

Word Count:

1. George Washington did not spend any money during his election campaigns. Instead, his supporters spent money on his behalf, mainly on providing alcohol to voters.
2. The administration of federal elections in the US is primarily controlled by the states.

While the United States aims to preserve the highest standards for a fair electoral process, there are several factors today that have nudged the country away from Dahl's definition of democracy. Two of the most significant factors today are the Electoral college and the use of voter suppression. These factors should be considered significant because they seek to diminish the power of the people in influencing political decisions that may not align with the majority of the population's sentiments.

The Electoral College is the process by which the United States votes and decides on a President. This process is widely known for breaking down the votes and the scale at which votes are counted and represented. "The Electoral College consists of 538 electors. A majority of 270 electoral votes is required to elect the President"(1) and each state's amount of electoral votes is decided by the number of members in its Congressional delegation, one for each member in the House of Representatives plus two for its Senators.

There are a couple of reasons why the Electoral College is among the leading causes of unfair elections. While the Electoral College is the deciding factor for the presidency, the amount of electoral votes a state holds does not necessarily reflect its population. In both the 2000 and 2016 elections, the electoral college favored one party while the popular vote favored the losing party. This led to widespread protest across the United States as many voters felt as if the election was cheated, all due to the nature of this voting system. Another reason why the Electoral College can lead to lower voting standards is because of its "winner-takes-all" system. While it makes sense for the winning party to reap the benefits of a successful campaign, this system can lead to the neglect of minority views and the over-representation of certain states in the election. Again, leading many groups of people to feel cheated by the electoral process.

Voter suppression is a strategy used to influence the outcome of an election in an unethical way by targeting, discouraging, and even preventing specific groups of people from voting. While political campaigns also aim to influence the outcome of an election, they do so by changing the opinions of potential voters through persuasion and promoting the act of voting. Some examples of voter suppression include strict voter ID

laws, purging of voter rolls, and intimidation tactics. Most if not all voter suppression tactics disproportionately affect lower-income communities, taking away from the democratic principle of equal representation of citizens.

Gerrymandering is the practice of manipulating the boundaries of an electoral district to favor one political party or group over another. It is a common practice in the United States, and it has significant implications for the country's democracy. Gerrymandering undermines the principle of "one person, one vote," as it can result in some citizens having more voting power than others. By creating electoral districts that favor one political party or group, gerrymandering reduces the responsiveness of the government to the preferences of its citizens. In some cases, it can even result in the majority of citizens being represented by politicians who do not reflect their preferences.

In conclusion, both the Electoral College and Voter Suppression have nudged the United States democracy away from Dahl's definition and lowered our standards of voting practices. These processes have disproportionately affected minority communities and play a role in the equal representation of citizens. With political tensions as they are today the United States needs to take a serious look into the amendment and reform of the electoral process and work to ensure fair, democratic elections in the future.

References:

1. "What Is the Electoral College?" *National Archives and Records Administration*, National Archives and Records Administration, <https://www.archives.gov/electoral-college/about>.