

ELECTIONS OF OFFICE HOLDERS

MODULE 6

TYPES

- **Types Of Elections**
- **Elections of officeholders**
- Electorates have only a limited power to determine government policies. Most elections do not directly establish public policy but instead confer on a small group of officials the authority to make policy (through laws and other devices) on behalf of the electorate as a whole.

FUNDAMENTAL FORMS

- Elections make a fundamental contribution to democratic governance. Because [direct democracy](#)—a form of government in which political decisions are made directly by the entire body of qualified citizens—is impractical in most modern societies, democratic government must be conducted through representatives. Elections enable voters to select leaders and to hold them accountable for their performance in office. Accountability can be undermined when elected leaders do not care whether they are reelected or when, for historical or other reasons, one party or [coalition](#) is so dominant that there is effectively no choice for voters among [alternative](#) candidates, parties, or policies. Nevertheless, the possibility of controlling leaders by requiring them to submit to regular and periodic elections helps to solve the problem of succession in leadership and thus contributes to the continuation of [democracy](#). Moreover, where the electoral process is competitive and forces candidates or parties to expose their records and future intentions to popular scrutiny, elections serve as forums for the discussion of public issues and [facilitate](#) the expression of [public opinion](#). Elections thus provide political education for citizens and ensure the responsiveness of democratic governments to the will of the people. They also serve to legitimize the acts of those who wield power, a function that is performed to some extent even by elections that are noncompetitive.

FUNDAMENTAL FORMS

- Elections also reinforce the stability and legitimacy of the political community. Like national holidays commemorating common experiences, elections link citizens to each other and thereby confirm the viability of the polity. As a result, elections help to facilitate social and political integration.
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CONCLUSION

- Finally, elections serve a self-actualizing purpose by confirming the worth and dignity of individual citizens as human beings. Whatever other needs voters may have, participation in an election serves to reinforce their self-esteem and self-respect. [Voting](#) gives people an opportunity to have their say and, through expressing partisanship, to satisfy their need to feel a sense of belonging. Even nonvoting satisfies the need of some people to express their alienation from the political community. For precisely these reasons, the long battle for the [right to vote](#) and the demand for equality in electoral participation can be viewed as the [manifestation](#) of a profound human craving for personal fulfillment.

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