

POLITICAL ROLE IN A DEMOCRATIC COUNTRY

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ABSTRACT

A central claim of democratic theory is that democracy induces governments to be responsive to the preferences of the people. Political parties organize politics in every modern democracy, and some observers claim that parties are what induce democracies to be responsive. Yet, according to others, parties give voice to extremists and reduce the responsiveness of governments to the citizenry. The debate about parties and democracy takes on renewed importance as new democracies around the globe struggle with issues of representation and governability. I show that our view of the impact of parties on democratic responsiveness hinges on what parties are their objectives and organization. I review competing theories of parties, sketch their testable implications, and note the empirical findings that may help adjudicate among these theories. I also review debates about the origins of parties, about the determinants of party-system size and characteristics, and about party competition.

Key Words: political parties; democracy; responsiveness; representation; elections.

I. INTRODUCTION

This research paper examines the various ways in which democracy has been conceptualized: in other words, models of democracy. Although the term democracy has often been used in the literature, there has not always been consensus as to its meaning. The literal meaning of democracy comes from a combination of two Greek words, demos (people) and kratos (rule; Robertson, 1985), and at its core, "Democracy is a form of government in which the people rule" (Sørensen, 1993, p. 3). The term originated in Athens and was a part of the standard classification of "regime forms that distinguished rule by one (monarchy), several (aristocracy), and the many (democracy)" (Miller, 1987, p. 114).

However, beyond the literal meaning of democracy, there has been considerable debate over the criteria that distinguish democracies from nondemocracies. A relatively narrow definition of democracy has been offered by Joseph Schumpeter (1950), who viewed democracy as simply a method for choosing political leadership: "The democratic method is that institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the people's vote" (p. 260). Another, more exclusive definition is offered by David Held, who argued that "democracy entails a political community in which there is some form of political equality among the people" (Held, 1996, p. 1). The existence of equal rights (and, accordingly, equal obligations) is the principal feature of political democracy.

Between the rather inclusive conception of political democracy offered by Schumpeter and the exclusive definition offered by Held is that offered by Robert Dahl (1989). For Dahl, democracy was an ideal type of political system in which citizens have the opportunity to (a) formulate their preferences, (b) signify their preferences to their fellow citizens and the government, and (c) have their preferences weighed equally in the conduct of government. However, since no system can fully embody democracy as an ideal type, Dahl prefers to use the term polyarchies to refer to existing "nonideal" democracies. Polyarchies exhibit the following characteristics:

Control over government decisions is constitutionally vested in elected officials.
Elected officials are chosen in free, fair, and frequent elections.

Practically all adults have the right to vote in elections.

Practically all adults have the right to run for elective offices.

Citizens have the right to express themselves freely on political matters.

Alternative sources of information are freely and legally available.

Everyone has the right to form parties, pressure groups, and other associations independent of the state. (Dahl, 1989)

One could distinguish empirically between different kinds of polyarchy in terms of two dimensions: competition for office and political participation. Systems that approach the democratic ideal (polyarchies) are characterized by high degrees of competition and high degrees of participation. Systems that have lower degrees of competition and participation are more autocratic. However, critics of this approach argue that this conceptualization is “static” and cannot distinguish between democratic and nondemocratic regimes, but only among varying degrees of polyarchy. Furthermore, this conceptualization of democracy cannot identify how democracies emerge from nondemocratic regimes, as has occurred in most European countries. What Richard Rose, William Mishler, and Christian Haerpfer (1998) prefer is the “democracy in competition” approach to conceptualizing democracy, or the notion that democracy is defined not relative to an ideal, as is polyarchy, but relative to nondemocratic alternatives. Thus Rose et al. opt for a definition based on Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan (1996), who identify four characteristics of central importance in characterizing any regime: the rule of law, the institutions of civil society, free and fair elections, and the extent to which governors are held accountable. Rule of law means that no individuals, including rulers, stand above the law. Civil society relates to the existence of sociopolitical groups, autonomous from the state, that allow for the free articulation of popular interests and keep in check the uncontrolled growth of the state (see Diamond, 1994; Fine & Rai, 1997). Free and fair elections refers to the existence of real competition for office. And accountability refers to the extent to which those who govern are responsible to others for their political actions. None of these criteria individually is sufficient to define a democracy, or any other regime for that matter. Only in combination do these characteristics define different kinds of regimes.

II. CLASSIC APPROACHES TO DEMOCRACY

A. THE ANCIENTS AND DEMOCRACY

The earliest conceptions of democracy are associated with the ancient Greeks. A number of factors contributed to the development of the democracy in Athens. The polis, or city-state, served as a basic unit of operation in Greece and was built on largely egalitarian values. These values were supported by three key factors. First, the connection of lower-class citizens to the military allowed them to better their socioeconomic status, as well as to get involved in communal decision making. Second, as the Athenian polis moved toward being a “world power,” the old institutions of governance and the distribution of power were questioned. This led to a question of who should be in charge of the polis and “what role the people should play in the decisions that directly affected their safety and future” (Boedeker & Raaflaub, 1998, p. 20).

Third, the empire generated a considerable amount of income, which accumulated and allowed for extra spending on domestic programs rather than only military. Having a steady source of income encouraged such spending, leading to “Athenians’ decision to introduce pay for juries and eventually for other political offices” (Boedeker & Raaflaub, 1998, p. 20)—an unprecedented development. However, Greek democracy was limited to freeborn male citizens with property (Thiele, 2003). Classical scholars such as Plato and Aristotle debated the usefulness and “goodness” of pure democracy. Sometimes it was viewed as a conventional form and “sometimes as a corrupt form of popular rule in the classification that included tyranny as the corrupt form of monarchy, oligarchy as the corrupt form of aristocracy, and ochlocracy as the corrupt form of government by the people” (Miller, 1987, pp. 114–115). Plato is considered to be an opponent of democracy, even though he was a follower of the political thought of Socrates, who was believed to be a “friend of democracy and a champion of open society” (Ober, 1998, p.

156). The reason for this notion lies in Plato's idea that democracy elevated the pursuit of freedom to the highest possible level, which ultimately leads to multiple breakdowns in the order of the society. Thus, he prefers the monarchical rule of philosopher kings (Thiele, 2003). Aristotle, a student of Plato's, agreed with Plato that monarchy, ruled by philosopher kings, is the best possible regime. However, he realized that such a regime is impossible to maintain.

B. PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY AND DIRECT DEMOCRACY

Although the ancients were suspicious of mob rule, the idea of participatory democracy, or direct democracy, has its roots with them. Participatory democracy, or direct democracy, can be traced back to Athens, Greece (460 BCE), where the direct rule of government was done by the people (i.e., *demokratia*) and not via an elected group of representatives. The Athenian city-state adopted this form of political system to provide its citizens an opportunity to directly participate in the state's decision-making process. Through an assembly, citizens could directly decide and vote on "public policies that [would] govern their behavior" (Mezey, 2008, p. 1). Although the Athenian democratic form of government lacked the right of women and of slaves to vote, it still provided all adult male citizens with an increase in control over their "own lives by allowing them to directly determine how public power [was] exercised" (Fung, 2003). As such, since there were no representatives in the Greek system of government, sovereignty over the laws lay primarily with male citizens, who ruled themselves directly.

Currently, Switzerland and some New England town meetings closely resemble participatory democracy or direct democracy. Switzerland has 23 states, known as cantons, three of which are divided and known as half cantons. These half cantons function as full cantons by having their own constitution and legislative, executive, and judiciary branches. However, two of the half cantons perform functions that resemble the Athenian city-state political system: All adult citizens participate in the decision-making process, as in participatory democracy. The rest of the Swiss cantons use a system of representatives elected directly by citizens and who act on behalf of those citizens, constituting a republic, or a representative democracy. Most of the countries in the world today resemble a republic, or a representative democracy. Some argue that although participatory or direct democracy allows citizens to rule themselves directly, the model may complicate and slow down the overall decision-making process (Mezey, 2008). Many critics also point out that in a direct democracy, citizens are not capable of being informed on all issues and thus are not capable of implementing various policies appropriately, and so they may instead rely on self-interest in making those decisions (Mezey, 2008). Among the many forms of democracy that have developed since the Greek and Roman civilizations, participatory or direct democracy is regarded as the type closest to the ideal form of democracy that provides citizens with full and direct participation in the decision-making process of their government (Mezey, 2008).

C. REPUBLICANISM, OR REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY

Republicanism, or representative democracy, is also rooted in the work of the ancients. Beginning in the fifth century BCE, Romans, inspired by the Greek system of government, developed a new form of government called republicanism (also known as representative democracy) to accommodate their ever-growing population. The difference between the Greek and Roman forms of democracy lies in the election of representatives. Specifically, in the Roman form of democracy, governmental decisions are made by an elected group of representatives (Mezey, 2008). These elected representatives "consider policy alternatives, and decide by vote" among themselves in accordance to the views of their constituents (Mezey, 2008, p. 1). In other words, in this form of government, (a) public policy is made by a representative of the citizens and not by the citizens themselves; (b) representatives are elected by citizens from groups called constituents; (c) adult citizens are able to cast a vote, and each citizen has one vote; and (d) representatives are "accountable for their actions to those who elect them and can be replaced by next elections" (p. 2). Specifically, citizens indirectly impact political decisions by "electing and influencing the behavior of representatives who actually make public policy and control implementation" (p. 2). For example, James Madison, a founding father of the United States, and philosophers such as John Locke and

Alexis de Tocqueville preferred and advocated this form of representative government, in which decisions were not made directly by citizens but were made by their elected and knowledgeable representatives. These philosophers believed that this system of representation would prevent citizens from resorting to self-interest during their decision-making process (Yarbrough, 1979).

It is important to mention that Madison aligned republicanism with representation (Yarbrough, 1979). Madison defined the republican government as one that must be democratic but not to the point that public matters must be “conducted by the citizens in person” (Yarbrough, 1979, p. 62). In general, “elected representatives would protect the right of the people better than the people themselves” (p. 62). The United States’ current system of government best resembles this form of democracy. Currently, countries such as the United Kingdom, Germany, Canada, the Netherlands, and Belgium also use this form of democracy as their governing system.

III. CONTEMPORARY MODELS OF DEMOCRACY

A. POLYARCHY

The idea of polyarchy is associated with the U.S. political scientist Robert Dahl, who was seeking an empirical way in which to measure the concept (in keeping with the introduction of the scientific method in political science as a result of the behavioral revolution in the 1950s and 1960s). In his 1963 book, *A Preface to Democratic Theory*, Dahl defined polyarchy as “an open, competitive and pluralistic system of minority rule” (cited in Krouse, 1982, p. 422). Dahl argued that polyarchy is “a necessary condition and foundation of democracy” (cited in Bailey & Braybrooke, 2003, p. 109). Dahl argued that “power in American politics is pluralistic,” and therefore government must account for the diversity in the population (cited in Bailey & Braybrooke, 2003, p. 103).

In his 1990 book, *After the Revolution: Authoritative Good Society*, Dahl looked at the purpose and function of polyarchy as a method of decision making (Dahl, 1990). Specifically, he emphasized that polyarchy provides greater political equality and popular sovereignty and as a democratic model best reflects participation in our modern or pluralistic society. Dahl argued that polyarchy is the basis for democracy. He also argued that pluralism is necessary, inevitable, and desirable in a polyarchy and that diversity provides individuals with more choice and leads to self-understanding. Polyarchy is seen as the product of freedom and as generally good for human beings (Dahl, 1990). Dahl describes polyarchy as a product of democratizing nation-states and not like direct democracy as seen in ancient Athens. Polyarchy is more similar to republicanism, or the representative form of democracy. According to Dahl, polyarchy is pivotal to the establishment of the democratic process. In his works, Dahl refers to polyarchy as a regime that must require the presence of seven political institutions in order to exist: elected officials, free and fair elections, inclusive suffrage, (an inclusive) right to run for office, freedom of expression, alternative sources of information (freedom of media), and associational autonomy (freedom of association; Bailey & Braybrooke, 2003, p. 107). In his 1972 book, titled *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition*, Dahl emphasizes that these political institutions of polyarchy are necessary for the attainment of democracy but that ideal democracy does not exist currently in the world (Dahl, 1972). In other words, polyarchy is an imperfect, real-world substitute for full democracy (Bailey & Braybrooke, 2003, p. 107).

An important feature of polyarchy is that it promotes competition and toleration. Specifically, polyarchy accepts and tolerates a variety of views and, as such, equips citizens with an opportunity to express their opposition. Opposition parties and associations of all kinds are “good and natural” in polyarchy (Bailey & Braybrooke, 2003, p. 108). Therefore, the freedom of association and an ability of interest groups to influence governmental decision-making processes are widely accepted and encouraged in polyarchy. Furthermore, Dahl interprets polyarchy as a system of rights. Specifically, he refers to these rights as being crucial in protecting and guaranteeing political institutions of polyarchy. Specifically, these rights include procedural rights such as (a) political equality, (b) effective participation, and (c) enlightened understanding in political and economic life (Bailey & Braybrooke, 2003). Some scholars have argued that polyarchy is incapable of promoting democracy in societies deeply divided along cultural or ethnic lines

and where “civil war is always a possibility during times of extreme conflict, especially when what is at stake is the right of a subculture to participate in governance” (Bailey & Braybrooke, 2003, p. 112).

Polyarchies not only have difficulty accommodating extreme conflict, but they may actually generate and exacerbate it. By allowing citizens to articulate their grievances freely and join associations to advance their causes, polyarchies place political weapons in the hands of people who may be culturally hostile to their fellow citizens (Bailey & Braybrooke, 2003, p. 112).

B. MAJORITARIAN, OR WESTMINSTER, DEMOCRACY

Majoritarian democracy is a modern form of democracy, termed the Westminster model by political scientist Arend Lijphart (1999) to denote the Palace of Westminster in London, where the parliament of the United Kingdom convenes. Lijphart refers to the United Kingdom as the best example of this model.

Lijphart (1999) provides 10 distinct features to characterize this modern form of democracy:

Concentration of executive power in one party and bare majority: The ruling cabinet consists of a one party majority and excludes minority parties.

Cabinet dominance: The cabinet, composed of leaders of a cohesive majority party, can be confident of passing legislation.

Two party system: Government is dominated by two large parties.

Majoritarian and disproportional system of elections: The election system functions according to single member district plurality, or a first past the post system.

Interest group pluralism: Competition and conflict characterize the interest group system.

Unitary and centralized government: Local governments are part of the central government, their powers are not constitutionally guaranteed, and they are financially dependent on the central government.

Concentration of legislative power in a unicameral legislature.

Constitutional flexibility: For example, in the United Kingdom, there is no written constitution, and as such, Parliament can freely change policies or law by regular majorities and not by supermajorities.

Absence of judicial review: Since a written constitution does not exist, there is no written document by which courts can decide the constitutionality of legislation.

A central bank controlled by the executive: In this model, banks are controlled by the cabinet and are not independent.

Countries with this model of government tend to have homogeneous societies. This form of government can be seen in countries such as Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and most of the British former colonies in Asia, Africa, and the Caribbean after their independence (Lijphart, 1999). Although majoritarian democracy is quite prevalent in the English-speaking world, Lijphart prefers the consensual model of democracy in less homogeneous societies (i.e., pluralistic societies), and in fact he believes that the consensual model would be appropriate for most societies.

C. CONSENSUAL DEMOCRACY

In contrast to majoritarian democracy, consensual democracy is regarded by Lijphart as a better form of democracy in societies that are culturally heterogeneous (or what he calls “plural societies”). Especially in plural societies, majority rule becomes “not only undemocratic but also dangerous because minorities that are continually denied access to power will feel excluded and discriminated against and may lose their allegiance to the regime” (Lijphart, 1999, p. 32). In most deeply divided societies, such as Northern Ireland, “majority rule spells majority dictatorship and civil strife rather than democracy” (p. 33). As such, consensual democracy is best for “less divided but still heterogeneous countries” as well as homogeneous societies (p. 33). Lijphart (1999) provides 10 distinct features to characterize this modern form of democracy:

Executive power sharing in broad coalition cabinets: In this model, all or most of the important parties share executive power in broad coalition.

Executive legislative balance of power: There is a formal separation of power between the executive and the legislature, allowing for more independence between these two branches of government. Additionally, the legislature cannot stage a vote of no confidence.

Multiparty system: In a pluralist society, such as in Switzerland, parties are divided along several lines.

Proportional representation: This electoral system divides parliamentary seats among the parties in proportion to the votes they receive.

Interest group corporatism.

Federal and decentralized government.

Strong bicameralism.

Constitutional rigidity: A written constitution exists and can be changed only by special legislative majorities.

Judicial review.

Central bank: Some degree of independence exists for banks in monetary policy making decisions.

D. CONSOCIATIONAL DEMOCRACY

Consociational democracy is a specific form of consensual democracy that Lijphart (1976) proposed in his book *The Politics of Accommodation* as a solution for societies that are deeply divided along ethnic, religious, or cultural lines. Specifically, he argued that a solution for deeply divided societies such as the Netherlands is a system of government in which groups share power within institutions. The idea of group representation is key in Lijphart's view of achieving democracy, and the consociational model of democracy would provide for more group participation and a voice for minorities. Countries such as the Netherlands and Switzerland are the best examples of this type of democracy.

E. DELEGATIVE DEMOCRACY

In the 1990s, Guillermo O'Donnell (1994) introduced the idea of delegative democracy, which he described as follows:

Delagative democracies rest on the premise that whoever wins election to the presidency is thereby entitled to govern as he or she sees fit, constrained only by the hard facts of existing power relations and by a constitutionally limited term of office. The president is to be the embodiment of the nation and the main custodian and definer of its interests. (p. 60) The policies of this democracy may not reflect the promises made by the candidate's campaign, because the candidate, once elected, is the one who decides what is appropriate for the country. Delegative democracy occurs in formerly authoritarian states (Argentina, Brazil, Peru, Ecuador, etc.) and post- Communist countries. They meet the basic requirements of being a democratic society but are not as liberal as representative democracies "and do not seem to be on the path toward becoming" representative (O'Donnell, 1994, p. 56). These states are not consolidated or institutionalized, but they do resist regression back to authoritarianism. Delegative democracies are strongly majoritarian and hold fair and clean elections (sometimes using a runoff technique if the first round of elections does not produce a clear-cut majority). In delegative democracies, parties, the congress, and the press are normally free to voice their criticisms, unlike in authoritarian states. In certain situations, courts are able to block "unconstitutional" policies.

Delegative democracy is similar to representative democracy in that representative democracy has an element of delegation: "Through some procedure a collectivity authorizes some individuals to speak for it and eventually to commit the collectivity to what the representative decides" (O'Donnell, 1994, p. 61). However, representation requires accountability. In institutionalized societies, representatives are held accountable for their actions not only vertically, that is, to the electorate, but also horizontally, that is, to other representatives and institutions. According to O'Donnell, vertical accountability, "along with the freedom to form parties and to try to influence public opinion," is present in both delegative and representative democracies; however, the horizontal accountability attributes of representative democracy are "extremely weak or nonexistent in delegative democracies" (p. 61).

Presidents of delegative democracies make conscious efforts to disrupt the development of institutions that provide for horizontal accountability because they believe that such institutions are unnecessary impediments. Weak institutionalization in delegative democracies in turn allows the process of policy making to be swift. This increases the “likelihood of gross mistakes, of hazardous implementation, and of concentrating responsibility for the outcomes on the president,” who is praised as a savior at one moment and cursed the next (O’Donnell, 1994, p. 62). In representative democracy, the decision-making process happens at a slow pace and is incremental and sometimes comes to a standstill. But the policies produced are usually less prone to gross mistakes and have a better chance of being implemented, and the responsibility for mistakes is shared among a wide range of institutions.

F. DELIBERATIVE DEMOCRACY

Deliberative democracy is the idea that legitimate lawmaking stems from the public deliberation of citizens. Deliberative democracy presents “an ideal of political autonomy based on the practical reasoning of citizens” (Bohman & Rehg, 1997, p. ix). Deliberative democracy is often seen as countering rational choice and liberalism theories. Much of political action is “made up of [a] broad swath of moral conflicts” that are “not properly resolved by mere interest group bargaining” (Macedo, 1999, p. 5). Certain issues, such as affirmative action, environmental protection, or assisted suicide, cannot be resolved through rational choice argument. Many liberals too are more concerned with the fundamental rights and principles of justice than with the moral aspects of the debate. Gutmann and Thompson (1999) state that moral disagreement is ever present in politics, even under the best conditions.

Deliberative democracy promotes the legitimacy of collective decisions. Creating a feeling of legitimacy and democratic goodwill, together with fair process, creates stability in the long run. Another positive characteristic of deliberative democracy is that it encourages “public-spirited perspectives on public issues” (Macedo, 1999, p. 10). It allows the public to contemplate and think about the common good. According to Macedo’s argument, deliberative democracy also promotes mutually respectful decision making, as well as the ability to correct mistakes of the past. Despite its positive qualities, deliberative democracy has often been criticized for its idealism. Frederick Schauer believes it places too much emphasis on deliberation and “talk-based decision procedures” (Schauer, 1999, p. 18). William Simon believes that deliberative democracy’s agenda is too broad and that it places too much emphasis on civility in each issue, undermining the energy of some groups that “define and constitute themselves through the assertion of their claims” (Macedo, 1999, p. 51). Last, it is criticized for presupposing a sense of closeness or solidarity among the participants, which is in fact lacking in many countries.

G. DEMOCRATIC AUTONOMY

The model of democratic autonomy addresses the essential question of what it means to be democratic. Democracy as an idea offers a framework that claims that “there are fair and just ways of negotiating values and value disputes” (Held, 1996, p. 297). It is the only “grand” narrative that can legitimately “frame and delimit the competing narratives of the contemporary age” (p. 298). Democracy does not offer a solution for all injustices and dangers. However, it does offer a first line of defense for public dialogue about general matters, as well as guiding the process of political development toward institutional paths.

The concept of autonomy implies the human ability to reason “self-consciously, to be self-reflective and to be self-determining” (Held, 1996, p. 300). This notion could not develop in a medieval worldview, because in that society, political obligations and rights were connected with property rights and tradition. As the society evolved, the concept of autonomy began to be more popular. Modern liberal society ties “goals of liberty and equality to individualist political, economic and ethical doctrines” (p. 299). These connections require the state to provide necessary conditions to allow citizens to pursue their own interests. This opinion has been largely shaped by Locke, who believed that the state exists to protect individuals’ rights and liberties and is a burden that individuals endure to secure themselves. Democratic autonomy, therefore, requires people to enjoy equal rights and obligations “within the specification of the

political framework, which generates and limits the opportunities available to them” (Held, 1996, p. 324). People should be free and equal in determining the conditions of their own lives as long as they do not impose on the rights of others. In this system, the principle of autonomy is enshrined in a constitution and bill of rights. Democratic autonomy requires open availability of information to ensure that decisions about public life are informed. It introduces new mechanisms to ensure “enlightened participation, such as voter feedback and citizen juries, increase in accountability in public and private life, and . . . [an] institutional framework receptive to experiments with organizational forms” (p. 325).

IV. ARROW’S IMPOSSIBILITY THEOREM

without some reference to the work of Kenneth Arrow, and in particular his impossibility theorem. This theorem states that, given several “well-known assumptions, the social orderings of particular alternatives that are meant to reflect individuals’ preferences must match the preferences of an arbitrary individual,” such as a dictator (Hansen, 2002, p. 218). According to the proof of the theorem, a social-choice rule, such as democracy, is out of the question. Dictatorship, in this case, is the only feasible form of rule. In his proof, Arrow imagines a community attempting to make decisions about economic policy as a committee or direct democracy. The policy in question may be any other type of policy as long as it arrives at an ordering of the proposals put forward and voted on. To choose the policy, each member has to cast a vote. Each member has a preference in regard to the various proposals put forward. Arrow tries to check “the suitability of the procedure by which, from the ballots cast, the community might arrive at an ordering of the proposals which had been put forward and voted on,” and whether or not such a procedure exists (Black, 1969, p. 228).

This theorem shows that no committee procedure will be able to satisfy certain conditions that, as suggested by Arrow, this “procedure might reasonably be required to meet, and that whichever committee procedure we may choose will, for certain sets of schedules, infringe one or more of the apparently reasonable conditions” specified (Black, 1969, p. 228).

In political science, Arrow’s theorem of general impossibility found many supporters (Geanakoplos, 2005). William Riker states that voting outcomes will be different if different voting schemes for the identical set of voter preferences are tested. No voting scheme will produce a unique outcome from a given set of ordered voter preferences unless the regime is “dictatorial or manipulative” (Behrouzi, 2005, p. 64). In addition, Iain McLean stated that in a multidimensional society, the will of the people does not exist. Regardless of what option the people choose, “there’s another which a majority of the people would rather have” (Behrouzi, 2005, p. 65). These premises hint toward impossibility of direct democracy.

V. CONCLUSION

Many models of democracy appear in the contemporary political science literature. Many of these models, such as polyarchy and delegative democracy, tend to be descriptive models of reality, whereas others (such as consociationalism and deliberative democracy) tend to be proscriptive solutions to promote democracy under particular social conditions. Although each of these models assumes some basic features of democracy (such as high levels of participation, competition, and civil and political rights), they illustrate the variety of ways in which democracy can be expressed. Democracy and its conceptualization will remain important issues in political science.

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