

Piper Kim
ENGL 301 98A
8 June 2022

Assignment 1.3 — Definitions

Introduction:

Dear Writing Team,

In this assignment, I will explain the term *democracy* to non-technical readers through three different definitions: (1) parenthetical definition, (2) sentence definition, and (3) expanded definition. This relatively complex term is used throughout history to describe governance, and with this assignment, I hope my group members can fully understand what *democracy* is.

Term: Democracy

Parenthetical definition:

Democracy (a system of government) is typically run by elected representatives through the concept of *majority rules* (greater number exercises greater power).

Sentence definition:

Democracy is a representative system of government where people elect representatives to govern in the people's name while having to maintain order and balance, civil liberties, media freedom, liberty and the pursuit of happiness

Expanded definitions:

Etymology:

Democracy is a system of government governed by the people in which the sovereign power is vested in the people as a whole exercising power directly or by elected officials. The word *democracy* derives from the Greek words “demos” and “kratos”. “Demos” means “common people; district” while “kratos” means “rule, strength”. The two words together form “demokratia” which is described as a “popular government” in Greek.

History:

The term democracy was invented by the Greeks during the classical age, meaning “rule of the people.” In ancient Athens, the Greeks (only free men, excluding women, children, and slaves as they were not considered citizens at the time and therefore could not vote) were the first political people in the history to create States purely as communities of citizens in which the administration and the making of policy were the right and the duty of these citizens. The establishment of democracy in Greece is generally associated with the original founding of Western civilization. In fact, individuals attempted to leverage these early democratic experiments into a new template for post-monarchical political organization. Years later,

beginning in the 18th century the establishment of the democracy in the United States is considered the world's first constitutional democracy, although suffrage, such as women's suffrage, was restricted in the 20th century. Today, there are democratic governments in many parts of the world. For example, North and South America, Australia, and Europe are mostly ruled by democratic criteria such as Free and fair elections, civil liberties, and the rule of law guaranteeing rights to all.

Negation:

There are many other types of systems of government in the world other than democracy. Some other common types of governance include monarchy, dictatorship, anarchy, totalitarianism, and more. In this section, I will briefly explain these forms of government to clear any misunderstandings. Monarchy was historically one of the most common forms of government, meaning that there is one head of state. In this system, a king or queen rules the country for as long as they are alive. The crown is inherited, usually passed down through generations of the family. Dictatorship, on the other hand, is the opposite of democracy. In a dictatorship, a single individual has gained power through force and everyone has to follow their policies (the people have little to no voice in this system). Similar to dictatorship is a totalitarian government where a group of people has control of the people. The regime maintains complete control of the country by not allowing any other people to form a political party. Lastly, anarchy is a type of governance that does not *actually* have a functioning government. A country that has anarchy typically experiences civil unrest and war. All of these are other types of government systems that could be misunderstood as democracy. Democratic countries stand in opposition to nations that are either ruled by a monarchy, dictatorship, anarchy, or totalitarianism. However, it is clear that democracy is a representative system where people elect other people to govern in the people's name.

A common misconception of democracy is that once a civilian government is elected by the people the political system has reached its end. However, many elements are needed to form a democratic government — how the government effectively promotes public good, which consists of freedom and good governance. Without the former proper governance, democracy could relapse into despotism (tyranny, absolute power), without the latter it degenerates into mobocracy (ruled by the mass).

The goals of democracy are listed:

- Effective participation
- Citizen control of the agenda: citizens control what the government concerns itself with
- Maintain order and balance
- Provide for the common good of society
- Protect life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness
- Inclusion: include and extend rights to all people subject to its laws

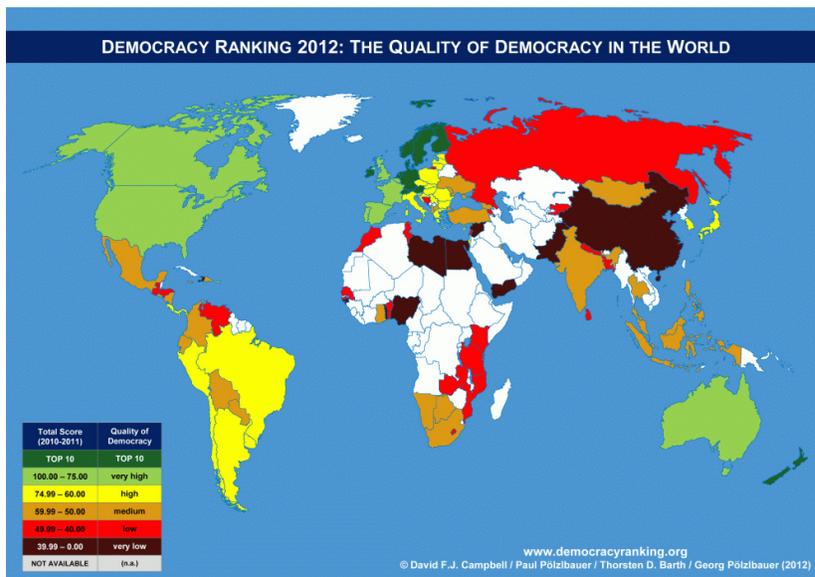
Visuals & Examples:

There are many ways democracy is shown locally and nationally. For example, the local or national government may hold a public gathering in which citizens can discuss their opinions on current or emerging policies and proposals. Another example is the government holding a referendum (a general vote by the electorate). When the government proposes a constitutional amendment or a new law, the citizens are allowed to vote for or against it. Essentially, democracy gives power to the people. In figure 1, an image is shown of a crowd of people holding a dice that displays two options “yes” or “no”. The dice are in the hands of the people which emphasizes the power they hold. Figure 2 highlights how democratic a country is on a 100-point scale. Notable countries in the 2012 data show that the United States and Canada are both highly democratic.

Figure 1:



Figure 2:



Works Cited

“Democratic Institutions.” *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., www.britannica.com/topic/democracy/Democratic-institutions.

Ehrenberg, Victor. “Origins of Democracy.” *Historia: Zeitschrift Für Alte Geschichte*, vol. 1, no. 4, 1950, pp. 515–48. *JSTOR*, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4434319>. Accessed 6 Jun. 2022.

(Figure 1) Longley, Robert. "Representative Democracy: Definition, Pros, and Cons." ThoughtCo, Aug. 3, 2021, [thoughtco.com/representative-democracy-definition-pros-cons-4589561](https://www.thoughtco.com/representative-democracy-definition-pros-cons-4589561).