



DELIBERATIVE DEMOCRACY

Waldenia Model

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A few words of introduction

The purpose of this text is to give a brief and accessible overview of how deliberative democracy can work at its full potential. This requires a specific formula, a way of designing a democratic system, which in this case is the Waldenia Model. At the heart of this model are citizens' assemblies.

Full-scale deliberative democracy means that there are no general elections at all. This is the big step to be taken: imagining that democracy can exist without general elections. And that it can function well. This is what I would like to start with. Following this, I will outline the key elements of the Waldenia Model that ensure its smooth functioning: its institutions and procedures. Waldenia Model could be described in more detail, however, the aim here is primarily to show that deliberative democracy on a full scale is possible and how this model can work in practice.

Why consider introducing a full version of deliberative democracy at all? What could it actually accomplish? Waldenia Model is democracy in earnest, which means that people have the opportunity to make important decisions about the issues that affect their lives, and also that they maintain control over what happens in the country at all times. The Waldenia Model enables informed decision making, taking into account a broader, long-term perspective. This model enables making decisions that are not burdened by the logic of political rivalry. This latter benefit alone translates into quite a significant change in how the decisions are made. The Waldenia Model also means a real possibility for the public to oversee the government's activities and make corrections of its actions, should the need arise. It is an opportunity to improve the way the country functions, and this in turn allows achieving a better quality of life.

Let's start at the beginning, though.

Beyond the general elections

I was a few years too young to take part in the first partially free elections in Poland after World War II, which took place in June 1989. Nevertheless, if I had been able to vote in them, I would have gladly done so. I also appreciate their importance: they opened the way to democratic, social and economic changes in Poland. They are an example of how people can change the course of history and the political system of their country for the better, using elections. There are, of course, more such positive

examples of change through democratic elections, not only in Europe but also in Asia and in North and South America.

The great advantage of elections is that they are universal: everyone who wants to participate in them can do so. This gives people a sense of empowerment. There may, of course, be certain restrictions, such as a minimum age, nevertheless the vast majority of the citizens are able to take part in elections. This, in turn, ensures that their outcome is respected by the public: there is a general consensus that the results of elections give elected persons a mandate to make decisions on their behalf. So why, in my view, should we move away from general elections?

First of all, because it is possible to design a democratic system that will be able to deliver better quality decisions and solutions than representative democracy. Take for example issues such as climate change or biodiversity conservation. The current form of democracy was not able to address them properly. There are also many other social issues, such as poverty or access to education that remain to be solved. Of course, there are countries in the world that are doing better and there are others that are doing not so well. It's not the same everywhere. Nevertheless, in every representative democracy there is an element that is potentially toxic. And that is elections.

Elections basically mean that there is a competition for power, and with this comes an atmosphere of conflict that is fuelled by political parties seeking to crush their political competitors. This conflict is propagated by the press, television and the internet, and it spills over to the public, who are also involved in it. The theoretical assumptions of representative democracy look good on paper, but they have far-reaching side effects that, in my view, do not serve society well. It is enough to see how the debate in the parliament looks, how politicians talk to each other during election campaigns, as exemplified by Joe Biden's debate with Donald Trump during the 2020 campaign. One of the strong divisions in American society is related to the support of political parties, and this means who is voting for whom. With this kind of setup, it's a long way to go to a harmoniously functioning society.

On the other hand, there is a new form of democracy becoming more and more popular, which is citizens' assemblies with a randomly selected group of people. The composition of this group reflects selected demographic criteria such as gender, age, education level, and place of residence. I had an opportunity to support the first citizens' assembly in Bosnia, which took place in Mostar. The task for a randomly

selected group of residents was relatively simple: to work out recommendations for improving cleanliness in the city. When I arrived in Mostar with a presentation about citizens' assemblies at the end of 2019, some buildings still had no windows, and in some places the walls showed traces of rifle bullets – these were the remnants of the civil war in the former Yugoslavia. On top of that, there still had been no local elections for about 10 years, and the mayor, taking advantage of a loophole in the law, persisted in his position. In December 2020, local elections were finally held and a legal city council was elected. Outlining this background is important to understand the political context in which the citizens' assembly in 2021 was held. Since ethnicity was taken into account as one of the demographic criteria for the assembly, in one group there were Croats, Bosniaks and Serbs, who were to talk together about the issues of their city.

After a month filled with meetings that passed in a good atmosphere, the citizens' assembly in Mostar adopted 32 recommendations, most with a level of support above 90 percent (support of at least 80 percent of the assembly members was required to adopt a recommendation). In Polish cities, the recommendations of the citizens' assemblies are also accepted at a level of at least 80 percent support and there are dozens of them. The fact that this succeeds sometimes surprises even the assembly members themselves.

Now, imagine the parliaments in Poland, the United Kingdom, Germany or the United States were to make decisions in this way, with the support of at least 80 percent of the voters. It wouldn't be easy, would it? Sometimes even achieving a simple majority in the parliament is a challenge.

How is it possible that what succeeds for ordinary citizens would be so difficult for parliamentarians? This is partially because the assembly members have different motivations and they are completely independent in their opinions. They are not bound by the discipline of their political party, commitments to campaign sponsors or thinking in terms of their own political careers. This independence of assembly members is possible thanks to random selection. In other words: their independence is assured by the fact that there are no elections to the citizens' assembly. This allows them to focus on solutions and to consider which ones will be most beneficial and how to fine-tune them. And they can be completely in alignment with themselves in doing so.

Several decades of experience with various forms of deliberative processes with a randomly selected group of participants, including citizens' assemblies, show that this form of democracy works well and, above all, that it works as democracy should:

it ensures a meaningful deliberation and informed decision-making. The potential of citizens' assemblies, however, is far greater than just resolving single issues once in a while. They can be at the core of the entire political system.

Democracy is like an operating system on a computer, it's like Windows or macOS, depending on the hardware you use. In order to be able to use the internet on a computer, receive emails, or print even a single page of text on a printer, you need a well-functioning operating system. And it is the same with countries: you need an effective system of decision making, thanks to which issues concerning food, education, health, agriculture, economy or environment can be resolved. Moreover, it is not about making any decisions. It's about a democratic system that will allow people to live happy lives. And this is exactly the main purpose of the Waldenia Model of deliberative democracy.

Basic premises of the model

The Waldenia Model was developed for practical use - its aim is to enable well-thought-out, high-quality decisions and to allow for effective management of the country. However, it is not a model of democracy in which citizens deal directly with everything. This would neither be necessary nor practical. For effective management, delegating tasks to employed individuals is a very good solution. On the other hand, what is needed to ensure its democratic character is that through citizens' assemblies, the public should have the opportunity to indicate the direction of the country's development, effectively oversee the actions of the government and, if necessary, take almost any decision that is related to the functioning of the state.

In other words, the premise of the Waldenia Model is not that regular people should deal directly with all the details of a country's policy, because there is simply too much of it. In this model, lay citizens indicate the direction in which the ship should sail, and the role of the experts is to get the ship to its port. And if citizens notice



that the ship is going in a different direction than they wished, they can correct its course at any time.

This model is also based on the premise that through the use of citizens' assemblies, people are able to make sensible and well-considered decisions that will contribute to the improved quality of their lives.

The meaning of democracy is understood here as making collective decisions to ensure a good quality of life in the society. What is taken into consideration here is that making informed decisions is time-consuming, as one usually has to become familiar with many aspects of an issue, and that modern countries are so large that meetings of all citizens in one place are impractical. That is why people are invited to participate in a citizens' assembly, with a randomly selected group that constitutes the country in miniature.

The guiding principle behind organising citizens' assemblies is that democracy is for everyone. This means not only that any person can be potentially randomly selected to become an assembly member, but also that anyone can send their comments, suggestions, and feedback to the assembly. It means that the learning phase is broadcast live, that it can be observed, and that the written educational materials that are provided to the assembly members are posted on the assembly's website and available to all. The idea here is that people who are not selected to the assembly also have the opportunity to contribute.

There is another assumption worth mentioning here, which concerns the very foundations of democracy: that every person is inherently valuable, or that they have their own inner dignity. It is related to the fact that everyone is free, that they can determine their own lives, and thus have a say in what happens in the community in which they live. This is the starting point for democracy.

Citizens' assemblies as a basic element of democracy

Thanks to experience in organising citizens' assemblies and other forms of deliberative processes, we know what issues they work best for and what is needed for a citizens' assembly to be a success. The subject for the assembly should be chosen so that it can be discussed in depth during the learning phase, by analysing the pros and cons of particular solutions. Assembly members should be given time to digest new information and put it together so that they are clear about what is important to them and what they want to achieve in a given area. Small group discussions - a flagship

element of any citizens' assembly - can help with this. It is crucial to have good facilitation (conducting meetings), to build a friendly atmosphere and to design the process in such a way that it supports the development of relevant solutions, for example, by consulting preliminary versions of recommendations with experts.

It is also worth ensuring that taking part in a citizens' assembly is as easy as possible, in other words the key is to make them accessible. To this end, for example, assembly meetings are organised on weekends so that people who work during the week can attend. Shorter meetings over the Internet can additionally take place in the afternoons, on weekdays. In addition, a per diem is provided to all assembly members in connection with their participation in the assembly.

The total duration of the assembly should not be too long. If it were to last for more than a year, for example, it would be too much for some people and they might therefore choose not to take part. This, in turn, reduces the potential pool of people who can become assembly members, which in turn affects the representativeness of the assembly. It seems that a good time for one citizens' assembly is maximum six months. This is an intuitive assessment as, to my knowledge, no thorough research has been done on this topic. So intuitively, assemblies lasting more than a year may already be too long for some people, even if their meetings take place only once a month.

Assuming, then, that a single citizens' assembly will last less than a year, what decisions are these going to be, so that the outcome can be trusted? This will certainly include setting the direction of action in a particular area, for example a list of 10 main priorities, goals to be achieved in the coming term of office, which may be 4 or 5 years. It is still worth adopting general principles to this effect, so that it is clear which way to go when there are decisions to be made on issues that the assembly has not dealt with.

The point here, however, is not to have one assembly create a list of priorities for all areas of state policy. That would be far too much. So it would be better to break this down into smaller parts and hold 12-15 assemblies simultaneously, each dealing with a specific area, such as agriculture, education, culture, economy, social policy, or environment. And each of these assemblies - referred to as a "strategy assembly" (or policy assembly) because its role is to develop guidelines for state policy - will develop a list of priorities for the area.

Who will be in charge of implementing these priorities? A person selected and recruited by the strategy assembly, following the adoption of the priorities for the area. This person will be assigned as a minister.

Determining the direction of state development – strategy assemblies

A situation in which the principles of state policy will be decided by the citizens themselves, through citizens' assemblies, means a completely different world than before. Why? Because the assembly members think long-term, they are not constrained by the next election campaign, raising funds for it or poll results. They are free to consider what will be best for them, their families, or society as a whole. But their perspectives are different; it's not like everyone today is capable of thinking about the broader common good. Besides, even if everyone thought only about what is beneficial to them, the result will still be a perspective of the common good, since the assembly members are, after all, the country in miniature (due to the demographic criteria adopted when composing it). That's why the key thing when making decisions in the assembly is to be in tune with yourself.

It's also commonly known that a well-run assembly allows for the activation of collective wisdom or, in other words, collective intelligence. How does this work? For example, if one person misses something, another may notice it and pass it on to the rest of the group. This increases the level of knowledge and understanding of an issue across the group. In the same room, there are people with different life experiences, different ages, different knowledge and values. Each of them is independent. Results of studies have confirmed that a diverse group is more likely to make good decisions than a homogeneous group. The diversity of the assembly is ensured at the outset through demographic criteria such as gender, age, education level, urban or rural residence, and others that are perceived to be relevant in the country (for example, language or ethnic group).

The strategy assembly, dealing with a given topic area, should be quite large: between 120 and 200 people. With this size, it should be seen as credible to the public and, if necessary, its subgroups should be able to discuss specific issues that come up. From this perspective, larger assemblies may be better. This raises the cost of organising them, but still the whole process should cost less than holding a general election.

Organising over a dozen assemblies at the same time is a bit of an organisational challenge, but if their formula is well prepared, it should be relatively easy: each assembly has its own coordinating team that is responsible for conducting it, and its course is supervised by monitoring teams (one checks compliance with the standards, while the other watches over the arrangement of the agenda in the learning phase). The key to success is good design of the process flow and governance structure.

Assembly meetings may be held once every few weeks in-person, with online meetings scheduled in between them. Such an hour-long weekday online meeting is a great convenience for a national level citizens' assembly and helps enrich its agenda. It works well in case of a need to consult experts, for example, in an informal conversation (it is then a kind of an "afternoon tea with experts").

It is fundamental to prepare the educational part well. It is also a good idea to prepare a list of key issues to be discussed within a given topic area in advance. Of course, assembly members can add to it on their own, but it is a big help if they receive substantive "input" right from the start. Such a list of issues can be developed in a workshop with experts and parties related to the topic, including NGOs and academic institutions. The opportunity to send suggestions, proposals and comments should be open to everyone to keep the assembly open. The preparation stage can therefore start even a year before the first meeting of the assembly itself.

Strategy assemblies can begin in January and run through the end of June. By that time, the first phase of their work, namely the elaboration of their priorities for action and general principles, should be completed. After that, the assembly members have a two-month break for vacation before the next phase, which we'll talk about in a moment.

On the practical side, it is worth bearing in mind that two or more assemblies may be interested in the same issues, so that they may overlap. Thus, a special mechanism should be prepared to prevent such situations. It may also turn out that the assembly will find that some issues are so complex that they cannot be resolved by the end of June. It should then be able to decide that these topics will be dealt with by specialised citizens' assemblies set up in the following year.

The strategy assembly has a lot of liberty in setting priorities for action for the next term. Nevertheless, they must be consistent with the fundamental values that are included in the constitution of the country concerned.

Selection of ministers

The second phase of the strategy assembly begins, according to the timeline proposed here, after the summer holidays. It is the strategy assemblies that select the ministers, as it is their members who identify the tasks at hand, so they are well versed in who will be fit to implement them. This stage should take place with the support of recruitment specialists who, along with the facilitators, will lay out the entire recruitment process.

Recruitment for the position of minister should be open and it can be assumed that many candidates may apply. To make things simple, an initial screening among the candidates may be done by the recruitment team so that in effect five people are presented to the assembly for selection. Of course, the assembly should be able to invite anyone who applies, including those outside the recommended five, to the interview. This pre-selection is only a precaution in case there are many applicants.

Ideally, the minister is not only a top specialist in his or her field, but also a good manager, since it is his or her role also to manage the entire ministry, with all its departments and offices. He or she can be supported in this task by management professionals.

In this model, candidates will know immediately after the announcement of recruitment results what is expected of them and will be able to check whether the proposed objectives are consistent with their beliefs or dear to them. For example, if someone is in favour of industrial agriculture that involves the use of large quantities of chemicals, and the assembly identifies as a priority the development of organic farming, small family farms, and cooperatives, then that person will know that this task is not for them because it is contrary to their views. In turn, it will be up to the assembly members to see if indeed the people who declare their willingness to carry out the tasks identified by the strategy assemblies will be able to do so.

I am very curious to know what such interviews would look like? What questions would the assembly members ask? Should this part be broadcast live? In my opinion, no. The idea is to make the candidates, as well as the assembly members, feel at ease. If someone has a question to ask, they shouldn't have to wonder how it will come off on TV or the Internet. Candidates should also be given the opportunity to answer honestly, they should be able to feel at ease. So I would bet on the comfort of the conversation here. The credibility of this process can be ensured by the participation of observers at meetings, and assembly members can provide their

rationale for their selection. And that would conclude the second phase of the strategy assembly's work.



How government works

Once all the ministers have been selected, the government can begin to carry out the tasks assigned to it. It will undoubtedly be useful to coordinate its activities, as some objectives may require the cooperation of several ministries, so cross-sectoral teams will need to be set up. It is worth appointing a coordinator of government activities to coordinate all this. However, this is not the role of a prime minister, but rather that of a facilitator.

Who in turn will handle foreign contacts? That is the role of the minister of foreign affairs. And defence? Obviously, the minister

of defence should also be elected. Depending on the country, the list of individual ministries may be slightly different. Some areas may be connected and others separated. For example, energy can be part of the environment ministry or it can be a separate ministry. There may be a separate Ministry of Sustainable Development or there may not be one at all. This is all related to the specifics of a given country, so it is something to be decided on an issue-by-issue basis.

The issue that can be potentially inflammatory is making a spending plan, as each minister can direct the money flow where they need it themselves. At this point, there is room for action for the government's work coordinator, whose role is to conduct discussions and design workshops in such a way as to reconcile everyone's needs. If necessary, there could be a backstop mechanism in the form of a special citizens' assembly to resolve disputes over budget expenditure. However, as a general rule, it is the role of ministers and the coordinator of government to come up with a solution that is satisfactory to all.

In this model of democracy, new laws are made by ministers through regulations. Why this way? There is the theoretical possibility of creating a permanent parliament

with a randomly selected group of citizens to approve new laws, although, in my opinion, this would not be very practical. There may be dozens of bills in a year, and having a sufficiently long educational part for each one may simply be missing the point. This is one of those things that we already know from experience with the citizens' assemblies held so far. A citizens' assembly will work great if it has a specific issue to decide on and if the educational part is adequately prepared and there is enough time for the deliberative part. On the other hand, it is not a good idea to burden the permanent citizens' parliament with dozens of bills. Of course, one can assume that such a citizens' parliament would be very large, that, for example, it could have several hundred members, and then individual bills would be dealt with by thematic committees, as is the case today in parliaments. However, in this case these committees would be small in terms of the number of members, which lowers their representativeness, and there could still be quite a few bills to review and approve.

Oversight of the activities of ministers, especially in law-making, is essential. This is indisputable. So how do we approach this? The basic mechanism ensuring the proper execution of tasks by ministers is the transparency of their activities. For example, all draft regulations may be published well in advance, may be sent to assembly members, and the adoption of any change in the law may require public consultations in the form of a workshop, with stakeholders and experts. I would therefore prioritise a transparent law-making procedure.

If necessary, it should be possible for ministers to act quickly, with shortened public consultation. However, this should be reserved for exceptional situations, such as natural disasters, and should also follow a clear procedure.

Annual reports on the implementation of priority tasks by individual ministers are also important here. They can be emailed not only to assembly members but also to all citizens of a country. For it is the public, as a whole, that is the recipient of government action. All Estonian citizens, for example, have official email addresses to which information from ministers can be sent. This will facilitate the performance of control function by the public.

But what if there are issues to be resolved about which the strategy assembly did not specifically identify what needs to be done? The minister is then required to be guided by the general principles and values identified by the assembly. For example, bison came out to the fields in winter and wreaked some havoc, causing losses to farmers. The strategy assembly in the area of environment did not deal with

the bison issue, but pointed out the general principle of caring for nature, preserving habitats and biodiversity. This indicates to the minister the course of action - at least in my interpretation - that compensation to farmers is preferred to culling, as the recommendation was care, not eradication.

The Minister publishes a draft regulation on compensation for bison damage on the Ministry's website and consults the amount and method of payment with farmers in the affected area. The academic community is also speaking out. The minister prepares a report on the process of developing a new regulation and submits it to a special oversight body, the Standards and Procedures Council. Only if there are no objections from the Council can the minister sign the regulation and pay the compensation.

Control mechanisms

But what if the minister decides to move in the direction of bison culling? This is where the control mechanisms come in. There are several ways to respond, and another Waldenia Model institution may come into play, namely the Citizens' Senate.

The Citizens' Senate is made up of 250-500 former assembly members, randomly selected from those who are willing to participate, taking into account basic demographic criteria. Its term of office is one and a half years. So this is a large group, and it follows that the Senate should be able to create thematic committees for all of the areas that the strategy assemblies dealt with, and these committees should be relatively large (a few dozen people each, for sufficiently high diversity). The Senate itself, however, does not directly arbitrate issues of state policy, as it would be too much for it to go into the details of a particular matter. Instead, it has the ability to initiate assemblies on matters of its choosing and thus performs a review function.

So, in a situation with a proposal to cull the bison, the Senate wildlife committee can first, under the "soft option", call the minister for explanations. It may do so on its own initiative or on a request sent to it by any interested person. This is because anyone can submit an application to it. During the meeting with the Senate committee, the minister explained that the bison population, in his opinion, has multiplied excessively, that the damage to the crops is high and the costs are high, so the culling would be the simplest solution, and it would also ensure budget revenues from hunting permits from foreign hunters.

Suppose the committee is of a different opinion and the minister does not give way, explaining his concern for the country budget. The committee has two options for action here: it can bring to a vote by the Citizens' Senate a motion to initiate a single-issue citizens' assembly that would address the issue of bison compensation and make a final decision. It may also conclude that the minister did not really understand the direction of the strategy assembly and what the values of the public are, and may therefore put to a vote of the Citizens' Senate a motion for an assembly to remove him from office.

In contrast, the strategy assembly may have the possibility of directly dismissing a minister. It is the strategy assembly who chose the minister, they know what values they indicated and what exactly the priorities for action they set. And if the minister doesn't live up to the expectations of the assembly members, they may have the ability to dismiss him: this possibility is their special power.

So it may seem at first that ministers have a great deal of power, as they can make laws by issuing regulations. However, signing the regulation requires, firstly, compliance with the procedures for transparency and participation in law-making. Secondly, there are strong safeguards, from calling a minister to account, through the ability to initiate a citizens' assembly on a particular topic, to initiating a recall assembly on removing a minister from office. This allows monitoring the ministers' activities and responding when necessary.

But that's not all. Not only strategy assemblies should be able to initiate a single-issue assembly. "Ordinary" citizens should be able to do it as well, after collecting an appropriate number of signatures. There should also be a bottom-up opportunity to initiate a recall assembly. Then the oversight function lies not only with the Citizens' Senate, but also with the public in general.

A key element of well-functioning citizens' assemblies is correctly chosen standards and procedures for their operation. What is needed here is a body that will deal with establishing these standards and that will rule on questions of interpretation. Standards include, for example, random selection of assembly members, representativeness of the assembly in terms of demographics, ensuring participation of all stakeholders, the ability of assembly members to invite experts, and others. Procedures, on the other hand, are detailed provisions included in the assembly rulebook, which concern, for instance, the tasks of experts in the educational part or the manner of observers' registration.

Adoption of standards and procedures for citizens' assemblies is the responsibility of the Standards and Procedures Council. Its name can of course ultimately be different and more exciting; the point here is to be clear about its role. The Council is a permanent, expert body, which entails the election and recruitment of about 5-7 people. The Council is also tasked with overseeing the passing of new laws by the ministers. It is an entire institution, with a sufficiently large staff to handle the details. It is to the Council that objections or signals of possible procedural violations can be reported, which may result in new regulations being put on hold.

Who will select the members of this Council? The Citizens' Senate. In addition to its day-to-day oversight function, its role is also to select individuals for key positions in the state: members of the Standards and Procedures Council, and the Director of the Citizens' Assemblies Coordination Centre, which will be discussed in a moment. Hence its large composition - several hundred people - is also relevant here.

Organising citizens' assemblies

Organising each citizens' assembly requires conducting random selection, inviting experts, preparing a meeting schedule for the deliberative part where the decisions are worked out, hiring facilitators to lead the discussion, and a number of other things. This is all handled by the assembly coordinators. An institution is therefore needed to select them, to provide them with training and support if needed, and to develop new solutions (research and development). This is the role of the Citizens' Assemblies Coordination Centre. It is the heart of a well-functioning deliberative democracy, or in other words, or perhaps less poetically speaking, its engine.

The day-to-day supervision of the running of the different citizens' assemblies is ensured by their monitoring teams. Each assembly may have two monitoring teams dedicated to it: one for issues related to the assembly program, and another for issues related to compliance with standards and procedures. In the event of a serious breach of standards or procedures, it can be reported to the Standards and Procedures Council, which can dismiss the assembly coordinators concerned. In addition, the assembly members themselves should also have the option to dismiss assembly coordinators (this option should also apply to dismissing facilitators).

These dismissal mechanisms may never be used, as in practice a reminder from the monitoring team or the Standards and Procedures Council may suffice.

Nevertheless, they should be in place as a safeguard. Similarly, when organising citizens' assemblies we now use the formula of expert arbitration, if the coordinating team and the monitoring team cannot come to an agreement. So far, however, such arbitration procedure has never been used. Yet its very existence is useful, and being able to exercise it sometimes affects the decisions made.

Director of the Citizens' Assemblies Coordination Centre is the person who sets the tone for how the assemblies are conducted and is responsible for selecting the right people to do so. A lot depends on such a person, which is why they are selected by the Citizens' Senate made up of people who have experience with citizens' assemblies and know what to look out for. It also ensures that the public has control over the tone that is set for the organisation of citizens' assemblies and the atmosphere and character they have.

How to introduce deliberative democracy?

Full-scale deliberative democracy can be introduced in any country that chooses to do so and is willing to try how it will work in practice. The prerequisite for this is a capable design and organising team that knows how to do this. In order to introduce deliberative democracy in its full potential, it will obviously be necessary to change the law and draft a new constitution (or at least several new chapters thereof) to include all the new institutions needed for the smooth functioning of the Waldenia Model or other formula of deliberative democracy.

Most of the countries in the world that currently have parliamentary democracies have their basic principles of statehood set out in their constitutions. This is also where the method of introducing changes in the constitution is described. For example, in Poland a bill on amending the constitution may be submitted by at least 1/5 of the statutory number of deputies, the Senate or the president. The decision to adopt amendments to the Constitution shall be taken by the Sejm by a majority of at least 2/3 of votes in the presence of at least half the statutory number of deputies, and by the Senate by an absolute majority of votes in the presence of at least half the statutory number of Senators. This is the procedure. Whether the Polish Parliament has the majority needed to adopt such changes is another matter. In general, however, the legal possibility of moving to deliberative democracy is there. In order for this to happen, however, it is necessary, above all, for society to be willing to make such a change. If there is such a will on the part of the society, then it may vote in elections

for those groups that declare their willingness to implement deliberative democracy. So elections may still be useful for something.

Places where the introduction of deliberative democracy may be desirable are countries where an armed conflict has ended, such as a civil war, or entirely new countries that emerge after a conflict has ended. The Waldenia Model ensures elimination of rivalry for power, which takes place on the occasion of parliamentary elections - power remains in the hands of society, which chooses the members of the government, but this is done through strategy assemblies. Thus, there is no "power struggle" in the form of election campaigns, and participation in decision-making by all sectors of society is ensured through appropriate demographic criteria. This in turn creates favourable conditions for transformation towards a peacefully functioning country.

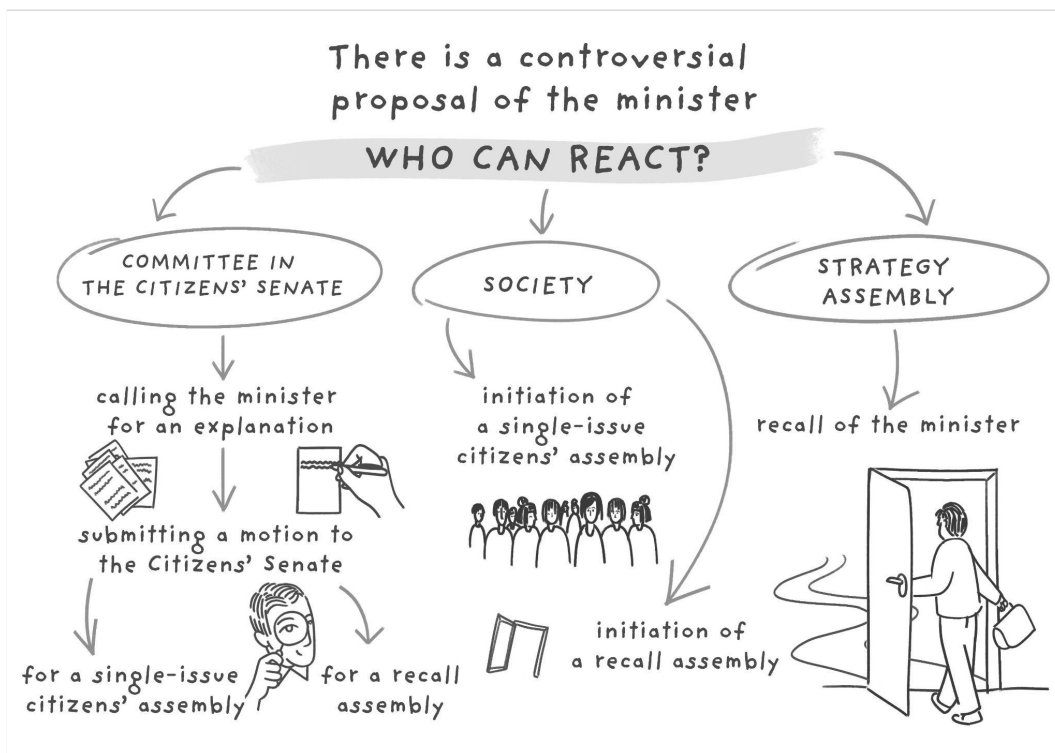
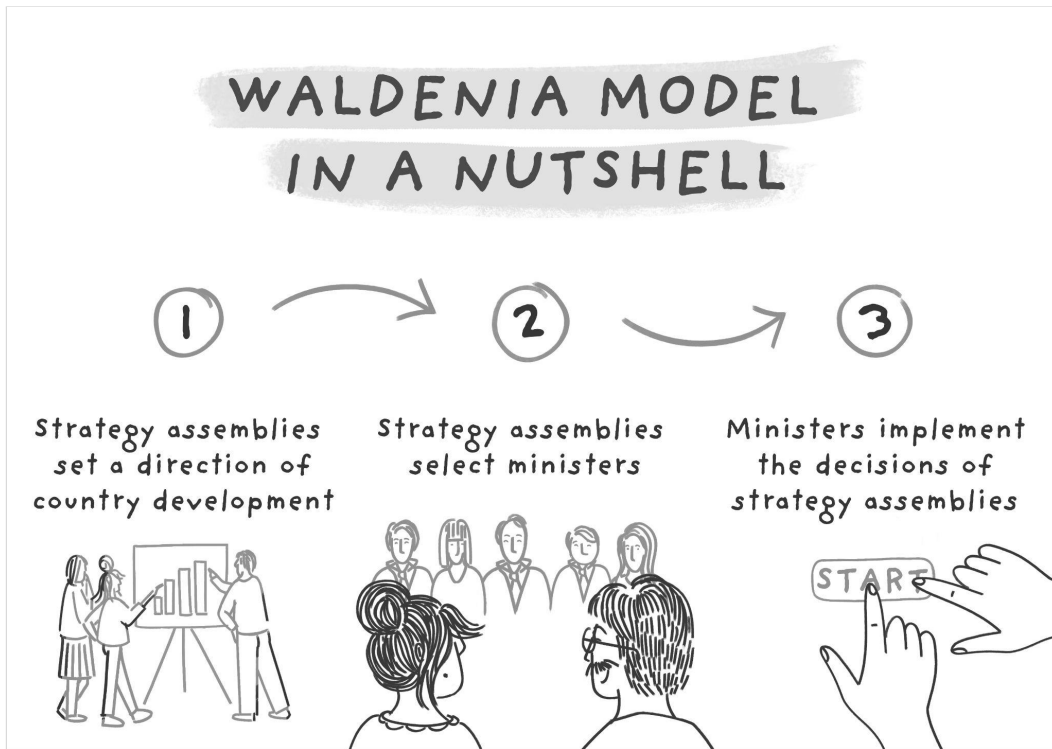
This change may not be to everyone's liking, as it removes the possibility of political groups taking over power, which may cause resistance among some politicians. The vision of a future where you can't win elections because they simply don't exist may not be particularly appealing to everyone. It can therefore be assumed that not everyone will be happy. However, the vast majority of society, which can confirm the changes to the constitution in a referendum, may be satisfied.

The model described here applies to the national scale, but it is also possible to introduce deliberative democracy at one level of the country, for example regionally, especially when a particular level of administration has not yet been established. However, there is no doubt that the full potential of deliberative democracy is on the national scale and deciding the direction of the whole country. The regional and local levels can be added to it.

Looking again at the benefits that a move to full-scale deliberative democracy can bring, these will be, from my perspective, primarily better decisions and solutions, which will translate into a better quality of life. There will also be greater harmony in society as there will be no electoral competition.

We have nearly two hundred countries in the world today. Someday, in one of them, the public may see fit to introduce deliberative democracy in full version. I'll keep my fingers crossed for them.

Appendix: infographics



INSTITUTIONS SPECIFIC TO THE WALDENIA MODEL

