**Advantages and Disadvantages of Democracy**

Democracy is a system of government where the entire population or eligible members of the state have the opportunity to vote on issues directly or send someone that they elect to make those decisions on their behalf. It is a governing structure where rule comes from the people instead of the military or state. Although it is an option that is usually associated with the United States, the Declaration of Independence makes no word of this option.

The founding fathers of the United States actually feared the idea of democratic rule. James Madison mentioned in one of the federalist papers that this form of government could lead to confusion, instability, and injustice. They were scared that a popular government would eventually perish because that was happening more often than not everyone else in the world.

What history does not always remember is that the Roman Empire once had a working democracy during the early years of their existence. You can even visit the Forum still to this day, which is where their meetings and votes were held. Even Vladimir Lenin felt that democracy was the goal of communism, using a dictator to control the proletariat until such a status became possible.

Now many believe that a democracy is the best form of government that is available today because it gives each person the freedom to have a voice. These are the advantages and disadvantages of such a system to consider.

**List of the Advantages of Democracy**

1. Democracies give people a chance to become personally involved with their government.

Because the government in a democracy is under the control of the people and their voice, then it is up to each individual to decide their fate. People can choose to vote in whatever way their morality dictates. Some even give voters the option to not vote if that is what they feel is the best way to express their opinion.

Every ballot is an opportunity to express one’s personal opinion. Whether that voice lands in the majority or not, there is an agreement in a democracy that the tally of the vote stands unless there is a clear moral objection to the outcome. A community won’t object over the failure of a tax levy for a swimming pool, but the judicial system might step in if the people vote to accept a local ordinance that allows slavery.

2. The structure of a democracy works to reduce issues with exploitation.

All government formations are sensitive to exploitation because of the people who get elected into powerful positions. The contrast with democracy is that the authorities are distributed more equally within it. The ruling documents in this structure create checks and balances to assure that no single person receives supreme power over the legislative process.

Democracies prevent elected officials from ignoring the needs of the general population to help themselves. It challenges them to represent the needs of each community so that everyone receives an equal opportunity to pursue their dreams.

3. A democracy encourages equality in a positive way.

The structure of a democracy gives every vote an equal amount of weight during an election. This option gives each person the chance to cast a ballot without judgment when they register for this process, providing an opinion that despite their social or economic status. Everything “yes” or “no” counts as one, whether you are rich or poor, own land or not, of express your gender in a specific way.

“Democracy and socialism have nothing in common but one word: equality,” said Alexis de Tocqueville. “But notice the difference; while democracy seeks equality in liberty, socialism seeks equality in restraint and servitude.”

4. Democracies usually grow faster economically than other forms of government.

The freedom offered in the structures of democracy allows the general population to seek any result they want. Although legal barriers exist to prevent one person from hurting another, this governing structure grants the freedom to look for different employment opportunities, schools, or even places to live. The choice remains with your voice.

You get an opportunity to seek what you are enthusiastic about in this life. The structure of democracy makes it possible for everyone to stay fruitful with their work because they are always employing their strengths. That is why the gross domestic product of a country which features constitutional arrangements is typically larger.

5. There is more consistency available in democracy than other government structures.

There is more unity in the governing process with democracy because the general population holds the right to vote on resolutions. This arrangement can take different styles, but the result is generally the same. Each person gets the chance to express their view at their polling stations by casting a vote. That process allows each community to continue pursuing the specific results that they feel are helpful, or they can switch directions to try something new.

The structure of democracy makes it possible for everyone to come together in a way that forms society in ways that are helpful for virtually all people.

6. Democracy does not create a centralized power base for ruling over the people.

The United States uses a centralized form of governing, but there are equal powers distributed between the executive, legislative, and judicial branches. Voters have an opportunity to change their elected officials every 2-6 years as a way to control their destiny.

In a direct democracy, every decision would be placed to a vote for a supreme level of control. Either way, there is no centralized power that can dictate what people can or cannot do. Every branch of the government must agree on the process. Then each community can make decisions with their voting power to overturn unwanted rules and regulations to evolve life over time.

7. People identify with their government to create a stronger level of patriotism.

The structures of democracy are unique because they allow everyone to fight for the things that they want in life. Each person can pursue their dreams, working to mold society in a vision that meets their expectations. Even when that idea runs counter to what the majority wants or falls outside of an expected window of morality, there is an ability to express those ideas assuming that others are not hurt by such an effort.

That is why there is more loyalty and patriotism present in democracy. Even when there is disagreement in the community, everyone still has the common ground of their nation to fall back upon when forming their identity. Everyone contributes in their own way, which this governing structure celebrates. Other governments can dictate those choices.

8. Countries who use democracy are less likely to enter into armed conflicts.

As democracy has come through Europe once again, the levels of warfare between the major nations on the continent have decreased significantly. There have been fewer conflicts in the past 50 years than at any other time in history. Although the United States is an exception to this advantage because of the country’s status on the global stage, most nations who focus on a democracy avoid battles instead of chasing after them.

That means there are fewer issues with violent rebellion within democratic societies as well. Decisions must route through various legislative bodies or the people, which reduces the pursuit of war on a whim. There are fewer coup attempts within this governing structure as well.

9. A democracy transitions power smoothly while establishing legitimacy.

Democracy creates an appropriate structure of government for every person because voters select who will be in charge or how policies are made if a direct form of governing is in place. This process demands that each candidate for office declare before their voters the reasons why they are the best person to represent each community.

By winning an election, it becomes possible to establish legitimacy for political candidates or referendums that other forms of governing cannot provide. When leaders change in democracy, the checks and balances offered by this format make it possible to produce smooth transitions when power changes hands. There are fewer arguments about who becomes the replacement for any position. This outcome occurs because each job is either directed by the people or filled by someone who won an election.

10. It encourages centrism more than extremism.

Even in this current wave of populism that is happening around the world, the format of democracy encourages people to come to the center more often than it favors the extreme. There are times when a complete majority of a single party can win an election, but even then, there can be enough disagreement within the ranks that compromises must happen. This process makes it possible for voters or their representatives to aggregate the different needs of each community toward a coherent policy that protects the needs of everyone. That ensures that the interests of each segment of society can receive the protection they need while providing a higher level of accountability for the governing actions which occur.

**List of the Disadvantages of Democracy**

1. Democracy is ineffective unless voters educate themselves on governing decisions.

A democracy allows an individual to cast a vote either directly or through a preferred representative on the issues that the government must manage. There is no direction as to how voters approach this responsibility. Although some people will educate themselves on each issue to offer an experienced opinion, there is no requirement to go through all of this work. Someone can turn in a ballot that is a straight-party ticket with no consideration about the individual views or needs.

President Teddy Roosevelt reportedly once said this: “A vote is like a rifle; its usefulness depends upon the character of the user.”

2. The structure of democracy depends upon the will of the majority.

History has taught us that the will of the majority is not always the ethical or moral position that one should take. We have dealt with issues like slavery, discrimination, and gender inequality in the past because the perspective of the those with the most votes say that society deserves to have those elements. If someone finds themselves outside of the will of the majority more often than not, then it will feel like their vote doesn’t really count for something.

“Majority rule only works if you’re also considering individual rights,” said Larry Flynt. “Because you can’t have five wolves and one sheep voting on what they should all be having for supper.”

3. Democracy can encourage mob rule.

People are migrating toward neighborhoods, employment opportunities, and even relationships based on how comfortable they are around other people. The prevalence is to have neighbors and friends who have a like-minded perspective because there is a fear present in democracy of being wrong. No one wants to be stuck on the outside looking in when it comes to governing. Some states in the U.S. are even becoming polarized as families keep moving to stay within their comfort zone. Democracies encourage mob thinking because every election becomes an “us vs. them” edict.

“Remember,” Will Rogers reportedly warned, “democracy never lasts long. It soon wastes, exhausts, and murders itself. There never was a democracy yet that did not commit suicide.”

4. The cost of democracy is something that many people don’t realize exists.

Democracy is one of the least cost-efficient forms of governing that exists today. The time and currency resources that are necessary to conduct an election can cost billions of dollars. Even a local election for city council, mayor, or a school board can cost six figures. The Presidential elections every four years in the United States are measured in the billions. Although it is useful to have the people to have power in their voice, their taxes are what are used to create that opportunity.

“Democracy is the worst form of government,” warned Winston Churchill, “except for all of the others.”

5. Democracy requires more time to implement changes.

Centralized government structures can make declarations on rules, regulations, or responses that are not always possible in a democratic structure. Voting requires time to review the information provided by each election. That means processes slow down to the point where it can take several years to create significant changes. There may only be 1-2 legislative bills that come through in an entire session that go beyond the typical budgets, committees, and nominations that officials manage.

It even takes more time at the local level to make decisions with democracy because each referendum must go to the voters. Every decision is up for review potentially. That means there is always a certain level of uncertainty.

6. The structure of a democracy is a person-first process.

Elections usually involve the opinions or thoughts of each person based on what individuals want for themselves. Instead of looking at what might be useful for the rest of society, most voters gauge what they put on their ballot based on what affects their checking account, taxes, or overall cost of living. It is a process which encourages everyone to put their needs before others.

When people are voting based on personal interests, then it creates discontent in society because it feels like the majority tries to suppress the minority. That is why there must be an emphasis on protecting the rights of those who find themselves on the outside.

7. There is still the risk of creating a conflict of interest within the government.

Most people work to retain what they have after it is earned. That is why families keep making mortgage or rental payments, managers continue to reinforce their expertise, and politicians do their best to stay in power. Democracies put structures into place to limit the impact of one person on the overall society, but it was not always that way.

Franklin D. Roosevelt served in office from March 1933 to April 1945. He served as the 32nd President won a record four Presidential elections, becoming a central figure in the events that shaped the world during that time. His New Deal program was a direct response to the Great Depression. Now an amendment limits the number of terms that the executive branch can serve.

8. Democratic governments follow the “a chicken in every pot” system.

Democracy does not require the same level of accountability if it is established in representative form. The goal of a politician is to receive the most votes. Once that person gets into office, there are fewer controls in place to recall that person if they do not accurately represent what their community wants. The only method to stop this in some countries is to vote in a different person during the next election.

Empty promises are common in direct democracies as well. When there is an incentive to offer everything without the requirement to fulfill your word, then you’ll see more lies than truth in the daily conversations about governing that occur.

9. Gridlock occurs frequently in democratic structures.

There is no incentive for people to work together when another election can change the outcome in the future. The United States encountered this disadvantage when a Supreme Court opening occurred during the final year of President Obama’s term in office. Republicans in Congress refused to even hold hearings with his nominee because of the upcoming election, which President Trump eventually won.

When there is no incentive to work together, then partisan politics become the conversation of government. It is especially bad in two-party systems, but this disadvantage is present in all democracies as well.

10. It can require individual voters to accept an entire mandate for a single issue.

Conservatives in the United States would argue that it is challenging to vote for the average Democrat because of their views on abortion. Liberals would make the same point when discussing LGBTQIA+ rights. Unless there is a direct democracy structure in place, voters must accept an entire manifesto to vote on the issues which are critical to their needs. Instead of having a candidate who truly represents them, they must pick the platform which is the closest to their stance.