meant to be delectably devoured; that homes are meant to be cozy; that people are meant to care for one another. Content with mere survival, braceros did not demand the very sensibilities that made them human for fear of being denied bare existence in their supposed 'dreamlands. 'After artificially inducing this poverty in migrant communities, the US government created a desperate "need of the greatest wealth — the other human being."[9] Braceros came to believe that integrating themselves into the fabric of American socio-economic structures presupposed the country stifling their ideas of what they were entitled to as human beings. Arbitrary wage deductions, threats of deportation, unsanitary working conditions, and stoop labor were, therefore, all rationalized as a means to an end.[10]

The Bracero Program was terminated in 1964, but to say a version of it does not exist today would be a misnomer. Marx's historical interpretation of capitalism tells us why unjust immigration policies continue to be ever-present. He asserts that history is nothing but the exploitation of "the materials, the capital funds, and the productive forces handed down to it by all preceding generations."[11] So long as dominant material classes continue to be ruling forces, they have little incentive to do away with the conditions of oppression that brought them to the top. It is why vitriolic opposition to an open border continues to grow, despite the US economy's undeniable dependence on labor from Mexican immigrants. It is why Donald Trump employed over 100 undocumented migrants for the construction of his resort, and yet built his 2016 Presidential Campaign on the promise of a wall at the Southern border.[12] Thus, historical precedent has shown American bourgeoisie's power is almost wholly derived from buy-in to the American dream — which at its core, is an abstraction that leverages migrants' unremitting hope to "place [them] in new dependences."[13] Seducing them into generational cycles of sacrifice that may never come to fruition, this governing rationality of migrant labor impedes these individuals' emancipation from systemic oppression.

[8] Marx, 89.
[9] Marx, 91.
[10] Dantona, K. E. (n.d.). *The Bracero Program and the Exploitability of Migrant Workers*.
[11] Marx, 172.
[12] Bowden, J. (n.d.). More than 100 undocumented immigrants worked at Trump's Bedminster resort during construction: Report. Retrieved September 22, 2024, from https://thehill.com/latino/429136-more-than-100-undocumented-immigrants-worked-at-trumps-bedminster-resort-during/
[13] Marx, 93.

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Surviving Capitalism, Outliving Marx

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Karl Marx's influence on modernity cannot be overstated. Intellectuals, partisans across the political spectrum, the global professoriate, and the like have been reacting to his sweeping reconception of societal evolution. Marxist scholarship has been shoring up its defenses and inscribing history through the lens of dialectical materialism ever since the first Erste Marxistische Arbeitswoche of the Frankfurt School in 1923. No matter how insightful I conceive myself to be, I am not so arrogant to presume that I can falsify decades of scholarship on the basis of mere excerpts. I don't aim to. I cannot speak to the scientific accuracy of the Marxist account of history for all people across all of time. The only worthy contribution I feel capable of presenting is a real-time case study of proletarian resignation. Marx speaks of the bourgeoisie sowing the seeds of its own peril through the education and common suppression of the working class. As a gravedigger produced by the bourgeoisie, I can't say I've been especially productive in this task (Marx, 483). I'm not sure if Marx can adequately explain why without crucifying me as a class traitor. When confronting Marx and Engels' early claims, I ask myself, how has the small fragment of proletarian life I've lived failed to match up to Marx's dream of an enlightened revolutionary ideal? Where did the revolution go to die?

No 17th century philosopher could possibly anticipate the disarray of social relations which brought about my current socioeconomic position. I wouldn't expect them to. Despite both of my parents being raised in the bourgeois class, personal tragedy left them propertyless and suffering endless precarity (Marx, 162). They inexplicably deviated from the material actions that would have maintained their status in the privileged class (Marx, 154). They did not recognize missed economic opportunities as an unacceptable loss. Instead, they shunned productivity in the name of worldly debt and small comforts. My father worked many odd jobs throughout my childhood - milkman, pizza delivery driver, pest control. None of these pursuits

were especially fruitful. My mother worked at the same call center for the first two decades of her citizenship in the U.S.. Both held Master's degrees, yet neither sought gainful economic mobility when unemployment struck time after time. Exploited and battered, our lived experience is fairly designated within the "wretchedness of the worker" - shrouded in privation, hovels and deformity (Marx, 70;73). Alienation, however, fails to capture for me the sheer noncommittal disinterest they held in their productive lives. Marx's analysis of the proletariat family as deeply unsentimental and profaned by the money relation can speak for much but not all of our familial strife (Marx, 475-476;487). The Sherrys are hardly revolutionaries. My father is a registered Republican and my mother's primary political commitment is bringing about the second coming of Christ. I am no rational saint either. I did not instantaneously grasp the extravagant norms of bourgeois youth the second I approached economic mobility. Nor have I held my peers hostage to avenge my bloodline. I value the animal satisfaction of my needs over my contribution to the species-being (Marx, 76). My critiques of this institution's role in perpetuating class oppression are swiftly assuaged by a free meal and a sunny day.

Marx claims in the *Communist Manifesto* that the party "no interests separate and apart from those of the proletariat as a whole" (Marx, 483). In order to homogenize the diversity of wants and needs, of all working class people under the umbrella class interests, Marx rewrote the rules of human nature. Any and all concerns not falling within the class war are either misconceived or capitalist schemes to distract us from our true triumphant destiny. Dialectical thought presumes itself to defeat all that falls away from the synthesis of contradictions, a war of mutually exclusive sides. This means all contradictions are bound to be resolved and objective truth must triumph (Marx, 489). There must be an objectively accessible interest of each material situation which we are situationally bound to pursue. With my parents' refusal to conceive of themselves as workers, their misery can not coexist with their inaction (Marx, 150). My acknowledgment of the hardship I've endured due to my class status can not possibly coexist with the enjoyment of the resources to which I'm now privy. The paradox of inefficiency is lost here. From within the theoretical fields of political economy and Western philosophy, the autonomous self with finite power possessed and rational self interest is integral to cohering the world (Bourdieu, 75-76). What does Marx take for granted in his limited picture of the human subject? Infinite desire. Infinite progress. Resentment. Causal attribution. Drivenness. Undignification. Just as our preferences maintain the existing social order, his implicit investments are necessary to make this theory legible.

Perhaps providing an individualistic counterfactual to dialectical materialism defeats the very purpose of superstructure analysis. Unfortunately for Marx, no degree of material abstraction can rob the narrativization process of my life from its meaning. However, one does not have to search within to find conflicting evidence. With each passing decade wherein climactic paradigm shifts hold us in suspense, one has to look towards ulterior explanations to

why these prophecies have yet to come to pass. What breaking point will come before our mass extinction? If contact alone were necessary to galvanize localized class struggle toward national uprising, how can we justify our current interconnected world's failure to rise up (Marx, 481)? Why don't we fight back? Maybe it's the toothaches and the fatigue, which drives one to sleep rather than outrage. Maybe it's pure complacency, growing gluttonous for the minor privileges afforded to us within the heart of empire. It could all be false consciousness – pure delusion as to the meaning of our existence and the internalization of our oppression. I can't help but take solace in Bourdieu's explanation, which recognizes the determination of our desires and perspective with our will to perpetuate ourselves. To concede the rules of the game in order to keep playing (Bourdieu, 74). I don't err my parents for indulging in the small luxuries and delusions that keep them alive. I don't begrudge myself the same. Until the revolution animates itself with fated glory, survival in a classist society may just have to be praxis enough.

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Reexamining Lottocracy: Electoral Democracy and Its Alternatives

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Global democracy is in crisis. Between the rise of far-right politics in Western democracies, growing concerns of corruption, elitism, increasing social unrest, economic inequality, and the geopolitical advance of powerful authoritarian states on the global stage, electoral democracy faces looming challenges to its future viability. As powerful transnational corporations secure greater and greater political power, social media algorithms isolate and polarize constituencies, and hostile nations strategically promulgate online falsehoods to destabilize their geopolitical opponents, electoral democracies are facing increasing barriers to productive political discourse. Individual voters are increasingly at risk of radicalization, misinformation, and political disengagement, threatening the very core of electoral democracy. Is electoral democracy still viable? Is it time to consider an alternative?

This paper considers an alternative to electoral democracy: sortition or "lottocracy". A lottocratic system is one in which political leaders are selected from a constituency by lottery instead of election. In his paper "Against Elections: The Lottocratic Alternative", Alexander A. Guerrero forwards a framework for a lottocratic system, arguing that a system of lottery for choosing those in political power is comparatively better than a system of electoral democracy.[14] Guerrero entirely rejects the notion that some form of electoral democracy must be at the root of our political system, forwarding one where our leaders are not chosen but selected by chance. While Guerrero forwards a compelling account of how such a system aims to address the issues facing electoral democracy, I ultimately conclude that Guerrero's proposal fails to render a legislative system that performs better under his proposed dimensions of normative evaluation. In

[14] Guerrero, A. A. (2014). Against Elections: The Lottocratic Alternative. Philosophy & Public Affairs, 42(2), 135–178. https://doi.org/10.1111/papa.12029

fact, I argue that Guerrero's lottocratic alternative will yield a system that is demonstrably worse across the two dimensions of evaluation that Guerrero proposes, and thus, reforming electoral democracy constitutes a more promising route to improving systems of government. Furthermore, implementing lottocracic body as a limited oversight mechanism presents a more de

The Lottocratic Proposal

Guerrero initially posits two dimensions of normative evaluation for a system of government: responsiveness and good governance. Responsiveness refers to the extent to which political outcomes are tied to the beliefs of the individuals in a political jurisdiction. A responsive system of government is one in which if the beliefs and values of a constituency were different, the political outcomes would be reflect this difference.[15] And importantly, they "would be different *because* the beliefs, preferences, and values were different".[16] By contrast, good governance refers to an objective view of how good the policies enacted in a political jurisdiction are. Guerrero admits what constitutes "good" policy is very open ended: "goodness might be connected to average individual welfare, or how well off the worst off are"[17] Or it could be connected to "autonomy" or an "objective ideal of justice".[18] What precisely constitutes good governance is irrelevant because on his view, electoral representative systems will fare poorly across the board.

Both dimensions of normative evaluation are fundamentally tied to what Guerrero terms meaningful accountability, such that without it, a system of government will be ineffective across both dimensions. Meaningful accountability requires both that elections are "free, regular, competitive and fair"[19], but also that citizens are able to monitor and evaluate their representatives. Meaningful accountability is clearly necessary for responsive governance, because people need to be able to choose and re-elect representatives that are responsive to the beliefs and values of their constituencies while rejecting those that aren't. But meaningful accountability is equally paramount for good governance, because in its absence, leaders will be subject to capture by the powerful. Leaders will be swayed by powerful interests that influence policy to benefit the rich instead of society broadly. This happens in a variety of ways, including via campaign finance, influencing media representation, and lobbying. Guerrero sums up the connection between meaningful accountability and these two dimensions as follows:

> (P1) Systems of electoral representation tend to bring about outcomes that are responsive to the preferences of some constituency, C, with respect to some problem, P, only if C can hold their representative(s) meaningfully accountable with respect to P.

[15] Guerrero 136
[16] Guerrero 136. Emphasis in original.
[17] Guerrero 137.
[18] Ibid.
[19] Guerrero 140

> (P2) Systems of electoral representation tend to bring about good outcomes with respect to some problem, P, only if the political constituency, C, can hold their representative(s) meaningfully accountable with respect to P.[20]

The problem with electoral democracy is that the political constituency can't hold their representatives meaningfully accountable. The system is structurally information asymmetric: voters rarely have the necessary information to both know what their representatives are actually doing and know what their representatives *ought* to be doing. If there's widespread ignorance about the nature of the relevant issues or what their representatives are doing about them, voters are unable to hold political leaders meaningfully accountable. For Guerrero, the problem is that many contemporary political problems are information intensive, meaning that a voter would need extensive technical knowledge to meaningfully evaluate the conduct of their representative. These problems lead to what Guerrero highlights as the most inherent problems in the construction of an electoral system:

> Complexity: many political problems are complex, technical, and information intensive in a way that renders it difficult for [voters] to have informed beliefs and preferences about those problems, given their limited time and knowledge.
> Opacity: whether the [representatives] are or have (a) actually acted or (b) tried to act to the benefit of the [voters] is not obvious to the [voters] in the short term (the time between election cycles).[21]

Coupled with other more contingent problems in the contemporary US electoral system, voters are unable to hold their representatives meaningfully accountable.

Thus, Guerrero forwards a lottocratic system with three distinctive features.[22] First, the legislative function is made up of many *single-issue* legislatures focusing on particular topic areas like the economy or health care. Second, the members are chosen by lottery from each political jurisdiction. And third, the members hear from experts on their legislature's topic at the beginning of each legislative session, with the experts in each area going through a qualification assessment and expert selection process. Each single-issue legislature is composed of 300 people randomly chosen from the relevant political jurisdiction.[23]

Guerrero argues this system will fare better across both dimensions of responsiveness and good governance. First, legislators will be less subject to capture. Because powerful interests

[20] Guerrero 141
[21] Guerrero 150.
[22] Guerrero neglects to specify many of the features of his proposed lottocratic system in order to allow for a variety of possible formulations. However, the features outlined in this paragraph constitute the essential elements of his proposed structure.
[23] Guerrero 155-156.

cannot influence who is selected for office, "buying off" representatives becomes extremely difficult for wealthy individuals or corporations. To meaningfully control legislative outcomes, powerful interests would have to sway the entire public, which becomes both financially difficult and unrealistic because most average citizens won't be paying close attention to particular issues. Furthermore, legislators will be subject to countervailing information from expert presentations, which powerful interests won't be able to influence. Second, the lottocratic system will yield legislators more indicatively representative of the United States. Over the long run, a random sample of the political community will indicatively represent the diverse set of views of the constituency. Instead of the rich and powerful running for office, anyone in the political jurisdiction may be selected. Third, legislators will have not sought out office, which, according to Guerrero, reduces the prevalence of power-hungry individuals in office (although he acknowledges this is a two-edged sword, since a revealed preference for leadership can also be indicative of the right qualities for being a good legislator). Fourth, legislators won't be focused exclusively on issues that give them the political support necessary for winning re-election. "Elected politicians are unlikely to pay the short-term political cost"[24] of legislating solutions to problems that don't build up their short-term political capital, but randomly selected ones don't need to be concerned about building up political wins and can afford to consider the long-term and legislate on less popular issues. Finally, a lottocratic system better embodies ideals of political equality. Even though everyone may get an equal vote in an electoral system, not everyone is equally likely to hold political power because of the myriad hurdles to becoming a viable candidate for office. By contrast, lottery selection better reflects political equality, since every individual is equally likely to hold real political power. As Guerrero puts it, "the lottocratic system also comes closer to satisfying a condition of equal actual political power than any other system that uses some subset of the population as political decision-makers".[25]

Guerrero further argues that a lottocratic system constituted by single-issue legislative bodies provides unique benefits over the standard generalist elected legislature. Not only will randomly selected legislators have the "epistemic humility"[26] necessary to consider the issues neutrally, but the single-issue focus allows them to become acquainted in depth with their particular topic area. Thus, Guerrero concludes that such a lottocratic alternative is preferable to electoral democracy.

However, this paper argues that Guerrero's proposal fails to render a legislative system that performs better under his proposed dimensions of normative evaluation. In fact, Guerrero's lottocratic alternative will yield a system that is demonstrably worse across the dimensions of both responsiveness and good governance.

[24] Guerrero 168.
[25] Guerrero 169.
[26] Guerrero 170.

Responsiveness

First, Guerrero's proposed system fails to bring about responsive policymaking. Guerrero's system is purportedly *indicatively* representative: instead of an elected representative being charged with representing the totality of their political jurisdiction, the random selection of representatives is supposed to be indicative of the variety of beliefs of the total populace. In other words, the two systems try to represent the constituency in fundamentally different ways. While in the electoral system the whole constituency chooses the legislator (who then must represent the whole constituency), a lottocratic system tries to be a microcosm of the whole constituency, a statistically representative sample. Each legislator is no longer representing and accountable to a set of constituents, like in the electoral system.

The problem is that this form of representation definitionally requires a statistically representative sample, and it suffers profoundly from undercoverage bias. Undercoverage bias occurs in a sample when specific population segments or groups are routinely left out or under-represented.[27] If a randomly selected sample is too small, it will leave out important segments of the target population, thus yielding a sample that is not representative of the whole constituency. Important parts of the population will just simply be left out, because the sample is not big enough to be statistically expected to include them. That is exactly what happens in Guerrero's system. In a proposed 300-person single-issue federal legislative body, it is hard to overstate the sheer unlikelihood of a given person being selected.[28] The portion of the total US population overseeing an issue at a particular point in time can be calculated as follows:

$$\frac{300\ (Members\ of\ a\ legislative\ body)}{258{,}000{,}000\ (Approximate\ voting\ age\ US\ population)^{29}} = 0.0000011627$$

This value is so exceedingly low that any given legislature would be way too small to indicatively represent each of the plethora of views, values, backgrounds, and ideologies that a good portion of Americans hold on a given issue. For example, a particular indigenous group that has interest in the policies of the energy-focused legislature would likely be functionally excluded from representation because they aren't a big enough group to expect to be selected for even a single seat in the legislature. In an electoral system, each member of the demographic group would be

[27] Ingram, O. (2023, October 5). *Causes and Examples of Undercoverage Bias*. Research Prospect. https://www.researchprospect.com/causes-and-examples-of-undercoverage-bias/

[28] For simplicity and clarity, this paper focuses on replacing the US federal legislature with Guerrero's lottocratic system. However, even if the same was done for state and local governments, a given individual would still be extremely unlikely to be selected for office.

[29] US population statistics taken from the US Census. *U.S. and World Population Clock*. United States Census Bureau. (2024, April 4). https://www.census.gov/popclock/

entitled to a vote and the right to pressure a representative who is accountable to them and their interests. A plethora of other demographic groups, each with their own unique interests and vulnerabilities, will similarly be systematically excluded from representation in Guerrero's system.

Undercoverage bias plagues other cleavages of the population as well, such as ideological beliefs. A particular advocacy group may have strong feelings about laws regulating the accessibility of the built environment to people with disabilities, or another group of the population may strongly believe in a lassiez-faire approach to government regulation. Particularly because Guerrero hopes to forward a system conducive to more nuanced political ideologies than a left-right binary, like more issue-focused groups of this ilk, a lottocratic system would be detrimental to a project of cultivating legislation that's more responsive to the views of the general public. Each of these groups will be systematically excluded from representation in Guerrero's system because no individual in them can realistically expect to ever be selected.

Guerrero may reply that the selection process can be constructed in a way that establishes representation quotas for certain groups, like minority or gender quotas, to make them representative of their proportion of the total population. In particular, such a system could be adroitly implemented to include many more of the important and disproportionately excluded population segments than are often seen in an electoral system, where the representatives are often wealthier and more connected than the average constituent. At least in Guerrero's system, the most significant groups will have a seat or more in the legislature, including groups that have faced disproportionate barriers to holding office.

The problem is that there are simply way too many relevant dimensions across which a legislature would need to be indicatively representative. Minority groups, ideologies, geographic areas, and a plethora of other relevant segments would be systematically excluded from representation, even ones that constitute significant shares of the population. Such quotas would be unable to deal with the intersectionality of identity characteristics, ideological beliefs, geographic location, income, and a laundry list of other important elements. People can't be neatly divided into boxes to fill a representation quota, no matter how one tries to draw it up. For example, a legislature that tries to include quotas for gender and racial representation will fail to achieve effective representation for ideological beliefs and income, as well as a plethora of other things. If one focuses the quotas on representing the whole income distribution, other important segments will be excluded. In Guerrero's system, groups that can't expect to have a seat in a legislature have no formal representation in the system at all. The result is de facto disenfranchisement for crucial segments of the population. While other worries about responsiveness certainly apply to the electoral system, like barriers to holding office, an electoral system is comparatively more responsive because it's explicitly and directly representative of the whole constituency, including smaller groups. Everyone has an equal say in choosing the representative, and the representative is formally accountable to everyone in the constituency.

Good Governance

Second, Guerrero's proposed system fails to bring about good governance. The construction of single-issue lottocratic legislatures leads to two connected issues, policy incoherence and issue neglect. Both of these stem from the same fundamental root: single-issue legislatures will entirely lack the requisite coordination and vision to bring about a coherent policy program that addresses the totality of issues facing a constituency.

Policy Incoherence

While Guerrero claims focusing on single issues will allow average citizens to gain the requisite technical knowledge to address a particular policy area, effective lawmaking doesn't fit into nice, neat boxes, and the effects and impetus for any law nearly always spans the division of policy areas. Not only do most meaningful pieces of legislation encompass a variety of policy areas to the point that single-issue legislatures would have to be perpetually combining and functionally creating a generalist legislature, but each legislator will only be able to understand a narrow portion of the implications and relevant considerations for a given bill, because they only have information in a single area. Legislatures that act on their own will be constantly creating contradictory legislation because the effects of any bill will spill over into a variety of other policy areas. For example, the education legislature may pass a bill providing federal grant funding for new school buses to help rural school districts, while at the same time the environmental legislature passes a bill banning the government from using gas-powered vehicles in order to spur the transition to electric ones. Do the school districts get the buses? Not only will contradictions like these be ubiquitous, but the legislatures *won't even have the vocabularies to address them*. Lawmakers siloed into their particular policy niches won't be effective at considering how a bill interacts with the agendas of other legislatures, and will hardly even understand when problems arise. Neither legislature stepped even slightly out of its lane, and yet different legislatures will be constantly stepping on each other's toes, contradicting each other's policies, and contributing to a runaway budget as each competes for the funding for which each legislature regards as the most important and relevant issue. Without even a semblance of a complete and interactive vision of legislative policy, policy incoherence will become rampant.

How might Guerrero respond to fears of policy incoherence? Perhaps the most plausible route is to argue that individual issue legislatures can still forward a cohesive policy platform. There are two reasons why such a claim may seem plausible: first, party coordination can still occur in a lottocratic system. People can still get together to form political parties that have a coherent set of planks that form a policy platform, grounded in a uniting ideology. In the United States, traditional political parties could still develop a cohesive vision for policy that spans all of the legislatures and informs each legislator on what their goals should be, given their party membership. Second, Guerrero proposes that in situations where an issue spans multiple issue areas, the system could "allow for two distinct policy area SILLs to merge to address a particular

policy problem"[30], thus allowing for the requisite coordination to bring a set of cohesive policy changes into practice.

The problem is that neither of these reasons are sufficient to overcome the serious barriers to effective policy-making that Guerrero's system entails. Political parties are grossly insufficient to be the entity that coordinates the laws of a variety of legislatures; not only do they rarely forward more than general issue areas for which to garner political support and lack the fine-tuned capabilities to coordinate real law-making, they also can't address the core issue of policy incoherence: you simply can't divide up the issues into neat boxes. Each legislature will inevitably end up stepping on each other's toes and contradicting each other because it's not possible to divide the issues in a way that the duties of one legislature never overlap with another.

Guerrero's proposal to allow for the temporary merging of legislatures is similarly insufficient. As an illustrative example, take the recently passed federal infrastructure bill, the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act[31]. Should this bill be spearheaded by the economic legislature? It might have a focus on job creation and the economy, but it also focuses on green energy infrastructure, an issue for the environment legislature. It develops infrastructure in rural areas to help US agriculture, which comes under the purview of the agriculture legislature. And its investment in a variety of energy sources seems to concern the energy legislature. Each legislator will have an extremely limited and insufficient conception of what an important bill like this does, having only knowledge in a narrow slice of the issues. Even if the legislatures combine, the capacities each individual legislator has will be severely limited to their own domain of expertise. Trying to enact good policy in such a way is starkly reminiscent of the timeless parable of the five blind men, who each touch a different part of an elephant and form radically different ideas of what the elephant is. Just as the man who feels the tail can't even find a common conception of the situation to form meaningful dialogue with the one who feels the tusk, members of different legislatures will only see the bill as an energy policy or an economic policy or an agricultural policy, with no one possessing a complete and coherent picture of the bill. In other words, such focus on a narrow scope of expertise will render legislators so attuned to the details of the tail that they miss the elephant. A generalist legislature is comparatively better-equipped to forward a cohesive policy platform, even if the individual members have less domain-specific expertise. The presence of expert advisors and legislative subcommittees that focus in-depth on specific issues allows a more generalist political leader to make well-informed decisions about the information-intensive issues Guerrero cares about while simultaneously retaining a coherent policymaking

[30] Guerrero 176.

[31] This paper referred to the following source concerning the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act: Xavier de Souza Briggs, C. C. J., Muro, M., & Elizabeth Linos, J. W. (2024, February 29). *At its two-year anniversary, the bipartisan infrastructure law continues to rebuild all of America*. Brookings.

platform. A generalist legislature may sometimes struggle to address the finer details of certain information-intensive political issues, but it knows an elephant when it sees one.

Issue Neglect

Guerrero's proposed lottocratic system also leads to severe issue neglect. While the bills that do get proposed will often overlap with other legislative areas, leading to tensions and contradictions, other issues that don't neatly fit a given legislature's topic area may not be addressed at all or at least severely neglected. While Guerrero neglects to specify the precise quantity of single-issue federal legislatures or an exhaustive division of possible topic areas, any reasonable quantity of legislatures would fail to encompass the virulent diversity of political issues a federal lawmaking body would need to address. There are two general typologies of essential legislative issues that will suffer from Guerrero's structure. The first is bills that concern problems so general and encompassing that no representative or representative body will be equipped to address it. The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act adroitly illustrates this problem: it's unclear how single-issue legislatures would have the capacity to address broad infrastructural problems on a federal level, when each legislator only has a narrow understanding of the political issues. Issues of this ilk are likely to be severely neglected, as no legislative body will be equipped to introduce one during the agenda-setting phase of the legislative process. Even if multiple legislatures combine to attempt to craft a bill, no legislator will have the ability to critically examine it in totality, and such a bill would fail to be sufficiently encompassing in nature. Perhaps the economic legislature and the agriculture legislature meet jointly to introduce an infrastructure plan, but said proposal will likely fail to include important environmental considerations, energy infrastructure investments, or revitalization plans for areas suffering from urban decay. Other possible permutations will suffer from analogous oversights. Irrespective of the way one chooses to carve it up, Guerrero's proposal will lead to real neglect of policy issues that intersect many topic areas.

The second typology concerns issues which exhibit the opposite feature: they don't fit into any of the single-issue legislatures' topic areas. These political problems are also myriad. No reasonable quantity of legislatures and their respective topic scopes will constitute an exhaustive list of the issues in need of addressing. Given this inevitable reality, it's likely a litany of pressing problems falls through the cracks. Because each legislative body is intentionally narrow in scope, legislatures will lack the knowhow and the impetus to introduce bills that don't fall clearly within said legislature's purview. Or, disagreements, both implicit and explicit, will arise between legislatures on under which body's purview an issue falls.

For example, it's extremely unclear how a bill to grant the District of Columbia statehood would be introduced. Perhaps a democracy-focused single-issue legislative body would exist, but in such a world, myriad other issues would go unaddressed. What about a proposal to provide restoration funding for a culturally significant site for an indigenous tribe? Or a joint agreement to develop offshore sites for deep water mining of rare earth minerals? The problem is that any given

legislator will be epistemically impoverished with respect to the possible issues and solutions out there. It's not even just that a legislature may think a restoration plan or an offshore mining agreement isn't "their problem." It's that *no one will even know such a need exists*. Average citizens will be siloed into a specific policy niche and become unconcerned about the broader totality of things, unable to form a real network of policy proposals that, in totality, must encompass the whole range of needs in a society.

How might Guerrero further respond to problems of issue neglect? Guerrero may posit that the quantity and division of issue legislatures can change in order to address issues not covered in the initial set of legislatures. Such a system would be flexible, allowing for dynamic relations between legislatures and enabling them to adjust their scope as the issues facing the society change. This could plausibly address issue neglect better than a generalist legislature, because it allows for the creation of new legislative bodies specifically focused on the new issue, whereas a generalist legislature would become overburdened by the addition of new issues onto its docket and unable to quickly address them.

The problem is that changes in the quantity and scope of legislative bodies, at least with any meaningful frequency, are incredibly impractical and worsen policy incoherence. The laws stipulating the quantity and scope of the legislatures would need to be amended, 300 new people would need to be randomly selected, moved, housed, educated on the issue and taught the workings of law-making, experts would need to be rigorously evaluated and selected, and another legislature would need to be eliminated or folded into another in order to prevent an indefinite burgeoning of the number of legislatures. The problem is that the set of issues facing a society is anything but static. With the dynamic nature of a 21st century global economy and the rapid pace of technological development, new issues in need of legislative remedy will be constantly arising, making the initial set of policy areas perpetually obsolete. How will the set of legislatures address new problems likely posed by the rapid advancement of artificial intelligence? Even if the need eventually compels the addition of or changes in the scope of certain legislatures, adjustments and subsequent policy implementations will be so sluggish as to render governance on the issue entirely ineffective. By the time an adjustment is finally made, solutions will be too late, and another pressing issue will already be presenting itself. By contrast, a generalist legislature has the flexibility to address any issue that arises. Even if gridlock or unawareness hampers the generalist legislature's response, it is massively better equipped to handle the unpredictability of future issues by not being constrained to a pre-ordained domain of authority.

Importantly, the issues of policy incoherence and of issue neglect are unavoidable in Guerrero's proposal because adjustments to limit one necessarily trade off with addressing the other. Increasing the quantity of legislatures or constantly changing their scope to better address issue neglect will exacerbate policy incoherence, resulting in more legislatures stepping on the toes of others. The greater the quantity and variability, the more unwieldy legislative cohesion becomes, further exacerbating problems of policy incoherence. Conversely though, efforts to limit the

quantity of legislatures and make them more static to reduce policy incoherence will result in worse issue neglect, since more issues will fall through the cracks. In any hypothetical world so construed, problems of policy incoherence and issue neglect will necessarily be ubiquitous.

Conclusion

Sortition as an encompassing legislative project faces serious pitfalls. In order to combat the structural lack of policymaking expertise in lottocratic systems, a division of legislative bodies into specific policy areas, narrowing down the scope of knowledge required of each dilettantish legislator, seems necessary. But such a move results in a further set of perhaps greater concerns. While this counsels against lottocracy in an expansive sense, alternative uses may be more promising. Guerrero also acknowledges the possibility of using sortition in a more limited government role, acting as an oversight mechanism to traditional legislative bodies: "Additionally, they could be used just as an oversight mechanism, charged only with making recommendations regarding legislation, or with having some level of veto power over traditional legislative processes."[32] While evaluating the specific virtues of a sortition system in this alternative capacity lies beyond the scope of this paper, using lottocracy as a check on our present political institutions seems much more promising, and has the potential to harness the undeniable virtues of the lottocratic process Guerrero emphasizes.

Indubitably, the contemporary electoral system in the United States is in need of substantial remedy. The issues that face the system as we currently have it are both numerous and pernicious. But a move away from the crown jewel of American democracy – as imperfect as it is – as Guerrero proposes would be misguided and result in far worse legislative government across both dimensions of normative evaluation Guerrero proposes. Not only would a lottocratic system be unresponsive to the beliefs and values of the public, but the legislation such a system would enact would fare poorly across any reasonable conception of good governance. While electoral democracy may be imperfect, it still remains indispensable to the twisting and oft-frustrating odyssey that is the pursuit of a more just politics.

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