

mate change, growing public debt, and future technologies along philosophical and economic lines with respect to how and to what extent society needs to account for the demands of tomorrow. What follows is an interesting discussion on the premise of compensating future generations for resource and natural capital losses, some of which cannot be repaired or substituted.

By creating a balance between a personal narrative and a descriptive mapping of policy areas with examples from all over the world, Shafik offers a coherent and approachable view of what the renovated social contract may look like. While acknowledging that countries differ in their demographic structures, political priorities, and the challenges they face, Shafik turns the discussion into general guidelines accompanied by some specific reflections, including such topical policies as carbon taxes and universal basic income.

One area that is missing the attention it arguably deserves as the largest part of most educational systems is basic education. Apart from criticism of traditional education systems that focus too heavily on rote memorisation instead of creative thinking skills, almost no related policies are discussed in the book. Additionally, some of the questions propounded by Shafik, including those regarding carbon taxes, technology regulation, and the righting of historical wrongs, would benefit from being examined in a global setting while also considering actors like the EU and OECD. Further, this social contract framework could have benefited from the inclusion of the complicated questions surrounding the defence of a state, including both law enforcement and armed forces.

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John Wall: *Give Children the Vote: On Democratizing Democracy*
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This well-written and thought-provoking book addresses central questions relating to voting exclusions based on age. Currently, most democracies do not allow children and adolescents below the age of 18 to vote. Wall argues that the democratic ideal requires the removal of age exclusion to vote. Expanding the democratic system to include children may sound anarchical to some. However, when the arguments in favour of the disenfranchisement of children are carefully scrutinised, John Wall elegantly and meticulously demonstrates that there are very few, if any, reasons in favour of disfranchising children.

Wall argues that the case for children's suffrage is about basic democratic justice. Historically, democracies have, from their foundation, only allowed a select few landowners or aristocrats the right to vote. Over time, the right to vote has expanded to include non-landowning men, peasants, minorities and women. However, one group is still systematically disenfranchised based on the number of years lived. Wall argues that the exclusion of children from voting is based on much of the same grounds on which previously disenfranchised groups, such as women or minorities, were excluded. He points out that currently, we discriminate and apply a double standard to children, barring them from holding political actors and governments accountable through voting. Children's suffrage is the best way to improve the lives of children and strengthen our democracies.

To analyse these new proposals, Wall suggests that we must view them from a childist perspective, which aims to transform societal structures and norms in response to the various lived experiences of children. As an example of the difference in lived experiences, Wall mentions the

poverty rates between children and adults. He argues that children are systematically poorer on average than adults in advanced Western societies, whereas in the past, the elderly were generally poorer. However, over time, policies have reduced elderly poverty rates. Wall suggests that politicians are less incentivised to fight for children's poverty, as children do not have the political power to influence economic policy.

Wall argues that age and maturity are not good measures for deciding who gets to vote. A better criterion is the desire to vote. Voters only need the competence to be able to cast a ballot, examine different views and make a political choice. These competencies are not gained at a certain age but only when the desire to vote appears. The existence of children's parliaments across the world, as well as children's climate and racial activism, shows that they can be fully capable of participating in discussions about the public sphere and should be given the opportunity to vote.

Currently, children are excluded from the vote based on the assumption that it takes time and experience to gain the knowledge and competencies required to take on the responsibility of participating in the democratic franchise. In the same vein, it takes time and training to develop the skills needed for academic study, marriage, obtaining a driver's licence or employment. Restricting the vote very much builds on this same premise; voting is a right, and it relies on developed abilities, as it might have serious consequences for society and oneself.

Arguments against children voting are numerous, such as children are mentally underdeveloped, they are without political or social competencies, and they need to learn to debate and grasp complex issues. The opposition to children's voting boils down to the idea that they are not mature enough to speak on their own behalf and

lack the capacity to be politically engaged with others, as voting needs to be based on some level of political thought and consideration. This view suggests that democracies rely on rational voters who are capable of reflecting on and understanding ideas about justice.

Assuming that children are incompetent to vote is the standard view that bars them from voting. However, is it fair to require a standard of competence for children when competence is not even asked of adults but is merely assumed? There is no law or requirement of political capacity for adults, so why is there a double standard for children? Is competence even the correct basis for deciding who has the right to vote and who does not? It is important to understand that the right to vote is comparable to the right to freedom of expression and freedom of assembly. Voting rights are basic human rights, not special rights that are earned, such as marriage and driving, which should follow age-appropriate limits.

Wall does not directly introduce the idea of the changes in political discourse and language that would take place should children be allowed to vote, but he suggests it. Politicians would be forced to speak about complex issues in terms and languages that children can understand and follow, which would, in his view, stymie attempts at obfuscation or overly complicating issues with the goal of masking the true intended purpose of the matter in question. Furthermore, discussion at the children's level is beneficial to *all*. As Wall points out, adults do not need to be highly informed to vote; they only need to have an *idea* of what they want. A larger proportion of voters will be able to hear a child's version of political issues that they might not otherwise have learned more about by bringing politics to the level of children.

In terms of implementing voting reforms, Wall sees a proxy vote system, in which every person is provided a vote that

can be exercised by a close proxy on their behalf, as the most politically feasible policy (see also van Parijs, P. (1998). *The Disfranchisement of the Elderly, and Other Attempts to Secure Intergenerational Justice. Philosophy & Public Affairs*, 27(4), 292–333; Vanhuysse, P. (2013). *Intergenerational Justice in Aging Societies: A Cross-National Comparison of 29 OECD Countries*. Bertelsmann Stiftung; Vanhuysse, P. (2014, March). *Intergenerational Justice and Public Policy in Europe. European Social Observatory (OSE) Paper Series*. (Opinion Paper No. 16)).

Children show us that people in a democracy are not just independent but also interdependent. Parents or guardians could exercise the right to vote on behalf of their children, and those with serious mental illnesses or dementia could have close proxies exercise their rights on their behalf. Individuals can claim their votes whenever they have the desire to do so. However, the primary flaw in this proposition is that it deviates from the essential one vote per person. Furthermore, it would lead to those who have more children having more votes. It is simple to imagine an ideal in which parents truly vote in favour of the best benefits of their children, but it is equally simple to imagine this being not always the case. Perhaps a simpler approach than the proxy vote system is to give an accumulation voting mechanism system. If someone misses three parliamentary elections in their first 18 years, they get to exercise this later with those accumulated votes. That said, the most just and fair option is simply to remove any age restrictions on age at voting.

Overall, I thoroughly enjoyed this book, as it was well written and was a joy to read. The arguments are well presented, and Wall carefully scrutinises the main case against enfranchising children. The book serves as a collection of arguments in favour of drastically changing our democratic systems. It is a step forward in the discussion of and debate on children's

suffrage and a quintessential book for anyone interested in furthering democratic thoughts and ideas.

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Daron Acemoglu: *Redesigning AI – Work, Democracy, and Justice in the Age of Automation*
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Over the past decade, we have seen tremendous progress in artificial intelligence (AI). However, the promises of AI – revolutionising medicine, societal benefits, and unprecedented economic growth and prosperity – still fall short, and AI contains many perils. Notably, the serious threats posed by AI include the displacement of human workers, disinformation, surveillance, and greater inequality. In this book, MIT Professor Daron Acemoglu argues that the future of AI is not settled. By leading a forum of fellow researchers, computer scientists, and labour activists, Acemoglu's book provides a deep moral discussion about the perils of AI and the steps that must be taken to ensure that AI can create and bolster democratic freedom and shared prosperity.

In his leading essay 'Redesigning AI', Acemoglu argues that AI developers need to pay attention to its disruptive effects on society. Because AI is not designed to work for people, the future of jobs and democracy are seriously threatened. If AI is not redirected, it will result in social upheaval, as the two backbones of our modern society, namely, shared prosperity and democratic political participation, will be undermined. The first major concern for Acemoglu is