

An Essay on Post-Modern Democracy

Facing the Technocratic Challenge

By

Paris Arnopoulos

INTRODUCTION

Presently accumulating problems of democratic governance among diverse cultures and complex technological advances have become paramount in today's global village. Democracy is everywhere lauded as an ideal and nowhere practiced as such. It even appears in a beleaguered state and defensive position. So, our question now is what do we mean by democracy and then how close can we attain it under the present demanding circumstances of rapid historical change and social instability.

It is our primary hypothesis that democracy, as originally defined in Greece and practiced in Athens, fell very short of its promises, even if not failing completely to succeed in its policies. Perhaps for that reason, democracy never attained a long historical viability and it was really two thousand years later that it was somewhat resurrected in the modern western world.

The travails of democracy in the last couple of centuries have shown by now that this revamped ideal left a lot to be desired. From that experience, our secondary hypothesis is that democracy has reached a stage of demo-sclerosis and needs a substantial overhaul if it is to survive in the post-industrial world.

In a constantly changing world, any proposals for change are themselves subject to change. Our tertiary hypothesis therefore is that whatever options exist presently for a sustainable democracy are temporal and regional. In a world in flux, we should never think of a permanent preferable global ideal political system.

Based on these three hypotheses, we proceed in a discussion of their merits, pro and cons, without necessarily coming to a definitive conclusion. Following the classical dialectic, we could even propose a possible and desirable synthesis of opposing points of view, a Golden Mean that could at least sustain a feasible democracy here and now.

In that quest, we start by introducing and defining democracy etymologically and historically, from its classical origins to the present reality. Then, consider the various problems and issues arising in the post-modern global world era. Finally, concluding with some theoretical and practical options in sustaining, updating, and adapting democracy to the exigencies of our reality.

CANONIC DEFINITION

According to the Greek etymology, democracy is the rule of the people or power to the people. *Demos* meant the citizens of a political community, i.e. *polis*. *Kratos* meant sovereign power or governmental authority (including its legislative, executive, and judiciary functions). These *sine qua non* conditions of democracy defined the what, who and where of this political system. It is within this original content and context that the concept in question in our discussion takes place.

For these conditions to be fulfilled, democracy, per definition, assumes a culturally and ethnically homogeneous community, where there is a shared understanding of fundamental values and common interests based in common past, collective present, and desirable future.

Moreover, democracy functions with a workable consensus, not unanimity, thus a deciding majority accepts and embraces a descending minority. Political compromise through a dialectical dialogue and negotiated settlement, only works if a democratic majority rule is coupled with acceptable-respectable constitutional minority rights.

It also assumes the societal center of gravity rests on a significant middle class. Only when extreme disagreements and disparities are minimized and conflicting interests coexist, then opposing opinions can get resolved by a majority in periodic popular votes. With this understanding, Solon, the great law-giver of ancient Athens, introduced *seisachthea* or the sharing of burdens, by forgiving unsustainable debts as a prerequisite condition for democratization.

To these basic socio-economic requirements should be added certain other specific geo-political conditions: a clear delineation between internal and external (we-they) concerns and a well-defined membership of the body politic. As such, direct democracy only works in small, tight communities of exclusive citizenship, where strict limitations are observed in temporary tenures and legitimate jurisdictions.

Of course, these ideal conditions never existed in fact, not even in their original promulgations. Classical Greek democracy only approximated to a degree, time and place, the above requirements, so the Athenian prototype in its Golden Age was the closest anyone approached the prosaic definition of democracy. In other cases, different copies were made with varying degrees of success, depending on local environmental, cultural, and historical conditions.

Now that the new context within which democracy must adapt necessarily requires radical changes in its content. Thus, it behoves us to investigate to what extent our novel situation allows what kind of a neo-democracy we may aspire and can afford. Democracy in the 21st century world, is obviously quite different from its original paradigm or practice in Ancient Athens. It is questionable whether the various kinds of representative democracy existing now share any similarity with the direct democracy of classical Greece. In that case, the critical question is whether the idea and practice of democracy have run their course over two and half millennia and are presently overdue for a complete overhaul or termination.

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

If we accept the etymological definition of Democracy, then our primary problem is finding out what the people want. Apart from the complicated logistic hiding behind this simplistic definition, there are many substantive questions, including: who are the people and how do they know what they want? Democratic regimes always accept the majority of voters who express their opinion at some specific time, place, and issue, as a reflection of their will, want, or demand.

Faced with the very difficult and complicated interpretation of democratic opinion polls, most philosophers have been deeply critical of democracy. Yet, most people have always held it up as a possible and desirable form of government, in spite the dramatic change of its contextual social and technical conditions.

Consequently, over centuries of history, democracy is becoming a shadowy caricature of its old self. Is it possible in this time and age for millions of citizens to be expected to know and decide on the complex questions posed periodically to them? Even if possible, is it desirable to depend on their momentary partial interest and imperfect information to influence policy-making details, when even technical experts after exhaustive study find it difficult to be sure of anything?

Democracy is still inextricably tied to politics, although it has outlived the city-state where it began. Since the Aristotelian definition of man as *zoon politikon*, we can confidently say that both politics and democracy are uniquely human inventions or artifacts. Neither exists in nature outside human society, since all other animals make decisions by unconscious instinct and resolve conflicts by physical force.

What persists from political democracy's primordial origins has been completed, so now it contains the following tridimensional components: majority rule (periodic elections; opposition parties; checks and balances); rule of Law (constitutional individual and collective Human Rights); liberty of expression (freedom of public opinion and private belief). These three, political, legal, and cultural dimensions are based on the essential meaning of politics as a human activity carried on within a social arena, aiming at conflict-resolution of opposing opinions by dialectical compromise, resulting in a common policy.

With this definition of politics, democracy becomes its sub-category, adding the *sine qua non* conditions outlined above. This qualifier tries to avoid the possible political result of an arbitrary rule of one or few people or even a tyranny of the majority, no matter how authoritarian, paternalistic, and benevolent it may be. By operating openly in public, inclusive of all citizens, democratic politics, unlike exclusive politics, allows the expression of multiple opinions and public debates, thus ensuring their widespread acceptable resolution. Political legitimacy thereby rises from below by *vox populi*, rather than granted from above by *dei gratia*.

A major problem of democracy is that the people are not a unitary entity and never speak in a single voice, in spite governments that claim to do so in the name of the people. Unlike theocracies that speak in the name of God, democracies can only speak in the name of most people at best. This polyphonic reality in democratic regimes often

echoes a cacophony of contradictions that is supposed to be accepted as the General Will of an ever-changing majority.

Yet, on a more basic level, all normal people are unanimous in what they want. Human values are always and everywhere the same: security, equality, and freedom heading the list. People want to live a happy, healthy, wealthy, free and secure life for themselves and their family. Governments know these eternal popular preferences and do not need democracy to tell them what the people want.

The problem is that these various values are contradictory, as equality and liberty, for example, cannot be both optimized, the more you have of one, the less you get of the other. Neither democracy, nor any other political system can resolve this issue, so history is full of such conflicts that confirm this impossibility.

Nevertheless, since ultimate conflicting desires are obviously well known, by expressing their differing opinions people can only interject the intervening details and methods of attaining these universal natural desiderata. Thus, it is the specific means, rather than the general ends where the *hoi polloi* can contribute to resolve conflicting opinions by establishing and pursuing majority preferences.

Of course, that does not ensure this process or its results will necessarily be the best policy to adopt. The practice of political democracy does not come gratis. Aristocratic politics may result in better public policies by cheaper and faster decision-making of those best suited to govern, whereas democratic politics are often riddled with ignorant opinions, widespread corruption, functional incompetence, interminable discussions, self-serving choices, and other time wasting or energy costing methods.

MODERN EVOLUTION

As political sovereignty moved from polis to ethnos, democratic theory and practice had to readjust to the new larger socioeconomic system. The rise of the nation-state in Renaissance Europe, as legitimized in the Treaty of Westphalia, made direct democracy impossible to apply to the enlarged demography that included millions instead of thousands of citizens. It seemed that large nations and empires could only be governed by autocratic regimes.

Of course, non- or anti-democratic theories and practices existed and thrived in most of the world, most of its history. Ever since Plato, anti-democratic philosophies were the dominant ideals of the greatest political thinkers. Democracy, therefore, was never by any means either an ideal or practical system of government.

By the Nineteenth century, however, economic conditions and social revolutions made democracy possible and popular again. Assuming that people are more likely to obey rules, if they think they have participated in making them, democratic governments tried once again to involve citizens in policy-making. But, as Churchill is reputed to have said, the best way to disabuse one of democracy is to speak with an average voter for a few minutes.

Nevertheless, to resolve the contradictions between the quantity and quality of democratic participation, a new type of indirect democracy was invented. Thus, was born Representative (Presidential or Parliamentary) Democracy as the only possible

and desirable form of government in large modern societies. In this way, the traditional rule of the people was reinterpreted as rule by their elected representatives: meeting, debating, and deciding in legislative assemblies. The general will of the people could thereby be transmitted to their agents who would promulgate it into laws.

At the same time, the meaning of democracy attained two more ideal qualifiers: Secularism and Liberalism. This new adjective of modern democracy included the separation of church and state, division of legislative, executive, and judicial power. Moreover, it imposed periodic elections, competing parties, individual and collective human rights, including freedom of conscience and expression, as well as other constitutional guaranties. These multiple requirements completed its political, economic, and social dimensions as we understand them now, at least in the Western World.

Another economic requirement, pointed out by Marx, was that liberal democracy was the child of market capitalism after a certain level of its development: i.e. middle-income bourgeois status, sustained by an educated urbane electorate. As a bourgeois institution, democratic liberalism was stated to accompany capitalism into the trashcan of history after the inevitable imminent communist revolution. But, after over a century in waiting, this Marxist dream did not materialize yet, nor is it spotted on the foreseeable horizon.

Instead, Western Liberal Democracy is still alive and now dominates the field, having left behind the so-called People's Democracies in the dustbin of history. The only other kind remaining to claim the fashionable title of democracy is really a theocracy based on a fundamentalist religious culture. In such cases, we have various pseudo-democracies masquerading as popular regimes but being nothing more than malevolent or benevolent dictatorships of tyrannical majorities. Consequently, democracy has become a many-splendored thing that everybody wants as a vague but desirable political state but nobody knows how practice successfully.

THE DECLINE OF DEMOCRACY

Many Post-Modern or Post-Industrial, Socio-Liberal Democracies are apparently in a critical condition in a Globalizing World. The overdeveloped societies, mostly in Western Europe and North America, seem to have reached a peak of their progress and are now going through a new period of inflection to an unknown phase-stage. This momentous change involves structural transformations in cultural, economic, and political aspects of their social system, as well as their environment. How could they confront and overcome such a risky situation and come out better than they came in?

With these givens, along with their low demography and high sovereignty debts, these countries are at great pains to keep up their acquired high standard of living enjoyed by most people. With the opening of national borders by the globalization of world economy, overdeveloped countries cannot compete with the lower labor cost of underdeveloped ones. Moreover, automated production decreases high cost employment with its attendant political side-effects of dissatisfaction and protest. At the same time, medical advances lengthen human life spans, increasing older people, while

women's liberation decreases birth rates, producing fewer workers who must pay higher taxes to support more pensioners.

To keep their people in the way to which they had become accustomed, in view of falling tax revenues and rising acquired rights, economies who cannot keep growing indefinitely resort to government borrowing. Such deficit financing if it is not well invested makes debt servicing unsustainable and threatens state bankruptcy. The political side-effect of these non-viable economic conditions translate into a political bipolarity by dividing the middle class towards both its radical left and reactionary right extremes, where populist demagogues steer countries into an impasse of nationalist protectionism or isolationism, eventually repeating the fatal historical alternating cycles of peace-confrontation-war.

As the cause of it all, technological advances changed life standards and cultures within a generation. But this change did not affect all people equally. Differences and inequalities within and between countries grow apace, creating winners in pre-industrial and losers in post-industrial countries, thus increasing political frictions and conflicts within and between them. To compete successfully, countries try to improve efficiency by reducing expenses, increasing taxes, and decreasing welfare services to service their debts. This orthodox economic policy, however, creates unbearable political costs that no democratic regime can afford to implement. Therein lies the current democratic predicament.

This dilemma haunts all developed democracies that have fallen into the trap that makes any possible economic solutions politically unaffordable, because such dire economic problems can only be resolved by creating unacceptable political conditions of lowering the standard of living and raising its cost. Given such choice, no electorate would vote for it and no democratic government can survive it. Democracies are therefore impotent to break their vicious circle, so can only slip into an inexorable downward spiral.

Since people do not volunteer to lower their standard of living or freedom of action, the only available answer to reverse this slippery slope seems to be for a government to adopt and apply unpopular measures. But such policies could only be imposed by an authoritarian government that is willing and able to disregard popular opposition and suppress resistance by force, something current democracies cannot afford to do.

To avoid this stalemate, democratic protocols must be updated to enable governments to impose needed bitter remedies to relieve societies in distress and point them toward a post-modern sustainable development. We are now in the process of searching for such a suitable effective democratic qualitative renovation for the 21st Century.

POST-MODERN SEQUEL

In our highly fluid times, the meanings of democracy keep ever-changing and re-interpreted. Pushed and pulled by technological innovations, the world is moving on to its post-modern era, symbolized by the birth of the atomic age in the mid-twentieth century, followed by the space age by the late second millennium. This evolution is evident by economic changes brought about from the dominance of the tertiary (services) sector

that overtook the primary (agriculture) and secondary (industrial) combined, at least in the most developed countries. We can therefore say that by the beginning of the third millennium, history entered its economic post-industrial age, as it inaugurated the societal post-modern age.

Technology and its economic applications, however, move much faster than social developments and even more so than political change. This rate differential creates a significant widening time gap between them, thus raising the stresses and strains in human beings and their social systems. As old traditions break down before they can be replaced by new ones adapted to the present realities, societies find themselves in a dangerous anomic interregnum where anything can happen.

Political decay is a concomitant development of advanced democracies. Assuming the greatest threat to liberty is the monopoly of power in one center, democratic politics try to spread political power in different institutions by a plethora of constitutional restraints, effecting checks and balances among the legislative, executive and judiciary branches of government.

Moreover, the constant kowtowing to momentary majority public opinions and powerful private interests make unpopular policies very hard to adopt and sustain, thus sacrificing long-term benefits to short-sighted wish fulfillments. As in everything else, it is possible to have too much of a good thing like democracy.

In this critical situation where we are now, traditional democratic institutions find themselves overwhelmed and surpassed by fast-moving events. How, then, can a stable democracy survive in this chaotically unstable world? This is the question that we must consider here, if we want to save this classical ideal or its modern inheritance.

An obvious way would be to develop a political technology to utilize the new possibilities afforded by scientific advances in telecommunications. It has been suggested that democracy can be enhanced by empowering citizens to participate in all public decisions, as they did in the ancient polis, by electronic voting mechanisms in their homes, individually and instantaneously transmitted to the appropriate policy-making institutions.

Such tele-democracy could solve this problem of large and widespread electorates, thus bringing democratic processes up to date with post-modern practices. The dramatic progress of telecommunications could possibly help create a Telecommunitary Democracy, giving all citizens the opportunity to be in constant touch not only with each other but also with their government.

The success of social networks, personal portals, blogs, e-mails, and a plethora of electronic media created a virtual reality that has added another layer to our physical actuality. Such devices based on the individual cell-phone, computer and television, all converging into the internet, are presently connecting every individual into a global village. How best to utilize these novelties in the service of democracy remains to be seen.

LIMITS OF DEMOCRACY

Although direct democracy has become once again technically possible, thanks to the dramatic progress of telecommunications in the World Wide Web, the critical question is whether it is still desirable. Given the rapid spread of telephony, it is possible to make humanity as interconnected as an organic or artificial brain by mid-century. Then, this development usher in the oft anticipated Singularity.

When the global ten-billion nervous system comes into being, direct democracy may be possible in a planetary scale, when all people could make their opinions known to everyone, continuously and instantaneously, if they so wish. This requirement would also civilize world affairs by confirming if liberal democracies never go to war against each other. Should that classical ideal then become the default norm of human governance?

Not so easily or necessarily. The obvious problems are both old and new. Public opinion has always been fickle, short-lived, and short-sighted. People change their mind fast and often, so temporary popular and sectorial opinions do not make populist decisions the best way to govern civil society. These short-comings were noted since ancient Athens, as endemic to democratic government by Plato and Aristotle, pointing out the natural deterioration of democracies into ochlocracies and tyrannies.

As all political regimes, even their success eventually leads to their demise. Every rise and maturity gives way to decline and fall. Whether by suicide or homicide then, democracy may become extinct, because societies, as all systems, are ultimately unsustainable and perishable. The only difference is if their duration is measured in years, centuries, or millennia.

When we add present developments to those perennial differences and defects, the limits of democracy become even more striking. As societies become more complex and decisions sophisticated, correct opinions must be based on wider and deeper knowledge of many things. Proper decision-making requires technical understanding, as well as ethical common sense. If democracy does not morph into some dystopian mutant, the body politic must be sufficiently educated and cultured not to choose the easy fast road to nowhere.

More recently, dysfunctional democracy has raised its ugly head in the most advanced societies, where a multiplicity of opposing pressure groups demand retention or expansion of their conflicting vested interests and acquired entitlements. In rich countries, political debates tend to revolve around trivia, thriving as political theatre of great form but little substance. In highly developed systems with a well-organized civil society with a variety of institutions, associations, and syndicates, the classical will of the majority is really the will of strong and outspoken minorities. So, trying to impose democratic epiphenomena to unprepared societies without the proper civic superstructure, economic structure and cultural infrastructure invites systemic chaos or demagogic attempts to use majorities to abuse minorities.

Due to the balance of many centers of power, separation of various jurisdictions and multiplicity of acquired rights, decision-making has become the lowest common denominator of all these constraints. Democratic governments must consult and

compromise these competing and conflicting interests and opinions before they can arrive at a coherent public policy.

This process is a time and energy as well as money and effort consuming activity that often results in systemic sclerosis and political paralysis. In such zero-sum games, democracy seems to have reached its final stage of development or decay in which inefficiency and ineffectiveness trump all its other benefits. Consequently, it would be impossible to predict where we might go from here.

DEMOCRACY & TECHNOCRACY

Many recent dramatic events have shaken up the political universe of the developed world. These events manifest a widespread movement towards conservative, xenophobic nationalism in many north-western countries during their post-industrializing stage, where elections, referenda or simply opinion polls indicate a definite increase of popular dissatisfaction with democratic governing elites and their neo-liberal and globalist policies. This trend towards ideological, cultural, and political extremes is quite disturbing because it is a serious symptom of systemic social disintegration and a harbinger of deeply critical times ahead.

Indeed, the looming dangers have been recognised and decried by many well-known scientists who spoke and warned about the approaching catastrophe ahead, if we continue the same historical trajectory. The main reason for this social malaise is determined to be the increasing automatization of the means of production that displaces human workers to unemployment and subsequent impoverishment. Ironically, this revolutionary change could ultimately realize a Marxist utopia, forecasted two centuries ago but taking shape presently. Unfortunately, it seems that societies are not yet ready for such ideal state when everything is done by machines, so humans can devote themselves in higher pursuits and leisure.

Moreover, are other ongoing crises as the violent wars in the Middle East and Africa with their humanitarian by-product of massive refugee migrating hordes flooding, terrorizing, and destabilizing Europe, as well as the looming environmental catastrophe of global warming. These multiply the accumulating threats to human civilization. Given the plethora of menacing problems, citizens blame their governments and elites for creating this dire situation for the many, while enriching the few. Consequently, the angry demos turn to amiable demagogues who promise to solve these problems, if only they get elected to power.

Although the fundamental diagnosis may be correct, the responsibility for its cause only falls minimally on any government or even elite. In this maelstrom of rapid and radical change in the world, governments and elites are as disoriented and confused as the populace in general. In this interdependent, globalized world, no government, corporation, or institution holds enough power to control events or developments more than marginally.

The increasing momentum of scientific and technological advances causing the current socio-economic revolution throughout the world is too dispersed, self-sustained

and advances inexorably. Future developments thus depend more on random, unexpected inventions than on human intentions; so much so, that side-effects and unintended consequences drive history, rather than elite plans or formal policies, not to speak of conspiracy theories.

In that sense, people attack the wrong targets and turn to false saviors, because unfortunately there is no single target and no simple solution. The technological problem has metastasized beyond feasible remedy. Since political power is spread out among various disparate competing centers around the globe, there is no chance that we can convert many national self-interests to act for one common interest. Humanity will reach the precipice before states can be forced to do anything in a coordinated manner and even then, it may be too little and too late.

Meanwhile, if there is still time, democratic policy-making must be constrained within a technocratic framework, so that the fluctuating momentary moods and demands of public opinion are held in check by the overriding necessities of reality, better recognized by specialist deep knowledge. Traditional democracy where a simple majority or even plurality of electoral opinion can determine public policies for the whole society in the short term, is no longer a reliable way of responding to the challenges of complex and critical problems in the long term.

Instead, the “will of the people” should be shaped and moderated by realistic conditions, not by demagogic fake promises. Such moderation, however, can only be attained by sharing equitably the profits of technology, so that everyone is provided with a viable income and all people can enjoy the products of automation.

For the new economy to function with minimal human participation, so that the devil does not make work for idle hands and even Marx is finally fulfilled, the people should be socialized in various wholesome cultural activities instead of working for a living. This combination of democratic politics wedded to technocratic economics may become the optimal combination of classic and novel approaches, best suited for post-modern communities of the new century.

TECHNOCRATIC DEMOCRACY

At the dawn of the 21st Century, the rapid progress of technology is rapidly transforming the world into a globalized and complexified super-system. Although cultures and economies are fast converging by the fast change and movement of ideas, people, capital, goods, and services, carried by instant communication and speedy transportation. Yet, polities and their politics are still struggling to catch up, thereby accumulating problems in democracy, ecology, equality, and equity, throughout the world.

Although this political paradox was recognized as long ago as Plato’s Republic, making democracy a philosophical pariah ever since, very little advance has been made through the millennia in this crucial area of public affairs. Nevertheless, it is evident that changed circumstances demand to update classical ideals to fit new realities, otherwise,

we experience the degradation of liberalism into populism and democracy into ochlocracy, eventually morphing into tyrannical or dictatorial regimes.

This growing systemic complexity now surpasses the limited knowledge or understanding of people to make correct decisions, so vox populi is no longer vox dei. As human power increases faster than its intelligence, human errors become costlier and even fatal. But, as automation is replacing human brawn, artificial intelligence (AI) is overtaking even our brain power. It now seems that politics is the final frontier where the intelligence battle of the century will be joined. As AI becomes better than natural intellect (NI), making more efficient and effective decisions in public affairs, political life must necessarily follow suit.

This means that the inexorable advance of AI insidiously forces people and societies to become more dependent upon cybernetic supports and computerized aides, not only for their physical but also psychological wellbeing. Sooner rather than later, both individual and collective decisions will be increasingly based on ideas and data provided by super-intelligent robotics (SIR), upon whose information and suggestion, people will have to depend and decide rational plans and realistic policies.

Already, professional civil services are gaining greater de facto executive powers by experts and their computers. So, legislatures are the last hold out of traditional human negotiation and manipulation, with its attendant syndromes of indecisiveness, incoherence, ignorance, prejudice, and corruption. The more accurate and complete the data provided by SIRs, the less the margin of error and maneuver by human decision makers. The next generation of SIRs will then perform many legislative and policy making functions, moderating issues of subjective and conflicting opinions to fit objective and irrefutable restrictions, thus leaving only rubber stamp decisions to humans.

To reverse the vicious spiral of democratic degradation, political problems created by technological developments will have to be mostly resolved when technological advances are applied to politics as well. If cyborg applications combine AI with NI, utilizing weighted tele-voting by the instant www internet, they could create a cyber-democracy, responsive to the changing needs and demands of well informed, educated, and responsible citizens, as classical democracy always implied and assumed.

The ratio between the quantity and quality of technology applied to the political process and the government institutions would determine whether a society has a technocratic democracy or a democratic technocracy. Obviously, the proportional combination of each must be left to the place and time of their application.

This tentative prognosis makes it incumbent upon the inevitable cybernetic advance from AI to SIR to produce a humanoid technocracy as an optimal solution to our political predicament in the impending future. This inescapable evolution of human integrity and ingenuity could make its creation much smarter than its parentage, but still leaving the defining aspects of human integrity.

Yet, the growing dependence on SIR will increase human capacity to solve its problems and improve our quality of life, only if it can carefully develop and properly manage a new hybrid government. Installing and instilling sufficient controls on its cybernetic creations will therefore be the ultimate criterion to ensure if humanity's creatures shall remain its servants and not become its masters.

CONCLUSION

After a few millennia of history, humanity has not discovered any other political systems than that of the classical Greeks. Certainly, we have made many adjustments and few improvements forced by environmental circumstances and empowered by technological advancements, but the original parameters remain the same. Unless we can cope up with a radically novel system of social governance, following our discoveries of better artifacts to improve our lives, democracy in its various forms will remain the final frontier in the everlasting search of the optimal political invention.

As it is, democracy makes for populism, pandering, pettiness and delays, but its instability and fragility also makes for flexibility and longevity. Although it may not be the most efficient or effective of political regimes, it is the most ethical, as it affords optimal consideration to the wishes of those involved and affected by its actions. Democratic morality in its policy-making comes closest into taking account and weighing the perceived interest of most conflicting pressures, as expressed by the various sides of a constantly shifting public opinion.

In a final analysis, in spite all its imperfections and failings, the thesis that democracy is the worst form of government except for all the others, may be relatively if not absolutely, true. If we consider democracy not necessarily as the *summum bonum* of any commonwealth, but as the lesser evil of politics, we will have reached the optimal pragmatism of our reality. Thus, it behooves us to keep its classical content up to date to fit within its changing context.

Nevertheless, the important consideration is that democracy is a many splendored thing and comes in many flavors, so should not be stretched in a Procrustean bed to fit all fleeting circumstances. The main thesis here is that the successful application of democracy, as of all things, is situational. Democratic regimes must thus be adapted to specific cultural conditions. As political institutions are superstructures, resting upon social structures and natural infrastructures. The variety of history, nature and culture then determine the type and degree of democracy any social system can sustain.

Since the dominant feature of our progressive civilization, now and for the future, seems to be the advances of science and technology, democratic institutions better take advantage of their novel provisions to retain its relevance in a fast-changing world. According to this study, some form of a qualified technocratic democracy, therefore seems the best combination to attain this challenge.

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