

Direct Democracy (DD) & Decentralised Direct Democracy (DDD)

The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) Article 25 provides that:

“Every citizen shall have the right and the opportunity to take part in the conduct of public affairs, directly or through freely chosen representatives”. Its interpretation has never been addressed by government in the UK or Scotland, although Schedule 5 of the Scotland Act 1998 allows Holyrood to implement Article 25 with respect to devolved legislation. Both governments, by failing to implement ICCPR and thus retaining the existing democratically deficient governance structure, are guilty of denying citizens their political rights with which to hold government to account.

In 1996, recognising the difficulties of transposing ICCPR into domestic legislation, the UN Human Rights Committee approved an Addendum to Article 25, which forms the authoritative basis for [*Scottish Direct Democracy*](#).

Direct Democracy comprises the instruments and processes which animate Popular Sovereignty, the fundamental principle underlying Scotland's Constitution (internationally referred to as [Political Rights](#)). This alternative to the top-down and confrontational Westminster and Holyrood governance systems would enable Scotland to create a model based on popular consensus and mutual respect. The framework is inclusive: People, Local and Regional Councils, Parliament and Government, all working in the national interest - the “Common Good”.

There are several variations of Direct Democracy and Decentralised Direct Democracy (DDD) functioning successfully across the world⁽⁶⁾. Switzerland is by far the recognised leader. The following are key features of [the Swiss system](#):

- *The People control the Constitution (DD)* – 2% of voters (80,000 in Scotland) may propose a totally new Constitution (signatures to be obtained within 18 months from launching of such an Initiative); a majority popular vote is required to approve the proposal.
- *The People & Regions jointly control changes to the Constitution (DDD)*; a double majority of People & Regions is required to approve the proposal.
- *Parliament & Government draft laws and decrees* to implement approved Constitutional changes and other normal business of government.
- *The People & Regions control Parliament and Government (DD / DDD)* – 1% of voters (40,000) or a specified number of Regions may launch a referendum contesting virtually all proposed legislation or certain government decrees within 100 days from official publication of the approved Bill. A majority popular vote is required to approve or reject proposals.

Conclusion: No perfect national governance model exists. But if one believes the People should exercise ultimate control over their government, as with Popular Sovereignty, then Direct Democracy is the only system that gives them that ability. Direct Democracy inverts the power pyramid and puts the People back where they belong - on top.