

What is a Democracy?



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A Democracy is...



is a type of government that is one of a kind because it is a government by the people, in which the power is vested in the people themselves. The people are allowed to elect representatives who conduct their power in a free electoral system. A democracy can be viewed as consisting of five components which are participation, pluralism, developmentalism, protection, and performance.

Components of Democracy:

- ◆ Participatory democracy is when the people are involved in selecting government officials, such as voting.
- ◆ A pluralist democracy states that all people can participate in the governing process no matter, race, religion, ideologies or political views.
- ◆ Developmentalism is a democracy that is difficult to precisely describe and measure. It assumes the best about society
- ◆ Protective democracy is deeply rooted in liberalism and believes that the government exists to protect the rights of individual citizens.
- ◆ Performance democracy is when the government produces laws and policies that are a reflection of the self-governing people's desire for well-being.

The truth on democracies..

A democracy may sound like the perfect form of government, like all governments, it has its pitfalls. Some criticisms of ~~democracies~~ include:

- ❧ Only the very wealthy can afford to run for office, leaving the real power in the hands of the rich.
- ❧ Voters are often uninformed and don't understand what they are voting for.
- ❧ Two party systems (like in the United States) give voters few choices on issues.
- ❧ The large bureaucracy of democracies can be inefficient and decisions can take a long time.
- ❧ Internal corruption can limit the fairness of elections and the power of the people.
- ❧ However, despite the issues of democracy, it has proven to be one of the fairest and most efficient forms of modern government in the world today. People living in democratic governments tend to have more freedoms, protections, and a higher standard of living than in other forms of government.

Is the United States a Democracy?



The United States is an indirect democracy or a republic. While each citizen only has a small say, they do have some say in how the government is run and who runs the government.

My interests...



- ❧ This topic interests me because most people like to think that the United States is a democratic country when in fact it is not a direct democracy but it is a "presidential republic". The defining characteristic is an elected president who serves as the country's head of state and head of government.
- ❧ In this system the president leads an executive branch of government that is distinct from the legislative branch. This is in contrast to a Parliamentary Democracy, in which the country's head of government is part of, and comes to power through, the legislature.

Research Interests..



- ❧ The research was very interesting because I found out that a few countries do not have some of the privileges the we in America have. For example, the right to vote and freedom of speech. Also in some other countries people have been killed for going against or negatively speaking about their leaders.

Plans in the future...



- ❧ In the future we all should continue to exercise our right to vote. Especially for people of color, this is very important because not only did our ancestors fight and sacrifice their lives for this privilege but voting is also our voice that we can use to make change without saying a word.
- ❧ It is also very important to get to know our community council members and those who represent us in our communities.

Interviews

Do You think the U.S. is a democratic country? Why or why not?



- ❧ My Mommy: “Melisa, America is a republic and a republic is indeed a democracy, so that makes the U.S. a democracy. A nation is a democracy if it has an elected government.”
- ❧ Alex(Boyfriend): “It is a democracy because “we” the people are in charge of the government. We elect our officials. That is what a democracy is. Ruled by the people. Even though we don’t directly elect the president, but we hold state primaries that use our votes as the indicator for which candidate the electors will support.”
- ❧ Singh(My uber driver): “The United States is absolutely a democracy. Anyone saying otherwise clearly has no idea what it means to live in a non-democratic country. We call those type of countries dictatorships. I was born in Yemen and came to the U.S. as a teenager.”

Conclusion...




- ∞ In my conclusion most people, I believe, think that a democracy means one person has one vote, and everyone's vote counts. In that sense, we are not the democracy people believe that we are. In a democracy, all people should have a voice in who wins elections. In America that fundamental feature of a democracy is entirely restricted by two private political corporations who now have absolute control over who you can vote for. Yes, you have one vote and it counts, but you don't get to exercise your vote the way you want to. You can exercise your vote only according to the constraints that the two private political corporations put upon you. They chose who can run, and you can only choose from among them. Most reasonable people would feel that this violates the fundamental nature of a democracy.

Citations:



- ❧ Shapiro, I. (1994). Three Ways to Be a Democrat. *Political Theory*, 22(1), 124-151. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/192135>
- ❧ Hudson, W. E. (1995). *American democracy in peril: Seven challenges to America's future*. Chatham, N.J: Chatham House Publishers.
- ❧ Analyzing Politics - *An Introduction to Political Science* By Ellen Grigsby (4th, Fourth Edition)

Summary:

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- ∞ In the United States, there seems to be a concurrence that this land was and is made for the free people of the earth. A lot of us do believe that the democracy we have in place is unfailing, that nothing or no one other than God could destroy it. Even though some of us have complaints with what the government is doing, most of us believe that our voices are heard loud and clear, if only we would be caring enough to say anything. Yet I truly believe that there are pros and cons to our so called "democracy", and although there is representation, powers that we cannot control keep it from being what some would call total democracy. To give the United States democracy some credit, I think that it may not even be a bad idea to keep it the way it is.