

# Pragmarchy

## Definition

**Pragmarchy** (from the Greek *pragma*, "the thing done" or "matter at hand," and *arkhia*, "rule") is a democratic organizing principle where decision-making authority is distributed based on a participant's self-selected interest and direct stake in a specific issue. Unlike **polyarchy**, where citizens elect generalist representatives to handle all matters, Pragmarchy "unbundles" the political mandate, allowing for granular, issue-based participation.

## Origins and Etymology

The term was coined to address the "competency gap" in modern representative systems. While **Autocracy** is the rule of the self and **Democracy** is the rule of the people as a whole, **Pragmarchy** is the rule of the *matter at hand*. It posits that the most legitimate and effective decisions are made by those whose lives intersect directly with the problem being solved.

## Core Principles

### 1. Unbundled Mandates

In traditional systems, a single vote for a representative covers everything from trash collection to foreign policy. Pragmarchy separates these issues. Citizens do not vote for a person; they vote for a specific outcome or policy path within a specific domain.

### 2. Self-Selected Stakeholdership

Participation is not mandatory, nor is it universal for every triviality. Instead, it relies on "engaged peers." This assumes that a nurse has more relevant insight into hospital workflow than a career politician, and a local resident has more stake in a neighborhood zoning change than a distant bureaucrat.

### 3. Proportional Influence and the "Endorsed Interest"

To maintain a balance between equality (one person, one vote) and the intensity of individual willpower, Pragmarchy often employs a **Participation Credit** system:

- **Base Participation:** Every citizen has the right to participate in a set number of core issues (e.g., the annual budget) and one self-selected "Priority Issue" per year.
- **Delegated Agency:** To prevent the "tyranny of the hyper-active," citizens who wish to engage in multiple issues must seek "endorsements" from peers. By having a fellow citizen delegate their unused participation credit, an individual can expand their influence, ensuring that high-engagement is backed by a social mandate.

## Comparison with Polyarchy

Feature	Polyarchy (Representative)	Pragmarchy (Issue-Based)
Unit of Power	The Representative	The "Pragma" (The Issue)
Knowledge	Generalist / Bureaucratic	Specialized / Lived Experience
Engagement	Intermittent (Every 4 years)	Continuous / Case-by-Case
Identity	Tribal (Party-based)	Functional (Task-based)

## History and Case Studies: The "Demoex" Experiment

The most notable precursor to Pragmarchic theory was the **Demoex** (Democracy Experiment) in Vallentuna, Sweden (2002). Demoex secured a seat on the local municipal council and used an online platform to allow citizens to vote on every issue brought before the council. The elected representative acted as a "human proxy," voting strictly according to the digital majority. The experiment demonstrated that:

- Citizens do not participate in everything; they gravitate toward issues where they have expertise or a personal stake.
- The "apathy" often cited in modern democracy is frequently just "alienation" from a blunt, binary system.

## Challenges and Criticisms

- **The Expertise Paradox:** Critics argue that "lived experience" cannot replace technical expertise. Pragmarchy responds by framing experts as advisors to the "engaged peers" rather than rulers over them.
- **Digital Divide:** Implementation requires robust, secure, and accessible digital infrastructure to ensure that self-selection doesn't become a barrier for those with less technological literacy.
- **Social Pressure:** The "Endorsed Interest" model requires a level of social cohesion where neighbors feel comfortable delegating their "voice" to one another.