

Discuss greek ideas
of democracy,
citizenship, voting



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Greek Ideas of Democracy, Citizenship, Voting The ancient Greeks had an interesting system of government. Their idea of democracy, citizenship and voting itself may be considered the foundation of all democracies in later times but the democracy they experienced was very different from the democratic systems that we have today. To better understand the Greek ideals concerning democracy, citizenship and voting itself it would be easier to treat them each as a singular topic to be discussed in detail. Of these citizenship is most important since it lays down the foundation of who can vote and thus be a part of the democratic system.

The best example we have of citizenship in Greek times, is Athens where only adult males born to Athenian parents that had gone through military training were known as citizens who had the right to vote. Women, children, slaves and anyone who owed a debt to the city would not be allowed to vote. However, as was the case in later democratic systems, owning land or property was not a qualification required for voters or citizenship. In terms of political action and the number of votes cast, some citizens were more participatory than others just as it happens in the world today (Fotopoulos, 2008).

The voting on various matters took place in an assembly of the citizens but these citizens were not elected as in a parliamentary system. The democracy as well as the functioning of the government was based on a direct system in which any adult male citizen could take part in the decision making process and it was considered an important duty of the citizen to do that. The officials who govern this process could be elected or might be selected randomly from the assembly itself. The matters before the assembly varied in terms of their magnitude ranging from granting citizenship to some to <https://assignbuster.com/discuss-greek-ideas-of-democracy-citizenship-voting/>

dealing with political crimes (Fotopoulos, 2008).

Before the vote was cast, speakers could make speeches supporting or opposing the motion before the assembly and then citizens would vote on the motion by a show of hands. The system worked without any political parties and the motion was carried or defeated simply by plain majority. The votes were not counted but simply reported by plain sight since thousands of people may be attending the assembly. Not only was the system quite simple at the heart of it, it also seems to be quite participative (Fotopoulos, 2008).

This becomes the very root of the democracy that it was participative since the people present at the assembly had to cast their vote according to the conscious they had and the information they received from the people giving speeches on the motion. Undoubtedly, their model of democracy might seem infantile compared to the democratic ideals we have today where women can vote and a representative democracy exists. However, it must be noted that for the time it was present, the Greek system for democracy was quite possibly the most advanced in existence.

Word Count: 525

Works Cited

Fotopoulos, T. 2008, ' Direct and Economic Democracy in Ancient Athens and its Significance Today', [Online] Available at: http://www.democracynature.org/dn/vol1/fotopoulos_athens.htm