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Rethinking “Representative” Democracy

By

Tawreak Gamble-Eddington

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Submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for  
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## ABSTRACT

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The rapidly changing dynamism of the 21st century has left democratic institutions in shambles as populists rise to power and, arguably, threaten to undermine the very fabric of the democratic way of life through increasingly exclusionary politics. The popularity of populist leaders and reemergence of ethno-nationalism demonstrate a shortcoming of many representative democracies, their elites’ ability to adequately represent the masses. In this paper, I will argue that recent trends in the decline of democracy can be partially attributed to a lack of democratic legitimacy that has been caused by a failure to intentionally account for demographic diversity in the elites-masses compromise that underpins representative democracies. Furthermore, I will argue that the majoritarian notion of representation is not sufficient to represent the demographic composition of multicultural democracies and suggest a mixed regime that provides for greater descriptive representation of minorities in national politics.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction.....	1
Chapter 1- The Inequalities of Democracy.....	14
“The People” as Ethnos or Dēmos.....	14
“We the [Desirable] People” .....	23
Athenian Democracy.....	28
The Roman Republic.....	34
The Adoption of Representation.....	35
Representation Clarified.....	40
Chapter 2- Representative Democracies and Ethnic Politics.....	51
Defining a Representative Democracy .....	51
Anglo-American Majoritarian Political Systems.....	55
Semi-Autonomous Political Systems.....	63
Consociational Political Systems .....	68
Critics of Consociationalism and Other Approaches .....	73
Other Critics of Consociationalism.....	78



Chapter 3- Case Studies.....	84
Case Study Selection.....	84
Anglo-American Majoritarian Political Systems: The UK.....	85
The UK and Power Distribution.....	85
A Comparative Look at the USA and the UK.....	92
Semi-Autonomous Political Systems: Spain.....	98
A comparative Look at Spain and Canada.....	106
Consociational Political Systems: Belgium.....	114
Belgium and Political Fragmentation.....	114
A Comparative Look at Bosnia and Belgium.....	120
Putting the Pieces Together.....	129
Chapter 4- A New Way Forward?.....	132
What We've Seen: Another Look at the Typology.....	132
Minority Empowerment Thesis: The Value of Representation.....	137
Where Can We Go: A Case for Direct Democracy?.....	142
Reforming Institutions: "Radical" Change and Reform?.....	154

Conclusion- What Does it All Mean? .....	161
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## INTRODUCTION

These, then, will be some of the features of democracy... it will be, in all likelihood, an agreeable, lawless, parti-colored commonwealth, dealing with all alike on a footing of equality, whether they be really equal or not. — Plato, *the Republic*, Book 8, Section 558.

Can a democracy truly be representative if there is a need for “equal footing” amongst citizens, that is as of yet unmet, in the political realm and elected officials are not representative of the populace? The notion of democratic representation is founded on the basis of equality amongst all citizens of a political community. Representative democracy is conducted through the delegation of political decisions to elected officials who are “responsive to the direct will of the people” in the moment, oftentimes referred to as populist, and officials who are merely “rendering present [through the discretionary expression of their preferences] the people they claim to represent” in their decisions (Näsström 1-2). In either case, representative democracy is intended to complete the goal of governance and serve as a compromise between elites and the masses; where elections give the masses a right to choose representatives but prevents them from actually intervening in ruling (Näsström 2). In this paper, I will argue that recent trends in the decline of democracy can be partially attributed to a lack of democratic legitimacy that has been caused by a failure to intentionally account for demographic diversity in elites-masses compromise of many democracies; furthermore, I will argue that the majoritarian notion of many representative democracies is not sufficient to represent the demographic composition of multicultural democracies and suggest a mixed regime that provides for greater descriptive representation of minorities in national politics.

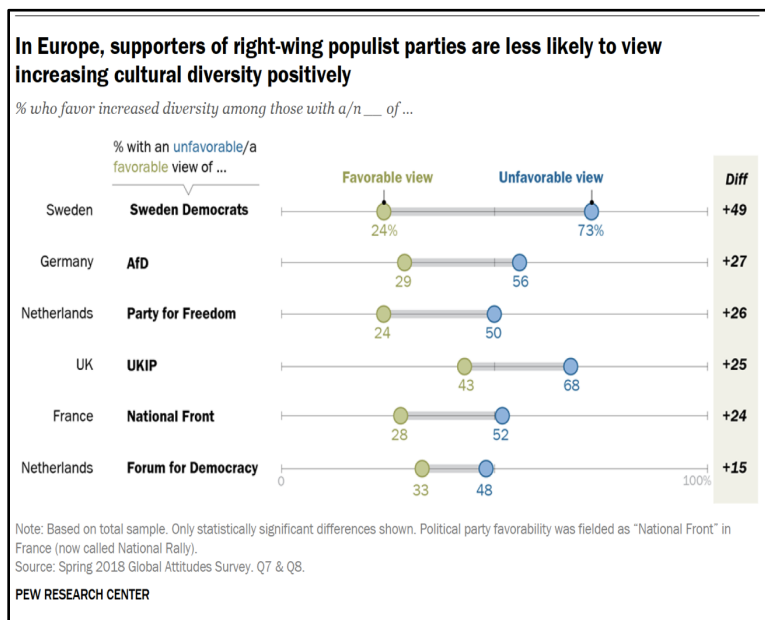
Diversity, and thus descriptive representation, necessitates the inclusion of different types of people within a given society or state to be intentionally included, giving way for a large breadth of lived experiences or backgrounds. From differences in

culture, race, ethnicity and religion to variances in sex/gender identity, sexual orientation and disability, diversity can be encapsulated by a large range of experiences. Diversity can also, however, be seen through non-physical characteristics such as ideological differences, political affiliation, geographic origins, education and socio-economic class. The characteristics corresponding to each of the aforementioned forms of diversity are important when discussing descriptive representation; for descriptively representative politicians can encapsulate all, some, or none of the aforementioned characteristics in relation to their constituents. However, the number of differing types of diversity makes it difficult to coherently analyze diversity in representation or democracy without leaving out some segments. As such, this essay will focus primarily on ethnic/racial diversity in terms of descriptive representation or diversity since it has come center stage in Western democracies as a result of social upheavals and mass mobilization around issues of racial injustice in the state or security apparatuses; most notable of the upheavals has been the Black Lives Matter Movement which began in the USA and has spread internationally.

Global migration has increased in the past few decades, with North America and Europe receiving the vast majority of migrants and led to increasingly diverse populations being present in Western democracies. In a 2019 *Pew Research* public perception poll, the 27 nations surveyed—which collectively account for more than half of the world's international migrants and includes every Western democracy—the majority of citizens said that their country had become more diverse in the past 20 years (Poushter N.p). Among the countries surveyed, the Greeks were the most likely to say that their country has become more diverse (92%) and more than 75% of those surveyed in Sweden, Germany, Spain, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Italy and France said

that their country has become more diverse (Poushter N.p). In the USA, however, perception of diversity varied by race/ethnicity with white Americans (80%) being more likely than black Americans (69%) to think their country has become more diverse in the past 20 years. In the wake of the growing diversity in Western democracies, a median of 23% of those surveyed opposed increasing diversity in their country, viewing diversity as a bad thing or perceiving less diversity as a good thing (Poushter N.p); of those who viewed diversity as a bad or unwanted thing, especially in Europe, Pew found that the majority of them supported right-wing populists. With growing racial/ethnic diversity and the current rise of right-wing populism, race and ethnicity has come to center stage in the current geo-political landscape (Roskin 62).

In the late 20th century, the Left gained tremendous ground, taking power



throughout Europe from communist puppet regimes, as citizens took to the streets and initiated a period of democratization that has spread globally and has lasted up until recently (Roskin 62). Recently, however, populist

movements expressing discontent with representative democracy have come from not only the far right, but the Left and they have both begun to shake the established order or regime (Crouch 125). According to political scientist Margaret Canovan, Populism is an

anti-establishment and anti-elite ideology that heightens tensions between “the people” and the distant or corrupt “elite” (Canovan 60). In Canovan’s conceptualization of populism, “the people” can typically be classified as encompassing the nation or ethnos, the (economic) underdog, or the ordinary people at any given time. Each classification of “the people” plays to a differing fear or concern that is exacerbated by populist leaders: the people as a “nation” is hostile to migrants or ethnic minorities, the people as the “underdog” expresses concern about economic conditions, and the people as the “ordinary people” differentiates between the “common” people and elites (Canovan 50-55). No matter how a populism may define the people, Populism focuses on the agency of individual leaders to form connections and to followers, exploiting the existing institutional weaknesses seen in socio-economic conditions or the political establishment. As such, like an earthquake of great magnitude, the pro-democracy dissidents of the 1989 revolts have become the voter base of the new radical-right and democracy is being routed as anti-democratic sentiments have quickly shaken the core of modern democratic institutions (Oberschall 90).

From the 2015 Refugee crisis and the 2010 Eurozone crisis to the current COVID-19 pandemic, Europe’s fundamental structure has been rattled, and public trust in government chipped away slowly, by the quickly shifting nature of the 21st century and its various socio-economic crises. Similarly, in America, economic hardship in the late 2000s, the War on Terror, anti-immigrant sentiment in general and the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic have left the political field ripe for anti-democracy mobilization. Far-right populism, in particular, has proven itself rather potent at mobilizing “the people” against “the establishment” and capitalizing on discontent over socio-economic

fluctuations. The strategy of the far-right populist is simple: ascend to power through democratic institutions and claiming the right to speak for “the people”—often playing off of the disdain held for ruling parties or established institutions and qualifying “the people” as a subset of the general populace—and then diverging from the political order to erode democratic institutions (Crouch 125-126). Coinciding with the rise of far-right populism, in the political realm, has been a redefining of “the people,” often to the exclusionary benefit of the majority group, in many countries away from the *demos* and towards the *ethnos*; seen through the growing apprehension to liberal notions of multiculturalism, a distrust of government institutions/legitimacy and the popularity of anti-immigration political platforms (Wike N.p). The term democracy, it would seem, is increasingly more exclusive.

From increased rates of diversity, repeated socio-economic crisis and growing disdain for traditional parties to faltering democratic institutions and the heightened levels of immigration, the liberal democratic order has become weakened and is under siege by proponents of nationalism and populism (Wike N.p). In recent years, democracies globally have seen radical populists and right-wing parties garner significant levels of support that they have not witnessed since the mid-20th century; through political fear mongering and sharp critiques of democratic institutions, populist and nationalist that have sought to renegotiate the established democratic order or completely upend it (Stone 2018). All across the globe, populists have risen to power, claiming to “speak for the people”, and stressed the homogeneity of the people by excluding specific population segments as others (Stone 2018). And as often is the case, fringe leaders have called for the fundamental changing of the democratic process of integration, the

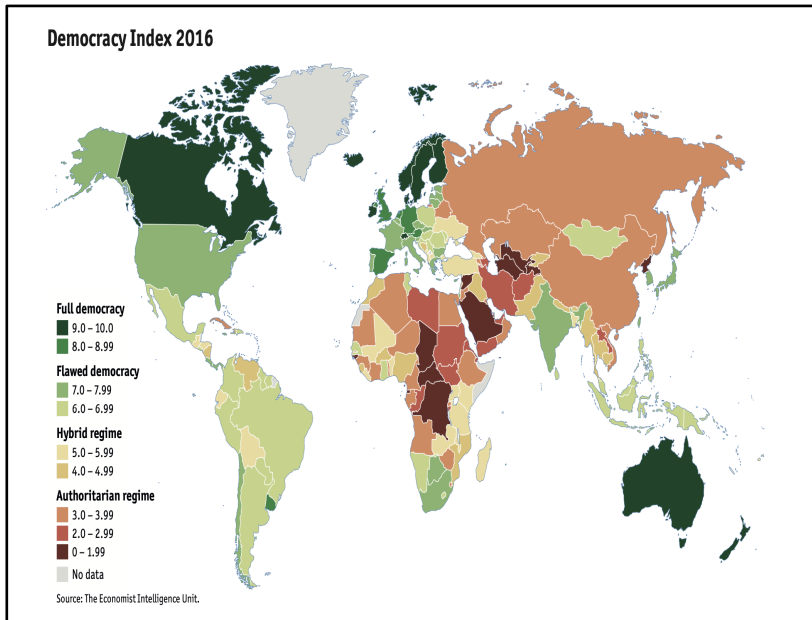
destruction of democratic institutions and dramatic shifts in notions of “the people” through fear mongering. What are the results? The global decline of democracy and the erosion of the liberal order.

In the 2016 Democracy Index the average global score fell, on a scale of 0 to 10, from 5.55 in 2015 to 5.52 with 72 countries experiencing declines in democracy and a mere 38 countries showing improvements (Democracy Index 5). Apart from the instances of democracy reversals or transitions into new “democratic categories,” there has been a steady decline in many countries in some aspects of governance, political participation and media freedoms, and a clear deterioration in attitudes associated with, or conducive to, democracy; in the USA and some western European countries, in particular, a distrust of government institutions has led to rapidly declining scores (Democracy Index 19). Eastern Europe, Latin America, the Middle East and North Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa and Western Europe all suffered from significant declines in their regional democratic rankings and every other region stagnated; chief amongst the regions, however, was Eastern Europe which recorded a decline from 5.55 to 5.43 (Democracy Index 3-5). Additionally, the number of “full democracies” declined from 20 in 2015 to 19 in 2016, with the USA falling into the category of “flawed democracy” (to 7.98 in 2015 from 8.05 in 2015) and popular confidence in the functioning of public institutions declining globally. The “march” of democracy globally has come to a dramatic halt and, it would seem, the democracies of the world are blindly marching backwards; the problems rooted in the institutional inequalities of democracy or outright neglect have gone unchecked for too long and democratic institutions are now crumbling.



A number of events occurring globally capture the current state of democracy.

Throughout Eastern Europe, there has been a mood of deep popular disappointment with



democracy as a result of ineffective government policies or external crisis and the countries once herald as symbols of democratization is falling from grace. The region of Eastern Europe, in 2016,

recorded the most dramatic regression in democracy out of any region; not only are there no “full democracies” in Eastern Europe there has also been a consistent weakening of the electoral processes (Democracy Index 7). In Poland, the Polish Law and Justice (PiS) has systematically undermined the democratic institutions of Poland, rigging the judicial branch of government, pushing through nationalistic regulations, curtailing women’s rights and undermining independent media (Tworzecki N.p). Similarly, in Hungary Viktor Orban and his Fidesz party have sought to establish illiberal democratic institutions, promote xenophobia —through discriminatory rhetoric and the literal building of a border wall—nationally, attack LGBTQ+ rights, manipulate the media and centralize government power (McVeigh N.p). Eastern Europe, despite the region's ability to lead the pack in eroding democratic institutions, is not alone in their crisis of democracy.

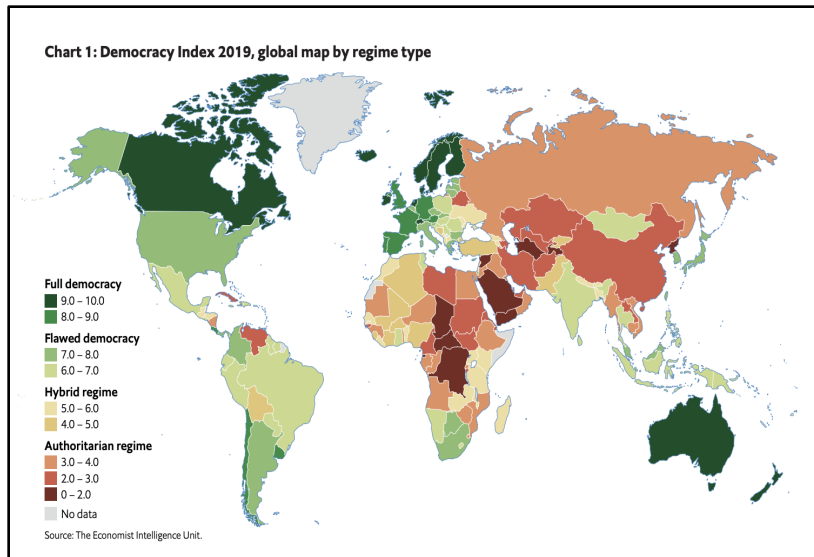
Throughout other parts of Europe, democratic institutions have come into question as populist or nationalistic rhetoric has washed over the continent. In the United Kingdom, nationalist sentiment and notions of “controlling the border” from immigrants or other “undesirables” has led the country to distance themselves from continental attempts at European harmonization by leaving the European Union; all the while, the fragile peace on the Emerald Island has come into question as the border between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland over land—and the sea border between the UK and the Republic of Ireland—could become a “hard” border (Democracy Index 5-10). In the United States, similar in many regards to Hungary, Trump was elected on a nationalistic platform of “America First,” anti-immigration notions of building a border wall along the south of the USA and populist notions of destroying the establishment or draining “the swamp” (NPR N.p.). In 2020 Trump lost reelection to the Democratic nominee Joe Biden, but his platform still galvanized nationalist sentiments and led over 70,000,000 American voters to head to the poles to support his agenda; nevertheless, in the 2020 Election, both Donald Trump and his adversary Joe Biden broke American records for voter turnout (NPR N.p.). Trump's rise to prominence can be seen as a direct reflection of the ever-decreasing trust of Americans in government, appealing to notions of elitism or corruption within the established institution to build a case for why voters should choose him (Democracy Index 7). The lack of trust in government has had a corrosive effect on American democracy, as reflected in the decline in the US score in the Democracy Index.

Brexit and American support for Donald Trump, as well as political events in places such as Poland, capture a set of contradictions that are besetting contemporary

democracies. Populist leaders and nationalist sentiments are gaining popularity throughout democracies and are eroding trust or functioning of democratic institutions; the 2016 election of Trump, as well as his voter turnout in 2020, and Brexit are vindications of the current state of democracy (Democracy Index 7). At the same time, however, the record-breaking participation in some democracies shows the desire for something “better” and the possibility for democracies to overcome illiberal practices through popular political participation (Democracy Index 3-4). Oftentimes in the wake of crises, the citizenry becomes disillusioned with their own society and their fear of the “unknown future,” at that moment either great change or great catastrophe can befall a democratic society. The major threat to democracy in the contemporary period, however, is not only political parties challenging national institutions, but also the populace's embracement of populist rhetoric and growing disdain for democracy.

With years passing since the large-scale re-insurgence of far-right and populist leaders globally, where does democracy stand and has the situation improved? Well, put simply, no. After improvements in 2018, with the Democracy Index global average rising to 5.48, the 2019 Democracy Index global average sits at 5.44 (a 0.01 decline from 2016's record low global average of 5.45) (Democracy Index 6). The decline in the 2019 global average in 2019 was driven by a sharp regression in Latin America and Sub-Saharan Africa, a small regression in Middle East and North Africa, and stagnation in the remaining regions covered (Democracy Index 6). For western democracies there was little improvement with the exception of France and Portugal who were able to emerge from the “flawed democracy” category they found themselves in throughout 2018 and join the ranks of “full democracy.” At the same time, however, Malta fell out of the “full

democracy” category to become a “flawed democracy” (Democracy Index 6). The majority of western democracies, however, remained stagnant in their 2019 ranking. The defining feature in western democracies, according to the Economist Intelligence Unit, were mass protests caused wide-spread dissatisfaction with the political status quo, most notably anti-racists, anti-police brutality and Black Lives Matter Movements in the



United States and other parts of the developed world (Democracy Index 6-8). Most protests have been centered on some segment of the issue of democratic

representation. The mobilization of the people in democracies, like that of the large voter turnout in 2016 and now in 2020, show promise for democratic renewal and the peoples effect meaningful change in the future. However, the fundamental inequalities of representative democracy remain unchanged, and democracy has either stagnated or regressed depending on the region (Democracy Index 6).

As the foundation of democracy is attacked from all fronts, this essay will not only explore the current decline of democracy but to reflect on the origins of democracies in general —looking at political theorists such as Aristotle, Plato, Rousseau—and the development of representative democracies. To bring ancient political theorists, many of which provide detailed critiques of democracy and whose works have lasting relevance

even till today, this essay will aim to integrate and critique ancient political theorists throughout the duration of the work.

Following the section on democratic regimes and democratic theory, this essay will complete a comparative study of a handful of diverse democracies, as seen by the Economist's 2019 Democracy Index's ratings, to explore variances in minority representation in national legislators. To those ends, the comparative section will draw substantially on expansive academic datasets currently in existence. As such, the empirical section will use the Ethnic Power Relations (EPR) Data Sets from the Center for Comparative and International Studies. The EPR Data Sets identifies all politically relevant ethnic groups and their access to state power in every country of the world from 1946 to 2017. The EPR Data Sets include annual data on over 800 groups and codes the degree to which their representatives held executive-level state power. The EPR Data Sets will allow this essay to develop a comprehensive assessment of how democracies are performing in terms of descriptively representing the populace, in particular marginalized groups.

Additionally, this essay will also focus on the notion of representation in democracies, the prominence of ethnic politics in democracies, the shortcomings of consociationalism and the flaws of majoritarian representation by doing a comparative case study of the three different types of democratic regimes (Anglo-American majoritarian, Consociational, and Semi-autonomous). The comparative analysis of democratic regime cases will make use of existing literature on the case studies and draw on extensive data in order to gain a holistic idea about the level, or accuracy, of descriptive representation in each case study. To those ends, this essay will choose three

cases from the empirical section and study them more completely by using relevant data on minority representation and democracy. The modes of empirical analysis that will be used to accurately derive the political conditions within each case study will be: (1) the EPR-Core Data Set from the Center for Comparative and International Studies, (2) V-DEM reports, and (3) the Democracy Index from the Economist's Intelligence Unit.

The Democracy Index provides unique data driven insights into the health of modern democracies and the ability of minority groups to participate or the level of said participation in the country. The Democracy Index measures the health of contemporary democracies and classifies countries as Full Democracies, Flawed Democracies, Hybrid Regimes and Authoritarian Regimes. The Democracy Index uses four indicators to classify regimes: the presence of a competitive and multiparty political system, universal adult suffrage, regularly contested and secure elections conducted with secret ballots, and public access of major parties to the electorate through the media or campaigning. The cross referencing of the three data sets will allow me to develop a comparative analysis of minority representation and the conditions of democracy of my case study countries.

Unfortunately, many have long dismissed the practicality or functionality of promoting some form of demographically representative form of government, discounting it as merely race or ethnic politics. This essay, however, will analyze which democratic regime works best in the increasingly diverse 21st century and explore the possibility of a mixed system that more fully incorporates minority groups in proportion to their demographic size and makes use of modern technology for improved democratic governance in politics. The global “march” of democracy stalled in the 2000s, confronted difficulties in the late 2000s as a result of various economic crises, retreated with the rise

of populism in 2016 and has continued to stagnant or decline globally; it seems that democracy has taken a break from its march internationally, needing some time to gather its energy or breath before continuing on its journey. Democracy's decline does not, however, mean that renewal of democracy's march is impossible. Recent waves in voter turnout and civil protest in the developing show the potential for democratic renewal and change (Democracy Index 6-8). Nevertheless, with democracy declining globally, the current way in which we understand democratic representation and democratic governance needs to change to usher in a new stage of democratic renewal.

As countries have expanded and encompassed new lands and peoples throughout history, the various ethnic groups have endlessly competed with the dominant demographic for power and have been delegated to less than demographically proportional political power in many countries. This in turn has created a system of continuous division and competition between a country's dominant demographic group and its minority groups, a trend that is prevalent in multicultural countries globally and often coincides with secessionist movements. The culmination of various means of conducting ethnic politics, historically, and promoting "state unity" have led to drastically different representative democracies in Western society that have long been dominated by the ethnic majority. This essay hopes to add to the corpus of existing political thought and comparative politics by examining how we understand representative democracies and how we can move said understanding forward to be more inclusive in the wake of the decline of democracy globally and the expanding diversity of democracies; the times of the completely homogenous society thought to be ideal for democracy have passed and the future is increasingly ethnically diverse.

## CHAPTER 1- The Inequalities of Democracy and Representative Democracy

### “The People” as Ethnos or Dēmos:

When politicians in democracies say “we the people” to whom are they referring? Are you included in “the people” so often talked about and, if so, why? It is commonly held that in the “natural state,” the time before the creation of society or the state, all people are equal to one another with the same rights and privileges in society; however, in order to obtain some type of security of person or property and form a community aspects of equality are ceded to the political community to form a political regime (Dahrendorf 17).<sup>1</sup> In this understanding of inequality, the regime or the state can be seen as a manifestation, at its core, of *the people’s* will and inequality as a perpetuation of the state. At the formation of every regime, ranging from monarchies and aristocracies to democracies, *the people* or the *dēmos* has to be defined for institutions or societies to function effectively (Taylor, N.p). The level of inequality inherent to a society at its origins can be seen as parallels to the inequalities amongst individuals (such as individual physical abilities, intellectual prowess...etc) who compose the new society before its creation (Dahrendorf 17). The aforementioned criteria for inequality, however, outlines inequalities of natural ability and not inequalities of social position that are created as a result of the state (Dahrendorf 19). Many assume that *the people* or *dēmos* within a democracy are inclusive and extend a voice to most individuals, if not all, within a society. However, inclusion and exclusion are often symbiotic qualities of a democratic

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<sup>1</sup> Original discussions of the “natural state” can be drawn to the many interpretations of human nature and the origins of inequality discussed by political theorists such as John Locke, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and Thomas Hobbes.



state that are rooted in the defining of *the people* and the creation of inequalities of social position.

The focus of this work will be on inequalities of social position and examine how the said inequalities developed in societies, looking at how the unequal *natural capabilities* of some were stratified in society through *social differentiation* of elites' positions and *social stratification* of reputation or wealth in elites' rank systems (Dahrendorf 19). Elites—who are a small 'ruling minority' that has become increasingly professionalized and influences or controls the socio-political landscape of a given country—is, in theory, constrained by the same legal-constitutional rules and practices as others within society (Higley 1). However, by way of their influential role in society elites usually have enough autonomy to interpret societal laws, modify rules, and alter public responsibilities in ways that protect or propagate their interests. Additionally, in the modern context, elites employ mechanisms of society like the mass media to sway non-elite groups and coercion when needed (Higley 1). When describing the qualities of elites, Higley wrote:

They are the principal national-level decision makers in the largest or most pivotal organizations and movements. Elites include top business, government and military leaders, along with leaders of parties, professional associations, trade unions, media combines, major interest groups, important churches and other politically influential and hierarchically structured organizations and movements. The outcomes they affect are the basic stability or instability of political regimes, the forms and workings of political institutions, and the main policies followed by national governments. Typically, elite persons enjoy elevated social status (sometimes 'celebrity' status) and large financial rewards, though these and other perquisites are best seen as consequences and correlates of their organizational positions, not separate bases of influence and power (Higley 3-5).

Elites, in their essence, therefore, are differentiated by *the people* and stratified through special privileges or influences not granted to the rest of *the people* (Higgins 3). With the creation of regimes, elites helped develop the criteria for not only which individuals will be included—and thus given the right to participate in the political community or, sometimes, receive government protections—but which ones will be excluded is a central tension. Inclusion and exclusion can often change over time as elites' opinions change or the masses determine new qualifications of worthiness (Taylor 81).<sup>2</sup> In the process of defining *the people*, nevertheless, socio-political criteria help choose those included in deliberation and those excluded, making inequality seem natural to societies, including democracies (Taylor, N.p).<sup>3</sup>

Since the time of ancient Athens, notions of governance by the *dēmos* through assemblies has been a cornerstone of democratic theory and the formation of modern representative democracies. In the constitutions of democratic regimes, as well as the covenants of any other type of regime, *the people* are defined in clear terms along ideas or guidelines laid out by the political community; however, the term itself contains a porifera of understandings and, this ambiguity, leads many to believe that *the people* are inclusive even when it is not within their society (Agamben 3-4). In most cases, *the people* are defined through one's citizenship or more generally through one's ability to

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<sup>2</sup> Elites will be defined as those powerful people who hold a disproportionate amount of wealth, privilege, political power or skill in a society; they can obtain said power through natural capabilities, however, this is not the only means of creating or sustaining elite statues. Elites can find their origins as those who first began claiming aspects of the natural states as their own and, subsequently, began a process of *social stratification* with them at the center.

<sup>3</sup> While societal elites can exclusion as a tool to prevent segments of the masses from governing or participating in society and thus prevents the “tyranny of the masses,” inclusion, in general, has historically led to the “inclusion of the masses” in abstract or elitist political institutions.

participate in the larger political community (Aristotle Book I).<sup>4</sup> Therefore, in a democracy, bounds of inclusion are set through citizenship and those who are not included in or are ineligible to fall within the said category are not included in *the people*. Aristotle writes extensively on the topic of citizenship and says, “Consequently, our inquiry must be into who is to be called a citizen and what a citizen is, for citizen too is often a subject of dispute: not everyone agrees that the same person is a citizen, since someone who is a citizen in a democracy is often not one in an oligarchy” (Aristotle Book I). Aristotle promoted inequality within society, based on citizenship or exclusion, because he believed that it was not only natural but essential in the formation of a functioning political community.

For Aristotle, not all human beings are political in nature or able to meaningfully participate because of their *natural capabilities*; namely Aristotle, in accordance with his time, identifies those within the household (women, slaves and children) and foreigners in those unfit for political rule (Aristotle Book I). Women, slaves and children were seen, by Aristotle, as necessary to society in order to complete labor or produce products and yet as unequal in their *natural capabilities* to participate in the community. While some are unfit, the “free” within a society are able to not only partake in the political community through active engagement as a “political animal” but to reach their full human potential through said participation (Aristotle Book I). To prevent those unable to fully participate in the political community from corrupting it and to maintain a separate private sphere of production/ labor, Aristotle assumes an almost natural inequality of *social stratification* based on *natural capabilities*.

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<sup>4</sup> For this essay, I will adopt Aristotle’s definition of citizenship and apply it accordingly throughout the writing.

While Aristotle conceptualized “the citizen” for his ideal society, it is also important to note that during the insular times of Ancient Greece it was clear who was a citizen and who wasn’t; Greek elites didn’t need to make arbitrary decisions who was a member of the political community, unless imagining a new society, for citizenship was determined by lineage and seemed “natural” (Aristotle Book I). Looked at in a modern context, however, Aristotle’s conceptualization of citizenship as central to determining the political community seems to have held true; from marriage and ancestry to specialized tracks for skilled professionals or investors, every country has developed their own criteria for citizenship and, thus defining *the people*.<sup>5</sup> Whether in an ancient or modern context, who participates in the political community as a citizen can be seen as a decision based on a set of outlined criteria that seem “natural” or concerted defining of *the people* to reflect political motives.

Aristotle was concerned, primarily, with the studying of inequality as a form of *social stratification*, but he fails in comprehensively exploring the origins of *social stratification* in political communities or societies (Dahrendorf 20). Why, you may ask, did Aristotle fail in his endeavor to holistically comprehend *social stratification*? From the onset, Aristotle assumed that there were inherent differences not only of ability or skill, but of rank between individuals; he, thus, does not differentiate between the created inequality of *social stratification* and the natural inequality of *natural capability*.

Aristotle falls into the trap of attempting to study *social stratification*, while failing to

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<sup>5</sup> Aristotle, like many political theorist of his time, accept exclusions based on sex or birth as natural to society and notions of race or ethnicity did not need to be addressed because of the homogenous nature of Greek city states. Later, in Rome, however, multi confessionalism and multiethnicity develops under the empire and elites have to make decisions about who’s in and who’s out.

recognize his presupposed assumption of inequality, applying unequal ranks to society as a natural feature (Dahrendorf 20-21).

For ancient political theorist Plato, similar to Aristotle, a strict aristocratic society with a strong meritocratic component centered around justice and not democratic freedom created the ideal way to rule in the favor of *the people* (Plato Book IV). While discussing a “just society” Plato wrote, “When the trader, the auxiliary [Zoe or bare living], and the guardian [Bio or political living] each do their own business, that is justice, and will make the city just (Plato Book IV).” In Plato’s ideal world everyone did their specific tasks, and only their task, in a fragmented society and *the people*—meaning those able to participate in the state’s political community and contribute to the governance of said state—were defined as an exclusive group of individuals known as the guardians. The guardians, by all of Plato’s accounts, were to be a group of individuals of superior “nature” or ability that, as a result, were given special privileges and tasked with ruling society as a part of the political community (Plato Book IV).

Plato, like Aristotle, embraced inequality in society and conceptualized it as a natural or needed aspect of regime in order to progress effective governance. For Plato, the natural capabilities were ingrained into each human at birth and should be the leading factor in their development or role in life; for class was created in order to meet the needs in society (Plato Book IV). Put simply, some were born to be farmers, some were born to be weavers and others to be guardians. Therefore, Plato embraced the natural inequality in ability to perform different occupations and sought to limit individuals to their “natural” occupation so that they could foster a specialization in that role and not corrupt

the jobs of others, in particular that of governance, through unspecialized input (Plato Book IV).

Plato's notion of a "just society," like that of Aristotle, bases the notion of *the people* on a quality that he believed to be ideal for society. For Plato, notions of citizenship do not particularly matter, but *the people* are, nevertheless, defined narrowly as those in the guardian class based on birth and individuals' "nature." For Plato, exclusion—in direct opposition to the notions of inclusion inherent to the foundation of the democratic regime he hated—sat at the center of creating a just society and, thus, informed, how he defined *the people* of his society (Plato Book IV). When looking at Plato and Aristotle from a historical perspective they are not unique in their creation of qualifications for being part of *the people* nor are they special in their assertion that their interpretation of *the people* is correct. Despite the differences of Plato's notion of society, he too falls into the same trap as Plato when analyzing the inequality of *social stratification*. Plato's understanding of society and conceptualization of a "just society" assumes that men are by nature unequal in rank and, thus, fall in a natural hierarchy within society; at the top of society, as a result, is the inequality of *natural capabilities* codified in the inequality of *social stratification* through rank systems (Dahrendorf 20-21).

While Plato created inequalities and exclusion within a society based on human "nature" or ability, Aristotle created exclusions based on citizenship or paradoxically "freedom." Both assume, as previously discussed, that the creation of the elite and the inequality of *social stratification* come about as a result of *natural capabilities* (Dahrendorf 20-21). Since Plato and Aristotle hold the assumption that unequal rank or

*social stratification* is natural, however, it is unlikely that their works can provide adequate accounts about the origins of elites, for they assume their existence rather than detail their creation through *social stratification* (Dahrendorf 23). The matter of the inequality of *social stratification* and, thus, elites' origins remain a highly debated topic. On one hand, political theorists like Schmoller hold that elites can find their origins in the division of labor (Dahrendorf 25-27). And on the other hand, political theorists like Parsons assert that elites came to being as a result of the existence of the concept of evaluation or worth and its significance for social systems (Dahrendorf 27-30). Besides the conceptualizations of Parsons and Schmoller there exists substantial literature on how the inequality of *social stratification* came to being, whether as a result of historical progression or deliberate societal necessity. With such a large variety of accounts of the origins of elites, this work will look primarily at the role of elites in the inequality of *social stratification*, with the baseline assumption that elites are also a result of *social stratification* in some form.

Plato and Aristotle help us to understand, therefore, how societies can, even with good or modest intentions, be inherently exclusionary to individuals who live within it but are treated differently and denied full equality. Each had their ideas of society and created notions of *the people* based on said notions; nevertheless, both were conceptualizations of society and its exclusions based on their understanding of the world. For any number of reasons, based on the situation of one's society or "natural" assumptions of the functioning of the world, *the people* may be defined along exclusionary or inclusionary lines in (Taylor 79-82).

The creation of notions of citizenship and the *people*, and its increasingly restrictive nature over past decades, have led to the continued solidification of inequality within societies as non-citizens are relegated to “second-class” status (Taylor 100). While we have been discussing the notion of *the people* as the constitutive *dēmos*, that being those who can participate in the political community of society most often through citizenship, *the people* may also be defined along ethnic lines as *ethnos* (Taylor 79-82). For example, in Germany, if *the people* were understood as *ethnos* it would likely include only those who were ethnically of German descent. Meanwhile, if *the people* in Germany were understood as the *dēmos* then it would encompass all of those eligible to participate in the political community of Germany and not merely those of ethnic German descent. Put simply, while the phrase *the people* as *dēmos*, as we have described, creates unequal hierarchies based on one's ability to participate in the political community, *the people* as *ethnos* creates unequal hierarchies based on one's ethnic heritage.

The ability for *the people* to be defined or understood in so many ways means that *the people* of a society are many things at once and yet nothing at all because of them many ways to interpret or define them (Taylor 82). Plato, Aristotle, Taylor, and Agamben help us understand a great deal about exclusion and inclusion: how regimes can be created based on exclusionary practices, the role of citizenship in inclusion/exclusion, and exclusive fragmentation of the populace. From the period of ancient Greek city-states to the time of modern representative democracies, each of the aforementioned notions of exclusion and inclusion has existed for centuries in human society and state formation. Too often, however, the inequality of exclusion is understood as a result of natural capabilities or worth; this understanding, however, like that of Aristotle's and Plato's



conceptualization of society is false. The inequality of society, which we see in modern society is as a result not merely of *natural capabilities* but of *social stratification* and *social differentiation* rooted in the formation of contemporary society and the defining of *the people* (Dahrendorf 20-21). Although elites often take a leading role in defining the people they are not always alone; it may be the case, as a result of discontent or an overstepping of the bounds, that *the people* demand a redefining of who are the people in some form and go against elite interests.

### **“We the [Desirable] People”:**

Exclusion of *the people* can come from structural understandings of the *ethnos* or *dēmos* that limit those included within the collective of the state but also through the forced removal of included groups from the state. Intentional exclusion at the initiation or the founding of regimes happens in all regimes, but it finds itself often in those regime types intended to be the freest (i.e., democracies) or the most repressed principalities/monarchies. Take, for example, the case of Bhutan. Bhutan is a small country in South Asia that, for the majority of its history, had a monarchy. In 2007, however, monarch Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck “gave” democracy to his people, and *the people* quickly changed from only the aristocratic class who held political/economic power to the masses (Taylor 79). In the years preceding the king giving his people democracy, nevertheless, the monarchy sought to expand *the people* through democracy and, at the same time, “redefine” them as a docile *ethnos*. As such, the Bhutanese exiled over 110,000 of the ethnic minority group called the Lhotshampas because they protested for democratic and cultural rights (Taylor 80). It is no accident

that the forced exodus of one of the largest and most prominent ethnic groups in Bhutan, a relatively homogenous country, occurred a short period before the elites of Bhutan established Bhutanese democracy (Taylor 80-81). The monarchy of Bhutan—similar to the elites at the formation of many societies— “reinvented” or carefully crafted who *the people* would be within their society by “redefining” *the people* as *ethnos* of Bhutan and exiling those who did not fit within a said classification (Taylor 79-82).

While the monarchy of Bhutan defined *the people* as *Ethnos* and excluded those minority groups who protested or deviated from the majority “Bhutanese identity,” other countries have modified *ethnos* and set the boundaries of *the people* along with larger ideas of race and class (amongst others) that perpetuates a presupposed power structure. As a result, the state, especially democratic ones, tend to be a seemingly perpetual negotiation over those who will be included as “us” and those who will be excluded as “them” (Taylor 81). Take, for another example, the United States of America. The US constitution starts with “we the people of the United States of America declare...” and then proceeds to outline those democratic rights imbued to *the people* of America (Agamben 1). Upon closer examination, however, *the people* outlined in the American constitution can be deduced as a select group of individuals who own property, are men and are white; women, non-landowners, or racial minorities are not included in notions of the gendered, racial and socio-economic conceptualization of *the American people* (Taylor 81).

In colonial America, blacks were classified as either “other persons” in the case of them being free or as “enslaved” individuals; in either case, they were excluded from the political community by way of being considered property or unworthy of full citizenship

and political participation (Taylor 81). Native peoples were “excluded from the body of politics” by way of their “tribal sovereignty” and women were seemingly overlooked in all regards as they were relegated to the private sphere (Taylor 80-81). According to Astra Taylor, “The United States broke ground [in the 18th century] by binding the democratic project to theories of racial difference, which offered pseudo-scientific rationales for the Atlantic slave trade, colonialism, and a range of citizenship restrictions (Taylor 84).” *The American people* were defined as a specific group of people within American society and others were looked at as outsiders.<sup>6</sup>

The problem arises, however, not only because of the politics involved in defining who *the people* are and the use of force to achieve said ends but also the fact that those initially chosen to be *the people* will hold an institutionally powerful position in society. As such, although who *the people* are may change over time, the initial group of individuals who are defined as *the people* will often hold on to some tenable source of institutional power in their society and contribute to long-term inequality within said society through their holding of said power. Although inclusion or exclusion from society, whether through forced exodus or some other manner, in general, are important aspects of defining who *the people* of a society are, so too are the power or positions that individuals have within said society once admitted.

Since the creation of American democracy and the onset of the French Revolution, notions of *the people* as *dēmos* and ideas about governing through the consent of *the people* have become increasingly popular. How to obtain the consent of

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<sup>6</sup> To a large extent, this trend of inclusion and exclusion can be seen virtually everywhere in contemporary society. Take, for example, the deplorable conditions of migrant workers in California and Texas who are underpaid, abused and exploited because they are excluded from the American concept of “the people.”

*the people* or govern in their favor, however, has been a topic of great debate as *the people* of a society have shifted over time (Taylor 78). Additionally, *the people* who give their consent to be governed, although on paper they may all be equal, are often not afforded equal rights or opportunity within a community as a result of the exclusionary elements that underpin popular sovereignty in western democracies (Agamben 3-5). What does this mean? An inherent “bio fracture” exists in the notion of *the people*, especially in democracies, in which a fragmentation of the populace intended to be included by right becomes excluded by circumstance (Agamben 3). As Agamben puts it: “The same term [*the people*] names the constitutive political subject as well as the class that is excluded—de facto, if not de jure—from Politics (Agamben 5).” So then, in addition to the debate around exclusion/inclusion in the creation of the *people* that we have discussed, we must also consider the exclusionary “bio fracture” within *the people*.

The “bio fracture,” like that of exclusionary notions of *the people* in general, causes the creation of subclasses within a democratic society. Take, for example, homeless citizens and ethnic minority citizens in many democracies. Homeless citizens of a state should be included within the political community of their respective states because they are entitled to a said right and, based on democracy, equal to all of their fellow citizens. In reality, however, homeless citizens face extreme barriers and logistical issues to political participation—such as not having an address to list for voting or merely being unable to worry about politics as one struggles to survive—that limits their ability to participate in their political community. Similarly, in many countries’, minority citizens are entitled, as citizens, to be able to equally participate in the political community but face opposition from other ethnic groups or even the political community

itself; with examples ranging from intimidation or voter suppression to gerrymandering and various other tactics (Taylor N.p.). The homeless citizen and minority citizen, in the aforementioned cases, are examples of “bio fractures” in democratic regimes; they are included within a system, and yet often excluded at the same time. When speaking about the prevalence of “bio fractures” Agamben wrote:

Such a widespread and constant semantic ambiguity cannot be accidental: it surely reflects an ambiguity inherent in the nature and function of the concept of people in Western politics. It is as if, in other words, what we call people was actually not a unitary subject but rather a dialectical oscillation between two opposite poles: on the one hand, the People as a whole and as an integral body politic and, on the other hand, the people as a subset and as fragmentary multiplicity of needy and excluded bodies; on the one hand, an inclusive concept that pretends to be without remainder while, on the other hand, an exclusive concept known to afford no hope; at one pole, the total state of the sovereign and integrated citizens and, at the other pole, the banishment – either court of miracles or camp – of the wretched, the oppressed, and the vanquished (Agamben 3).

The fragmentation of *the people*, therefore, can be understood as the intentional or unintentional segregation of power away from the institutionally powerless in the camp of the underprivileged. So, are the effects of *the people* within a democracy being “bio fractured” merely the creation of subclasses or fragments? Put simply, no. Exploitation finds itself inherently associated with “bio fractures,” the same can be said of restrictive bonds for classifying who *the people* are, for it intentionally excludes peoples from underprivileged societal positions and amplifies the voice of the privileged. Additionally, exclusion of any form, whether intentional or not, limits the rights of individuals within a society or alienates individuals from their rights and can, as a result, be used as a tool for their exploitation (Taylor 88). In these ways, within the notion of *the people* exists a natural, although not often discussed, feeling of inferiority, exploitation, and dispensability in regard to the voices or lives of those individuals who are part of a “bio fracture” within society.

Is “bio fracture” and the inequalities apparent in the ambiguous nature of the term *the people* normal for modern democracies? While some political theorists, such as Hobbes, would argue that the inequality we see in democratic regimes’ structures are normal or even agreed upon by the citizenry through a covenant, such assertions fall short. Instead, the inequalities apparent in the regimes result from societies, driven by elites, class structure, class dynamics, the consequences of institutional choices and various other aspects of *social stratification*, failing to ensure equal access and opportunity. A concerted effort, through the increased inclusionary measures, can “vanquish racist [or more generally unequal] practices of domination and advance the individual and collective autonomy of subjugated people (Taylor 87).” The next step, therefore, is to determine what changes can be made to existing structures or what institutions can be created to facilitate the attainment of greater inclusivity in society.

The insights of Plato, Aristotle, Taylor, and Agamben have laid the framework for us to understand exclusion; we must now teach ourselves how to embrace inclusion through structural reform and intentional policy, but first, let's examine the democratic structures currently in place and how they came to be. For, although elites often take a leading role in defining *the people*, they do not possess a monopoly on said power. From the American Civil Rights movement of the 1960s to the Women's Suffrage Movement, *the people* can redefine those included in *the people* in some form, as has been the case in numerous social movements that have given rights to minority or marginalized communities and go against elite interests.

### **Athenian Democracy:**

There exists in the modern world, as well as previously in the ancient world, a large number of different government or regime types; from aristocracies and monarchies to democracies, the number of regime types seems almost endless when one includes the numerous variations of each of the aforementioned classifications of regimes into their count. The first form of government to include all citizens, however, in governance and to ensure equal rights under the law came in the form of a democracy (Thucydides 91). The Athenian leader Solon pioneered democracy and often receives praise for its innovation in allowing *the people* to rule themselves; especially in the age of Greek city-states, where monarchies were the predominant form of government (Thucydides 91-92).<sup>7</sup> The word democracy, as we know it, has its origins in ancient Greek and comes from the words *dēmos* meaning the people and *Kratos* meaning power or rule; combined *dēmos* and *Kratos* create the word *dēmoskratos* and signify the governing of the state by *the people* or the power of governance being held by *the people* (Ericksen 325). Notions of *the people*, and the right to rule of the people are inherent to democracy and more generally to the corpus of modern democratic theory; democracy can find its meaning in both an aspirational concept of equality through popular sovereignty and the harsh realities or failures of modern-day democratic governance (Taylor N.p).

With its origins in Athens, Greece, a democratic regime in its purest form is the governing of the state by *the people* through the use of popular assemblies or other political institutions (Schwartzberg 312-313). When *the people* take the place of the king through a change of regime into democracy “the locus of power becomes an empty

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<sup>7</sup> Although Athens, Greece is commonly believed and taught to be the birthplace of democracy, Democratic processes can be tracked across continents in early periods of human history. Most commonly, Democratic practices can be seen in tribal nations where leaders or elders were chosen from amongst the people and by the people.

place” with no one designated controller or “rightful” ruler (Näsström 1-3). Instead, the central notion of democracy is the absence of one person with power or decision-making power and the creation of equal power amongst individuals within a society. Democracy, therefore, replaces any notion of aristocratic or divine right with the popular rule of the people; this holds, especially, for ancient Athens where democratic governance came from structural reform from below as a result of class conflict (Näsström 2-7). When describing Athenian democracy to Athens’ citizenry, Pericles, the chosen leader of Athens, said: “Our constitution is called a democracy because we govern in the interests of the majority, not just a few. Our laws give equal rights to all in private disputes, but public preferment depends on individual distinction and is determined largely by merit rather than rotation: and poverty is no barrier to office... (Thucydides 91-92).”<sup>8</sup> At first glance, the Athenian model of democracy seems the same as modern democracies, like that of the United States or France. The modern model of democracy, however, cannot be traced solely back to Athenian democracy but rather to the creation of hybrid or mixed regimes (which combine aristocracy and democracy). The topic of mixed regimes will be discussed further in the next section so, for now, the notion will be left here.

To continue on the origins of democracy, the Athenian conceptualization of democracy refers to modern notions of direct democracy where citizens directly participate in the governance of the state and do not elect individuals to represent their interests. In the Athenian model, individuals vote for generals, individual citizens are chosen by lot to serve in the Administrative Council, and all-important decisions are

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<sup>8</sup> Pericles gave this speech at the end of the first year of the Peloponnesian War, a war between the Delian League led by Athens and the Peloponnesian League led by Sparta, to the Athenian military and citizenry to arouse pride in Athenians about their democracy.



debated in popular assemblies (Schwartzberg 313). *The people* of Athens were defined as a constitutive *dēmos* consisting of all Athenians able to participate in the Athenian political community (i.e., citizens); although the *dēmos* of Athens did only include citizens and not slaves or other non-citizens. As such, in the Athenian model citizens are almost obliged to participate in the public sphere and every citizen directly participates in said sphere through popular assemblies (Schwartzberg 312-313). Athenian democracy broke ground as a regime type, but its critics have been vocal about its shortcomings.

Plato led the pack of democratic critics in his time. An Athenian born during the Classical period in ancient Greece, Plato who founded the Academy, the first institution of higher learning in the Western world, and wrote extensively on democracy, the ideal regime, and the good life. On the matter of democracy, in his book *The Republic*, Plato asserted that democracy's obsession with freedom and inability to create a "just" or structures even an effective form of governance (Plato Book IV). In *the Republic*, Plato described democracy as "[seeming] to be the fairest of states, being, an embroidered robe which is spangled with every sort of flower..." because people are the "masters of themselves" (Plato Book I)." To Plato, democracy gives the allure of being the ideal regime but fails to deliver justice or a harmonious social order, creating instead tyranny (Plato Book I).<sup>9</sup>

When discussing the "democratic man" Plato wrote, "...he lives from day to day indulging the appetite of the hour...[and] often he-is busy with politics and starts to his

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<sup>9</sup>Beyond his ideological resentment, Plato also had a personal resentment against democracy because the democratic government of Athens had executed his acquaintance Socrates. Additionally, Plato descended from the last king of Athens, Codrus, as well as the Athenian statesman Solon, and as a result, may have harbored disdain for a regime system that denied him (as one of a relatively distinguish bloodline in the aristocracy) a more prominent political position in society.

feet and says and does whatever comes into his head... his life has neither law nor order; and this distracted existence he terms joy and bliss and freedom..." (Plato Book VIII). According to Plato, democracy, as well as the democratic man, relies on freedom—rather than Justice—as the cornerstone of society causes its deterioration into tyranny (Plato Book I). Put simply, Plato asserts that a regime concerned primarily about individual freedom will lead to a breakdown of the natural order: individuals who are unfit for governance will lead rather than the guardians, people will lie for their benefit, and the population will not be controlled for the benefit of society (Plato Book IV). Instead of democracy, Plato offers his readers a meritocratic society in which those who are most capable are elevated to the role of leader and everyone else fulfills their hierarchical purpose within society (Plato Book I).

In response to Plato's challenge that democracy will devolve into tyranny, Aristotle does just that and introduces the notion of the mixed regime called the Polity (a democratic regime ruled by citizens that are neither rich nor poor) as the superior form of governance in existence that rules in favor of the majority (Aristotle Book III). Aristotle wrote: "Deviations... are tyranny from kingship, oligarchy from aristocracy, and democracy from polity. For tyranny is rule by one man for the advantage of himself, oligarchy is for the advantage of the well-off, and democracy is for the advantage of the needy. None of them is for what is profitable in common (Aristotle Book III)." For Aristotle, aristocracy or monarchy fostered the ideal society (should there be someone or a group of people so superior in virtue that they should rule), but the polity sufficed as the best existing form of government and possibly the only viable one as societies grew larger (Aristotle Book III).

Similar to Aristotle, many of the founding fathers of the United States of America (namely James Madison and Alexander Hamilton) wrote vigorously on the shortcomings of “pure democracy.” In the *Federalist Papers*, a collection of 85 articles and essays by some of America’s founding fathers to defend the US constitution, James Madison argued that democracy exists as a flawed system because it cannot handle the development of political factions, it fails to be logical for peoples to assemble in large nations as a result of distance and the “common passion or interest will, in almost every case, be felt by a majority of the whole... (Madison N.p.).” Instead of a democracy, Madison advocates for a mixed regime, where there is a scheme of representation for the populace, that he calls a republic. Madison’s, as well as many of the other founding fathers’, fear of the “ineffectiveness” of Athenian democracy and the subsequent “tyranny of the masses” that they believed it entailed led to the creation of the “American democratic experience” based on not a direct democracy but a mixed regime.

Plato, Aristotle, and James Madison provide critical critiques of democracy and present alternative regimes that they assert as better for society. The origins of democracy, nevertheless, can be found not in modern notions of representing *the people* through mixed democratic regimes but rather in the direct democracy of Athenian society; where each citizen with a vote, a direct voice in government, and the power or ability to govern. At the core of Athenian democracy, therefore, sat a notion of equality amongst all citizens through equal participation—with no understanding or conceptualization of the notion of representation or aristocratic moderation—and at the core of mixed regimes with democratic institutions is the moderation of *the people* through elite or aristocratic institutions and the relegation of power (Pitkin 336). As a

result, mixed regimes promote an inherent inequality within the structures of democracies that dilutes equality in favor of public moderation and political convenience.

### **The Roman Republic:**

From the ashes of ancient Athens came various types of mixed regimes and the modern forms of democratic governance: representative democracies. A mixed regime is a combination of two separate regime types, such as democracy and aristocracy, in an attempt to develop a “more effective” regime type that appeased *the people* and elites (Madison N.p.).<sup>10</sup> After the fall of Athens in the fifth century, the next major iteration of democratic governance, in some form, came through the mixed regime of ancient Rome in the sixth century; the Romans called their mixed regime a *republica* or republic (Machiavelli 181-182).

How did the Roman Republic, after over a century-long period, come to have a mixed democratic regime? Originally, a monarchy and various aristocratic families dominated ancient Rome, with *the people* having no say in the governance of the state of politics (Machiavelli 181). *The Roman people*, therefore, were defined as the *dēmos* but included only the aristocracy and royal family. However, class conflict between the disenfranchised plebeians and a powerful aristocracy drove *the peoples* to demand regime reform and drove the formation of the Roman Republic (Machiavelli 183-184). With the creation of the Roman Republic came a shift in the *dēmos* of Roman society and *the people* to include all citizens of Roman society rather than just the aristocratic class. In *the Prince* and the *Discourses on the First Decade of Titus Livius*, Nicolo Machiavelli

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<sup>10</sup> Mixed Regimes were a common suggestion of ancient political theorists, such as Aristotle, and later democratic theorists who helped craft the constitutions of modern democracies.

describes the republic as the perfect state for it provides a legal means for *the people* to channel their hatred or difference of expression from the aristocracy (Machiavelli 193).

The Roman Republic, in its essence, consisted of four main institutions: (1) the Senate controlled by the aristocrats (known as the patricians), (2) the Comitia Centuriata controlled by monarchist/military (known as the praetor), (3) the Concilium Plebis controlled by *the people* (known as the plebians), and (4) the Comitia Tributa open to all citizens like the Athenian Assembly (Machiavelli 193). Although the aristocratically controlled senate retained great power, the Roman Republic, for the first time since Ancient Greece, gave a voice in government to the common people through the Concilium Plebis and Comitia Tributa. The voice of *the people*, however, was moderated by the aristocratic institutions of the senate and Comitia Centuriata to create a mixed regime that inspired the creation of numerous democracies after its collapse.<sup>11</sup> The Roman Republic, in the aforementioned way, redefined democracy and created a vision of what it would come to be in the modern era (Machiavelli 190-195).<sup>12</sup> First came moderation of *the people* through aristocratic institutions, then came moderation of *the people* through notions of representative democracy.

### **The Adoption of Representation:**

In the modern era, the mixed regimes that we call democracies have largely replaced the aristocratic or monarchist institutions of ancient Rome and replaced them

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<sup>11</sup> For this essay moderate or moderation will be defined as the forcing of political views or attitudes towards center-left or center-right views. Put simply, moderate or moderation is the rejection of radical and extreme views that may unwind the elite-mass compromise or challenge elites' fundamental position in society.

<sup>12</sup> Following the collapse of the Roman Empire mixed regimes incorporation some aspect of democracy or popular sovereignty could be found in various Italian city-states, in particular Florence, during the Renaissance period of European history.

with a new method of moderating *the people*, which were often seen as unreliable as a result of lack of knowledge or rashness, called representation (Pitkin 334). According to Hannah Pitkin, a political theorist and former professor at the University of California at Berkeley, Representation as a political concept and practice can be traced back to the late medieval period of European history when imposed as a duty by the monarch (Pitkin 336-337). For example, in England when the king needed additional revenue, he: “required each shire and borough to send a delegate to commit the locality to special additional taxes (Pitkin 337).” Representation, therefore, finds its origin in the imposed duty placed on *the people* from above and a desire to enhance administrative capabilities, bearing no notions of equality or democracy (Pitkin 337). Nevertheless, political theorists adopted the notion of representation as a fundamental basis of new mixed regimes and used not only to bring democracy to a national scale but to avoid the usage of direct participation (Pitkin 335-338).

With the establishment of representation as a concrete political notion during the late medieval period of European History, it began to be combined with notions of mixed regime democracies during the English Civil War and then in the various eighteenth-century democratic revolutions (Pitkin 338).<sup>13</sup> With the growing demand for political power to be vested in *the people*—similar to those calls that led to the formation of the Roman Republic—pro-democracy supporters began seeing representation and the extension of suffrage as a means to make large-scale democracy possible in their societies (Pitkin 336).

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<sup>13</sup> Most notable of the eighteenth-century democratic revolutions was the American Revolution, the French Revolution, and the Haitian Revolution which each brought about widespread democratic governance and had international reach in promoting democratic governance.

Contrarily, elites saw representation as a tool for preventing and blocking off the possible rise of Athenian democracy and direct democratic participation; in this way the elite support for democratic representation bears striking resemblance to the support of the elites for adoption of democratic institutions in ancient Rome, both sought to moderate *the people's* demands through mechanisms able to be manipulated or controlled (Pitkin 335-338). On the topic of elites representing the masses, Astra Taylor wrote: “The rhetoric of popular sovereignty may appeal to elites, but they also recognize the risks. Seeking a veneer of democratic legitimacy but loath to let the people actually rule... their challenge is creating a docile citizenry out of a democratically spirited one.” (Taylor 90). While pro-democracy individuals saw an opportunity to expand the ideals of democracy further, elites saw a method to limit the power the masses could obtain and develop a docile citizenry who would not call for greater direct participation.

With both elites and pro-democracy individuals recognizing the value of representation they incorporated into popular governance to form representative democracies, representative democracy became a compromise between elites and the pro-democracy masses; in the elite-masses compromise, elections give the masses a right to choose representatives to express their ideas but prevents the masses from actually intervening directly in the ruling or governance of their society (Näsström 2). When arguing for the benefits of representative democracies and mixed regimes over an Athenian democracy James Madison wrote:

The two great points of difference between a democracy and a republic [a representative democracy] are: first, the delegation of the government, in the latter, to a small number of citizens elected by the rest; secondly, the greater number of citizens, and greater sphere of country, over which the latter may be extended. The effect of the first difference is, on the one hand, to refine and enlarge the public

views, by passing them through the medium of a chosen body of citizens, whose wisdom may best discern the true interest of their country, and whose patriotism and love of justice will be least likely to sacrifice it to temporary or partial considerations. Under such a regulation, it may well happen that the public voice, pronounced by the representatives of the people, will be more consonant to the public good than if pronounced by the people themselves, convened for the purpose (Madison N.p).

When creating the elite-mass compromise and developing a representative democracy relies on a notion of moderation or interpretation; *the people's* voice becomes interpreted by elites to attain the “public good.” Moreover, representative democracy, since it relies on the articulation of elites and not solely on the will of *the people*, appears as a conservative form of democratic governance that inherently seeks to preserve existing power structures of a society that benefit the elite class (Näsström 1-2).

When assessing the concept of representation and its underpinnings in the elite-masses compromise, one must also recognize that representation relies on elites’ articulation, as previously discussed, and places the elite at the center of the political structure as representatives. This understanding of the elite-mass compromise gives way to two critical questions regarding the legitimacy of democratic representation: (1) Can *the people* be represented by elites or a representational structure? (2) And can elites be adequate representations of *the people* and representatives for *the people*? To answer the first question, It would seem evident to me that an individual can be represented within a democratic structure but representation comes in many forms and is often not equally accessible when “bio fractures” in the people are considered (Agamben 3-5). As such, representation may be adequate or efficient for democratic governance, but the inequalities embedded within it make it not preferable to reflect the will of *the people* or democratic governance more generally (Madison N.p.). To the second question, the elites can rarely be adequate representations of the people for they often lack any unifying or



common characteristics; in the past, however, elites were able to provide greater representation than they currently do.

In representative democracies, elites are placed at the center of the political structure as representations of or representatives for *the people* (Madison N.p.). The elite-mass compromise of representative democracy, however, only explicitly accounts for one stratification of society, class. As representative democracies have become increasingly diverse, however, the absence of institutions to account for said diversity causes the already unrepresentative elite class to become even more unrepresentative of *the people* (Agamben 3). Why? The elite class stagnants in terms of its ability to adequately represent *the people*, as they become increasingly diverse, through a representative democracy. A central conflict of the elite-mass compromise, therefore, becomes a conservative elite class placed at the center of democracy that has become increasingly unrepresentative of the people. The result can be seen in a deficit of democratic legitimacy and a notion of the expendability of the individual's voice in favor of an elite-driven moderation of the people (Mansfield 516).<sup>14</sup>

The elite-masses compromise that underpins representative democracy seems like an one- way road in which the masses pronounce their desires and elected representatives take the aspects they see fit and create policy; representatives in this form are intended to be mere political agents of *the people*, their principal, although oftentimes they go beyond these bounds to achieve their goals (Mansfield 516). Aside from the moderation of *the people* by elites and the conservation of elite power structures, the elite-mass

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<sup>14</sup> Elite institutions not only moderate the voices of the masses in general and helps to suppress the individual voices of those groups that fall within the periphery of society, namely minorities and marginalized groups, that do not necessarily agree with the elite-mass compromise. As a result, there is a notion of dispensability or expendability of marginalized voices in representative democracies.

compromise also leads to the alienation of segments of *the people*. The elite-mass compromise considers *the people* as a whole or one, adopting a majoritarian connotation, and not as individuals or parts; in the absence of proper considerations for the parts of the whole, segments of *the people* become marginalized from political representation because they do not align with the majority (Mansfield 515-16).

### **Representation Clarified:**

The concept of political representation is misleadingly simple: everyone knows it, yet very few can agree on one definition for the concept. Extensive literature exists, and grows by the day, in democratic theory that offers numerous definitions of this elusive concept of representation. What are the benefits of the representative model of governance? In theory, the representative democracy “unburdens human beings from the excess of responsibility that comes with the removal of an external authority [such as a monarchy or oligarchy] in political affairs by sharing and dividing it equally [amongst representatives]” (Näsström 2). For some, the relegation of *the people's* power inherent to representative democracy means that representation comes with the expectation that elected officials are reflective of or responding to the will of *the people*; for when representatives cease to represent the will of *the people*, they stop being democratic (Näsström 1). Others argue, however, that within democracies representatives are not tasked with responding to the “will of the people,” but rather interpreting their will and “rendering present *the people* they claim to represent” (Näsström 1). What representation is, similar to our earlier discussion of the phrase *the people*, subject to interpretation and can be defined in numerous manners to meet one's needs or predispositions.

Traditionally, democratic theory on political representation has focused on whether elected officials should act as *delegates* or as *trustees of the people* and examined the inherently contradictory notions of the two concepts (Fox 1225). Representatives who are *delegates* of their constituents simply follow the expressed preferences of their constituents when drafting or voting on legislation. In contrast to *delegates*, when representatives are *trustees* of their constituents, they follow their understanding or judgment of the best action to pursue and do not rely merely on conveying the will of *the people* (Fox 1225-1228). The democratic notion of representatives as *trustees*, as it appears in political theory, seems inherently unequal to those within a democracy; for one must relegate their power for four years to an elected official in hopes that their policies will stay aligned with the shifting preferences of their constituents. In reality, however, modern democracy expects the relegation of their power to representatives throughout a representative's time in office; for the moment an elected official act of their own volition and not in the interest of their constituents then they are no longer representing anyone but themselves. Nevertheless, the theories of representatives as *delegates* or as *trustees* offer those elected to office a contradictory understanding of their role once in office and contradictory demands regarding behavior.

To address the contradictory nature of the representative as a *delegate* and a *trustee*, Hanna Pitkin argues that the autonomy of both the representative and of those being represented should be safeguarded; the representative, therefore, should be independent of (as a *trustee*) and at the same time dependent on (as a *delegate*) their constituents (Pitkin 54). In Pitkin's conceptualization, the autonomy of the representative to act of their own volition is preserved by allowing them to make decisions based on

their understanding of the interests of the represented, and the autonomy of those being represented preserves itself by having the constituent preferences influence representatives' decisions (Pitkin 59). The notion of combining the *trustee* and *delegate* seems, at least to me, to be far more appealing than possibly having the occurrence of a mere *trustee*; however, when placed in perspective, the great concern surrounding the autonomy or the ability of representatives to act of their own volition while in office seems misplaced; for these representatives run for office too, at a most basic level, represent their constituents and their desires through some platform. That does not mean, nevertheless, that a representative cannot represent oneself as well, but the representative must count themselves as only one voice on equal footing with other constituents (their voice should not be given great power merely for the office they hold). Pitkin advances the debate surrounding representation substantially through her work, however, the simplicity of the trustee/delegate dichotomy and its usefulness has remained at the center of debates in democratic theory.

In developing the current corpus of democratic theory, the traditional notions of *Trustee* and *delegate* have been revisited by modern political theorists and significantly expanded on. In general, according to political scientist Lisa Disch, there are two different schools of representation in democratic theory: (1) a *Responsive School* that emphasizes the continuing responsiveness of the government to the preferences of its citizens (i.e. representatives as reflections of the constituents' wills) and (2) a *Constitutive School* that adheres to the "traditional model of promissory representation," in which representatives hold to preexisting promises and pursuing policies that align with said interests over time (Disch 100). Both schools of thought emphasize the assumption that

constituents (i.e., those represented) can form opinions and hold preferences that are not only coherent enough to be represented by elected officials but stable or consistent enough to be represented (Disch 100-102). The *Constitutive School* of representation, in addition to the aforementioned assumption, also relies on the notion that representatives look backward to preferences that have been expressed and position their future actions in a “speculative mode” toward what their constituency might want; in this conceptualization, the representative becomes more than a spokesman of *the people*, they are an interpreter of *the people's* will (Disch 102-103). Both of the aforementioned schools of Representation present their unique conceptualization of the role of democratic representatives and their responsibilities.

While the *Responsive School* of representation would be ideal for ensuring that *the people's* voices are heard, since representatives would constantly be changing their positions to represent the will of *the people* rather than merely the will of *the people* when said representatives were elected, the *Constitutive School* of representation gives way to a clearer understanding of the elite-masses compromise (Näsström 1-2). Representatives, in many cases, are not true representatives of the will of people but rather the moderator of *the people's* desires and informative mouthpieces for party platforms. *The people* yell “revolution” and representatives respond with “moderate or small-scale reform.” *The people* demand the defunding of police institutions or police reform and representatives respond by playing with financial budgets to give the illusion of budgetary change (Disch 102-104). Seemingly, for every demand or modification *the people* may have for how to change society, representatives have an effective response to moderate said demands to maintain the health of the elite-mass compromise and their

power as part of the elite class; in this way, *the people*, although unintentionally, are domesticated by elites' whims and subjected to the enduring management of elite-driven institutions unless they come together to demand an alternative (Disch 102).

A simpler method of moderation used by elites, in opposition to merely moderating their demands, can be found in the manipulation of the will of *the people* through the careful articulation of how constituents' policy preferences are expressed in legislation. In this way, representatives can safely convey the will of *the people*, without threat to their own power, because their will reflects the desire to propagate the elite-masses compromise (Disch 101-103). However, the notions of constituent manipulation by representatives or elites relies on the assumption that the formation of constituents' preferences depend on the way representatives communicate ideas to and "Educate" constituents in their attempt to win elections; put simply, constituents must be incompetent or uninformed enough to be privy to elite manipulation (Disch 102).

Another mode of elite manipulation is when, as Disch outlines in *Toward a Mobilization Conception of Democratic Representation*, elite's outright customization of constituents' preferences through the democratic mobilization of *the people* towards a goal and the participation of elites in the process of forming constituents demands or preferences (Disch 107).

Similar to Disch's argument about elites articulating the demands or preferences of the masses through democratic mobilization, Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky's *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media* outlines how the Media influences the masses (Herman 30). According to Herman and Chomsky, as part of the elite's institutions, the Media systemically propagates "propaganda" by imposing

filters or frames on the information disseminated to the masses (Herman 30). As a result, the media self-censors itself and makes its reports align with the dominant market or government forces to propagate their power. Herman does concede, however, that media coverage cannot be seen as a deliberate campaign of misinformation perpetrated by conspirators, news anchors, journalists, or other members of the media community (Herman 35-40). Instead, the structural integrity of the media system reinforces elite bias in favor of those in power and against any dissenting views in the public sphere (Herman 120). Herman and Chomsky's conceptualization of the elite-driven institution of the media fits well into the understanding of representation as an inherently conservative and often manipulative outcome of the elite-mass compromise, for elites can influence the masses in various ways to accomplish their goals and moderate the masses desires.

In addition to the two schools of representation mentioned earlier, the *Responsive School* and the *Constitutive School*, five general conceptualizations have come to prominence over recent decades that outline the different forms of representation that an elected official can engage with. The five types of representation, according to Mansbridge's Selection Model, include (1) *Promissory Representation*, (2) *Anticipatory Representation*, (3) *Gyroscopic Representation*, and (4) *Surrogate Representation* (Mansbridge 515-516). *Promissory Representation*, falling nicely within the *Constitutive School* of representation, focuses on the notion that during campaigns representatives made promises to constituents, which they will ultimately keep or fail to keep during their time in office (Mansbridge 516). Unlike *Promissory Representation*, *Anticipatory Representation* falls in between the *Responsive School* and the *Constitutive School* of representation. *Anticipatory Representation* centers around representatives not only

holding to their promises made in past elections but also focusing on what they think their constituents will approve of in the next election as well; in this way, representatives adhere to traditional *promissory representation* and also are responsive to the changing whims, often looking to the future, of the constituents they represent (Mansbridge 515-517).

The last form of representation, *Surrogate Representation*, and *Gyroscopic Representation* fall largely outside the bounds of the *Responsive School* and the *Constitutive School* of representation. *Surrogate Representation* occurs when elected officials represent the interests or desires of constituents outside of their districts (Mansbridge 515). *Surrogate Representation*, usually, functions as a means of representation only when those being represented via surrogate by the elected official fall within the larger state-wide scheme of representation. For example, if an American Senator from the state of Florida represented the interests of Massachusetts residents in a congressional vote, rather than the interests of his Floridian constituents, then *Surrogate Representation* would be occurring; for the Senator from Florida represents people who are not their constituents, but who fall within their federal jurisdiction as a member of congress.

Similar to *Surrogate Representation*, *Gyroscopic Representation* falls outside the *Responsive School* of representation and the *Constitutive School* of representation. Instead of representing the preferences of constituencies, *Gyroscopic Representation* occurs when electors choose a representative who can be expected to act in a manner that voters approve of without the need for external pressures (Mansbridge 520). As such, in *Gyroscopic Representation*, representatives look within their own ideals and convictions



as a basis for their actions, rather than the changing preferences of their constituencies (Mansbridge 515-520). *Gyroscopic Representation*, as a result, appears the least responsive to the changing nature of constituents' desires because they are not centered on constituent preferences but rather an individual personality or set of convictions (Mansbridge 520).

While Mansbridge's Selection Model provides a rather complex mechanism for understanding the different types of representations, her conceptualization of representation is only one of many ways of defining or comprehending how representation functions. Pitkin, for example, famously outlined her four categories of representation in *The Concept of Representation*. For Pitkin, representation took shape in one of four categories: (1) *Formalistic Representation*, (2) *Symbolic Representation*, (3) *Descriptive Representation*, and (4) *Substantive Representation* (Pitkin 20-31). *Formalistic Representation* occurs as a result of the institutional arrangements that initiate representation such as regularly elected offices in government. *Symbolic Representation* happens when representatives "stands for" the represented or serves as a symbol of the represented (Pitkin 23). *Descriptive Representation* can be defined as the extent to which a representative resembles, usually in terms of personal identity or background, those in which they are representing (Pitkin 22-24). Lastly, *Substantive Representation* occurs when the actions taken by a representative, both past and present, are of the interest of those being represented (Pitkin 23-26).

Unlike Mansbridge's classification, Pitkin focuses on how the representative as an individual's person represents their constituents, rather than merely examining the mechanisms by which one could classify the actions taken by a representative.

Additionally, Pitkin's classification of the types of representation gives way to great overlap when applied to real-world instances and can be used, as can Mansbridge's to an extent, to extrapolate inequalities in society. For example, if my elected official aligns with my political beliefs and comes from the same background or looks like me, I would enjoy a high level of representation according to Pitkin's model. Specifically, I would be *Substantively Represented*, *Formalistically Represented*, and *Descriptively Represented* by my representative. However, if my neighbor comes from a completely different background or doesn't look like his representative he would only be *Formalistically* or *Substantively Represented* at best, assuming their political views align. On a small scale, this often is not a problem for one cannot assume to be represented in every regard. Nevertheless, when inequality in representation becomes systemic, meaning one group of people tend to enjoy a larger amount of representation, then institutional inequality becomes apparent and must be addressed. There are, as have been described, numerous methods for defining representation and understanding the modes in which representation can occur. Nevertheless, representation as a whole tends to not fit neatly within a box or category, but rather overlaps boundaries.

Representative democracy can be an effective tool for mixed regimes to employ in order to achieve some level of democratic representation. However, when assessing the institution of representative democracies, and representation itself, one must note the inherent inequalities in the system and the vast relativity of classifications. Throughout this chapter, we have looked at the unequal nature of defining *the people* (being arbitrary in modern cases and "natural" or given in pre-modern cases) of a state, the origins of direct democracy in Athens, the development of mixed regimes that incorporate

democratic practices, the elite-masses compromise, and, finally, the adoption of representation by mixed regimes. In each of the aforementioned cases, inequality is key to understanding or interpreting the formation of modern democratic states; one must define *the people*, one must define the state and who or how one gets represented. In each case, a decision must be made to determine who gets included in the state and its institutions and those excluded from the state. As we saw in the previous discussion of defining *the people*, however, being included may not be sufficient; for you may be excluded, even if you are entitled to be included, based on circumstances beyond your control. Similarly, even when one does achieve inclusion the elite-masse compromise that underpins representative democracy, places elites and the “original people” in positions of greater power than the masses and grants them the ability to moderate or censor the masses representative democracy seems to be, as are many regimes, a rope around the neck of the masses and a tight noose for those in disadvantageous societal positions (such as minority or marginalized groups).

Democracy has a complex history, often being misconstrued, whose point of origination can be found in the direct democracy of ancient Athens and the pact made between citizens and the Athenian state. However, modern representative democracy, although also able to claim its heritage in ancient Athens to some extent, more notably dates back to the democratic institutions of ancient Rome and the representative structures of some Medieval European nations, which are combined to form the basis for the democratic revolutions of the 18th century. Nevertheless, whether in the case of direct democracy or representative democracy a narrative had been built that celebrated democracies modern achievements while simultaneously hiding its shortcomings (namely

exclusionary practices, marginalization of minority groups, and the fragmentation of the population).

What is the solution to inequality in the democratic state? How do we provide representation to all of those entitled to it and guarantee adequate representation?

Inequality seems inescapable, even in democratic societies, but institutions can, and should, be reformed to mitigate the inequalities of society. In normal times, elites are placed in the driver seat of governance and can use their privileged position to moderate the demands of the masses or propagate inequalities in the interests of elite power. In abnormal times, however, elites are unable to use institutional forces or moderate *the peoples'* demands for a host of reasons, ranging from a lack of trust and repeated failures of governance to merely asking for too much of the populace. *The people* may regain, however, the upper hand in the elite-mass compromise and progress their demands unmoderated by elites, possibly even overthrow those in power or force a change in course. In these instances, democracy can be transformed to progress democratic governance and address the institutional inequalities of a given regime.

## CHAPTER 2- Representative Democracies and Ethnic Politics

### Defining a Representative Democracy:

How does a representative democracy develop its institutions? Are democratic institutions created to address inequalities rooted in the elite-mass compromise or are they meant to perpetuate said inequalities? With the adoption of mixed regimes in the form of representative democracies and the usage of representation as a form of elite moderation, societies across the globe have developed varying types of democracies (Almond 391). From regimes that focus on consensualism (primarily seen in Consociational or Semi-Autonomous regimes types) to those emphasizing the will of the majority, representative democracies come in many forms and are designed to fit the realities of the societies they are in; the number and type of representative democracies are truly only restricted by societal need and the bounds of human imagination (Almond 391). Classifications or typologies of representative democracies, according to political scientist Gabriel A. Almond, attempt to group similar types of democracies based on their orientation to political action and the interdependence of political systems (Almond 395).<sup>15</sup>

Like the variation in types or representative democracies, literature is abundant by political comparativists that attempts to classify democracies into coherent typologies (Almond 392). Many of the existing classifications of democracy, pioneered before to the

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<sup>15</sup> For Almond, the concept of a political system implies that these roles are interdependent and that a significant change in any one role affects changes in the others, and thereby changes the system as a whole. Additionally, Almond argues that the political system is embedded in “attitudes toward politics, political values, ideologies, national character, cultural ethos.”

20th-century, tend to focus on defining democratic regimes based on the number of political parties (two-party and multi-party systems), the power of the executive office or branch of government (democracy-dictatorship), and the method of selection for the executive office (parliamentary-presidential systems) (Almond 391-392). Each classification has its benefits for analyzing or classifying representative democracies and contributes to the modern conceptualization of which factors are important to examine. The fact remains, however, that any political scientist concerned with the general problem of classification of political systems and representative democracies will find that all of the existing bases of classification leave something to be desired or exclude some aspect found important by others (Almond 392).

In 1965 Almond developed his famous typology of political systems and distinguished three types of Western democratic systems; the Almond typology, unlike other existing typologies, sought to examine representative democracies based on their *political culture*.<sup>16</sup> For Almond, every political system is embedded in a particular “pattern of orientations to actions” that can be derived from their *political culture* of a society (Almond 396). Almond (1956) defines *political culture* as the particular pattern of orientations to political action developed in society and, in 1963, revised his definition to clarify that *political culture* was the “distribution of patterns of orientation” (Stephan 419-421). Almond’s notion of *political culture* allows for conceptualization of certain regime types being inherently fit for certain types of societies, based on their existing *political culture* or culture, and also gives way to the understanding of society as being

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<sup>16</sup> Political culture does not coincide with a given political system or society. Additionally, political culture is not synonymous or interchangeable with the general culture and cultural traditions of a given society. However, political culture and culture can often function together or underpin each other.

able to be influenced or changed by a powerful *political culture* (Almond 399).

Almond's typology outlined the Anglo-American political systems (the UK and the USA), the Continental European political systems (France, Germany, and Italy), and a "third category" consisting of the Scandinavian and Low Countries of Europe that is rarely discussed (Almond 392). According to Almond, the Anglo-American systems as those having a homogeneous *political culture* and segmented role structures for society (Lijphart 207). In contrast, the Continental European democracies are characterized by a fragmentation of *political culture* with separate *political subcultures* (Lijphart 207-208). While Anglo-American democracies often have a high degree of stability and effectiveness, the Continental European systems tend to be unstable because of internal fragmentation. Continental European systems, also, face the threat of a "Caesaristic breakthrough" and a lapse into totalitarianism as a result of the political immobilism caused by fragmentation (Lijphart 208). In Almond's conceptualization of the typology of democracy fragmentation and stability are mutually exclusive characteristics of a democratic regime; put simply, when a regime is fragmented it is not stable and when a regime is homogenous it is stable (Almond 396). There have been cases of democratic regimes that are fragmented, such as those in Belgium and Bosnia, but are still stable. In those cases of fragmented but stable democracies, political theorist Arend Lijphart adds to the typology of Almond and develops the classification of "consociational democracies" (Lijphart 211).<sup>17</sup>

Almond's typology of democracies provides great contextualization to the factors

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<sup>17</sup> Lijphart describes "stable" or "stability" as the masses being able to select their leaders and the ability of governmental elites to meet the demands placed upon them by the masses, as well as the continuation of the constitution or regime form. Additionally, Lijphart classifies stability as the absence of violence, revolution, or other signs of dissatisfaction.

essential in classifying modern representative democracies into appropriate categories and recognizing the various complexities that underpin said regimes. At the same time, however, Almond's typology falls short of encompassing all of the possible variations of regime types and focuses only on Western democracies.<sup>18</sup> Even in his descriptions of what affects the formation of different *political cultures*, and thus facilitates the suitable adoption of one regime type over another, Almond identifies five factors that all-around a country's ability to be "western:" (1) the type of traditional cultures, (2) the auspices under which Westernization has been introduced, (3) the functions of the society which have been Westernized, (4) the tempo of the Westernization process and (5) the type of Western cultural products introduced (Almond 401-402). Almond's typology of representative democracies is by all accounts incomplete and does not encompass all of the variations possible or present in the modern world. Most importantly, as a result of the time frame in which he published his work, Almond leaves out representative democracies similar to those of the Continental European category, such as the semi-autonomous regime of Spain.<sup>19</sup> However, since this essay will focus on Western democracies exclusively, as symbols of democracy more generally, Almond's typology will serve as a suitable framework for understanding some of the regime types in Europe and North America and develop a vague outline; while also developing the typology further to clarify it. As such, while recognizing the wide variation in representative democracies, this essay will use a typology that focuses on the three most different types

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<sup>18</sup> In his groundbreaking 1965 work, Almond recognizes that his typology does not cover all of the variations in representative democracies but encapsulates "most" of them. Additionally, Almond also acknowledges that his typology is focused primarily on the western hemisphere.

<sup>19</sup> Almond published his typology in 1965, but Spain didn't move to its current political structure with autonomous regions until the 1970s.



of representative democracies: the Anglo-American majoritarian system, the Semi-autonomous system, and the consociational system. By examining these three vastly different types of representative democracies, this essay will shed light on the variation possible in democratic institutions and assess to what extent each has institutions that can handle or promote increased diversity in the public sphere.

### **Anglo-American Majoritarian Political Systems:**

As one might tell from its name, the Anglo-American political classification draws its inspiration from the majoritarian political systems of the United States of America, the United Kingdom, and other former colonial holdings of the United Kingdom. The basic premise of the Anglo-American majoritarian political system is the Lockean dependence on majority rule or majoritarianism as the preferred choice of forming governments or selecting elected officials.

John Locke was a 17th-century British political theorist who was primarily focused on human nature, the formation of the state, happiness, and individual property; in his analysis of the creation of contemporary societies, however, he provides the essential underpinnings to the notion of Majoritarianism or rule of the majority (Locke 8). In Locke's *Second Treatise* he wrote:

Whosoever therefore out of a state of nature unites into a community, must be understood to give up all the power, necessary to the ends for which they unite into society, to the majority of the community, unless they expressly agreed in any number greater than the majority. And this is done by barely agreeing to unite into one political society, which is all the compact that is, or needs be, between the individuals, that enter into, or make up a commonwealth. And thus that, which begins and actually constitutes any political society, is nothing but the consent of any number of freemen capable of a majority to unite and incorporate into such a society. And this is that, and that only, which did, or could give beginning to any lawful

government in the world (Locke 99).

For Locke, the creation of the state or the commonwealth is driven through the consent of *the people*—who are all completely equal in their natural state and equally entitled to anything on earth since it was given to them all “in common” by God—and their willingness to join political society to resolve common disputes (Locke 14). The purpose of political society, therefore, is to create a “common judge” that can arbitrate between equal individuals, govern in the “common good” of *the people*, and to protect individuals’ rights to property (Locke 17).<sup>20</sup> The creation of the state, according to Locke, and the decisions that it makes are to be decided by the majority of those within a given society; a political concept that informed the formation of Anglo-American political systems and more generally representative democracies over recent centuries.

Majority rule is the view that the legitimate political authority of the state is expressed through the will of the majority of those subject to its authority (Locke 99). The majority will, in conceptualization, is intended to aim for the common good of all in society, and not pursue their sectional interests. The notion of working in the “common good,” however, often finds itself falling short as elites tend to work in their interests and minority political groups or opposition are often excluded to some extent from decision-making even if they received a substantial portion of the votes. Why? Under the notion of majoritarianism, there is no need for attracting more votes than is necessary to form a majority, even if that is only 50.06% or 51% of *the people*; for this reason, the Anglo-American model is often believed to only, to some extent, be functional for homogenous countries (Meisburger 155-156). Additionally, the majority will is often conceptualized

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<sup>20</sup> In his first treatise, Locke describes property as a more expansive term than modern conceptualizations and includes, in particular, one's labor as a key component of the concept of property.

as something that is not “constantly” in existence, it is something formed only following the process of aggregation or selection (Meisburger 155-156). The most notable aspect of the Anglo-American system, in comparison to other regime types, is its ability to permit and possibly even encourage, the exclusion and suppression of views outside of the majority.

As we saw in the previous discussion of defining *the people*, in chapter 1, being included in the political community may not be sufficient to ensure adequate representation; for you may be excluded, even if you are entitled to be included, based on circumstances beyond your control or by political concepts like majoritarianism that institutionally marginalize non-majority view. As such, even when one does achieve inclusion in a representative democracy the elite-mass compromise or the institutions that arise from it, which places elites and the “original people” (who are often larger segments of the population) in positions of greater power, can alienate minority or marginalized groups (Meisburger 155-156).

In Almond’s typology of representative democracies, he identifies Anglo-American political systems as those that enjoy a high level of stability and effectiveness (Almond 397-398). Almond describes four key structures of Anglo-American political systems. First, Anglo-American political systems are highly differentiated as a result of the specialization of every government-related role. Second, they are “manifest, organized, and bureaucratized” as a result of the relative autonomy in the various government-related roles or agencies (Almond 399). Third, Anglo-American political systems are characterized by a high degree of stability in the functions of the roles. Lastly, Anglo-American political systems are likely to have a diffusion of power and

influence within the political system due to the breath of civil society, mass media, representation, and mass education (Almond 399). When discussing the characteristics of the Anglo-American political system Almond wrote:

It is a homogeneous culture in the sense that there is a sharing of political ends and means. The great majority of the actors in the political system accept as the ultimate goals of the political system some combination of the values of freedom, mass welfare, and security. There are groups which stress one value at the expense of the others; there are times when one value is stressed by all groups; but by and large the tendency is for all these values to be shared, and for no one of them to be completely repressed (Almond 398).

Put simply, according to Almond, Anglo-American political systems are highly stable regimes because of their insular nature, centralized government, secularized political systems, and shared *political culture* and goals (Almond 397-398). To reiterate, Anglo-American political systems stability stems from their shared *political culture* and homogeneous political goals; the absence of these qualities in a system, therefore, causes instability.

The Anglo-American political system, as previously stated, can best be seen through the political structures of the United States and the United Kingdom, where the majoritarian principle underpins their Majoritarian election system (Gay 118). In Majoritarian systems, votes are often cast in a first-past-the-post system, which is a direct application of the concept of majoritarianism for every election ranging from local offices to national offices; the first past “the post” or the benchmark of votes, that being 51% of voters or a number greater than all other opponents, is chosen as the winner and there is no need to have or develop a consensus with opposing parties to form a government (Gay 118-120). According to political theorist Oonagh Gay, Majoritarian systems “concentrate power in the hands of the government, which promotes clarity of responsibility for policy

choices and enables voters to hold governments to account for their performance. The central weakness of this vision of democracy, however, is that it affords less nuanced representation (Gay 119).” Majoritarian systems tend to produce single-party majorities in a political system, excluding the other parties from partaking in ruling and removing the need to form coalitions to form a government or control the executive branch.

Additionally, Majoritarian systems concentrate policy-making power in the hands of the ruling party and result in single-party governments (Gay 118). The Majoritarian system of governance, per the general notion of majoritarianism, often allows the majority to rule unilaterally with minimal opposition or consensus from opposing parties until the next election occurs.

Besides the exclusion inherent in the Majoritarian system and the notion of majoritarianism, Majoritarian systems can have additional constitutional institutions that lead to exclusionary practices or the perpetuation of the elite-mass compromise. In the United Kingdom, one of the most notable of the constitutional institutions that cause inequality and exclusion is the House of Lords. The House of Lords, also called the Upper House, is the second chamber of the British Parliament (Politico N.p.). Members of the House of Lords come from the British aristocracy and are not elected by the British people like in the House of Commons, also known as the Lower chamber. As a result, the House of Lords does not have virtually any of the same powers as the House of Commons, such as forming governments or controlling taxation. Nevertheless, the House of Lords does retain the right to revise and scrutinize the Government's actions and legislation (Politico N.p.). As such, the House of Lords holds tangible power, using its extensive expertise and influence brought on by its members privileged and titled

upbringings, to influence or moderate the national policies created in the House of Commons; members of the House of Lords will often wield their power by asking Ministers to rethink their stances on legislation and amending bills rather than vetoing or outright rejecting whole pieces of legislation (Politico N.p.). In this way, the House of Lords—tucked within the majoritarian principle of the United Kingdom’s Anglo-American Majoritarian regime—acts as a form of elite moderation and institutional perpetuation of the elite-mass compromise. The House of Lords adds to democratic inequality by expanding the apparatus of moderation that is inherent to the notions of representation and representative democracy discussed in the previous chapter; *the people* become moderated not only through elites who gain office in the House of Commons but also through elites who institutionally hold power merely as a result of their social class.

In sharp contrast to the Anglo-American majoritarian system, but still partially adhering to the notion of majoritarianism, is the Proportional Representation (PR) system of choosing elected officials. In the PR system divisions or fragmentation in an electorate are reflected proportionately in elections, with parties receiving a share of seats in the legislative branch that is equally proportional to their share of the vote (Gay 119). PR is typically seen

as a procedure that promotes inclusion and consensus. According to Oonagh Gay, a PR system “promotes broad and nuanced representation and a participatory policy process in which representatives’ bargain and negotiate with each other in a flexible and accommodative fashion (Gay 119).” In PR systems elections are designed to, as accurately as possible, reflect citizens’ diverse views in the process of reaching a consensus between parties and

forming a coalition or grand coalition; although the PR system does not prompt majoritarianism on a micro-scale in terms of electing officials, the coalition aspect of PR adheres, albeit partially, to the notion of majoritarianism because it requires parties to work together to form a majority and create a government (Gay 120). Since parties are required to work together to run government in a PR system, the emphasis is placed on consensualism to some extent; PR can have a majoritarian feel if a single party is in charge or if opposing parties are outright excluded from all governance, but coalitions require political compromise amongst parties and the formation of a mutual consensus. Majoritarianism, in contrast, conveys the idea of a single party with a majority of representatives domineering and running the political show (Gay 119-122). Although PR is a far more representative method of electing officials, it too has drawbacks. Most notable amongst PR's drawbacks is the fact that the PR system does not afford clarity of responsibility because of the multifaceted nature of coalitions and policies are the outcomes of bargaining, the proportionality of the vote allows fringe parties to obtain office and the majoritarian nature of forming a coalition still leads to the inherent exclusion of non-coalition parties and views (Gay 119-122). The PR system improves the ability for segments of *the people* or their representatives to be present in crucial deliberations; at the same time, however, it acts merely as a cover to mask some of the many faults inherent to the Anglo-American system, namely enhanced inequality and exclusion.

The Anglo-American majoritarian system is one most notable for the inequality and exclusion it can perpetuate by its varying adherence to the principle of Majority rule and alienation of consensus. However, according to Almond, the Anglo-American model

is the most stable amongst the many variations of representative democracy because of its homogenous nature and shared political goals; additionally, in the Anglo-American model, there is the underlying assumption that all parties agree to play by the “rules” and work within the political system or state apparatus to progress their agendas (Almond 399). Almond, nevertheless, describes the Anglo-American system as “fun” and almost “game-like,” since the political sphere is a constant competition for gaining power through government but rarely the erosion of said systems of power to meet political aims (Almond 399-400). Almond’s analysis, both then and now, falls short of examining those left out by the Anglo-American majoritarian system that gave it the sense of “stability” or “fun” Almond so greatly admires.

In an increasingly diverse and globalized world, nevertheless, the exclusionary nature of the Anglo-American majoritarian system leaves much to be desired in terms of providing adequate representation to *the people* and accounting for marginalized or minority communities. As a result, the conceptualization and application of majoritarianism in representative democracies cause “bio fractures” to be formed in the political realm and leads to the exclusion of, possibly substantial, segments of the population or elected officials from expressing their voice (Agamben 3). Put simply, a “bio fracture” is artificially created in any system that employs the majority principle because said system necessitates the fragmentation of those intended to be included (elected officials) by excluding them completely or partially from the political process (Agamben 3). Instead of the “fun” Almond described, we are left only with questions. What happens when the homogeneity of the system becomes fractured by the heterogeneous nature of a diverse society? Will homogenous stability remain a defining



feature of Anglo-American political systems or does, instead, their homogenous nature leads to instability as diversity increases within them?

### **Semi-Autonomous Political Systems:**

The classification of Semi-Autonomous political systems encompasses the Continental European system (France, Germany, and Italy) outlined by Almond, but also those regime types similar to the Continental European system by expanding those types of *political subcultures* included in the typology (such as Spain). To understand the Semi-Autonomous classification we must, therefore, understand the Continental European system outlined by Almond in his typology. In contrast to the homogenous *political culture* and stable qualities of the Anglo-American majoritarian system, the Continental European system has a fragmented or heterogeneous *political culture* and is unstable (Almond 405). The fragmentation of the *political culture* in Continental European systems is brought about by “an uneven pattern of development” rooted in the remnants of “older cultures” or “political manifestations” that were held in common by some segment of the society (Almond 405-406). Almond classifies the remnants of “older cultures” or “political manifestations” as *political subcultures*.

According to Almond, the *political subcultures* within the Continental European system—the Catholic Ancien Regime areas in France, Southern Italy, and the Islands, and parts of Bavaria—are rooted in three distinct remnants of “older cultures.” Those who fall within the first *political subculture* are religious minorities in France, Germany, and Italy that failed to be integrated into the state through the process of middle-class secularization in the 19th century (Almond 406). The second type of *political subculture*

is the older middle classes who are still, over a century later, primarily concerned with the secularization of the. In societies that have only partially secularized, Almond outlines a third type of *political subculture* associated with the modernized and industrialized parts of these societies (Almond 406-407). The major *political subcultures*, therefore, are (1) the pre-industrial, primarily Catholic, (2) the older middle-class, and (3) the industrialist (Almond 406).

According to Almond the aforementioned *political subcultures*, and their subsequent fragmentations into smaller *political subcultures*, cause the large-scale fragmentation of the Continental European system because they have differing political goals and an unwillingness to work within the system. The central tendency of the Continental system is often not bargaining in the “game” of politics but imposing one's will on competing views. When describing the Continental system Almond wrote:

Since in the last century the political issues have involved the very survival of these sub-cultures, and the basic form of the political system itself, the political actors have not come to politics with specific bargainable differences but rather with conflicting and mutually exclusive designs for the political culture and political system. This has involved a further fragmentation at the level of ideology and political organizations (Almond 407-408).

The fragmentation and *political subcultures* of the Continental European systems causes elites not to want to “exchange, compromise, and adapt” in hopes of bargaining with political opponents, but rather to “preach, exhort, convert, and transform” the system through demoralization or transformism (Almond 407). Where does *political subcultures*’ nature to transform and demoralize come from? Almond argues that *political subcultures* are inherently militant and get their decisiveness from the groups that are embedded within them or that they correlate with more generally; for the Catholic *political*

*subculture*, for example, the Church itself and the Catholic apparatus of services that surrounds it embeds *subcultures* with ideals that politically alienates them from the bargaining process (Almond 406). The defining factor for Continental European systems, as a result of the failure to bargain, prominence of *political subcultures*, and fragmentation is the normalization of political immobilization in the *political culture* (Almond 406-407).

Almond's analysis of *political subcultures* provides valuable insights into what can cause the fragmentation of *political cultures* and lead to regime instability; Almond, however, fails to account for other types of subcultures that may be prominent in a given society and the resulting government types they form (Almond 406-407). *Political subcultures*, in a modern context, must also include those racial or ethnic elites that are remnants from past states or past organizations of the modern state; Almond could expand his definition of the "older middle class" *political subculture*, but that too would leave at the role of "older societal elites" from ethnic minority groups or cultures (Almond 407). Therefore, to increase the accuracy of Almond's typology "ethnic elites" and other types of marginalized cultures, which often run contrary to mainstream cultures or society, must be considered as parts of the *political subcultures* that cause fragmentation in the Continental European systems. To continue, the naming of the system as "Continental European" in and of itself—while only referring to France, Germany, and Italy—fails to encompass the expansiveness of the different types of government systems with strong *political subcultures* in Continental Europe and abroad. Instead, Almond should look at the larger similarities between regimes in continental Europe which suffer from high levels of fragmentation, prominent *political subcultures*

and political immobility (Almond 406-407). As such, this essay will not only expand Almond's definition of *political subcultures* to include ethnic elites but also classify the Continental European systems of France, Germany, and Italy into the category of semi-autonomous systems; the decentralization of power and the creation of semi-autonomous segments of the state as a result of *political subcultures* (being those outlined by Almond and expanded upon in this work) is a recurring commonality amongst France, Germany, Italy and other European countries such as Spain.

The "semi-autonomous" characteristics of a system can come about either through formal means or through marginal means. Almond describes the Continental European systems as lacking the ability to bargain, primarily as a result of the existence of the fragmentation of the national *political culture* by *political subcultures* with different objectives or political goals. In Almond's example, *political subcultures* work on the margins, in an informal sense, to establish semi-autonomy and exert power on the political system or cause fragmentation (Almond 406-407). When semi-autonomy is formally granted, however, the "inability" of some *subcultures* to bargain can be overcome. Semi-autonomy through formal means comes about primarily as a result of the creation of institutional or constitutional frameworks to give power or relative political autonomy to *political subcultures* within a given society. Examples of the granting of semi-autonomy based on *political subcultures* can be found in the Spanish autonomous communities of País Vasco or Catalonia and the French provinces of New Caledonia, and Corsica. In each case the level of autonomy of a specific community varies based on the country, region and even the period one is examining; in general, nevertheless, the basic premise of semi-autonomy is that a *political subculture* is given relative dominion over

their community or region (Specia N.p).

Most often, the *political subcultures* given semi-autonomy are a prominent ethnolinguistic or religious minority that has long-established roots in the country and is a “remnant” of an older political system or community (Specia N.p). Semi-autonomous regimes may grant varying types of autonomy such as fiscal autonomy, domestic-political autonomy, ethnolinguistic autonomy, or, in very rare cases, international-political autonomy. While ethnic elites and *political subcultures* may enjoy differing levels of autonomy, said autonomy can quickly be stripped away. At the same time, those ethnic elites who compose a particular *political subculture* may find themselves with relative semi-autonomy at one instance and none at another, as their marginal semi-autonomy is eroded over time or their formal semi-autonomy is destroyed from above through systems of uniformity or assimilation. While semi-autonomous systems are in place, however, ethnic elites can work within the system to bargain with others and enjoy representation, at least on the local level. Unlike Almond’s description of Continental European systems, therefore, the broader semi-autonomous category may be fragmented to; both, nevertheless, suffer from some form of fragmentation within the *political subculture*, decentralization on the national or local level, and the occasional immobilization of the political system (Almond 406-407).

The political system and means of governance of semi-autonomous states most often fall within the category of Proportional Representation (PR); although semi-autonomous states are often more conducive to the usage of PR systems, they are not necessarily a requirement for a semi-autonomous state (Gay 119). In the PR system, as previously mentioned, divisions or fragmentation of the electorate are proportionately

represented in the granting of seats or power to the varying parties and the institution of coalition building is essential in forming a government (Gay 119-122). The PR system helps to improve the ability of *political subcultures* to be present in crucial deliberations and, at the same time, participate more inclusively in the larger political community.

The classification of regimes as semi-autonomous entails a level of guaranteed representation, brought about primarily by decentralization and the granting of relative autonomy, and consensus that is absent from the Anglo-American majoritarian political system (Almond 399). The exclusionary nature of the Anglo-American majoritarian system leaves much to be desired in terms of diverse representation and can create “bio fractures” in the political community (Agamben 3). The semi-autonomous system seeks to address some of the shortcomings of a purely majoritarian system by granting representation and power to *political subcultures* in a given society; this granting of relative autonomy may foster the bargaining that is absent from the Continental European systems outlined by Almond or merely cause greater immobilization depending on the state (Almond 406). Either way, however, the fact remains that the semi-autonomous system intentionally includes greater segments of *the people* into the ruling of the political community than the Anglo-American majoritarian system does.<sup>21</sup> Additionally, the semi-autonomous system of governance emphasizes the consensus amongst important segments of the state's political culture while the Anglo-American majoritarian system promotes exclusionary topics and the dominance of the majority.

### **Consociational Political Systems:**

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<sup>21</sup> It is important to note that while this essay makes a clear distinction between the Anglo-American majoritarian system of governance and the semi-autonomous system of governance can overlap.

The largest types of representative democracies left out of Almond's typology are those cases of cultural fragmentation or heterogeneous regimes, which Lijphart describes as *pluralism*, that are highly stable (Schendelen 154-155). Political scientists Arend Lijphart classifies those fragmented but stable democracies not considered by Almond as "consociational democracies" (Lijphart 211). Unlike semi-autonomous political systems, consociational systems come about when elites make deliberate efforts to counteract the immobilizing and destabilizing effects of cultural fragmentation through grand coalitions or shared executive power with equal representation on all lower levels of government (Lijphart 212-214). The institution that is central to a successful in the design of a Consociational democracy are: (1) executive power sharing through grand coalitions; (2) bicameralism and minority representation; (3) proportional representation; (4) decentralization of the government through a federalist system; (5) minority veto (Pales 2011). Belgium's institutions have allowed it to maintain national stability, in the wake of numerous mutually reinforcing social cleavages, and foster an "ideal Consociational system". In this way, consociational democracies guarantee complete representation for *political subcultures* at every level of government through power sharing; meanwhile, semi-autonomous regimes often only guarantee partial representation on a local or regional level. Consociational political systems require, however, a specific set of conditions to be met for them to come to fruition.

According to Lijphart, the creation of a consociational democracy requires three prerequisites for societal elites and one base or underlying assumption about elites' understanding of fragmentation. First, elites must be able to manage or to accommodate "the divergent interests and demands of the [*political*] *subcultures*" (Lijphart 217-219).

Second, *political subcultures* and elites must be able to transcend cleavages to work with elites of rival *political subculture*. Third, there must be a commitment to the maintenance of the political system and a general willingness to partake in the improvement of said systems' cohesion or stability (Lijphart 217-219). Lastly, all of the aforementioned requirements for the development of a consociational democracy are contingent on the assumption that elites understand the perils or danger of political fragmentation and are willing to take steps towards fixing them or crossing *social cleavages* to work with others; the mutual working together of different *political subcultures* is defined as *accommodation* by Lijphart (Schendelen 155-156). Put simply, the formation of a consociational system requires elites to be able to overcome political fragmentation and differences to work together and support a power sharing system.

The consociational system, similar to that of the semi-autonomous system but far more expansive, is the system most notable for its emphasis on inclusion and consensus amongst *political subcultures* (Lijphart 217-219). Unlike the societies where the Anglo-American majoritarian system or, in some cases, the semi-autonomous system are created, consociational systems come into existence in societies with extreme fragmentation; the extreme fragmentation of the state and the existence of powerful *political subcultures* can, and has, led to the undermining of the state, political immobility and the outbreak of violence (Almond 399). In the societies in which consociational states come into being, therefore, there is not always pre-existing assumptions that all elite parties agree to play by the "rules," that the state has a monopoly on the legitimate use of force or that elites will work within the state apparatus to progress their agendas. As such, said assumption is often developed by elites as a



cornerstone to the development of a fragmented, yet stable regime known as a consociational political system (Lijphart 218). Chief amongst the consociational state's ability to get elite stakeholders from different *political subcultures* to come to the discussion table is the creation of institutions that guarantee their interests will be preserved. Put simply, consociationalism aims for government stability by fostering power-sharing across *political subcultures*, developing sustainable institutions that can overcome political immobility, and by avoiding the outbreak of violence by *political subcultures* aggrieved at political systems that fail to represent them (Lijphart 217-219). The key, in every facet of consociationalism, is consensus and sharing.

Examples of consociational political systems can be found all-around, despite the focus often being on European consociational systems, and have enjoyed varying levels of success. The four classic examples of a consociational state, as Lijphart outlined extensively in his various works, are Switzerland, Belgium, Austria, and the Netherlands (Lijphart 219). Since the initial inception of the idea of consociationalism, however, more countries have begun to fall under the auspice of the consociational political system as regimes change. Switzerland began being characterized as a consociational system in 1943, Belgium following World War I, Austria between 1945 and 1966, and the Netherlands from the period of 1917 to 1967 (Pales N.p). Other notable consociational political systems, at some point in time, are those of the former nation of Czechoslovakia, India, Colombia, Malaysia, South Africa, Cyprus, Bosnia, Macedonia, and Lebanon. Those nations who have ceased being consociational states, after having been classified as such, usually were met with great normative success in terms of governance or merely ceased to exist. In rare cases like that of Lebanon and Cyprus, however, the result was a

Civil War (Pales N.p). Nevertheless, since Lijphart's introduction of the concept of consociationalism in the 1960s it has grown in popularity and increasingly been adopted by constitution makers in fragmented societies, but that is not to say that consociationalism does not have a sizable amount of literature criticizing it.

Besides the requirements for the development of a consociational system, some characteristics tend to promote the development of consociational systems but are not necessary for its creation. First, the existence of an external threat to the country or the existence of the elite-mass system (Lijphart 217). The second condition is elites' recognition of the need for cross-ethnic co-operation or a more general willingness to engage across *political subcultures* (Lijphart 217). Thirdly, the presence of "relatively low total load on the decision-making apparatus" or the existence of an easily changeable structure or "decision-making apparatus" (Lijphart 217-219). Other important factors for a consociational state are distinct social cleavage with high levels of internal political cohesion and widespread acceptance of the principle of "government by elite cartel" (Lijphart 221-222). "Government by elite cartel," according to Lijphart is a society's acceptance that elites, through the elite-mass compromise, are the principal players in the decision-making process and said elites can overcome their differences to form a stable government (Lijphart 222). The acceptance of "government by elite cartel" and the presence of the various aforementioned conditions in a fragmented society aids in the formation of a stable state with a consociational political system by elites.

Consociational democracies tend to succeed when there is no clear ethnic majority can be found and ethnic groups are willing to compromise, granting equal veto power and status or representation to all of the constituent ethnic groups while

recognizing the country's ethnic diversity (Smootha 26). Consociational political systems, as a result, can “create” (or rather recognize/enforce) virtually separate societies within a state that are based on *political subcultures*’ ethnic affiliations, while uniting said separate states together through some shared national identity and overarching institutions that not only unite them but guarantee their places and in the political system (Smootha 32-33). The *political subcultures* represented, nevertheless, within a consociational stature are not necessarily stagnant in society; those *political subcultures* represented can change overtime based on size, prominence, and various other factors. Lijphart emphasizes that representation does not have to be given through very rigid guidelines for specific groups to have power, but rather for power to be shared amongst the most important groups in the society (Lijphart 103). The result is a political system based on consensus amongst relevant elite stakeholders that is hypothetically able to evolve or change with a state's ethnic composition.

### **Critics of Consociationalism and Other Approaches:**

Aside from the semi-autonomous regime and the consociational regime, there exists an extensive literature in political science on how to approach ethnic conflict or fragmentation; conflict-regulation in diverse societies can range from partition, violence (seen often through genocide and forced removal), and domination (often through imposed assimilation or involuntary segregation) to accommodation (most notable observed in partition and power sharing). Each of the aforementioned modes of conflict-regulation has a large number of variations and adaptations. As a result, no “uniform” mode of conflict-regulation can work for every or all given cases (Smootha 26). The existing debate is conflict management, nevertheless, focuses on the scope of ethnic

representation and the quality of representation, looking at if expanded representation is necessary, useful, or harmful in stabilizing ethnically divided societies (Ishiyama 252).

Political scientist Sammy Smooha, however, presents four dominant forms of dealing with deep internal conflict and fragmentation within a democracy: (1) the development of a consociational political system, (2) the employment of partition, (3) the development of an ethnic democracy, and (4) the development of liberal democracy (Smooha 26-27).

Each of the aforementioned present different approaches on how to address or overcome intense fragmentation of the *political culture* by, primarily ethnic, *political subcultures*; at the same time, however, each approach also has drawbacks and sharp criticisms that limit its applicability or suitability for most cases.

Consociational political systems, as previously discussed, are those regimes that are simultaneously stable and yet highly fragmented; they are defined primarily by the guaranteed existence of institutional representation in every facet of governance, cross-ethnic power sharing, and a mutual veto. According to Smooha, consociational democracies work best when no clear ethnic majority but rather a few or more *political subcultures* that can be brought together to form a compromise. In this way, consociational political systems recognize the ethnic diversity of a given country, and the often-separate societies that exist, and they develop a government based on ethnic affiliations, with some shared identity or overarching institutions (Smooha 32-33). The “consociational group” contends that the increased incorporation of as many ethnic groups as possible proportionally (often through PR and some form of power sharing) into governance creates the conditions for inter-ethnic cooperation and moderates political demands from any one group (Ishiyama 252-253). Consociationalism, although

appearing ideal in terms of granting representation within a highly fragmented society has faced substantial criticisms since its 1960s conceptualization by Arend Lijphart.

Criticisms of Lijphart's theory of consociationalism vary greatly but, according to political scientist Schendelen, they fall within one of four shortcomings: (1) a lack of conceptual clarity or various imprecisions, (2) the "mutability" of consociationalism's core concepts, (3) the difficulty of measuring the defining characteristics of a consociational state and (4) the absence of scientific support or qualifications (Schendelen 154-155). Another category of critics of consociationalism, not mentioned by Schendelen, are those who criticize the strong elite-based orientation or domination of the theory of consociationalism; namely that the conceptualization of the "elite cartel" ruling over society and the delegation of the people to a "somewhat" subjected statuses that must adhere to elite rule. Each set of criticisms of consociationalism attacks a specific aspect of the theory, whether it be its evidence, applicability, results, or formulation.

Chief amongst the skeptics of consociationalism is political scientist Rinus van Schendelen. Schendelen has argued that Lijphart uses evidence selectively and, as a result, his publications clarifying his theory of consociationalism use differing definitions of key concepts such as democracy and stability (Schendelen 156). To begin, Schendelen asserts that a key component of the evidence Lijphart uses, as indicators of stability, is the absence of violence, revolution and dissatisfaction, and the presence of cabinet stability and constitutional continuity (Schendelen 157-159). According to Schendelen, however, Lijphart's definition of stability and its indicators not only fluctuates between his works—at times looking at negative indicators and at other times looking at positive

indicators—but fails to even account for the government turnover that is common in consociational systems (Schendelen 164-168). To continue, Schendelen asserts that no matter what definition of stability Lijphart chooses to use, there is no empirical evidence that the absence of negative indicators causes political stability or constitutional continuity in any form; put simply, the correlation between negative and positive indicators does not, necessarily, necessitate the causation of positive indicators by negative ones or vice versa (Schendelen 157).

In addition to Lijphart's selective and vague use of evidence, Schendelen also asserts that the *pillarization* that causes the prominence of *political subcultures* in some societies was weakened by the 1950s—especially in the Netherlands which is one of Lijphart's "classic cases"—and formerly cohesive or coherent *political subcultures* were fading away (Schendelen 165).<sup>22</sup> Therefore, the "cross-dimensional co-operation" that Lijphart makes note of as qualities of consociational regimes are, instead, indicators of the dissolution of *political subcultures*, and elites pursuit of self-interests; political elites choose to form coalitions and engage in accommodation, as such, and negotiate with the opposition to improve their power and their party's power (Schendelen 165-170). Besides the structural flaws in Lijphart's argument, Schendelen questioned whether a consociational system could even be called a democracy and "isn't somehow ruled out by definition" because of the guarantees it puts in place for *political subcultures*. Schendelen provides valuable insights into some of the shortcomings of the theory of consociationalism and its applicability to the real world or the cases outlined by Lijphart.

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<sup>22</sup> When Schendelen uses the term pillarization they are referring to the rigid "pillars" of *political subcultures* in society. The term pillarization is one used, originally, by Lijphart and built upon by Schendelen.

While Schendelen questioned the evidence for the theory of consociationalism and its applicability, political scientist Brian Barry called into question the scope of consociationalism and argued that it was not widely applicable, and it only moderately worked for a few small countries (Barry 484). According to Barry, the major Swiss parties are proportionally represented since 1959 in the executive branch of the Swiss government known as the Federal Council; unlike Lijphart's consociational description of the Federal Council, however, members of the Federal Council are viewed as "individuals administering departments" rather than as party "oligarchs" or representatives of a *political subculture* that reaches across societal segmentation (Barry 482). Despite Barry's questioning of "how consociational" Switzerland is, he concedes that the country is consociational both descriptively but substantively because "political parties cross-cut cleavages in the society and provide a picture of remarkable consensus rather than a highly structured conflict of goals" (Barry 501). Although Barry asserts that Switzerland is a consociational regime, he also scrutinizes consociationalism's applicability to the Netherlands as "doubtful."

In the case of the Netherlands, Barry asserts that the religious and class segmentation of the country is not strong enough to cause the sufficient fragmentation of the national *political culture* to necessitate a consociational system (Barry 505). In the Netherlands, Lijphart outlines religion as one of the primary causes of *political subcultures*, cultural fragmentation, and, thus, the applicability of the consociational model; while Barry agrees that religious divisions exist in the Netherlands, he argues that the Dutch don't "believe or act as if" said divisions are large enough to warrant special considerations or cause political instability (Barry 502-504). Barry wrote: "the whole

cause of the disagreement was the feeling of some Dutchman ... that it mattered what all the inhabitants of the country believed. Demands for policies aimed at producing religious or secular uniformity presuppose a concern...for the state of grace of one's fellow citizens" (Barry 504). In sharp contrast to the Netherlands, Barry discusses cases such as that of Northern Ireland or other deeply fragmented societies, where he says religion creates *political subcultures* strong enough to fragment society. Barry ultimately concludes that the Netherlands case, as well as other more modern cases discussed by political scientists, are much "more doubtful than commonly supposed" and the consociational model does not fit them as it does Switzerland or Belgium (Barry 503-505).

### **Other Critics of Consociationalism:**

Although outright critics of consociationalism are numerous, so too are those political scientists with alternative theories to address strong ethnic divisions in democratic societies. In his various works, political scientist Donald L. Horowitz argues that consociationalism is a "one-size fits all solution" to societal division (Lijphart 99). Why? Consociationalism focuses on diverging identities or *political subcultures* and how to make them work together rather than integrating a society's identities and institutionalizing said integration through mandatory structures of representation (Horowitz 5). Additionally, through its codification of *political subcultures* through mandatory institutions or representation, consociationalism exacerbates competition amongst the *political subcultures* or possibly even leads to the creation of competition in the first place (Horowitz 5-7). In contrast, Horowitz proposes a centripetalists form of



conflict mediation that encourages voluntary pre-electoral coalitions of moderates that cut across societal fragmentation and foster the *accommodation of political subcultures* (Horowitz 6). The centripetal model makes use of moderates' preferential advantage with voters to appeal at the margins to voters outside of their group and to "form an interethnic vote-pooling coalition" that can fend off monoethnic or extremists' parties; centripetal systems are best adopted, therefore, in deeply divided democracies that have a preference-based voting system (Horowitz 8-9). "Vote-pooling coalitions" come about primarily as a result of international recommendations or a need of a party from the majority group to include a minority *political subculture* (Horowitz 9). Horowitz provides key insights into how one can address strong societal fragmentation without necessarily developing the complex institutions of a consociational system.

Similar to Horowitz, Paul Brass believes the issue of governance lies not in the scope of representation but with its quality, criticizing consociational theory for only "freezing" ethnic conflict rather than eliminating it (Ishiyama 253-256). Instead, Brass proposes individual competition and an individually based system to weaken and eliminate ethnic cleavages. Along similar lines to Brass, Ishiyama argues that when an electoral system promotes individual competition it is apt to promote individuals who value compromise (of all forms including cross-ethnic) within parties and when group competition is emphasized the opposite is likely to happen (with increased group competition and leaders pursuing ethnic political goals) (Ishiyama 254-257). Horowitz's, Brass's and Ishiyama's approaches follow a similar trend in their criticisms of consociationalism—namely that consociationalism solidifies *political subcultures*, possibly even empowers *political subcultures* presence or prominence and causes

heightened long-term division—but they too are not perfect and have met criticisms by consociationalist.

In “Constitutional Design for Divided Societies,” Lijphart addresses the alternative model to power sharing proposed by Horwitz and determines it to be inferior for societies with strong ethnic divisions; ceding only that the method may be superior in a majoritarian society than the plausible alternatives (Lijphart 99). In general, Lijphart denoted the participation of representatives of all significant communal groups in political decision-making is essential in the development of a constitutional system within societies with deep ethnic divisions. Lijphart emphasizes, however, that representation does not have to be given through very rigid guidelines for specific groups to have power, as Horwitz outlined in his criticism of consociationalism, but rather for power to be shared amongst the most important groups in the society (Lijphart 103).

One of the primary methods advocated for highly fragmented societies, outside of consociationalism or centripetalism, is the partition or division of the state into separate homogeneous states; with relevant *political subcultures* in the fragmented society maintaining their presence in part of a new nation as the majority or ruling class. Partition is believed to be, by its proponents, the most “humane” method to solve ethnic conflicts after they have advanced into conflict because it allows the state to separate along ethnic lines, “save lives” that would be lost from ethnic fighting and creates a “lasting” solution to societal ethnic division (Kumar 23-24). In light of large-scale immigration and growing diversity, however, the “lasting” quality perpetuated by partition advocates as an inherent part of the process is rather weak; overtime, it is possible, if not even plausible, that a country will become fragmented to some extent.

A successful partition requires organized population transfers into the countries which are aligned with their ethnic group and, thus, are homogenous (Kumar 24). The success of partitioning, therefore, is often dependent on internal decision-making (rather than external imposition) about the applicability of partitioning and it necessitates voluntary population transfers (Smootha 31). Additionally, partition is only suitable for situations where the ethnic groups have incompatible nationalisms and they are, largely, territorially separated from each other (Smootha 26). The erasure of fragmentation and the creation of a homogenous and stable society is the goal of partition but said ends can only be met once a set of specific conditions are present in a given society.

Despite its “well-intentioned” purposes or conceptualization, the history of partition has been dotted with its imposition by colonial powers on other countries and the fear of possible endless partitioning (Kumar 25). In many historical cases, colonial powers' desire to withdraw from their overseas commitments and territories led to the partitioning of countries that were former European colonies (Kumar 24-26). Rather than a desire to assist in the process of self-determination or to develop stable states, colonial powers used partitioning as a tool to develop arbitrary borders across their vast colonial empires and, often, ignored actual societal fragmentation (based on language, tribal affiliations...etc.) for convenience's sake. As a result, partitioning has often resulted not in the creation of homogenous states but rather the development of further fragmentation and even violence as colonial powers attempted to make one ethnic group dominant in a territory (Kumar 24-26).

In addition to the historical misuse or imposition of partition, many political scientists have also outlined countless possible shortcomings that the use of partition can

cause in fragmented societies. To begin, a fear exists that the use of partition will beget further calls for partition by different ethnic communities within the old state or new state, creating an unstoppable avalanche of secessionist movements (Kumar 31). As such, partition can lead to greater regime instability rather than stability. In addition to fears of secessionist movements or further partition, political scientists like Sammy Smooha have found that partition does not, often, make sense for any country because it places them in a dis-favorable position politically since a sovereign state is relinquishing parts of their land and economically in the global market since smaller nations are often overlooked (Smooha 31).

While partition seeks to divide states along ethnic lines to develop homogeneous states and consociationalism seeks to promote consensus, the ethnic democracy and liberal democracy approaches seek to exclude or ignore *political subcultures* (Ishiyama 253). Ethnic democracy and liberal democracy adhere to notions of majoritarianism that systematically exclude groups from the decision-making process. As a result, they both inadvertently increase the likelihood of violence or ethnic conflict (Ishiyama 253). The ethnic democracy approach to intense fragmentation focuses on working within the system and adhering to principles of majoritarianism. Ethnic democracy combines majoritarian electoral procedures and respect for the rule of law and individual citizenship rights with the institutionalized dominance of a majority ethnic group over a society. In its essence, ethnic democracy is the articulation of the majority ethnic group's political agenda on an ethnic nationalist platform and the ignoring or suppression of other segments of the population (Smooha 26-27). The ethnic majority, in this sense, simultaneously espouses exclusionary nationalism and a commitment to the principles of

democracy (Smootha 32).

In contrast to ethnic democracy, liberal democracy is when a large portion of the population deny/ignore or wish to deny/ignore ethnic affiliations and *political subcultures* within a given society (Smootha 26). In a liberal democracy, the individual citizen rather than the group (embodied by different *political subcultures*), is considered the cornerstone of societal representation, and ethnic affiliations are ignored by those within society; concepts of ethnicity, in this way, become something that is privatized and personal affiliation to the individual but not a visible or public affiliation to drive the *political culture* (Smootha 32-33). The mere ignoring of *political subcultures* or groups in favor of the individual, however, does not make *political subcultures* disappear or arguably improve government functionality. As a result, liberal democracies can often face a lack of, or loss of, trust in government protections for non-discrimination by various ethnic groups and calls for group rights recognition; they, at times, find themselves outright denying the existence of *political subcultures* or discrimination against said *political subcultures* (Smootha 33).

## CHAPTER 3- Case Studies

### Case Study Selection:

This essay will draw on several case studies to illustrate how the three types of representative democracies that are the focus of this study (Anglo-American Majoritarian, Semi-Autonomous regions, and Consociational) function in the real world, test the effectiveness of the previously outlined typology, and highlight the variety of *political subcultures* within each case. Recognizing that adherence to typology's characteristics varies from case to case and hoping to add breadth to the discussion, this essay will use two case studies for each of the three types of representative democracies instead of just one per section. To begin, each case study will look at the development of the cases' *political subcultures* through historical analysis, their adherence to their respective typology, and a handful of empirical data from three data sets—the EPR-Core Data Set, Democracy Index, and V-DEM Data Set—to help examine the current state of their *political subcultures* and descriptive representation for minority groups.

The cases that are examined are the United Kingdom and the United States in the Anglo-American Majoritarian category, Spain and Canada in the Semi-Autonomous category, and Bosnia and Belgium in the Consociational section. The United Kingdom and the United States were chosen to represent the Anglo-American Majoritarian category because they fall soundly within the classification of the Anglo-American Majoritarian system and are held to be the most preeminent models of said system. However, both countries also have different *political subcultures* and government types. Similar to the UK and USA, Spain represents its respective category because it falls well

within the said classification as a result of its granting of autonomy, in varying forms, to the respective ethno-linguistic cleavages of Spanish society. To contrast the staunch autonomy of the Spanish Semi-Autonomous system, this essay provides the case of Canada and the province of Québec as an example of a more “moderate” semi-autonomous representative democracy. Lastly, Bosnia and Belgium were chosen as representations of their categories because they too fit well within their categories on paper and Belgium is a preeminent model for consociationalism since Lijphart first presented the theory in the 20th century. Additionally, despite their strong adherence to the characteristics of their category, both countries share different *political subcultures* and government structures.

### **Anglo-American Majoritarian Political Systems: The United Kingdom (UK)**

#### **(A) The UK and Power Distribution**

The United Kingdom is a medium-sized country of 66.5 million people in Western Europe that is governed by some five parliamentary bodies and a strong federal government in London. The V-DEM Datasets, created by the University of Gothenburg, indicate that the United Kingdom is firmly in the top 10% of “Liberal Democracies” in the world with a score of more than .75 out of 1 (V-DEM 24-26). Similarly, according to the 2020 Democracy Index ratings from *the Economists*, the United Kingdom is a “full democracy” that is ranked 16th in the world with a score of 8.54 out of 10: the United Kingdom has a perfect ranking of 10 out of 10 for “Electoral process and Pluralism,” a 7.50 out of 10 for the “Functioning of its government,” 8.89 out of 10 for “Political

Participation,” and a 7.50 out of 10 for “Political Culture” (Democracy Index 9).<sup>23</sup> In comparison to other European democracies, especially in Western Europe, the United Kingdom ranks in the center for virtually every factor studied by the Democracy Index. In particular, the United Kingdom’s “Political Culture,” is more fragmented or weak than most of its Western European neighbors, with only Belgium and Portugal having lower ratings. Despite their shortcomings in having a fully unified political culture, likely as a result of the various ethno-linguistic identities in the country, the United Kingdom has a highly functional and effective governing apparatus (Democracy Index 9-13). The creation of the modern country of the United Kingdom and the formation of its Anglo-American Majoritarian model which grants it stability dates back to the 19th-century.



Image 1.1 Map of the modern-day UK borders and the countries within it. From the BBC Country Profile

In 1801 the United Kingdom came into existence through the Act of Union, formally uniting Great Britain (England, Scotland, and Wales) and Ireland as the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland (CIA N.p). Since 1801, the borders and name of the UK have changed—with the 1921 Anglo-Irish Treaty partitioning Ireland into Northern Ireland and the Republic

<sup>23</sup> The Democracy Index measures the health of contemporary democracies and classifies countries as Full Democracies, Flawed Democracies, Hybrid Regimes, and Authoritarian Regimes. The Democracy Index uses four indicators to classify regimes: the presence of a competitive and multiparty political system, universal adult suffrage, regularly contested and secure elections conducted with secret ballots and public access of major parties to the electorate through the media or campaigning.



of Ireland and the name being officially changed to simply the United Kingdom in 1927—but the general structure of the country has not. The UK is a federalist parliamentary democracy under a constitutional monarchy. The UK's federal government consists of three primary sections: the executive branch, judicial branch, and legislative branch. The Belgian monarch, currently Queen Elizabeth II of England, serves as the head of the British state and is responsible for appointing parliamentary confirmed candidates to the judiciary and executive branches of government (CIA N.p). The Prime Minister (PM), who is chosen from the majority coalition based on the principles of majoritarianism, serves as the head of government and is responsible for conducting the country's day-to-day business (United Kingdom N.p).

The UK's legislative branch, consisting of the House of Lords and House of Commons, is responsible for drafting laws and federal regulations for the entirety of the country. The House of Lords, also called the Upper House, is the second chamber of the British Parliament and consists of 792 seats (Politico N.p.). Members of the House of Lords come from the British aristocracy and are not elected by the British people in recurring election cycles. As a result, the House of Lords does not have virtually any of the powers invested in the federal government—such as control over taxation or forming a government—and is more of a symbolic aspect of the British government that has the power to scrutinize legislation or externally use their power to influence elections. The House of Commons, on the other hand, is the first chamber of the British parliament and consists of elected representatives from the constituencies in the six countries that make up the UK (United Kingdom N.p).

The House of Commons currently has 650 parliamentary constituencies, and thus

650 representatives, across the four countries that comprise the United Kingdom: England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland (United Kingdom N.p). Currently, the British House of Commons is comprised of the Conservative Party with 365 seats, the Labour Party with 200 seats, the Scottish National Party with 47 seats, the Liberal Democrats with 11 seats, and the Democratic Unionist Party with 8 seats. Additionally, the House of Commons consists of the Plaid Cymru with 3 seats, the Social Democratic and Labour Party with 2 seats, the Alliance Party with 1 seat, the Green Party with 1 seat, Independent with 4 seats, and Sinn Féin with 7 seats (Johnston 10-12). British elections (locally and nationally) are based on a first-past-the-post system, as discussed in the previous chapter, that calls for the candidate with the most votes out of the poll of candidates to win a given election. The most votes out of the pool of candidates, however, are not synonymous with a majority of the total votes cast. Whether receiving a majority of the total vote or merely a larger number of votes than their competitors, each constituency in the UK elects only a single member of parliament (MP) to the House of Commons every five years (United Kingdom N.p). The number of seats in the House of Commons is fixed at 650 but the allocation of seats between each of the four nations of the UK is calculated based on the proportion of the registered voters in each (Johnston 20). The election system of the UK is a clear-cut embodiment of the principle of majoritarianism in the selection of legislative representatives. However, the principle of majoritarianism embedded in British elections is challenged, albeit on a relatively small-scale, by the presence of a federalist system that grants some autonomy to the four countries within the United Kingdom (Gay 119).

The use of a federalist system allows the countries within the UK, although often

dominated by England, to all have some level of regional autonomy and to play an important role in the composition of the federal government. The United Kingdom consists of four countries: Northern Ireland, England, Scotland, and Wales. Each of the countries has a unique culture, language, and heritage that is indigenous to the region. Additionally, each of the four countries has its own parliament to handle regional affairs, enforce federal legislation and maintain the cultural/linguistic heritage of each region (United Kingdom N.p). Despite having some power, the theory of majoritarianism embodies even the moderately devolved nature of this system since any laws or regulations the countries make is subject to federal laws and cannot go against it. It is the majority party in Parliament that puts its stamp on the entire national legislation; the British parliament still has greater power and can override local and regional governments and, therefore, this is still a majoritarian system (United Kingdom N.p).

Recognizing that the UK adheres to majoritarian principles in its governmental structure, how does the UK stacks up the characteristics common to the Anglo-American category of representative democracies? The UK, unlike many countries, embodies virtually all of the core principles that are central to a successful Anglo-American system. (1) Despite its global nature, the UK demonstrates a tendency towards an insular nature politically and economically, as can be seen through Brexit and the UK's ongoing push towards less reliance/connectedness with continental Europe (Democracy Index 7). (2) The United Kingdom's government is highly centralized, as discussed earlier, and every one of the UK's four countries at the periphery of society is subject to the decisions of the British parliament at the center (Dunin-Wasowicz 1). (3) Even though the UK has a state religion, Anglicanism, the country has secularized political systems that do not

emphasize any particular religious affiliation. (4) British politicians share a *political culture* that emphasizes democratic debate, progress towards the common goal of improving the country, and a mutual sense of unity (Dunin-Wasowicz 1-3). (5) The UK federal government is “highly differentiated” because each government-related role is specialized, and the country has a strong bureaucratic structure. In total the UK has 23 ministerial departments that administer virtually every facet of the British public sector, 20 non-ministerial departments that provide expert opinion, and 300+ agencies that work to enforce and execute government decrees (United Kingdom N.p). The UK bears every characteristic or requirement outlined by Almond for a country to fall within the category of an Anglo-American system. As a result of its adherence to the characteristics of the Anglo-American model, the UK should, and does, have a high level of stability and effectiveness in governing (Almond 397-398).

Is the UK divided by *political subcultures* that fragment the country? How does the UK fit within the conceptualization of *political subcultures*? The UK is a relatively homogeneous country in terms of the *political culture*, as Anglo-American majoritarian systems tend to be, and political outcomes because of the moderate stance embedded into the core of Majoritarian-based systems. The measure for the homogeneity in the *political culture* is the absence of many, or any, *political subcultures* with diverging goals that can fragment the national political culture or the presence of *political subcultures* who tend to align with the majority in terms of the mode of governance. British political parties—whether it be the ruling Conservative party or the opposing Labor Party—tend to compete for the center of British politics with the ultimate result of enacting moderate legislative reform. The British political structure, often, is a relatively positive

phenomena because its institutions incentivize party behavior in centripetal or centrifugal directions in a PR system, encouraging party differentiation and limiting extremism. As a result, those who voted for a losing party in one election could often expect similar policies to be passed by an opposition party to those their preferred party would have enacted (Christoph 632-634).

Although the UK is a diverse state of four nations, territory-based or culturally based *political subcultures* within the UK were largely erased or engulfed into a single left-right dimension of political competition encapsulated in the Conservative and Labor parties (Dunin-Wasowicz 4). British politics has long been dominated by two big parties, one right moderate and one left moderate party, and a small number of “floating” voters between the two parties. In the 1950s, for example, over 80% of the electorate voted for the Labour party (the left moderate party) or Conservative party (the right moderate party) (Taylor N.p).

Since the 1950s, the two-party domination of the UK has remained strong with them holding a combined 86% of the British parliament. This is not to say that British parties all share the same ideology, but rather that there is an innate sense of pragmatism and moderation embedded in the British system that ultimately results in similar outcomes across party lines (Taylor N.p). Additionally, as British parties become closer in any given election to obtaining power or participating in a ruling coalition they tend to “shed” extremist or non-conforming *political subcultures* from the public light to make themselves more palpable to the British electorate (Christoph 636). The force causing the embeddedness of moderation in the British system is the combination of proportional representation, federalism and the omnipresent left-right dimension that superseded

individual parties. While the left-right dimension may seem all-encompassing, it turns out to be rather weak in practice and has little, if any, unifying factor among ideological groups (Dunin-Wasowicz 2-4). Even with a relatively homogeneous *political culture* and strong two-party domination, some *political subcultures* do exist in the UK and they have increasingly come to prominence as the “floaters” between the two main parties have increasingly gravitated towards nationalist parties within the UK’s four countries since the 1950s. Nevertheless, said *political subcultures’* power was often minuscule in comparison to the dominant left-right dimension of political competition. In recent times, however, the *political culture* of the UK has increasingly fragmented as the country’s ethno-linguistic *political subcultures*, embodied in the Scottish parties, have obtained greater amounts of representation and power in the country. What was once political consensus or the simple ignoring of ethno-linguistic differences in policy outcomes, has become the source of modern political splintering on issues such as BREXIT. On a similar note, the left-right dimension of the UK has also weakened in recent years as the Labour party has become a symbolic shell of itself. The result is, in the UK at least, a weakening or erasure of the previous institutional consensus and moderation.

### **(B) A Comparative Look at the United States and the UK**

Although the left-right dimension of political competition is prominent in the UK, it is not unique to the country but rather a common trend in Anglo-American majoritarian countries that tend to “overlook” or ignore racial and ethnic divides to the detriment of democratic representation. According to the 2020 Democracy Index ratings, the United States is a “flawed democracy” that is ranked 25th in the world with a score of 7.92 out

of 10: the USA has a 9.17 out of 10 for “Electoral process and Pluralism,” a 6.79 out of 10 for the “Functioning of its government,” 8.89 out of 10 for “Political Participation,” and a 6.25 out of 10 for “Political Culture” (Democracy Index 43). In comparison to other North American democracies, the USA ranks in the bottom for virtually every



Image 1.2 Map of the modern-day USA borders and the countries within it. From the CIA Country Profiles.

factor studied by the Democracy Index (Democracy Index 43). Despite its low rankings, which have consistently decreased over recent years in a process of “Autocratization,” the V-DEM Datasets indicate that the USA is in the top 20% of

“Liberal Democracies” in the world with a score of more than 0.50 out of 1 and lower than 0.75 out of 1 (V-DEM 24-26).

In the USA, which also fits within the Anglo-American majoritarian model, the country has solidified a two-party system with a left-right dimension to which the electorate largely adhere (Lee 138). Voters tend to choose between “the left” embodied with the Democrats or “the right” embodied with the Republicans. However, the left-right dynamic has increasingly become an “identity” rather than a mere political affiliation in

the USA, as the *political culture* weakens and fragments from a fledgling trust in government institutions (Democracy Index 20). As a result, third parties in the USA have played a minimal role, if any role at all, in the governance of the American political system throughout its history and tend to capture a small number of “floating” voters who trend between a fringe party, independent candidates and one of the major parties (Lee 138-140). Similar to the UK, historically at least, is the moderate nature of the American *political culture* and the innate sense of pragmatism in the American political system that tends to lead to moderate compromise (Jacobson 388-390). In the United States, as in the UK, there is a dual factor at play, each working in conjunction to produce moderation. On one hand is the country’s homogenous *political culture*, as well as the country’s *political subcultures* willingness to coalesce in political organizations/parties often not descriptively representing them, and on another hand is the country’s institutions that propagate a left-right dynamic.

In recent years, polarization in the American political system has played a role in causing the major parties’ inability to “shed” extremist segments of their party as the voter base has become radicalized, party loyalty is heightened, swing districts have all but evaporated due to gerrymandering and policy has begun shifting away from the center (Jacobson 388). In its place, the American two-party system has begun propagating less-moderate left-right political views and witnessed decreasing levels of pragmatism/compromise since the 93rd American Congress in 1973 (Jacobson 690). Despite its increasing polarization, the left-right dimension of the USA holds in the present, embodied by the Republican and Democratic parties, and bears striking similarities to *political culture* and the configuration of the British political landscape.



In order to identify the *political subcultures* of the UK, based on race and ethnicity, this essay makes use of the aggregate data from the EPR Core dataset. Based on the EPR Core dataset ethnic *political subcultures* in the UK currently consist of (1) Afro-Uruguayans, (2) Scots, (3) Asians, (4) Afro-Caribbeans, (5) Welsh, (6) Catholics in Northern Ireland, and Protestants in Northern Ireland (Bormann 744-771). Of those major *political subcultures* present in the UK, however, the EPR Core dataset identifies the ethno-linguistic identities (Scots, Welsh, and Northern Irish) of the UK's four countries—excluding England which is the majority—as the only politically relevant *political subcultures* based on their power/influence. The Scots, Welsh and Northern Irish all have relative access to state power, although at times it wanes, and play roles in the fragmentation of the British *political culture* based on ethno-linguistic cleavages (Vog 1327-1342).

Although a state of four nations that largely debate along ideological lines, the linguistic and ethnic dimensions of the UK have fostered slight fragmentations in the British *political culture* since the formation of the state (Dunin-Wasowicz 1-3). To begin, although largely carrying a British identity and adhering to the *political culture* of the UK, Northern Ireland has a diverse history with a unique culture, a native language, and a strain of “Irish” identity. The desire for Northern Irish separation from the *political culture* and the UK more generally can be seen through the Sinn Fein party, which holds 7 seats in the British parliament (Johnston 10). Similarly, the Scottish *political subculture* (as seen through the Scottish National Party with 47 seats) and the Welsh *political subculture* (as seen through the Plaid Cymru with 3 seats) cause a fragmentation of the British *political culture* as each one holds tenable sway and influence on their respective

geographic regions based on ethno-linguistic cleavages (Johnston 10). Fragmentation in the UK is a sliding scale, with many of the country's *political subcultures* vying for independence; most prominent on the scale, in recent times, is the Scots who have been sliding towards independence for several decades and whose representatives have continuously walked out of the House of Commons in protest. Although many may disagree, say a Scottish or Irish nationalist, the fragmentation of the UK *political culture* has been relatively isolated to a handful of political parties and, notably, the referendums held in some of the ethno-linguistic regions that diverge from the “majority” view. In the legislature, nevertheless, the parties all still adhere to the fundamental commitment to represent their constituents in British democracy and work across ethno-linguistic lines to get legislation passed (Johnston 10).

Many of the aforementioned parties have strong policies for their respective ethno-linguistic *political subculture* to secede from the UK if given the opportunity through a referendum, with the popularity for secession growing amidst the fallout of BREXIT (Langfitt 2). The combination of all of these parties, nevertheless, only 57 seats in the 650-seat parliament of the UK, meaning that the political fragmentation is limited to less than 9% of the total British parliament (Johnston 10). In addition to the parties attributed to a political subculture in the UK, British *political subcultures* are also present to some extent within the left-right dimension of the political parties with both the Conservative party and Labor party having members from the four countries of the UK that identify with their ethno-linguistic identity; the overarching and cross-cutting political parties in the UK or USA are a sharp contrast to countries like Belgium with highly fragmented parties along ethno-linguistic lines (Johnston 10-12). The

fragmentation of the British *political culture* is limited to some extent by the winner-take-all electoral system limit third party representation and, thus, limit parties strictly identifying with one ethno-linguistic group, keeping their political fragmentation score low. Although growing in numbers, at the present, the *political subcultures* of the UK are still subject to the whim of the left-right dimension of British politics that largely “transcends” or disregards ethno-linguistic differences inherent to the four countries that compose the UK. Modern representation, however, could be out-of-step with an evolving British *political culture* that is increasingly fragmenting but at present this has a slow-to-no effect on national representation given the country’s electoral method.

Similar to the UK, the major ethno-linguistic *political subcultures* of the USA have some political power in the political system. The power of American ethno-linguistic *political subcultures*, however, is often encapsulated in individual representatives or senators within one of the two major parties. Based on the EPR Core dataset ethnic *political subcultures* in the USA currently consist of (1) Latinos, (2) African Americans, (3) Asian Americans, (4) American Indians, and (5) Arab Americans (Bormann 744-771). Of those major *political subcultures* present in the USA, however, the EPR Core dataset identifies only Latinos and African-Americans as politically relevant *political subcultures* based on their power/influence (Vog 1327-1342). The formulation of American political subcultures in the USA political system is not identical to that in the UK. In contrast to the UK, primarily as a result of the configuration of the American political system along two-parties, there are no ethno-linguistic parties within the USA that advocate for a specific *political subculture*. Instead, as is the case in the UK to a lesser extent, *political subcultures* are incorporated into the left-right dimension and

serve under one of the major parties.

The United Kingdom's Anglo-American Majoritarian system creates a highly stable governmental apparatus that engages with the various segments of British society on a national level through a left-right dichotomy and embraces, to some extent, the diversity of the country's ethno-linguistic *political subcultures* on a regional level through federalism. In all cases, however, the central government in London is responsible for deciding policy and the British political structure ignores the ethno-linguistic *political subcultures* in the creation of most parties or legislation, to the detriment of said ethno-linguistic *political subcultures*.

### **Semi-Autonomous Political Systems: Spain**

Spain is a medium-sized country of 46.94 million people in the westernmost portion of Europe with strong democratic institutions. The V-DEM Datasets indicates that Spain is firmly in the top 10% of "Liberal Democracies" in the world with a score of more than .75 out of 1 (V-DEM 24-26). Furthermore, according to the 2020 Democracy Index ratings, Spain is a "full democracy" that is ranked 22nd in the world with a score of 8.12 out of 10: Spain has a ranking of 9.58 out of 10 for "Electoral process and Pluralism," a 7.14 out of 10 for the "Functioning of its government," 7.22 out of 10 for "Political Participation," and an 8.13 out of 10 for "Political Culture" (Democracy Index 50). In comparison to other Western European democracies, Spain ranks in the lower center for virtually every factor studied by the Democracy Index. In particular, the functioning of the Spanish government and the level of political participation in Spain is particularly lower than most of its Western European neighbors. Despite its below-

average performance, by Western European standards, Spain has a stable administrative structure and a *political culture* rooted in a constitutional framework that ensures ethno-linguistic representation for the country's *political subcultures*. The creation of modern Spain and the formation of its Semi-Autonomous model dates back to the 15th century



Image 1.3 Image of modern-day Spain and its major cultural regions. From the Encyclopædia Britannica.

(Democracy Index 9).

In the 15th century, the Spanish state came into existence as a monarchy through the union of Ferdinand II, the King of Aragon (the eastern portions of modern-day Spain), and Princess Isabella of Castile. Since its creation, the country of Spain has undergone a series of

constitutional transformations that have shifted it from a centralized monarchy to a decentralized democracy. Starting in 1883, and up until 1930, Spain continually had a parliamentary system written into its national constitution in some form but gave substantial power to the Spanish monarchy (Shabad 111-112). In 1931, a social revolution occurred, and Spain became a democracy, albeit a highly unstable and dysfunctional one, for a brief period. Spanish democracy lasted until July 17th of 1936, when the Spanish Civil War began between the nationalist forces of Francisco Franco and the republican forces of the 2nd Republic of Spain. The War resulted in the collapse of the fledgling Spanish democracy and the formation of a highly centralized dictatorship

under Francisco Franco in 1939 (Shabad 111).

Spain had a long history of being a highly centralized state, similar in many regards to the Anglo-American Majoritarian model, with a single administrative and governmental authority embodied through leaders like Francisco Franco. In the 1970s the Spanish government, under the Franco regime, underwent a concerted effort to centralize and standardize the Spanish state along with the ideals of “castilianization,” whereby non-majority cultures and languages in Spain were suppressed in favor of the dominant Castellano culture/language (Shabad 111-115). Despite Franco’s attempts to repress Spain’s minorities and progress an assimilationist policy, the major minority groups in Spain maintained their ethno-linguistic identity and persevered throughout the 1970s. The repression that Spain’s minority groups faced during the period served as a renewed catalyst for calls for regional autonomy and ethnolinguistic self-expression throughout the late 20th century (Shabad 111-112). Upon the death of Franco in 1975, however, that all changed. In 1975 Spanish King Juan Carlos I became the head of the Spanish state, succeeding Franco as his hand-picked heir, and he began the process of nationwide democratization.

Following Franco’s death, ethno-linguistic parties such as the *Partido Nacionalista Vasco* and the *Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya* quickly rose to prominence on a platform of increased self-autonomy (Shabad 112). Spain is not like other European multinational societies, which have often taken the form of a consociational state because Castellano is the country’s clear dominant culture and language, but the government guarantees the autonomy of its ethno-linguistic *political subcultures* (Shabad 114). For Spain, therefore, the problem wasn’t one of mediating

between relatively equally sized ethno-linguistic identities but rather between the Castellano ethno-linguistic majority and a few prominent ethno-linguistic *political subcultures* that accounted for some 28% of the country's total population (Shabad 114). To minimize the political challenges to the existence of the Spanish state, the Spanish political elites began the process of governmental decentralization in 1977 and gave varying forms of regional autonomy to the different ethno-linguistic *political subcultures* within their respective regions of the country (Shabad 112). In 1978 a new Spanish constitution explicitly recognized the multinational and multilingual character of the Spanish state, a sharp departure from the historically unitary emphasis of Spanish constitutions. The 1978 constitution established Spain as a federalist parliamentary democracy under a constitutional monarchy, while simultaneously establishing the principle of decentralization of the Spanish government and the granting of relative autonomy to the major ethno-linguistic *political subcultures* of Spain (Shabad 112-113).

With a new constitution in place, the process of gaining autonomy began for the “historically” autonomous Basque, Catalan, Gallego, and Valencian communities (Shabad 113). In 1979 the Basque provinces and Catalonia regained the autonomy to address a host of economic, social, and cultural issues within their respective regions. Additionally, and uniquely, in the Basque provinces of Guipúzcoa and Vizcaya the *Conciertos Económicos* were reestablished, allowing the regions to have greater economic control over (Shabad 113). Similar to the Basque provinces and Catalonia, Galicia passed its own autonomy referendum and gained new levels of autonomy over their region. Soon after Galicia, the southern region of Andalusia, with no major claim to ethno-linguistic difference with the Spanish state or historic autonomy, became the fourth

region to be granted autonomy (Shabad 112). Autonomy during this period came as a result of increasing support for radical ethno-linguistic nationalist parties—such as Herri Batasunam in the Basque provinces—in the different ethno-linguistic regions, a renewed call for secession by some ethno-linguistic political subcultures, and escalating violence by the Basque separatist organization Euskadi ta Askatasuna (ETA) (Shabad 114). Like a tidal wave of discontent with the state, power faded away from the centralized state, and autonomy flooded towards the ethno-linguistic *political subcultures*. The ethno-linguistic *political subcultures* of Spain called into question the very nature of Spanish representation and democratic practices to gain autonomy (Shabad 111).

In 1983, the creation of *el Estado de las Autonomías* officially ended with the creation of 17 autonomous communities and the continued delegation of power to regional governments (Shabad 112). According to political scientist Goldie Shabad: “As of June 1985, 300,000 functionaries of the central government had been transferred to the regions, and by the end of that year all but a few regional governments had received the full measure of competencies granted to them by their statutes of autonomy (Shabad 112).” By 1980, nevertheless, it seemed as if the new nature of the Spanish state and the differences brought about by the prominence of ethno-linguistic calls for autonomy had all but been solved. Unfortunately, the problem of autonomy and succession did not end. The Basque provinces (also known as Euskadi or Pais Vasco) and Catalonia, set the groundwork for other “historically autonomous” regions with a non-mainstream ethno-linguistic *political subculture* laid the groundwork for the formation of the Spanish state as a Semi-Autonomous regime type (Shabad 114-116).<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Interestingly, the autonomy granted to the “historically autonomous” communities of Spain set a precedent of granting autonomy, to some degree, to the various regions of Spain even if they did not



Although power has moved away from the central state and towards the peripheries, embodied by the new autonomous communities, the national government of Spain maintains the vast majority of the essential functions of the state, such as conducting foreign relations and maintaining a military (La Moncloa n.p). The power that has been granted to the autonomous communities primarily allows them to regulate their education, promote their language/culture, have substantial influence over finances/management, and run the political/administrative functions of their respective regions. According to the Moncloa of Spain:

Autonomous Communities have considerable freedom in terms of economic and financial management. They are able to approve their own annual budgets and determine their own resources through taxes, rates and surcharges. The general funding system of Autonomous Communities, which also includes taxes assigned by the State and participation in national taxes, is set multilaterally by the State and Autonomous Communities, ensuring inter-regional solidarity and an equal threshold in the provision of basic public services throughout Spain thanks to a range of financial mechanisms. Furthermore, Comunidad Autónoma del País Vasco and Comunidad Foral de Navarra, have two special systems by virtue of their regional systems: the Economic Agreement (Concierto Económico), in the case of the Basque Country, and the Agreement (Convenio), in the case of Navarre. With these financial systems, these Communities agree with the State, their contribution to its support and to the harmonization of their own tax system with that which prevails in the rest of national territory (La Moncloa n.p).

In this way, the autonomous zones are allowed to enjoy a great amount of freedom in the way they govern and administer themselves on a day-to-day basis. On a national scale, however, the autonomous zones must work with the national government of Spain to determine some aspects of regional policy and all aspects of a state-wide policy. The powers of the autonomous zones do not permit their contradiction of the federal

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technically have a historic claim to self-governance such as Andalusia. With the granting of Andalusian autonomy in 1980, the ruling Spanish party UCD weakened in power and new questions arose about the future of the Spanish state.

government or their unilateral acting on the international stage (La Moncloa n.p).

With the general timeline behind the formation of the current Spanish state in mind, let us now examine the various facets of the Spanish government. The Executive of Spain is divided between the head of the Spanish state current King Felipe VI, who performs mostly ceremonial activities and holds little actual power in the political realm, and the Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez Pérez-Castejón (La Moncloa n.p). The legislative branch of the government is called Les Cortes and, similar in some regards to that of the United Kingdom, it is divided into the Congress of Deputies and the Senate (La Moncloa n.p).

Unlike the United Kingdom with a relatively straightforward system based on first-past-the-post and single-member districts, the Spanish method of conducting elections is a bit more complex (La Moncloa n.p). The Spanish election system legislative system is based on proportional representation with some minimum guarantees put in place, in terms of seats and representation, for the various provinces of Spain based on population. Additionally, Spain makes use of a run-off system that ensures that candidates receive a majority of the votes, making run-off elections occur amongst top vote-getters, in a given election to enter the office (La Moncloa n.p). Run-off elections, proportional representation, and territorial guarantees for representation are essential aspects of selecting representatives for the legislative branch.

The Senate of Spain consists of 266 senators and guarantees a small degree of territorial representation for Spain's *comunidades autónomas* or autonomous communities, many of which speak on behalf of one of the country's ethno-linguistic *political subcultures* (La Moncloa n.p). Of the 266 senators in the Senate, 208 of them are

elected directly to their office through universal suffrage: each of the 47 mainland provinces is granted 4 senators, there are 3 senators for each of the three largest islands (Gran Canaria, Mallorca, and Tenerife), each other island (Ibiza-Formentera, Minorca, Fuerteventura, Gomera, Hierro, Lanzarote, and La Palma) has 1 senator and Ceuta and Melilla each have 2 senators (La Moncloa n.p). Additionally, there are another 58 senators who are appointed by the legislative assemblies of the autonomous communities. Each of the legislative assemblies of the Autonomous communities each appoints a senator (guaranteed) and then is allowed to appoint another senator for every million inhabitants of their respective territory (La Moncloa n.p). The Senate can veto or amend legislation passed by the Congress of Deputies, but the ultimate passage of legislation must be decided on by the Congress of Deputies. Through the use of appointed seats in the Senate by the autonomous communities, the legislative structure of Les Cortes reinforces the representation or power of the different autonomous communities in Spain and complements the autonomy each community has the decentralized federalist model (La Moncloa n.p).

In contrast to the Senate, the Congress of Deputies is composed of 350 members who are all chosen through direct elections, in either multi-member or single-member districts, with universal suffrage (La Moncloa n.p). Each of the 50 Spanish provinces is guaranteed at least two seats in the Congress of Deputies and the cities of Ceuta and Melilla are guaranteed one seat. Of the remaining seats in the Congress, they are allocated proportionally based on the size of each constituency (Congreso de los Diputados n.p). The current ruling coalition of Spain is led by the Spanish Socialist's Working Party (PSOE) with 120 seats and Unidos Podemos (UP) with 35 seats.

Additionally, the ruling coalition is supported by several smaller parties: The Republican Left of Catalonia (ERC) with 13 seats, the Basque Nationalist Party (PNV) with 6 seats, Euskal Herria Bildu (EH Bildu) with 5 seats, a pluralist group with 7 seats and a mixed group with 5 seats (Congreso de los Diputados n.p). In opposition to the ruling coalition are the People's Party (PP) with 88 seats, Vox with 52 seats, the Citizens party (Cs) with 10 seats, a plural group with 5 seats, and a mixed group with 6 seats (Congreso de los Diputados n.p). It certainly seems, based on the current structure of the Spanish government and its promotion of ethno-linguistic *political subcultures* relative autonomy, that Spain is a good example of a Semi-Autonomous system.

#### **(A) A comparative Look at Spain and Canada**

Is the Spanish political system unique in its granting of political representation to its country's *political subcultures* or is it part of a larger category of semi-autonomous countries? More pressingly, however, do other semi-autonomous countries like Canada produce the centripetal dynamic we saw in Spain for so long? To answer these questions let us, briefly, look at the North American country of Canada and its Semi-Autonomous system. The V-DEM Datasets indicate that Canada is firmly in the top 10% of "Liberal Democracies" in the world with a score of more than .75 out of 1 (V-DEM 24-26). Furthermore, the 2020 Democracy Index ratings show that Canada is a "full democracy" that is ranked 5th in the world with a score of 9.24 out of 10: Canada has a ranking of 9.58 out of 10 for "Electoral process and Pluralism," an 8.93 out of 10 for the "Functioning of its government," 8.89 out of 10 for "Political Participation," and a 9.38

out of 10 for “Political Culture” (Democracy Index 8).<sup>25</sup> In comparison to other Northern American democracies, and the world more generally, Canada ranks at the top for virtually every factor studied by the Democracy Index. In particular, Canada’s robust “Political Culture,” “political participation” and government functioning are exceptional outliers in the democratic world (Democracy Index 8). The creation of the modern country of Canada, its granting of relative autonomy to its provinces, and the formation of its Semi-Autonomous model dates back to the formation of the state.

Before exploring the formation of the Canadian state, as a comparison to Spain, let us examine the *political subcultures* of the country. To identify the *political*



Image 1.4 Image of modern-day Canada and its provinces. From the Encyclopedia Britannica.

*subcultures* of Canada, based

on race and ethnicity, this essay makes use of the aggregate data from the EPR Core dataset. Based on the EPR Core dataset the ethnic majority in Canada is the

English-speaking population of

the nation and the ethnic

*political subcultures* consist of (1) the Aboriginal peoples, and (2) the French-speaking

population of Québec (Bormann 744-771). Of those major *political subcultures* present in

<sup>25</sup> The Democracy Index measures the health of contemporary democracies and classifies countries as Full Democracies, Flawed Democracies, Hybrid Regimes, and Authoritarian Regimes. The Democracy Index uses four indicators to classify regimes: the presence of a competitive and multiparty political system, universal adult suffrage, regularly contested and secure elections conducted with secret ballots and public access of major parties to the electorate through the media or campaigning.

Canada, the EPR Core dataset identifies the French-speaking population of Québec as politically relevant based on their power/influence and the Aboriginal peoples as a group discriminated against. The Quebecois population of Canada—with a history dating back to the colonization of the region by the French—plays the primary role in fragmenting the Canadian *political culture*, similar to the ethno-linguistic *political subcultures* of Spain, and has historically demanded socio-political power and representation (Vog 1327-1342).

Since the creation of the Canadian federation in the late 20th century, the province of Québec has claimed its right to relative or complete political, cultural, and social autonomy. On a national level, the Canadian system differs from Spain because there is no level of guaranteed representation for the country's ethno-linguistic *political subcultures*. Instead, Canada has a bicameral parliamentary system that resembles something more similar to the Anglo-American Majoritarian model. In the Canadian House of Commons, each representative is individually elected to represent their constituents within a single-member constituency and through a first-past-the-post voting system (Parliament of Canada N.p). Additionally, in the Canadian Senate individuals are appointed by the Governor-General to represent Canada's provinces/territories (Parliament of Canada N.p). In this way, the ethno-linguistic *political subcultures* of Canada are absorbed into the federal government on a national level.

Despite a large amount of difference in the national legislative structure of Canada and Spain, both countries give relative autonomy to their country's ethno-linguistic *political subcultures* on a regional level. On a local level, Canada grants a high degree of autonomy to its provinces, including that of Québec, to control everything from education and private judicial disputes to cultural heritage and local administration.

Similar to Spain, therefore, the Canadian system delegates power over how the different regions of the country are governed to its respective provinces and assumes the general responsibilities of national governance itself. Based on a comparative analysis of Spain and Canada, the Spanish system grants a greater level of representation/autonomy on a national level and similar quality or level of autonomy/representation on a local level to its ethno-linguistic *political subcultures*.<sup>26</sup>

With the nature of the Spanish national system explored, one may come to wonder, how does Spain compare to the typology of Semi-Autonomous representative democracies outlined in the previous chapter? According to Almond, the Continental European systems can only develop semi-autonomy from the margins as the systems' inability to bargain causes the fragmentation of the national *political culture* by *political subcultures* (Almond 406-407). In reality, however, the "semi-autonomous" characteristics of a democratic system can come about either through formal means or through marginal means. In the case of Spain, as we have seen, the semi-autonomous nature of its system has come about through a formal and systematic approach to decentralize power to the Spanish autonomous communities through the country's constitutional frameworks (Almond 406). The classification of Spain as semi-autonomous recognizes a level of guaranteed ethno-linguistic representation—brought about primarily by decentralization and the granting of relative autonomy but also by the means of choosing/guaranteeing representation in the national legislator—and consensus

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<sup>26</sup> The greater semblance of political autonomy on a national level may be a result of Spain merely having a greater degree of fragmentation in its country, with numerous distinct ethno-linguistic *political subcultures* in distinct regions of the country. As such, while both Spain and Canada give a great degree of autonomy to their administrative provinces/communities, the Spanish system seems more inclusive because there is more to include.

that is absent from the Anglo-American majoritarian political system (Almond 399).

With semi-autonomy given formerly to Spain's ethno-linguistic *political subcultures*, and more generally to its autonomous zones, Spain fits well into the characteristics of being a semi-autonomous state.

In addition to granting relative autonomy to the country's ethno-linguistic *political subcultures*, the reason for granting autonomy and the type of autonomy granted also fits well into the Semi-Autonomous framework outlined in the previous chapter. To begin, in Spain the *political subcultures* given semi-autonomy, or at least the greatest amount of autonomy, is the prominent ethno-linguistic minorities in the Basque Country, Catalonia, Galicia, and Valencia. Each of the prominent ethno-linguistic communities have long-established roots in Spain and is a "remnant" of an older political system or community (Specia N.p). Unlike the semi-autonomous structure outlined in the previous chapter, however, some of the regional identities in Spain are not limited merely by one's ethno-linguistic identity at birth (Shabad 133). Politicians in regions like the Basque provinces welcomed immigration to their region and claimed that being Basque is not limited to being born there or speaking the language. Instead, being Basque was the concerted effort to work within Basque society and to contribute to it (Shabad 133). Despite the nature of "becoming" a member of one of Spain's ethno-linguistic *political subcultures*, the fact remains that the culture, language and heritage of each region are prominent in Spain and have a long history of being in the Iberian Peninsula. In a similar manner to granting relative autonomy to its ethno-linguistic *political subcultures*, Spain also grants varying types of autonomy such as fiscal autonomy, domestic-political autonomy, or ethnolinguistic autonomy to its autonomous communities (Specia N.p).



Based on the characteristics of the Spanish system it is quite clear that Spain fits perfectly within the category of a semi-autonomous state. Additionally, the centripetal dynamic of Spain allows for the diversity of the country to be represented in various facets in the political realm of Spain that prevent the complete fragmentation of the nation.

While semi-autonomous systems are in place ethnic elites can work within the system to bargain with others and enjoy representation, at least on the local level. At the same time, however, the granting of autonomy to different regions of Spain has lessened the political friction between the country's ethno-linguistic *political subcultures* but has also, arguably, aided in entrenching Spaniards' identification with one's ethno-linguistic or regional affiliations (Shabad 130). The division in Spanish society could be seen from the earliest periods of the modern Spanish state and the current Spanish constitution, which reassured and recognized ethno-linguistic semi-autonomy. Look, for example, to 1983 and 1984 when the "Guerra de las Banderas" or "war of the flags" occurred in the Basque Country. In the "Guerra de las Banderas" Basque politicians and local governments refused to fly the Spanish flag on appropriate occasions next to the Basque flag or they removed Spanish flags when visible (Shabad 131). Since then, instances of division between the national governments and autonomous regions, as well as a prominent sense of regional nationalism, have remained a common feature of Spanish society or politics.

A prime example of the fragmentation of the Spanish *political culture* and the prominence of the Catalan independence movement. Since 2008, in particular, tensions between Catalonia and the Spanish government have been heightened due to the 2008

financial crash and Catalan resentment of Spanish public spending (BBC N.p).<sup>27</sup> As such, in 2014 the legislature of the autonomous community of Catalonia held a symbolic referendum to ask the citizens of Catalonia if they wanted to secede from the country of Spain. Shortly before being held, however, the Spanish government outlawed the referendum and prevented it from occurring. In the following year, with secessionist sentiments high, a pro-secessionist legislature entered office in Catalonia, and they moved to have an official independence referendum in 2017 (BBC N.p). After the referendum, the Catalan legislature declared independence and the Spanish government moved swiftly to quell the autonomous region's actions and declare the referendum illegal. The Spanish government imposed direct rule on the region of Catalonia and invoked Article 155 of the Spanish constitution to dissolve the Catalan parliament and hold a snap election (BBC N.p).

The 2017 snap election, again, gave power to a secessionist majority in the Catalan legislature and further intensified the discontent in the region. Since the snap election and referendum, 9 of the Catalan officials—including former Catalan Vice-President Oriol Junqueras—who voted to secede were arrested and charged by the Spanish courts (BBC N.p). In the wake of mass unrest in the region of Catalonia and calls for greater autonomy or independence, the semi-autonomous state of Spain has not been able to fully stop the fragmentation of the Spanish *political culture* or overcome ethno-linguistic *political subcultures* preference in their native regions. Despite obstacles faced by the Spanish system, the semi-autonomous structure nature of the country has given the

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<sup>27</sup> Important to note is that Catalonia is one of the wealthiest portions of Spain and the autonomous community has continuously butted heads with the national government overspending and taxes, often holding the sentiment that they are contributing “too much” to the national system and have “too little” control on the financial outcomes.

central government and the ethno-linguistic elites of the nation the leeway to negotiate with each other, while guaranteeing a certain degree of autonomy/representation in politics (BBC N.p).

The Spanish institutions worked at first, producing a more stable, centrist, and coalition-style of politics, but there has been a cultural shift towards more prominent ethno-linguistic identifiers. Now the Spanish institutions (autonomies) are conducive to fragmentation and polarization, as can be seen in the case of Catalonia. Why, one may wonder, did the institutions that moderated and fostered dialogue in the past fail to do the same in the present? Institutions are inanimate rules developed in the past that bend to very animated cultural moments of the present. When created in the mid-to-late 20th century, the modern Spanish institutions sought to be responsive to cultural demands of the country's ethno-linguistic *political subcultures* and it is representative of citizens. While the semi-autonomous structure of Spain grants representation, it can also be used by radical right cultural movements to the point of regime transformation and the deterioration of others' representation.

For many, the instability brought about by the fragmentation in the Spanish political culture may seem unique or even strange. In reality, however, separatist movements are a common feature of many Semi-Autonomous systems. One needs not to look further than Canada, for example, and the numerous referendums that the province of Québec (Dumont 1). In 1980 Québec held its first referendum to gain independence from Canada and the referendum failed with 60% of voters opposing independence. Again, in 1995, Québec held a referendum on leaving Canada and the margins were far narrower, with 51% of voters against independence and 49% of voters for independence

(Dumont 1-3). The Quebecois claims for independence stem from calls for greater political autonomy in the region and a desire for increased francophone representation in all facets of Canadian society (Dumont 1-3). The juxtaposition of the Spanish and Canadian cases of Semi-Autonomous systems provides valuable insights into a common feature of the aforementioned system, and systems with strong ethno-linguistic *political subcultures* in general, their fragmentation makes them prone to independence or secession movements. At the same time, however, their embracing of native ethno-linguistic *political subcultures* has driven ethnic elites to work with each other to reach compromises and maintain the integrity of the central state.

### **Consociational Political Systems: Belgium**

#### **(A) Belgium and Political Fragmentation**

Belgium is a small nation in Western Europe with a population of about 11.5 million people, more than six parliamentary bodies that govern the country, and a weak federalist government in Brussels. According to the 2020 Democracy Index ratings, Belgium is a “flawed democracy” that is ranked 36th in the world with a score of 7.51 out of 10: Belgium has a ranking of 9.58 out of 10 for “Electoral process and Pluralism,” a 7.86 out of 10 for the “Functioning of its government,” 5.00 out of 10 for “Political Participation,” and a 6.88 out of 10 for “Political Culture” (Democracy Index 50). In comparison to other Western European democracies, Belgium ranks in the bottom for virtually every factor studied by the Democracy Index. It would seem, according to the rankings, the only thing the Belgian democracy is exceptional at is not mobilizing citizens to participate in politics and having a highly fragmented “political culture”

(Democracy Index 9). Despite its below-average performance, by Western European standards, the V-DEM Datasets indicate that Belgium is firmly in the top 10% of “Liberal Democracies” in the world with a score of more than .75 out of 1 and has extensive democratic institutions that ensure representation for the country’s ethno-linguistic *political subcultures*, which date back to the 19th and 20th-centuries (V-DEM 24-26).



Image 1.4 Image of modern-day Belgium and its provinces. From the Encyclopedia Britannica.

Nestled between France, Luxemburg, Germany, and the Netherlands, Belgium houses the headquarters of the European Union and is a nation that often plays a leading role in European politics. In comparison to other Western European nations, however, Belgium is a fairly new state. In 1815, at the Congress of Vienna, Holland (then known as the Northern Netherlands) and Belgium

(then known as the Southern Netherlands) were united into one state under the rule of King William I (Belgium N.p).<sup>28</sup> Belgium and Holland’s unification did not last long, as opposition to the protestant King William I mounted in Belgium. Following a series of demands and incidents, Belgium declared independence from the Netherlands in 1830 and the country’s catholic elites chose a new catholic monarch and adopted a progressive constitution (Belgium N.p). After a series of reforms, and fearing the centralization they

<sup>28</sup> Before 1815, the territory that now comprises Belgium often transferred hands between different European powers.

had experienced under Holland's rule, the fledgling Belgian state transformed into a federalist parliamentary democracy under a constitutional monarchy in 1831 (Belgium N.p). Since 1831 the Belgian state has built out its institutions and expanded its bureaucratic structure, but it has maintained the same borders and regime. The modern Belgian state consists of the executive branch, the judicial branch, and the legislative branches of government.

The executive and legislative branches play the greatest role in administering the Belgian state. In the executive branch, the Belgian monarch, currently Philippe of Belgium, serves as the head of state and is responsible for appointing parliamentary confirmed candidates to the judiciary and executive branches of government (CIA N.p).<sup>29</sup> Additionally, the Prime Minister, who is usually chosen from amongst the parties in the majority coalition of the legislative branch, serves as the head of government and is responsible for conducting the day-to-day business of the nation. Aside from the executive branch of government, the Belgian legislative branch plays the leading role in administering the Belgian state and developing laws/regulations.

To understand the composition of the Belgian legislative branch it is important, first, to take a closer look at how Belgium governs not only nationally but regionally. Belgium is divided into three different communities based on *political subcultures*, along with ethno-linguistic cleavages, in the country. In Belgium there is a Flemish (a dialect of Dutch), a French, and a German-speaking Community within Belgium (Belgium N.p). Each of the Belgian communities has its parliament to handle issues related to their

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<sup>29</sup> It is important to note that while the monarch "appoints" candidates they don't bear any significant power over the process. As the head of state, the monarch is more of a ceremonial symbol of the Belgian state than a mechanism of its administration or governance.

community and its governance. In addition to the Belgian communities, Belgium is divided into three larger administrative regions with their parliaments (Belgium N.p). The three regions of Belgium are Flanders (which encapsulates the historic Dutch-speaking region), Wallonia (which encapsulates the historic French-speaking region, and the German-speaking region in the city of Liege), and the capital region of Brussels. The Brussels parliament is the federal parliament of Belgium, and thus is composed of representatives from throughout the country, while the other two parliaments focus on all issues related to their region or populace (Belgium N.p). There are, therefore, 3 regional parliaments, 3 parliaments for the different Belgian ethnic communities, and 1 federal parliament based in the Brussels region. The power to make decisions in Belgium is complex and, as a result of its decentralized federalist structure, is no longer in the exclusive power of the federal government. Instead, each of the 7 parliaments, to some extent, exercise their authority within their respective domains and come together to create a vague administrative apparatus (Belgium N.p). The legislative branch of government, although mostly composed of only the federal parliament in Brussels, can be thought of more broadly in Belgium to encompass regional and ethno-linguistic *political subcultures* to some degree.

In order to identify to what extent, the Belgian political system truly encapsulates or represents the current *political subcultures* of Belgium, based on race and ethnicity, this essay will make use of the aggregate data from the EPR Core dataset. Based on the EPR Core dataset ethnic *political subcultures* in Belgium currently consist of (1) Walloons, (2) Flemish, and (3) Germans (Bormann 744-771). Of those major *political subcultures* present, however, the EPR Core dataset identifies the ethno-linguistic

identities of the Walloons and Flemish as the only politically relevant *political subcultures* based on their power/influence. It would seem, therefore, that the complicated legislative system of Belgium and its granting of power to the Flemish and Walloons within their respective regions is proportional to the influence/power they wield in Belgian national politics and society.

The complicated nature of the Belgian system does not stop in its sheer size or relegation of power but rather extends into the administration of the country. As one might suspect, an overcomplicated system with high levels of autonomy is usually not ideal for having uniform governance. What's more, Belgium's political system is a series of opposing federal and regional legislative bodies that tend to compete with each other for influence or power (Pale 5). Since Belgium's constitutional reforms of the 1970s, the country has given greater and greater amounts of power to its autonomous communities to empower the dominant ethno-linguistic *political subcultures* within the nation (Toharudin 30). The parliaments of the autonomous regions can not only manage their education systems, run their news networks, and regulate inter-region modes of transportation but conduct foreign relations and draft laws that contradict or override national laws if they see fit (Pale 3-6). What does that mean? That means that the autonomous regions have expansive, contradictory, competing, and overlapping jurisdictions with the federal legislative body of Belgium (Toharudin 24-27).

The complexity of the Belgian governing system does not merely stop at jurisdiction, it extends into every aspect of governance on a national level as well. The traditional legislative branch of Belgium consists of the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate. The Chamber of Deputies consists of 150 seats that are elected by the general



populace of Belgium through universal suffrage, which is compulsory for citizens over the age of 18 (Belgium N.p). Elections in Belgium, in stark contrast to the United Kingdom, are conducted through the practice of proportional representation, and seats are assigned to parties in proportion to the percentage of the total vote within one of the eleven constituencies (Chamber of Deputies 1-2). Belgium's political parties are divided primarily amongst the Flemish and Walloon population, both of them seeking to advance their ethnic groups' interests over those of the nation as a whole. Currently, the Chamber of Deputies is composed of Government the Socialist Party (PS) with 19 seats, the Reformist Movement (MR) with 14 seats, Ecolo with 13 seats, the Christian Democratic and Flemish party (CD&V) with 12 seats, and the Open Flemish Liberals and Democrats (Open Vld) with 12 seats (Chamber of Deputies 1-2). Additionally, the Chamber of Deputies is comprised of the Flemish Socialist Party (sp.a) with 9 seats, Groen with 8 seats, the New Flemish Alliance (N-VA) with 24 seats, Vlaams Belang (VB) with 18 seats, and the Workers Party of Belgium (PVDA-PTB) with 12 seats. Minor parties include the Humanist Democratic Center (cdH) with 5 seats, DÉFI with 2 seats, and Independents with 2 seats (Chamber of Deputies 2). As one might tell from the sheer number of parties, the Belgian system is highly fragmented and has a prolific number of parties with more than 11 parties currently holding seats in the Chamber of Deputies.

In contrast to the Chamber of Deputies, the Senate has 60 members that are chosen by a combination of electoral results and appointments based on ethno-linguistic affiliation.<sup>30</sup> In the Senate, 50 senators are appointed by the Parliaments of the

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<sup>30</sup> Although the 10 co-opted senators may be chosen based on which groups performed the best in certain elections, the positions themselves are not directly voted on by Belgian citizens. All senator positions are appointed.

Communities or the Regions from among their members based on population, and 10 of the senators are co-opted based on election results (Belgium N.p). Currently, the Senate consists of 10 members from the French-speaking community's parliament, 8 members from the Parliament of Wallonia, 29 members from the Flemish Parliament, 2 French-speaking members from Parliament of the Brussels-Capital Region and 1 member of the Parliament of the German-speaking Community. The 10 remaining Senators are all co-opted based on the electoral results in a given election (Belgium N.p). Within the Senate, at least 1-2 seats are reserved for the small German community in Liege to ensure representation. The Belgian political system, as is common in Consociational systems, has a highly complicated administrative structure that grants power to *political subcultures* and ensures ethno-linguistic representation.

### **(B) A Comparative Look at Bosnia and Belgium**

Despite the complexity and competing interests in the Belgian administrative institutions, Belgium is not the only consociational state with elaborate governance structures. In Bosnia-Herzegovina, for example, the political structure is equally complex with the three major ethnic groups (the Bosniaks, the Serbs, and the Croats) guaranteed representation in regional and national governance; not only are there three major ethnic groups but also two major religions, Islam and Christianity, that often serve as dividing factors in the country (Radio Free Europe N.p). Based on the EPR Core dataset ethnic *political subcultures* in Belgium currently consist of (1) Bosniaks, (2) Serbs, (3) Croats, and (4) Roma (Bormann 744-771). Of those major *political subcultures* present, however, the EPR Core dataset identifies the Bosniaks, Serbs, Croats as the only politically

relevant *political subcultures* based on their power/influence. With strong *political subcultures* apparent in the country, Bosnia-Herzegovina is divided into three relatively autonomous regions, the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Brčko, and the Republika Srpska, based on the country's ethno-linguistic and religious *political subcultures*. Each of the two main autonomous regions (the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina and the Republika Srpska) has its own president, two deputies (based on the ethnicity of the president), a prime minister, a council of ministers, and a bicameral parliament (Radio Free Europe N.p).

Similar to Belgium, Bosnia-Herzegovina is a decentralized federalist state and the autonomous regions of the nation handle a large portion of the nation's governance.

Despite its relative lack of power, the federal structure of Bosnia still remains very



Image 1.5 Image of modern-day Bosnia and its provinces. From the Encyclopædia Britannica.

complex. In total, Bosnia-Herzegovina has 13 prime ministers and more than 700 members of parliament (Radio Free Europe N.p).

Additionally, the Bosnian system has a tripartite presidency that rotates every eight months

between one Bosniak, one

Serb, and one Croat that is directly elected. The tripartite presidency also chooses a multi-ethnic cabinet that is evenly divided amongst the different ethno-linguistic *political*

*subcultures* of the nation (Radio Free Europe N.p). The division within and the complexity of the Bosnian state, along with numerous other factors, has created one of the lowest ranking democracies in Europe, which some consider to no longer even constitute a democracy. According to the 2020 Democracy Index ratings, Bosnia-Herzegovina is a “Hybrid-Regime” that is ranked 101st in the world with a score of 4.81 out of 10: Bosnia-Herzegovina has a 7.00 out of 10 for “Electoral process and Pluralism,” a 2.93 out of 10 for the “Functioning of its government,” 5.56 out of 10 for “Political Participation,” and a 3.13 out of 10 for “Political Culture” (Democracy Index 33). In comparison to other European democracies, Bosnia-Herzegovina ranks at the absolute bottom for virtually every factor studied by the Democracy Index with its highly fragmented “political culture” and dysfunctional governments (Democracy Index 9). Additionally, the V-DEM Datasets place Bosnia-Herzegovina firmly in the bottom 40-50% of “Liberal Democracies” in the world with a score of less than .5 out of 1 (V-DEM 24-26). In the presence of the complex and highly underperforming Consociational system of Bosnia, the Belgian system does not seem quite as abnormal, dysfunctional, or elaborate as one might first assume.

With the complexity of government institutions and division along with *political subcultures* in Belgium, one may ask how does the country truly stack up to the characteristics common to the Consociational category of representative democracies? Is Belgium an overly complicated administrative structure that panders to its *political subcultures*, “defusing” power by merely granting autonomy to every restless area within the state, or does Belgium’s institutions foster accommodation? Belgium, as one of Lijphat’s classic examples of consociationalism, embodies all of the core principles

needed to create a consociational democracy: (1) Belgium has executive power-sharing embedded into its political system through the use of grand coalitions to form governments (Pales 3-6). (2) The Belgian federal structure, as described previously, embraces bicameralism with its House of Deputies and Senate structure. Additionally, minority representation is guaranteed in the federal structure through the use of allocation systems for the various ethno-linguistic communities and a minimum guarantee for said communities. (3) Belgium uses the system of proportional representation to guarantee accurate representation (Lijphart 218). (4) Belgium is a decentralized state that makes use of a federalist system to delegate autonomy to the different regions of the country. (5) Lastly, Belgium makes use of a minority veto capability—that requires  $\frac{3}{4}$  support in parliament—to ensure that the different ethno-linguistic *political subcultures* feel represented, can oppose legislation that goes against their interest, and encourage cooperation across *political subcultures* to pass legislation (Lijphart 217-219). Belgium's system grants ethno-linguistic *political subcultures* autonomy to conduct their affairs, representation through power-sharing arrangements, and proportional representation and security in the form of a minority veto.

In addition to meeting the baseline requirements to be a consociational state, Belgium has also historically fulfilled some of the characteristics Lijphart outlined as conducive to a successful consociational state being created (Lijphart 217). To begin, the existence of an external threat to the country and the existence of an elite-mass system at the formation of the Belgian state aided in its creation (Lijphart 217-219). Belgium, nestled between world powers and formerly part of the Netherlands, has historically seen their neighbors as an external threat to their political, cultural, and economic interests. As

such, Belgium declared independence in the first place during the 1830s. The fear of an “external threat” unified the divided elites of modern-day Belgium and facilitated their compromise across ethno-linguistic lines to accomplish the common goal of defeating their enemies (Belgium N.p). To a large extent, the fear of an “external threat” present at the formation of the Belgian state has since left and the sense of unity gained by said threat has vanished.<sup>31</sup> Nevertheless, it is possible that some semblance of a smaller “external threat” arises, in particular in the economic realm, from the active role Belgium plays in politics with its more powerful neighbors.

The second condition Lijphart outlines as conducive to the formation of a consociational state are elites' recognition of the need for cross-ethnic cooperation or a more general willingness to engage across *political subcultures* (Lijphart 217). In Belgium, there has been a large historical emphasis, once in office, for elected officials to engage in cross-ethnic cooperation with other *political subcultures* to pass legislation. Put simply, a democratic ethos is present in Belgium that defines their *political culture* that encourages cross-ethnic cooperation. However, in the modern-day, the ethno-linguistic *political subcultures* in Belgium seem not to be up to the task of cross-ethnic cooperation, as the political realm has become increasingly fragmented amongst different parties and the growing power of the autonomous regions fostered heightened ethnic politics (Toharudin 30-35).

Instead, the political elites in the Belgian government have often found themselves unable to accommodate or reach any agreement, often failing to even form a

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<sup>31</sup> Similar concepts of the “External threat” can be seen in numerous countries both past and present as a catalyst for unity. In Yugoslavia, for example, the external threat of the USSR disappeared after the collapse of the Soviets and unity seemingly dissolved overnight.

ruling coalition. Between 2017 and 2008, Belgium went without a proper government for over six months of infighting in the ruling coalition between the Flemish and Walloon contingents (Traynor N.p). Similarly, between 2010 and 2011, the ethno-linguistic *political subcultures* in Belgium were unable to reach a compromise and form a ruling coalition.<sup>32</sup> As a result, Belgium went 589 days without an elected government and broke world records for one of the longest periods that a democratic country has gone without an elected government (Traynor N.p). Once again, in 2020, Belgium lacked a government for most of the year as political infighting between the Flemish and Walloon broke down the ruling coalition. Belgium's new 2020 record days without having a government is 653 days (Bock 1-3). Over the past decade, alone, the Belgian people have spent a total of over three years without a ruling coalition to govern the country (Bock 1).

Despite the dysfunctionality of the Belgian government and the frequent inability of the ethno-linguistic *political subcultures* to compromise, Belgium does surprisingly fulfill the characteristic of having cross-ethnic cooperation (Lijphart 217). How, one might ask, can Belgium possibly be conducive to cross-ethnic cooperation when its coalitions consistently break down? The key to understanding lies in the fact that despite their ardent disagreements, the ruling coalition's contain both Flemish and Walloon elected officials, and dialogue between the two political subcultures is constant, as they seek to pursue their policy objectives (Bock 1-3). The willingness, or more so need, of the *political subcultures* to work together has fostered Belgian politicians' accommodative ability to work together despite great differences. *Political cultures*, like that of Belgium and the UK, can develop democratic norms that have a

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<sup>32</sup> The ruling coalition prior to the one outlined above had only held power for a mere five months before collapsing because of similar ethno-linguistic divisions.

stickiness/stability and can really constrain the worst impulses towards fragmentation.

Thirdly, Belgium has historically had the presence of a “relatively low total load on the decision-making apparatus” or the existence of an easily changeable “decision-making apparatus,” both of which Lijphart emphasizes as conducive to a strong consociational system (Lijphart 217-219). The prominent *political subcultures* represented within Belgian society today, along ethno-linguistic lines, have not always been the country's main *political subcultures*. Instead, in the 19th-century Belgian society fractured over the *political subcultures* of class and religion (Mughan 437-440). As such, the Socialist and Catholic parties stood at the center of the fragmented Belgian *political culture* and competed with each other in a seemingly endless cycle of political chess to obtain power; between 1947 and 1999 every ruling Belgian coalition consisted of either the Catholic or Socialist party as the leading coalition member (Mughan 447). The existence of large political parties with set ideological differences, similar in many regards to the right-left political dichotomy of the British majoritarian system, fostered the creation of broad coalitions in early Belgian history that united the citizenry and facilitated political accommodation amongst the parties. Over the decades, nevertheless, the Catholic and Socialist parties began to wane in power as the major parties began being seen as incapable of pushing reform and unrepresentative of the general populace. As a result, a third option, in the form of the Liberal Party emerged as a political alternative and aided in the fragmentation of the Belgian political realm (Mughan 443-448).

Another shortfall of the Socialist and Catholic parties, according to Lijphart, was their inability to articulate or appeal to ethno-linguistic *political subcultures*, which



prompted large scale disassociation with them (Lijphart 210). With the Belgian electorate shifting away from their prominent class-based *political subculture* and the Liberal party rising in popularity, new parties based on ethno-linguistic *political subcultures* arose to monopolize power. Unlike the Socialist or Catholic parties, which often appealed across ethno-linguistic *political subcultures* to get elected, the new parties based on ethno-linguistic *political subcultures* focused on appealing to their ethno-linguistic groups to gain office. The ethno-linguistic focus in Belgian politics has remained unchanged, more or less, since the late 20th century (Traynor N.p). In modern times, you can find the ethno-linguistic *political subcultures* commonly clashing with each other on everything ranging from Flemish secession or the maintenance of ethno-linguistic heritage to the perceived “oppressiveness” of the other ethno-linguistic groups (Traynor N.p).

With new *political subcultures* in charge, Belgian society changed quickly over the following decades as the “decision-making apparatus” of the country changed to meet the desires of the country’s ethno-linguistic *political subcultures*. A primary example of Belgium’s ability to change is the country’s constitutional reforms in 1970. Belgium’s constitutional reforms of 1970 pushed the country away from a more centralized federalist state and into a highly decentralized federalist state with the most prominent descriptive factor in politics being one's ethno-linguistic identity (Toharudin 30). In this way, Belgium has demonstrated its “relatively low total load on the decision-making apparatus” and ability to change its “decision-making apparatus” to meet the needs of the *political subcultures* ruling the nation, thus making it a country conducive to consociationalism according to Lijphart (Lijphart 210).

Belgium’s ethno-linguistic division and government instability are not unique to

the country, instead, it seems to be a common feature of Consociational systems.

Returning to the example of Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Bosnian government has historically suffered from political immobilization and coalition collapse as a result of differences between the ethno-linguistic *political subcultures* of the country (Reuters 1-2). In fact, in 2018 Bosnian lawmakers were faced with coalition collapse over the differing political agendas of the Serbs and Bosniaks, resulting in a 14-month period in which no coalition could be formed (Reuters 2). The ethno-linguistic and religious differences in Bosnia, despite their more recent appearance in many newspapers, are not new; the *political subcultures* in the country are so strong that ethnic conflict and widespread violence has broken out in the country amongst the different *political subcultures* on multiple occasions over the past few decades (Reuters 3). When looking at the division of the Consociational system in Bosnia-Herzegovina and the fragmentation of the *political culture*, the instability and ineffectiveness of the Belgian system do not seem like so much of an anomaly. Instead, the condition of the Belgian system and politics takes form as more of a symptom, rather than a cause, of the ethno-linguistic division in the country or possibly even a result of the Consociational system itself. What Belgium has in its back pocket are those thick democratic norms, a cultural resource not evident in Bosnia's recent history.

Despite Belgium's historically "low total load on the decision-making apparatus," the shift in prominence of the country's ethno-linguistic *political subcultures* in the latter half of the 20th century has caused increasingly large divisions amongst the Belgian populace within the consociational state (Smooha 32-33). The Consociational system intended to accommodate ethnic divisions political subcultures and foster intra-ethnic

cooperation has unintentionally codified historic ethno-linguistic rivalries (Smootha 33). In its wake, virtually opposing ethno-linguistic societies with high levels of autonomy have been developed and empowered within the framework of the Belgian state. “The country operates on the basis of linguistic apartheid, which infects everything from public libraries to local and regional government, the education system, the political parties, national television, the newspapers, even football teams” (Traynor N.p). Despite the presence of virtually separate societies, however, the Belgian consociational system has united its separate states (Flanders and Wallonia) together through a national identity based on a shared history, majority religion, and various other cultural factors viewed by Belgians as distinctive from other countries (Smootha 32-33). Additionally, Belgium’s consociational institutions have allowed it to maintain national unity, although unstable at times, in the wake of numerous mutually reinforcing *political subcultures* and diverging political interests.

### **Putting the Pieces Together:**

Through the contextualization of three main case studies (Belgium, Spain, and the United Kingdom) this chapter has sought to analyze if these countries fit within the typology of representative democracies outlined in the previous chapter and explore representation for ethno-linguistic *political subcultures* in each country. Moreover, by juxtaposing the case studies with other countries within the typology of representative democracies with other cases that are similar continuity of the typology can be seen, showing that each case is not singular in modern times but symbols of their respective type of representative democracy. Lastly, this chapter has explored how each case study

manages, or ignores in the case of the Anglo-American Majoritarian model, to represent the cleavages within their respective societies through means ranging from guaranteed seats in the national legislature and autonomy to a mutual veto.

Overall, five generalizations become apparent by study different types of representative democracies. (1) *Political culture* matters, as can be seen in the political change that resulted from culture shifts in the UK but the stagnation of British institutions and could be just as essential if not more important than institutions in determining outcomes. (2) A *political culture* of thick democratic norms can overcome other cultural tendencies towards fragmentation, as seen by the centripetal force leading to thick democratic norms in Belgium and Britain. (3) Contrarily, the absence of said “thick” democratic norms and a centrifugal force, as in Bosnia, can lead to the heightened fragmentation of a society. (4) It appears to be a good thing to revise and reform institutions to make them compatible with a changing *political culture*. Therefore, institutions need to be able to change and have built-in mechanisms for said revision or reform; Spain and Belgium are primary examples of having flexible systems built to maximize representation and change when necessary. (5) Systems that give autonomy to regions, whether based on ethno-linguistic identity or mere geography, give local elites the opportunity to rule. As a result, said autonomy leads to centripetal politics (the need for coalition partners between center/regions, and local ruling parties concerned about governing at the local level) or to centrifugal politics (the reinforcement of particular identities at the expense of general or national identities). Autonomy, therefore, is a double-edged sword that can not only foster local governance or representation but erode the very fabric of state unity. With such variety in addressing ethnic diversity and

the fragmentation of the national political culture, the question remains, what is the best mode of managing ethnic diversity and cross-ethnic demands for representation?

## CHAPTER 4- A New Way Forward?

### What We've Seen: Another Look at the Three-Pronged Typology

Representative democracies, at their core, are a system of government intended to not only grant a voice to the masses in a society but to moderate said voices through an elite-mass compromise and mutually reinforcing institutions. However, representative democracies have often failed to truly represent all of the masses because they do not all ensure that ethnic or racial minority *political subcultures* are given a say in their governance. Democratic institutions define *the people* of the state in a seemingly clear and all-encompassing manner but in reality, *the people* are an ambiguous conceptualization of the majority group in a given society (Agamben 3-4). What's more, many of the democratic systems of representation that modern societies rely on are over a century old and are legacies of past generations, even though the world we live in today is so drastically different (Klein 1-3).

Although they seem inclusive, many types of representative democracies often fall short of providing descriptive political representation and power to marginalized ethnic or racial *political subcultures*—unless they outline such in the democratic institutions of their society—because they were not necessarily built to do so (Klein 1). Is the lack of change in so many democratic societies the result of their effectiveness? Or is it a result of our inability to change or develop new representational institutions (Klein 1-2)? Of the three models of representative democracy observed in this essay, we've seen that only the newer models of representative democracy or models developed in deeply divided states, like Consociationalism, have managed to even consider the necessity of

racial or ethnic inclusion (Democracy Index 9). In contrast, older models like the Anglo-American Majoritarian system in the USA lack virtually any regard for the aforementioned inclusion and have remained relatively stagnant in their ability to create new institutions. The problem lies, for many representative democracies, in the fact that they were not built for the purposeful representation of *political subcultures* because said *political subcultures* were not relevant at the time when democratic institutions were being developed (Klein 1). The question of ethnic or racial representation for *political subcultures*, nevertheless, has become the center of growing debates in the 21st century. National *political cultures* have become increasingly fragmented by heightened levels of immigration, wide-spread enfranchisement, the growing prominence of *political subcultures*, and a general disenchantment with majoritarian rule have all become more common over the past century (Democracy Index 1-4). The political landscape of the countries we see today, in most regards, does not resemble the same landscape that they once were.

A culture of “thick” democratic norms and institutions representative of a country’s major ethnic or racial *political subcultures* can overcome other cultural tendencies towards fragmentation if it can meet the societal demands of the present. From the basis of representative democracies have come the three different models, each granting different levels of minority or *political subculture* representation in government, explored throughout this essay: the Anglo-American Majoritarian model, the Semi-Autonomous model, and the Consociational model. While each of these models differs greatly in their ability to provide representation to ethnic or racial *political subcultures* in their country, they also vary in their effectiveness or plausibility given the historical

context of the country (ACE Project N.p). The commonality amongst these models, however, is that they all adhere to the elite-mass compact and confine the role of the people to choosing or consenting to certain elites holding power rather than the various segments of society being able to exert their political power (Klein 2-3). In some cases, such as the Consociational or Semi-Autonomous models, the elite-mass compromise can hold because the diversity of representatives is ensured for the major *political subcultures*. In other cases, such as in the Anglo-American Majoritarian model, the elite-mass compromise can work towards delegitimizing democracy because the major *political subcultures* lack adequate representation or an ability to exert their political power beyond elites whom many members of said *subcultures* may feel don't represent them (Klein 2). The question must be, therefore, how do we create institutions that move beyond merely holding representatives accountable, at best, and towards mechanisms that ensure not only accountability but representation?

The Consociational model of representative democracy and the Semi-Autonomous model grant the greatest amount of ethnic or racial representation to a country's ethno-linguistic *political subcultures*, as seen in Spain, Canada, Belgium, and Bosnia. The Semi-Autonomous model allows *political subcultures* to have a relative autonomy and guaranteed representation in the national legislature (La Moncloa n.p). As a result, a relatively centralized state can delegate regional autonomy to its different administrative units (provinces, states...etc.), grant representation nationally, and still maintain the essential powers of a stable and unified state through cross-cutting coalitions. On a regional level, however, members of an ethno-linguistic *political subculture* who are not a majority of the population in the region can still be under-



represented or overlooked depending on the electoral method used (La Moncloa n.p). Additionally, regional discontent can lead to the propagation of secessionist movements for calls for greater autonomy by ethno-linguistic *political subcultures*, as seen in Canada and Spain (La Moncloa n.p). Nevertheless, the Semi-Autonomous system provides stability, high levels of effective governance and limits the fragmentation of the political culture by recognizing and granting political power/representation (Shabad 114-116). While a Semi-Autonomous system can function properly in various contexts and be largely encapsulated by a decentralized federalist system, a Consociational system can only work in nations with prominent ethno-linguistic political sub cleavages that are deeply divided and relatively concentrated in distinct geographical regions.

Of the three types of representative democracies studied, the Consociational system grants the greatest amount of ensured representation to a country's different ethno-linguistic political subcultures through mechanisms such as the mutual veto. However, as seen through Belgium and Bosnia, the governmental institutions of a Consociational system are overly complex, help to cause the frequent collapse of the ruling coalition, codify the fragmentation of the *political culture*, and are overall ineffectual in running a national government (ACE Project N.p). Additionally, similar to the Semi-Autonomous system, members of an ethno-linguistic *political subculture* in certain regions who are not a majority of the population in the said region can be under-represented or overlooked depending on the electoral method used. Despite its shortcomings in providing an effective and stable form of governance, Consociational systems are often only used in the most divided of states and they help to keep an already highly fragmented *political culture* from completely shattering by attempting to ensure

representation for *political subcultures* (ACE Project N.p). A Consociational system would not lend itself to being very effective, nor was it intended to be, in a country that is not highly divided or that does not have multiple large/prominent *political subcultures* like in the United States of America.

Unlike the Consociational system and the Semi-Autonomous system, the Anglo-American Majoritarian system provides very few or virtually no guarantees for a country's *political subcultures*, opting instead to ignore or devalue them in favor of a traditional left-right dimension (ACE Project N.p). The Anglo-American Majoritarian system, seen in the UK and the US, has a relatively high level of government effectiveness and is highly stable, being governed by fundamental majoritarian principles. *Political subcultures*, however, are often left without any institutional protections and guarantees for representation on the local nor the national level, leaving them in a vulnerable position to endure under the whim of the majority (ACE Project N.p).

In all of the three different types of representative democracies studied, the level of governmental effectiveness on a national level seems to decrease with the increasing regional autonomy and guaranteed representation for *political subcultures* (ACE Project N.p). At the center of the fragmentation of each case study's *political culture*, however, lay the ethno-linguistic differences of the country and the *political subcultures'* desire for greater representation. Ethnic and racial representation of *political subcultures*, therefore, seems to be at the center of the possible effectiveness of different types of representative democracies, a desire for a country's ethnic and racial *political subcultures*, and the chief complaint of said *political subcultures*; representation is a double-edged sword. How then can democratic institutions be made in a way that simultaneously ensures the

effectiveness of government, the representation of *the people*, and the racial or ethnic *political subcultures* within it?

Rule by the majority, and the deprivation of rights for other minority groups entailed within it, has the effect of leading to the undermining of the rights of individuals (within the majority ethnic group and minority groups) and of notions of power resting in the many (Snyder 324). Additionally, majority control only works “effectively” when the minority population decides it is “better to be second class citizens [working within the system] than first-class rebels” and there is some ideological or racially based justification of ethnic subordination; the claim of dominance by the majority, however, is often weak and under threat of fragmentation by *political subcultures* (Snyder 323). Institutions, therefore, need to turn away from elite-based notions of representation on the local level, ensure adequate political representation for *political subcultures* nationally, and institute a combination of direct and representative democratic techniques to ensure that the whole of *the people* (rather than just a majority) have a say in the governance of their country. Institutions need to be built to change, have an integrative approach to representation, and promote cross-ethnic political alliances (Snyder 329-330).

### **Minority Empowerment Thesis: The Value of Representation**

Besides being at the center of conflict and conflict resolution in the three types of representative democracies studies, the creation of institutions that ensure ethnic or racial representation of *political subcultures* has been shown to not only prevent the complete fragmentation of the political culture but to provide beneficial results that strengthen democratic regimes. The Minority Empowerment Thesis holds that minority representation, and increases in the said representation, strengthens representational links,

fosters more positive attitudes toward government, and encourages political participation (Banducci 535). Opposition to the minority empowerment thesis holds that descriptive representation, that being representation along racial or ethnic lines, has unintended negative effects on minorities within the political system; possibly weakening incentives to vote or be politically engaged (Banducci 540-545). There is statistical evidence, nevertheless, for the minority Empowerment Thesis. The most abundant of said evidence, as one might assume, comes from Anglo-American Majoritarian systems of representative democracies (especially the United States of America) where minorities tend to have the least amount of political representation and be the least prone to using proportional representation.

In “Minority Representation, Empowerment, and Participation,” political scientist Susan Banducci explores the validity of the minority empowerment thesis by looking at African-Americans in the USA and the Maori people in New Zealand. In particular, Banducci explores if descriptive representation [representation by those with similar descriptive features/characteristics] has tangible results over substantive representation [representation by those who work in your best interest or along policy lines beneficial to you] (Banducci 535). Banducci’s study found that the effects of minority empowerment were significant in the USA where blacks were more likely to recall the name of their representatives, more likely to contact representatives, and more likely to approve of their performance when they were descriptively representative of their race or ethnicity (Banducci 549). Similarly, in New Zealand, Banucci found that the Maori who have descriptive representatives were more likely to believe they had a say in government and more likely to vote or participate in politics (Banducci 552). Lastly, Banducci found that

the absence of a descriptive representative can cause some “constituents to face barriers communicating and identifying with their representative” (Banducci 539). Another study by political scientists Lawrence Bobo and Franklin Gilliam, using a rare survey that oversampled blacks in the USA, sought to accomplish a similar objective as Banducci and to examine if increases in black empowerment would affect the level of black political participation (Bobo 377). Bobo’s study found that blacks in “high-black-empowerment areas,” as seen by the race of the mayor, were more politically active and had greater trust in government than blacks living in areas without black mayors (Bobo 387-389). The studies conducted by Banducci, Bobo, and Gilliam help to illustrate the benefits of having descriptive representation of ethnic or racial *political subcultures* in government, removing barriers to perceived access, and encouraging better democratic participation/practices.

Banducci, Bobo, and Gilliam’s studies were not unique in their determination that minority empowerment and representation have tangible benefits for democratic societies. In “Race and Trust in Government: Testing the Political Reality Model,” political scientists Susan Howell and Deborah Fagan showed that black citizens in New Orleans, where there are many black administrative officials, are more than 50% more trusting of the government than African Americans in a national sample. Howell and Fagan attribute this difference in trust to the presence of not only black officials but a black mayor in New Orleans, which gives black citizens a feeling of representation and a perceived “voice” in the system (Howell 340-345). Howell speculates that while the presence of black city administrators changes black attitudes about their political position, it does not have the same impact on white American citizens; possibly because

white Americans, as the majority, are more “likely to choose among multiple dimensions, only one of which is the racial dimension” (Howell 346). Ultimately, Howell and Fagan conclude that “black voters, because of their racial identification, are more likely to approve of the mayor regardless of their evaluations of general and specific city conditions” but are also more likely to feel represented when they share descriptive features/characteristics (Howell 348). Based on the data gathered by various political scientists, it would seem that an increase in descriptive representation or the general presence of elected officials who are descriptively representative promotes ethnic or racial *political subcultures* to participate rather than fragment. When combined with the information gathered from the three types of representative democracies studied, these studies show that political representation can be used as a powerful tool to mitigate the fragmentation of the *political culture* while simultaneously promoting minority participation and inclusive notions of *the people* (Howell 346-348). The question remains, however, how can one create effective institutions that ensure the representation of ethnic or racial *political subcultures* in a representative democracy on not only a national level but a local level?

There are many institutional ways to enhance the representation of ethnic or racial *political subcultures* in a representative democracy. Primary amongst said institutional methods are electoral systems with intentional precautions or encouragements put in place to facilitate minority representation (Schiller 34-36). To begin, reasonably large voter districts can help to encourage parties to nominate candidates from minorities because balanced tickets will increase their electoral chances. To obtain larger voter districts, however, the power to draw districts and to change them would need to be

wrestled out of the hands of political elites who tend to gerrymander them and given to neutral state or federal government administrators (Schiller 30). Additionally, the replacement of majoritarian first-past-the-post systems with PR systems that have a very low threshold, or no formal threshold, can facilitate the representation of ethnic or racial political subcultures by encouraging the formation of parties specifically representing them (ACE Project N.p).

In terms of ensured representation, seats can be set aside in the legislature for ethnic or racial *political subcultures* to ensure representation in the legislature (ACE Project N.p). Representatives for guaranteed seats are often elected in the same manner as other representatives, but they can sometimes be elected within the political subculture depending on the conditions outlined in the country's electoral law (ACE Project N.p). Another possibility to give representation to *political subcultures* is "the best loser system" used in some countries such as Mauritius. "The best loser system" takes the highest polling losing candidates from a particular ethnic or racial political subculture and awards them seats in the legislature in order to ensure that it has balanced ethnic representation (ACE Project N.p). Instead of the overt guaranteeing of seats to *political subcultures* or granting of seats to the highest polling losing candidates, which some political scientists claim may "breed resentment on the part of majority populations and exacerbate mistrust between various cultural groups" institutions can also be designed to "overrepresent" regions with concentrated racial or ethnic *political subcultures* (ACE Project N.p). An example of "overrepresentation" can be seen in the case of the UK where Scotland and Wales have more representatives in the British House of Commons than they would be entitled to if seats were allocated based on population size alone.

Lastly, political substantive representation for ethnic or racial *political subcultures* can be facilitated on a local level through systems of direct democracy that encourage elected representatives to be responsible to their constituents, including the major *political subcultures* within a given constituency.

### **Where Can We Go: A Case for Direct Democracy?**

On a local level, state governance in the three types of representative democracies studied occurs along with the typical electoral systems of representative democracy; citizens go to the polls and vote for representatives to speak on their behalf on town governments, city councils, state legislators, or various other types of administrative structures (Schiller 34). The problem, however, lies in the fact that on a local level the desires of some of the country's ethnic or racial *political subcultures* can easily be ignored if they are not a part of the majority or numerous in number, highly concentrated in one area. As a result, ethnic or racial *political subcultures* are often not adequately or proportionally represented in local politics, neither descriptively nor politically (Schiller 34-36). Now, one could seek to solve this problem by creating a complex system that guarantees representation for the major demographic groups in a given region. Such systems, unfortunately, tend to lead to ineffective governmental functioning if a society is highly divided. Another plausible solution, however, would be to simply keep the fundamental system of electing representatives on a local level but allow every citizen the opportunity to affect important legislation and hold representatives responsible through local direct democracy; democracies could, therefore, embrace a hybrid model of democratic governance on a local level.



In his *Two Treatises on Civil Government*, John Locke wrote: “For if the consent of the majority shall not in reason, be received, as the act of the whole, and conclude every individual; nothing but the consent of every individual can make anything be the act of the whole: But such a consent is next to impossible ever to be had.” Locke was correct, in some regards, that the consent of all individuals cannot usually be attained on any one issue. Locke failed to consider, however, if there were democratic mechanisms that could attain the consent of the people and still be inclusive of the various segments of society. In his defense, nevertheless, it is probable that such a notion was not overlooked but rather ignored since his vision of a representative legislature and individual consent was limited to those included in his ideal of *the people*; for Locke the people were white, male, property owners. In the absence of the consent of every individual, democracy can at least attempt to obtain the consent or opposition of as many citizens as possible on essential government issues through direct democracy.

Direct democracy, in the modern-day, can be defined by a handful of core institutions that are distinct from the fundamental mechanisms of normal representative democracy (Schiller 34). The primary features of direct democracy are decision-making by popular votes and public deliberation of political issues (Schiller 36). Direct democracy, similar in some regards to the Athenian system of direct democracy discussed in earlier chapters, is based on the fundamental democratic principles of popular sovereignty, freedom, and political equality amongst citizens (Schiller 36). Unlike the Athenian system, however, modern direct democracy tends to serve as a supplement to representative democracy with key democratic enriching and supplemental functions (Schiller 36).

Modern direct democracy can take various forms to help supplement representative democracy, but it most often is symbolic of increased political power/influence for voters through referendums (Schiller 13-14). There are four primary types of referendums: (1) citizen-initiated referendums where a group of citizens initiates a proposition to be voted on, (2) popular referendum in which citizens can request from the government in order to reject or accept a new political decision, (3) government-initiated referendums where the executive or legislative branch can call for the people to vote on a proposed or existing policy, (4) and mandatory referendums on specific subjects that are required by law (often outlined in the state's constitution) to be voted on (Schiller 13). In addition to the use of the referendum, direct democracy gives power over elected officials back to *the people* living within a constituency through the use of a recall vote. Similar to a vote of no confidence on a national level, a recall vote is when constituents can vote to recall elected officials from their current office and replace them with an interim representative or a completely new representative in a snap election (Schiller 13-14).

The use of referendums and recall votes take power away from representatives and place it back in the hands of citizens in a given area. Additionally, referendums and recall votes force representatives to reorient themselves from focusing only on large or national issues to focusing on local issues that are often the most relevant for constituents (Schiller 13-14). Most importantly, however, direct democracy allows constituents to decide for themselves what are the issues most important to them and to ensure that their elected official pursues said issues. Direct democracy, as such, can be a useful tool to help eliminate some of the obstacles faced by ethnic or racial *political subcultures* to

express their voice in policy on a local level, is relatively simple to implement, and is intended to have a meaningful influence over elected officials, even if they do not necessarily descriptively represent a certain *political subculture*.

Direct democracy functions well not only on a local level but also on a national level. On a national level, direct democracy can be seen in its various forms in different European democracies and democratic institutions (especially in constitutions). In Eastern Europe after 1989, as countries vied for independence and transformed into democracies, several countries introduced direct democracy at the national level as an instrument of popular sovereignty (Schiller 12-13). Some of the Eastern European states extended direct democracy initiatives and referendum instruments not only on the national level but also on the municipal level, except for the three Baltic states (Schiller 13-15).

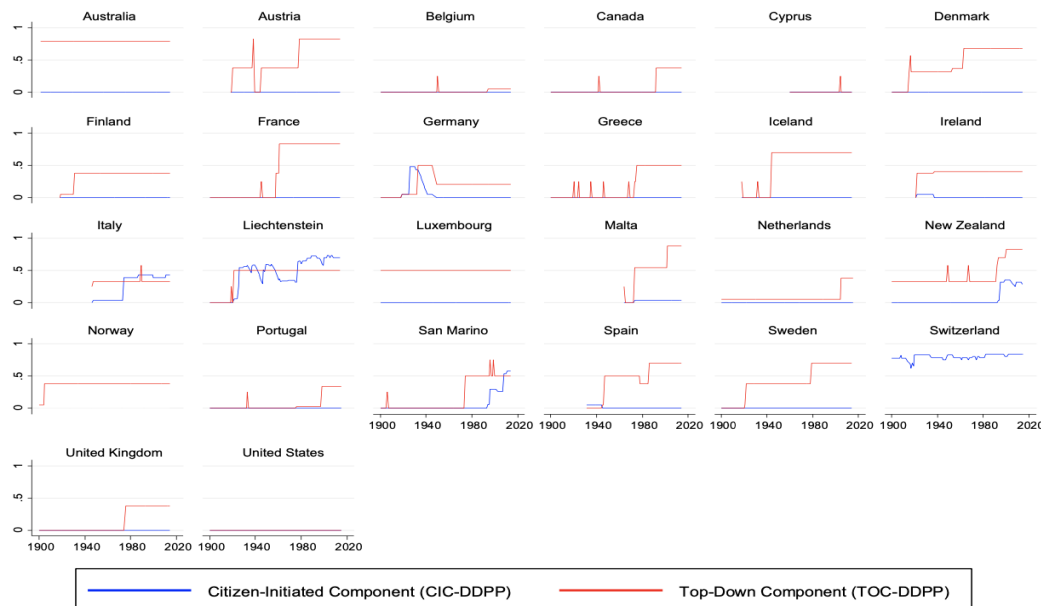


Figure 1.1 From *The Potential of Direct Democracy: A Global Measure (1900–2014)* by David Altman. Graph show Citizen initiated and Government initiated (or “Top-Down”) direct democracy levels in Western European and North African countries since 1900. An increase in the usage of both can be seen overtime.

Similarly, in some of the cases examined in the last chapter such as Spain, the UK, and Canada direct democracy could be seen in popular referendums held on issues of minority rights or secession. The graph above, from David Altman's *The potential of Direct Democracy: A global Measure (1900-2014)*, shows a clear trend in western democracies towards a greeted usage of direct democracy mechanisms since 1900 except for only a few of the countries studied (Altman 1222). In general, however, few Western European countries with a parliamentary system have adopted direct democracy at the national level through some sort of initiative and/or referendum measure (Schiller 13). Instead, most direct democracy measures in Western Europe are mandated referendums on constitutional issues. Nevertheless, some countries like Denmark, Ireland, Italy, France, and Liechtenstein have implemented direct democratic instruments (Schiller 13-16).

While direct democracy is most prominent inside of the state structure, it is not limited in its use to only the state and the rationale for its creation is institutional in nature. In 2009 the Lisbon Treaty created the European Citizens' Initiative as a tool to promote direct democracy in European Union politics and since 2009 numerous referendums on accession to the EU or votes on treaty amendments have been conducted through the instruments of direct democracy (Schiller 9). The specific reason, arguably, why direct democracy has been implemented in any form on the national level in European democracies in the late 20th to early 21st centuries is institutional. Direct democracy at the national level, according to political scientist Schiller, could support the adoption of corresponding local institutions that help to not only appease ethnic or racial representation but to prevent calls for separation or fragmentation (Schiller 14-15). At the

same time, however, the reverse is also possible. The creation of local direct democracy institutions could help in the promotion of national direct democracy institutions that promote cross-cutting cleavage, alleviate ethnic or racial calls for representation, and prevent the fragmentation of the national *political culture*. Whereas European countries such as Switzerland and Liechtenstein fit well into the first pattern outlined, Norway and the Czech Republic could fit within the second pattern (Schiller 13). Although the instruments of direct democracy may be seen in various forms and their development occurs in different manners, they are always adopted as methods that allow for greater democratic participation, a desire for an increased sense of representation, and a want to promote popular sovereignty (Schiller 13-15).

REQUIREMENTS	BALLOT VOTE: Binding	BALLOT VOTE: Advisory
Liberal ( ~ 5 %)	STRONG  Switzerland (German-speaking cantons) Germany (few states) Slovenia	Italy
Medium ( ~ 10 %)	Czech Republic Germany (majority of states) Poland	Sweden (2010, new)
Restrictive ( ~ 15 or more %)	France Liechtenstein Slovakia Switzerland (Roman cantons)	Bulgaria (Denmark, mainly referendum) Norway Finland  WEAK

Figure 1.2 Procedures of direct democracy: country profiles from Theo Schiller's *Local Direct Democracy in Europe – a comparative overview*. The figure shows the type of direct democracy procedures in European countries and their level of

While the modern forms of direct democracy are adequate supplements to the current systems of representative democracy, it is also possible to design Athenian forms

of direct democracy to replace the need for representatives in some cases. On a local level, as well as on a national level, Athenian-style direct democracy can come to fruition in the form of citizens' assemblies with built-in mechanisms to reduce prejudice and societal power dynamics (Klein 20). In citizens' assemblies, all of *the people* would be able to directly affect real political outcomes, shape political discourse, define agenda priorities, and deliberate about the contents of the agenda (Klein 14). According to political scientist Hélène Landemore, deliberation amongst the many in society will help to filter out the noise of non-conventional voices and to push policies/legislation that is more representative of the desires of *the people* (Klein 14-16). One can only hope, however, that this is true. For if it fails to hold, citizens prove to vote narrowly and selfishly and stupidly, then direct democracy must be considered "falsified" or a fallacy unable to be implemented. Who would desire direct democracy if it was such an ineffectual system of representation? *In Defense of Anarchism*, the anarchist philosopher Robert Paul Wolff advocates for direct democracy and argues that at first people may make stupid decisions that benefit only themselves or their group (Wolff 20-25). Overtime, however, Wolff asserts that once the consequences of selfish actions are realized, all citizens will begin to get serious and will act socially conscious in their participation (Wolff 24). In some respects, Wolff continues along the same ideological lines as Rousseau in his exploration of direct democracy as a mechanism for change: should citizens follow the will of all (selfishness) when they vote or the General Will (national or common interests)? No matter what the outcome of implementing direct democracy may be, the will of the selfish or the common good, the mechanisms and

institutions within direct democracy can help to decrease the likelihood or overall negative effects of a worst-case scenario of this regime.

If the inclusion of all of *the people* is impossible, rather as a result of logistics or a mere lack of participation, a representative sample of the population that is randomly selected could be convened in a citizens' assembly to deliberate and make decisions; a randomly selected group that is representative of the population along socio-economic lines would minimize the loss of diversity/representation amongst the deliberators (Klein 16). The citizen's assembly, in its essence, is a miniature portrait or encapsulation of *the people* in any given society.

Similar to how citizen assemblies can be scaled down, they can also be scaled up. Imagine if large swaths of representative samples of the population were randomly selected to form a part of the legislative branch of government every couple of years? Or if a representative sample of the population that was randomly selected was formed to deliberate on a specific piece of legislation or policy proposal? The benefits of citizens' assemblies are that they can avoid the homogenizing effect placed on deliberators/representatives when they are elected. For when the people elect representatives, the decision-makers tend to be relatively homogenous along some dimension, whether it be psychological features, race, gender, or various other socio-economic features (Klein 20). As a result, elected officials that have undergone a homogenizing feature struggle to envision or place themselves into the lives of others (Klein 20). Citizens' assemblies, similar to the more common modern mechanisms of direct democracy used, provide a means to create more representative deliberation and policymaking in the democratic practice than what is currently available in some systems.

Additionally, citizens' assemblies help to break down some barriers to representation by incentivizing discourse across cleavages and incorporating mechanisms that ensure *political subcultures* are included in representative samples of the population that are convened to deliberate.

If democratic institutions are formulated in a way that excludes perspectives or fails to ensure representation for *political subcultures*, they will not only be unable to solve problems the best way you could, but they may also fragment the *political culture* as calls for such representation mount (Klein 21). Recent research by Scott Page and Lu Hong has shown that group intelligence is more so a function of group diversity than of the individual intelligence of its members. That means that, statistically, a group is better off with one more unit of group diversity than it would be with one more unit of individual competence or intelligence (Klein 24). Likely, diversity and adequate representation play such a key role in group functionality and effectiveness because said diversity brings about the possibility of having a larger breadth of experiences or opinions. This notion of diversity as a driver of effectiveness, therefore, suggests that the whole premise of the 18th-century democratic institutions needing to incorporate an "elite" representative to filter or moderate the will of the people is unfounded (Klein 21). It turns out, despite the inklings of early political theorists like Aristotle, that democracy would have been better off with "a mini portrait of the people" governing over society rather than merely the "best and the brightest" drawn from the elites (Klein 19-21). What's more, the notion of diversity in a group—such as a legislative body—not fragmenting the *political culture* calls into question if guaranteed representation or systems of representation in the Semi-Autonomous and Consociational models cause a



lack of effectiveness in governance as some claim or if some other cause is to blame for said lack of effectiveness (Klein 19-21).

Throughout this discussion of direct democracy, one may ask, is direct democracy even fully possible and would it be effective? The usage of direct democracy, in the modern-day, is increasingly possible with the developments we have experienced in communication technology over past decades (Schiller 16). Modern technology allows us to conduct direct democracy practices, such as holding large-scale referendums, not only in person but also via the digital realm. As a result, *the people* have access to a broad breadth of ways that they can engage with politics and voice their opinions through votes that were previously impossible in the previous generations. In particular, the digital realm allows direct democracy to be transparent through mechanisms such as ballot tracking or live tallying of votes (Schiller 13). Just because direct democracy could be implemented, however, does not mean that we should implement it; for although it has many positives, direct democracy also could have significant drawbacks for *political subcultures* (Schiller 16).

Direct democracy, aside from being conducive to greater levels of democratic participation and an increased feeling of representation, may not work in every type of society nor may it protect minority rights.<sup>33</sup> In societies that are highly fragmented or divided, direct democracy may be used as a means to oppose other groups or to strip said groups of their rights through referendums (Schiller 35). The question must be asked, therefore, does direct democracy endanger minority rights rather than protect them?

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<sup>33</sup> Direct democracy may have the greatest equalizing effect in Anglo-American Majoritarian systems, rather than a Consociational or Semi-Autonomous system, because there are often no protections put in place nor assurances for ethnic or racial political subcultures, as seen in the case of the USA.

Although he ignored certain aspects of embedding minority rights into democracy, when creating the US constitution James Madison advocated against “pure democracy” because of its ability to erode individual liberties. In particular, Madison argued that a united majority could easily manipulate a system without representatives and that a system with direct democracy cannot “cope with the ills of factions because there is no check on the power of the majority to rule at the expense of others” (Lewis 365). Opponents of direct democracy, like Madison, argue that mass participation exposes minority groups to negative policy outcomes favored by possibly only by a majority of the voters. Furthermore, they argue that without a representative, who supposedly encourages deliberation and minority representation, minority rights are at an increased risk of being eroded under mechanisms of direct democracy (Lewis 364). With mixed opinions on the effectiveness of direct democracy and its ability to protect minority rights, which point of view holds?

There has not been substantial data that can point in favor of direct democracy nor against direct democracy; Anglo-American Majoritarian representative democracies, however, have been shown to erode the rights of minority *political subcultures* within them (Lewis 365). Nevertheless, it seems apparent that even if there is no substantial evidence against direct democracies protecting minority rights that precautions should be taken when implementing such systems to ensure that minority rights are protected. Direct democracy, as it has been in modern history, should only be implemented as a supplement to the representative democracy system and it should not be all-encompassing. For example, when thinking about direct democracy, specific subjects may be excluded from initiative or referendum (such as topics relating to ending or

stripping rights, privileges...etc. related to a particular group) to ensure ethnic or racial *political subcultures* do not have their rights taken away (Schiller 13-15).

Additionally, referendums begun by citizens' initiatives need to be regulated, outlining a designated number of signatures required for an initiative to be voted upon and other criteria allowed for collecting signatures (Schiller 18). Outlining how signatures can be obtained, who can sign, and setting a minimum number of signatures required will allow mechanisms of direct democracy to overcome some "minority" opinions or segments of the voting base that may seek to erode racial or ethnic rights (Lewis 365). Another important factor to consider, to ensure ethnic or racial *political subcultures*, is the criteria to determine the validity of the vote such as requirements for a majority of eligible votes to be cast in order to create a quorum. In Germany, for example, a majority of votes cast must also include about 15% to 25% of all registered voters to establish a quorum and be valid (Schiller 18-19). Furthermore, precaution can be taken to ensure that results are not valid if a certain percentage of each other's major political subcultures has participated in the vote. Similar to having a minimum number of signatures, having a minimum percentage of the total voting population present can help to mitigate possible obstacles where minority political opinions could affect everyone.

The last factor that needs to be considered is if referendums/ballot votes should take on a binding or an advisory (consultative) role (Schiller 17-19). If referendums are binding, then they will have the effect of overriding or superseding the decisions of the representative elected in office. Contrarily, if referendums are merely advisory, they will serve to inform the elected representative of the will of the people on a certain topic but will not, in and of themselves, override a representative's desired course of action

(Schiller 18-19). There are many ways to limit direct democracy, should it be implemented in a given state, and develop institutions that would protect ethnic or racial *political subcultures*. The effectiveness of direct democracy in ensuring the representation of ethnic or racial *political subcultures* is highly debatable and it may even be advised that in Consociational or Semi-Autonomous systems that direct democracy be viewed negatively; since the Consociational and Semi-Autonomous systems guarantees representation for *political subcultures*, while direct democracy may be unable to. Despite its possible shortcomings, nevertheless, local direct democracy allows communities to return to a more purist envisioning of democracy, in which the people are able to affect real political outcomes, shape political discourse, and define/deliberate the agenda, rather than just elect representatives under the auspice of the elite-mass compromise (Klein 14).

### **Reforming Institutions: “Radical” Change and Reform?**

Each of the three systems examined throughout this work has its own strengths and weaknesses in terms of effectiveness, but the Semi-Autonomous and Consociational systems guarantee representation to racial or ethnic *political subcultures*. As such, let’s turn towards the Anglo-American Majoritarian system as that which needs the most guidance on reforming political institutions of the three systems examined.

The most exclusionary aspect of many Anglo-American Majoritarian systems is the prominence of electoral systems, such as the first-past-the-post system, that allow the majority ethnic group to dominate politics and isolate ethnic or racial *political subcultures*. The options on reforming majoritarian electoral systems, like the first-past-

the-post system, are to either replace them entirely with new electoral institutions such as PR systems or to reform them to be more representative of the will of *the people* (Cho 1650-1651). Replacing majoritarian systems in favor of PR systems has been a common call to action for many political scientists for good reason. In “Citizens’ Perceptions of Government Responsiveness in Africa: Do Electoral Systems and Ethnic Diversity Matter?” political scientist Wonbin Cho found that election systems affect perceptions of government responsiveness to constituents. The relationship between election systems and government responsiveness, however, is highly contingent on the degree of ethnic diversity in society (Cho 1650-1655). Using data collected from 15 democratic countries in Africa, Cho found that at lower levels of ethnic diversity, majoritarian electoral systems (such as first-past-the-post) are much better at boosting citizens’ existing external efficacy. Put simply, majoritarian electoral systems work well in relatively homogenous countries and in said countries, they bolster individuals’ feeling of government responsiveness (Cho 1650-1655). Although, at higher levels of ethnic diversity, Cho found that PR systems are more likely to elevate efficacy and promote a sense of being represented (Cho 1650-1655). Cho’s findings, although not perfectly aligning with this work’s focus on Western democracies, have important implications for constitutional design and understanding about the role that electoral systems have on the actual or perceived representation of ethnic and racial *political subcultures*.

In Anglo-American Majoritarian systems, the replacement of the first-past-the-post electoral systems has a wider effect than one might assume at first glance, for the PR system tends to undermine the left-right dichotomy that allows two parties to dominate national politics in favor of a more fragmented political landscape (Edsall 1).

Additionally, the PR system tends to promote, or rather allow the creation of parties along descriptive minority identities and allows for anti-democratic or populist sentiments to be relegated to the margins of politics (Edsall 1-2). For most Anglo-American Majoritarian systems, a PR system would be a dramatic shift to the political landscape of parties but for the USA it would be a seismic transition from their two-party system. Traditionally, the American two-party system has allowed the segmentation of different political views and beliefs under the umbrella of one of the two major parties, the Democrats and the Republicans, along a left-right dimension (Edsall 1). In recent times, the two-party system has come into conflict with itself, as anti-democratic and populist segments of the far-right have become prominent in the Republican party.

According to political scientist Daniel Ziblatt:

The American Republican Party looks like a European far-right party...But the big difference between the U.S. and a lot of these European countries is that the U.S. only has two parties and one of them is like a European far-right party. If the G.O.P. only controlled 20 percent of the legislature, like you see in a lot of European countries, this would be far less problematic—but they basically control half of it (Edsall 1).

Proportional representation would not only let the Republican party fragment by allowing far-right segments to form a separate party but would allow both moderate and far-right politicians/constituencies to have greater levels of representation (Edsall 2-3). Similar to the possible fragmentation of the Republican party along ideological lines, a PR system would allow racial or ethnic *political subcultures* to form parties instead of merely being a fraction within a larger party; the creation of new parties that can focus on the needs of particular *political subculture* and an increased presence in the political realm can position racial or ethnic *political subcultures* as prominent political forces (Edsall 2-3).

PR systems can also help to decrease the fragmentation of the political culture and mitigate, in some cases, the prominence of secessionist movements by a country's *political subcultures*. In an essay titled "Ethnopolitical Parties and Democratic Consolidation in Post-Communist Eastern Europe," John Ishiyama investigated the relationship between institutions and the extent to which ethnic groups make political demands for separatism (Ishiyama 50). It tests several institutional remedies, like consociationalism and Horowitz's strengthened executive approach, in light of the evidence from 21 'minorities at risk' in post-communist Eastern Europe from 1990-98 (Ishiyama 50-52). The article finds that that proportional representation of ethnic groups and the existence of relatively powerful presidencies are associated with less mass ethnic protests. Additionally, the avoidance of destructive demands appears to be best promoted by electoral systems which emphasize 'individualism' and less decentralization of political authority (Ishiyama 51). A drawback to the PR system, however, is that it would allow the most extreme anti-democratic forces now present in U.S. politics or other Anglo-American Majoritarian systems to possibly be institutionalized unless precautions are taken with minimum voter capture percentages to prevent fringe groups from gaining elected seats (Edsall 4). The replacement of majoritarian electoral systems is one way of shifting institutions towards greater representation for ethnic or racial *political subcultures*.

Aside from replacement, it is also possible to reform existing majoritarian electoral systems to be more representative by adopting mechanisms to push away radical candidates. A top-two or top-four primary system (such as that in the state of Oregon and the state of Washington) allows representatives to be more accountable to their

constituents than to their party. One can vote for the desired candidate that they want most of the most desirable one within their party (Egan 1-3). If no one candidate gets 51% of the vote, then a runoff election is held amongst the top two vote-getters. In this case, if one's most preferred candidate fails to make it to the top two, they can reevaluate the best option for themselves and vote accordingly. Allows for voters to reach across party lines or political subcultures to choose more moderate candidates and isolate radical segments of a given party from being elected with a majority of voters' support (Egan 3). Additionally, a top-two system causes politicians to reach outside of their vote base to gain a broader breadth of support for different segments of the constituency (Egan 3-4). A problem with a top-two system is that they make it very hard for minor-party candidates to advance and if one party is too fragmented then one of their candidates may not make it to the top two. As such, a top-4 system may be more favorable for having a more inclusive ticket to vote on (Egan 4). Aside from a top-4 system, the use of large multimember districts (Rather than winner take all single-member districts) coupled with ranked-choice voting and the expansion of the size of the legislative branch could aid in greater representation for racial or ethnic *political subcultures* (Edsall 4). Reforming existing Anglo-American Majoritarian systems or simply replacing them all together is essential for not only promoting ethnic or racial representation of *political subcultures* but in protecting them. Populism or the tyranny of the ethnic majority in Anglo-American Majoritarian systems can be, quite literally, fatal for ethnic or racial *political subcultures* (Egan 2-3).

The various methods discussed in this section can aid in increasing representation in politics for ethnic or racial *political subcultures*, but they cannot ensure said



representation. The only mechanisms that can ensure representation are institutional guarantees such as those laid out in the Semi-Autonomous and Consociational democratic systems. As such, institutions need to be created at least on a national level to guarantee that the major *political subcultures* of a state are represented in the national legislator. Many of the cases studied in the previous chapter took different approaches, if any, to ensure that *political subcultures* were represented.

The Semi-Autonomous system of Spain, in particular, grabs one's attention because it can provide allocation systems for seats in the national legislature based on region. Similarly, the Consociational System of Belgium guaranteed representation to its major *political subcultures* by guaranteeing not only regional but ethno-linguistic representation in their national legislature through a dual system. Belgium is a rather extreme case of division. However, aspects of the approaches used by Spain and Belgium are both very effective in different contexts. The Spanish system would only function properly if it was in a country where the *political subcultures* are concentrated in different regions and, thus, can benefit from the relative autonomy gained or the guaranteed seats in the national legislature for each autonomous community. In contrast, the Belgian system of guarantees relies on regional concentration to some extent but also on specific ethno-linguistic representation for the country's *political subcultures*. The Belgian dual approach is the better of the two systems because it allows for greater representation of specific groups and also more generally of territorial regions.

Ideally, the guarantees given to the racial or ethnic *political subcultures* should be substantial enough to make sure that their rights are not eroded, and they have adequate representation but not so intrusive that they cause resentment or ineffectiveness of

governance. To those ends, the “dualist” Belgian system of representation for the national legislation appears to be the best system of representation examined in this body of work. That is not to say, however, that the overly complex system of governance that Belgians employ on every level of governance, and their highly decentralized government should be adopted. Instead, the basic format of having a minimum number of seats reserved for each territorial region and each of the major ethnic or racial *political subcultures* should be employed on a national level. The representatives could be selected by requiring parties to have a minimum number of each of the major ethnic or racial *political subcultures* or simply by holding elections within the said *political subcultures* to choose a representative. These reforms could stand on their own as a means of ensuring political representation for *political subcultures* but could also work in collaboration with the other reforms outlined in this essay such as the adoption of local direct democracy, proportional representation, or the reform of majoritarian electoral systems. The combination of these mechanisms or institutions, nevertheless, will help to prevent the continued fragmentation of *political cultures*, stymie the ability of fringe segments of the political realm to erode minority rights, and promote greater minority participation in the democratic practice. These institutions, however, must be able to change with the shifting of *political subcultures* relevance and the overall needs of a given society.

## CONCLUSION: What Does it All Mean?

This thesis sought to answer and explore one simple question: can a democracy truly be representative if there is a need for “equal footing” amongst citizens, that is as of yet unmet, in the political realm and elected officials are not representative of the populace? For all intents and purposes this question has been explored in great detail throughout the duration of this thesis in hopes of shedding light on the importance of representation for ethnic or racial political subcultures in a world of rapidly changing demographic compositions. The simple answer to the question, I posed, as seen through the case study is a resounding no; a representative government that fails to be representative, both descriptively and substantively, of the people within a society is in fact not a representative government and arguably fails short of even being a democracy.

Increased levels of descriptive representation for ethnic or racial *political subcultures* can lead to greater participation by minority groups, a feeling of political inclusion/representation amongst said groups and overall improved efficiency of democracy. The absence of said representation, however, often leads to large-scale discontent amongst *political subcultures*, heightened fragmentation of the *political cultures* and various other symptoms of democratic decline. Recent trends in the decline of democracy can be partially attributed to a lack of democratic legitimacy that has been caused by a failure to intentionally account for demographic diversity in the elites-masses compromise that underpins representative democracies and a continued failure of many regimes to reform institutions to intentionally incorporate ethnic or racial *political subcultures*. In particular, of the types of representative democracies studied in this thesis, the Anglo-American Majoritarian system has the least mechanisms in place to

ensure representation for *political subcultures* and tends to lead to the lowest rates of racial or ethnic representation (Dahrendorf 19). The eternity of *the people*, put simply, are not represented adequately and the root of the problem is the inequality inherent to the elite-mass compromise that underpins representation. The inequalities developed in societies, prior to the elite-mass compromise were stratified through the *social differentiation* of elites' positions and the *social stratification* of elites' place in society as "representatives" of *the people's* will (Dahrendorf 19).

Since the time of ancient Athens, notions of governance by the *dēmos* through popular assemblies have been a cornerstone of democratic theory. Athenian democracy, itself, was the purest form democracy for it allowed the governing of the state by *the people* through the use of popular assemblies and other direct democracy institutions (Schwartzberg 312-313). For Athenians like Aristotle, however, not all human beings were political in nature or able to meaningfully participate in democracy because of their *natural capabilities*; namely women, slaves, children, and foreigners were unfit for political rule (Aristotle Book I). Aristotle was concerned with inequality as a form of *social stratification* that could work in favor of a larger society; only by excluding some from the *dēmos*, Aristotle asserted, could a regime function effectively (Dahrendorf 20). Similar to Aristotle, Plato viewed a strict aristocratic society with a strong meritocratic component centered around justice and not democratic freedom was an ideal way to rule (Plato Book IV). While Plato created exclusion within a society based on human "nature" or ability, Aristotle created exclusions based on citizenship or "freedom." Plato and Aristotle both embraced inequality in society and their conceptualizations of inequality in participation as a necessity for regime, paving the way for generations of political

theorists to segment societal structures so that the favored few within a society could represent the will of *the people* (Plato Book IV). Inherent in their work as well is the understanding that *the people* should include only certain aspects of society or favor certain groups in terms of representation and power (Plato Book IV).

Exclusion of *the people* can come from structural understandings of who should rule, who should be excluded, or from an understanding of *the people* as *ethnos* or *dēmos*. An *ethnos* understanding can limit those included within the collective of the state along ethnic lines but also through the forced removal of included groups from the state as seen in the case of the homogenizing cultural agenda of the Franco government in Spain over *political subcultures* in their nation (Taylor 100). There are many ways to exclude segments of one's population from having representation; many of which have lasting effects on the political apparatus of a society, for those initially chosen to be *the people* will hold an institutionally powerful position in society (Agamben 3-5). The creation of differentiations between *the people* and the exclusion of some from being defined as *the people* results in “bio fracture” society; the “bio fracture” of the people initiates a fragmentation of the *political culture* of nations by *political subcultures*, who are often not entirely included or represented in notions of *the people*, vying to partake and gain power (Agamben 3).

The inequalities codified into society by conceptualizations of who was/is included and the acceptance of a privileged group of people being able to represent *the people* is the foundation of a mixed democratic regime; mixed regimes, in their essence, sought to incorporate *the people* or segments of *the people* into national governance but to moderate their power through institutions. Conceptualized by Aristotle as “the Polity,”

a mixed democratic regime was ruled by a select segment of citizens that are “neither rich nor poor” and who rule in the favor of *the people* (Aristotle Book III). The idea of a mixed democratic regime was later adopted by the Roman Republic through its use of public assemblies, senatorial officials, and various councils to rule over its domain (Machiavelli 193). During the English Civil War and the various eighteenth-century democratic revolutions, however, the aristocratic or monarchist institutions of ancient Rome were replaced with new mixed systems designed to moderate *the people* through representation (Pitkin 338). In the modern day, the tool of representation has continued to be used as the basis for mixed democratic regimes such as representative democracies because it allows for the continued moderation of *the people*, the partial participation of *the people* in the practice of governance, and compromise across various segments of society. Representative democracy is underpinned, like all mixed regimes, by an elite-mass compromise; in the elite-mass compromise, elections give the masses a right to choose representatives to express their ideas but prevents them from actually intervening directly in governance (Näsström 2).

The tool of representation used in representative democracies, therefore, arouses the question of what is representation and who is being represented? There are numerous schools of political theory that explore what is representation, who is a representative, how to classify representation, and who has power in a representative-constituent relationship. For the purpose of this thesis, however, we focused on how the representative as an individual person represents or fails to represent constituents descriptively in terms of race and ethnicity. Racial or ethnic representation was the cornerstone of this analysis because, as seen in the case studies section, it tended to be the

factor that fragmented the *political culture* of a representative democracy the most, as *political subcultures* sought greater political power. With representation established as the key mechanism of moderating the people—reinforced by institutional mechanisms like national senates, majoritarian electoral systems, and the limiting or elimination of direct democracy tools like referendums—and dictating who is present in political discourse, a greater analysis of some of the different types of representative democracy was needed.

This thesis built upon the ground breaking work of political scientists Gabriel Almond and Arend Lijphart to outline three different types of representative democracies: (1) the Anglo-American Majoritarian systems (embodied by the UK and USA), (2) the Semi-Autonomous system (embodied by Spain and Canada), and (3) the Consociational system (embodied by Belgium and Bosnia) (Almond 397-398). Each of the three types of representative democracies explored had defining institutional mechanisms that either promoted, ignored, or discouraged the representation of the country's *political subcultures* in the political system.

The Consociational system granted the greatest number of institutions to ensure minority representation and security in the legislative/executive process, granting large degrees of regional autonomy and often occurring in only the most divided of nations (Lijphart 208). Consociational systems ensure seats in the national legislature for relevant *political subcultures*, a mutual veto, PR electoral mechanisms, and various other institutions; these institutional mechanisms often coincided with a thick *political culture* that allowed for crossethnic communication collaboration or communication and minimized the fragmentation of the *political culture* (Lijphart 218-220). Consociational

systems, however, were observed to be ineffective in maintaining a ruling coalition, had strong or growing secessionist movements, and are possibly culpable of enshrining differences within a society to create “virtual apartheid” systems.

Similar to the Consociational system, in many regards, the Semi-Autonomous system ensures the representation of relevant racial or ethnic *political subcultures* through the delegation of autonomy (especially cultural, religious, or linguistic autonomy) to different regions, PR electoral systems, and legislative mechanisms that delegate a minimum number of seats to *political subcultures* (Almond 391). The key differences between the two systems is the level of autonomy given, the number of institution assurances for *political subcultures*, and the power invested in the central government (Shabad 112-114). Semi-Autonomous systems appeared to be more effective at maintaining a government coalition than the Consociational system but suffered from similar concerns about political fragmentation, the reinforcement of existing societal divisions through representative mechanisms, and prominent secessionist movements (Shabad 113).

The last system explored was the Anglo-American Majoritarian system, underpinned by majoritarian electoral systems, the ignoring of *political subcultures*, and the absorption of political issues along a left-right dimension (Almond 391). The Anglo-American Majoritarian system has no guarantees or reassurances in place for the relevant ethnic or racial *political subcultures* that may dwell within a country. As a result, the Anglo-American Majoritarian system has the lowest levels of representation for *political subcultures* (often opting merely to “overlook” them). In contrast, however, Anglo-American Majoritarian systems were relatively stable, and they had high levels of



government efficiency (Almond 391). From the analysis of six different countries with the three aforementioned types of representative democracy, clear defining features could be seen in each system and the health of the national (Lijphart 220).

Each of the three systems analyzed, and the six countries explored, used various institutional systems of moderation and defined—whether intentionally or unintentionally—who *the people* were that should have political power or representation were (Agamben 3-5). In the case of the Anglo-American Majoritarian *the people* were defined as the simple majority of the country's population, which tended to coincide with the majority ethnic or racial group within a country (Agamben 4). Nevertheless, there are examples of Anglo-American Majoritarian systems where *political subcultures* engage in secessionist movements similar to and government ineffectiveness in terms of political partisanship can be seen. In the Semi-Autonomous and Consociational systems, *the people* were characterized as all of the relevant ethnic or racial *political subcultures* within the country and, if applicable, the majority ethnic or racial group. As a result, the Semi-Autonomous and Consociational systems created institutional systems and tools to ensure that *the people* were adequately represented within government (Agamben 3-5). The more inclusive the defining of *the people*, the greater number of representative mechanisms were adopted, and the lower the “biofracture” within a given society and thus the fragmentation of the *political culture* by *political subcultures*.

The question remains, upon a complete analysis of the six different cases, if greater levels of ethnic or racial representation for *political subcultures* was a positive or a negative thing? Although ineffectiveness in maintaining a ruling party and complicated institutional systems seem to grow as a greater number of mechanisms are introduced to

ensure racial or ethnic representation of *political subcultures*, data drawn from various studies have shown that descriptive representation is positively associated with increased levels of minority participation, governmental effectiveness, and the feeling of representation in minority communities (Cho 1650-1655). Additionally, greater representation can help to offset the recent prominence of populist or nationalist movements caused by the fragmentation of the *political culture*. Perhaps, therefore, the issue that causes lower levels of government effectiveness is not the level of guaranteed representation for racial or ethnic *political subcultures* but rather the complexity of the systems in place, the level of autonomy given to different regions or some factor not explored by this work. No matter the cause of differing levels of government effectiveness, the fact remains that descriptive representation of relevant *political subcultures* stands at the center of cultural fragmentation to some extent in all three types of representative democracies studied.

To address the issue of representation for ethnic or racial *political subcultures*, institutions need to be created or reformed so that they can ensure descriptive representation on some level locally and nationally. This thesis outlines four methods to accomplish greater descriptive representation, focusing on the Anglo-American model in particular:

- (1) The adoption of Semi-Autonomous of Consociational guarantees/mechanisms in national legislators when *political subcultures* are relatively concentrated and the majority in a geographic region.
- (2) The use of modern direct democracy mechanisms like referendums of representative recalls to supplement representative democracies and grant greater

direct input from *the People* (Schiller 13-14). Modern direct democracy mechanisms can function well not only on a local level but also on a national level but they need to be regulated.

(3) The replacement of representative institutions with “citizens assemblies” that resemble, in some regards, the popular assemblies of Ancient Athens and can actively debate on policy. The assemblies could be large in size, encompassing all citizens, or smaller and composed of a representative sample of randomly selected citizens. Citizens assemblies could function locally or nationally and be scaled as necessary, especially with current technological advancements, but they need to be regulated (Klein 20).

(4) The reform or replacement of existing electoral systems in Anglo-American systems. In particular the replacement of the first-past-the-post electoral system with a PR system and the use of a top-two system or ranked choice voting system (Edsall 1).

Of the ways to increase representation for ethnic or racial political subcultures, the adoption of direct democracy is the greatest departure from current practices in representative democracies. There has not been substantial data that can point in favor of direct democracy nor against it; however, it could be a valuable tool in returning power to the people and allowing for greater participation in the political realm (Schiller 18). All of the various methods of increasing descriptive representation, nevertheless, are viable routes for representative democracies to take.

The lack of descriptive representation for relevant racial or ethnic *political subcultures* in some types of democratic regimes, namely the Anglo-American system,

has allowed for the fragmentation of national *political cultures* and a loss of government democratic legitimacy as the elite-mass compromise that underpins representative democracy is called into question by elites of *political subcultures* excluded from the process and populist sentiments of the majority ethnic culture. As a result, a dual legitimacy has been formed (embodied by the prominence of secessionist movements in many western democracies) in which elites of *political subcultures* vie for power with the majority ethnicity and fragment the *political culture* in the process. What is left is a lack of trust in government institutions, the rise of the radical-right or secessionist parties, and societal resentment across ethno-linguistic cleavages. To stymie the current degradation of democratic practices systems, need to be put in place in order to ensure representation of relevant *political subcultures* and strengthen *political cultures* by reinvesting power in the hands of *the people*. What is needed, put simple, is a rethinking or reform of the elite-mass compromise that modern democracies stand on to place *the people* at the center of governance.

With mechanisms of ensured representation, every ethnic or racial group within a society can improve the quality of representation and overcome the mentality of politics as a zero-sum game of warfare. There is an intense societal concern, as has been explored throughout this thesis, about exclusion or inclusion and the loss of political power by granting greater levels of inclusion. The reality of the matter, however, is that developing mechanisms of representation is a return to fundamental principles that democracy was founded on and not some impending extinction for the ethnic or racial majority in power within a society. In a world where demographics are rapidly changing, the demographic majority of today can be the demographic minority of the future so it is paramount that

institutions are developed to provide adequate and proportional representation to all people within a society; in this way, representation, in fact, enhances the standing of the majority and the minority by ensuring that neither will ever be without adequate representation in relation to their size in the population.

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