



Democracy

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Democracy

- **Democracy** is a system of government in which the people either govern themselves directly, or elect their public officials through free elections.
- The Czech Republic has a democratic form of government in which the people elect members to Parliament to govern the country; therefore, it is known as a parliamentary democracy.
- In a parliamentary democracy, the political party which is in the majority elects the country's prime minister (leader).



The Theory of Democratic Government

- The decision of a group must reflect the preference of more than half of those participating; a simple majority, known as **majority rule**.
- **Simple majority** - A number of votes totalling over **50** per cent, such as the total number of votes or seats



The Theory of Democratic Government

- A **supermajority** or a **qualified majority** is a requirement for a proposal to gain a specified level or type of support which exceeds a simple majority in order to have effect. for example, parliamentary procedure requires that any action that may alter the rights of the minority has a supermajority requirement (**such as a two-thirds majority**).



Democracy – Basic Elements

- Democracy
 - **Democratic systems involve wide participation by citizens in the decision-making process**
 - **In representative democracy, majority rule is achieved through periodic elections**
 - **Factors for evaluating freedom are**
 - Political rights
 - Civil liberties
 - **Political rights include**
 - Fair and competitive elections
 - Power for elected representatives
 - Ability to organize
 - Safeguards on rights of minorities



Democracy – Basic Elements

- People of the country rule through any form of government they choose to establish
- Free elections so citizens can choose their leaders and express their opinions - **government can be defeated**
- Majority rule because all citizens are equal
- Minority rights guarantee that the government can't take away freedoms of smaller groups or individuals
- Political parties give voters a choice
- Controls on power prevent any branch or person from becoming too powerful
- Based on laws and usually has a written constitution
- Has a separate judicial system to protect the laws and the rights of the people
- Private organizations carry on many social and economic functions
- Citizen participation is considered a responsibility



Democracy – Basic Elements

- Stamping out corruption
- Free and active media
 - **Media freedom**
 - **Media pluralism/independence**



What is Democracy?

- Regular, contested elections
- Alternation of Governments
- Rule of Law
- freedoms: speech, association press, etc.
- Pluralism /civil society
- Privacy
- Separation of powers/checks and balances
 - some systems are obviously democracies
 - some systems are obviously non-democratic
 - some systems are in between



Variables

- Electoral system and party system
- monarchy or republic
- Uni - or bi-cameral
- fusion of executive and legislature
- separation of powers
- President and prime minister
- ministers in or out of Assembly



Democracy

- Presidential or parliamentary?
- British model?
- US model?
- French model?

- Direct or indirect election?
- How much power?
- Relationship with Prime Minister



Parliament

Parliament = expression of the will of the people and public interest”

- **Makes laws**
- **Balances power of the executive**
- **Speaks on behalf of the people**



Bicameralism

- Bicameralism: The fragmentation of legislative power, established through the existence of two (co-equal) chambers in the assembly, a device of limited government.



The Theory of Democratic Government

- Societies can meet these principles with a direct or **participatory democracy**, which is a system of government where citizens rule themselves rather than electing representatives to govern on their behalf.



The Theory of Democratic Government

- **Representative democracy** is a system of government where citizens elect public officials - representatives to govern on their behalf.



The Theory of Democratic Government

- **Universal participation:** everyone in a democratic society should participate in governmental decision-making.
- The principle of **political equality** establishes an equality in political decision-making providing for one vote per person, with all votes counted equally.



The Merits of Direct Democracy

- It heightens the control that citizens can exercise over their destinies, and is the only pure form of democracy.
- It creates a better-informed and more politically sophisticated citizenry, and thus it has educational benefits.
- It enables the public to express their own view and interests without having to rely on self-serving politicians.
- It ensures that rule is legitimate in the sense that people are more likely to accept decisions that they made themselves.



The Strengths of Representative Democracy

- It offers a practicable form of democracy (direct popular participation is achievable only in small communities).
- It relieves ordinary citizens of the burden of decision-making, thus making possible a division of labour in politics.
- It allows government to be placed in the hands of those with better education, expert knowledge and greater experience.
- It maintains stability by distancing ordinary citizens from politics, thereby encouraging them to accept compromise.



Parliamentary Democracy

- Parliamentary democracy is a form of democratic rule that operates through a popularly elected deliberative assembly, which establishes an indirect link between the government and the governed. Democracy in this sense, essentially means responsible and representative government. Parliamentary democracy thus balances popular participation against elite rule: government is accountable not directly to the public but to the public's elected representatives.



Pluralism

- The term pluralism is used in two senses, one broad the other narrow. In its broader sense, pluralism is a belief in, or a commitment to, diversity or multiplicity (the existence of many things). More narrowly, pluralism is a theory of the distribution of political power. It holds that power is widely and evenly dispersed in society rather than concentrated in the hands of an elite or a ruling class. In this form, pluralism is usually seen as a theory of „group politics“ in which individuals are represented largely through their membership of organized group, and all such groups have access to the policy process.



Liberalism

- **Liberalism** (from the Latin *liberalis*, "of freedom" is the belief in the importance of liberty and equal rights.
- Most liberals support such fundamental ideas as liberal democracy, free and fair elections, written constitutions, human rights, free trade, and a secular society.



Elements of Liberalism

- **Individualism:** It reflects a belief in the supreme importance of the human individual as opposed to any social group or collective body. Human beings are seen, first and foremost, as individuals. This implies that they are of equal moral worth and that they possess separate and unique identities.
- **Freedom:** Individual freedom, or liberty (the two terms are inter-changeable) is the core value of liberalism, it is given priority over, say, equality, justice, or authority.



Elements of Liberalism

- **Reason:** Liberals believe that the world has a rational structure, and that this can be uncovered through the exercise of human reason and by critical enquiry. Issues must be resolved through debates and arguments rather than bloodshed and war.
- **Equality:** Individualism implies a belief in foundational equality: that is, the belief that individuals are „born equal“, at least in terms of moral worth.



Elements of Liberalism

- **Toleration:** Liberals believe that toleration (that is , forbearance: the willingness of people to allow others to think, speak and act in ways they disapprove) is both a guarantee of individual liberty and a means of social enrichment.
- **Consent:** In liberal view, authority and social relationships should always be based on consent or willing agreement.



Elements of Liberalism

- **Constitutionalism:** Although liberals see government as a vital guarantee of order and stability in society, they are constantly aware of the danger that government may become a tyranny against the individual. They therefore believe in limited government. This goal can be attained through the fragmentation of government power.....



Democracy

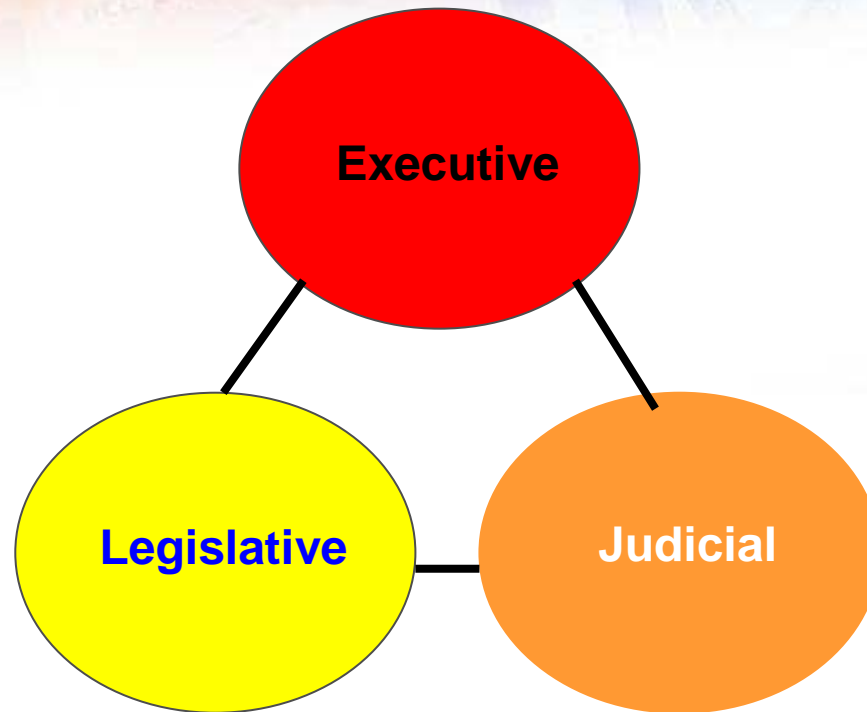
The Czech Republic is a representative democracy and is composed of **THREE BRANCHES OF GOVERNMENT**

The Constitution creates a government of three equal branches, or parts.

The Constitution is the plan and set of rules for our government.

The three branches are: **LEGISLATIVE, EXECUTIVE, JUDICIAL**

The division of power



The division of power

- Congress in the United States has two parts: The Senate and The House of Representatives

Society gives feedback

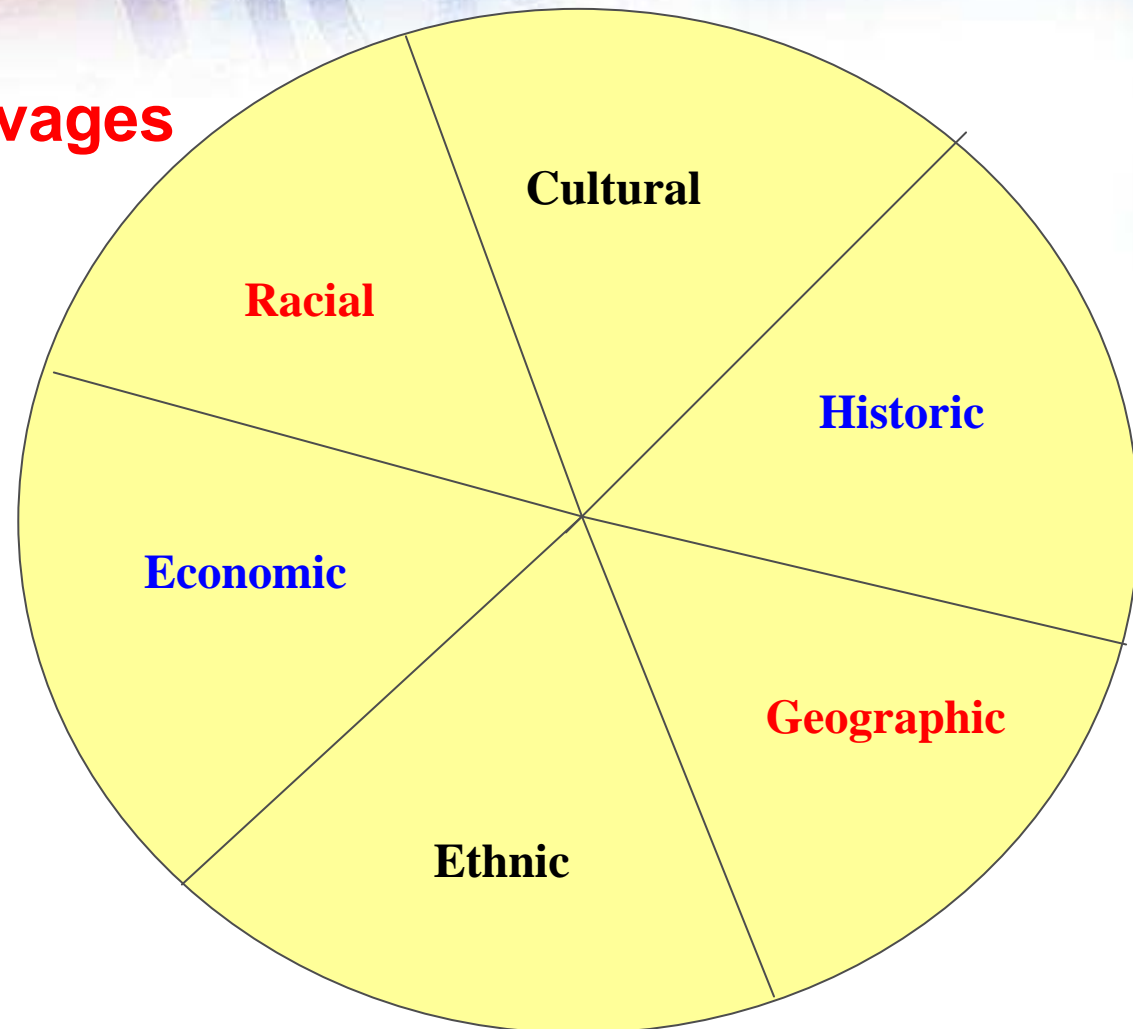
- Illustrates how different segments of society influence a government to make decisions
- Society gives feedback on the government's decision, which becomes input for the next decision



Citizens, Society, and the State

Politically relevant cleavages

- Consider politically relevant cleavages and their effect on the state
- The media and advocacy groups also influence state operations





Models of Democracy

Opportunities for
Mass Participation

LOW

HIGH

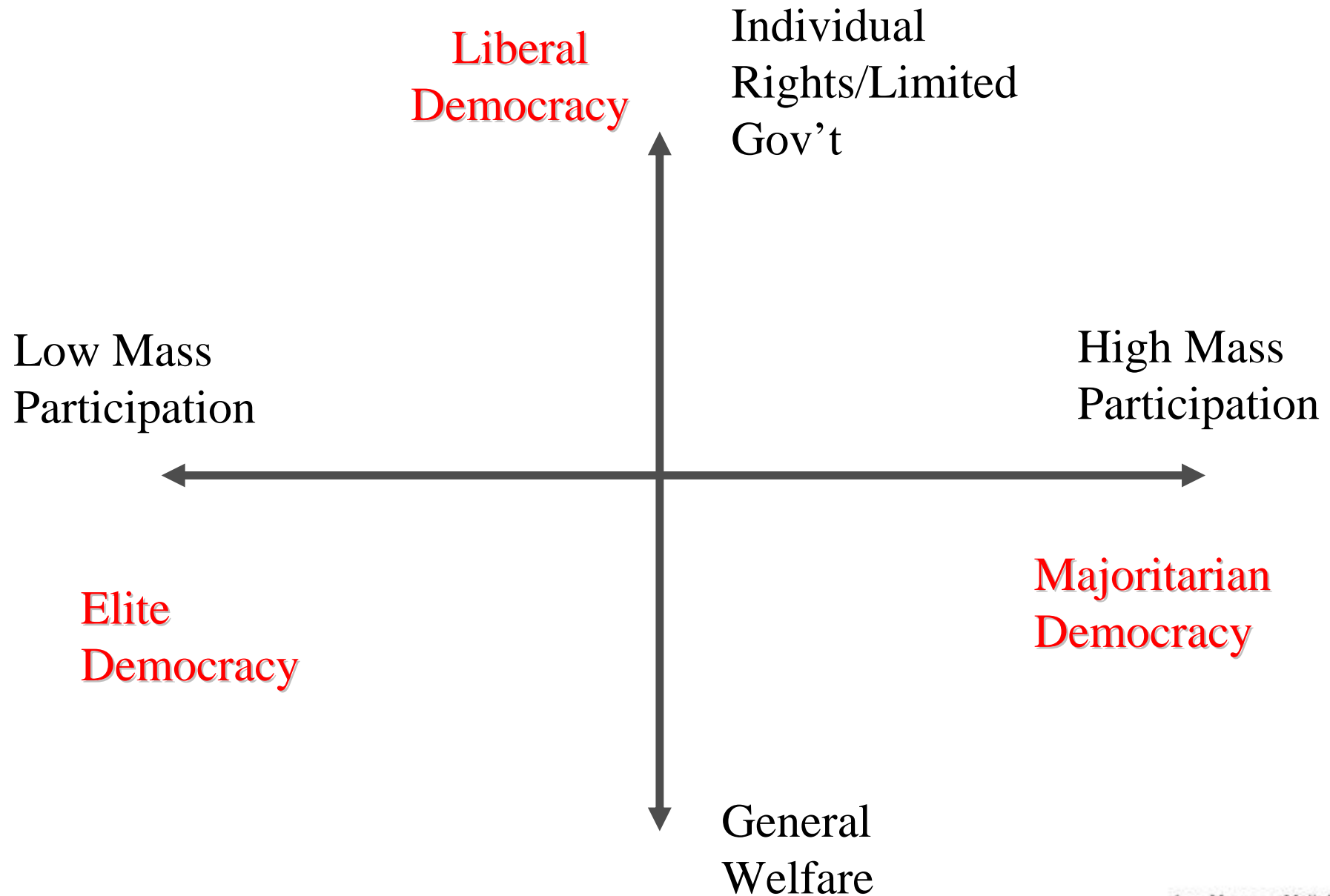


Representative
Democracy

Participatory
Democracy

Direct
Democracy

Models of Democracy





Models of Democracy

- Majoritarian democracy
 - most important goal is maximizing mass participation
 - high mass participation will result in decisions being made that maximize the general welfare



Models of democracy

- Elite democracy
 - most important goal is the general welfare
 - requires an elite capable of pursuing the long-term interests of society



Models of democracy

- Liberal democracy
 - most important goal is protecting individual rights
 - does not prefer low mass participation but may be willing to accept it



Liberal Democracy

- Liberal democracy is an indirect and representative form of democracy in that political office is gained through success in regular elections that are conducted on the basis of formal political equality.
- Liberal democracy is based on competition and electoral choice. These are achieved through political pluralism, tolerance of a wide range of contending beliefs, and the existence of conflicting social philosophies and rival political movements and parties.
- In liberal democracy, there is a clear distinction between the state and civil society. This distinction is maintained through the existence of autonomous groups and interests, and the market or capitalist organization of economic life.



Models of democracy

Majoritarian democratic critiques of other models

Elite democracy – there is no such thing as an elite that is not self-interested and will look after the good of the general masses

Liberal democracy – emphasis on individual rights is used to limit government in order to protect small, priveleged groups



Models of democracy

- Elite democratic critiques of other models
 - Liberal democracy – undue focus on individual rights limits government’s ability to pursue the general welfare of the community
 - Majoritarian democracy – masses are too uninterested, incompetent or, at worst, dangerous to be given control over decision-making



Models of democracy

- Majoritarian democratic critiques of other models
- Elite democracy – there is no such thing as an elite that is not self-interested and will look after the good of the general masses
- Liberal democracy – emphasis on individual rights is used to limit government in order to protect small, privileged groups



Models of democracy

- Liberal democratic critiques of other models
 - Elite democracy – if unchecked, elites will use power to infringe the rights of individuals
 - Majoritarian democracy – if unchecked, majority will infringe the rights of minorities (tyranny of the majority)



Models of democracy

- Elite democrats
 - the masses will ***always*** be incapable of making decisions for the long-term common good
- Liberal democrats
 - elites and the majorities will ***always*** be prone to infringing individual rights if given the chance
- Majoritarian democrats
 - elites will ***always*** be self-serving
 - masses can learn over time to become better democratic citizens if given a meaningful opportunity to do so



Models of democracy

- **there is no “right” model**
- the best model of democracy is contestable
- there is no one, single, accepted model of democracy
 - **within a range of basic elements (consent of the governed, protection of individual rights), *democracy means different things to different people***



Thank You for your Attention

