**EVALUATE THE PRINCIPLES OF DEMOCRACY AND FEDERALISM**

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**Democracy**

**Brief introduction**

There are certain features of democracy about which there is significant consensus and the world has countless examples of democratic practices that have existed over long periods of time and have now advanced across vast geographical spaces (Landman, 2007). Democracy, intrinsically and ideally, espouses certain ethos for which democratic proponents proposes to the world. The principles governing democracy as a system of governance are discusses as follows:

1. The principle of popular sovereignty

Democracy is a form of governance based on some degree of **popular sovereignty** and collective decision-making and this premise remains largely uncontested (Landman, 2007). In democratic setting, leaders seek mandate from the electorate. Elected leaders draw the legitimacy of their service from the processes governing the exercise of the civic duty given to each citizen. According to Bellamy (2008), participation and democracy links citizenship and democratic politics in a systematic fashion.

2. The principle of rule of the law

Law is supreme in any democratic setting. According to Koivisto (2022), The transparency metaphor in law both relies on and attempts to bridge the premised distance between the governor and the governed.

3. The principle of ethical conduct and accountability

Ethics is the application of principle to behaviour- Without ethics, democracy cannot survive (Staff Reports, 2020). At the heart of democracy, is the ethical concept and an ethical way to govern because it is built on a premise of individual rights, political equality, a fair governing process and justice among other rights. Democracy is a form of governance in which political power is vested in the people, which means the process by which we adopt policy is as important as the policy we adopt (Staff Reports, 2020). Democracy, rule of the people, is comprised of complex webs of accountabilities between people and those who use power to govern on their behalf. Democratic accountability is comprised of justifications for these uses of power, combined with distributions of empowerments in such a way that those affected can sanction its use (Warren, 2014).

4. The principle of human rights

Democracy provides an environment that respects human rights and fundamental freedoms, and in which the freely expressed will of people is exercised (UN, n.d). Citizenry have a say in decisions and can hold decision-makers cum legislators into account. Women and men have equal rights and all people are free from discrimination (UN, n.d).

Democracy is founded on the principles of equality and respect for all individuals in what is popularly known as mutual respect.

5. Majority rule principle

Democracy is commonly associated with political equality and/or majority rule. (Sanders, 2010). Decision-making procedures can be justified in democracy by invoking either their fairness or their ability to produce good outcomes (Girrand, 2014).

Whether democratic or federal, the principles of majority rule and the protection of individual and minority rights would seem contradictory. However, these principles are twin pillars holding up the very foundation of what we mean by democratic government. The minorities irrespective of how they are, whether as a result of ethnic background, religious belief, geographic location, income level, or political-- enjoy guaranteed basic human rights that no government, and no majority, elected or not, should disenfranchise.

6. Muilt-party system principle

According to National Youth Council (n.d), a multi-party system is a political system in which multiple political parties across the political spectrum run for national elections, and all have the capacity to gain control of government offices, separately or in coalition. A multi-party system create room for opposition to the winning party and thereby holding the incoming government in check. This helps provide the government with different viewpoints on issues. Additionally, a multi-party system provides voters with a choice of candidates, parties and policies to vote for.

7. The principle of Economic freedom

According to Vasquez (2005), economic freedom is a desirable end unto itself because it generally expands the range of choice of the individual, both as a consumer and as a producer. Economic freedom allows for independent sources of wealth to counterbalance political power and to nourish a pluralistic society (Vasquez, 2005).

A democratic political system permits active but voluntary citizens' participation at the same time that it creates through competitive market forces conditions to growth (Nelson, & Singh, 1998).

8. Regular free and fair elections principle

Free and fair elections are the heart of democracy. According to USAID (n.d), elections and other political processes are pivotal to the quality of a country’s governance and can either greatly advance or set back a country’s long-term democratic development. Free, fair, and credible elections are the principle upon which other indicators of democracy are evaluated (Kaburu, 2017).

**Federalism**

Brief introduction

Federalism, philosophically and in practice, according to (Schick, 2007), is a system that divides political authority between a nation-state and sub-national polities within its territory so that both the national and sub-national polities directly govern individuals within their jurisdiction, and that confers both national and sub-national citizenships. Principally, federalism is founded on the following ethos:

1. Principle of autonomy

According to Tierney (2022), federalism is an act of constitutional union that gives foundational recognition and accommodation to the state’s constituent territorial pluralism. The law of the land as enshrined in the constitution fosters this foundational pluralism and maintains the constitutional relationship between pluralism and union in the creation and reconciliation of different orders of government (Tierney, 2022).

Aunclair (2005), states that, some federations have opted for the asymmetric form of federalism, thereby granting certain national groups true autonomous. The asymmetry division of power differ from country to country with the division of powers being based on the realities of each federation unit.

According to Aunclair (2005), other federations have also adopted approaches based on the challenges they face. One such approach consists of redrawing state or provincial borders so as to better respect the ethnic make-up of each one (Aunclair, 2005). Suksi (2021), notes that, a distinction between territorial autonomy and federal forms of organization can be made by using institutional and material criteria and by considering the relevance of supremacy clauses and preemption doctrines of different sorts in relation to singular sub-state entities.

2. Principle of separation of powers

Federalism provides for unity in some matters and localized self-government in others (Saunders, 2019). The reasons for structuring a state as a federation vary. Often, a federation is established to assist to maintain peace or to manage diversity (Saunders, 2019). In a very general view, federalism also can deepen democracy, by providing a level of government that can respond more effectively to local circumstances. States and regions also can help to inform union institutions about conditions, needs and demands around the country (Saunders, 2019).

3. The principle of inclusivity

‘‘Federalism’’ is a normative term recommending the use of federal principles, and favours a political system of multilevel government combining elements of shared-rule and territorial self-rule (McGarry and O’Leary, 2007; Watts 2008). Power in federalism, is divided between the two tiers of government. There are two broadly dinstict approaches to distributing powers within federations: the dualist and integrated models. Many countries have elements of both. The dualist model typically places different jurisdictions to each level of government, which then delivers and administers its own programs. The integrated model provides for many shared competences and the constituent-unit governments often administer centrally legislated programs or laws. Such division of power ensures neutrality and equality in the representation of the various groups and interests in the polity. Additionally, division of power secures local autonomy and representation for diverse groups. However, according to Aunclair (2005), there is no a priori formula to determine which powers should be devolved to the federal authority and which to the regional authorities.

In areas where is ethnic diversity, federalism has been touted as the solution in galvanizing the nation together. According to Bulmer (2015), one of the main benefits of federalism is that it provides a framework for the recognition of ethnic, religious, linguistic or other cultural communities, reflecting their desire to be recognized as a people with a distinct identity and particular interests.

4. The principle of Subsidiarity

The principle of subsidiarity offers a general guide for the division of legislative power in a federation (Fabbrini 2016). According to this principle, powers should be assigned to the lowest level of government at which they can effectively be exercised so that the process of governing takes place as closely as possible to the people affected by it, in the interest of responsive and effective decision-making. Responsive and effective decisions, in turn, foster democracy and attract public engagement and support.

In federalism, decentralization of good and services, and governance is at the centre of this system of governance. Decentralization of the provision of local public goods, public services and targeted transfers is based largely on the fact that efficiency is enhanced, a form of subsidiarity (Boadway, 2006). There are several reasons for this. Some are based on informational advantages. States may have better information about local needs for public services and costs of provision. They may be better able to target programs to those for whom they are intended. Administrative costs may be reduced by eliminating a layer of bureaucracy and alleviating agency costs (Boadway, 2006).

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