

DEMOCRACY

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INTRODUCTION

Both our daily intake / interpretation of democracy in the media, family, public transport and generally all around us, as well as extensive research on the relationship between the democracy in our country, etc., require more complex study of this phenomenon by professional individuals and institutions. Certainly, we can not ignore the many theoretical explanations of the concept and the term of democracy by various authors, but we also witness both its vagueness and ambiguity.

Commitment to research this topic has arisen because of the importance and advantages of democracy as a kind of political order, but also because of the lack of the negative characteristics of this phenomenon.

Economic development favors the development of democracy as developed societies are based on respect for property rights and ownership of pluralism, ensuring the right to work, etc. Historical heritage and from it created social awareness and climate are either limiting or encouraging elements for the development of democracy. Civil society is based on the principles of autonomy, associativity and the public, and it actually represents the legitimacy of the modern state. This paper provides an overview of democracy in modern conditions and points out some of the problems, challenges and issues facing democracy in the future.

“Democracy (yet) does not live here, and will not soon, and we just hope it shall not permanently move out,” this is one of the titles within a public opinion survey conducted in 2014 in Serbia by the National Democratic Institute and CeSID. One cannot remain indifferent to this, therefore, this paper presents parts of this research, among other things.

1. DEMOCRACY HAPPENS

Libertas inaestimabilis res est.

Democracy is a very complex system of relations between the state and citizens towards achieving personal freedom of citizens and the transformation of state power. Democracy

is a political system based on the possibility that the people / citizens can elect their representatives, and on the fact that democracy is a political orientation that favors the rule of the people through elected representatives of the people.

According to available sources, the understanding of the word democracy is linked to the Greek historian Herodotus, at a time when *demos* consisted of citizens of the polis, a small town, a sort of commune. Some sources indicate that for Aristotle *demos* meant the poor. The ancient city-state (city-republics), which is the source and inspiration for the later (and even modern) debates about democracy, had significant deficiencies. First of all, women did not have the status of 'citizen,' just like foreigners and most of the slaves. This, at first glance, simple definition of democracy hides many theoretical and empirical pitfalls and obstacles, because the question is who constitutes the nation, whether they are all members of a community (in ancient times it was the only free citizens, not slaves) whether this constitutes majority (by what criteria), is it "lower" classes, social groups, or is it the average organic whole of society, or is it simply some form of mass of people (unstructured and undefined). (Šijaković I., 2008:1)

During the second half of the twentieth century in theory there existed a division between "Western" democracy and "Communist" democracy. A particular feature was "a self-governing democracy." David Held mentions nine models of democracy, which are grouped into two groups. The first group are the classic models of democracy (Athens, protective, development and direct democracy), and the second group includes competitive elitism, pluralistic democracy, the rule of democracy, participatory and modern (combined) democracy. D. Held later mentions three major groups of models of democracy: the rule of Athens and the Republic, liberal representative and one-party democracy.

Many theorists understand democracy as a system of justice and equality among people, as a process that recognizes the diversity in society and allows constant criticism of phenomena, relationships and processes. Democracy is at the same time both acquisition and instrument of freedom, justice and equal opportunities in society. W. Churchill and J. Nehru have similar views on democracy: a good form of government because it is less bad than all other forms that occasionally occur.

In addition to the decisive and constructive dialogue, which in itself is a profoundly democratic standard, there are some other undisputed democratic principles such as pluralism, inclusiveness and equality. It is important that dialogue acknowledges the spirit of democratic culture and its essential elements: mutual respect among participants and their willingness to accept a common ground. (White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue, 2008: 2).

There are also negative opinions which represent democracy as a procedure that allows the people to believe that they rule, so that it could be easily manipulated by the elite or any powerful individual. In that case, the people are called upon when you need to justify or support the actions of rulers or elite. These views show to what extent the concept of democracy is a complex, multi-layered, complex, hidden, unclear and still imprecise and incomplete, both from theoretical and empirical aspects.

2. KINGDOM OF FREEDOM AND EQUALITY

One of the fundamental values of democracy is equality of all men in society. This is a key principle that underpins real democracy. (Čavoški, R., R. Vasić, 2011: 3). For every soci-

ety and the state creation of equal starting positions is a complex and difficult process which separates the mature, advanced and democratic countries from those that are not.

“The kingdom of freedom begins only where work determined by hardship and by external expediency ceases; by the nature of things it lies beyond the sphere of material production ... Freedom in this area may consist in the fact that people as associated producers, rationally regulate their interchange with nature, place it under their common control, instead of being ruled like a blind force; But it always remains a realm of necessity. Only outside it starts development of human power, which is an end in itself, the true realm of freedom, but that can flourish only in the realm of necessity as its basis” (Karl Marx, 1973: 4).

Individual and collective freedom (political, economic, cultural) present a value of democracy which is directly based on the equality of people in society. In Greek idea of democracy freedom often occupied a more important position than equality. According to Plato, among other things, freedom is seen as the highest good in a democracy. (Plato, 1976: 5).

Democracy allows people to affect regime change against various forms of totalitarianism and dictatorship. The very basis of human and democratic rights is the possibility of choice and selection from the many alternatives. This confirms the true meaning of existence of citizens: to be able to vote and to be elected.

Democracy enables development of competitive spirit by bringing attitudes, opinions, suggestions, etc. to provide alternatives. It means “force of stronger argument” freedom and the culture of dialogue, tolerance, compromise, avoiding the imposition by force of arguments and situations in which conflicts are triggered.

Pluralism recognizes the existing diversity of interests. The most important link in the chain of pluralism is freedom of every individual, and the ability to share the interests and attitudes. Pluralism (economic, political, cultural) represents a significant value democracy because it opens up a space of manifestation of different needs, interests and abilities.

3. MODERN DEMOCRACY

“Today, the only one democratic states are the ones that emerged from the liberal revolution and only in democratic states the human rights protected: any authoritarian country in the world is at the same time anti-liberal and anti-democratic” (Bobbio, N., 1990: 8).

We define democracy as a social process that brings the rules and procedures of participation into political life and the organization of society. As for liberalism, we can conclude that it is a phenomenon that responds to every restraint, restriction, neglect and exclusion of these rules.

Democracy in modern conditions appears as a form of return to democracy. This is evident from the example of the countries of Latin America, Asia, Africa, namely those environments where democracy was suppressed by military dictatorships. After the collapse of these regimes there was a gradual return to multiparty and parliamentary forms of political action.

The situation is similar with some countries of the former “socialist regime” who before “socialist revolution” had parliamentary democracy. They are now “back” on the paths of democratic procedures, but this is rather the establishment of new / ‘unknown’ relations.

3.1. Challenges to democracy

There are many challenges, problems and issues facing democracy in the future. Analyzing democracy in modern conditions, etc., Šijaković lists some of these obstacles: how to avoid a situation where democracy appears as the “tyranny of the majority”; how to remove the impression that in some societies, democracy appears as “obsession with democracy” (citizens are demanding more democracy, and the government believes that “given” too much democracy); if you do not constantly evolving and is not included in all aspects of social life, but remains only on formal procedures and requirements, democracy is inevitably transformed into a “dogma”; how to avoid a situation where democracy is emerging as a tool for manipulation and “control” of the masses; how to create the conditions for democracy, free public opinion and to “restrain” the negative effects of mass media and modern means of communication, and to develop more the culture of dialogue and tolerance at all levels of society, and finally, how to speed up the integration process of democracy in society, with equitable development of local, regional and global needs and interests of modern man (citizen). (Šijaković I., 2008:1).

Time will tell whether these questions, challenges and problems facing democracy will be resolved.

4. STATE OF DEMOCRACY IN SERBIA - OPINION POLL

A headline in one part of the report of the study of public opinion in Serbia, conducted in 2007, concerning the attitude towards democracy, is “Democracy (yet) does not live here.” At that moment, research indicated that democracy still did not have the majority in our society.

Some 39% held the view that democracy has no alternative, and against this were collectively 40% (22% of respondents claimed for them there is no difference whatsoever between democracy and non-democracy, and 18% felt that sometimes can be better than democracy) of those who did not perceive democracy as the only possible concept of governance.

The predominance of undemocratic attitude was minimal, but in the report it was analyzed as a deficit of democracy in Serbia. At that time, the general opinion claimed that these findings confirmed a bit ironic assessment that democracy is not living on a permanent address in Serbia, that still it was not “the only game in town.”

By analyzing data from surveys in 2014, the percentage of those who have faith in democracy as the rule fell from 39% to 30%, while on the other hand the number of those who do not increased. Further, the number of those who believe that it does not matter what form of government is installed increased from 22% to 25%, while the percentage of those who think that sometimes undemocratic government is better than the democratic one rose from 18% to 24%.

The decline of confidence in democracy is accompanied by an increase in distrust, so the difference that seven years ago was minimal now amounts to almost a fifth of the population: 30% of proponents to 49% of opponents. Findings from 2007 indicate that in terms of the functioning of education, generational belonging and employment status of the attitude toward democracy, it could be concluded that the high school was the dividing point of (non)acceptance, and that the democratic sentiments and practices are rooted above average

among the highly educated and young people. If these data are compared with findings from 2014, it can be said that the key demographic characteristics of respondents of democratic orientation remained the same. These features are not the same because there is a noticeable change in the age groups. They suggest that in the youngest group (18 to 29) and older age groups (over 50 years) there are noticeable trends of declining trust in democracy, while a positive attitude towards democracy above average is represented among the middle age respondents (30 to 49 years). The closeness with certain political parties and identification with them proved to be an important determinant in their relationship to democracy.

5. CONCLUSION

Ancient Greece is the cradle of democracy, but the ancient philosophers did not always unreservedly favor democracy over other forms of social organization. Plato opted for power of one man - monarchy, Aristotle advocated the power of several people - the aristocracy; Cicero advocated the power of all - democracy. In ancient Greece there was first established "democracy" as a political practice.

Many theorists see democracy as a system of justice and equality among people, as a process that recognizes the diversity in society and allows for constant criticism of phenomena, relationships and processes.

Equality between people in society is a key principle that underpins real democracy and equality is reflected in the conditions and opportunities provided to citizen so they can realize their needs.

There are many challenges, problems and issues that democracy shall face in the future. Let us see what the future brings!

6. REFERENCES

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