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The History of Democracy: From Ancient Athens to Present-Day

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Abstract

From its beginnings in ancient Athens to its current uses, democracy—as a type of government—has seen major changes. This article looks at the philosophical roots, changes in institutions, and historical growth of democracy, as well as the problems that have come up over time. It talks about Athens' direct democracy, Rome's republican history, the rise of representative democracies during the Enlightenment, and how democratic ideas are now spread all over the world. Major events, famous thinkers, and turning points in the history of democracy are used in this study to show how strong and flexible democratic institutions are. This research also looks at modern issues like populism, digital democracy, and the integrity of elections to figure out the future of democratic government in a world that is always connected.

Keywords: Democracy; Ancient Athens; Representative Government; Political Philosophy; Electoral Systems; Democratic Institutions; Governance; Political Evolution; Digital Democracy; Populism.

Introduction

Democracy has emerged as a highly prosperous political framework during the 20th and 21st centuries. In a democratic government, individuals possess the right to freely select their preferred religion. This is due to the democratic system's provision of equal rights for all citizens under the law. The system known as Demokrita, which denoted governance by the populace, was the original incarnation of democracy.

According to Schumpeter (1947), democracy is characterized by the people's ability to exercise their choice in approving or rejecting the individuals who would govern them (1947, 2). This statement promotes the implementation of electoral processes to select leaders who accurately represent the preferences of the people. According to Abraham Lincoln, democracy can be defined as a form of governance that is characterized by its foundation in the collective will and participation of the citizenry, ultimately serving their interests (Lincoln, 1862).

The introduction of democracy into the Athenian city-state occurred during the period of Cleisthenes' reconstruction in 508–7 BC, signifying its significant and comprehensive adoption. Simultaneously, Pericles emerged as a prominent political figure during the period spanning from 461 to 429, before experiencing a temporary decline in influence following Athens' defeat by the Oligarchic city-state of Sparta. According to

Roper (2012), the Peloponnesian War concluded in 404. The successful implementation of democracy on a global scale has yet to be achieved.

In a broad context, democracy functions as a form of governance that upholds and preserves all liberties rather than solely encompassing systems that make decisions without the agreement of their citizens. Democracy is widely seen as a system of governance wherein all individuals are expected to uphold a sense of equilibrium through the fulfillment of specific responsibilities and commitments. Democracy, as a political system, primarily emphasizes the core principles of defending human rights and ensuring accountability to the populace, typically through the framework of representative governance. The safeguarding of people holds paramount importance within the context of democracy, as democratic governance places significant emphasis on upholding the fundamental rights of individuals and ensuring their non-deprivation.

Chapter 1

1.0. HISTORY OF DEMOCRACY (ATHENS)

The historical development and origins of democracy can be attributed to ancient civilizations, notably ancient Greece. The concept of democracy originated in ancient Athens through the contributions of its esteemed citizens. Franz Steiner posits that the ancient Greeks held the distinction of being the earliest political entities in human history. They achieved this status by establishing states that functioned exclusively as societies of citizens, wherein the authority to govern and formulate policies rested solely with these citizens (Steiner, 1950, p. 1).

However, according to another scholarly publication, it has been observed that approximately 2500 years ago in Ancient Greece, the inhabitants of the city-state of Athens devised a distinct method of decision-making that deviated from the autocratic practices prevalent in earlier times (Swirkonline, 2015, p. 1). The establishment of the city-state of Athens led to the development of a decision-making system often known as democracy in the field of governance. All individuals residing inside the city-state of Athens possessed the right to participate in the electoral process and actively engage in the governance of their polity.

From a historical perspective, Athens holds the distinction of being the first city-state to grant common citizens the opportunity to participate in governmental positions and legal proceedings. According to Swirkonline (2015), every resident of Athens possessed the eligibility to participate in the Congress, where they were entitled to engage in discourse and exercise their voting rights to establish legislation for the city-state.

During that period, women were devoid of rights as their inclusion in the democratic framework was absent. Another expert has highlighted that the genesis of democracy may be traced back to three ancient civilizations, namely the Roman, Greek, and Persian civilizations (Top Document Film, 2007, p. 1). The concept of freedom, as proposed by the ancient Greeks, is characterized by a finite duration. Professor Paul Cartledge argues that the origins of Athenian democracy in the fourth and fifth centuries BC can be attributed to Solon, a prominent figure who thrived around 600 BCE (Cartledge, 2011, p. 2).

Solon initially expressed skepticism towards the concept of democracy, as he held reservations about power being vested in the hands of the general populace. However, it is noteworthy that his subsequent implementation of a comprehensive constitutional reform and rectification package served as a foundational framework for the eventual establishment and advancement of democracy, a process that unfolded over a span of more than a century (Cartledge, 2011, 2). Furthermore, the democratic system in Athens consisted of three fundamental institutions, namely the "ekklesia," which served as the supreme governing body of Athens.

The ekklesia provided an inclusive platform for participation, as everyone who was a member of the demos, referring to the approximately 40,000 adult male citizens, was granted access to the ekklesia's gatherings.

These meetings, held forty times annually, took place in a hillside auditorium located west of the Acropolis (Abdulmaseeh, 2015, p. 1). The second crucial establishment, known as the Council of Five Hundred, comprised 500 individuals, with fifty representatives from each of the ten Athenian tribes. These members served on the board for a duration of one year (Abdulmaseeh, 2015, p. 2).

The system was devised by Cleisthenes, the prominent figure at the helm of the city-state of Athens. According to the scholarly work of Karen Carr, it has been observed that the success of democracy in Athens led to its adoption or selection as the preferred system of administration by numerous other governments (Carr, 2016, p. 2).

Following its initial dissemination, the practice in question became prevalent throughout the Mediterranean region. However, it experienced a significant decline due to the actions of the Roman Empire in the first century B.C. Nevertheless, several locations, such as Athens, persisted in employing democratic systems to deliberate upon local affairs for an extended period (Carr, 2016, p. 3). Moreover, the inception of democracy may be traced back to the period when the Athenian democracy under Pericles was observed and analyzed by political thinkers and philosophers. The inception of Athenian democracy can be characterized as a gradual transformation towards a system that could be classified as an aristocracy.

According to Herodotus, the concept of a single individual holding power and being considered the most capable, despite the absence of democratic principles and practices in Ancient Greece, has continued to serve as a motivating factor and exert influence on politicians and governments throughout history (2). In all honesty, the advent of democracy by Cleisthenes effectively mitigated and eradicated the prevailing political disparity between the aristocratic members and the lower classes, comprising the Ancient Greek military personnel and naval forces.

It is significant to note in this context that appointments rather than elections determined the makeup of the 500-member parliament in Athens. During the historical period in question, it can be argued that an unstructured and unpredictable raffle system exhibited a higher degree of democratic principles compared to an election process. The Dikasteria constituted the third crucial institution. According to Abdulmaseeh (2015, p. 3), daily, a random selection process is employed to choose over 500 male residents above the age of thirty to serve as jurors within the democratic framework.

1.1. DEMOCRACY IN THE MIDDLE AGES (ROMAN).

Historically, it has been observed that the lifespan of Greek democracies tends to be quite short. The Roman precursor to Greek concepts and the comprehensive framework that initially appeared to adopt and advocate Athenian democratic values: Furthermore, Swirlkoline (2015) asserts that democracy was absent during the medieval period, with Christianity being the predominant and originally embraced religion. Consequently, numerous democratic concepts were comprehended and adhered to by a significant portion of the populace (p. 2).

During the medieval period, Christianity espoused the belief and doctrine that all beings were endowed with equal creation. From a historical perspective, it may be seen that during the early 5th century, the inhabitants of Rome achieved the privilege of electing their rulers through a strategy of civil noncompliance. In the year 287 BC, after a span of two centuries, the concept of granting the decisions made through popular elections formal recognition, and legal standing was established (Jones, 2016, p. 2).

1.2. THE ADVANCES OF DEMOCRACY IN THE 20TH CENTURY

The emergence of the initial democratic systems in the modern age may be traced back to the aftermath of the revolutions in France and the United States of America (USA). According to Swirkonline, the United States

Revolution is a significant historical event that represents a pivotal moment in the development of democracy. According to Swirkonline (2015), the initial stage was the formulation of the document known as the Declaration of Liberation (p. 3).

Following the uprising and subsequent coup d'état in 19th-century France, a mild introduction of democracy took place in Europe. In several nations, the nominal preservation of despotism and despotism was observed, although, in practice, democracy assumed dominance. In historical terms, the contextual backdrop of the event can be traced back to the conclusion of the German occupation of Denmark amid the Second World War. This circumstance was elucidated by Jakobsen (2010, p. 319) as follows: "The global community was abruptly awakened and found itself in a state of astonishment, witnessing a newfound embrace of democratic principles."

The Democratic Revolution has had a profound impact on the efficiency of the current system. This revolution was a remarkable event that affected the entire world, encompassing Asia, Europe, and the Americas. Fortunately, it recognized that the United States democratic revolution was particularly noteworthy following the disruption and turmoil in Geneva. This revolution marked the initial successful proclamation of the principle that the power of the people should derive from those they govern.

Apart from the French Revolution, the most significant revolutions of the 18th and 19th centuries are as follows: The impact of the revolution on the sphere of Western civilization or education was influenced, to some extent, by the knowledge it provided, which disproportionately affected Western civilization. Additionally, the involvement of the American Reformation in the European conflict over American self-governance contributed to the heightened political complexity and challenges faced by England, Holland, France, and Ireland. Significantly, the conflicts resulted in the establishment of "Grattan's Parliament" in Ireland in the year 1782. The development of modern democracies in the 20th century can be attributed to a variety of factors, including conflict, upheaval, economic conditions, and the establishment of independent or sovereign entities.

In Larry Diamond's analysis, he asserts that with the global expansion of democracy over the last thirty years, there has been a shift in focus among politicians, scholars, activists, and aid administrators. Rather than questioning the causes behind these transitions, there is now a greater emphasis on understanding the characteristics and implications of this new age (Diamond, 2014, p. 2).

Political scientists and programs with a political science foundation have both analyzed and studied the examination of democracy in European nations during the 20th century in detail.

According to Robert (2016), there was significant growth in the overall number of countries with the requisite political framework of a democratic representative system throughout the 20th century. Nevertheless, the military's defeat was diminished in significance due to the Allies' decisive dominance during World War 1. In the aftermath of the Second World War, Italy and Germany emerged as victorious powers. Subsequently, between 1990 and 1991, the Soviet Union saw a significant political and economic decline, which can be characterized as a catastrophic event.

The advancement of democracy in the 20th and 21st centuries was closely linked to economic prosperity, progress, and satisfaction. This is because the establishment of market economies has played a significant role in facilitating the diffusion of democracy in various ways.

As the economic well-being of significant portions of the global population progressively and consistently improved. According to Robert (2016), there is a positive correlation between the dissemination of economic wealth throughout a nation and the likelihood of successful democratic governance. Financial contentment has had a significant influence on the proliferation of democracy during the 20th and 21st centuries since it fosters improvements in both living standards and national growth.

Furthermore, according to Max Roser (2016), the progression of democratic systems in the 20th century encountered hindrances and disruptions primarily due to the conflicts arising from World War II. However, it

is noteworthy that the prevalence of democracies experienced a substantial increase after the downfall of the Soviet Union in 1989. Since that era, the system has been regarded as the most optimal type of governance, well-suited for both the populace and their elected representatives to administer and manage the global community.

According to *The Economist*, it can be observed that democracies successfully established themselves under challenging circumstances in Germany over the latter half of the 20th century, despite the traumatic aftermath of Nazism. South Africa, a country that experienced racial discrimination in the 1990s, and India, the nation with the highest number of impoverished people (*The Economist*, 2016, p. 5).

The revolution can be understood as a transformative process that facilitated the establishment of self-governance and the official power of certain nations, such as America. The inquiry pertains to the potential evolution of democratic ideology and ideas across history. From a political perspective, the concept of democracy has made significant progress since its origins in ancient Greece. The ideology of democracy was founded on the principles of actuality and implementation. The theory of democracy has changed over time about the notions of equality and individual liberty.

In general, the democracy of the United States of America serves as a prime exemplification of how democratic systems have evolved, with numerous esteemed American individuals working towards rectifying inherent flaws within the system. In a candid assessment, it can be observed that the ideology of democracy underwent a gradual evolution in the recognition of female rights. Initially, the inclusion of women's rights was absent, but over a span of three decades, significant strides were made in including these rights. This development has rendered the democratic system more contemporary and suitable for adoption on a global scale.

However, the notion promotes the idea of granting equal rights to individuals regardless of their race or gender. Through the process of study, it is evident that democracy as an ideology has undergone significant transformations over time, resulting in notable improvements. One of the fundamental objectives of democracy is to ensure the fulfillment of the preferences of the majority, which is why it is predicated on the principle of majority rule. In a broad context, the quality of democracy undergoes continual transformation, often referred to as development or expansion. The adoption of this theory by various nations can be viewed as a positive advancement for democracy. Many countries perceive democracy as a legitimate system of governance that fosters social cohesion and addresses the socioeconomic disparities between affluent and impoverished societies worldwide.

Chapter 2

2.0. DEMOCRACY AND ITS IMPACT.

Democracy refers to a political system in which individuals possess the fundamental rights of freedom of expression, freedom of religion, and political equality. However, a government must be maintained and sustained by those who value both independence and liberty rather than exclusively by a privileged few who hold positions of control within the government.

However, the primary objective is to establish a government that is devoid of any form of favoritism, unfairness, or partisanship, which would otherwise contravene the legal framework and established norms of the nation. It is evident that in the context of a democratic system of governance, individuals must be subject to specific responsibilities and constraints. However, democracy should prioritize the safeguarding of human rights and be answerable to its populace, typically through mechanisms of popular representation. The safeguarding of human rights constitutes a significant imperative within a democratic framework, necessitating that governments ensure their citizens are not deprived of fundamental freedoms.

Firstly, it is argued that democracy provides safeguarding measures for all segments of society, including marginalized and vulnerable groups, against the tyranny and humiliation imposed by powerful individuals or governing bodies. These rights assert that the entitlements of individuals are of such paramount importance that they supersede all other considerations. Some individuals argue that democracy does not inherently fully ensure the protection of human rights.

This is exemplified in certain democratic nations, such as the United States and Belgium, where economic and social rights are not fully guaranteed. While governments in these countries may offer a range of welfare benefits encompassing food, shelter, healthcare, and education, citizens generally lack the legal right to take legal action against the government for violations of these benefits.

The researcher holds a dissenting viewpoint about their assertions, as researcher contend that the establishment of human rights and democracy inside nations is causally linked to the promotion of peace and consensus. The reason for asserting this statement is that democracy is a form of governance in which authority is vested in the people, who exercise it directly or through elected representatives, with the goal of serving the interests and welfare of the populace. There exist two distinct categories of human rights: civil and political rights and economic, social, and cultural rights. An ideal government is supported by those who value freedom and that ensures the protection of human rights.

This includes the recognition of the right to freedom of speech, the provision of free education, and the promotion of friendly relations between nations. The compatibility between human rights and democracy arises from the fact that democracy typically safeguards the protection of human rights. This may be observed in various contexts, such as the case of Obamacare in the United States. In this instance, democracy and human rights collaborate to ensure the provision of appropriate medical care. According to Article 3 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), the participating states commit to guaranteeing the equitable entitlement of both men and women to the full enjoyment of all economic, social, and cultural rights outlined in the covenant.

The perception of human rights as an absolute necessity for democracy is commonly held, with some considering it to be the only criterion for democracy. However, various elements contribute to democracy, and respect for human rights is one of them. Both democracy and human rights are suitable and contribute to peace and harmony within a country, as they ensure that the government's actions align with the will of the people. It is important to note that there is no singular model of a democratic society, if it recognizes and respects human rights.

In certain situations, there is often a conflict between human rights and democracy, as they both strive to address different aspects of societal governance. The ability to effectively manage violence and maintain peace among citizens is a key factor in this conflict. Various entities, such as industry unions and elite trade unions, possess the authority to govern institutions and advocate for the advancement and protection of their own economic and collective interests. However, these rights are subject to limitations determined by legislation and are permissible within an egalitarian society that prioritizes national security and the safeguarding of the rights of others (ICESCR Article 2).

The significance of democracy and human rights is frequently deemed essential for individuals worldwide due to their alignment with the desires of the populace. In certain circumstances, they serve as protectors of humanity. Encouragingly, democracy and human rights are widely regarded as influential and protective forces.

2.1. WHAT DEMOCRACY LOOKS LIKE TODAY

In the 21st century, democracy has emerged as a robust and influential system of governance. It functions as an ideology that is universally distinct and constitutes one of the fundamental concepts, values, and

principles upheld by the United Nations. The reason for the establishment of an environment that safeguards and facilitates the effective implementation of human rights is rooted in the principles outlined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. These principles have been further developed and reinforced in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which upholds a range of political rights and civil liberties that are fundamental to the functioning of a robust democracy (Global Issues, 1). In contemporary civilization, a significant number of nations worldwide have adopted democratic systems of governance since they perceive this type of administration to be the most effective in facilitating proximity between the government and its population as well as fostering societal harmony and peace.

In the present era, democracy stands as the sole governmental system that enables citizens to actively engage in political parties, exert influence on their representatives, and ensure the protection of civil rights. Moreover, the United Nations serves as a commendable illustration of an institution that advocates for and upholds the democratic style of governance in the present era. According to a report by Global Issue (2016), the United Nations is actively engaged in promoting democracy and governance through various initiatives such as the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the United Nations Democracy Fund (UNDEF), and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO).

The United Nations has played a crucial role in upholding democracy today. They diligently engage in efforts to assist other nations in strengthening the mechanisms of checks and balances that foster the flourishing of democratic systems. Additionally, this initiative aims to enhance the impartiality, fairness, and effectiveness of domestic human rights organizations and the peace and security framework. The United Nations Assembly has asserted that democracy is a universally recognized principle that is founded upon the freely expressed desire of individuals to define their political, economic, social, and cultural systems, as well as their comprehensive engagement in all facets of their existence (Global Problem, 2016, p. 2).

The contemporary interpretation of democracy encompasses a diverse range of perspectives, resulting in varying conceptions among individuals. In its current context, democracy empowers citizens by granting them the authority and capacity to exercise equal rights in determining their way of life. In contemporary society, it can be argued that democracy has evolved as the most optimal system of governance, effectively accommodating citizens' ability to exercise their rights through the electoral process.

Democracy has been widely regarded as the most exemplary system of governance, mostly due to its ability to establish proximity between the government and its citizens. The implementation of openness and effectiveness in governance has significant implications for both mankind and the environment. This approach enables leaders to operate in a manner that can be objectively assessed and ensures that national interests take precedence over personal interests.

According to Global Problems (2016), democracy, specifically democratic governance, entails the recognition, endorsement, and realization of individuals' human rights and fundamental liberties. This framework enables individuals to lead lives characterized by dignity and respect. The contemporary assessment of democracy in the present era indicates that it is widely regarded as an ideal form of governance that numerous nations are inclined to embrace gladly. The Democracy Ranking is highly committed to enhancing and advancing the quality and attributes of democracy on a worldwide scale. The following map illustrates the contemporary understanding and significance of democracy in our culture.

The map presented below illustrates the efficacy of the system as ranked in the previous year. Upon examining the map, we discovered a dynamic landscape characterized by ongoing changes and consistent progress over the course of each year. Based on the aforementioned rating, it is posited that the current status of democracy in the contemporary world exhibits consistent and unwavering stability. Upon initial observation of the map, it becomes apparent that more than ten countries can be identified as the top democracies worldwide over the period spanning from 2013 to 2014.

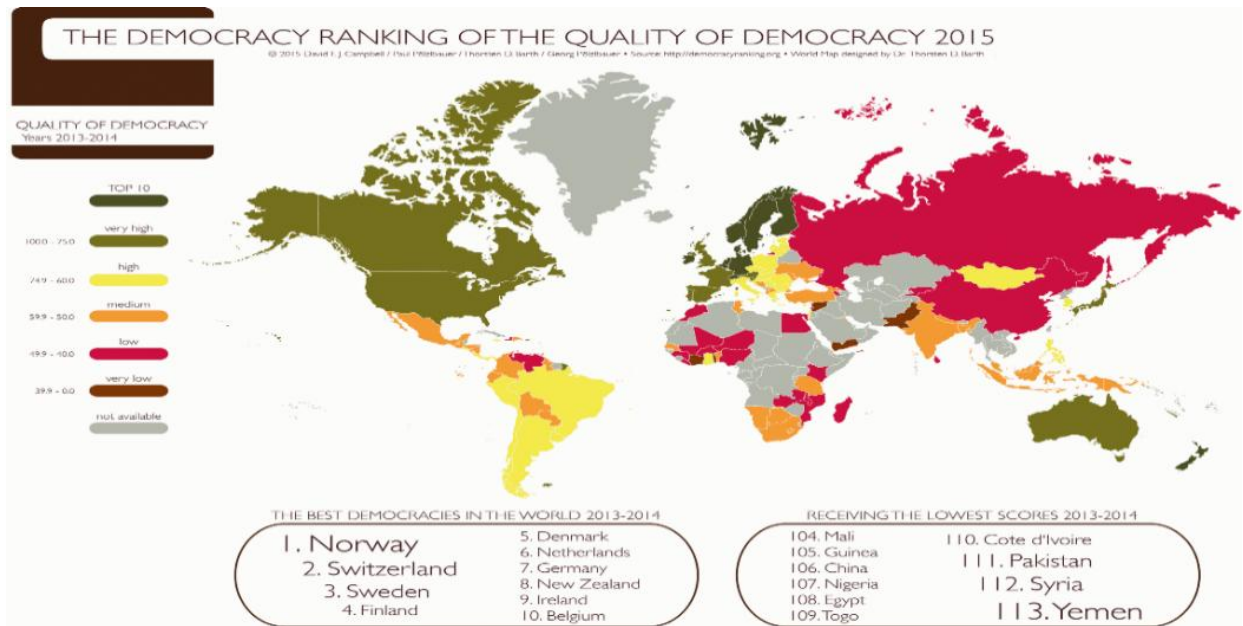


Image retrieved from <http://democracyranking.org/wordpress/rank/democracy-ranking-2015/>

In contemporary society, democratic governance plays a pivotal role in shaping economic and social policies that prioritize the welfare and aspirations of individuals. It is important to acknowledge that the United Nations does not endorse a specific form of government but rather advocates for democratic governance as a collection of values and principles that should be adhered to foster more participation, equality, security, and human development (Global Problem, 2016, p. 2).

In contemporary times, democracy has emerged as a very dynamic and effective form of administration due to its ability to establish robust mechanisms for preventing the concentration of power in the hands of a select few. This system of governance, known as democracy, is characterized by its commitment to representing the interests and aspirations of the general populace. The values of democracy possess such a strong allure for individuals across the globe that several individuals have made significant sacrifices, including their livelihoods and even their lives, in their pursuit of this political system (Anup, 2016, p. 1).

In the present era, it is evident that those who have actively advocated for democracy have played a significant role in fostering societal tranquility and cohesion. This implies that the inclusion of elected representatives to advocate for individuals in governmental institutions is of the utmost importance and significance. Conversely, this implies the provision of genuine economic, educational, and developmental liberties and motivations for the majority of individuals worldwide, about both local and global institutions that influence their livelihoods. In contemporary society, individuals possess a range of inherent rights that are inviolable and cannot be infringed upon by the governing authorities. These rights are universally acknowledged and ensured on a worldwide scale.

In modern times, it is evident that individuals possess the inherent entitlement to freely exercise their religious beliefs and assemble in any desired association. Every individual possesses the inherent entitlement to freely engage in social interactions and form relationships without facing censure, as well as the autonomy to select their preferred companions. To the best of my knowledge, it is widely acknowledged that individuals possess the inherent entitlement to pursue authority, knowledge, and concepts. This principle extends to all members of society, as each citizen bears the duty and privilege to use their rights in a nonviolent and meticulous manner while upholding the principles of legality and societal harmony.

In contemporary culture, the diffusion of democracy has become a global phenomenon, with numerous countries voluntarily embracing democratic systems due to their perceived efficacy. Democracy is widely acknowledged as the prevailing and acceptable form of governance, universally recognized by individuals across the globe.

According to Stanford University, public participation plays a crucial role in contemporary democracies. The article provides further clarification that this phenomenon manifests in several ways. According to Stanford University (2016), it is incumbent upon citizens to fulfill their duty and assume responsibility for acquiring knowledge regarding matters of public concern, overseeing the actions of their leaders and representatives, and articulating their viewpoints. Citizen engagement holds significant importance within a democratic system. This is mostly attributed to many factors, such as engaging in electoral processes, engaging in constructive debates on pertinent issues, staying informed about both private and public meetings, and even resorting to peaceful protests as a means of expressing discontent with their leaders.

According to Sargent (2008), a crucial aspect of any democratic system is the principle that individuals should actively participate in political decision-making, either through direct involvement or by selecting representatives. According to Sargent (2008), proponents of democracy argue that active participation in decision-making processes, even though the act of voting in elections, broadens the perspectives of voters and enhances their awareness of various topics (p. 63). In general, democracy is the only governmental system that affords citizens the opportunity and capacity to engage in decision-making processes, fostering a sense of inclusion and enhancing citizens' satisfaction compared to alternative systems that restrict citizen participation in such matters.

CONCLUSION

In modern society, a significant proportion of the younger generation actively engages in democratic processes and contributes to the realm of governance. The active participation of young individuals in democratic processes has been of paramount importance in molding and influencing the development of democracy over the course of contemporary history. It has been comprehended that the functioning of a democracy is contingent upon the collective preferences of the majority, with the youth constituting a significant proportion of the global population (Ravi, Raj, 1). Democracy has become prevalent on a global scale, establishing a framework wherein adolescents are allowed to articulate their preferences while simultaneously curbing the authority of the governing figure. The transformation of the universe from an authoritarian and tyrannical entity to a robust democracy is apparent.

Many nations across Europe and the Americas have undergone a process of democratization, with select countries in Asia and Africa, particularly in the southern and western regions of the African continent, also embracing this political system. What is the contemporary manifestation of democracy? Contemporary democracies exemplify the potential for the realization of a democratic global order, as they possess qualities reminiscent of a golden era. The evidence demonstrates a positive correlation between economic prosperity and political liberties. In contemporary times, democracy has become synonymous with the pursuit of freedom, and it is seen that states embracing democratic principles tend to be at the forefront of economic progress and advancement.

The current trajectory of economic growth and development instills optimism and confidence in the potential for future democratization on a global scale. Democracy has emerged as the most desirable system of governance that nations worldwide are actively pursuing. Democracy, as a form of governance, has consistently held significance for its citizens, leading to its designation as a "Citizens' Democracy" (Gans, 2013, p. 23). Alternatively, it is officially recognized as a representative democracy.

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