DIRECT DEMOCRACY & SORTITION ASSEMBLIES

A Civic Architecture for the British Isles

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Engineering Brief

A governance mechanism to constrain state expansion and regulatory intrusion

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"We inherit the lessons of the past, not its chains."

— DD&SA Founding Principle

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A living document — subject to civic deliberation and democratic revision.

1. Problem Definition

Modern governments exhibit a persistent and predictable failure mode: **regulatory accumulation driven by career incentives, lobbying capture, and institutional self-preservation.**

Key characteristics of the problem:

Political roles function as careers, incentivising expansion of authority rather than restraint.

Electoral systems reward signalling, coalition-building, and donor appeasement over long-term system stability.

Regulatory bodies tend to grow in scope, complexity, and intrusiveness regardless of outcomes.

Innovative and productive enterprises become default targets for control, delay, or extraction.

This behaviour is not primarily ideological. It is **structural**.

Any solution that relies on “better people,” ethics, or vigilance fails at scale.

2. Design Objective

DD&SA (Direct Democracy & Sortition Assemblies) is designed to:

- **Remove incentives for political self-expansion**
- **Break the link between power, career advancement, and lobbying**
- **Constrain regulatory behaviour by design rather than intention**
- **Preserve public legitimacy while reducing state interference in innovation**

The goal is not minimal government, but **predictable, bounded government**.

3. Core Design Principles

DD&SA applies engineering logic to governance:

- **Incentives define behaviour** — Systems must assume self-interest and design around it.
- **Rotation over permanence** — Long-term authority creates capture. Temporary authority limits it.
- **Constraint over trust** — Good systems do not rely on virtue.
- **Transparency over persuasion** — Decisions must be inspectable, not performative.
- **Structural neutrality** — No parties, factions, or re-election dynamics.

4. System Architecture (High-Level)

4.1 Distributed Direct Input

Residents participate directly in defined decision categories.

Participation is structured, limited, and scoped — not continuous plebiscites.

Input defines **directional consent**, not micromanagement.

This prevents detachment between the governed and decision outcomes without creating populist volatility.

4.2 Sortition Assemblies (Random Selection)

Decision-makers are selected by **random draw** from a qualified population.

No campaigning, no re-election, no donor relationships.

Terms are **short, fixed, and non-renewable**.

Effect:

Power cannot be pursued.

Influence cannot be accumulated.

Capture becomes statistically improbable.

This is the core anti-corruption mechanism.

4.3 Deliberative Cells (Small-Scale Units)

Selected individuals operate in small, rotating deliberative groups.

Each cell handles narrowly scoped issues.

Decisions are constrained by predefined mandates and immutable system rules.

Small groups reduce grandstanding and ideological theatre. They behave more like engineering review panels than parliaments.

5. Regulatory Constraint Mechanisms

DD&SA introduces **explicit friction against regulatory growth**:

5.1 Regulatory Sunset Enforcement

All regulations expire automatically unless explicitly renewed.

Renewal requires demonstrated utility and proportionality.

No permanent regulatory artefacts.

5.2 Expansion Cost Principle

Any new regulatory burden must remove or simplify existing ones.

Net regulatory growth is structurally discouraged.

5.3 Separation of Creation and Enforcement

Regulatory authors cannot be enforcers.

Enforcement bodies have no rule-making authority.

This prevents bureaucratic self-feeding loops.

6. Failure Mode Analysis

DD&SA does not claim perfection. It claims **bounded damage and rapid correction**.

7. Compatibility with Innovation and Industry

DD&SA aligns with high-innovation environments by:

Reducing unpredictable regulatory shifts

Limiting ideologically motivated intervention

Increasing framework stability over electoral cycles

Treating governance as infrastructure, not theatre

For technology-driven enterprises, this translates to:

Lower compliance uncertainty

Fewer arbitrary constraints

More reliable long-term planning conditions

8. Implementation Scope

DD&SA is **modular**, not revolutionary:

Can be applied at municipal, regional, or national levels

Can operate alongside existing constitutional frameworks

Can initially govern specific domains (e.g., regulation, oversight, resource allocation)

Adoption does not require sudden systemic replacement.

9. Summary

DD&SA treats governance as a **systems engineering problem**, not a moral one.

By removing ambition from power, limiting tenure, and structurally blocking capture, it constrains the natural tendency of governments to intrude into productive activity — including technological and industrial innovation.

It does not promise ideal outcomes. It promises **predictable limits**.

That is its value.

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