

Is Democracy a Reality in today's Mass Societal Order?

The need of foundations/think tanks analyzing democracy, architecture, community and ideal spaces

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METADATA

Urban Eidos Issue 2-2024 (ISSN: 2942-5131)

Article-DOI: <https://doi.org/10.62582/RNRI95106P>

Issue-DOI: <https://doi.org/10.62582/RNRI95103>

Society today is going through major transitions, transitions that have changed the way we think, work, live and communicate with other people. In many ways in a digital world, it feels that the ability of communication between people is becoming a lost skill. Will the technical, socio-economic and political landscape bring a complete disruption of life as we know it today, or will it help mankind adapt to a better way of living, and a democratic lifestyle based on the Greek words 'Demos' meaning people and 'Kratos' meaning power, governing which depends on the will of the people?

Yet, does democracy even REALLY exist today? As population forever increases and the city becomes an unmanageable mass with no freedom of thought, planned living spaces, or community, will the political and socio-economic order collapse? The narrative is that people feel unrepresented by their governments, youth feels alienated from the process in that it has no representation, voice or positive influence on political decision making, population growth makes it difficult to be heard, and in the western world there seems to be dramatic challenges to democracy on an ever increasing scale. There is a shortage of housing and inflation creating problems for people having troubles to make ends meet. There are immediate needs for change in architecture, the structure and planning of cities, and the very structure of the democracy. The democracy of today has been developed under neoliberalism to embody consumerism, control by an oligarchical structure over the mass population, and politics that have separated themselves from the mainstream populace.

Coming from a background in film and entertainment worldwide one works with many narratives that shape business, politics, life and community. The business mirrors the positives and negatives that are present into today's western culture and the conceptualization of democracy itself. The Greek model of democracy was based on smaller cities and centres where the citizens had a say in everything in everyday life, but can this be transposed to a modern metropolis at a time that most of society has no direct say or control in the day-by-day democratic process of decision making? Politicians repeat time-after-time that society lives in democracy and on television we are constantly reminded. Yet if democracy is healthy and functioning, as it was originally embodied, would we all have to be reminded everyday about it existing... in my opinion no.

Will free thought even exist in the near future? In attempting to deliver information and contexts from the point-of-view of highly qualified individuals worldwide whom are concerned about the status quo, one must take a deep look into the community of today and the city (which originally was part of Greek society and was viewed as an ideal space)..a city of free citizens in terms of democratic participation and free

citizenship. In doing so one's ultimate objective is to create a positive impact on the ongoing concepts of modern and future society.

One must also communicate with all generations, so as to have a totally inclusive view to where the city (Polis), society and community stand presently. Has the conceptualization of the 'ideal space' taken on a new meaning and existence, or is it an extension of the 'so-called' democratic societies of the past that have been ideologically reconfigured to the present? If the ideal space of today is based on a democratic model, does it exist as a community of freedom of expression?

The world has turned to consumer driven and oligarchical democracy, democracy controlled by the few, a socio-economic and political phenomenon that is affecting neoliberalism and how it functions or misfunctions today in the western world.

Foundations and think tanks, such as Ideal Spaces, are needed to link the past with the present and the future, bringing forth the important issues of the transformation of living spaces relative to urban development and the community. We can only have a comfort zone in the present if we look to the past, and a future if we analyze the present. This in the whole describes the importance of foundations such as Ideal Spaces.

This in turn brings into question the utopian society, and if it really ever existed, or was it a symbolic view to the desire of scholars through years of history to establish a basis for what existed in the past and how to transcribe that to the present day community...is there really an ultimate ideal space for the human race to live in today and the future?

The linkage between Greek democracy and modern day societies with billions of people and cities of millions of inhabitants does not allow for the voices of the people to be heard. A central point is if a new concept of community can exist within the structure that mankind has constructed over the decades. Will society be able to create cities where community thrives through architecture, free thought and art to deliver an embracing peace-of-mind with an ever-expanding population, and the movement by many to return to some aspect of authoritarian rule of the few over the masses? This seems to be driven by unhappiness in the present neoliberal agenda in western democratic society.

What is needed is a new focal point, a shift to a new central concept of communicative resources where there is community involvement and the creation of ideal living spaces, communities and cities where there is a more communal existence, and where ideas and thoughts can be shared within lifestyle. This can be delivered through the vision of architects, artists, politicians and in the main the populace itself. In the European society and community, we have seen generally a definite disconnect between democracy as it exists (if one can really call it democracy) and the people.

Yet in 2024 we have seen some interesting developments where large numbers of the population have voiced their opinion publically in mass rallies and demonstrations against a return to any type of authoritarian or oligarchical rule. In Germany this has been evident in major gatherings against the movement to the far right and populism and a return to the right's political posturing. Although this is not a society wide phenomenon, and there are those in the population who counter such gatherings, it does show a population that seemingly has a breaking point to what they can and cannot live with.

The people have united and we see democracy and free speech finding a new forum, a democracy of, for and by the people. This could be seen as a shocking and limited reality. Limited in that the youth feel alienated from the democratic process and many middle class and working class people feel the need for change, as they feel the present structure of government and socio-economic policies fail them. They look to promises of a better life through extreme political opinions, which in turn relates to utopia, since the promise of utopia is to reach the promised land, and that land is free of complications and complex dynamics. Many feel this is the only way for survival. Yet as many move away from established political parties and economic structures, the voice of many is they want change based on a new democratic form, and some see populism as the answer. Yet is the need for a new democratic structure a reality that can be built upon? Whether this is sustainable in present day European and

western society could well be questioned, but people's feelings are being voiced on crucial matters to lifestyle, community and living space.

Therefore organizations such as Ideal Spaces become a link, a communicative centre, with a view where things past and present can be analyzed, reviewed and presented in a written and visual form so as to deliver communication to people around the world with a view to the „ideal city“. The ideal city can be seen to be a symbol for re-focusing on the issue of the idea of the 'right' city being linked with the 'right' form of democracy, an open forum where freedom of speech, democracy and citizenship are core values to lifestyle, community, architecture, art and society itself. An "ideal city" is such, as it allows the people to think and communicate in an open and unrestricted manner, and not under authoritarian or oligarchical framework linked with promises of a utopia that will never be able to be achieved. This causes people to look at themselves, community, architecture, art and the space they live in so as to reinvigorate the populace to be re-involved in how society can be bettered for all. Community is a vital concept to communication, dialogue, living spaces and the movement of freedom of speech and democratic beliefs, yet there needs to be a re-structuring and a revitalization of community. This will deliver a higher quality of life within a democratic framework. This allows for a leading edge in presenting ideas that will allow for a clear and concise journey into finding answers to the real issues that are affecting society in the present day, in a broader view, to collaborate and work through democracy, architecture, community and art.

Community, ideal spaces and a healthy environment are keys to a future life that will give the population the best at all levels within a given society. It is the ability to create and present a working framework for community, space and environment that has a democratic core and a desire to present basics from the Greek and Roman societies going back centuries that sets organizations, such as Ideal Spaces, truly in a league of their own in their written and visual presentations, symposia and events. The work of such foundations and think tanks is needed to revitalize the 'evergreen' concept of an ideal city and new social concepts for the betterment of life. A working framework will have to consist of a dialogue between government and the people, a productive and communal living space and a freedom of thought that will allow for an evergreen existence.

The world needs the ability of organizations and think tanks such as Ideal Spaces that bring an in-depth analysis from individuals highly qualified in urban planning, architecture, art, freedom of speech and today's political and socio-economic structures. This delivers a path back to a purer, and unrestrictive democratic function, not based on central control and not just offering platitudes. The central assumption being that Ideal spaces have an effect on architecture, art, community and the human condition. Living within a positive, spacial concept brings a mental peace-of-mind to the populace, and this in turn creates a productive communal purpose to life. This is a mainstay of the ongoing work of a functional democracy.

The importance of Foundations, such as Ideal Spaces, is to keep open communication between people by bringing them together at symposia and events, so as to allow for a free exchange of thoughts and information, a dialogue. We all hear that due to the digital age that all we need is a cell phone to communicate and get our information. The point is that there is a lot of information to be had from one's cell phone, but who may be manipulating the information and how it is dispersed. Direct information dialogue between people is better than indirect communication via technical devices so as to deliver freedom of thought.

We need freedom of thought and interaction between people so as to protect democratic values and allow an open information flow. Art, architecture, community and living spaces are all components of a whole....a society....a community. Hence dealing with topics of freedom of speech, urban planning, art and architecture bring forth communication that is necessary for community and society to thrive today and in the future.