

Democracy

Democracy is very important concept in modern governance.

In the 1970s, Robert-Dahl, an American political scientist, pointed that true democracy cannot be seen yet anywhere in the world and it is something we must aim for in future.

This is still a reality.

Democracy is not governing on the basis of people's will.

There can be no policy that everyone can be convinced of.

If you are aiming to "listen to the opinions of many people and decide what everyone can agree on", you will not be able to do anything after all.

Democracy is not governing by many people.

Persons involved in polity are small in number always in history.

Even in democratic system, governance can only be oligarchy as formality. Democracy of society which has many members cannot help forming representative system accompanied by elections. "Iron law of oligarchy" that Mihealth said is correct in terms of number of superficial persons who have political power. (For instance, even referendum is not a system of direct democracy either. Voting about topics, not people, is somewhat close to the will of the people, but this is also a kind of indirect democracy because people have no choice but to choose the conclusions packaged by professional politicians and cannot propose alternatives.)

Therefore, not only economists such as Pareto, Schumpeter and Hayek but also jurist such as Kelsen who put highest value on liberty believe that "democracy means that congressmen are elected by people, and after choosing, people should obey the chosen minority and should not involved in politics more than that."

Actually, such opinion is requiring people to give up on politics and make people overlook the importance of ingenuity which make election system effective for true democracy.

Democracy is a political system in which you don't know who will be the opinion leader. It is a procedural principle that set arena of discussion or fight.

We have the principle of separation of powers to suppress the concentration of power in many kinds (anything), also we have the principle of democracy to suppress the concentration of power in long term (anytime).

The essence of democracy lies in the ease of change (replacement) of politicians and policymakers and the wide range and variability of candidates.

The essence of democracy is the changeability of opinion leaders. Any person have possibility of becoming an opinion leader no matter where comes from in true democratic society.

The same person can't always make the right decision. Persons who are facing the problem are likely to make better decision. But we don't know in advance who is the person most committed to the problem. We don't know where the right decision comes from.

That's why we need a system that allows "the person" to come from any place, and a system that is easy to constantly correct our judgments.

History of mankind has changed so that human and their society can change easily.

Therefore, it can be said that democracy is the most evolved form of politics.

The level of democracy is measured by how many people can participate in the decision making and enforcement of political matters.

The level of democracy is measured not by the number of people actually governing, but by the possibility of the rulers being replaced (Is the concentration of power avoided?), and the possibility the opinions of governed person are being heard (Are the mistakes in judgment due to the indisting and lack of information of a small number of rulers prevented?).

It cannot be digitally distinguished as "It is democratic if the the rulers are elected by unversal suffrage. Otherwise it is undemocratic."

For example, even in the unversal suffrage, there is a big difference between an election in which "if you keep what the boss of a political party or region says and show the attitude that you are listening to the petitions of the electorate, you can be elected" and an election in which "you cannot be elected unless you are a person who seriously thinks about what the citizens really want and what should be done for the citizens". There is a big difference between the petition right which has no choice but to ask the person in power to hear the wishe of a general public and the petition right which has the means to monitor rulers' actions and expel them from public office.

The Roman Empire also had a democratic aspect in the sense that it had set up an opportunity to become emperor for some people. However, democratic level was low in it because the candidates were limited and a lot of things had to be bet to become a person in power.

We can say modern democracy is a more advanced system because we don't have to bet too heavy latch to make a change in society and we can change opinion leaders peacefully.

Democracy is not determining what benefits people most.

Can we tell what is the greatest happiness of the greatest number?

What makes you feel happy depends on personal feeling. We cannot say that the maximum majority becomes happy when democracy works to the maximum.

The purpose of politics is not to make people happy, but to make them alive. Excessive demands on politics lead to irresponsibility.

Democracy is one of appearance of negative approach.

It is a principle to eliminate injustice, not a principle to choose and recommend what is justice.

Jjustice means the maximum lives in limited conditions. Justice is also a status in that various principles are properly balanced.

But it is very difficult to accurately determine where is good balance.

However, it will be easier to find that "what is injustice" - balance is clearly lost - and it will be evitable.

Popper rebuilt the Utilitarianism as "minimizing heartbreak, not maximizing happiness." Fuller argues that "you can know (reach an agreement) what is plainly injustice without declaring what is justice." Hayek also says that " we can approach truth and justice only by continuing to eliminate fallacies and injustices." ✖6

For example, when 100 people are involved in a catastrophe, we will try to help them as much as possible. Making it maximum is justice. But no one will know how many people can survive at the time. Is it 100 or 53 or 21? On the other hand, injustice is annihilation through internal conflict and so on. This will be clear to see.

But what is injustice changes from time to time. It is quite possible that what is good now is not so after a moment.

Therefore, it is important to make decisions changeable.

Democracy is the preparation to make such decisions changing easier, and the creation of a system that makes it easier for correct opinions to come out.

***6 All of the requirements must be completed to say "It is OOO", but it is enough to say "it is not OOO" when only one of the requirements is missing. Of course, the latter is easier.**

Democracy is also an application of the Falsificationism

Justice is good balance, and good balance changes along to situation. The correctness of opinion will be highly guaranteed by the fact that it was selected in situation where other opinions are easy to appear. When an election is held in the presence of many candidate, there will be high probability that elected candidate has right stuff of the role.

Therefore democracy is also about paying attention to the minority opinions of the periphery and picking them up properly rather than the opinions of the central majority.

It also admonishes and warns the current majority and opinion leaders.

The majority can't imagine them being oppressed, so they can say blunt reply with no care. A society they can imagine is democratic truly.

In that sense, these underwritten are sign of the democratic level for instance.

Can minorities be protected from disadvantages in regulations or inequality in redistribution?

Is it quick and easy to set safeguards for the needy?

Is there little destruction of the socially vulnerable groups when policy changes?

The real enemy of democracy is not kings or emperors or local bosses or the systems to which they belong. It's what lurks in our minds.

The conquerors tend to build forts that are difficult for the outsiders to enter to protect their blessed status. When some groups go through and defeat the conquerors they will do the same as new authorities.

This is selfish pursuit of freedom at the expense of the freedoms of others. This is distorted desire for self-esteem and self-justification. This is intension of winner to show up his victory as if scheduled. It twist the facts eventually. This is a denial of democracy, something that may be the essence of evil.

Come to ourselves, don't we want to enter a small number of dominant community of excellent persons, and to wield power while being protected as a member of it? Don't we want to cheer to authority and get along in group (or class) with wealth and title? Or don't we think that a life receiving special protection from such people is not bad? And are't we shutting eyes to their power or status or wealth stands on the sacrifice of the outsiders who cannot be part of the limited and blessed group?

These attitudes should be called "oligarchism" though there are differences of degree.

Oligarchism is a cancer that lives deep in our mind and continues to assert its legitimacy.

The greatest weapon of oligarchism is that it is hidden. It has survived in politics and the economy and it is one of the major causes of the blockade in many phase today.

Democracy is a way of controlling ourselves so as not to enter such a wrong path.

It is an attitude to try to create a society in that you will not be so troubled even if you become the outsider of the group which have power, and you will not be difficult to re-enter the group. It is an effort to suppress blind faith to

authority and induction by profit, and to make it easier to change the opinions of individuals.

This might be the status that "Veil of ignorance" that Rawls says is covered, and the society in which justice is rather easily achieved.

In addition, there are two main aspects in which oligarchism impairs the possibility of replacement which is the essence of democratic system. One is hierarchic division and the other is exclusion in the first place.

The former is apt to be seen in the society where too varied people gather (such as huge empire), and the latter is likely to be seen in the society with too much similarity (such as feudal village).

Freedom and equality are easily suppressed in both case. ✖8

On the other hand, in a group of intermediate size (such as nation states or small empires), democracy is relatively easy to achieve.

The convergence of regions into nation state in modern history may have been a background for making it easier to adopt democracy.

***8 In here, " empire" does not mean "the country governed by the emperor", but rather a social group that recognizes the unification as long as some important elements (language, religion, etc.) are common even if the ethnic groups are different.**

It is a concept contrasted with "nation state" which has biological, cultural, economic and mental bonds.

Even if a country with a small population or land is an "empire" when it consists of multiple ethnic groups.

Empire and nation state are typical examples, so to speak, actual status of states are fluid.

After being unified as a multiracial empire, with cultural and economic unity gradually cultivated and democracy consciously introduced, some empires become similar to nation state.

On the other hand, nation state can be unable to govern in unity if economic disparities widen and the minimum level of similarity is failed and internal conflicts become intense.

When we examine the idea of democracy, the problem of political mechanism comes to light.

For example, it is necessary to strengthen public oversight for government, legislature and judiciary.

It is also necessary to remove as much as possible the influence of hidden power in the selection of civil servants and public officials.

It is also useful to give political power to local governments as much as possible. This makes it easier for society to have diversity, which is the soil of democracy. Even if it is a minority at the national level, it may be a majority at the local level. And you can also vote by foot.

In the following chapters, I would like to review the basic design of polity concretely from the viewpoint of realizing the modern governance philosophy including democracy.