

**CONCEPTUAL ASPECTS OF DEMOCRACY:
THEORETICAL-PRACTICAL ANALYSIS**

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One of the most useful political word is „democracy”. Even if it is a word familiar to most, the concept of “democracy” is still misunderstood and misused in a time when totalitarian regimes and military dictatorships alike have attempted to claim popular support by pinning democratic labels upon themselves. Yet the power of the

democratic idea has also evoked some of history's most profound and moving expressions of human will and intellect: from Pericles in ancient Athens to Vaclav Havel in the modern Czech Republic, from Thomas Jefferson's Declaration of Independence in 1776 to Andrei Sakharov's last speeches in 1989 [1].

Democracy is more than a set of constitutional rules and procedures that determine how a government functions. In a democracy, government is only one element coexisting in a social fabric of many and varied institutions, political parties, organizations, and associations. This diversity is called pluralism, and it assumes that the many organized groups and institutions in a democratic society do not depend upon government for their existence, legitimacy, or authority.

By its political size democracy is a system of government that bases its legitimacy on the participation of the people. While democratic governments come in many varieties, they are uniformly characterized by (1) competitive elections, (2) the principle of political and legal equality, and (3) a high degree of individual freedom, or civil liberties. Due to reliance on elections, democracies have as their default principle the concept of majority rule. However, one of the dominant tensions running through democratic societies is the balance struck between the will of the majority and minority rights. The compromise between these two principles differs in different democratic states [2].

Prof. Shawn Rosenberg argue that active participation in a democracy requires thoughtfulness, discipline, and the ability to parse propaganda from valid information. He affirms that in sum, the majority of Americans, for example, are generally unable to understand or value democratic culture, institutions, practices or citizenship in the manner required [3].

Development of democracy in a state is a hard work. The last half of the 20th century was the golden age of democracy. In 1945 there were just 12 democracies in the entire world. By the end of the century there were 87. But then came the great reversal: In the second decade of the 21st century, the shift to democracy rather suddenly and ominously stopped – and reversed. A brief three decades after some

had heralded the “end of history” it’s possible that it’s democracy that’s nearing the end, as Shawn Rosenberg consider.

Democracy identifies the general processes causing democratization and de-democratization at a national level across the world over the last few hundred years. It singles out integration of trust networks into public politics, insulation of public politics from categorical inequality, and suppression of autonomous coercive power centers as crucial processes [4].

Analyzing democracy and democratization as a concept, there are four main types of definitions: constitutional, substantive, procedural, and process-oriented A constitutional approach concentrates on laws a regime enacts concerning political activity. Thus we can look across history and recognize differences among oligarchies, monarchies, republics, and a number of other types by means of contrasting legal arrangements. Within democracies, furthermore, we can distinguish between constitutional monarchies, presidential systems, and parliament-centered arrangements, not to mention such variations as federal versus unitary structures. For large historical comparisons, constitutional criteria have many advantages, especially the relative visibility of constitutional forms. Second, focusing on the possible outcomes of politics undercuts any effort to learn whether some political arrangements – including democracy – promote more desirable substantive outcomes than other political arrangements [5]. Advocates of procedural definitions single out a narrow range of governmental practices to determine whether a regime qualifies as democratic. Most procedural observers center their attention on elections, asking whether genuinely competitive elections engaging large numbers of citizens regularly produce changes in governmental personnel and policy. But if they actually cause significant governmental changes, they signal the procedural presence of democracy.

References:

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