

Problems in Identifying a ‘Democratic Deficit’

David Beetham

The concept of a ‘democratic deficit’ is said to have originated in relation to the European Union, though in that context it remains highly contested, not least because of major disagreements about what sort of political system the EU is and what therefore are the appropriate criteria against which it should be assessed. As the author of one recent survey concluded, ‘The literature on the democratic deficit in the European Union is remarkable for its heterogeneity... The question of what a democratic deficit is reflects the specific model of democracy one considers appropriate for the EU.’¹ In the context of nation-states, however, despite obvious differences between them, it is possible to reach a greater measure of agreement on the criteria for assessment of their democratic quality. I am not convinced that differences of priority over the ordering of democratic values, whether among academics or wider publics, need prevent us from achieving this agreement.

In the democracy assessment framework developed for International IDEA we have sought to identify international standards of good practice for each aspect of a country’s democracy to be chosen for assessment.² Naturally, some of these standards are more well established than others, for example in the field of civil and political rights; but we should not underestimate the work that has been taking place in different international agencies over the past two decades to develop standards for many aspects of democratic life.³ As with international human rights standards, these make a distinction between a good quality of attainment and the particular institutional mechanisms used to reach it, which may well differ from one jurisdiction to the next. The fact that we are often confronted with the need for ‘trade-offs’, and that all democratic goods cannot be maximised simultaneously, does not stop us identifying what counts as a ‘good’ in the first place.

Now it may happen that some of the established democracies are deeply reluctant to allow themselves to be assessed against any external standard. Yet this posture is increasingly difficult to maintain in an era when the international development departments of the same countries have established sophisticated criteria for ‘good governance’, against which countries seeking development aid or democracy assistance are externally assessed.⁴ We could also mention the EU, which established quite stringent thresholds for democracy and human rights attainment, alongside those in property and financial law, to be met by candidate countries as a condition of membership. Although the quip ‘if the EU itself were to seek admission it would be refused entry’ may be contested in view of the disputed character of EU institutions,⁵ there is no reason to regard these same standards as inappropriate for its existing member countries. It is precisely the process of institution building in the new and restored democracies that has led to the articulation of clearer standards of democratic attainment internationally.

So I would define a ‘democratic deficit’ in the first instance as a substantial and systematic failing in relation to international standards of good practice in some

important feature of a country's democratic life. *Substantial* means what it says – not a trivial or minor failing. *Systematic* implies a repeated failing which can be traced to some identifiable underlying deficiency. And *some important feature* signals that democracy is a multi-faceted complex of many elements, and that some will reach international standards of good practice more fully than others. A feature of most democracy assessments conducted using the International IDEA framework has been the identification of the different strengths and weaknesses of a country's democracy, and the publication of a summary of the key deficits which merit public attention and concern. A draft assessment is typically subjected to a wide-ranging scrutiny at a national conference, at which different experts and members of different political tendencies are present, to give greater authority to the findings.

By way of example here is a summary of the key deficits found by the Netherlands assessment of 2006.⁶ Eight of what were termed 'untamed problems' were identified:

- Fragile social cohesion, especially affecting new citizens of non-Western origin, few of whom felt themselves to be Dutch.
- An increase in the number and seriousness of incidents in which freedom of expression had been suppressed due to violence.
- The larger political parties were less rooted in society and losing popular support for their candidate and policy selection procedures.
- Political arenas were being displaced from representative and accountable departments of government to new administrative bodies and quangos.
- Overlapping administrative competencies were producing unnecessary complexity for citizens.
- The vulnerability to constant media exposure had developed a political culture of risk avoidance.
- The internal procedures for overseeing EU policy and legislation were inadequate.
- Poll findings showed decreasing public confidence in politicians and government.

It is one thing, however, for assessors to identify a democratic deficit, as in the list compiled above. It is another thing for a deficit to become *politically significant* or *salient*, such as to generate pressure for reform. This typically requires a combination of two things. One is a key event or example which exposes the deficit unavoidably to public view. A second is that this should arouse widespread public concern, maybe intensified through media exposure and interest group advocacy. The assassination of the party leader Pim Fortyn is an obvious example from the Netherlands, since it shockingly demonstrated a systematic threat to freedom of expression in that country (see the second item above). Another is the US presidential election of 2000, where the narrowness of the result and contestation over the ballots highlighted longstanding deficiencies in the registration and election procedures, which broke almost every international standard of 'free and fair elections'. Indeed in many countries it is only the narrowness of an election result that makes chronic deficits in electoral procedures politically salient.

From the UK we could take as an example the Stephen Lawrence case, where the failure of the police to investigate the murder of a black teenager with due speed or care exposed the force as 'institutionally racist', to cite the conclusion of a judge-led

enquiry into the affair.⁷ Here it was only the determined campaigning of the teenager's parents and an active support group that kept the issue in the public view and gave it political salience. In a similarly regrettable manner, the recent failure of the Metropolitan Police to apprehend two serial rapists despite the repeated availability of evidence has exposed the systematically low priority given by the force to these crimes compared with car theft or burglary.⁸ What is at issue in both types of case is a serious and systematic deviation from standards of equal citizenship that are central to any democracy.

So a democratic deficit may require a key event or example to expose it unavoidably to public view, and the arousal of substantial public concern to give it political salience. And we could conclude that what is most important for the overall health of a democracy is not so much the existence or even exposure of deficits, but that there should be the capacity and willingness to make effective reforms once a deficit has become politically salient. By the same token, nothing is more guaranteed to create apathy and disaffection among a population than the failure to rectify a deficit that has become politically salient in the manner outlined above. Above all, democracies are characterised by the capacity for self-renewal without violence; and the demonstrable lack of this capacity is arguably more damaging to the quality of a country's public life than the number of specific deficits that can be identified through a systematic assessment process.

To be sure, democratic deficits do not always need to acquire what I call 'political salience' to be the subject of reform. The assessment carried out in the Netherlands using the International IDEA framework was unusual in that it was organised by a democracy unit within the government's interior ministry; and it was explicitly linked to a government-initiated reform programme involving wide public consultation.⁹ However, even here, one would expect that the priority in such a reform programme would be given to those issues that most aroused deep and widespread public concern. And where the assessment is civil-society based, as is more usually the case, it may require persistent campaigning by advocacy groups to get any of the key deficits identified to arouse wider public concern and achieve the necessary political salience to prompt reform.

At this point it is worth drawing attention to possible divergences between elite and mass publics, which may mean that even longstanding deficits which become exposed by some key event may not achieve sufficient political salience. These could be called 'dogs that don't bark'. We could take as an example the UK general election of 2005. It is quite widely agreed among the politically informed that a key deficit in the UK's democracy is the plurality election system, which has produced increasingly disproportional outcomes, reduced effective electoral choice and allowed campaigning to be concentrated on 'swing voters' in a small number of marginal constituencies. The defects of the system in a multi-party context are such that it was never seriously entertained as the electoral method for the newly established parliament and assemblies in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. The result of the 2005 election exposed the perverse consequences to public view in the clearest possible manner: on the second lowest voter turnout since the First World War (61%) the Labour Party won 55% of the parliamentary seats with a mere 35% of the popular vote, or just over 20% of the total electorate. Although the result was viewed with

astonishment by many abroad, it caused hardly a ripple at home, where the new government quickly proceeded to business as usual.

No doubt part of the explanation lies in the refusal of the main opposition party to make an issue of the affair, since it expects in due course to reap the fruits of single-party rule for itself. Yet it must also be that the wider public is not moved by the issue, despite two decades of active campaigning for electoral reform by a range of advocacy groups. So there is a potential divergence between the views of elite and mass publics, and between the democratic deficits that are identified in a systematic assessment and those that arouse wider public concern sufficient to prompt reform. This divergence will be explored in the next section through the results of three country assessments from the developed world where the International IDEA methodology was used.

Dogs that don't bark and those that don't stop

The three country assessments described here offer three contrasting scenarios. One is a country where significant deficits were identified by assessors, but these were not reflected in the popular assessment of the democracy, which was unusually positive. Second is a country where assessors had difficulty in identifying serious deficiencies, but public opinion remained stubbornly dissatisfied with the democratic process and citizens' ability to influence it. The third is a country which has carried out a far-reaching programme of democratic reform to deal with acknowledged deficiencies, but public trust in politics and politicians has declined *pari passu* as the reforms have been implemented. These countries are Ireland, New Zealand and the UK, and the assessments were published in 2007, 2002 and 2002 respectively. Together they compel caution in reading off too readily from the assessment of political analysts to the state of public satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the workings of democracy. They also throw doubt on over-generalised explanations as opposed to those that are country- or issue-specific.

The Irish Republic

The executive summary of the Irish democracy assessment was divided into three categories: 'what we are doing well; what we are doing badly; where we are in flux'.¹⁰ Some of the deficits identified were common to many European democracies – declining levels of party activism and voter turnout; poor representation of women in public life; weak parliamentary oversight of the executive and independent public bodies. Others were more specific to Ireland – high levels of poverty and inequality; limited scope and independence for local government; high level of church influence in public life, especially education; poor delivery of front-line services; over-utilisation of imprisonment in the criminal justice system. Under the 'in flux' category came a number of high profile issues regarding the quality of policing and corruption in public life, reaching to the highest levels, which had been the subject of extensive legislative reform, albeit too recent to assess the impact in practice.

Although some of the deficits identified could be said to be typical preoccupations of the 'political cognoscenti' – poor parliamentary oversight of the executive, limited independence for local government – others had a much wider public salience. Yet the existing survey data and polls conducted for the assessment showed levels of citizen

confidence in public institutions and the workings of Irish democracy to be markedly and consistently higher than in most other European countries.

The evidence suggests that the Irish public retains a high degree of confidence in the system of government and the way in which democracy works. The overall level of confidence in a range of public institutions in Ireland is among the highest in Europe, and over two-thirds of people express satisfaction with the way democracy is developing compared to less than half in the rest of Europe. Indeed one commentator has stated that “the attitudes towards the political system [in Ireland] could be considered almost enthusiastic”.
...Almost two-thirds of respondents believed that when ordinary citizens make an effort to influence political decisions they can really make a difference.¹¹

In the light of the democratic deficits identified in the assessment, how can this comparatively positive judgement of Irish public opinion be explained? In a national conference convened to review the draft findings of the assessment, a number of specific explanations were advanced in relation to particular issues, and one much more general one. As regards issues affecting the socially excluded, marginalised or disadvantaged, these involved a minority of the population only, and would not impact on majority opinion, so it was argued. As regards high profile cases of corruption or abuse of power, the extensive legislation to clean up politics seemed to have quietened the original public concerns, even though its effect in practice was still unclear. And the accessibility and constituency activity of elected parliamentarians encouraged by the STV voting system was seen to offset any corresponding deficit in their national parliamentary role of holding public officials to account.

At a more general level, it was agreed that the economic performance of the ‘Celtic Tiger’ was primarily responsible for the generally positive assessment of Irish democracy despite the deficits identified. This explanation is supported by the polling evidence which shows that Irish public opinion started diverging in a positive direction from the European average early in the 1990s and continued ever since.¹² What will happen now that the bottom has fallen out of the economy is unclear. A recent poll showed forty per cent blaming the government more than the bankers for the collapse, and for the harsh budget that has followed.¹³ Whether this will show up in reduced confidence in the democratic process or only in the succession of Fianna Fail governments, is too early to say. One of the key advantages of a democracy is the capacity of citizens to remove a failed government through the electoral process, and bring about a sense of renewal even where the structures themselves remain unchanged. Although the jury of Irish public opinion on the fallout from the credit crunch on their democracy is still out, their consistently positive verdict over the past two decades despite the deficits identified by expert analysts remains remarkable.

New Zealand

In sharp contrast to Ireland is New Zealand, a country of similarly small size, where the assessors were hard put to find any serious ‘deficits’, yet the population showed high levels of dissatisfaction with the functioning of their democracy.¹⁴ Among the positive features identified were the way New Zealand had modified its Westminster parliamentary system with a strong bill of rights monitored by an independent Human

Rights Commission, and a mixed member proportional election system, delivering a politically and socially diverse parliament. Women were strongly represented in parliament, government and the public service, and at the highest levels, much more so than in comparator countries. Rights of the Maori population were constitutionally guaranteed, and they were represented in parliament in proportion to their numbers in the population, albeit with evidence of some backlash from sections of the majority community. In most other respects New Zealand performed strongly against international standards of democratic performance. Here is how the authors summarised their findings:

In many respects New Zealand enjoys a level of democracy which people in other countries would envy. Basic rights are guaranteed, public life is largely corruption-free, government is accountable to both Parliament and the electorate, representatives are readily available to their electors, and the opportunities for public consultation on legislation through the parliamentary committee system are unusually well developed. In addition, there are relatively high levels of citizen participation both in elections (85 per cent turnout) and in civic associations. Yet surveys of public opinion show that large majorities of people, while believing in the value of a democratic system, also feel themselves disempowered in relation to government. Thus some 85.4 per cent believe that the public has little control over what politicians do in office, 61.6 per cent believe that the average person will not get anywhere by talking to central government officials, and 67.4 per cent think that government is generally unresponsive to public opinion... The discrepancy between most of the indicators of democratic performance in New Zealand, and the level of popular dissatisfaction with it, presents something of a paradox which merits further investigation.¹⁵

In a seminar which I took part in at the University of Canterbury in 2000 to explore this paradox, two different explanations found most support. One was a generic one, to the effect that popular expectations of government had risen in a context where politicians were more exposed than before to media investigation and criticism – in effect that dissatisfaction with government and politicians was now a normal part of the democratic condition. On its own, however, it is hardly sufficient to explain the large and specific discrepancy between a democratic system in which channels of decision-making and legislation are unusually open to public input, and the popular sense of powerlessness about citizens' capacity to influence them.

A second explanation addressed this specific discrepancy, and focused on long surviving memories of the Labour government under David Lange in the mid 1980s, which had introduced a raft of neo-liberal economic policies without any prior consultation. These had not figured in any election manifesto, and they had proved widely unpopular, whatever the economic logic supporting them may have been in terms of New Zealand's international economic position. On this view the historical decision to reshape New Zealand's political economy and society unilaterally – by a Labour, not a Conservative or Liberal party – may have influenced people's attitude to the representative process for a generation.

This explanation was largely hypothetical, and not open to definitive proof. Yet it serves to draw attention to a feature that is often missing from democracy

assessments. This is the existence of key historical moments, events or decisions which may shape public attitudes to government for a generation, but which will not show up in a snapshot assessment of the condition of democracy at a single moment in time. An institutional analysis may find admirable mechanisms for public consultation on policy and legislation, such as exist in New Zealand, but miss a major issue where a government has defied public opinion even while it is consulting it obsessively on lesser ones. This must also account as a contributory factor to public disaffection with the representative process in the third country example considered here.

The United Kingdom

In the UK we have been conducting systematic audits on the condition of democracy for the past fifteen years, starting under the Conservative government of 1992-7.¹⁶ In 1997 the incoming Labour government initiated the most far-reaching programme of constitutional reform that had been undertaken for a century and a half. It was said that it was the kind of reform programme which normally only occurs in the aftermath of revolution or defeat in war. It included the devolution of power to Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland; the establishment of the Greater London Authority; the incorporation of the European Convention on Human Rights into UK law through the Human Rights Act; the introduction of a Freedom of Information Act; the abolition of the hereditary element in the House of Lords; the establishment of an Electoral Commission; and much more.

Admittedly these reforms were carried out under the rubric of ‘modernisation’ rather than ‘democratisation’, a word that was never mentioned in the government literature. Yet these reforms were designed precisely to address some of the main democratic deficits which had been identified by commentators, and which had been campaigned around by civic groups for a decade or more. So when we came to undertake a major democratic audit of the first Blair administration in 2001, we were able to show systematic advance across a range of indicators towards standards of international best practice.¹⁷ However, at the same time as the objective indicators of democratic performance were improving, so public confidence in the representative process, and in parliament and parliamentarians, was going into decline. Voter turnout in the 2001 election was the lowest since the First World War, party memberships were falling fast, and levels of trust in politicians had declined even further than before – processes that have continued during the rest of Labour’s period of office to date. It was as if the public had not noticed the democratic reforms that Labour had been responsible for, or had not regarded them as of any significance.

When Gordon Brown took over from Tony Blair as Prime Minister in the summer of 2007, almost his first act was to publish a ‘green paper’ entitled *The Governance of Britain*, which took as its starting point the declining public trust in the democratic process. ‘Action is now needed across the breadth of the political system’, the paper argued, ‘to promote and restore trust in politics and our political institutions.’ There followed a new list of proposed reforms, involving the strengthening of Parliament, making the executive more accountable, a limited introduction of direct democracy and an expansion of citizenship education, to instruct the young in ‘the importance of the democratic process and the need for active citizenship’. What was never asked was why the first set of constitutional reforms, important and necessary as they indeed

were, should have had no positive effect on public confidence; or why we should expect another phase of similar reforms to be any different.¹⁸

So here we have another sharp divergence between the objective indicators, which show a clear improvement following significant democratic reform, and public perceptions of, and confidence in, the representative process. Again it seems to me too simple to fall back on the kind of general explanations that attribute declining public trust in politics to increased expectations or more educated electorates. There are a number of perfectly intelligible causes specific to the UK, or at least particularly salient there under the Blair administrations, which can help account for the low levels of confidence in elected representatives and in the representative process more widely. I would identify three:

- Although Blair came into office promising to eliminate Tory ‘sleaze’ from public life, high-profile examples of the distortions of money in politics have continued throughout Labour’s period in office, such as peerages for those contributing to party funds, cash for parliamentary questions, misuse of parliamentary expenses, and so on. British public life is not particularly corrupt by international standards, but the public impression is different, not least because the issue was made so much of by Labour before it came to power in 1997.
- Labour governments have created a ‘spin’ culture, in which a host of sharp practices have been employed to manipulate public opinion and marginalise independent voices in party and government, with the result that public confidence in the credibility of politicians as a class has been further eroded.¹⁹
- Blair’s project of constructing ‘New Labour’ as a right-of-centre party has, together with the workings of the electoral system, effectively disenfranchised large numbers of voters, and produced successive parliaments that have been seriously unrepresentative of political opinion in the country.

The gap, in other words, is not only between some of the objective democratic indicators, which have clearly improved, and public perceptions of the democratic process. It is also between what the government itself believes will restore public confidence, and what may be required to do so. A typical example of this is the government’s attempt to encourage more people to vote through making it easier (though also more open to abuse), while not acknowledging the underlying reasons why electors might not think it *worth* voting. And the fallout from the historical decision in 2002-3 to go to war in Iraq, which demonstrated the last two failings itemised above in extreme form, is still with us. A generation of young people who participated actively in demonstrations against the war could only conclude that their voices don’t count, whatever ‘citizenship education’ might teach to the contrary.²⁰

Conclusion: from generality to specificity in democracy assessment

The striking feature of all three assessments discussed is the discrepancy between the condition of democracy as judged by expert assessors and as judged in opinion surveys of popular levels of satisfaction with the democratic process. In the case of the Irish Republic, popular assessment was much more positive than the deficits identified by assessors would lead one to expect. In New Zealand, the level of popular dissatisfaction and sense of disempowerment was at odds with all the objective

indicators of democratic performance. In the UK, the implementation of a far-reaching programme of constitutional reform to remedy long-standing deficits coincided with a continuing decline in public confidence in politicians and the representative process.

Most explanations in the literature assume that the discrepancy is all in one direction; and that, while the established democracies are *comparatively* sound, levels of popular disaffection remain stubbornly high.²¹ Two explanations are then usually advanced for this discrepancy: on the input side, that popular expectations of government have risen with increased education and rising standards of consumer provision in the private sector; on the output side, that the competence of governments has been eroded by the process of globalisation, as the credit crisis for example has only too clearly demonstrated. Yet the Irish example shows that the discrepancy between expert assessment and popular estimation can work the other way; also that the configuration of international economic conditions can be used to a country's advantage, as happened during the years of the 'Celtic Tiger'. Whatever popular expectations and external constraints may be, politicians cannot be assumed to be impotent in face of them, as a deterministic reading of the condition of national democracies might suggest.

What we should concentrate on, therefore, is the discrepancy between elite or expert assessments and the judgement of wider publics, in whatever direction this goes. There may be some common factors at work here. One possibility is a difference in emphasis in people's understanding of democracy. Experts are more likely to concentrate on institutional arrangements and the *process* aspects of democracy, public opinion on *outcomes*, whether in terms of personal security and economic wellbeing, or standards of conduct of elected representatives. Of course there is a relation between process and outcome, but this may not always be apparent. In a democracy assessment conducted across the countries of South Asia, when people were asked what components of democracy they valued most highly, the 'rule of law' came at the bottom, whereas 'access to justice' scored much higher.²²

Another way of putting this is that people's *experience* of democracy will differ. The politically informed, who have access to international standards of good practice, may conclude, as they did in the Irish case, that parliamentarians are relatively ineffective in their role of holding the executive to account. Yet their ready availability to constituents could be what matters and is most visible from the standpoint of the ordinary citizen. Of course a democracy assessment should be able to capture both types of experience, as the International IDEA framework tries to do. So, for example, the second section of the framework is entitled 'The rule of law and access to justice', with the search questions that follow divided equally between the two components. Yet more could clearly be done to capture a fuller range of what might be called the 'experiential' aspects of democracy.

In order to capture these, the South Asian assessments combined the qualitative evaluations of experts with surveys of lay opinion, dialogues with activists and case studies to tease out the 'puzzles of democracy' such as divergences between the different findings. In particular the assessors found a tension between the views of the politically aware and those of other citizens – between 'elite commonsense' and 'people's commonsense'. 'When we have a dialogue with the activists,' they reported,

‘or when we had a dialogue with the enlightened people, the trust in political parties and parliament was so low, but when we went to the people with the same questions, trust in parties and Parliament exceeded 50 per cent on average.....Teams need to think about these tensions in their reports.’²³

In the light of such discrepancies, the lesson to be drawn from the three case-studies described here is that we should be wary of any simple generalisations. The more one looks in depth at an individual country, the more it is the specific features of a country’s institutions, political culture and historical evolution that assume importance in assessing its democratic condition, and explaining differences in people’s views about it. This does not mean that we do not need a standard framework and set of methodologies of assessment, which can be applied anywhere. But they have to be used with sensitivity to the specificities of each country and each dimension of its democratic life. It is these specificities that the democracy assessments of Ireland, New Zealand and the UK all bring out, and that we need to pay attention to elsewhere.

¹ Thomas Jensen, ‘The Democratic Deficit of the European Union’, *Living Reviews in Democracy*, vol 1, 2009, 1-9.

² David Beetham, Edzia Carvalho, Todd Landman and Stuart Weir, *Assessing the Quality of Democracy: A Practical Guide*, Stockholm: International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA), 2008, pp. 79-249. See also my article ‘Towards a Universal Framework for Democracy Assessment’, *Democratization*, vol 11.2, 2004, 1-17.

³ See for example the work done by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) on standards for ‘free and fair’ elections: Guy S. Goodwin-Gill, *Free and Fair Elections: International Law and Practice*, Geneva: IPU, 1994 ; Guy S. Goodwin-Gill, *Codes of Conduct for Elections*, Geneva: IPU, 1998; Michael D. Boda ed., *Revisiting Free and Fair Elections*, Geneva: IPU, 2004.

⁴ Thomas Carothers, *Aiding Democracy Abroad*, Washington DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2006; Gordon Crawford, *Foreign Aid and Political Reform*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001.

⁵ See note 1 above and the literature reviewed there.

⁶ Netherlands Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations press release 11 December 2006, ‘The State of Our Democracy: Towards a Policy Agenda for Democracy in the Netherlands. For the full report translated into English (5 October 2006) see www.onzedemocratie.nl

⁷ Sir William Macpherson, *The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry*, London: Home Office CM4261-1, February 1999.

⁸ See reports in *The Guardian*, 27 March 2009, and the article by Assistant Commissioner John Yates acknowledging the police deficiencies, p. 38.

⁹ The only other government-initiated assessment to date using the International IDEA methodology has been in Mongolia. See UNDP, *Democratic Governance Indicators: Assessing the State of Governance in Mongolia*, Ulanbaatar: UNDP Mongolia, 2006.

¹⁰ For the full assessment see Ian Hughes, Paula Clancy, Clodagh Harris and David Beetham, *Power to the People? Assessing Democracy in Ireland*, Dublin: TASC at New Island, 2007. The executive summary of the same title was published simultaneously, www.tascnet.ie

¹¹ Op. cit., p. 492.

¹² Op. cit., pp. 492-3.

¹³ Reported in *The Independent*, 7 April 2009, p. 38.

¹⁴ John Henderson and Paul Bellamy, *Democracy in New Zealand*, Christchurch: Macmillan Brown Centre for Pacific Studies and Stockholm: International IDEA, 2002.

¹⁵ This summary is from David Beetham, Sarah Bracking, Iain Kearton, Nalini Vittal and Stuart Weir eds., *The State of Democracy: Assessments in Eight Nations Around the World*, The Hague: Kluwer Law International, 2002, pp. 55-6.

¹⁶ Francesca Klug, Keir Starmer and Stuart Weir, *The Three Pillars of Liberty*, London: Routledge, 1996; Stuart Weir and David Beetham, *Political Power and Democratic Control in Britain*, London: Routledge, 1999. See also my article ‘Key Principles and Indices for a Democratic Audit’ in David Beetham ed., *Defining and Measuring Democracy*, London: Sage, 1994, pp. 25-43.

¹⁷ David Beetham, Iain Byrne, Pauline Ngan and Stuart Weir, *Democracy under Blair*, London: Politico's, 2002. We illustrated these advances by a bulls-eye chart in a pamphlet summarising our findings: Democratic Audit of the United Kingdom, *Executive Democracy in Britain*, Colchester: Essex University Human Rights Centre, 2002, p. 5.

¹⁸ London: Ministry of Justice CM 7170, July 2007.

¹⁹ Peter Osborne, *The Rise of Political Lying*, London: The Free Press, 2005; George Pitcher, *The Death of Spin*, Chichester: John Wiley, 2003.

²⁰ See my article on the Iraq war demonstrations, 'Political Participation, Mass Protest and Representative Democracy', *Parliamentary Affairs*, vol 56.4, 2003, 597-609.

²¹ So for example in Susan J. Pharr and Robert D. Putnam eds., *Disaffected Democracies*, Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000.

²² Beetham et al eds., *Assessing the Quality of Democracy*, p. 261.

²³ Op. cit., p. 255.