

Politics and Democracy: A Critical Evaluation

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Effective dictatorships require great leaders. Effective democracies need great citizens. (Barber, 1995: 18)

Abstract: The primary objective of this article is to assert that different definitions of politics lead to different, even contradictory understandings of democracy. In this respect, crises of representative democracy will be analyzed within the framework of the interrelationships between the chief categories such as politics, economy and ethics as well as democracy, citizenship, election and voter. Besides, current and probable consequences of perceiving democracy as a means or process will be explicated and some basic arguments of participatory democracy will be presented.

Key Words: *Politics, democracy, citizenship, economy, ethics.*

Introduction

The primary objective of this study is to argue that diverse political definitions lead to different understandings of democracy in terms of methodology, due to the fact that their basic assumptions are different. For this purpose, crises of representative democracy will be highlighted within the framework of main categories such as politics, economy and ethics as well as democracy, citizen, election and voter. Besides, the existing and likely outcomes of the comprehension of democracy as an instrument or process will be explicated and certain basic arguments of participatory democracy will be outlined.

In the first section of the study, the “competitive-instrumental interpretation of politics and democracy” will be handled. Besides, power politics and instrumental rationality developed by thinkers like Machiavelli and Thomas Hobbes will be tracked until today and it will be argued that political definitions and democracy approaches of leading names in social sciences like Max Weber, Joseph Schumpeter, David Easton, Harold Lasswell, Friedrich A. Hayek and Robert Dahl have an instrumental nature parallel to the dissertations of Ma-

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chiavelli and Hobbes. In the second section, “politics and democracy as a lifestyle or process” will be analyzed. In this section, current and probable criticisms to the understanding of instrumental politics will be re-evaluated through classical and modern thinkers like Plato Aristotle, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Immanuel Kant, Karl Marx, C. Wright Mills, Crawford Macpherson, Miliband, Herbert Marcuse, Hannah Arendt, Cornelius Castoriadis, Jürgen Habermas and Benjamin Barber. This section will particularly focus on the Plato--Arendt-Habermas line and Rousseau’s criticisms will be individually evaluated.

In this article, the basic arguments of these two approaches to politics and democracy will be deliberated and their scopes and adequacies will be discussed in respect of methodology. For this purpose, the legitimacy problem faced by instrumental democracy – since it reduces democracy to elections and citizen to voter - will be explored. The conclusion section of the study will focus on basic questions that have to be re-asked in order to revive participatory democracy and citizenship and evaluate what kind of a political society and public sphere participatory democracy and citizenship suggest.

Competitive-Instrumental Interpretation of Politics and Democracy

In the contemporary period, the instrumental comprehension of politics has commenced with Machiavelli. The concept of “power” had priority in Machiavelli’s political thoughts, and in his work “The Prince”, he developed the view “the end justifies the means”. Machiavelli considered politics within the context of instrumental rationality and argued that success justifies the use of any methods (Machiavelli, 2001: 64-75). While he was often blamed for indecency because of the attitude he adopted, various cycles attempted to justify Machiavelli and lavished praise on him as the founder of modern political science (Machiavelli, 2001: 5; Hobbes, 1995: 9-13). Even though Thomas Hobbes harshly criticized Machiavelli because of his views and blamed him for “stupidity” without giving his name (Hobbes, 1995: 107-108), he adopted Machiavelli’s rationality and negative views on human nature as well by saying, “homo homini lupus”. Political models of Machiavelli and Hobbes symbolize the sovereignty of political rationality in the modern period. In Machiavelli and his theories, instrumental politics, capitalism and realism mingled. Then, instrumental politics has continually evolved and settled in the capitalism-

realism axis with the support of positivist philosophy.¹ The definition of “politics”, which has been adopted worldwide today, reflects the opinions of the philosophers in question. Political definitions and democracy approaches of leading names of social sciences like Max Weber, Joseph Schumpeter, David Easton, Harold Lasswell, Friedrich A. Hayek and Robert Dahl have an instrumental nature parallel to the dissertations of Machiavelli and Hobbes.

According to Max Weber, politics means, “striving to share power or striving to influence the distribution of power, either among states or among groups within a state” (Weber, 1993: 80). And state is “a human community that (successfully) claims the *monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force* within a given territory” (Weber, 1993: 80). In Weber’s view, the state is the center of power and violence. And competition, even conflict is immanent in this definition. The discourse/action of “seizing state power”, as we frequently witness in the case of Turkey, is, in a sense, endeavored to be justified by the definition in question. Weber’s approach to politics is realistic and since he identifies politics with seizing state power, he overlooks the existence of other types of relationships like cooperation and solidarity between citizens living together in society. Weber, who outlines the concepts of political party and status in order to criticize Marx’s theory of class, thus underlining the existence of numerous non-class and non-conflict relationships, over-emphasizes interest differences in society when it comes to politics to the extent he denies himself. Hence, he develops a political design compliant with the principles of capitalist power. Thus, Weber obliquely excludes the idea of a politics not depending on “competition”, “power” and “violence”. In other words, the idea of the creation of a world jointly by all members of society in which all members want to live and, which observes and develops common interests does not exist in Weber’s mind. Moreover, if Weber was asked the question “what is the goal of power?”, his answer would undoubtedly be the acquisition of individual interests. In this sense, we can say that Weber developed a definition compliant with individualistic-liberal/capitalist ideology. Each individual strives to maximize his interest and power is the instrument toward that goal. Meanwhile, competition constitutes the basic characteristic of the system due to the acceptance of the principle of conflict of interest. In conformity with the instrumental definition of politics, Weber formulates the public sphere as a space that can be oriented

¹ For competent criticisms to science-philosophy-politics relationships and positivist political model, see, Köker (1998) and Sunar (1999).

for the purpose of individual or group interests and thus, considers the professionalization of politics normal. Even though he is one of the leading social scientists of the 20th century, when it comes to politics he disregards society and prefers to describe politics as an “individual activity”, even as a the “profession of a politician”:

“There are two ways of making politics one's vocation: Either one lives 'for' politics or one lives 'off' politics. By no means is this contrast an exclusive one. The rule is, rather, that man does both, at least in thought, and certainly he also does both in practice. He who lives 'for' politics makes politics his life, in an internal sense. Either he enjoys the naked possession of the power he exerts, or he nourishes his inner balance and self-feeling by the consciousness that his life has *meaning* in the service of a 'cause.' In this internal sense, every sincere man who lives for a cause also lives off this cause. The distinction hence refers to a much more substantial aspect of the matter, namely, to the economics. He who strives to make politics a permanent *source of income* lives 'off' politics as a vocation, whereas he who does not do this lives 'for' politics. Under the dominance of the private property order, some--if you wish--very trivial preconditions must exist in order for a person to be able to live 'for' politics in this economic sense. Under normal conditions, the politician must be economically independent of the income politics can bring him. This means, quite simply, that the politician must be wealthy or must have a personal position in life which yields sufficient income” (Weber, 1993: 86).

Weber's definition of politics was adopted as the classical definition of the instrumental approach and was later re-produced with slight changes under different terms by different scholars. Easton, one of the leading representatives of system analysis, defines politics as the authoritative allocation of social values at a social level (Easton, 1953). While defining politics, the only contribution which Easton made to Weber's definition was to replace *resources* with *values*. Hence, he emphasized the sharing of both physical and moral values more clearly. Lasswell considers politics in a similar way: According to Lasswell, politics is who gets what, when, and how (Lasswell, 1958). From this point of view, politics is a derivative or the second phase of the economy. The economy seems to deal with the production of resources, while politics is interested in the allocation of these resources. Robert Dahl's studies visibly reflect the conceptual confusion about the relationship between these two areas as well as the definition of politics

as a derivative of the economy. Dahl admitted that the economy was associated with scarce resources and the production of goods and services. Even though he himself, within a Weberian framework, defined politics as a style of human relationship based on power, influence or authority, he faced the difficulty of drawing a distinction between these two spheres (Dahl, 1976: 3-4); Dahl had to accept, in one of his books, that in capitalism, economic relations require politics (Dahl, 1985: 85).²

Meanwhile, Hayek and Schumpeter set out the understanding of the democracy of instrumental approach in a quite concise manner. Schumpeter tends to define democracy merely as a “political method”. Democracy is a simple institutional arrangement towards political decision-making and it is not a value in itself. In Schumpeter’s view, people do not govern in democracy. They are incapable of governing the state. According to Schumpeter, people are emotional, irrational and primitive and they are driven by dark motives. For these reasons, people cannot govern, but are governed. Those who govern are politicians. Politicians propose and make decisions on the issues that are determinant on peoples’ lives. In short, Schumpeter maintains that democracy is a political method that enables the election of politicians who compete for vote (Schumpeter, 1947: 242 ff.). Like Weber and Schumpeter, Hayek said democracy is a method, not value in itself. According to Hayek, free market and the rule of law were the most indispensable elements (Hayek, 1960: 106; 1997: 3-8). Today, new right-wing, i.e. conservative liberalism, continues to define on an instrumental basis so as to exclude people by popularizing Hayek’s views.

Adrian Leftwich provided an interim evaluation on politics. According to Leftwich, “...politics compromises all the activities of cooperation and conflict, within and between societies, whereby the human species goes about organising the use, production and distribution of human, natural and other resources in the production and reproduction of its biological and social life” (Leftwich, 1983: 11, 26). Even though Weber, Easton or Schumpeter’s approaches to poli-

² On 29 April 2004, it was announced on TV news that the British Oil Company BP had ceased its activities in Iraq due to the lack of an authority that would implement the regulations as well as the necessary regulations that would allow BP to operate in Iraq. This is a remarkable example in respect of manifesting the real intent of neoliberalism’s dissertation to minimize or transform the state by decomposing politics and the economy. Neoliberalism suggests the replacement of citizen state by a state, which will chiefly serve companies. Hence, contrary to the dissertation of the politics-economy decomposition, politics is rendered dependent on the economy.

tics are instrumental and confrontational in an apparent manner, Leftwich's approach also encompasses social cooperation, although resource allocation is emphasized. In this respect, Leftwich stands somewhere between these two understandings of politics. At least we observe that he endeavored to define politics by both Weberian and Aristotelian approaches. As can be seen below, Leftwich's approach is compatible with Marx's views in many aspects.

It will be helpful to resort to the arguments of other approaches in order to precisely identify the pros and cons of the understanding of instrumental politics. In this way, we have the opportunity to discuss implicit and explicit theoretical extensions of both approaches more clearly, as well as their likely reflections on practice.

Politics and Democracy as a Life Style or Process

Even though Machavellian understanding of politics with its different derivatives prevails in practice, it took serious criticism from a theoretical point of view and was rejected. One of these criticisms, as C. Wright Mills emphasized, is the concentration of power in the hands of elites (Mills, 1974). Another criticism in relation to the former one was that in the real sense, advanced capitalist regimes were bourgeois democracies rather than being democratic. For instance, in Miliband's view, the economically dominant class governs via democratic mechanisms instead of a dictatorship. In this system, there is more than one political party, the opposition and regular elections. The system in question also involves representative assemblies and secured rights. Even though these rights are not insignificant, their aim is to conceal the concentration of power in the hands of entrepreneur elites. Thus, the rights and equality were pretended to be fairly distributed (Miliband, 1973). A similar emphasis was voiced by Crawford Macpherson, one of the leading representatives of social liberalism in the 20th century.³ Macpherson criticized the definition of politics as the post-war economy-oriented market mechanism. According to individualist liberals, politics is an exchange process and a market mechanism. Voters are customers and politicians are entrepreneurs. Macpherson underlined the inadequacies and defects of defining politics and democracy in the sphere of a capitalist economy. In an environment where instrumental politics and democracy are dominant, high socio-economic classes often have more success

³ Levent Köker published comprehensive studies on Crawford Macpherson and translated his most predominant works into Turkish (See, Köker, 1992: 7-26; Macpherson, 1984).

in accessing resources, thus more efficiently participating in political activities. On the other hand, inequality increases disinterest. And disinterest leads to more inequality. Hence, according to Macpherson, ways should be found to ensure more equalitarian wealth distribution, to render better education, health and wealth opportunities and to assure people's participation in decision-making processes (See, Macpherson, 1966; 1973; 1977: 87 ff.).

Contrary to the instrumental approach, which considers politics as an area of competition and conflict in respect of the allocation of resources, the second approach to it is a goal in itself and therefore, it focuses on quite different issues. We can say that the theoretical origins of the second approach are based on the political philosophy of Aristotle and Plato (Sunar, 1999: 58-70). Among its leading representatives are Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Immanuel Kant, Karl Marx, Herbert Marcuse, Hannah Arendt, Jürgen Habermas and Benjamin Barber. At this point, we should make a distinction. The Platonist-Marxist line and the an-Rousseauist line represent the two branches of the second approach. Even though the arguments of Plato and Marx to some extent give an idea about the second political style, the main argument continues in the an-Rousseauist line and modern philosophers prefer to pursue this line. Therefore, firstly I will touch on the contributions of Plato and Marx. Then I will attempt to analyze an-Rousseauist understanding of politics along with its contemporary interpretations in more detailed manner.

Once upon a time, Popper had announced that Plato, Hegel and Marx were "the main enemies of open society" from an individualistic/liberal point of view and presented that as the representatives of totalitarian systems (Popper, 1967-1968). I have to say that I do not interpret Plato and Marx in the way Popper had interpreted and that I disagree with Popper's approach. On the other hand, since readers who approach Marx with sympathy or consider Plato and Marx as the representatives of the opposite philosophy may rightfully ask why these two philosophers are mentioned together, without entering into a comprehensive discussion, I want to mention a few points. The criticisms towards Hegel, who defended transcendental state and divine leader while continuously humiliating the peoples, are justifiable. However, Popper's comments on the views of Plato and Marx are groundless in many aspects. It undeniably true that Plato suggested an unequalitarian society and that his philosophy had many contradictions. Nevertheless, we can say that his way of establishing a relationship between politics, philosophy and the economy may contribute to a

participatory democratic theory to some extent. For the last few centuries, the economy has been regarded as the most significant field and instrument of politics, while philosophy is considered useless. In Plato's system, philosophy and politics ranked first in the hierarchy belonging to citizens. The economy, on the other hand, was defined as a field specific to slaves that occupied a place at the bottom of the hierarchy. Even though he recognized slavery, Plato's ranking has nothing to do with authoritarianism or totalitarianism. As a matter of fact, his ranking system can be considered the most serious antithesis of the economic instrumental mind, which is dominant today.⁴

Contrary to Plato, who was more interested in philosophy and politics, considering economic structure and relationships as secondary issues, Marx attempted to resolve the relationships between economic and social structure and politics and philosophy. However, this does not signify that Marx opposed Plato. Quite the reverse, Marx sought a realistic solution to the problem, which Plato had believed he had taken a shortcut to solve. Therefore, though his resolutions were economy-centered, Marx's primary objective was to prove that it was possible to establish a political and social life, in which individuals were emancipated from the oppression of economic obligations. In other words, Marx attempts to liberate people, who are sentenced by Plato to slavery in order to meet tangible production, from being the instrument of others, thus putting forth the principles and conditions of classless society.⁵

Considering his definition of politics, Weber insisted that politics continually materializes in the form of power relationships. According to Weber, politics designed by mankind will be valid as long as mankind exists. But, won't the definition of realistic and instrumental politics in question change in line with changing economic relationships and social structure? Or, won't politics exist in a classless society suggested by Marx? Contrary to the philosophies of history of those such as Francis Fukuyama (1992), who served the USA's interests by adapting Hegel's (1991 and 1995) thoughts, which he developed for Germany, by his thesis "The End of the History, if a classless society in Marx's view, is not an end, but a phase during which humanity will write its real history (Marx, 1975: 116), then, it cannot be mentioned in connection with the end of politics in Marx's system. Quite the reverse, with the emancipation of humanity from relationships based on

⁴ For instrumental rationality, see, particularly Frankfurt scholars. For instance, Horkheimer and Adorno (1995-1996) and Horkheimer (1998).

⁵ For outlines of Marx's arguments, see, Marx and Engels (1998).

domination, politics will not be an instrument of domination any more. Hence, politics will point to different relationships by different terms and thus it will be socialized. From this viewpoint, we can say that Marx considered politics in two ways; the first definition of politics is valid in a capitalist society. It is rather resource allocation-oriented and is conflictual.⁶ The second definition will be valid in a classless society and will basically focus on the activities of individuals, which they will perform via conciliatory cooperation (Marx, 1977: 89–90, 96, 122, 190–191). Hence, Marx appears to have common views both with Aristotelian and Rousseauian philosophy to a great extent as well as with many philosophers after him.

Serious answers to the questions, “Isn’t it possible to make a politics or democracy definition, which is not expressed via ‘*contradiction, competition, violence, resource sharing*, if so, ‘what are the principles on which such a definition is based and how can it be put into practice?’” are embedded in Aristotle’s and Rousseau’s arguments as well as the arguments of modern interpreters about these two philosophers. Basically, these philosophers conceptualize politics as a “style of life” and “process” and deny the instrumental approach.

Aristotle maintained that the goal of existence was to attain perfection, pointing to the inseparability of goal and process. Aristotle’s consideration of substance and form as prerequisites of one another carried him to a dimension, which Plato lacked. Thus, he went beyond the antagonism, which Plato argued existed between substance and form. Although “being” signifies a process, at the same time, it identifies with the goal as it embodies it every moment and it ensures its realization. Aristotelian philosophy perceives the goal not only as living, but also as living in happiness. In this context, the process itself was formulated as the “being” or “perfection.”⁷ Kant’s arguments on the theory/practice and those of Hegel regarding instrument-goal have deep traces of Aristotle’s ethical and political philosophy (Kant, 1991: 61–92; Hegel, 1974: 44 ff.). In the meantime, Rousseau interpreted Aristotle’s philosophy from a different perspective: Rousseau argued that the desire for perfection in human nature, at the same time, led to distortion and corruption, thus directing the distortion tendency, which, in Plato’s view, was valid for the world of things, towards the capitalist civilization (Rousseau, 1998 and 2001). These views were related to Plato’s arguments that good achieves itself by

⁶ For Marx’s views on civil society and democracy, see, Marx (1977: 27–35, 169).

⁷ For Aristotle’s ethical and political philosophy, see., Aristotle (1998; 1999; 2000).

“being good”, while evil achieves itself both by being “evil” and “pretending to be good” (Plato, 1942 and 2001: 24-54). Aristotle carried Plato’s view of the “good in itself”, that is committed to any goal, to an upper level with his “being” and “perfection” thesis. In this context, Aristotle’s assertion that a human being was a political entity was supplemented with Kant’s thesis that the individual was an ethical entity and therefore, he/she cannot be an instrument of any other thing or power (Kant, 1980: 46). In brief, conceptions and evaluations about the individual had a significant impact on the political model. Especially, defining the individual as a political entity led to the identification of virtue, knowledge and politics.

Being influenced by all these views, Gramsci asserted, in his book, *Prison Notebooks*, that human beings are political entities, who change and organize the environment, which they have created or built, and, who develop behaviour patterns in this process (Gramsci, 1971: 137-138). Hannah Arendt, like Aristotle and Rousseau, underlined the necessity for expanding the public sphere, underlining the destructiveness of the private sphere. Therefore, the scenario of liberal political power was revised by considerably different, even contradictory terms and principles. In the liberal scenario, questions focused on the restriction of political power for personal interests. Thus, individuals could pursue their personal happiness by means of the instruments they have chosen. Therefore, there was a negative freedom here. In other words, protecting himself/herself from the effect and the restriction of political power seemed enough for the individual. On the other hand, Arendt emphasized a fair share rather than restriction of political power and gave priority to the common interest and happiness of individuals since they share the same origin. Sharing the public sphere with others was considered the source of enthusiasm on its own and thus individual happiness was replaced by public happiness. The belief that as long as an individual has opportunities to influence the world by being in solidarity and cooperation with others, the effect areas of both political freedom and public happiness would expand (Beiner, 1984: 253) was meant to be the collapse and denial of Weberian political scenario.

The comprehension of politics as an uninterrupted style of life and process constitutes the essence of Arendt’s political design. As seen in the following quotation, Arendt strongly adopts the Aristotelian philosophy:

“...It is this insistence on the living deed and the spoken word as the greatest, achievements of which human beings are capable

that was conceptualized in notion of *energeia* (actuality), with which he designated all activities that do not pursue an end (are *ateleis*) and leave no work behind (no *par autas arga*), but exhaust their full meaning in the performance itself derives its original meaning; for in these instances of action and speech the end (*telos*) is not pursued but lies in the activity itself which therefore becomes an *entelecheia*, and the work is not what follows and extinguishes the process but is imbedded in it; the performance is the work, is *energeia*, in his political philosophy, is still well aware of what is at stake in politics, namely, no less than the *ergon tou anthroÅpou* (the “work of man” qua man), and if he defined this “work” as “to live well” (*eu zeÅn*), he clearly meant that “work” here is no work product but exists only in sheer actuality” (Arendt, 2000: 299-300).

Rousseau’s concepts of general will and the people’s sovereignty, which he comprehensively argued in *The Social Contract*, are notable. When we comprehend general will as common will or principles that emerge as an outcome of the unconditional reconciliation of all citizens comprising society, Rousseau’s political model requires the participation of the people at every stage. The relationship, which Plato established between the economy and philosophy-politics in this stage, was re-formulated by Rousseau with respect to administration. Rousseau, with his theory of general will, collided the governor/the governed antagonism as well as the scenario that placed governors at the top of the pyramid and the people or citizens at the bottom. Contrary to Hobbes, Rousseau, in *The Social Contract*, redefined governors as officials and rendered them dependent on the citizens (Rousseau, 1987: 69, 103–115). Moreover, he argued that representative democracy, in which conservatives like Edmund Burke, attempted to render representatives irresponsible against those being represented in favor of governors could not be democratic in any way. Rousseau maintained:

“But sovereignty cannot be represented; it lies in the General Will alone, there is no intermediate possibility. Deputies of the people, therefore, are not and cannot be its representatives: they are merely its stewards. Every law the people has not ratified in person is null and void. The people of England thinks themselves free; but they only are free during parliamentary elections. As soon as the elections are over, slavery overtakes them, and they are nothing. The use they make of the brief moments of liberty shows indeed that it deserves to lose it” (Rousseau, 1987: 109).

Aristotle's consideration of process and action as a goal in itself and Rousseau's views on general will and representation has become the touchstone of participatory democracy theories. For instance, Marcuse, who followed in the footsteps of Aristotle, Rousseau and Marx, adopted a considerably radical approach with respect to representation. In his book *One Dimensional Man*, Marcuse underlined the depolitization of people, thus becoming toys of bureaucrats and manipulators and voiced his criticism towards "so-called" democratic society in the following words: "Free election of masters does not abolish the masters or the slaves" (Marcuse, 1968: 35). While questioning the dominant understanding of democracy, i.e. instrumental democracy, Marcuse particularly stressed the views of two American writers. He argued that Morris Janowitz and Dwaine Marvic defended a particular type of democracy by methodologically excluding certain questions from the research, thus eliminating the other type of democracy. Marcuse criticized these scholars as they excluded *mandatory representation* theories by affirming "inapplicable", which developed from the classical theory of democracy and suggested that instead of unlimited representativeness in deputyship, representatives should definitely be governed by electors and they should comply with "directives" from electors, thus taking the definition "competitive" as a basis (Marcuse, 1968: 160-167).

Today, instrumental interpretations and practices of politics and democracy are approached with scepticism as they exclude citizens from the political system. It can be said that all thinkers mentioned above, more or less contributed to the development of Habermas's interpretations and criticisms, who questioned instrumental politics from a wide perspective. In a sense, Habermas assumed the role of living representative or the interpretator of many philosophers ranging from Aristotle to Arendt. Particularly, Aristotle's conceptions of perfection, being and the end in itself, and Rousseau's social contract theory constitute the basis of Habermas's arguments on politics and democracy. Thus, Habermas had the chance to realize one of his most significant criticisms towards the instrumental approach. Habermas maintained that the actual function, i.e. its political function, of the public sphere owned by the citizens, was eliminated as a result of dividing society into two as those who are decision-makers and the governed as well as the split of political power. As an outcome of the delegation of political power to the decision-makers, the public sphere began to serve exclusively to legalize the governing group. As a matter of fact, according to Habermas, "the election and

confirmation of governing individuals, or those capable of governing, are as a rule plebiscitary acts” (Habermas, 1992: 80). Hence, democracy and elections turned out to be acclamation rather than public discussion. Elections are used solely for deciding who becomes decision-makers and to which positions they will be appointed. However, during the elections, guidelines of future decisions themselves are not set. Habermas, therefore, asserted that elections stipulated by democracy can perform no other function than legalizing the decisions of decision-makers before the public. This is one of the most severe criticisms towards instrumental politics in respect of its basic mentality and legitimacy as well as the concept of democracy, which is in harmony with this type of politics. Besides, it underlines a problem, which supporters of instrumental politics and elitist democracy will hardly comprehend within their logical patterns, let alone answer it.

“Decisions themselves, according to the decisionistic view, must remain basically beyond public discussion. The scientization of politics then automatically accords with the theory developed by Weber, extended by Schumpeter, and now unquestioned by modern political sociology, a theory that in the last analysis reduces the process of democratic decision-making to a regulated acclamation procedure for elites alternately appointed to exercise power. In this way power, untouched in its irrational substance, can be legitimated but not rationalized” (Habermas, 1992: 80).

The democracy understanding provided in Habermas’s foreword in the 1990 edition of his book, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, which he quoted from Bernard Manin and also adopted himself, focuses on the legitimacy, not of individuals, but of decisions. This understanding of democracy focuses attention, not on the result, but the process itself, following in the footsteps of Aristotelian philosophy:

“It is, therefore, necessary to alter radically the perspective common to both liberal theories and democratic thought: the source of legitimacy is not the predetermined will of individuals, but rather the process of its formation, that is, deliberation itself... [A] legitimate decision does not represent the will of all, but is one that results from the deliberation of all. It is the process by which everyone’s will is formed that confers its legitimacy on the outcome, rather than the sum of already formed wills. The deliberative principle is both individualistic and democratic... We must affirm, at the risk of contradicting a long tradition, that

legitimate law is the result of general deliberation, and not the expression of the general will” (Manin, 1987: 351 ff; Habermas, 2000: 43).

Undoubtedly, the deliberative or communicative democracy model of Manin and Habermas, which focuses on process, bears traces of the political philosophy of Aristotle and Rousseau. Nevertheless, even though general will theory actually necessitates the consensus of individuals, Manin and Habermas implicitly criticized Rousseau affirming that he overlooked the formation of individuals’ will and excluded the deliberative process. Comparing them with those who attempt to associate Rousseau with authoritarianism, these two philosophers’ interpretations of Rousseau were relatively true. However, ignoring Rousseau’s other views on representation and participation, they merely focused on his comments about general will. Perhaps they thought that the originality of their thoughts would be harmed or would disappear.⁸ At this point, it would be helpful to scrutinize Rousseau’s assertions, which significantly contributed to the development of participatory democracy, in a more detailed manner.

Rousseau was opposed to representation. He considered representation as a stage of slavery as it led to inequality and loss of freedom. Meanwhile, he strongly supported the participation of citizens in public issues and their common happiness. As can be understood from the following text, he argued that good laws could only be possible by citizen participation and that the higher participation was, the better government would be.

“As soon as public service ceases to be the chief business of the citizens, the State is ready to fall. When war comes, they pay troops and stay at home: when it is necessary to meet in council, they name deputies and stay at home. Through idleness and money, they get soldiers to enslave their country and representatives to sell it.

It is through the hustle of commerce and the arts, through the greedy self-interest of profit, and through softness and love of amenities that personal services are replaced by money payments.

⁸ I suggest readers, who consider my criticisms of Manin and Habermas, to read Descartes’s criticisms towards scientists with respect to the method. See, Descartes (1996: 67–68). Besides, Habermas’s repeated reference in the foreword of his book, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, of his former arguments on the assertions of other writers on deliberative democracy might stem from his similar concerns.

Men surrender a part of their profits in order to have time to increase them at leisure. Make gifts of money, and you will not be long without chains. The word *finance* is a slavish word, unknown in the city-state. In a country that is truly free, the citizens do everything with their own arms and nothing by means of money; so far from paying to be exempted from their duties, they would even pay for the privilege of fulfilling them themselves. I am far from taking the common view: I hold enforced labour to be less opposed to liberty than taxes.

The better the constitution of a State is, the more do public affairs encroach on private in the minds of the citizens. Private affairs are even of much less importance, because the aggregate of the common happiness furnishes a greater proportion of that of each individual, so that there is less for him to seek in particular cares. In a well-ordered city every man flies to the assemblies: under a bad government no one cares to stir a step to get to them, because no one is interested in what happens there, because it is foreseen that the general will will not prevail, and lastly because domestic cares are all-absorbing. Good laws lead to the making of better ones; bad ones bring about worse” (Rousseau, 1987: 108-109).

According to Rousseau, “Finally, when the State, on the eve of ruin, maintains only a vain, illusory and formal existence, when in every heart the social bond is broken, and the meanest interest brazenly lays hold of the sacred name of “public good”, the general will becomes mute”. And in such an environment, “all men, guided by secret motives, no more give their views as citizens than if the State had never been; and iniquitous decrees directed solely to private interest get passed under the name of laws” (Rousseau, 1987: 119-120). Hence, Rousseau criticized the theater just due to the fact that it pushes the citizens to the status of spectators and passivize them, thus preventing them from being social actors. He, on the other hand, suggested the spread of festivals and carnivals participated in by all citizens (Rousseau, 1960 and 1985). Thus, the citizens regarded by Rousseau as the founders and subjects of the political society will lose neither their equality nor their freedom. Contrary to the criticisms of Manin and Habermas, Rousseau laid emphasis on the action rather than the deliberation. Even in its current outlines, Rousseau’s theory offers a notably strong and participatory democracy: “A good government depends on the existence of extremely

strong citizens” (Rousseau, 1987: 71). Thus, Rousseau clearly expressed that the people could only be strong via participation:

“The people in assembly, I shall be told, is a mere chimera. It is so today, but two thousand years ago it was not so. Has man's nature changed? The bounds of possibility, in moral matters, are less narrow than we imagine: it is our weaknesses, our vices and our prejudices that confine them. Base souls have no belief in great men; vile slaves smile in mockery at the name of liberty” (Rousseau, 1987: 103-104).

As can be seen, Rousseau boldly expressed his longing for a democracy, whose actors were not representatives, but citizens as well as the fundamental principles of such democracy. Besides when citizens lose their freedoms and wills, the expression, “Fear and flattery then change votes into acclamation; deliberation ceases, and only worship or malediction is left” (Rousseau, 1987: 121-122) proves that along with the citizens’ role as subjects or actors, communication, deliberation and discussion constitute the core of Rousseau’s theory.

Rousseau’s criticisms towards representative democracy were then repeated by Cornelius Castoriadis and Benjamin Barber in an updated manner. Castoriadis focused particularly on autonomy, asserting that an autonomous society would recreate its institutions and history by questioning them and that autonomy would only be achieved by a constant questioning and self-creation. In this framework, an autonomous society would have the chance to deliberate its laws in implementation. Consequently, questioning laws is regarded, in a sense, as the moment democracy and politics are born. As argued by Rousseau, the foundations of such a society were laid in Ancient Greek, as also was asserted by Castoriadis. Politics, even judgment was not considered a profession. Thus, the people directly participated in the government, and judges and members of the jury were appointed through lottery (Castoriadis, 2006: 273-329). Meanwhile, Barber argues that today, people suffer from democracy not more than necessary, but quite the reverse, less than necessary and that rejecting voting in a country where citizenship is identified with votership, points to the bankruptcy of democracy (Barber, 1995: 20-22). Barber’s words, “representative democracy is the most expensive paradoxal oxymoron”⁹ (Barber, 1995: 23) manifest non-democracy, even the anti-democratic nature of representative democracy in a striking manner. In brief, Rousseau’s insistence on the non-

⁹ Oxymoron is a figure of speech that combines two contradictory terms.

representability of general will continues theoretically. At this point, I have one final point to make: If democracy signifies the peoples' self-decision-making and self-governing, then isn't redefining democracy via adjectives such as participatory, deliberative, communicative, etc. repeating these characteristics, which democracy already incorporates, unnecessarily? Does this definition at the same time mean justifying the democracy scenario of instrumental democracy or, at least recognizing it? Such questions assume great importance with respect to raising the question of whether current democracies are actually democracies or not.

Conclusion or Some Reflections on Participatory Democracy

When seen as a process and perfection activity in Aristotelian terms, politics seeks an answer to the question of "how people can live happily together" rather than the question of "how people can live together". Today's definition of politics is formed of an instrumental framework: Politics is defined as an instrument and method used by *homoeconomicus*, which are described as greedy and selfish entities of the discipline of the capitalist economy, for acquiring more resources, and the power imposition exercised by them over one another for the purpose of achieving their goal. In a sense, such politics can be depicted as the struggle of vultures swooping on corpses. In this situation, the concept of democracy turns out to be of an instrumental nature. Once the goal of social institutions is defined as maintaining the individual's banal existence, the institutions in question easily assume the function of protecting one group of people against others. As a result of this viewpoint on life, the world we live in also gives a banal appearance lacking virtues. When life in general and politics in particular are perceived as the fulfillment of economic and biological needs, the majority of solutions produced render the problem more complicated and even the utilitarian principle of classical liberalism, "greatest happiness to the greatest number", loses its chance of being implemented. As long as politics remains as a derivative and instrument of the capitalist economy, more people get unemployed; more people are pushed outside the political arena: and more people are left to unhappiness and exhaustion. Briefly, economics has captured politics and social life. As Levent Köker precisely underlines, as a consequence of such relationships, governments, instead of feeling responsible for their voters, resort to different sources and institutions other than democratic institutions and processes,

thus starting to represent these rather than those who have elected them (Köker, 1995: 90). They become deeply involved in such relationships to such an extent that they finally start to perceive themselves as tradesmen and the government as business. Any action or decision of the government is shaped according to the demands of skillful and practical people, who always pursue their personal interests against social citizenship and public interests, rather than protecting the rights and freedoms of citizens and ensuring a fair and safe world for them. Therefore, members of the government try to justify their actions and decisions on the criterion of profitability rather than appropriateness with public consciousness and legitimacy.

Identifying democracy and politics with elections is a misapprehension caused by instrumental politics and representative democracy, and constitutes one of the most serious threats to democracy. What is immanent in democracy is not votership, but citizenship. For that reason, citizens and voters should be distinguished from one another. Votership signifies merely one of the roles of citizens. In this respect, the expression, "citizens had their final say", which is frequently repeated during elections, can be perceived as the announcement of the discourse that citizens are no more political actors and in fact, they should not be. The use of this expression exclusively during elections is concrete proof of this view. The expression in question implies that citizens, as voters, have exercised their democratic right and now they should wait another five years. Moreover, the identification of democracy with elections freezes democratic life as a process. It merely takes a certain period or moment of time, excluding the process. Hence, it considerably restricts the concept of citizenship. In this respect, Weber's, Schumpeter's, Lasswell's or Easton's realistic definitions of politics and democracy as the struggle for competition and resource allocation among elites not only have an increased negative impact on public participation, but they also exclude it. It paves the way for politics as a profession and elitist democracy. People who choose politics as a profession develop a closed community structure similar to that of the guild system. This is *oligarchy's iron law*. In this respect, Robert Michels's (1959) assertion may not only be read as the belief for the non-applicability of democracy, but also may be interpreted as the natural consequence of representative democracy.

This study has not criticized democracy, but representative democracy. A lot of people, who realized the crises or problems of representative democracy, actually look for non-democratic, even anti-

democratic solutions or, at least they pretend to do so. It will be appropriate to remind monarchy supporters of Rousseau's words: "one deceives himself if he mixes monarchy with the administration of a good king. Such administration should be considered when it is in the hands of incompetent and bad kings" (Rousseau, 1987: 90). Then, the problem is less participation and thus, political alienation. The opposite of representative democracy is neither monarchy, nor bureaucracy. On the contrary, there exists a close logical association between these and representative democracy. Representative democracy constantly tends to go back to oligarchy, aristocracy or monarchy. Numerous implementations in the world appear to support this tendency¹⁰. Therefore, quite the opposite of representative democracy is participatory, deliberative and strong democracy.

The questions that should be asked and answered today in order to find out the assumptions and arguments of democracy are as follows: Do all people have the right to access to information? Are all people equal or not? Is political or legal equality possible without economic equality? Are equality and freedom opposites? What is the goal of equality and freedom? Why do people have to comply with or, adopt a rule, which they have not established? Why is eliminating the crises of representative democracy via mandatory representation, which suggests the representatives' commitment not to the leader of the political parties but to the citizens who have chosen them, not considered or applied? Why aren't elections held in shorter terms instead of five years in general?

Why isn't there a principle that stipulates the assignment of every citizen to a public position at least once, thus granting citizens the right to be elected only for once in order to prevent politics from turning out to be a profession and to grant all citizens the right and chance to elect and to be elected at least in theory, considered and applied? Some people will oppose asserting that some of these questions, albeit all of them, will lead to *great narration*. With this comes another question: Why is asking the above-mentioned questions and

¹⁰ In this respect, it will be sufficient to name two countries, which are completely different from each other : the USA and Azerbaijan. A short time before his death, Haydar Aliyev, the President of Azerbaijan, delegated the presidency to his son Ilham Aliyev. After George Bush, Clinton became the president of the US. However, in the third period following Clinton, Bush Junior became the President. Then he was reelected. Those who are interested in mathematics and probability can calculate the probability of the successive election of a father and a son in a population of about 250 million.. This points to the lack of the equality of opportunity as well as the tendency of representative democracy towards monarchy.

trying to find answers to these questions considered to be *great narration*?

In summary, democracy is not election. On the contrary, it can only be a simple process of democracy. Citizens are not voters. The word 'voter' can be used merely for defining the role, which citizens assume during elections and therefore is temporary. Defining citizens solely as citizens or customers is inadequate with respect to democratic citizenship (Barber, 1995: 18). Such an approach is both wrong and even damaging in respect of democracy and citizens as it confines democracy to the logic of capitalism. When the election process and action are described as a part of democratic politics, the role of citizens does not come to an end after elections. Thus, the principle of instrumental politics, "the end justifies the means" is replaced by the principle, "the goal should be embedded in instrument" in participatory democracy. Considering democracy as a political system, where people do their own work, make their own decisions and execute these decisions denotes thinking, discussing, deliberating, showing will, making and implementing decisions together. In an environment, where all members of society are interested in politics and write their own history, politicians or savers or great leaders are absolutely not needed.

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