
Breaking Governance Capture

How Sortition Can Transform
Organizations



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About me

Sortition USA
Executive Director

Leonora is a nonprofit leader with extensive experience in movement-building and organizing. She currently serves as Executive Director of Sortition USA, a democratic lottery movement-building organization, and Director of Public Access Democracy, a democratic lottery advocacy organization based in Los Angeles. Previously, Leonora was the Executive Director of Abundant Housing LA, a pro-housing movement organization that grew from an all-volunteer group to a staffed organization of 10 under her leadership.



Randomness is powerful

Imagine these without randomness:

- Clinical trials
- Jury trials
- Cryptography
- Statistical research
- Risk modeling

The Governance Capture Problem in Organizations

Dominance/influence by certain interests

Board entrenchment

Low member participation

Low transparency

Internal politics over mission

What Is Sortition?

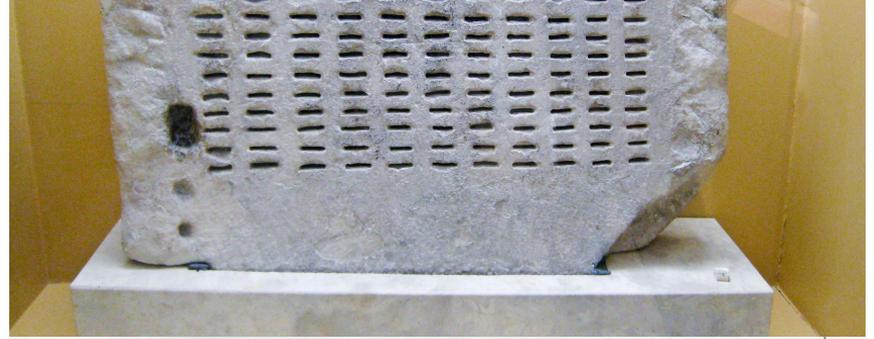


The Selection of Government By Lottery.

“It is accepted as democratic when public offices are allocated by lot; and as oligarchic when they are filled by election. -- Aristotle, Politics, Book IV”

History & Modern Practice

- Ancient Athens
- Jury trials today
- Irish Citizens' Assemblies
- LA Charter Review
Assembly



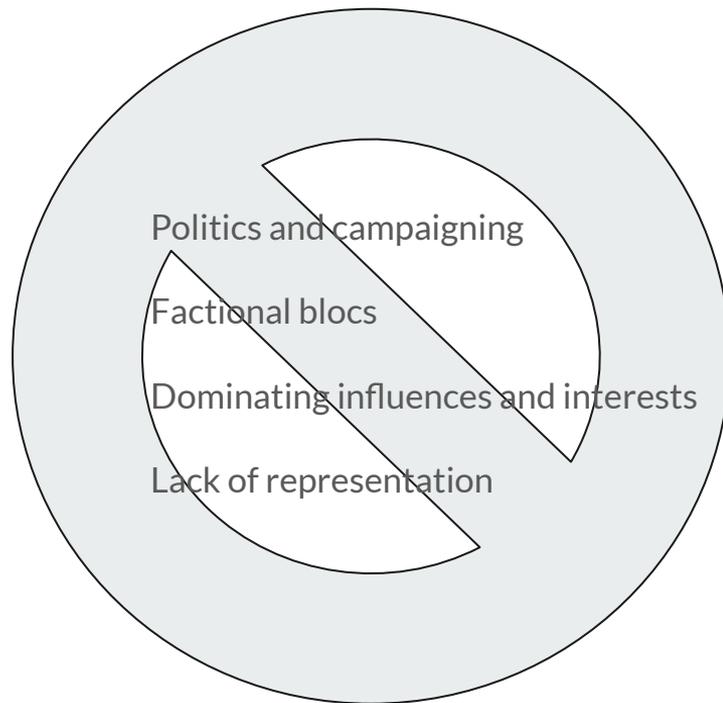
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Citizens' Assembly on Biodiversity Loss from Democracy Without Borders



Why Randomness Works



Statistically valid cross section of the community:

PLUS deliberative and transparent process



In civic assemblies, people are paid for deliberation over days or months.

- Allows deep understanding and dialogue to inform decisions

Experts

Expertise is elevated when it is presented in front of impartial people.



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How we are putting sortition into practice



- Lottery-based board
- Open meetings
- Strong onboarding process
- Staggered terms
- Advisors committee of experts
- Training and agreement to legal duties
- Screening for basic disqualifications
- Rules about conduct



Strengths and challenges

- Need a system that's resilient to strong or “difficult” personalities
- Need advisors committee, officers, or others who can provide expertise and guidance
- Gets people involved and engaged who might otherwise not be
- “Regular people” are more capable, and bring more fresh ideas, than might be expected (shuffles new ideas onto the board!)

Ways to implement

- Board
- Committees
- Dispute resolution
- Internal reviews



SORTITION USA

How to learn more and get involved

- Join us at SortitionUSA.org
- Reach out to us - we have models, training, and resources that can help you implement sortition in your organization!

