

The complex term of democracy essay (article)

[Politics](#), [Democracy](#)



What is democracy? Democracy is a complex term in itself due to its broadness and there has never been a single definition of democracy. In order to get a clear understanding of the concept of democracy, it should be broken down into different components. These include the various faces, and conditions for democratic processes or governance.

When addressing the faces of democracy, one should clearly differentiate between them. Over the years, theories, models, and concepts of democracy have been developed in order to understand and solve the paradox that is democracy. However, these theories and concepts have ended up contradicting each other in principle.

According to Sodaro (164), there are four faces of democracy. First, there is popular sovereignty which is a concept that postulates that people are entitled to rule or govern themselves (Sodaro 164). The second face of democracy is that of rights and liberties consisting of given basic rights and freedoms that the law to citizenry must guarantee (Sodaro 164).

This must be clearly captured in the constitution of any democratic nation. Sodaro suggests that democratic values form the third face of democracy and they include fairness, ability to tolerate, and compromise (164).

Furthermore, the fourth face of democracy identified by Sodaro is economic democracy which act as a pillar for various standards of fairness or equality as essential social and economic elements of democracy (164).

Ten conditions for democracy, according Sodaro, include: state institutions which must be governed by the rule of law; elites committed to upholding democratic values; a homogenous society where all are equal under the rule

of law; equal distribution of national wealth; private enterprise with no interference or overregulation by the government; a middle class whose concerns are given due consideration; support of the disadvantaged for democracy; citizen participation in decision making, a vibrant civil society, and democratic political culture where the majority win but the minority are accorded due respect; an educated populace who enjoy freedom of information; and a favorable international environment that facilitates global democracy (207-220).

For instance, with technological advancement witnessed in the twenty first century, the world has become closely connected that global citizenry is taking shape where there shall be no geographical boundaries.

Democracy, either liberal or electoral, must meet certain minimum standards before being recognized as one. Many countries of the world which are considered great democracies have had to strive over the years towards their current state of democracy. Western and European countries are regarded as model democracies by the developing nations (Campbell 7). The critical question that may be asked is whether there is an ideal state of democracy which all nations strive to attain. What will happen once this status is achieved?

There are a number of preconditions for democracy and they include a functioning state and minimum level of consensus on nationhood within the boundaries of a given country (Campbell 5). Some scholars regard some of the ten conditions for democracy discussed by Sodaro as being preconditions in themselves.

These preconditions for democracy are necessary if the other basic conditions are to thrive. In order to achieve a fully functional state, there must be legally elected government empowered to uphold the rule of law and able to implement its policies in the entire country.

If the state is not functional, the same government will not be in a position to execute the plan outlined in its manifesto however ambitious it may be.

War-torn countries in the world like Somalia have neither a functional state nor a stable government making the idea of democracy in these countries a far-fetched dream. Even if there is a government, the state of affairs makes it difficult to enforce any of its legislations.

“ Although some preconditions for democracy may be facilitated by external forces, elites of any given country wield a lot of power that influence the environment under which democracy may be exercised,” (Campbell 7).

The second precondition for democracy is a minimum standard of consensus on who constitute a nation. This can be met by coming up with an agreement that define clearly the agents as well as the subjects of the anticipated democratic rule (Campbell 8).

This hinges on the understanding that a democratic country is ruled by the people. A good example of citizens' participation is captured by The Economist during the passage of Proposition 8 in California ().

Given the nature of democracy and the benefits that accompany such a state, all countries are naturally striving to attain such a status. It can be

argued that democracy is here to stay. This is because democracy symbolizes a state of equilibrium that most countries yearn to attain.

Advanced democracies are doing everything possible to remain in their present state as well as spread it to other nations. America is one of the countries that are associated with upcoming democracies albeit their questionable approach of involvement. Is externally imposed democracy sustainable?

As the world moves towards total interconnectedness, then it is clear that global citizenry under an international democratic arrangement is the next agenda. A vivid example of this possibility is pre-conceived by the setting up of an international criminal court (ICC) that is entitled to investigate and prosecute individuals out of their home countries. Will national democracies become extinct once global democracy is attained?

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