

# **The Definition of Republic and Democracy from a Conceptual Perspective**

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## **Abstract**

The words of the republic and democracy are different in concept and content. Despite this, they can be used in place of each other by the people and can lead to misunderstandings. Although the two concepts are different from each other, they support each other and support their development. In this study, these two concepts, which have a very important place in our political and daily life, will be studied. This study focuses on the definition of republic and democracy from a conceptual perspective.

**Keywords:** Republic, Democracy, People, Concept.

## **1. Introduction**

Everyone has a question when they are young. Which Parent Do You Love More? A child who is faced with such a question will have difficulty deciding what to say. The child will try to get rid of this dilemma by telling one of his parents. However, the children who have learned to healthy thinking that grow up in a good family environment will be able to give an appropriate answer by estimating that these two concepts are not different from each other.

It is difficult to distinguish between the concepts of republic and democracy for a normal citizen, as in the case of the mother and father. These concepts are understood and used as if they have sameness. There can be many explanations for the perception of these two concepts in theory but different in practice. In so much that this situation can be taken forward and decorated with words that have no meaning by normal citizens. The problem arises right here. Is democracy or republic more necessary for a citizen? Which will make him/her more free and happy and increase all kinds of prosperity? The answer to these questions can be given after looking at the explanation of these concepts.

## 2. The Concepts of Republic and Democracy

The concept of 'Republic' derives from the 'public' in Arabic. It stands for a community, a bevy of people; and it also means a social tribe or nation (Çetinoğlu, 1998: 804). The Republic is a regime which advocates that the power belongs to the public and the sovereignty is used only by the public. "Cumhuriyet" in Turkish is expressed "Republique" in French and "The Republic" in English. Its Latin origin is "Res Publica". Res public stands for belonging to the public, a public property. The Republic has the same meaning both in Latin and in Arabic origin. While in the ancient Greece the word of Republic was used for a treasury of the city, the public fund in the version of "Ta Koinonia", then it referred to "common interest" (Haytoğlu, 2013). The origin of the word democracy comes from the Greek "demos", meaning people and "kratos", meaning government. Literally, democracy means government by or of the people (LaRosa, 2006: 4). When the word of Republic is considered as popular sovereignty, the importance of electoral system in exercising sovereignty comes to the light by itself. It is directly linked to the electoral system of how, to what extent and by whom the people will be represented in this regime which does not accept the inheritance or lifelong use of power, in any way, essentially.

A republic is a government in which a restricted group of citizens form a political unit, usually under the auspice of a charter, which directs them to elect representatives who will govern the state (Marriott, 2003). Republics, by their very nature, tend to be free polities, not because they are elected by the citizens of the polity, but because they are bound by charters, which limit the responsibilities and powers of the state (Marriott, 2003). The fact that people vote for representatives has nothing to do with making anything free. The logical consistency and rationality of the charter, as well as the willingness of the people to live by it, is what keeps people free (Marriott, 2003). Republic is a system of government in which the people hold sovereign power and elect representatives who exercise that power (Keehn, 2015). It contrasts on the one hand with a pure democracy, in which the people or community as an organized whole wield the sovereign power of government, and on the other with the rule of one person (Keehn, 2015). Although it may not be immediately clear, this definition provides a good beginning in understanding the foundations of a Republic. The definition hinges on who holds the sovereign power. And of course, the sovereign power is the ultimate power within the country and the definition above hinges on who holds this power (Keehn, 2015).

A democracy is government by the majority. There is still a restricted group of citizens in a democracy, but this group rules directly and personally runs the state. The group may delegate specific tasks to individuals, such as generalships and governorships, but there is no question that the ruling force in a democracy is not a charter (if there even is a charter), but the vote of the majority (Marriott, 2003). Democracies are free only if the people know what freedom is and are consistent in their application of it. If they don't know this, or more appropriately, if a majority of the people don't know this, then a democracy could be just as tyrannical as the worst dictator (Marriott, 2003). According to Long (1976), a Republic, on the other hand, has a very different purpose and an entirely different form, or system, of government. Its purpose is to control the Majority strictly, as well as all others among the people, primarily to protect The Individual's God-given, unalienable rights and therefore for the protection of the rights of The Minority, of all minorities, and the liberties of people in general. The definition of a Republic is: a constitutionally limited government of the representative type, created by a written constitution—adopted by the people and changeable (from its original meaning) by them only by its amendment—with its powers divided between three separate Branches: Executive, Legislative and Judicial. Here the term "the people" means, of course, the electorate (Long, 1976).

Democracy is one of the most popular terms in the political science. It has combination with different adjectives defined in different way with different contains. All approaches can settle

on its content and its own signification. The root of democracy is that people choose or decide who governs them. Initially the most known definitions of democracy are based on the governance of the people. The people decide who will represent them and who will head the government at the national and local levels. They do so by choosing between competing parties in regular, fair and free elections. In a democracy laws and policies require majority support in parliament (Aktaş, 2015: 87).

Democracy is the appraisive political concept par excellence. Correspondingly, one finds endless disputes over appropriate meaning and definition (Collier, 1997: 433). The most general definition of democracy is that the public are governed by the people, the sovereignty belongs to the nation or the public. In this framework, democracy is a concept that emphasizes the power of the people. Abraham Lincoln described a democracy in 1864 as "the government of the people, by the people, for the people" (Tunç, 2008: 1115). Over time, experiences have caused the democracy to be subject to broader definitions. In this context, democracy has been expressed as "a political system allowing the form of government indirectly used by the public through representation and delegated authority, where the top government is elected and its representatives are elected in free elections with certain intervals" (Tunç, 2008: 1115). The basic components of democracy can be summarized as follows (Becker and Raveloson, 2008: 4-16):

- **Fundamental Freedom and Fundamental Rights:** Human rights are much more than a mere component of democracy. They represent essential requirements for the well performing of a democratic system. The development and evolution of human rights are only possible when humans live in a democracy, given the fact that it is only within this system that the population itself can draw up the laws that will rule and publicly control the three powers: the legislative power, the executive power and the judiciary power (Becker and Raveloson, 2008: 4).
- **Elections:** Elections constitute one of the most important pillars of democracy. Those are the texts of Electoral Law that rule and clearly define both the organisation of these elections, and how to undertake the deduction of the votes in order to assign them to the corresponding seats. There is an active electoral law and a passive electoral law. Citizens who can use active electoral law have the right to vote whereas those who can use passive electoral law have the right to be elected. In most cases, the whole electorate can use both types of right (Becker and Raveloson, 2008: 4).
- **Rule of Law:** In a Rule of Law, there are fundamental principles and procedures that guarantee the freedom of each individual and which allow participation in political life. There is, first of all, the right to a free blossoming of individual personality. To sum it up, the power of the State is linked to the laws that rule it. Thus, the concept of Rule of Law is directly opposed to that of "Police State" or "Despotic State" (Becker and Raveloson, 2008: 5).
- **Separation of Powers:** There are three State powers within a State: The legislative power draws up and adopts laws. The executive power enforces laws and government policies. The judiciary power represents the legal framework for exercising the power. The term "separation of powers" actually means "division" of the State power into three parts: The ones that have just been cited above. In a democratic State, the power of the State can be controlled and influenced efficiently, first and foremost, by itself. The State power must then be distributed among several organs (Becker and Raveloson, 2008: 6).
- **The Parliament:** Even if the relationship between the Parliament and the Government can be very different in democracies, parliaments fundamentally always have the same functions. They are vested with the office of proposing laws. They hold the right to put forward

proposals of laws. In the systems of parliamentary governments, this right is often assigned to the government, as it represents the majority in the parliament, and the likelihood of having a bill passed is greater in this case. In a general rule, the relative majority is enough to pass a bill. On the other hand, laws that deal with essential themes such as the Constitution, for example, often need a majority of two thirds or a referendum, to be validated (Becker and Raveloson, 2008: 9).

- **Democratic Pluralism:** In a democracy, pluralism is considered and applied as a form of social order and policy. In the field of politics, pluralism implies that a large number of interest groupings and associations that get together freely are reciprocally in a situation of competition to win influence on social and political life. These groupings can be of political, economic, religious, ethnic or of any other nature. A plural society is characterized by respect, acceptance and recognition of all points of view; no matter how different or diverging they can be; and their dissemination, as well as their enforcement should not be faced with any obstacle. Pluralism is based on controversial discussions whose results are often built on compromises which eventually satisfy all the involved groups, or at the very least, are acceptable as a whole. In pluralism, either dialogues, points of view exchanges or discussions, as well as ideas and opinions that are debated there have a constructive feature within the framework of social processes of expression of ideas and political will of citizens, even if they are either contrary to or opposed to the regime in place or even closer to the opposition (Becker and Raveloson, 2008: 11).
- **The Government and the Opposition:** The leadership of a community will fare better if taken on by only one person or a small group, as long as this community is expected to be able to act. You must already have noticed this in your daily life, in a more reduced framework. When one class or working group has to discuss something, the first thing to do is to elect a leader; to put in place and maintain a structure. Without this leader, the debate takes place in a disorderly manner and coming up with results is difficult. If we transpose this image to the case of the State, we can see clearly why it is necessary to have a government. The government, which is always supported by the parliament or presidential majority party (with or without coalition with the other parties), can only function with an intact and efficient state administration, which enforces the decisions. In a democratic State, there is always an opposition that exists parallel with the government. During the elections and at the level of the different state organs, (Parliament, Senate, regional and communal councils, etc.), in most cases, there is one or several opposition parties that confront the party of the power in place. The opposition controls the government (Becker and Raveloson, 2008: 12-14).
- **Public Opinion and Freedom of the Media:** Public opinion is of a decisive importance for democracy. Public opinion is made up with citizens or specific groups that reflect on their community and express their criticisms, their proposals or their agreement to influence the construction of political will. It is not possible to talk about only one, but of several public opinions because in a plural society, there are always several stands. Public opinion is then a tool to control the politicians that lead the country. Public opinion serves the whole population in its effort to display criticisms and its incitements to well defined actions. As far as the dissemination of positions and opinions are concerned, it is the media, that is to say television, radio and newspapers, but also more and more, internet, that play a decisive role. In the current mass societies, communication can only be carried out through mass media. Interchanges of information can only be done through the direct contacts of dialogues, because over time our societies have become too populated. Political parties, particularly, must call on the media to lay their projects and their stands in front of the population. Democracies are not any more basically characterized by direct communication, but rather by media communication. It is by the way for this reason that the media are considered as the “fourth power” coming after the judiciary, the executive and

the legislative powers, because they constitute in fact the most important controlling tools of the public opinion (Becker and Raveloson, 2008: 12-16).

After democracy and republic have been dealt with as a concept it is necessary to identify what you want to emphasize with the public who are mentioned frequently in the definition.

### **3. The Republic or the Democracy?**

Although it can be said that the public is all the people living in a country, throughout the historical process the practice has not been exercised in the same way since the ancient Greece, when democracy began to exist. Citizenship was only given to certain segments at that time as a right, and they were directly involved in the direct governance. The physical impossibilities of actual implementation of such a democracy today have made limited representation democracy available today. In this form of governance, which can also be called indirect democracy, the ordinary citizens are held responsible for the decision-making process and it allows the governance to be exercised by the experienced persons. In this context, it can be said that both democracy and the republic regard the people as the primary element. Then there is what a difference or contradiction between these two concepts, so many scientists writers have written in pages by expressing one page from one of these concepts to another.

In fact, someone can be a republican without being a democrat. For example; Belgium and many other constitutional monarchies show that it can become a democrat without being a republican (Debray, 1990: 55). Not every republic or monarchy is a democracy. But every democracy can be a republic or monarchy as a form of government. For example; the system in England is a monarchical democracy; the system in Turkey is a republican democracy (Selçuk, 2010: 3). In any country, people's democracy may not show full sovereignty and power. On the contrary, the absence of a monarch which passes from the father to the son may not show that the republic is there. Even if any administration regards itself as a republican and emphasize its own sovereignty belongs to the popular sovereignty it may not be a democratic. Today, although many administrations define themselves as republicans, in view of the rights and freedoms there, it can be clearly seen that a popular idealism has been created despite the people being restricted or even precluded on the ground of one or the other.

In fact, there is no need for equality between democracy and republic, which is indispensable. When democracy is considered in this framework, it shows a libertarian approach. Republicans emphasize that limitless freedom can be restricted to rights and freedoms by arguing that it can harm the essential elements and *sine qua non* in the structuring, called the state, and the aim should be to protect the state. Many countries in the world have been discussing that if democracy lines are kept wide, it can harm the state and the republic. It can be said that those who have made this debate are of opinion that making concessions from the democracy instead of that from the republic and the state, otherwise the results will not be positive for the state. Those who base on Republic have advocated that democracy can actually restraint on the democratic rights for the ideal of the republic and stated that allowing democrats to destroy the repressive movements targeting the republic would allow the republic to disappear.

Public is the people living together in any country at a certain time. However, the concept of the public has been transformed into a concept that can be shaped according to the desired result and changed according to what the theoreticians try to prove. From another point of view, the public are briefly regarded as the whole of the rest people except those who appear to be sovereign or dominant in a country or in the world. You should not be a biased person by looking at this definition. Because all the theorists aim to regulate the relationship between

the rulers, those who use the sovereignty personally, and the people who are the true owners of sovereignty.

Democracy and the republic can be said to be partners in a country in which the public are represented in a real sense, democratic values are being formed and implemented, and where administrators can exercise dominance and governance on behalf of the public. According to Pettit (Pettit, 1998: 16); it will be possible to provide a universal basis for what kind of democracy the republic should build, as a freedom without domination, what can be seen as the demands of certain segment. Freedom as a non-dominance will bring such a conception of democracy that being object to will usually take the place of consent in the conditions of democracy. What is important is not that the administration does what people say; however, people have always a right to object whatever the administration does with the pain arising from arbitrariness. From Pettit's view of point, it can be understood that the administration can only grant the right of appeal to the public, and democracy will only work in this direction. In short, the public does not recognize the right to participate in the governance, and it means that "If you have an appeal, please say it but do not interfere." (Pettit, 1998: 16).

In the classical sense, the sovereignty which all of the power holders, whom we can express as power, do not want to leave anyhow and hold everything in their hands is treated in two different ways as popular sovereignty and national sovereignty. Thus, the self-governance of the public that the republicans advocate in the participation of the public in the rule emerges in two different models. One of the most important differences that arose in both models is the right to vote in popular sovereignty while it is a duty to be done in national sovereignty. There is a need for those who will speak on behalf of the nation that is not psychically in national sovereignty, and only those can be determined by choice. The mandatory system is in effect at this point. In the case of popular sovereignty, the real thing is that the public can reveal their will by means of physical existence without intermediaries. Direct popular sovereignty will allow the formation of referendum and public opinion due to its characteristics. In popular sovereignty, the use of it by means of representation requires a lot of mechanisms in order to control those who use their will and to prevent them from being wrong. However, in the case of popular sovereignty, this is nothing but delaying the realization of the will (Kapani, 1989: 53). This artificial distinction between two types of sovereignty may be important in terms of result as idealism and practicality. In practice, however, we have arrived on consensus that the national sovereignty is more effective in terms of control of the users who have the sovereignty individually and prevention of arbitrariness.

#### **4. Conclusion**

The use of the popular sovereignty only through representation and the fact that they can closely influence the electoral system indirectly bring the republic and its institutions into an important and necessary situation with its idealist character. The Republic is not as regional as democracy, but advocates ideas that are more universal, even reaching beyond the universe, and are forcing its citizens to change in this way. Democracy, on the contrary, does not force people, but to leave them in their natural processes in the way of development.

While the elected representatives of democracy constitute voters, the elected representatives of the republic present the nation and the country so that it removes the need for them to relate to the place where they are elected. Therefore, the voters' rights to speak to their representatives are restricted or even ignored, and their elected representative becomes a representative of others. However, since the voters can be represented more concrete in the democracy, they can reach to their own elected representative at any moment, they can establish any kind of pressures in order to fulfill their demands, and most importantly, they can prevent any situation to their own detriment.

The Republic depends on the reason, the universal ideals, the constitution and the laws and a strict education in accordance with the values of the individual and the republic instead of the administration which is based on the family and is shaped by being good or bad of the person in power. As a result of a rigorous education based on ideals, citizens becoming unavoidably conscious have turned to the search for a way of questioning the values of the republic, a universal rationalist approach to a more liberal, concrete, individualistic approach to government that does not act imperiously, but as universal as the republic. In short, citizens who become well-educated will be in quest of the democracy spontaneously. Just as the transition from the king's administration to the republic could be regarded as a realization of its own dynamics within a historical process, it can be said that the same situation emerged towards democracy. While democracy can easily meet the demands of the majority, the fulfillment of these demands in the republic depends on whether it conforms to the universally ideal criteria.

While citizens in the Republic do not have the right to be mistaken, democracy has flexibility within certain boundaries. The republic has forced all people to comply with strict rules that are programmed like robots, while democracy allows them to be in their own way in a more friendly environment. Comparing with the republic, Democracy can be seen as more humane administration that emphasizes the human being as an individual. However, it should not be forgotten that it has its own sides that are failing and have the tendencies that are not in compliance with democracy in somehow like in other forms of government. Problems in democracy can often stem from rulers, as opposed to the governed ones. Because qualifications of the rulers and the governed are united. If the governed is corrupted, the entire system will fail. Since equality is in priority rather than freedoms, the tendency towards individualism is driving people towards alienation and loneliness.

Alienation and loneliness will set the stage for the formation of anarchy or despotism in democracies. Anarchy will be the inevitable consequence of over-permissiveness. Despotism is not the strict despotism of the old governments, but the level that can be endured for people because of being softer and the presence of equality. These drawbacks are compensating. Intermediary institutions to be established within the system, freedom of the press, empowerment of the judiciary and the transformation of local governments into a developing structure that does not only benefit from the state but also contributes to it will decrease the least inconveniences by bringing limits to the state power (Göze, 1995: 347).

All kinds of governance in the world can be looked at with certain criteria. These can be qualified as good or bad by being evaluated with various characteristics. Defending the republic for the sake of goodness was an unquestionable way out when kingdoms existed. Nevertheless, an imperious tendency toward democracy which enables the human to be more free, more equal and allow the people who exercise sovereignty in person to inspect it will take its own place instead of this way out.

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