

**Introduction to Political Theory**  
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**Lecture – 22**  
**Democracy – 1: Introduction; Procedural & Substantive Democracy**

Hello and welcome friends. Today, we are going to discuss a new topic called democracy. Democracy is a widely, used term, and everything in contemporary era that is good or virtuous is often, associated with the term democracy. But we think or theorize or try to define, what is democracy? It is a contested concept yet it is very central to any theorization of politics or government or state in modern times.

All states, necessarily, profess that they are democratic in nature. But how far, they are democratic is something, constantly, debated, contested and challenged. Therefore, even when we see in modern era, democracy is used as a kind of legitimizing idea, it is not really, a universally, accepted norm or criteria about, what does it mean to be called a democratic country or a democratic society. Some of these debates and discussions, we will discuss over this course of two or three lectures, on democracy.

Today, we are going to basically, look at the understanding or definition of democracy as put forward by many scholars. And then, we will look at the evolution of this idea and how, in the modern times, it becomes an all pervasive idea, even, when the meaning and understanding of democracy is far from settled. We will discuss, particularly, about the direct and indirect forms of democracy, and more specifically, the idea of procedural and substantive notions of democratic system. These are some of the things, we will discuss today. In the next lecture, we will discuss about the different models of democracy, and then follow up with the challenges and criticisms to the very idea of democracy.

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**Intro**

➤ Democracy is central to any discourse on politics and government in modern times. Of course as an idea its roots can be traced back to ancient times but as an all pervasive legitimizing idea it is a recent phenomena. The word democracy is derived from the Greek root 'demos' which means 'the people'; 'cracy' stands for 'rule' or 'government'. Thus, literally, democracy signifies 'the rule of the people'.

➤ However, it is not that easy when it comes to defining democracy. Some of the following definitions can give us a sense of the contested meaning and understanding of democracy. Democracy, according to the Greeks, is the Government in which people rule over themselves. Aristotle considered it as a perverted form of government. Herodotus says, "the democracy denotes that form of government in which the ruling power of the state is largely vested in the members of the community as a whole". In the words of US President Abraham Lincoln, it is a government of the people, by the people and for the people. According to Bryce, "Democracy is that form of Government in which the ruling power of a state is legally vested, not in any particular class or classes but in the members of the community as a whole". "Democracy", writes Mazzini, "is the government of the best and wisest, for the progress of all and through all". Prof. Seeley says, "Democracy is a government in which everybody has a share". According to Dicey, "Democracy is a form of government in which the governing body is a comparatively large fraction of the entire nation".

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To begin, with the idea of democracy, it can be argued that it is central to any discourse on politics and government, in modern times. Because any discourse about politics or state or the government in modern times, revolves around the idea. But that does not mean, there is a kind of settled understanding or universal consensus, on what this idea means. Therefore, there is lot of confusion and challenges to its understanding as exactly, what does democracy means or what does it mean, when we say, we are democratic.

Nonetheless, this idea is very much central to any political and government related discourse, in modern times. And of course, as an idea its roots can be traced back to the ancient times. In Greece or even in India, we have many sanghas or republics, where there was a kind of democratic structure of decision-making. But as an all pervasive legitimizing idea, so much so, that even the military junta or undemocratic government and the outright dictators or autocrats, also, tries to legitimize their rule in the name of democracy. This kind of resurgence or reformation of democracy, as the legitimizing idea of time is something, a recent development or modern development, even, when the roots of this idea can be traced back to the ancient time.

The word democracy is derived from the Greek roots, which means, 'demos' and 'cracy'. Demos means, the people, and cracy, means, the rule or the government. So, democracy, literally, means, the rule of the people. Democracy is about a system of rule based on the governed or that is a kind of legitimizing process for a democratic government, the

functioning or existence of government is based on the consent of the people. Thus, a democratic rule by nature, means a rule 'by the people, for the people, of the people', as one of the US President, Abraham Lincoln, defines it.

This is a kind of literal meaning of the term, but its actual functioning or the process of democratic government, we see a lot of challenges, to identify, which a government is truly, functional or democratic government or which is not. It is not easy to define, what democracy is. And some of the following definitions give us a sense of contested meanings and understandings of democracy. Thus, democracy, according to, Greeks is the government in which people rule over themselves. It is a system of governance, where people rule over themselves and there is no external, or an outset authority which governs them.

Aristotle, considered it as a perverted form of government. So, he talks about many forms of government starting from the authoritarian to autocracy, then, he goes on to define polity as the rule by many. He regarded, it as an ideal form of government. Democracy, he regarded as a perverted system of governance. So, for him, democracy is a perverted form of government. Herodotus, says, democracy denotes that form of government in which the ruling power of the state is largely, vested in the members of the community, as a whole. The rule or basis of ruling is in the larger community, as a whole in the society.

The most quoted and often, repeated definition of democracy that you often, come across is by Abraham Lincoln, the US President who famously, said, democracy is a government 'of the people, by the people and for the people and all these three things, he says, about democracy matters. 'Democracy is a government of the people, by the people and for the people'. The very constitution of a democratic government is of the people. That means, the representative of the people. The government is run by the people themselves and not by other groups or communities. So, it is by the people and for the people. The very rational or objective of government is to work in the interest of or for the benefits of people.

This definition of democracy as the rule 'of people, by the people, for the people', give us a broader or comprehensive understanding of democracy. But when it again, comes to accessing, the actual functioning of democracies in the world, we face a lot of challenges

in terms of, even, when a functioning democracy follows some procedural parameters, the actual effect or outcome of that democracy may not be democratic that we will discuss, in the procedural and substantive notions of democracy.

Now, moving onto this Bryce definition of democracy, the democracy is that form of government in which the ruling power of state is legally, vested not in any particular class or classes like in aristocracy but in the members of the community as a whole. So, each and every member of that particular community together gives the legal basis of a democratic state and government.

Democracy, writes, Mazzini is the government of the best and the wisest, for the progress of all and through all. This sanction or the basis or what we can also call the consent is very crucial for the legitimacy or the existence of a democratic government which must function on the basis of the idea that the constitution of the government or a democratic rule is the result, of the consent of each and every member of the society.

For a very long time, governance is something, regarded as that task or responsibility of a very few section or a very few classes in society. For the first time, democracy, radically, altered, such conceptions of governance by a few, by asserting that a democratic government must function on the basis of each and every member of the government, for the benefit of the people. These two things, first, the process of electing a government or forming a government should be the result of the participation of every member.

Second, once, the government is constituted; it must function on the behalf of everyone, for the benefit of all. That means, the common good or good of the people is the objective of the government. The constitution and existence of the government rests on the idea of people and that is very central to the understanding of democracy.

Similarly, Prof Seeley, talks about democracy as a government in which everybody has a share. In this form of government like in monarchy, only, the monarch will have the stake because it is his monarchy. Similarly, in aristocracy, it is a particular class in the society, whose interest is at stake in the government. But in democracy, every single citizen of a democratic state has a stake and share in the decision-making or in the administrative process of the state.

According to Dicey, democracy, as a form of government in which the governing body is comparatively, a large fraction of the entire nation. The question of representation, where the governance is in the hand of those who are comparatively, a large fraction of the entire nation and not representing, a particular class and section.

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➤ Thus, we find that democracy is understood as a procedure; as an ideal; and more than that a system of rule that is very difficult to conceptualize. We can develop a sense of democracy by contrasting it with say autocracy -

<p><b>Democracy</b></p> <p><u>Rules, procedure</u></p> <p><u>Participation</u></p> <p><u>Right bearing citizens</u></p>	<p>↓</p>	<p><b>Autocracy</b></p> <p><u>Command, obedience</u></p> <p><u>Non/Less-participation</u></p> <p><u>Loyalties</u></p>
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➤ Democracy is something more than a system of rule. It has both procedural and substantive aspect which we will discuss in the later part of this lecture. It is a method or procedure to arrive at a decision. But it is also about a set of normative value and behavior through which a society approach and participate in collective decision making.

➤ Democracy as a system of rule is based on this idea of rule of law and its legitimacy comes from the consent of the ruled. Hence, regular, free, and fair election is regarded as essential feature of a democracy. It also signifies a free and open society which allows all kinds of voices and opinions to be heard.

Thus, we find that democracy is understood as a procedure and not as an ideal. So, the biggest challenge in defining democracy is that it is understood as a procedure. We can say, free and fair election, the rule of law, constitution, and political parties, if these exists in a country, it may be a democratic country. It is a procedural thing. But it is also, an ideal, where no country can claim to be a truly, democratic country. Because there will be some undemocratic ways of doing things, or undemocratic power, that is exercised. It is a coercive dimension of the state.

Therefore, as an ideal, it remains, as a kind of guiding principle, where all the societies or modern societies tries not just to govern themselves through the democratic or elected government, but also, it internalizes the value of democracy which is against hierarchy, or any kind of subordination and domination, or any kind of arbitrary use of power.

Democracy, in that sense, remains an ideal or as a guiding principle for many societies or individuals or collectivities, in modern times. It is a procedure, and it is also, an ideal and more than that a system of rule, that is very difficult to conceptualize and that is the most difficult part of democracy. As I have said, many undemocratic or military junta, also,

legitimize the rule, or access their rule in the name of democracy. As a procedure, as an ideal and more than that as a system of rule, the definition or the interpretation of democracy is a very difficult challenge.

Now, we can make a sense of, what does democracy implies, by making a kind of contrast between the democracy and autocracy. Democracy, is by definition, rule by the people, for the people, of the people. That means, the rule by every member. So, in a democratic rule, all members of the society or communities are expected to participate or have a stake in the functioning of the world.

Autocracy, on the hand, is a rule by one dictator or the authoritarian person or by few, but certainly, not by everyone. Autocratic rule, by definition is thus, about the rule by one person or a few individuals or a small section in the society. Now, if, we contrast democracy with autocracy, we will find that democracy is rule based on certain rules, customs and procedures, whereas, autocracy is more about command or obedience. There will be absolute hierarchy and the very functioning of the autocratic rule is based on command and obedience, whereas, in a democracy, we have the rules and procedures. Thus, the functioning of state and its machinery, and must follow and abide by the rules and procedures.

Second, democracy ensures participation of most of its population, almost all. So, each member or a democratic citizen's right to vote is the most crucial understanding of political participation in modern democracy. There are criticisms like Rousseau and others, we will discuss, later on. But certainly, the right to vote is given to every adult member of a particular community above a particular age.

This right to vote ensures the maximum political participation in the governance or in a democracy or electing the government in a democracy. It is about participation of every member or every eligible adult member in a society. So, democracy is a rule by participation, whereas, in autocracy, we have non-participation or very less participation of people in decision-making. The people are subjected to certain commands or certain orders and they are expected, to abide by or to obey those commands and orders. But in the decision-making, the participation of people is either less or none at all, in comparison to democracy.

Again, democracy is a government of the citizen, by the citizen and the citizens are right bearing citizen. That means, the state and government must protect certain rights of the individual citizens. This protection of rights give the state certain limits and restraints. For example, in the Indian Constitution, we have the fundamental rights. Now, fundamental rights, prohibit the state to formulate certain policies which contravenes, and takes away the rights, guaranteed under the chapter on fundamental rights.

Thus, democracy recognizes and protects certain rights of citizens, whereas, in autocracy, we have loyalty. So, we benefit or lose on the basis of our loyalty to the commander, or to the higher authority or to the dictator, so that is, the contrast between autocratic and democracy that one can have. Democracy is something, more than a system of rule or it is not just about the procedure. It has both the procedural and substantive aspects which we will discuss, in the later part of this lecture.

It is a method or procedure to arrive at a decision. Democracy is a method or procedure through which, we arrive at particular decisions. But it is also, about a set of normative value and behavior. This normative value and behavior through which society approaches and participate in the collective decision-making is something, which makes democracy, more than a system of rule and merely, it is a mechanism of governing the society. It is something, which is about creating new norms and exercising the power or legitimacy of that power.

And it further, from being a system of rules goes down, to shaping the behavior of individuals and groups in the society. So, the deepening of democracy is a term which can explain, how democracy, is not just about the system of rules and procedures. But it is also, about how the individuals or groups in society themselves, imbibe the democratic ideals or principles which leads to the creation of a good and better society.

Democracy as a system of rule is based on the idea of rule of law which is very crucial for democracy. It must function within the rule of law and its legitimacy, comes from the consent of the ruled. So, democratic government exists and their existence is legitimate, so long, it is based on the consent of people and how, consent is acquired through the periodic elections in a free and fair manner.

Thus, the regular, free and fair election is regarded as an essential feature of democracy. It signifies a free and open society, which allows all kinds or shades of opinions or

voices, to be expressed or heard. The characteristic of a democratic society in comparison to an undemocratic and autocratic society is, it allows, all shades of opinions or voices to be expressed and heard in public.

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**Democracy: Evolution of the concept**

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➤ World wide prevalence of democracy is relatively a recent phenomena, more precisely the most population of the world claims to be governed by democratic governments is a post second world war development. For a very long time people were suspicious of democracy, and used to equate it with 'mobocracy' (rule by mob) and inefficient rule. Even in modern times its usages is not without problematic and challenges. It is true that it has become a legitimizing ideas of our time so much so that even military juntas, dictators and monarchs legitimize their rules in the name of 'true' democracy. And to be called as undemocratic is seen in the negative terms. However, there are many challenges and criticism to democracy. It is equated with the tyranny of majority rule.

➤ However, the idea that the people should rule themselves is not new. Around 2500 years ago in Ancient Greece, the people of the city-state of Athens developed a way of making decisions that was different from the autocracy. Plato and Aristotle saw democracy at work in some of ancient Greek city-states, especially in Athens. Its salient features were: (a) equal participation by all freemen in the common affairs of the polis (city-state) which was regarded as an essential instrument of good life; (b) arriving at public decisions in an atmosphere of free discussion; and (c) general respect for law and for the established procedures of the community. The Greeks took pride in their customary law and admirably distinguished it from the 'arbitrary rule' prevalent among the 'barbarians'. The cornerstone of Athenian democracy was the direct and continuous participation of all citizens in the life of their polis or city-state.

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Now, if we look, at the evolution of the concept in this world, a wide prevalence of democracy is relatively, a new or recent phenomenon. So, we are not democratic, still today, lot of countries and societies, which claim to be democratic, but they are in substance or even, in the procedural sense, not exactly, a democratic state. However, as an idea, democracy is widely, prevalent or it is a legitimizing idea of our age. This becoming of it as a legitimizing idea or the wide prevalence of democracy is something, of a recent phenomenon. More precisely, the population of the world claims to be governed by a democratic government in the post-second world war phenomenon.

So, only, after the post-second world war, most of the population in the world or the rulers, claim to be democratic. For a very long time, people were very suspicious of democracy and used to equate democratic rule with mobocracy or the rule by a mob or inefficient rule, because the ruling or the governance is regarded as something, which require certain expertise and not everyone is capable of ruling or governing. Therefore, for a very long time, the democratic government was equated with the government of inefficient people or it was a mob rule or mobocracy. It was not something, good and virtual.



For a very long time, there was a kind of suspicion or apprehensions about democracy. And even, the most progressive liberal thinkers and scholars, refrained from calling themselves as a democrat. So, democrat was equated with the mobocracy and inefficient rule for a very long time. It is only, recently, that we associated or attached everything that is good and virtuous with democracy. But for a very long time, democracy was equated with the idea of mobocracy or the rule of mob or an inefficient rule.

Even in the modern times, its use is not without the problematic challenges. It is true that it has become a legitimizing idea of our times that even, a military junta, or dictators and the monarchs, legitimizes their rule in the name of a true democracy as what they called. So, starting from, for example, how competitive they are, in terms of legitimizing a very different and contradictory system of rule in the name of democracy. For a capitalist or in a capitalist economy, a free market economy will fight for the protection of rights and for the democratic rule.

A society which believes in the collective ownership or the state ownership of properties or national resources will fight that capitalists or what they call bourgeoisie democracy in the name of bringing about true democracy or more genuine democracy. This idea has a kind of legitimizing effect in modern times and to call someone undemocratic is seen as a kind of offensive, and everyone wants to present themselves or profess themselves as a democratic person.

However, there are many challenges and criticisms to democracy, even today. So, democracy is basically, equated with a majoritarian rule. The majoritarian rule is arithmetically, speaking, a rule of 50 plus 1. So, in a society of 100, the one, who has the vote of 51 will have the right to rule and govern. Now, this kind of democracy is related to the tyranny of majority and the rights, and the property of minority is always, at danger in this tyranny of majoritarian rule in democracy, based on the number. The other criticism of democracy is that it does not distinguish between a person who is well qualified, educationally, and a person who is illiterate.

Now, in a democratic rule, we have this idea that 'one person, one vote, or one vote, one value'. This 'one person, one vote and one vote, one value' do not make a distinction between a person who is a PhD or a person who is illiterate. The vote of each one of

them is same, so it does not make a distinction between the educated or qualified, and uneducated or unqualified. These are some of the other criticisms of democracy.

However, the idea that people should run themselves is not new. This idea that the government should be based on the interests of people and people themselves should participate in governance is not new. Around 2500 years ago, in ancient Greece, the people of Greece city or city-states of Athens developed a way, of making decisions that was different from the autocracy and features of an autocracy or the autocratic rule, as we have discussed.

Plato and Aristotle saw democracy at work in some of the ancient Greek city-states, especially, in Athens. Its salient features were equal participation by all free man. This point, we will discuss in a minute. So, the equal participation of all men in the common affair of polis, which is also, called the city-states was regarded as the essential instrument of a good life.

Thus, a good life is a public life in the polis and it is regarded as a good life, where the participation in the common affairs of the polis or the city-states was available or given to all free men in Athens. We are arriving at some decisions in an atmosphere of free discussions. The decisions were taken through discussions and not through coercion or whims and fancies of a few persons or one individual.

Third, the general aspect of law and the established procedures of the community. The Greeks took pride in their customary laws and admiringly, distinguished it from the 'arbitrary rule' as prevalent among the 'barbarians'. So, why, they call themselves as civilized is precisely, because they conducted their rule through procedures or by the procedures established in the community, in contrast, to the arbitrary rule of the barbarians, whims, fancies and passions, that drive politics and governance.

The cornerstone of the Athenian democracy was the direct and continuous participation. One can well understand the democratic nature of this rule, by the definition of citizenship in Aristotle, which we will discuss, later on, when we will discuss about citizenship that citizenship is the ability, to govern. So, there is a very thick notion of citizenship, where the citizen is not just the subject of rule, but equally, capable of ruling himself or herself, so that is the hallmark of citizenship or democracy in the Athenian city-states, or the Greek city-states, and certainly, in Athens.

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➤ However, the form of democracy prevalent in ancient Greek city-states was by no means regarded as an ideal rule. Athens was not a true democracy as women were not included nor were foreigners, slaves or freed slaves. The democracy therefore, was only for a very small minority of the people living in Athens. However, the idea of common good as independent of and prior to individual interests and desires was very strong in the city-states.

➤ Similarly, in Republican Rome the some of the democratic ideas were quite popular for example popular participation, public good, civic virtue, citizenship, codification of law and so on. In medieval England in 1215, King John had total control and his subjects had no freedom or say in the administration whatsoever. The **Magna Carta** took some of the king's power away and gave some rights and freedom to the people. The Magna Carta contained 63 clauses promising all freemen access to the courts and a fair trial, eliminating unfair fines and punishments and giving power to the Catholic Church in England instead of the king. The Magna Carta was an important milestone in British Law and would become the basis for many international constitutions in the future, including the Australian Constitution.

➤ The American revolution was a milestone in the making of modern democratic government. In the **Declaration of Independence**, written by the American President, Thomas Jefferson in 1776 many ideas were taken from two famous philosophers of the time, Jean Jacques Rousseau and John Locke, which outlined freedom and equality.

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However, the form of democracy, prevalent in ancient Greek city-states was by no means, regarded as an ideal rule. Why? Because, Athens was not a true democracy as women were not included, and nor foreigners, slaves and free slaves were included. So, the citizenship or participation was limited only, to the male citizens of the cities and not to the women foreigners, or slaves and so on. The democracy was meant for a small minority of people living in Athens. Therefore, we cannot regard the Athenian democracy as the ideal democracy. However, the ideal of common good as independent of and prior to individual interests and desires was very much strong in the governance of the city-states.

Similarly, in Republican Rome, some of the democratic ideas were quite popular. For example, the popular participation, public good, civic virtues, citizenship and codification of laws, are some of these ideals which can be regarded as modes of democratic ideals or democratic ways, of functioning, very popular in the Republican Rome.

The mediaeval England is the beginning, of a modern constitution and democracy. In 1215, King John, had total control and his subjects had no freedom in the administration, whatsoever. So, in 1215, there was a kind of complete control of monarch over the administration.

The Magna Carta took some of the king's power away, and gave some rights, and freedom to the people. The Magna Carta, which contains 63 clauses, promised all free man's access to the courts and a free trial, to eliminate unfair fines and punishments, and to give power to the Catholic Church in England, instead of the king.

So, the Magna Carta was an important milestone in the British law and it would become the basis for many international constitutions, including, the Australian Constitution. The Magna Carta, begins, this process of asserting certain rights, like the idea of free trial or removing some arbitrary or unfair fines and punishments becomes the very basis for the emergence of the modern democratic constitution.

The American Revolution was another milestone in the making of a modern democratic government. In the Declaration of Independence, written by the American President, Thomas Jefferson in 1776, many ideas were taken from the two famous philosophers, namely, Jean Jacques Rousseau and John Locke, who outlined about the freedom and equality. And we have referred to their ideas in the previous lecture. The guiding principle of the American Constitution was the rule based on the consent of people.

So, it starts with 'we the people'. The legitimizing authority for the state and its institution is the people of the United States. And also, there are certain rights of the citizens which must be protected. This American Constitution becomes another milestone in the making of the modern democratic states and constitutions.

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➤ *Modern democracies* developed throughout the 20th century. *Held* wrote that, "the historical changes that contributed to the emergence of modern liberal and liberal democratic thought were immensely complicated. Struggles between monarchs and estates over the domain of rightful authority; peasants rebellions against the weight of excessive taxation and social obligation; the spread of trade; commerce and market relations; changes in technology, particularly military technology; growing influence of Renaissance culture; religious strife; struggle between church and state- all played a part". Democracies have resulted from wars, revolutions, decolonization and economic circumstances.

➤ John Dunn argues that 'all states today profess to be democracies because a democracy is what it is virtuous for a state to be'. Thus now it becomes easier to associate everything that is good and virtuous to democracy. And that makes the concept of democracy very confusing. So much so that in 1960s Robert Dahl preferred the term 'polyarchies' over democracy to avoid the normative and subjective dimension of the term and to study democracy 'scientifically'.

➤ Democracy is often interpreted in a sense where it seems that even the contradictory ideas and values are regarded as the essential features of democracies i.e. majority rule or individual rights; limited government or popular sovereignty; private property or collective ownership; participation or representation; collective or individual; socialism or capitalism. And therefore, George Bernard Shaw once proclaimed that democracy seems to be everywhere and nowhere.

Thus, modern democracy is developed throughout the 20th century. Held, wrote that the historical changes which contributed to the emergence of the modern liberal and liberal democratic thought were immensely, complicated. The struggles between the monarchs and estates over the domain of rightful authority, peasant rebellions, against the weight of excessive taxations and social obligations, the spread of trade, commerce and market relations, changes in technology, particularly, military technology, the growing influence of Renaissance, culture, religious strife, the struggle between church and state, all played a part in the making or expansion of democracy, throughout the 20th century.

This definition, by Held, gives us a broader social, political, economic and religious struggle which was going on. And together, this constitutes a system of rule which we now, call as the democratic rule. This is the result of the historical changes that contributed in the emergence of a modern liberal or liberal democratic thought.

However, those were complicated and the struggles between monarchs and estates over the domain of rightful authority, peasant rebellions against the weight of excessive taxes and social obligations, the spread of trade, commerce and market relations, changes in technology, particularly, the military technology and growing influence of Renaissance culture, religious strife and the struggle between church and state, all these played a part in the emergence of liberal thoughts or a liberal democratic thought.

Thus, democracy has resulted from wars, revolution, decolonization and economic circumstances. Many people, argued that the capitalism or the prosperous society, produced a conducive atmosphere for the functioning of democracy, whereas, if a society is economically, backward, it will lead to an undemocratic or hierarchical system of rules and governance.

There is the historical or sociological explanation for the growth and expansion of modern democracy in the 20th century and through Held, we get some of this sense. And other things, we need to keep in mind about the struggle for democracy is constantly, inclusive and ever expanding. It does not limit with and it is a kind of constant in situation.

For example, in the US, the rule was based on the people, but the people are regarded as the white people. For the blacks, to get political participation took a long time to struggle and finally, after struggle of centuries, they get their right. And even, when they get the

legal, political right, social and economic equality, took another century and still that struggle is going on. Similarly, for the women, to participate in the political process in the country also, took a long struggle. The history of the modern democracies is a result of such struggles which constantly, expand the political process.

John Dunn, coming back to this debate on democracy, argues, all states today, profess to be democracies, because democracy is what it is virtuous, for a state to be. So, all states or modern state will profess themselves to be democratic, because it is virtuous to be democratic to do. As I said that democracy has acquired a legitimizing capacity, where it is seen in the negative sense, if somebody, is called undemocratic. So, all states now, profess democracy or democratic state, because they are virtuous to be.

Thus, it becomes, easier to associate everything which is good and virtuous to democracy. And that makes the concept of democracy very confusing, so much that in 1960s, when Robert Dahl tried to study, democracy scientifically, he preferred, the term polyarchy to democracy. Because everything was seen or associated which people or the community believed as good or virtuous with democracy.

Democracy is often, interpreted in a sense, where it seems that even, the contradictory ideas and values are regarded as the essential features of democracy. For example, the majority rule or individual rights, or a limited government or popular sovereignty. Similarly, the private property or collective ownership of property, or participation that means, the direct participation or through representations, collective or the individual socialism or capitalism, these are some of the contradictory ideals. But in democratic theorization or understanding, all these contradictory elements are often, seen as the essential features of democracy.

Therefore, George Bernard Shaw, once, proclaimed that democracy seems to be everywhere and nowhere, at the same time. So, what is real democracy? When one, professes themselves or when the state professes, itself, to be a democratic state, is it really, democratic and how far, it is democratic, remains and opens up a lot of contested arguments, which questions and challenges. George Bernard Shaw gave a sense of dichotomy and confusion about the use of the term democracy, where, everyone seems to profess democracy, even when any of them are not practicing it, in reality.

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**Key Features and Characteristics of Democracy**

- The defining feature of a democracy is that in this system of rule it is the people which is regarded as supreme. According to Anthony Arblaster, democracy refers to a situation where power and authority ultimately rest with the people. Government is based on the consent of the people.
- The main basis of democracy is liberty and equality. The people enjoy maximum liberty and equality because criticism of the people is not only tolerated in this system, but it is also encouraged. In Monarchies, Dictatorships, Aristocracies and Oligarchies the people and the Opposition parties have hardly any or no say at all in matters of national importance. Special emphasis is laid on equality. And Adult franchise based on the idea of one man one vote and one vote one value is the basis of political equality in a democracy where public offices is open for everyone.
- Citizens in a democracy is given certain rights which must be protected and a functioning democracy promote diversity of opinion and interests; freedom of speech and expression; and also the right to protest and resist. An independent judiciary is the hallmark of a democratic government.
- John Austin, James Bryce, A.V. Dicey, John Seeley and A.L. Lowell classify democracy chiefly as a form of government. Lowell, for instance, argues that democracy is only an experiment in government. Seeley describes it as government in which everyone has a share. Dicey, in his famous work *Law and Opinion in England (1905)*, treated democracy as a form of government under which majority opinion determines legislation. According to him, it would be unwise in a democracy to enforce laws not approved by the people.

Now, if you look, at the key features of democracy, we find that the defining feature of democracy is in the system of rule. It is the people, who are regarded as supreme. According to Anthony Arblaster, democracy refers, to a situation, where power and authority, ultimately, rests with the people and not with the government, so that is the defining feature of democracy. It is a system of rule which regards people as the supreme authority or the holders of power. Government, therefore, is based on the consent of people.

The main basis of democracy is liberty and equality. People enjoy maximum liberty and equality because criticisms of people are not only tolerated but it is also, encouraged in the system. Democracy is a system of rule, which provides citizens with scope to criticize the actions of government, and no other autocratic or undemocratic government will allow citizens to criticize their government. Because, they must obey or their existence depends on their loyalty to the monarch or the dictator.

But democracy, as a system of rule, permits, to encourage citizens to criticize the existing government. In Monarchies, Dictatorship, Aristocracies and Oligarchies, the people and the opposition parties have hardly, any rule or not at all in matters of national importance. Whereas, in democracy, we have the scope for such criticisms and even, the rule of opposition parties is of national importance. In democracy, they emphasis on this idea of political equality, where every citizen is granted the right to vote and that

granting the right to vote do not discriminate between the educated and uneducated, literate and illiterate, propertied and not propertied.

The Adult Franchise is based on the idea of 'one man one vote and one vote one value' is the basis of political equality in a democracy, where public offices is open for. Also, this gives the other characteristic of a democratic state. Citizens in democracy is given certain rights which must be protected and the functional democracy, promotes diversity of opinions and interests, freedom of speech and expressions, and also, the right to protest and resist, and independent judiciary is the hallmark of a democratic government. These are some of the characteristics.

John Austin, James Bryce, A. V. Dicey, John Seeley and A. L. Lowell classify, democracy, chiefly, as a form of government. Lowell, for instance, argues, democracy is an experiment in government. Seeley, describes, it as government in which everyone has a share. Dicey, in his famous work, *Law and Opinion in England*, treated democracy, as a form of government under which the majority opinions determines legislation. According to him, it would be unwise in democracy, to enforce law and not approved by the people.

In all of the argumentation, democracy is seen as a system of government or as a system of rule. Now, the system of that rule is based on the people and their participation, and Dicey goes on to explain, even the legislation and the law which do not have the approval of people, it will be unwise, to enforce them on the people. The sanction or the approval of people is necessary, for making of the government, laws and implementing those laws in a society.



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➤ As a process democracy has an expansionist dimension too. That is to say that it has emerged from a limited and restricted form of government to ever inclusive and ever expanding form of government, i.e. vote were restricted to white, male, educated and propertied but now it includes female, unpropertied, illiterate and marginalized such as Dalits.

**Direct and Indirect Democracy**

➤ Modern democracy largely works through its representative institutions. In order to understand its working it is essential to distinguish between direct and indirect democracy. **Direct Democracy** means the rule by the people of a state, town or other political community, by means of direct participation. Some examples of direct democracy are found in ancient Greek city-states, ancient India, Gram Sabhas as so on. This system can obviously operate in an area having a small number of citizens who can periodically meet at one place. Today when large and complex societies have emerged and when area is very extensive, direct democracy is impracticable. This system now prevails only in the four Cantons of Switzerland.

➤ **Indirect Democracy:** In a Representative or Indirect Democracy the will of the state is formulated and expressed not directly by the people themselves, but by their representatives to whom they delegate the power of deliberation and decision-making. *John Stuart Mill* has said in this regard that "Indirect or representative democracy is one in which the whole people or some numerous portion of them exercise the governing power through deputies periodically elected by themselves". Another writer *Bluntschli* has said, "In the representative democracy the rule is that the people govern through its officials; while it legislates, and controls the administration through its representatives". This type of government was established in England in the seventeenth century. In France, it was established in 1830 and in Italy in 1948. In Germany it was established after the First World War according to Weimer Constitution. Again this system was established in West Germany after the Second World War. Today this system is seen in many countries like Japan, Sri Lanka, India, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the United States of America, West Germany, Italy, France, Holland, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Austria and Belgium. In modern times, the term 'democracy' is also used as a synonym of 'representative democracy'.

The other dimension or feature of democracy is it is an ever expanding process. So, democracy, in modern times, is emerged from a limited and restricted government, and from that limited and restricted government, it becomes, ever inclusive and ever expanding form of government. Let us take the example, of this vote, when modern democracy started the right to vote were given only, to the white male or educated member of the community, or the educated or propertied member of the community. But there was also the struggle for expanding or making democracy more inclusive. It includes, the female, unpropertied, illiterate, marginalized, such as Dalits.

The other dimensions, most crucial for democracy is it started with a limited and restricted form of government and now, it is ever expanding, or ever inclusive and those groups were excluded from the process of governance or participation in the decision making. Therefore, it includes newer and newer groups, such as, female unpropertied, illiterate or the marginalized sections of the society. Now, very briefly, we will discuss about the direct and indirect forms of democracy and finally, the procedural and substantive notions of democracy.

Modern democracy, largely, works through its representatives. People in a large country with a vast number of people cannot take direct participation in day-to-day, basis in governing themselves. They govern through their representatives and the representatives are accountable to the people and this form of government is called indirect government.

But we also, have the instances, where people directly, participate in the making of collective decisions. Thus, modern democracy, largely, works through its representatives in situations.

In order to understand its functioning, it is essential to distinguish between the direct and indirect democracy. So, the direct democracy means, the rule by the people of state or other political community, by means of direct participation. People go and participate in the decision-making themselves and not through their representatives. Some examples, of direct democracy are found in ancient Greek city-states also. In ancient India, some Buddhist sanghas or republics did practice this form of direct democracy.

The Gram Sabha, in modern times, in the village panchayat is the example of direct democracy, where every male member who has got the right to vote is also member of the Gram Sabha. Gram Sabha, is taking collective decisions is the example of direct democracy in contemporary India. This system can obviously, operate in an area having small number of citizens, who can periodically, meet at one place. Today, when large and complex societies have emerged, when area is very vast and extensive, the direct democracy is impracticable or impossible, and this system, means, the direct democracy prevails only in the four cantons of Switzerland.

Indirect democracy is a representative democracy or in indirect democracy, the will of the state is formulated and expressed not directly, by the people themselves, but by their representatives. The people governed themselves in indirect democracy through their representatives. John Stuart Mill, said in this regard that indirect or representative democracy is one in which the whole people or numerous portion of them exercise the governing power through deputies, elected, periodically. So, this idea of periodic elections of the representatives of people is to ensure that the representatives are here to represent the will of people or the voices of people.

Another writer, Bluntschil, said about the representative democracy, the rule is that the people are governed through its officials, while it legislates and controls administration through its representative. So, it is basically, a modern nation-state which is a democratic state, where we represent the ministers. But we govern ourselves in a day-to-day basis, by recruiting the officials. These officials, which we call them as bureaucrats, who are permanent executives in a sense, we do not elect them, periodically, but we recruit them.

But overall, this bureaucracy or the officials, functions in the overall supervision of the elected representatives, like ministers.

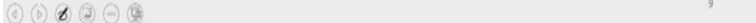
Bluntschli, characterized this representative democracy, where people are governed through its officials, while it legislates and controls the administration through its representatives, like the MPs or MLAs that we elect. This type of government was established in England in the 17th century or in France in 1830 or Italy in 1941. In Germany, it was established after the First World War, according to, the Weimer constitution. Again, this system was established in the West Germany after the Second World War.

And today, this system is seen in many countries like Japan, Sri Lanka, India, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, United States of America, West Germany, Italy, France, Holland, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Austria and Belgium. In modern times, the term democracy is used as a synonym of two representatives. So, this form of government prevails in most of the countries, in modern times.

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**Procedural and Substantive forms of Democracy**

- There are broadly speaking two ways of defining democracy – Procedural and Substantive. Procedural democracy is about free & fair election, fair competition among political parties, political equality. Where as Substantive democracy is about a system of government whereby the people's will is included into the program and functioning of the government.
- **Procedural democracy** is a democracy in which the people or citizens of the state have less influence than in traditional liberal democracies. This type of democracy is characterized by voters choosing to elect representatives in free elections. **Substantive democracy** is a form of democracy in which the outcome of elections is representative of the people. In other words, substantive democracy is a form of democracy that functions in the interest of the governed. Although a country may allow all citizens of age to vote, this characteristic does not necessarily qualify it as a substantive democracy. In substantive democracy the general population plays a real role in carrying out its political affairs i.e., the state is not merely set up as a democracy but it functions as one as well. Democracies may have elections (procedural) but may lack the rule of law and civil liberties (the substance of democracies). This is common in many dictatorships where "elections" are held and the dictator is conveniently elected. It's easy to have laws and a constitution (the framework or procedures) which proclaim democracy as the guiding principle of government, but that doesn't mean a country actually operates democratically (that the country is democratic in substance).
- All substantive democracies are procedural democracies, but not all procedural democracies are substantive democracies (ex: election but no independent judiciary + no civil liberties).



Finally, the procedural and substantive forms of democracy, they are broadly, speaking two ways of defining democracy. One is procedural and the other is substantive. Procedural democracy is about free and fair election, fair competition among political parties and political equality. And so, the procedural democracy is about a set of

procedures followed by any country, such as free and fair election, fair competition among the political parties and political equality.

Whereas, substantive democracy is about a system of government, whereby, the people will be included into the programmes and for the functioning of the government. It may be possible that a country has procedural democracy, but it lacks the substantive democracy. It is also, possible that it may lack both and yet it may process, itself as a democracy. Suppose, if a country is governed by one party, and there is no competition in election. So, what kind of democracy that country will have. Thus, those are some of the challenges which we will discuss in the next lecture.

But in the procedural democracy, we understand and there are certain procedures such as free and fair election, fair competition among the political parties and political equality, freedom of press is regarded as the characteristics of a procedural democracy. Whereas, the substantive democracy talks about, whether the functioning of the government or the programmes of the governance, reflects the will of people or not or empower them or strengthen the will of the people or not. So, procedural democracy is a democracy, in which people or citizens of the state have less influence than in the traditional, liberal democracy.

This type of democracy is characterized by voters choosing to elect representatives in free election. Substantive democracy is a form of democracy, in which the outcome of election is representative of the people. In other words, the substantive democracy is a form of democracy which functions in the interests of the governed. Although, a country may allow all citizens of particular age, to vote, but this characteristic does not necessarily, qualified, as a substantive democracy. So, merely, by fulfilling those procedural criteria, a country cannot be regarded as a democratic country.

In substantive democracy, the general population, face a real role in carrying out its political affairs. For example, the state is not merely, set up as democracy, but it functions as one. It is not just enough, to have free, fair and periodic elections, but it is also, necessary, to ensure that the decisions are taken through discussions and there are popular participation in decision-making. The decision is taken in the interests of the governed and also, it reflects the will of the people.

Democracy may have elections or procedural, but it may lack the rule of law and civil liberty which is involved in the substantive democracy. So, this is common, in many dictatorships, where elections are held or even rigged and the dictator is conveniently, elected. It is easy, to have law and constitution, the framework or the procedures which proclaim democracy as the guiding principle of government, but that does not mean a country, actually, operates democratically, or the country is democratic in substance. So, that is something, about the substantial notion of democracy which is far more, than merely, the procedural democracy.

All substantive democracy, therefore, are procedural democracy. In all the substantive democracy, we have free and fair elections, besides, the functioning of government on the basis of will of the people, but not all procedural democracies are substantive democracy. So, election, may be held but there will not be independent judiciary and there will not be any civil liberties.

It is possible, to have a procedural democracy without a substantive form of democracy, but all substantive democratic countries are countries which also, follows the nature of procedural democracy. For example, the free and fair election, open competition for positions or independent judiciary, or the free press, of the procedural notion of democracy.

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#### References

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3. Barry, Norman P. (1989). *An Introduction to Modern Political Theory*. United Kingdom: Palgrave Macmillan.
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That is all for today's lecture. You can refer to some of these books like Janaki Srinivasan's, "Democracy" in Rajeev Bhargava and Ashok Acharya's *Political Theory: An Introduction*. And these are also, the books which we have been referring to in other topics, which you should look at, if you want to study more on these topics which we have covered in this lecture. That is all for today's lecture. Please, write to us, your feedback, queries and comments. We will be happy to respond.

Thanks for listening. Thank you all.