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Democracy: Present and Future

Democratic theory and practice have traditionally taken a solitary, inward bound view with regard to the People. They have disregarded the plurality of Peoples and have neglected the fact that the relations among Peoples and citizens of different Peoples are an essential part of democratic government. Or, formulated the other way round, if external relations are conducted on non-democratic grounds, these external relations become the Trojan horse undermining domestic democratic processes.

In recent years, the increasing importance of transnational relations and multilateral problem solving has brought this simple truth more to the forefront of public discourse. We are now aware that decisions about external relations have to be better integrated into domestic democratic deliberation and decision making; problem solving and joint government, at least by democratic peoples, have to respect democratic standards and cannot just be conducted by the rules of traditional diplomacy and state relations.

Given the situation of a plurality and interdependence of Peoples, my contribution proposes to understand democracy as *demo*cracy. It will try to elucidate the added value of a concept of a government of a plurality of peoples, rather than of just one, indivisible people:

In a first part, the example of Swiss democracy will serve to illustrate the theory and reality of *demo*cracy as joint government of peoples. We can thereby merge two concepts that are often applied separately and considered as being in contradiction with each other: federalism and democracy.



Secondly, the conference will show that the idea of joint government of peoples potentially holds a lot future as it aims at accommodating and integrating the countervailing and disruptive processes of globalization and fragmentation. All politics are “glocal”. There is increasing need for joint government of peoples, but there is also strong commitment of citizens to particular peoples and small political communities.

Democracy tries to deal with this challenge within the framework of a theory that regards both, peoples and citizens as the legitimate actors of democracy.

The presentation will end with some reflections on the conditions of realization of democracy in the political settings of the EU and beyond.