

Innovations

Liberal Democracy is not Democracy: Neoclassicism Politics Perspectives

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Abstract:

Much work has been done to lucubrate divergence between democracy and liberal democracy. Despite this, scholarships have failed to convey that these are two distinct ideologies. This paper challenge the fundamental proposition that, democracy is synonymous to liberal democracy. The work delves into individualism, rights, media, and protection of minorities. This paper thereby, explore the differences between the two concepts, first, in principles, and second, in practice. Empirical examples provided offer a posteriori aid to enforce assertions that democracy, when infused with liberal tenets, forms a novel governance system - liberal democracy.

Keywords: *Democracy, Liberal Democracy, Media Repression, Electoral Integrity, Liberty, Freedom, & Pluralism*

Introduction

The conflation of two distinct political ideologies: liberalism and democracy to form a [novel] system of governance referred to as liberal democracy was aimed at pointing fingers at democracy for not being able to protect and guarantee individualism, rights, liberty, etc. Many often easily get confused, whenever faced with questions of, but not limited to, providing distinction(s) between democracy and liberal democracy. Some, if not all, believe that, there is no difference between the latter and the former. However, there do exist differences because the two ideologies represent different systems of governance (Graham, 1992). Likewise, both emanated from different eras. Democracy pre-date liberal democracy, thereby, making the former to be a product of modernism while the latter is a child of ancient societies.

As systems of governance, liberal democracy limits the powers of leaders while democracy does not. From this juncture, it shows that these are different, not only in principles, but also, in practice through their allocation of political powers. The concern here, is not centred on who is in power, but on the degree to which power is allocated for usage (Plattner 1998). This, even without considering other similar factors, indicates that, in practice, democracy is different from liberal democracy. There are societies that are liberal but non-democratic and others that are non-liberal but democratic. This vivid dichotomy was earlier raised by Graham (1992) posing that; are all liberals, democrats? Or are all democrats, liberals? The answer to these are simple; not all liberals are democrats, likewise, not all democrats are liberals. In the same alignment, some societies are liberal but are not a democracy, while others are non-liberal but are democracies.

Democracy is unable to protect rights, freedom, and liberty (Plattner 1998; Zakaria 2003). Thus, liberal democracy came to fill gaps created by democracy. Looking at, or considering liberal democracy as a continuation of democracy is unfair because democracy did not come to an end with the introduction of liberal democracy. Rather, without doubt, the two ideologies continue to exist, not coexist, but as unique systems of governance in their own political rights. They do not co-exist in the same political systems - implying that, a country is either a democracy or liberal democracy. Providing a scientific difference between these ideologies is of utmost important; it would help to inform countries on whether their political system is progressing or depreciating. If a democratic country diminishes to authoritarianism, it is necessary, more importantly, not only for academic purposes, to provide a level of measurement for liberal democracies. Thence, it is worthy to note, and point out outright, that, a liberal democracy can depreciate to a democracy; if it starts eroding values of liberalism. Several countries today, continue to refer to themselves as liberal democracy, though, freedom of speech is being stiffen, and rights are eradicated. With the framework provided by this study, scholars, policy makers and institutions would become well knowledgeable to ascertain that, liberal democracy is not a static political status.

Democracy was achieving positive results even when it cornered all women and slaves and prevented them from all forms of political participations. American and Western democracies were proud of their governance system at this stage of their political life. Is it right to say they were not a democracy at this time? As earlier mentioned; highlighting the gaps created by democracy, the tendency of alienating certain groups of people because of their gender and/or social status, gave rise to resistance against democracy. Thereby, forcing the creation of a new governance system - liberal democracy, with the sole purpose of filling this gap by being all inclusive (Plattner 1998). Knowing when a country was democratic and when it became a liberal democracy shed lights on advances and growth societies have made. Some authors refer to the West and America as liberal democracy even during the era of colonialism and slave trade (slavery). Meanwhile, these are anti-liberal actions, which communicates that, these countries were not closer to, or fit to be called liberal democracies during these eras.

The concept of illiberal democracy emerged to be the opposite of liberal democracy. However, if this should be considered, what would be left of democracy? Democracy from its state of originality has nothing to do with liberalism. Hence, illiberal democracy should be rejected. The opposite of liberal democracy is democracy (and not illiberal democracy). It's the same thing with autocracy - the opposite of liberal autocracy can't be illiberal autocracy because autocracy does not permit liberal values. These are common errors in political discourse and writings that deserve corrections. The opposites of political concepts are not generated from their direct opposite grammatical words - political lexicons are unique.

Smith critiques of liberal democracy [cited in McManus 2021] shows liberal democrats who claim to assure freedom, often at times, tend to take away citizens rights and freedom whenever they feel the exercise of freedom may have negative effects on their leadership. Also, fairness competition is constantly checked and constrained. These fully elucidate a glaring pictorial that liberal democracy and democracy are two different political ideologies. The latter doesn't guarantee freedom, while the former gives freedom and takes it back when it sense that it is about to be used against its interests. Which illustrates why great liberal political economists are sceptical about liberal democracy (Kukathas 2006). Hayek for instance, believe that, governments, no matter how liberal it may claim to be, should not interfere in the economy. Government interference is against free market economy. Notwithstanding, all liberal democracies interferes in markets, thereby, justifying why liberal democracy is a problem of its own self. No doubt, a great portion in most societies are increasingly becoming ardent supporters of liberal autocracy while dicing away liberal democracy. Most observers would

accept the phrase: illiberal democracy but are still unable to gain awareness that an illiberal democracy, in simpler parlance, means democracy. Therefore, liberal democracy cannot be, and should not be considered, regardless of the scale used, to be the same as democracy.

Many have laid endless arguments emphasising the ills of liberal democracy and termed it illiberal democracy (Zakaria 1997). Some observers fall short to come to the realisation that, there should be distinctions between democracy and liberal democracy. Anti liberal democracy scholars believe that their critiques on liberal democracy is a critique on democracy. This is why they often wrongly see illiberal democracy in countries that, from their onset, have never been a democracy. How can a country that recently came out of colonialism or fundamentalism and is still struggling to understand what it means to gain political independence be considered an illiberal democracy? Can a country become a liberal democracy when it has not experience democracy? This is some how, without second thoughts, a very sketchy and narrow analysis. Such line of arguments arise, often, with no sign of ending, not now, nor in the nearest or long[er] future, because scholarships have failed to acknowledge that the fusion of liberalism and democracy, gave birth to a new system of governance called liberal democracy which is different from an old system of governance - democracy.

Liberalism strives to survive out of government structures failed because citizens freedom, rights and liberty were victims of political overreach (Plattner 1999). This connotes that, democracy in its natural environment does not care [much] about liberal ideals. This enhanced liberal crusaders to pursue a system of governance that protects and guarantees liberal ideals, hence, not surprising, though some may be, notwithstanding, gave birth to what is known as liberal democracy. In accordance with the apophthegm, liberalism transformed and became liberal democracy because democracy could not incorporate it values. However, though not shocking, due to not being able to adjudge differences therein, other observers argues that liberal democracy is an advancement of democracy. These two contradictory view points, more negatively from the former, emerged because many are unaware, if not deliberately shying away, no doubt, not from the obvious, but from the realism, that, liberal democracy is different from democracy. Can both systems function independently? If no, why not?

Idi Amin is noted to have expresses that, freedom of speech is guaranteed in Uganda, but freedom after speech, he can't guarantee it. This merely denotes that, freedom after speech depends on the content of what a person may say. Probably, with certainty, in case of doubt, simply puts, means expressions against those in power is prohibited and violators would be admonished after exercising such freedom. For countries that claims to be democracies, this seems, bluntly, too harsh and cruel, but traits of such are found in most liberal democracies. Which accounts for why I proposed for a distinction between these ideologies, without dubiety, in order that, perhaps, sure enough, everyone would be capable to assess and ascertain whether a democracy or liberal democracy is appreciating or depreciating. In this light, democracy can diminish to autocracy/authoritarianism, while a liberal democracy can equally depreciate to a democracy; in so far, as it continues to have free and faire election, in the absence of, citizens freedom, rights and liberty.

Saying that liberalism laid the foundation for effective democracy is misleading because democracy existed before liberalism. Proven by the fact that ancient societies had some sort of representative governance system. Even the Athenians had a functional democracy without any iota of liberalism. More worrisome, is that, all political institutions, are today referred to as democratic institutions. Liberal democracy is not the only victim here. Taking a retrospective view, the House of Commons in England is known to have been in existence by the 13th Century. By this time, and many Centuries thereafter, there was nothing like democracy. How come, political institutions that are older than democracy became democratic institutions? The French

and British were all previously ruled by absolute monarchies with councils that acted like courts. The USA political system had freemen (franchised) and non-freemen (disenfranchised). The political evolutions over time of these countries, demo that, they were not liberal democracies centuries ago; they were mere democracies. Assessing recent politickings, they are no longer a democracy, possibly, having a different political ideology, none other than, liberal democracy.

Plainly, authoritarianism is a threat to democracy and vice versa. While the major and immediate threat to liberal democracy is liberal democracy. This sound strange and untrue, but the in fighting between the unlimited desires of some liberals has created two crystal clear camps or ideological cleavages among liberals: progressive liberals and conservative liberals (Hornat 2021). The latter wants endless rights and freedoms due to developments of newly created rights and cultures, while the former believes that an undefined and unlimited rights turn to destroy old rights. In an attempt to preserve old rights and prevent their progressive counterparts, many conservative liberals have turn to generate positive views and likeness for autocracy. They do this with expectations that, autocrats can best preserve the mile stones they have achieved in securing certain degree of rights, freedom and liberty. This illustrates how today's conservatives where yesterday liberals. This phenomenon would keep continuing because once a liberal gets saturated, s/he doesn't see any need to champion new causes(s). This also explains why, most conservatives are older people while the reverse is true for liberals.

Most authors argue that by 1960, several countries were adopting and implementing liberal democracy (Bollen 1993). But this argument has been heavily rejected (Carothers 2007). The reason why many people see liberal democracy at all times is because authors have created, either intentionally, or, unintentionally, a research gap by not providing true differences between democracy and liberal democracy. This has led to a false believe that liberal democracy is the Western form of Democracy, then, what is the form of democracy practised out of the West? Democracy is well defined but liberal democracy escapes a true definition. This justify why several authors wrongly see liberal democracy in all eras of mankind even where democracy was absent. Most of Asia and Africa were still under colonial rule by 1960, meaning they did not enjoy the luxury of freedom. This led to the rise of nationalism, fights against imperialism. How could a country colonising another be a liberal? How can a country that just gained independent be liberal democracy when it was not know democracy?

Autocracy gave birth to democracy in most countries due to inherent tensions between elites and non-elites. The ascension of democracy in such a circumstance completely lacks liberal tenets (Rodrik 2016). Due to facts that, elites giving up autocracy endeavoured to keep and protect their rights and control over resources. Democracy merely came in and allowed the masses to exercise civic duties like political participation; most importantly, as generally known, choosing their leaders through elections. Worth noting is the eminence that, liberal democracy brings and puts everyone equal under the law, without fear or favour of any class of people. No group of people, irrespective of social status, has exclusive property rights at the expense of others. This makes the governance system of liberal democracy to be very different from that of democracy. Which goes further to elaborate why this paper argues that liberal democracy is not democracy. It should be treated in its own rights and at the same time, given its own place as an independent political ideology that does not warrant any direct association with its predecessor - democracy.

Origin of Democracy

The origin of democracy can be traced back to ancient civilizations and societies where various forms of participatory decision-making and governance existed. While the concept and practices of democracy have evolved over time, some of the earliest instances of democratic principles can be observed in the following historical contexts:

Ancient Athens is often considered the birthplace of democracy. The city-state introduced a direct form of democracy in which eligible citizens directly participated in decision-making through assemblies and votes. The Athenian system allowed citizens to debate and vote on important issues, propose legislation, and hold public officials accountable. However, it's important to note that this form of democracy was limited to a relatively small portion of the population, excluding women, slaves, and non-citizens. The Roman Republic is another example of early democratic practices. While not a direct democracy like Athens, the Roman Republic featured representative elements where citizens elected officials to represent their interests in various legislative bodies. The system also had checks and balances to prevent concentration of power.

Various indigenous communities around the world practised diverse forms of participatory decision-making that can be seen and considered as precursors to modern democratic principles. These societies often emphasized consensus-building and collective decision-making through discussions among community members. Most [early] subsistence societies got things done only through the means of consensus. The Iroquois Confederacy, a group of Native American tribes, is also often cited to have an influence on the development of democratic ideas. The Confederacy had a system of representative government and councils where leaders were selected by consensus. During the Middle Ages, some European societies held assemblies where nobles, clergy, and commoners gathered to discuss matters of governance and taxation. These assemblies contributed to the idea of broader participation in decision-making.

The concept of democracy continued to evolve through various political revolutions and movements, including the American Revolution, Glorious Revolution, and the French Revolution. These events further shaped the development of democratic ideals, leading to the establishment of constitutional and representative democracies. It's important to recognize that the origin of democracy is not limited to a single event or civilization. Instead, it emerges from a complex interplay of historical, sociological, cultural, and intellectual factors that influenced the evolution of democratic systems and practices across different societies and time periods (Carothers 2007).

Origin of Liberal Democracy

Though one may find some similarities with the latter, it is important and necessary to pay attention to additions in principles the former stands for. The origin of liberal democracy can be traced far back to the 17th and 18th centuries. Liberal democracy is a form of representative government that combines democratic principles with the protection of individual rights and liberties. It emphasizes the rule of law, limited government intervention, and the importance of safeguarding individual freedoms. The development of liberal democracy was influenced by several key factors and thinkers:

The Enlightenment was a period characterized by the rise of intellectual and philosophical ideas that challenged traditional notions who were practising monarchy and absolutism. Thinkers like John Locke, Montesquieu, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and Voltaire promoted ideas of natural rights, separation of powers, and the consent of the governed. These ideas laid the foundation for the principles of liberal democracy. The concept of social contract and the idea that governments should exist to protect individual rights and liberties had a significant impact on the development of liberal democracy. Rousseau holds that a government can not govern successfully without the consent of its citizens. There must be some sort of arrangement and or agreement between the two parties. Lock's belief in the consent of the governed and the right to revolt against oppressive rulers resonated with the notion of popular sovereignty.

The American Revolution against British colonial rule showcased the practical implementation of liberal democratic principles. The Declaration of Independence (1776) articulated the idea that governments derive their legitimacy from the consent of the governed and that individuals have inalienable rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Yet, one could hardly talk of a liberal democracy at this time because many Americans were still keeping slaves. The U.S. Constitution (1787) further solidified the concepts of separation of powers, checks and balances. The French Revolution played a role in advancing liberal democratic ideals, although it also faced challenges and contradictions. The French Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizens (1789) asserted equality, liberty and freedom. However, the period also witnessed tensions between liberal democratic aspirations and authoritarian tendencies.

The rise of industrialization and urbanization brought new economic and social challenges that empowered individuals financially and gave them important positions in societies which provided a room for them to have a say in societal happenings and developments. Workers had opportunities to form unions, etc. in order to scheme mechanisms to protect their labour from employers. Liberal democracies addressed some challenges; by promoting legal protections for workers, advocating for social welfare policies, and regulating business practices to prevent exploitation.

The Civil Rights Movement - Martin Luther King

Though America political system was fully and effectively democratic, it was very far away from being a liberal democracy. This forced and sparked fierce and intense civil rights movements against segregation and racial discriminations. The achievements of the civil rights movements by 1970 upward, enabled America to become a liberal democracy. It attain this through the passing of several anti racial laws aimed at ensuring equality for all races. Canada could passed similar laws only in the 1980s. It's however untrue for scholars to refer to America and Western states as liberal democracies in the 1970s because these countries weren't liberal, thereby, they couldn't have had a liberal democracy at this time. In the 1960s, most African countries were fighting for independence against European colonial oppressors (the words: colonial master is not appropriate because it glorifies the perpetrators of inhuman acts and theft of African and Asian resources.

Explanation of Key Concepts

Democracy:

Democracy is a political system characterized by the participation of citizens in decision-making processes, allowing for collective choices to reflect the will of the people. In a democratic system, individuals have the right to vote in elections and participate in various aspects of governance. Likewise, individuals could decide to exercise this right by not voting. In this case, they must be prepared to acknowledge, respect and abide by the outcome of an election they abstained. In democracy, such 'An Inaction' (AI) is considered 'An Action' (AA). The researcher considers Inaction as also a way of democratic participation - passive participation. Participation take the form of choosing representatives, influencing policies, and holding leaders accountable for their actions. Apart from deciding not to vote, citizens who opted for 'AI' still has full rights to influence policies, and hold leaders accountable.

The fundamental principle of democracy is the idea that political power originates from the people, and government authority is exercised with their consent. This is what the researcher refer to as: potency and significant of the AI & AA of Democracy. My aphorism fits squarely and smoothly with Abraham Lincoln's adage: "*government of the people, by the people, for the people.*"

Lincoln did not provide any room for citizens exclusion irrespective of their [in]action in an election. Implying the AI & AA of democracy is of utmost importance. People need to stop criticising or negatively pointing at citizens who choose democratic AI approach over the AA approach. Both political entities help to provide forums for accommodation for all citizens. AI & AA is a system of inclusivity; which reckons well with democracy. Democratic systems can vary in their structures and practices, but they generally emphasize key principles such as political equality, protection of individual rights, transparency, and the rule of law. Democratic societies often include mechanisms for peaceful transitions of power, fostering stability and preventing authoritarian rule. Democracy is not only a set of institutions but also a culture of civic engagement and active participation, promoting a sense of belonging and responsibility among citizens.

Liberal Democracy:

Liberal democracy builds upon the principles of democracy while incorporating a strong emphasis on individual rights and liberties. In addition to ensuring that political decisions reflect the will of the people, liberal democracies prioritize the protection of individual freedoms from infringement by government and other citizens. These includes freedom of speech, press, assembly, and other civil liberties.

In a liberal democracy, the rule of law is paramount. This means that all individuals, including government officials, are subject to and must abide by the law. The judiciary plays a critical role in upholding these legal principles and ensuring that the rights of individuals are safeguarded. Liberal democracies often include a system of checks and balances, where different branches of government have distinct functions and the ability to constrain one another's powers. The concept of liberal democracy also extends to protecting minority rights, ensuring that the rights of marginalized groups are not overridden by the preferences of the majority. This inclusivity aims to prevent the "tyranny of the majority" and promotes a diverse and pluralistic society.

To sum-up, while democracy involves citizen participation in decision-making, liberal democracy adds a layer of protection for individual rights and freedoms. This was additions were absent in early democracies like Athenians societies. The emphasis on the rule of law, checks and balances, and respect for minority rights distinguishes liberal democracy from other forms of democracy and contributes to a political system that values both the collective will of the people and the individual rights of each citizen. Even today, some Western oppressors continue to indirectly control some African countries, but if they are truly a liberal democracy, why can't they allow every country to freely control their own political and economic affairs? Why interfere in the rights of others? This is anti liberalism. The theory of liberal democracy has been missed represent in most political arguments including scholarships.

Thoughts of Early Philosophers

Anti Democracy Political Thinkers

Most prominent early philosophers shy away from fully supporting democracy because they thought educated individuals should never be considered equals with uneducated masses especially when it comes to issues related to public decision making. Unfortunately, Socrates didn't leave behind any written works in regards to democracy. His thoughts on democracy can be inferred from the writings of one of his staunchest student: Plato, particularly in "*The Republic*." Socrates expressed scepticism towards democracy; he questioned the wisdom of allowing all citizens to participate in decision-making, suggesting that only those with knowledge and expertise should lead societies . In Plato's dialogues, Socrates critiqued the Athenian

democracy of his time, suggesting that it could lead to rule by the ignorant masses and demagogues (Plato 1943; Sharples 1994; Saxonhouse 1998; Marshall & Bilsborough 2010; Scott 2000). In alignment with Socrates' worries, Xenophon, in "The Polity of the Athenians," criticized the Athenian democracy for its instability; highlighting the tendency to switch policies frequently (Kroeker 2009; Seager 2001). Though Plato's early works like "Protagoras" and "Gorgias," had explored the potential benefits of democratic dialogue and rhetoric for arriving at informed decisions, despite this in "The Republic" he argued that democracy could lead to chaos and instability. He believed that a just society should be led by Philosopher-Kings who possessed wisdom and virtue, rather than allowing the majority to rule, as he contends that the masses were prone to irrationality and impulsiveness. Plato further opined that the rule of the masses could result in the pursuit of individual desires rather than the common good. Which he feared could easily degenerate into mob rule. In Plato's "The Republic" Thrasymachus argued that democracy could lead to the rule of the strong and manipulative, rather than the just.

Aristotle had a nuanced view of democracy' he recognized different forms of democracy, including direct and representative. He believed that a well-balanced government could emerge if democracy was tempered with elements of aristocracy and monarchy. Hobbes had a more pessimistic view of democracy. He believed that humans were inherently self-interested and that strong centralized authority was a necessity to maintain social order. His work "Leviathan" argued for an absolute sovereign to prevent the chaos of a state of nature. Schmitt criticized [liberal] democracy in his work "The Concept of the Political," arguing for a strong sovereign authority to counteract political fragmentation. He saw democracy as a system that encourages disintegration of political institutions and power, thereby, making it difficult to rule (Cheek 1991; Lindsay, 1992; Lintott 1992; Skidmore-Hess, Ellison, & Sherrod 2017).

Jason Brennan's "Against Democracy" argues that most citizens lack the knowledge and incentives to make informed political decisions, and advocates for epistocracy. Hélène Landemore criticizes traditional representative democracy, advocating for "open democracy" where citizens actively participate in decision-making. Nadia Urbinati criticizes the "competitive cult of leadership" in contemporary democracies, which she sees as detrimental to citizen participation. The efficacy of electoral democracy in post-colonial contexts, often fails to address deep-rooted socio-economic issues (Brennan 2016; Landemore 2020).

Pro Democracy Political Thinkers

Rousseau was critical of representative democracy and advocated for direct democracy. He believed that true democracy required active citizen participation and a commitment to the general will of the people. Tocqueville was generally positive about democracy but also identified potential pitfalls, such as the tyranny of the majority and the risk of individualism. He saw democratic societies as characterized by equality and voluntary associations (Stoke 1935). Marx viewed democracy within the context of class struggle. He saw bourgeois governance system as a form of political control by the capitalist class, exploiting the working class. Marx believed that true democracy could only emerge in a classless society. Weber had a complex view of democracy. While he recognized its importance for modern societies, he highlighted the role of bureaucracy and rationalization. Mannheim's views on democracy were influenced by his sociology of knowledge. He saw democracy as a way to manage the diversity of perspectives and ideas in modern societies, allowing for a more inclusive decision-making process. John Stuart Mill was a staunch advocate of representative democracy. He believed that democracy was essential to safeguard individual liberties and prevent the tyranny of the majority. Mill's work emphasized the importance of open debate, freedom of expression, and the protection of minority rights. Even though he had earlier fought that intellectuals should be given

opportunities to vote more than once because they can not be considered equals with non intellectuals.

Lock's ideas laid the groundwork for liberal democracy; his ideas on government and individual rights laid the foundation for liberal democratic principles. His work "Two Treatises of Government" emphasized the consent of the governed and the protection of natural rights within a political governance framework. He argued that government's legitimacy is derived from the consent of the governed and that individuals have natural rights that need protection. Lock's writings greatly influenced the concept of limited government, rule of law, and the separation of powers which is well developed by Montesquieu in his work titled "*The Spirit of the Laws*" where he introduced the idea of separation of powers, which became a cornerstone of modern political governance systems. He believed that a successful governance requires a system of checks and balances to prevent abuse of power (Montesquieu 1989). Adam Smith's ideas on political economy indirectly influenced democratic principles. While not exclusively a political philosopher, his advocacy for economic freedom and limited government intervention contributed to the development of classical liberal thought, which underpins many democratic societies .

Napoleon's views on democracy evolved over time. Initially, he supported the idea of a strong central authority, but he later adopted elements of democratic governance in his administration, such as the Napoleonic Code, which introduced legal equality and tried to protect individual rights (Thompson 1954). Rousseau's work: "*The Social Contract*" proposed the idea of a social contract where citizens collectively participate in the creation of laws. He advocated for direct democracy where citizens have a say in the decisions that affect their lives. Thomas Paine's book: "*Common Sense*" advocated for American independence and the institution of democratic governance. He believes that citizens have rights to choose their own government and such responsibility should not be left in the hands of a third party. His writings contributed to the spread of democratic ideals.

Supporters for Liberal Democracy

John Rawls: "A Theory of Justice" emphasized the importance of individual rights, equality, and the rule of law in a just society. His concept of the "veil of ignorance" supports the principles of liberal democracy. Amartya Sen: "Development as Freedom" argued that liberal democracy is essential for development and human flourishing. He highlighted the role of political freedoms in promoting well-being. Robert Dahl's work on pluralism and democratic participation aligns with the principles of liberal democracy. In "Polyarchy," he discussed the importance of inclusivity and competition in democratic systems. Martha Nussbaum's capabilities approach underscores the value of human dignity and the need for individual freedoms protected by liberal democratic institutions.

Ronald Dworkin's theory of "rights as trumps" and his defence of judicial review align with the protection of individual rights in liberal democracies. Charles Taylor's communitarian perspective supports liberal democracy by advocating for recognition of diverse cultural identities within a framework of shared political values. Jurgen Habermas's theory of communicative action highlights the role of public discourse and rational argumentation in shaping policies and institutions in liberal democracies. John Dunn's emphasis on citizen participation, accountability, and the protection of rights aligns with the principles of liberal democracy.

Critics of Liberal Democracy:

Michel Foucault's critique of power and knowledge challenges the claims of neutrality and objectivity in liberal democratic institutions. This justifies why the issue of fake news and misinformation has become a major political problem in most liberal democracies as they continue to grapple with a variety of opinions which they think may be harmful to their societies. This is a way to reduce freedom of expression which contradicts the very core of liberalism in democracy (Guédon 1977). Slavoj Žižek's criticism of the commodification of freedom and the illusion of choice in consumerist societies challenges the effectiveness of liberal democracy. Contemporary political occurrences have proven this line of argument to be true. Chantal Mouffe's critique of consensus-based liberal democracy and advocates for a more agonistic approach that acknowledges conflict and dissent (Davis 1999).

Wendy Brown's critique of neoliberalism and its impact on individual subjectivity raises questions about the compatibility of liberal democracy with market-driven values (McBride 2016). Michael Sandel's communitarian perspective questions the ability of liberal democracy to address deeper moral and ethical issues in society. This made Seyla Benhabib's to be concerned about the limits of liberal individualism and she call for a more inclusive deliberative democracy which challenges the scope of liberal democracy. Jacques Rancière's critique of liberal democracy's tendency to exclude marginalized voices, questions its commitment to genuine equality and participation.

Challenges faced by Liberal Democracy

In an era marked by the proliferation of information and the interconnectedness of global societies, the concept of liberal democracy has gained significant prominence. Rooted in the principles of individual rights, rule of law, and protection of minorities, liberal democracy represents a governance system that does not only ensures the participation of citizens in decision-making processes, but also, safeguards their fundamental freedoms. However, as the boundaries of democratic practices are tested, it becomes evident that the label of "liberal democracy" should not be hastily applied to nations that engage in practices antithetical to the core tenets of liberalism. Because a nation is able to conduct free and fair elections, it does not evince that it is a liberal democracy. Free and fair elections are aspects of democracy, and though also being an incorporated aspect of liberal democracy, liberal democracy goes beyond this.

Central to the essence of liberal democracy is the recognition of pluralism and the divergence of opinions. A thriving liberal democracy thrives on the premise that citizens possess the autonomy to express their views, critique government actions, and engage in open debates without fear of reprisal. This open exchange of ideas is essential for the vitality of democratic institutions, fostering informed decision-making and holding leaders accountable. It is in this context that the actions of certain countries raise pertinent questions about their adherence to the principles of liberal democracy. Many have given themselves the title solely because they have good electoral systems. Countries that employ tactics of media shut-down, arrest, maiming, and jailing of journalists, and the branding of all dissenting opinions as "fake news" or relieving workers from their jobs because of holding contrary views contravene the very essence of liberal democracy. By silencing voices that challenge the status quo, such nations undermine the foundational freedom of expression that is central to liberal democracy. The stifling of media outlets and the targeting of journalists not only curtail the public's access to accurate information, but also, erode checks and balances necessary for holding power accountable.

The refusal of leaders to concede defeat in elections directly contradicts the spirit of liberal democracy. A cornerstone of liberal democratic governance is the peaceful transition of power based on the will of the people as expressed through elections. When leaders reject the outcomes

of elections, they disregard the principle of majority rule and gnaw the faith of citizens in elections. This behavior stands in stark contrast to the acceptance of pluralism and the recognition that diverse opinions contribute to a robust democratic discourse and political good health. It is important to acknowledge that, the absence of liberalism in the practices of a democracy raises valid concerns about the legitimacy and authenticity of its claim to being a liberal democracy. The label should not be bestowed solely based on the presence of peaceful elections; rather, it should reflect a commitment to upholding liberal values that protect individual liberties, promote inclusive governance, and guarantee diversity of voices.

In a nutshell, the principles of liberal democracy encompass more than the mere trappings of democratic processes. The acceptance of all forms of pluralism, protection of individual rights, and liberty, are essential components that define true liberal democracies. Countries that engages in actions contrary to these principles, such as media suppression, persecution of press men, dismissal of all contrary opinions as conspiracy theories, and refusal to concede electoral defeat, challenges the integrity of any claim to be a liberal democracy (Zakaria 2003). As the world navigates the complex terrain of governance, it is imperative to uphold the sanctity of liberal values as an integral part of political journeys, ensuring that the label of "liberal democracy" is reserved for those nations that truly reflect these values in their actions and policies. Rejecting opposing opinions only goes a long way to affirm arguments raised against democracy and liberal during its early years of inception; some of which holds that, democracy is a government of uneducated people. If this assertion is not true, governments should allow their citizens to have access to a variety of information and let citizens be the judge of which information is right or wrong. Adherence to liberal democratic principles is not only a matter of moral imperative but also a practical necessity for sustainable governance. It is imperative for societies to recognize that democracy is not a monolithic concept, but liberal democracy is a monolithic concept.

Difficulties of Liberal Democracy to Preserve its Attributes

Abandoning Liberal Democracy and heading back to Democracy is the new normal in modern politics. The seismic shift has occurred unnoticed under the purview of public watch. This paradigm shift is caused by political interest and the incapability of Liberal Democracy to guarantee alternative voices advocating contrary opinions to that of leaders in position of power. The argument here is not concerned on whether contrary opinions are true or false, or whether they are fake news or conspiracy theories. The concern here is that liberalism in democracy was developed to accommodate a pluralism of opinions. Ones expression should not be stiffen by another because it is considered to be a contrary opinion. This accounts for why early philosophers like Socrates, Plato, Hobbes, etc. had warned that a governance system that brings the uneducated together with the educated and considers them as equal is not ideal for society. When everyone is given equal voices, those of the majority unwise would sound louder than that of wise minority. Pluralism of opinions is a major challenge that is uprooting liberal democracy because the only methodology it has to remedy it is to be anti-liberal by curtailing freedom of expression and access to information.

Liberalism in Democracy came about when Western States came to a realism that citizens and societal freedom is inseparable from government actions. Before the era of Enlightenment, states did not permit Open Freedom (author's coinage - meaning people were not allowed to criticise state authorities) but the Enlightenment gave birth to open freedom which allowed all sort of criticism in public places and States were not spared. Popular demands ensured Open Freedom should be assured and protected by governments. Open Freedom metamorphose democracy to liberal democracy - implying a version of governance different from the original established one, which was unable to guarantee public criticism against leaders.

Open Freedom ensures that Citizens were expected to be able to make sound decisions for themselves and criticise whatever they chose to, without causing any public and or physical harm. Just like Rawls supported government intervention into citizens freedom if the exercise may cause harm to another. Rawls didn't see that government interference, in some cases, is rather taking away freedom instead of protecting it. Which accounts why Nozick arguments are often opposing to that of Rawls. Governments often at times explore this for their own selfish interests.

Indicators of Democracy replacing Liberal Democracy

Governments across the world are increasingly silencing views that are contrary to their political agenda. Worse of all, media's are shut down. This reduces citizens access to information and condition them to become consumers of information rather than being rational and analytical (Michael 2018). It is an indicator that governments are failing to build the mental capacity of their citizens for them to attain critical thinking. They are scared of what their citizens judgements may be after consuming contrary views. Governments are scared that the consumption of alternative information to theirs may cause citizens to act negatively or stand-up against certain public policies. This has made governments to strangle even communication means that are used by their opponents. This non-liberal action has also forced the media to align along political lines. Most media today are either pro party X and against part Y. For instance, in the USA, Fox news is widely acknowledged to be pro Republican while CNN is pro Democrat. If they try to reject this direct explanation, they can not reject the fact that they are leaning to the right and left respectively. When main stream media aligns along party lines, it an indicator to denotes that a Liberal Democracy has lose liberalism in its democracy. Meaning it is now a democracy and not liberal democracy.

This is the case of almost every country today which continues to pretend to stay in a political falsehood of Liberal Democracy. These countries have retracted by taking several steps back into the yard of Democracy. In real pragmatic terms, it's rare to find a true liberal democracy in contemporary nation states because most states are overwhelmed by the ever increasing dynamism of pluralism. The most common contention for politicians of today is; us versus them, either you are with us or against us. States claiming to have Liberalism in Democracy should allow citizens to access alternative information. Preventing this imply that countries that continue to claim that they are a Liberal Democracy are telling lies because liberalism has been eroded in their public policies. Such countries may rightfully be referred to as Democracy and not Liberal Democracy. Democracy in Greek societies was developed to ensure that leaders are truly chosen by the populace. It didn't care much about inclusive politics and freedom. This is Democracy in its original self and political purity. As societies evolved over time, Western elites thought it would be wise to incorporate more elements into Democracy. This account for why when other elements where added, the political ideology could no longer be called Democracy. Rather, it was named to reflect new aspects that has been included into the ideology. All aspects added were focus on freedom and justice. Which justify why the best name that fits the new political ideology was: Liberal Democracy. It is very important to note here that, this was not a change of name from Democracy to Liberal Democracy. The latter was not renamed, rather, a new name was developed creating the former.

When media houses are no longer assured safety and protection that the birth of Liberal Democracy gave them, it implies that Liberal Democracy is unable to survive in contemporary political dynamics and increasing socio-cultural waves of intense pluralism. Countries that continues to experience but have free and fare elections are a Democracy and not Liberal Democracy. When a country cannot allow freedom of speech and media, it means it has lost the aspects of Liberalism in its Democracy and should no longer be recognized as a Liberal

Democracy. They have degraded themselves to a Democracy. When journalists are suspended, sacked, arrested, tortured, maimed and or killed, or when political leaders and or citizens social media accounts are blocked or deleted because they offer alternative opinions which are not in line with political elites, these are signs and symbols to identify a dying Liberal Democracy.

In a Liberal Democracy, losing parties are expected to concede defeat but in a Democracy this is irrelevant. Once election results are officially announced, whether the losing party concede or not, it doesn't really matter. Hillary Clinton just like Donald Trump never conceded defeat. Jair Bolsonaro never conceded defeat to Lula Da Silva. Though it is assumed these elections met democratic standards. This is an indicator that the USA is no longer a Liberal Democracy. It is now a Democracy just like Brazil. When politicians no longer concede it implies that extra political spice (liberalism) is no longer present in their democracy. There is nothing wrong to be a democracy. It allows citizens to freely choose their leaders. Countries should not always try to project themselves as liberal democracy if alternative views are being attacked and silence in their political spheres. Contrary opinions should be challenged through constructive debates and not with crude methods. Most media today are full with information signalling fake news. But fake information did not start existing today. What makes it different now? The issue of misinformation needs scholarly attention; if care is not taking, it may eradicate freedom of expression.

There has been a failure in most states to genuinely build the mental capacity of their citizens in order to ensure they can distinguished good information from bad ones. Countries whose media pay more attention to highlighting fake news is also an indicator that it is declining away from liberal Democracy and heading to democracy. Liberalism proclaims the right to education. If states are unable to provide the right resources to build the educational capacities of their citizens then it's a call for concern. It is worth noting That, not all contrary opinions are wrong or False. Opinions today are highly politicize to an extent that leader X would make his supporters believe that his opponent opinions are all lies. This is politics and it is not new in the game. What is new in the game is the increasing rate of side lining opinions politicians disagree with as misinformation/fake-news.

This brings us to a conclusion that such calculative step is skilfully taking away liberalism in democracy. Thence, liberal democracy is far fetch from many nations; it is not what it use to be in the yesteryears. Most countries continue to refer to themselves as liberal democracy but a critical scientific analysis has shown that these countries have fallen back in the confines of democracy. The indicators carved out by this study are meant to cause a political stir among scholarship to help ease the comprehension in the nuance between democracy and liberal democracy. Understanding of this nuance helps us to know if a country political strives are progressing or regressing.

Conclusion

In the realm of democratic governance, the concept of liberal democracy stands as a beacon of pluralism, liberty, rights, and open discourse. Its core tenets are built upon the premise that divergent opinions flourish, media remains independent, and leaders accept electoral outcomes. Un-liberal actions emerges when certain nations, despite their democratic prowess, employ repressive tactics that defy the very essence of liberal democracy. The work has delved into how countries that quell media, delete citizens social media accounts, persecute journalists, label all contrary views as "fake news," and demonstrate refusals to acknowledge electoral defeat should not be classified as liberal democracies due to the glaring contradiction between their actions and the essence of liberalism within democracy.

Central to liberal democracy is the nurturing of pluralism and the allowance for diverse voices to flourish. This inclusivity extends to the media landscape, where an unfettered press ensures an informed citizenry. However, instances abound where media outlets are forcibly shut down, journalists are sacked, suspended, some arrested, maimed, for daring to question power. Such acts do not only violate the principles of freedom of expression but also undermine the crucial role of media in safeguarding liberal democratic processes. As Schudson (2008) asserts, an independent media serves as the "watchdog of democracy," holding leaders accountable and fostering an environment of transparency.

The denigration of contrary opinions as "fake news" is a stark departure from the spirit of liberal democracy. In a true liberal democracy, the marketplace of ideas thrives on open discussions and debates, which are vital for informed decision-making. However, when dissenting voices are dismissed without proper discourse, the very foundation of open dialogue is compromised. This is particularly concerning in an era where disinformation and misinformation can undermine the collective understanding of reality. A functional [liberal] democracy relies on the exposure to diverse viewpoints, and preventing the undue influence of echo chambers (Sunstein 2017).

Moreover, the reluctance of leaders to concede electoral defeat challenges the core principle of majority rule within liberal democracy. An essential element of democratic governance is the peaceful transition of power based on the will of the electorate. When leaders refuse to honor this process, they undermine liberal democratic mandate and foster a climate of political uncertainty. As Lipset (1959) posits, [liberal] democracy is built on the acceptance of electoral outcomes, demonstrating respect for the collective choice of the people.

The hallmarks of liberal democracy extend beyond the procedural mechanics of elections. The principles of pluralism, unfettered media, respectful discourse, and acceptance of electoral results are intrinsic to liberal democratic ethos. Nations that stifle media, suppress journalists, dismiss contrary opinions, and deny electoral realities are incongruent with these principles. The contradiction between their actions and the tenets of liberalism within democracy renders them unfit for the classification of liberal democracies. The label should be reserved for nations that genuinely embrace the diversity of voices, upholding the sanctity of individual rights and open discourse, which are the bedrocks of true liberal democracies. Freedom House acknowledges the decline of freedom in many countries including USA.

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