DEMOCRACY AND PROTEST-AN INTERLINKED PHENOMENON

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ABSTRACT: Democracy (from Ancient   Greek: δημοκρατία, romanized: dēmokratía, dēmos 'people' and kratos 'rule')[1] is a system of government in which state power is vested in the people or the general population of a state.[2] According to the United Nations, democracy "provides an environment that respects human rights and fundamental freedoms, and in which the freely expressed will of people is exercised."[3] A protest (also called a demonstration, remonstration or remonstrance) is a public expression of objection, disapproval or dissent towards an idea or action, typically a political one.[1][2] Protests can be thought of as acts of cooperation in which numerous people cooperate by attending, and share the potential costs and risks of doing so.[3] Protests can take many different forms, from individual statements to mass political demonstrations. Protesters may organize a protest as a way of publicly making their opinions heard in an attempt to influence public opinion or government policy, or they may undertake direct action in an attempt to enact desired changes themselves.[4] Where protests are part of a systematic and peaceful nonviolent campaign to achieve a particular objective, and involve the use of pressure as well as persuasion, they go beyond mere protest and may be better described as a type of protest called civil resistance or nonviolent resistance.[5]

KEYWORDS-democracy, protest, political, public, civil, government

I. INTRODUCTION

In a direct democracy, the people have the direct authority to deliberate and decide legislation. In a representative democracy, the people choose governing officials through elections to do so. Who is considered part of "the people" and how authority is shared among or delegated by the people has changed over time and at different rates in different countries. Features of democracy often times include freedom of assembly, association, personal property, freedom of religion and speech, citizenship, consent of the governed, voting rights, freedom from unwarranted governmental deprivation of the right to life and liberty, and minority rights.

The notion of democracy has evolved over time considerably. Throughout history, one can find evidence of direct democracy, in which communities make decisions through popular assembly. Today, the dominant form of democracy is representative democracy, where citizens elect government officials to govern on their behalf such as in a parliamentary or presidential democracy.[4]

Prevalent day-to-day decision making of democracies is the majority rule,[5][6] though other decision making approaches like supermajority and consensus have also been integral to democracies. They serve the crucial purpose of inclusiveness and broader legitimacy on sensitive issues—counterbalancing majoritarianism—and therefore mostly take precedence on a constitutional level. In the common variant of liberal democracy, the powers of the majority are exercised within the framework of a representative democracy, but the constitution and a supreme court limit the majority and protect the minority—usually through securing the enjoyment by all of certain individual rights, e.g. freedom of speech or freedom of association.[7][8]

Various forms of self-expression and protest are sometimes restricted by governmental policy (such as the requirement of protest permits),[6] economic circumstances, religious orthodoxy, social structures, or media monopoly. One state reaction to protests is the use of riot police. Observers have noted an increased militarization of protest policing in many countries, with police deploying armored vehicles and snipers against protesters. When such restrictions occur, protests may assume the form of open civil disobedience, more subtle forms of resistance against the restrictions, or may spill over into other areas such as culture and emigration.

A protest itself may at times be the subject of a counter-protest. In such cases, counter-protesters demonstrate their support for the person, policy, action, etc. that is the subject of the original protest. Protesters and counter-protesters can sometimes violently clash. One study found that nonviolent activism during the civil rights movement in the United States tended to produce favorable media coverage and changes in public opinion focusing on the issues organizers

were raising, but violent protests tended to generate unfavorable media coverage that generated public desire to restore law and order.[7]

II. DISCUSSION

A protest can take many forms.[9][10] Willingness to participate is influenced by individuals' ties within social networks. Social connections can affect both the spread of factual information about a protest and social pressures on participants.[3] Willing to participate will also vary depending on the type of protest. Likelihood that someone will respond to a protest is also affected by group identification, and by the types of tactics involved.[11]

The Dynamics of Collective Action project and the Global Nonviolent Action Database[12] are two of the leading data collection efforts attempting to capture information about protest events. The Dynamics of Collective Action project considers the repertoire of protest tactics (and their definitions) to include:[13]

- Rally or demonstration: Demonstration, rally, or similar protest, without reference to marching or walking in a picket line or standing in a vigil. Reference to speeches, speakers, singing, or preaching, often verified by the presence of PA sound equipment and sometimes by a platform or stage. Ordinarily will include worship services, speeches, briefings.
- March: Reference to moving from one location to another; to distinguish from rotating or walking in a circle with picket signs (which is a picket).
- Vigil: Most vigils have banners, placards, or leaflets so that people passing by, despite silence from participants, can be informed about the purpose of the vigil.
- Picket: The modal activity is picketing; there may be references to a picket line, informational picketing, or holding signs; "carrying signs and walking around in a circle". Holding signs, placards, or banners is not the defining criteria; rather, it is holding or carrying those items and walking a circular route, a phrase sometimes surprisingly found in the permit application.
- Civil disobedience: Explicit protest that involves deliberately breaking laws deemed unjust in order to protest them; crossing barricades, prohibited use of segregated facilities (such as lunch-counters or restrooms), voter registration drives (to earn non-eligible people the right to vote), or tying up phone lines.
- Ceremony: These celebrate or protest status transitions ranging from birth and death dates of individuals, organizations or nations; seasons; re-enlistment or commissioning of military personnel; or to anniversaries of any of the above. These are sometimes referenced by presenting flowers or wreaths commemorating, dedicating, or celebrating status transitions or their anniversary; e.g., an annual merchant marine memorial service, celebrating Hanukkah or Easter, or celebrating the birthday of Martin Luther King Jr.
- Dramaturgical demonstration
- Motorcade: Vehicular procession (electoral campaigns or other issues)
- Information distribution: Tabling/petition gathering, lobbying, letter-writing campaigns, or teach-ins.
- Symbolic display: e.g., a menorah or creche scene, graffiti, cross burning, sign, or standing display.
- Attack by collective group (not-one-on-one assault, crime, rape): Motivation for attack is the "other group's identity", as in gay-bashing or lynching. Can also include verbal attacks or threats. (See hate crime)
- Riot, melee, mob violence: Large-scale (50+), use of violence by instigators against persons, property, police, or buildings separately or in combination, lasting several hours.[vague]
- Strike, slow down, sick-ins, and employee work protest of any kind: Regular air strike[through failure of negotiations or wildcat air strike. (Make note if a wildcat strike.)
- Boycott: Organized refusal to buy or use a product or service. Examples: rent strikes, Montgomery bus boycotts
- Press conference: Only if specifically named as such in report, and must be the predominant activity form. Could involve disclosure of information to "educate the public" or influence various decision-makers.
- Organization formation announcement or meeting announcement: Meeting or press conference to announce the formation of a new organization.
- Conflict, attack or clash (no instigator): This includes any boundary conflict in which no instigator can be identified, i.e. Black/white conflicts, abortion/anti-abortion conflicts.
- Prayer Walk: A prayer walk is an activity that consists of walking and praying at the same time. It's done not for the physical benefit but for the spiritual exercise, either publicly functioning as a demonstration or rally.
- Lawsuit: Legal maneuver by social movement organization or group.

- Peopleless Protest: Simultaneous online and offline protests involving physical representations of protesters in public spaces that are subsequently assembled online. Developed in Europe during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The term appeared in the 5th century BC in Greek city-states, notably Classical Athens, to mean "rule of the people", in contrast to aristocracy (ἀριστοκρατία, aristokratía), meaning "rule of an elite".[9] Western democracy, as distinct from that which existed in antiquity, is generally considered to have originated in city-states such as those in Classical Athens and the Roman Republic, where various schemes and degrees of enfranchisement of the free male population were observed before the form disappeared in the West at the beginning of late antiquity. In virtually all democratic governments throughout ancient and modern history, democratic citizenship was initially restricted to an elite class, which was later extended to all adult citizens. In most modern democracies, this was achieved through the suffrage movements of the 19th and 20th centuries.

Democracy contrasts with forms of government where power is either held by an individual, as in autocratic systems like absolute monarchy, or where power is held by a small number of individuals, as in an oligarchy—oppositions inherited from ancient Greek philosophy.[10] Karl Popper defined democracy in contrast to dictatorship or tyranny, focusing on opportunities for the people to control their leaders and to oust them without the need for a revolution.[11] World public opinion strongly favors democratic systems of government.[12] According to the V-Dem Democracy indices and The Economist Democracy Index, less than half the world's population lives in a democracy as of 2015.[13][14] Democratic backsliding with a rise in hybrid regimes has exceeded democratization since the early to mid 2010s.[13]

II. RESULTS

The Global Nonviolent Action Database uses Gene Sharp's classification of 198 methods of nonviolent action. There is considerable overlap with the Dynamics of Collective Action repertoire, although the GNA repertoire includes more specific tactics. Together, the two projects help define tactics available to protesters and document instances of their use.

Typology

Thomas Ratliff and Lori Hall[14] have devised a typology of six broad activity categories of the protest activities described in the Dynamics of Collective Action project.

- Literal, symbolic, aesthetic and sensory - Artistic, dramaturgical, and symbolic displays (street theater, dancing, etc.) including use of images, objects, graphic art, musical performances, or vocal/auditory exhibitions (speech-making, chanting, etc.).[15] May also include tactile exchanges of information (petitions, leaflets, etc.) and the destruction of objects of symbolic or political value. Highly visible and most diverse category of activity; impacts on society (police response, media focus, impact on potential allies, etc.) often are underestimated.[by whom?]

- Solemnity and the sacred – Vigils, prayer, or rallies, in the form of religious service, candlelight vigils, cross or coffin bearing etc. All directly related to the Durkheimian "sacred", or some form of religious or spiritual practice, belief, or ideology. Events where sacred activity is the primary focus are rarely responded to by police with force or presence. Solemnity usually provides a distinct quietness or stillness, changing the energy, description, and interpretation of such events.

- Institutional and conventional – Institutionalized activity or activity highly dependent on formal political processes and social institutions (press conferences, lawsuits, lobbying, etc.). Often conflated with non-confrontational and nonviolent activities in research as the other or reference category. More acceptable because it operates, to some degree, within the system. Historically contentious issue in regard to the practice of protest due to this integration within the system.

- Movement in space – Marches or parades (processional activities) from one spatio-temporal location to another, with beginning or ending places sometimes chosen for symbolic reasons. Picket lines often used in labor strikes but can be used by non-labor actors but the key differences between picket and processionals are the distance of movement. Events that take the form of a procession are logistically much more difficult to police (even if it is for the safety of protesters). Marches are some of the largest events in this period.

- Civil disobedience – Withholding obligations, sit-ins, blockades, shop-ins, occupations, bannering, "camping", etc., are all specific activities which constitute the tactical form of civil disobedience. In some way, these activities directly or technically break the law. Usually given most attention by researchers, media, and authorities. Often conflated with violence and threats because of direct action and confrontational nature, but should serve as a distinct category of action (both in the context of tactical and strategic planning and in the control of activity).[

- Collective violence and threats – Collective violence such as pushing, shoving, hitting, punching, damaging property, throwing objects, verbal threats, etc., is usually committed by a relative few out of many protesters (even tens of thousands). It is rare in occurrence and rarely condoned by the public or onlookers (particularly the media). Usually met with equivalent or overwhelming force in response by authorities.

Although democracy is generally understood to be defined by voting,[1][8] no consensus exists on a precise definition of democracy.[15] Karl Popper says that the "classical" view of democracy is, "in brief, the theory that democracy is the rule of the people, and that the people have a right to rule".[16] Kofi Annan states that "there are as many different forms of democracy as there are democratic nations in the world."[17] One study identified 2,234 adjectives used to describe democracy in the English language.[18]

A 1951 UNESCO-sponsored report found the idea of democracy "highly ambiguous".[19]

Democratic principles are reflected in all eligible citizens being equal before the law and having equal access to legislative processes.[20] For example, in a representative democracy, every vote has (in theory) equal weight, and the freedom of eligible citizens is secured by legitimised rights and liberties which are typically enshrined in a constitution.[21][22] Other uses of "democracy" may encompass direct democracy, in which citizens vote on issues directly.

One theory holds that democracy requires three fundamental principles: upward control (sovereignty residing at the lowest levels of authority), political equality, and social norms by which individuals and institutions only consider acceptable acts that reflect the first two principles of upward control and political equality.[23] Legal equality, political freedom and rule of law[24] are often identified by commentators as foundational characteristics for a well-functioning democracy.[15]

Roger Scruton argued that democracy alone cannot provide personal and political freedom unless the institutions of civil society are also present.[25]

In some countries, notably in the United Kingdom (which originated the Westminster system), the dominant principle is that of parliamentary sovereignty, while maintaining judicial independence.[26][27] In India, parliamentary sovereignty is subject to the Constitution of India which includes judicial review.[28] Though the term "democracy" is typically used in the context of a political state, the principles also are potentially applicable to private organisations, such as clubs, societies and firms.

Democracies may use many different decision-making methods, but majority rule is the dominant form. Without compensation, like legal protections of individual or group rights, political minorities can be oppressed by the "tyranny of the majority". Majority rule involves a competitive approach, opposed to consensus democracy, creating the need that elections, and generally deliberation, are substantively and procedurally "fair"," i.e. just and equitable. In some countries, freedom of political expression, freedom of speech, and freedom of the press are considered important to ensure that voters are well informed, enabling them to vote according to their own interests and beliefs.[29][30]

It has also been suggested that a basic feature of democracy is the capacity of all voters to participate freely and fully in the life of their society.[31] With its emphasis on notions of social contract and the collective will of all the voters, democracy can also be characterised as a form of political collectivism because it is defined as a form of government in which all eligible citizens have an equal say in lawmaking.[32]

Republics, though often popularly associated with democracy because of the shared principle of rule by consent of the governed, are not necessarily democracies, as republicanism does not specify how the people are to rule.[33] Classically the term "republic" encompassed both democracies and aristocracies.[34][35] In a modern sense the republican form of government is a form of government without a monarch. Because of this, democracies can be republics or constitutional monarchies, such as the United Kingdom.

Some forms of direct action listed in this article are also public demonstrations or rallies.

- Protest march, a historically and geographically common form of nonviolent action by groups of people.
- Picketing, a form of protest in which people congregate outside a place of work or location where an event is taking place. Often, this is done in an attempt to dissuade others from going in ("crossing the picket line"), but it can also be done to draw public attention to a cause.
- Street protesters demonstrate in areas with high visibility, often employing handmade placards such as sandwich boards or picket signs in order to maximize exposure and interaction with the public.

- Lockdowns and lock-ons are a way to stop movement of an object like a structure or tree, and to thwart the removal of actual protesters from the location. Users employ various chains, locks and even the sleeping dragon for impairment of those trying to remove them with a matrix of composted materials.

- Die-ins are a form of protest where participants simulate being dead (with varying degrees of realism). In the simplest form of a die-in, protesters simply lie down on the ground and pretend to be dead, sometimes covering themselves with signs or banners. Much of the effectiveness depends on the posture of the protesters, for when not properly executed, the protest might look more like a "sleep-in". For added realism, simulated wounds are sometimes painted on the bodies, or bandages, usually made to appear bloody, are used.

- Protest song is a song which protests perceived problems in society. Every major movement in Western history has been accompanied by its own collection of protest songs, from slave emancipation to women's suffrage, the labor movement, civil rights, the anti-war movement, the feminist movement, the environmental movement. Over time, the songs have come to protest more abstract, moral issues, such as injustice, racial discrimination, the morality of war in general (as opposed to purely protesting individual wars), globalization, inflation, social inequalities, and incarceration.

- Radical cheerleading. The idea is to ironically re-appropriate the aesthetics of cheerleading, for example by changing the chants to promote feminism and left-wing causes. Many radical cheerleaders (some of whom are male, transgender or non-gender identified) are in appearance far from the stereotypical image of a cheerleader.

- Critical Mass bike rides have been perceived as protest activities. A 2006 New Yorker article described Critical Mass' activity in New York City as "monthly political-protest rides", and characterized Critical Mass as a part of a social movement;[16] the U.K. e-zine Urban75, which advertises as well as publishes photographs of the Critical Mass event in London, describes this as "the monthly protest by cyclists reclaiming the streets of London".[17] However, Critical Mass participants have insisted that these events should be viewed as "celebrations" and spontaneous gatherings, not as protests or organized demonstrations.[18][19] This stance allows Critical Mass to argue a legal position that its events can occur without advance notification of local police.[20][21]

- Toyi-toyi is a Southern African dance originally from Zimbabwe that became famous for its use in political protests in the apartheid-era South Africa. See Protest in South Africa.

Renewed interest in the Magna Carta, the English Civil War, and the Glorious Revolution in the 17th century prompted the growth of political philosophy on the British Isles. Thomas Hobbes was the first philosopher to articulate a detailed social contract theory. Writing in the Leviathan (1651), Hobbes theorized that individuals living in the state of nature led lives that were "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short" and constantly waged a war of all against all. In order to prevent the occurrence of an anarchic state of nature, Hobbes reasoned that individuals ceded their rights to a strong, authoritarian power. In other words, Hobbes advocated for an absolute monarchy which, in his opinion, was the best form of government. Later, philosopher and physician John Locke would posit a different interpretation of social contract theory. Writing in his Two Treatises of Government (1689), Locke posited that all individuals possessed the inalienable rights to life, liberty and estate (property).[87] According to Locke, individuals would voluntarily come together to form a state for the purposes of defending their rights. Particularly important for Locke were property rights, whose protection Locke deemed to be a government's primary purpose.[88] Furthermore, Locke asserted that governments were legitimate only if they held the consent of the governed. For Locke, citizens had the right to revolt against a government that acted against their interest or became tyrannical. Although they were not widely read during his lifetime, Locke's works are considered the founding documents of liberal thought and profoundly influenced the leaders of the American Revolution and later the French Revolution.[89] His liberal democratic framework of governance remains the preeminent form of democracy in the world.

In the Cossack republics of Ukraine in the 16th and 17th centuries, the Cossack Hetmanate and Zaporizhian Sich, the holder of the highest post of Hetman was elected by the representatives from the country's districts.

In North America, representative government began in Jamestown, Virginia, with the election of the House of Burgesses (forerunner of the Virginia General Assembly) in 1619. English Puritans who migrated from 1620 established colonies in New England whose local governance was democratic;[90] although these local assemblies had some small amounts of devolved power, the ultimate authority was held by the Crown and the English Parliament. The Puritans (Pilgrim Fathers), Baptists, and Quakers who founded these colonies applied the democratic organisation of their congregations also to the administration of their communities in worldly matters.[91][92][93]

18th and 19th centuries

The first Parliament of Great Britain was established in 1707, after the merger of the Kingdom of England and the Kingdom of Scotland under the Acts of Union. Two key documents of the UK's uncodified constitution, the English Declaration of Right, 1689 (restated in the Bill of Rights 1689) and the Scottish Claim of Right 1689, had both

cemented Parliament's position as the supreme law-making body, and said that the "election of members of Parliament ought to be free".[95] However, Parliament was only elected by male property owners, which amounted to 3% of the population in 1780.[96] The first known British person of African heritage to vote in a general election, Ignatius Sancho, voted in 1774 and 1780.[97]

During the Age of Liberty in Sweden (1718–1772), civil rights were expanded and power shifted from the monarch to parliament.[98] The taxed peasantry was represented in parliament, although with little influence, but commoners without taxed property had no suffrage.

The creation of the short-lived Corsican Republic in 1755 was an early attempt to adopt a democratic constitution (all men and women above age of 25 could vote).[99] This Corsican Constitution was the first based on Enlightenment principles and included female suffrage, something that was not included in most other democracies until the 20th century.

Colonial America had similar property qualifications as Britain, and in the period before 1776 the abundance and availability of land meant that large numbers of colonists met such requirements with at least 60 per cent of adult white males able to vote.[100] The great majority of white men were farmers who met the property ownership or taxpaying requirements. With few exceptions no blacks or women could vote. Vermont, which, on declaring independence of Great Britain in 1777, adopted a constitution modelled on Pennsylvania's with citizenship and democratic suffrage for males with or without property.[101] The United States Constitution of 1787 is the oldest surviving, still active, governmental codified constitution. The Constitution provided for an elected government and protected civil rights and liberties, but did not end slavery nor extend voting rights in the United States, instead leaving the issue of suffrage to the individual states.[102] Generally, states limited suffrage to white male property owners and taxpayers.[103] At the time of the first Presidential election in 1789, about 6% of the population was eligible to vote.[104] The Naturalization Act of 1790 limited U.S. citizenship to whites only.[105] The Bill of Rights in 1791 set limits on government power to protect personal freedoms but had little impact on judgements by the courts for the first 130 years after ratification.[106]

In 1789, Revolutionary France adopted the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen and, although short-lived, the National Convention was elected by all men in 1792.[107] The Polish-Lithuanian Constitution of 3 May 1791 sought to implement a more effective constitutional monarchy, introduced political equality between townspeople and nobility, and placed the peasants under the protection of the government, mitigating the worst abuses of serfdom. In force for less than 19 months, it was declared null and void by the Grodno Sejm that met in 1793.[108][109] Nonetheless, the 1791 Constitution helped keep alive Polish aspirations for the eventual restoration of the country's sovereignty over a century later.

In the United States, the 1828 presidential election was the first in which non-property-holding white males could vote in the vast majority of states. Voter turnout soared during the 1830s, reaching about 80% of the adult white male population in the 1840 presidential election.[110] North Carolina was the last state to abolish property qualification in 1856 resulting in a close approximation to universal white male suffrage (however tax-paying requirements remained in five states in 1860 and survived in two states until the 20th century).[111][112][113] In the 1860 United States Census, the slave population had grown to four million,[114] and in Reconstruction after the Civil War, three constitutional amendments were passed: the 13th Amendment (1865) that ended slavery; the 14th Amendment (1869) that gave black people citizenship, and the 15th Amendment (1870) that gave black males a nominal right to vote.[115][116][nb 1] Full enfranchisement of citizens was not secured until after the civil rights movement gained passage by the US Congress of the Voting Rights Act of 1965.[117][118]

The voting franchise in the United Kingdom was expanded and made more uniform in a series of reforms that began with the Reform Act 1832 and continued into the 20th century, notably with the Representation of the People Act 1918 and the Equal Franchise Act 1928. Universal male suffrage was established in France in March 1848 in the wake of the French Revolution of 1848.[119] During that year, several revolutions broke out in Europe as rulers were confronted with popular demands for liberal constitutions and more democratic government.[120]

In 1876 the Ottoman Empire transitioned from an absolute monarchy to a constitutional one, and held two elections the next year to elect members to her newly formed parliament.[121] Provisional Electoral Regulations were issued, stating that the elected members of the Provincial Administrative Councils would elect members to the first Parliament. Later that year, a new constitution was promulgated, which provided for a bicameral Parliament with a Senate appointed by the Sultan and a popularly elected Chamber of Deputies. Only men above the age of 30 who were competent in Turkish and had full civil rights were allowed to stand for election. Reasons for disqualification included holding dual citizenship, being employed by a foreign government, being bankrupt, employed as a servant, or having "notoriety for ill deeds". Full universal suffrage was achieved in 1934.[122]

In 1893 the self-governing colony New Zealand became the first country in the world (except for the short-lived 18th-century Corsican Republic) to establish active universal suffrage by recognizing women as having the right to vote.[123]

20th and 21st centuries

20th-century transitions to liberal democracy have come in successive "waves of democracy", variously resulting from wars, revolutions, decolonisation, and religious and economic circumstances.[124] Global waves of "democratic regression" reversing democratization, have also occurred in the 1920s and 30s, in the 1960s and 1970s, and in the 2010s.[125][126]

World War I and the dissolution of the autocratic Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian empires resulted in the creation of new nation-states in Europe, most of them at least nominally democratic. In the 1920s democratic movements flourished and women's suffrage advanced, but the Great Depression brought disenchantment and most of the countries of Europe, Latin America, and Asia turned to strong-man rule or dictatorships. Fascism and dictatorships flourished in Nazi Germany, Italy, Spain and Portugal, as well as non-democratic governments in the Baltics, the Balkans, Brazil, Cuba, China, and Japan, among others.[127]

World War II brought a definitive reversal of this trend in western Europe. The democratisation of the American, British, and French sectors of occupied Germany (disputed[128]), Austria, Italy, and the occupied Japan served as a model for the later theory of government change. However, most of Eastern Europe, including the Soviet sector of Germany fell into the non-democratic Soviet-dominated bloc.

The war was followed by decolonisation, and again most of the new independent states had nominally democratic constitutions. India emerged as the world's largest democracy and continues to be so.[129] Countries that were once part of the British Empire often adopted the British Westminster system.[130][131] By 1960, the vast majority of country-states were nominally democracies, although most of the world's populations lived in nominal democracies that experienced sham elections, and other forms of subterfuge (particularly in "Communist" states and the former colonies.)

A subsequent wave of democratisation brought substantial gains toward true liberal democracy for many states, dubbed "third wave of democracy." Portugal, Spain, and several of the military dictatorships in South America returned to civilian rule in the 1970s and 1980s.[nb 2] This was followed by countries in East and South Asia by the mid-to-late 1980s. Economic malaise in the 1980s, along with resentment of Soviet oppression, contributed to the collapse of the Soviet Union, the associated end of the Cold War, and the democratisation and liberalisation of the former Eastern bloc countries. The most successful of the new democracies were those geographically and culturally closest to western Europe, and they are now either part of the European Union or candidate states. In 1986, after the toppling of the most prominent Asian dictatorship, the only democratic state of its kind at the time emerged in the Philippines with the rise of Corazon Aquino, who would later be known as the Mother of Asian Democracy.

The liberal trend spread to some states in Africa in the 1990s, most prominently in South Africa. Some recent examples of attempts of liberalisation include the Indonesian Revolution of 1998, the Bulldozer Revolution in Yugoslavia, the Rose Revolution in Georgia, the Orange Revolution in Ukraine, the Cedar Revolution in Lebanon, the Tulip Revolution in Kyrgyzstan, and the Jasmine Revolution in Tunisia.

According to Freedom House, in 2007 there were 123 electoral democracies (up from 40 in 1972).[133] According to World Forum on Democracy, electoral democracies now represent 120 of the 192 existing countries and constitute 58.2 per cent of the world's population. At the same time liberal democracies i.e. countries Freedom House regards as free and respectful of basic human rights and the rule of law are 85 in number and represent 38 per cent of the global population.[134] Also in 2007 the United Nations declared 15 September the International Day of Democracy.[135]

Many countries reduced their voting age to 18 years; the major democracies began to do so in the 1970s starting in Western Europe and North America.[136][Most electoral democracies continue to exclude those younger than 18 from voting.[139] The voting age has been lowered to 16 for national elections in a number of countries, including Brazil, Austria, Cuba, and Nicaragua. In California, a 2004 proposal to permit a quarter vote at 14 and a half vote at 16 was ultimately defeated. In 2008, the German parliament proposed but shelved a bill that would grant the vote to each citizen at birth, to be used by a parent until the child claims it for themselves.

According to Freedom House, starting in 2005, there have been 17 consecutive years in which declines in political rights and civil liberties throughout the world have outnumbered improvements,[140][141] as populist and nationalist political forces have gained ground everywhere from Poland (under the Law and Justice Party) to the Philippines (under Rodrigo Duterte).[140][125] In a Freedom House report released in 2016, Democracy Scores for most countries declined for the 12th consecutive year.[142] The Christian Science Monitor reported that nationalist and populist political ideologies were gaining ground, at the expense of rule of law, in countries like Poland, Turkey and Hungary. For example, in Poland, the President appointed 27 new Supreme Court

judges over legal objections from the European Commission. In Turkey, thousands of judges were removed from their positions following a failed coup attempt during a government crackdown .[143]

Countries autocratising (red) or democratising (blue) substantially and significantly (2010–2015). Countries in grey are substantially unchanged.[144]

"Democratic backsliding" in the 2010s were attributed to economic inequality and social discontent,[145] personalism,[146] poor management of the COVID-19 pandemic,[147][148] as well as other factors such as government manipulation of civil society, "toxic polarization," foreign disinformation campaigns,[149] racism and nativism, excessive executive power,[150][151][152] and decreased power of the opposition.[153] Within English-speaking Western democracies, "protection-based" attitudes combining cultural conservatism and leftist economic attitudes were the strongest predictor of support for authoritarian modes of governance.[154]

Aristotle contrasted rule by the many (democracy/timocracy), with rule by the few (oligarchy/aristocracy), and with rule by a single person (tyranny or today autocracy/absolute monarchy). He also thought that there was a good and a bad variant of each system (he considered democracy to be the degenerate counterpart to timocracy).[155][156]

A common view among early and renaissance Republican theorists was that democracy could only survive in small political communities.[157] Heeding the lessons of the Roman Republic's shift to monarchism as it grew larger or smaller, these Republican theorists held that the expansion of territory and population inevitably led to tyranny.[157] Democracy was therefore highly fragile and rare historically, as it could only survive in small political units, which due to their size were vulnerable to conquest by larger political units.[157] Montesquieu famously said, "if a republic is small, it is destroyed by an outside force; if it is large, it is destroyed by an internal vice."[157] Rousseau asserted, "It is, therefore the natural property of small states to be governed as a republic, of middling ones to be subject to a monarch, and of large empires to be swayed by a despotic prince."[157]

Contemporary theory

Among modern political theorists, there are three contending conceptions of democracy: aggregative democracy, deliberative democracy, and radical democracy.[158]

Aggregative

The theory of aggregative democracy claims that the aim of the democratic processes is to solicit citizens' preferences and aggregate them together to determine what social policies society should adopt. Therefore, proponents of this view hold that democratic participation should primarily focus on voting, where the policy with the most votes gets implemented.

Different variants of aggregative democracy exist. Under minimalism, democracy is a system of government in which citizens have given teams of political leaders the right to rule in periodic elections. According to this minimalist conception, citizens cannot and should not "rule" because, for example, on most issues, most of the time, they have no clear views or their views are not well-founded. Joseph Schumpeter articulated this view most famously in his book Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy.[159] Contemporary proponents of minimalism include William H. Riker, Adam Przeworski, Richard Posner.

According to the theory of direct democracy, on the other hand, citizens should vote directly, not through their representatives, on legislative proposals. Proponents of direct democracy offer varied reasons to support this view. Political activity can be valuable in itself, it socialises and educates citizens, and popular participation can check powerful elites. Most importantly, citizens do not rule themselves unless they directly decide laws and policies.

Governments will tend to produce laws and policies that are close to the views of the median voter—with half to their left and the other half to their right. This is not a desirable outcome as it represents the action of self-interested and somewhat unaccountable political elites competing for votes. Anthony Downs suggests that ideological political parties are necessary to act as a mediating broker between individual and governments. Downs laid out this view in his 1957 book An Economic Theory of Democracy.[160]

Robert A. Dahl argues that the fundamental democratic principle is that, when it comes to binding collective decisions, each person in a political community is entitled to have his/her interests be given equal consideration (not necessarily that all people are equally satisfied by the collective decision). He uses the term polyarchy to refer to societies in which there exists a certain set of institutions and procedures which are perceived as leading to such democracy. First and foremost among these institutions is the regular occurrence of free and open elections which are used to select representatives who then manage all or most of the public policy of the society. However, these polyarchic procedures

may not create a full democracy if, for example, poverty prevents political participation.[161] Similarly, Ronald Dworkin argues that "democracy is a substantive, not a merely procedural, ideal."[162]

Deliberative

Deliberative democracy is based on the notion that democracy is government by deliberation. Unlike aggregative democracy, deliberative democracy holds that, for a democratic decision to be legitimate, it must be preceded by authentic deliberation, not merely the aggregation of preferences that occurs in voting. Authentic deliberation is deliberation among decision-makers that is free from distortions of unequal political power, such as power a decision-maker obtained through economic wealth or the support of interest groups.[163][164][165] If the decision-makers cannot reach consensus after authentically deliberating on a proposal, then they vote on the proposal using a form of majority rule. Citizens assemblies are considered by many scholars as practical examples of deliberative democracy,[166][167][168] with a recent OECD report identifying citizens assemblies as an increasingly popular mechanism to involve citizens in governmental decision-making.[169]

Radical

Radical democracy is based on the idea that there are hierarchical and oppressive power relations that exist in society. Democracy's role is to make visible and challenge those relations by allowing for difference, dissent and antagonisms in decision-making processes.

Democratic transitions

A democratic transition describes a phase in a countries political system, often created as a result of an incomplete change from an authoritarian regime to a democratic one (or vice versa).[170][171]

Autocratization
Democratic backsliding[a] is a process of regime change towards autocracy that makes the exercise of political power by the public more arbitrary and repressive.[178][179][180] This process typically restricts the space for public contestation and political participation in the process of government selection.[181][182] Democratic decline involves the weakening of democratic institutions, such as the peaceful transition of power or free and fair elections, or the violation of individual rights that underpin democracies, especially freedom of expression.[183][184]

Democratization
Democratization, or democratisation, is the democratic transition to a more democratic political regime, including substantive political changes moving in a democratic direction.[185][186]

Measurement of democracy

Democracy indices are quantitative and comparative assessments of the state of democracy[187] for different countries according to various definitions of democracy.[188]

The democracies indices differ in whether they are categorical, such as classifying countries into democracies, hybrid regimes, and autocracies,[189][190] or continuous values.[191] The qualitative nature of democracy indices enables data analytical approaches for studying causal mechanisms of regime transformation processes.

Democracy indices differ in scope and weighting of different aspects of democracy, including the breadth of core democratic institutions, competitiveness and inclusiveness of polyarchy, freedom of expression, various aspects of governance, democratic norm transgressions, co-option of opposition, electoral system manipulation, electoral fraud, and popular support of anti-democratic alternatives.[192][193][194]

Difficulties in measuring democracy
Because democracy is an overarching concept that includes the functioning of diverse institutions which are not easy to measure, limitations exist in quantifying and econometrically measuring the potential effects of democracy or its relationship with other phenomena—whether inequality, poverty, education etc.[195] Given the constraints in acquiring reliable data with within-country variations on aspects of democracy, academics have largely studied cross-country variations, yet variations in democratic institutions can be large within countries. Another way of conceiving the difficulties in measuring democracy is through the debate between minimalist versus maximalist definitions of democracy. A minimalist conception of democracy defines democracy by primarily considering the essence of democracy; such as electoral procedures.[196] A maximalist definition of democracy can include outcomes, such as economic or administrative efficiency, into measures of democracy.[197] Some aspects of democracy, such as responsiveness[198] or accountability, are generally not included in democracy indices due to the difficulty measuring

these aspects. Other aspects, such as judicial independence or quality of the electoral system, are included in some democracy indices but not in others.

Types of governmental democracies

Democracy has taken a number of forms, both in theory and practice. Some varieties of democracy provide better representation and more freedom for their citizens than others.[199][200] However, if any democracy is not structured to prohibit the government from excluding the people from the legislative process, or any branch of government from altering the separation of powers in its favour, then a branch of the system can accumulate too much power and destroy the democracy.[201][202][203]

The following kinds of democracy are not exclusive of one another: many specify details of aspects that are independent of one another and can co-exist in a single system.

Basic forms

Several variants of democracy exist, but there are two basic forms, both of which concern how the whole body of all eligible citizens executes its will. One form of democracy is direct democracy, in which all eligible citizens have active participation in the political decision making, for example voting on policy initiatives directly.[204] In most modern democracies, the whole body of eligible citizens remain the sovereign power but political power is exercised indirectly through elected representatives; this is called a representative democracy.

Direct

Direct democracy is a political system where the citizens participate in the decision-making personally, contrary to relying on intermediaries or representatives. A direct democracy gives the voting population the power to:

- Change constitutional laws,
- Put forth initiatives, referendums and suggestions for laws

Within modern-day representative governments, certain electoral tools like referendums, citizens' initiatives and recall elections are referred to as forms of direct democracy.[205] However, some advocates of direct democracy argue for local assemblies of face-to-face discussion. Direct democracy as a government system currently exists in the Swiss cantons of Appenzell Innerrhoden and Glarus,[206] the Rebel Zapatista Autonomous Municipalities,[207] communities affiliated with the CIPO-RFM,[208] the Bolivian city councils of FEJUVE,[209] and Kurdish cantons of Rojava.[210]

Lot system

The use of a lot system, a characteristic of Athenian democracy, is a feature of some versions of direct democracies. In this system, important governmental and administrative tasks are performed by citizens picked from a lottery.[211]

Representative

Representative democracy involves the election of government officials by the people being represented. If the head of state is also democratically elected then it is called a democratic republic.[212] The most common mechanisms involve election of the candidate with a majority or a plurality of the votes. Most western countries have representative systems.[206]

Representatives may be elected or become diplomatic representatives by a particular district (or constituency), or represent the entire electorate through proportional systems, with some using a combination of the two. Some representative democracies also incorporate elements of direct democracy, such as referendums.[213] A characteristic of representative democracy is that while the representatives are elected by the people to act in the people's interest, they retain the freedom to exercise their own judgement as how best to do so. Such reasons have driven criticism upon representative democracy,[214][215] pointing out the contradictions of representation mechanisms with democracy[216][217]

Parliamentary

Parliamentary democracy is a representative democracy where government is appointed by or can be dismissed by, representatives as opposed to a "presidential rule" wherein the president is both head of state and the head of government and is elected by the voters. Under a parliamentary democracy, government is exercised by delegation to an executive ministry and subject to ongoing review, checks and balances by the legislative parliament elected by the people.[218][219][220][221]

In a parliamentary system, the Prime Minister may be dismissed by the legislature at any point in time for not meeting the expectations of the legislature. This is done through a Vote of No Confidence where the legislature decides whether or not to remove the Prime Minister from office with majority support for dismissal.[222] In some countries, the Prime Minister can also call an election at any point in time, typically when the Prime Minister believes that they are in good favour with the public as to get re-elected. In other parliamentary democracies, extra elections are virtually never held, a minority government being preferred until the next ordinary elections. An important feature of the parliamentary democracy is the concept of the "loyal opposition". The essence of the concept is that the second largest political party (or opposition) opposes the governing party (or coalition), while still remaining loyal to the state and its democratic principles.

Presidential

Presidential Democracy is a system where the public elects the president through an election. The president serves as both the head of state and head of government controlling most of the executive powers. The president serves for a specific term and cannot exceed that amount of time. The legislature often has limited ability to remove a president from office. Elections typically have a fixed date and aren't easily changed. The president has direct control over the cabinet, specifically appointing the cabinet members.[222]

The executive usually has the responsibility to execute or implement legislation and may have the limited legislative powers, such as a veto. However, a legislative branch passes legislation and budgets. This provides some measure of separation of powers. In consequence, however, the president and the legislature may end up in the control of separate parties, allowing one to block the other and thereby interfere with the orderly operation of the state. This may be the reason why presidential democracy is not very common outside the Americas, Africa, and Central and Southeast Asia.[222]

A semi-presidential system is a system of democracy in which the government includes both a prime minister and a president. The particular powers held by the prime minister and president vary by country.[222]

Hybrid or semi-direct

Some modern democracies that are predominantly representative in nature also heavily rely upon forms of political action that are directly democratic. These democracies, which combine elements of representative democracy and direct democracy, are termed hybrid democracies,[223] semi-direct democracies or participatory democracies. Examples include Switzerland and some U.S. states, where frequent use is made of referendums and initiatives.

The Swiss confederation is a semi-direct democracy.[206] At the federal level, citizens can propose changes to the constitution (federal popular initiative) or ask for a referendum to be held on any law voted by the parliament.[206] Between January 1995 and June 2005, Swiss citizens voted 31 times, to answer 103 questions (during the same period, French citizens participated in only two referendums).[206] Although in the past 120 years less than 250 initiatives have been put to referendum.[224]

Examples include the extensive use of referendums in the US state of California, which is a state that has more than 20 million voters.[225]

In New England, town meetings are often used, especially in rural areas, to manage local government. This creates a hybrid form of government, with a local direct democracy and a representative state government. For example, most Vermont towns hold annual town meetings in March in which town officers are elected, budgets for the town and schools are voted on, and citizens have the opportunity to speak and be heard on political matters.[226]

Typology

Many countries such as the United Kingdom, Spain, the Netherlands, Belgium, Scandinavian countries, Thailand, Japan and Bhutan turned powerful monarchs into constitutional monarchs (often gradually) with limited or symbolic roles. For example, in the predecessor states to the United Kingdom, constitutional monarchy began to emerge and has continued uninterrupted since the Glorious Revolution of 1688 and passage of the Bill of Rights 1689.[26][84] Strongly limited constitutional monarchies, such as the United Kingdom, have been referred to as crowned republics by writers such as H. G. Wells.[227]

In other countries, the monarchy was abolished along with the aristocratic system (as in France, China, Russia, Germany, Austria, Hungary, Italy, Greece and Egypt). An elected person, with or without significant powers, became the head of state in these countries.

Elite upper houses of legislatures, which often had lifetime or hereditary tenure, were common in many states. Over time, these either had their powers limited (as with the British House of Lords) or else became elective and remained powerful (as with the Australian Senate).

Republic

The term republic has many different meanings, but today often refers to a representative democracy with an elected head of state, such as a president, serving for a limited term, in contrast to states with a hereditary monarch as a head of state, even if these states also are representative democracies with an elected or appointed head of government such as a prime minister.[228]

The Founding Fathers of the United States often criticised direct democracy, which in their view often came without the protection of a constitution enshrining inalienable rights; James Madison argued, especially in The Federalist No. 10, that what distinguished a direct democracy from a republic was that the former became weaker as it got larger and suffered more violently from the effects of faction, whereas a republic could get stronger as it got larger and combats faction by its very structure.[229]

Professors Richard Ellis of Willamette University and Michael Nelson of Rhodes College argue that much constitutional thought, from Madison to Lincoln and beyond, has focused on "the problem of majority tyranny." They conclude, "The principles of republican government embedded in the Constitution represent an effort by the framers to ensure that the inalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness would not be trampled by majorities."[230] What was critical to American values, John Adams insisted,[231] was that the government be "bound by fixed laws, which the people have a voice in making, and a right to defend." As Benjamin Franklin was exiting after writing the U.S. constitution, Elizabeth Willing Powel[232] asked him "Well, Doctor, what have we got—a republic or a monarchy?". He replied "A republic—if you can keep it."[233]

Liberal democracy

A liberal democracy is a representative democracy in which the ability of the elected representatives to exercise decision-making power is subject to the rule of law, and moderated by a constitution or laws that emphasise the protection of the rights and freedoms of individuals, and which places constraints on the leaders and on the extent to which the will of the majority can be exercised against the rights of minorities (see civil liberties).

In a liberal democracy, it is possible for some large-scale decisions to emerge from the many individual decisions that citizens are free to make. In other words, citizens can "vote with their feet" or "vote with their dollars", resulting in significant informal government-by-the-masses that exercises many "powers" associated with formal government elsewhere.

Socialist

Socialist thought has several different views on democracy. Social democracy, democratic socialism, and the dictatorship of the proletariat (usually exercised through Soviet democracy) are some examples. Many democratic socialists and social democrats believe in a form of participatory, industrial, economic and/or workplace democracy combined with a representative democracy.

Within Marxist orthodoxy there is a hostility to what is commonly called "liberal democracy", which is referred to as parliamentary democracy because of its centralised nature. Because of orthodox Marxists' desire to eliminate the political elitism they see in capitalism, Marxists, Leninists and Trotskyists believe in direct democracy implemented through a system of communes (which are sometimes called soviets). This system ultimately manifests itself as council democracy and begins with workplace democracy.

Democracy cannot consist solely of elections that are nearly always fictitious and managed by rich landowners and professional politicians.

—Che Guevara, speech in Uruguay, 1961[234]

Anarchist

Anarchists are split in this domain, depending on whether they believe that a majority-rule is tyrannic or not. To many anarchists, the only form of democracy considered acceptable is direct democracy. Pierre-Joseph Proudhon argued that the only acceptable form of direct democracy is one in which it is recognised that majority decisions are not binding on the minority, even when unanimous.[235] However, anarcho-communist Murray Bookchin criticised individualist anarchists for opposing democracy,[236] and says "majority rule" is consistent with anarchism.[237]

Some anarcho-communists oppose the majoritarian nature of direct democracy, feeling that it can impede individual liberty and opt-in favour of a non-majoritarian form of consensus democracy, similar to Proudhon's position on direct democracy.[238]

Sortition

Sometimes called "democracy without elections", sortition chooses decision makers via a random process. The intention is that those chosen will be representative of the opinions and interests of the people at large and be fairer and more impartial than an elected official. The technique was in widespread use in Athenian Democracy and Renaissance Florence[239] and is still used in modern jury selection.

Consociational

Consociational democracy was first conceptualized in the 1960s by Dutch American political scientist Arend Lijphart. Consociational democracy, also called consociationalism, can be defined as a form of democracy based on power-sharing formula between elites representing the social groups in the society. According to the founder of the theory of consociational democracy, Arendt Lijphart, "Consociational democracy means government by elite cartel designed to turn a democracy with a fragmented political culture into a stable democracy".[240]

A consociational democracy allows for simultaneous majority votes in two or more ethno-religious constituencies, and policies are enacted only if they gain majority support from both or all of them.

Consensus democracy

Consensus democracy, or consensualism, is the application of consensus decision-making to the process of legislation in a democracy. It is characterized by a decision-making structure that involves and takes into account as broad a range of opinions as possible, as opposed to systems where minority opinions can potentially be ignored by vote-winning majorities in majoritarian democracies. Consensus democracy is most closely embodied in certain countries such as Switzerland, Germany, Denmark, Lebanon, Sweden, Iraq, and Belgium, where consensus is an important feature of political culture, particularly with a view to preventing the domination of one linguistic or cultural group in the political process.[241] Consensus democracy is sometimes called concordance system.

A consensus government is one in which the cabinet is appointed by the legislature without reference to political parties. It is generally found as part of a consensus or non-partisan democracy. Consensus government chiefly arises in non-partisan democracies and similar systems in which a majority of politicians are independent. Many former British territories with large indigenous populations use consensus government to fuse traditional tribal leadership with the Westminster system. Consensus government in Canada is used in the Northwest Territories and Nunavut, as well as the autonomous Nunatsiavut region, and similar systems have arisen in the Pacific island nations of Fiji, Tuvalu and Vanuatu, as well as the ancient Tynwald of the Isle of Man.[242]

Supranational

Qualified majority voting is designed by the Treaty of Rome to be the principal method of reaching decisions in the European Council of Ministers. This system allocates votes to member states in part according to their population, but heavily weighted in favour of the smaller states. This might be seen as a form of representative democracy, but representatives to the Council might be appointed rather than directly elected.

Inclusive

Inclusive democracy is a political theory and political project that aims for direct democracy in all fields of social life: political democracy in the form of face-to-face assemblies which are confederated, economic democracy in a stateless, moneyless and marketless economy, democracy in the social realm, i.e. self-management in places of work and education, and ecological democracy which aims to reintegrate society and nature. The theoretical project of inclusive democracy emerged from the work of political philosopher Takis Fotopoulos in "Towards An Inclusive Democracy" and was further developed in the journal Democracy & Nature and its successor The International Journal of Inclusive Democracy.

The basic unit of decision making in an inclusive democracy is the demotic assembly, i.e. the assembly of demos, the citizen body in a given geographical area which may encompass a town and the surrounding villages, or even neighbourhoods of large cities. An inclusive democracy today can only take the form of a confederal democracy that is based on a network of administrative councils whose members or delegates are elected from popular face-to-face democratic assemblies in the various demoi. Thus, their role is purely administrative and practical, not one of policymaking like that of representatives in representative democracy.

The citizen body is advised by experts, but it is the citizen body which functions as the ultimate decision-taker. Authority can be delegated to a segment of the citizen body to carry out specific duties, for example, to serve as members of popular courts, or of regional and confederal councils. Such delegation is made, in principle, by lot, on a rotation basis, and is always recallable by the citizen body. Delegates to regional and confederal bodies should have specific mandates.

Participatory politics

A Parpolity or Participatory Polity is a theoretical form of democracy that is ruled by a Nested Council structure. The guiding philosophy is that people should have decision-making power in proportion to how much they are affected by the decision. Local councils of 25–50 people are completely autonomous on issues that affect only them, and these councils send delegates to higher level councils who are again autonomous regarding issues that affect only the population affected by that council.

A council court of randomly chosen citizens serves as a check on the tyranny of the majority, and rules on which body gets to vote on which issue. Delegates may vote differently from how their sending council might wish but are mandated to communicate the wishes of their sending council. Delegates are recallable at any time. Referendums are possible at any time via votes of lower-level councils, however, not everything is a referendum as this is most likely a waste of time. A parpolity is meant to work in tandem with a participatory economy.

Cosmopolitan

Cosmopolitan democracy, also known as Global democracy or World Federalism, is a political system in which democracy is implemented on a global scale, either directly or through representatives. An important justification for this kind of system is that the decisions made in national or regional democracies often affect people outside the constituency who, by definition, cannot vote. By contrast, in a cosmopolitan democracy, the people who are affected by decisions also have a say in them.[243]

According to its supporters, any attempt to solve global problems is undemocratic without some form of cosmopolitan democracy. The general principle of cosmopolitan democracy is to expand some or all of the values and norms of democracy, including the rule of law; the non-violent resolution of conflicts; and equality among citizens, beyond the limits of the state. To be fully implemented, this would require reforming existing international organisations, e.g., the United Nations, as well as the creation of new institutions such as a World Parliament, which ideally would enhance public control over, and accountability in, international politics.

Cosmopolitan Democracy has been promoted, among others, by physicist Albert Einstein,[244] writer Kurt Vonnegut, columnist George Monbiot, and professors David Held and Daniele Archibugi.[245] The creation of the International Criminal Court in 2003 was seen as a major step forward by many supporters of this type of cosmopolitan democracy.

Creative democracy

Creative Democracy is advocated by American philosopher John Dewey. The main idea about Creative Democracy is that democracy encourages individual capacity building and the interaction among the society. Dewey argues that democracy is a way of life in his work of "Creative Democracy: The Task Before Us"[246] and an experience built on faith in human nature, faith in human beings, and faith in working with others. Democracy, in Dewey's view, is a moral ideal requiring actual effort and work by people; it is not an institutional concept that exists outside of ourselves. "The task of democracy", Dewey concludes, "is forever that of creation of a freer and more humane experience in which all share and to which all contribute".

Guided democracy

Guided democracy is a form of democracy that incorporates regular popular elections, but which often carefully "guides" the choices offered to the electorate in a manner that may reduce the ability of the electorate to truly determine the type of government exercised over them. Such democracies typically have only one central authority which is often not subject to meaningful public review by any other governmental authority. Russian-style democracy has often been referred to as a "Guided democracy."[247] Russian politicians have referred to their government as having only one center of power/ authority, as opposed to most other forms of democracy which usually attempt to incorporate two or more naturally competing sources of authority within the same government.[248]

Non-governmental democracy

Aside from the public sphere, similar democratic principles and mechanisms of voting and representation have been used to govern other kinds of groups. Many non-governmental organisations decide policy and leadership by voting. Most trade unions and cooperatives are governed by democratic elections. Corporations are ultimately governed by

their shareholders through shareholder democracy. Corporations may also employ systems such as workplace democracy to handle internal governance. Amitai Etzioni has postulated a system that fuses elements of democracy with sharia law, termed Islamocracy.[249] There is also a growing number of Democratic educational institutions such as Sudbury schools that are co-governed by students and staff.

Shareholder democracy

Shareholder democracy is a concept relating to the governance of corporations by their shareholders. In the United States, shareholders are typically granted voting rights according to the one share, one vote principle. Shareholders may vote annually to elect the company's board of directors, who themselves may choose the company's executives. The shareholder democracy framework may be inaccurate for companies which have different classes of stock that further alter the distribution of voting rights.

Justification

Several justifications for democracy have been postulated.

Legitimacy

Social contract theory argues that the legitimacy of government is based on consent of the governed, i.e. an election, and that political decisions must reflect the general will. Some proponents of the theory like Jean-Jacques Rousseau advocate for a direct democracy on this basis.[250]

Better decision-making

Condorcet's jury theorem is logical proof that if each decision-maker has a better than chance probability of making the right decision, then having the largest number of decision-makers, i.e. a democracy, will result in the best decisions. This has also been argued by theories of the wisdom of the crowd.

Economic success

In Why Nations Fail, economists Daron Acemoglu and James A. Robinson argue that democracies are more economically successful because undemocratic political systems tend to limit markets and favor monopolies at the expense of the creative destruction which is necessary for sustained economic growth.

A 2015 study by Acemoglu and others estimated that countries switching to democratic from authoritarian rule had on average a 20% higher GDP after 25 years than if they had remained authoritarian. The study examined 122 transitions to democracy and 71 transitions to authoritarian rule, occurring from 1960 to 2010.[251] Acemoglu said this was because democracies tended to invest more in health care and human capital, and reduce special treatment of regime allies.[252]

Criticism

Friedrich Nietzsche

Friedrich Nietzsche conveys a vision of a society where individuality is lost, and conformity prevails. In such a society, anyone who holds different beliefs or desires is considered deviant and is willingly marginalized or isolated: "No shepherd and one herd! Everybody wants the same, everybody is the same: whoever feels different goes voluntarily into a madhouse."[253]

- Surveillance of the sociopolitical environment
- Meaningful agenda setting
- Platforms for an intelligible and illuminating advocacy
- Dialogue across a diverse range of views
- Mechanisms for holding officials to account for how they have exercised power
- Incentives for citizens to learn, choose, and become involved
- A principled resistance to the efforts of forces outside the media to subvert their independence, integrity, and ability to serve the audience
- A sense of respect for the audience member, as potentially concerned and able to make sense of his or her political environment

This proposal has inspired a lot of discussions over whether the news media are actually fulfilling the requirements that a well functioning democracy requires.[302] Commercial mass media are generally not accountable to anybody but their owners, and they have no obligation to serve a democratic function.[302][303] They are controlled mainly by

economic market forces. Fierce economic competition may force the mass media to divert themselves from any democratic ideals and focus entirely on how to survive the competition.[304][305]

The tabloidization and popularization of the news media is seen in an increasing focus on human examples rather than statistics and principles. There is more focus on politicians as personalities and less focus on political issues in the popular media. Election campaigns are covered more as horse races and less as debates about ideologies and issues. The dominating media focus on spin, conflict, and competitive strategies has made voters perceive the politicians as egoists rather than idealists. This fosters mistrust and a cynical attitude to politics, less civic engagement, and less interest in voting.[306][307][308] The ability to find effective political solutions to social problems is hampered when problems tend to be blamed on individuals rather than on structural causes.[307] This person-centered focus may have far-reaching consequences not only for domestic problems but also for foreign policy when international conflicts are blamed on foreign heads of state rather than on political and economic structures.[309][310] A strong media focus on fear and terrorism has allowed military logic to penetrate public institutions, leading to increased surveillance and the erosion of civil rights.[311]

The responsiveness[312] and accountability of the democratic system is compromised when lack of access to substantive, diverse, and undistorted information is handicapping the citizens' capability of evaluating the political process.[303][308] The fast pace and trivialization in the competitive news media is dumbing down the political debate. Thorough and balanced investigation of complex political issues does not fit into this format. The political communication is characterized by short time horizons, short slogans, simple explanations, and simple solutions. This is conducive to political populism rather than serious deliberation.[303][311]

IV. CONCLUSION

Commercial mass media are often differentiated along the political spectrum so that people can hear mainly opinions that they already agree with. Too much controversy and diverse opinions are not always profitable for the commercial news media.[313] Political polarization is emerging when different people read different news and watch different TV channels. This polarization has been worsened by the emergence of the social media that allow people to communicate mainly with groups of like-minded people, the so-called echo chambers.[314] Extreme political polarization may undermine the trust in democratic institutions, leading to erosion of civil rights and free speech and in some cases even reversion to autocracy.[315]

Many media scholars have discussed non-commercial news media with public service obligations as a means to improve the democratic process by providing the kind of political contents that a free market does not provide.[316][317] The World Bank has recommended public service broadcasting in order to strengthen democracy in developing countries. These broadcasting services should be accountable to an independent regulatory body that is adequately protected from interference from political and economic interests.[318] Public service media have an obligation to provide reliable information to voters. Many countries have publicly funded radio and television stations with public service obligations, especially in Europe and Japan,[319] while such media are weak or non-existent in other countries including the USA.[320] Several studies have shown that the stronger the dominance of commercial broadcast media over public service media, the less the amount of policy-relevant information in the media and the more focus on horse race journalism, personalities, and the pecadillos of politicians. Public service broadcasters are characterized by more policy-relevant information and more respect for journalistic norms and impartiality than the commercial media. However, the trend of deregulation has put the public service model under increased pressure from competition with commercial media.[319][321][322]

The emergence of the internet and the social media has profoundly altered the conditions for political communication. The social media have given ordinary citizens easy access to voice their opinion and share information while bypassing the filters of the large news media. This is often seen as an advantage for democracy.[323] The new possibilities for communication have fundamentally changed the way social movements and protest movements operate and organize. The internet and social media have provided powerful new tools for democracy movements in developing countries and emerging democracies, enabling them to bypass censorship, voice their opinions, and organize protests.[324][325]

A serious problem with the social media is that they have no truth filters. The established news media have to guard their reputation as trustworthy, while ordinary citizens may post unreliable information.[324] In fact, studies show that false stories are going more viral than true stories.[326][327] The proliferation of false stories and conspiracy theories may undermine public trust in the political system and public officials.[327][315]

Reliable information sources are essential for the democratic process. Less democratic governments rely heavily on censorship, propaganda, and misinformation in order to stay in power, while independent sources of information are able to undermine their legitimacy.[328]

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