



Basic Principles of Democratic Constitution

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Abstract

The basic values rooted in a democratic constitution serve as the foundation for protecting individual liberty, establishing an equitable society, and encouraging civic duty. At its heart, a democratic constitution must explicitly proclaim people's sovereignty, guaranteeing that all political authority is derived from popular desire. This includes holding free, fair, and regular elections that allow individuals to pick their representatives without force or manipulation. Furthermore, the constitution should guarantee fundamental human rights and freedoms such as free speech, religion, assembly, and the press, promoting an atmosphere in which different points of view may be expressed and heard. The notion of the rule of law must take first place guaranteeing that all persons and institutions are held accountable to the law, which is equitably applied and enforced. Another key component is the separation of powers, which provides checks and balances to prevent abuse of authority by different and independent departments of government (executive, legislative, and judicial). Furthermore, the constitution should encourage social justice, equality, and minority rights, guaranteeing that all people have equal opportunities and are protected from discrimination. This study focused on secondary sources of knowledge about the idea and status of the fundamental values entrenched in the democratic constitution. These principles, taken together, guarantee the creation and preservation of a dynamic, inclusive, and resilient democratic society.

Keywords: Constitutionalism, equity, fairness, popular sovereignty, rule of law.

Introduction

The adoption of a democratic constitution is a turning point in the growth of governance, expressing the goals and ambitions of a community seeking to promote justice, equality, and liberty. A democratic constitution is more than just a legal document; it is a covenant between the government and the people, a framework that defines power distribution, fundamental rights protection, and accountability and transparency mechanisms (Arato, 2012). The path to the current democratic constitution has been long and difficult, punctuated by key milestones that represent the ongoing struggle for a just and equitable society. Constitutional democracy has its roots in ancient civilizations, with early forms of democratic rule emerging in Greek city-states and the republic of Rome. In Athens, for example, democracy (demos meaning "people" and kratos meaning "power") gained traction, allowing individuals to directly participate in decision-making processes (Bassiouni, 1998). Despite being limited to free males and ex-

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-cluding women, slaves, and non-citizens, this early version of democracy provided the basis for future political ideas. The Roman Republic contributed to the formation of democratic ideas through its complex system of checks and balances, separation of powers, and the concept of a republic controlled by rules rather than rulers' whims. Democracy is a form of governance in which the people have the authority to determine how they are governed. This system is based on the principles of liberty, equality, justice, and fairness, allowing everyone to have a say in choices that impact their lives. At its essence, democracy seeks to preserve individual rights, promote fairness, and ensure that all citizens have an equal say in defining their society. In present days democracy is discussed in participatory democracy as well as inclusive democracy.

However, it was not until the Enlightenment period that the current notion of a written constitution, which includes a full collection of principles and norms, began to emerge (Dahl, 2003). The written constitution is known as document of limited government and supremacy of constitution is its main feature. In single word it is called constitutionalism which is followed by USA. Rule of law is main feature of UN written constitution followed by UK. The Enlightenment, which lasted from the late 17th to the 18th century, was characterized by a radical movement toward reason, individuality, and the challenge of conventional authority. Natural rights, the social compact, and the separation of powers were championed by thinkers such as John Locke, Montesquieu, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and these concepts proved important to the formation of constitutional democracy (Brunch, Coker & VanArsdale, 2001). John Locke's idea of natural rights and consent-based governance was especially important. In his "Two Treatises of Government," Locke contended that individuals have inherent rights to life, liberty, and property, and that governments exist to safeguard these rights (Wasco, 2020). According to Locke, political power stems from the agreement of the governed, and any government that fails to protect natural rights loses legitimacy (Vilajosana, 2014). This revolutionary notion served as the foundation for contemporary democratic ideology, inspiring the designers of succeeding constitutions.

Montesquieu's key book, "The Spirit of the Laws," proposed the notion of the separation of powers, proposing for a government divided into three branches: executive, legislative, and judicial. Montesquieu argued that this division was necessary to prevent power consolidation while also ensuring liberty and justice (Grayling, 2020). His views greatly affected the design of the United States Constitution and other democratic constitutions throughout the world. Jean-Jacques Rousseau's "The Social Contract" elaborated on the concept of popular sovereignty by claiming that legitimate political authority is based on the collective decision of the people (Schmitt, 2008). Rousseau's vision of a society ruled by the popular will, as well as his focus on direct democracy, were in line with many rising nations' democratic ideals.

The Enlightenment principles resulted in the drafting of crucial texts that had a major impact on succeeding democratic constitutions. The United States Constitution of 1787 represents a watershed moment in the history of constitutional democracy (Austin, 2002). It formed a federal government that prioritized the separation of powers, checks and balances, and individual rights. The preamble of the Constitution, "We the People," emphasized the notion of popular sovereignty and established the tone for a government based on the agreement of the governed (Breyer, 2006). The Bill of Rights, which was adopted to the Constitution in 1791, protected essential liberties such free speech, religion, and the press, as well as the right to due process and a fair trial (Mbondenyei & Ojienda, 2013). These principles have become fundamental components of democratic constitutions across the world, serving as a model for defending individual liberties from government overreach.

Similarly, the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen, established in 1789 during the French Revolution, enshrined the ideas of liberty, equality, and brotherhood. It declared people'

fundamental rights and laid the groundwork for a democratic society founded on the rule of law (Odike & Nwakpu, 2016). The Declaration's influence grew beyond France, encouraging democratic movements and constitutional reforms throughout Europe and Latin America. These fundamental writings had a worldwide impact, as nations tried to accept and adapt democratic ideas to their own settings (Dorf & Sabel, 1998). Countries in Latin America, such as Mexico, Argentina, and Brazil, were inspired by the United States Constitution and the French Declaration in their own efforts for independence and constitutional administration (Areji, 2007).

However, the path to constitutional democracy has not been without hurdles. Many newly independent countries struggled to apply democratic principles amid political instability, economic hardship, and social conflicts (Manasyan, 2020). Authoritarian practices and power consolidation damaged certain constitutions, notwithstanding their democratic nature. The effort to defend the rule of law and protect fundamental rights is a continuous problem in many regions of the world. Bahmueller (2007). In recent decades, constitutional change and democratization have proceeded, fueled by a worldwide commitment to human rights and democratic government. International institutions like the United Nations, as well as regional groupings like the European Union and the African Union, have played important roles in advancing constitutional democracy and supporting constitutional revisions in member states (Tully, 2020). These programs have focused on increasing openness, accountability, and citizen engagement in governance. Technological improvements and the rise of digital communication have both affected the evolution of democratic constitutions. The internet and social media have created new forums for political participation, allowing individuals to join in public debate, mobilize for social change, and hold governments responsible (King 2019). E-democracy projects, such as online voting and digital consultations, have the potential to increase democratic participation and promote inclusive government. As we go into the twenty-first century, the ideas inscribed in democratic constitutions remain beacons of hope for communities seeking justice, equality, and liberty (Young, 2017). The continuous battle for democratic governance highlights the significance of remaining vigilant in protecting constitutional ideals from risks presented by authoritarianism, populism, and other challenges to democratic institutions.

Furthermore, the formation of a democratic constitution signifies a watershed moment in the growth of governance, symbolizing the goals and ambitions of a community seeking to promote justice, equality, and liberty (Issacharoff 2003). From the early forms of democratic administration in ancient Greece and Rome to the momentous transformations of the Enlightenment age, the route to modern constitutional democracy has been determined by the ongoing struggle for individual rights and communal self-government. The study sets out to answer the following research questions:

1. How have philosophical ideas influenced the formulation and evolution of democratic principles in various constitutional frameworks?
2. How do political, social, and economic factors contribute to the erosion or reinforcement of democratic principles?
3. How does the implementation of democratic principles affect the stability and sustainability of democratic governance?

Objectives

The following points have been developed as the research objectives of this research:

1. To analyze the historical evolution and philosophical foundations of principles in democratic constitutions.

2. To explore contemporary challenges to democratic principles and recommend strategies for their reinforcement.
3. To assess the impact of democratic principles on governance and societal outcomes.

Methodology

In this study, library sources serve as a repository knowledge and information for analyzing and describing the subject. Qualitative material has been obtained from several sources, including books, journals, papers, research articles, and websites. In this research, qualitative research design has been employed, hence, the research consists of textual rather than numerical data. This research incorporates descriptive analysis, interpretation, and non-statistical analysis. Content analysis of the secondary sources has been carried out. This article is based on documentary method.

Historical Context and Evolution

The growth of democratic constitutions demonstrates humanity's unwavering goal of self-government and the preservation of individual liberty. The Magna Carta of 1215, often regarded as a cornerstone of constitutionalism, established the notion that the king was not above the law, providing the framework for the rise of constitutional monarchies and parliamentary democracies (Issacharoff, 2010). Different kinds of constitutions may be found in use across the world. However, a democratic constitution must have ensured both constitutionalism and good governance. Constitutionalism and democracy are powerful concepts in today's politics. A constitution promotes self-government and public sovereignty, emphasizing the importance of majority rule (Dahal, 2017). The English Bill of Rights of 1689 strengthened parliamentary control over the king by establishing concepts such as the right to free elections, freedom of expression within Parliament, and protection from harsh and unusual punishment. In the 18th and 19th centuries, a surge of independence movements and revolutions swept through the Americas and Europe, ushering in a new period of constitution-making. The United States Constitution, with its sophisticated system of checks and balances and comprehensive Bill of Rights, served as a model for many other countries looking to create democratic rule. Similarly, the French Revolution's emphasis on liberty, equality, and fraternity sparked the development of constitutional frameworks that valued human rights and popular sovereignty.

The twentieth century saw an unparalleled growth of democratic constitutions, notably following the two World Wars and decolonization movements in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East (Murkens, 2018). The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, approved by the United Nations in 1948, emphasized the universal consensus on the significance of human rights and served as a normative framework for constitutional governments worldwide.

1. Rule of law

The concept of the rule of law is fundamental to every democratic constitution, acting as a cornerstone for upholding justice, fairness, and accountability in society. At its essence, the rule of law requires that all persons and organizations, including the government, follow and be responsible to the law (Barber, 2018). This concept prohibits arbitrary and unregulated government, which protects individual rights and promotes a fair and just society. It acts as a check against abuse of power by ensuring that laws are administered consistently and predictably, so creating a stable legal environment in which citizens may know and comprehend the rules that govern them.

Dicey's (1885) identification of three major components of the rule of law is one of the most important articulations of this notion. First, Dicey highlighted the need of regular law, which indicates that rules

must govern a country rather than arbitrary decisions made by individual government officials (Goerlich, 2008). This supremacy guarantees that laws are enacted in a transparent and democratic manner, reflecting the desire of the people rather than those in authority. Second, Dicey emphasized the necessity of equality before the law. This principle states that no one is above the law and that all persons, regardless of rank, money, or position, are treated equally by the legal system (Davis, 1988). Equality before the law is critical for preserving public faith in the judicial system and ensuring that justice is not only done, but also perceived to be done.

The third component described by Dicey is the preponderance of legal spirit, which refers to the judiciary's vital role in preserving the rule of law. This means that individual rights and liberties should be guaranteed by the constitution and interpreted by an independent court (Colon-Rios, 2011). The judge must act impartially, without regard for other departments of government or external forces. The legal spirit guarantees that laws are not only established and enforced properly, but that citizens may seek justice if their rights are violated.

2. Separation of powers

A democratic constitution is based on the idea of separation of powers between the legislative, executive, and judicial departments of government. This separation is critical for preventing power accumulation in a single organization, which may lead to authoritarianism and the degradation of individual liberty (Bellamy, 2007). The division of powers ensures that no single branch may dominate the country's government, resulting in a balanced and equitable political structure. Each branch has a separate function: the legislative branch creates laws, the executive branch executes them, and the judicial branch interprets them (Shulztiner & Carmi, 2014). This structural divide is intended to establish a system of checks and balances, with each branch having the authority to restrict the powers of the others, so limiting possible abuse of power.

One of the Founding Fathers of the United States, James Madison, emphasized the necessity of this division in "The Federalist Papers" (1788). Madison contended that the concentration of legislative, executive, and judicial powers in the hands of one, a few, or many individuals, whether hereditary, self-appointed, or elected, is the exact essence of tyranny (Mueller, 1996). He thought that the division of powers was necessary to protect liberty and keep one branch from interfering with the activities and powers of the others. Madison's thoughts emphasize the importance of a balanced government structure in which the several branches may check and balance one another, maintaining the democratic framework and ensuring that power is neither centralized or exploited.

3. Protection of fundamental rights

The safeguarding of basic human rights and freedoms is a critical component of democratic constitutions. These rights, which are frequently entrenched in a bill of rights or similar document, serve as the foundation for individual dignity and autonomy, ensuring that everyone is treated with respect and justice (Chambers, 2004). Fundamental rights often encompass the freedoms of expression, assembly, religion, and the press, as well as the right to a fair trial and protection against discrimination. These liberties are essential not just for individual well-being, but also for the health and vitality of the democratic system as a whole (Rosenfeld, 2000). Individuals can voice their thoughts, unite for collective action, practice their beliefs without fear of repercussions, and freely access information, all of which are required for an educated and active citizenry.

The right to a fair trial and protection against discrimination are especially important because they preserve the concepts of justice and equality under the law. A fair trial guarantees that persons are treated impartially and fairly in the legal system, safeguarding them against arbitrary imprisonment and unfair

punishment (Tripathee & Parajuli, 2009). Discrimination protection assures that all persons, regardless of race, gender, religion, or other traits, are treated equally and able to fully participate in society.

Ronald Dworkin, a well-known legal philosopher, underlined the significance of fundamental rights in promoting a pluralistic and inclusive society. Dworkin (1977) defines basic rights as moral imperatives that preserve each person's intrinsic dignity (Anyangwe, 1999). They enable a society in which varied perspectives and lifestyles may coexist peacefully, enhancing the social fabric and encouraging societal development. By protecting fundamental rights, democratic constitutions provide an environment in which people may prosper and contribute to the greater good.

4. Popular sovereignty

Popular sovereignty, the notion that a government's authority is derived from and stays based on the agreement of its people, is the foundation of democratic governance across the world. At its heart, popular sovereignty requires that governments obtain their legitimacy from the continual consent of the governed, which is often represented through frequent elections and the conduct of elected representatives (Schmitt, 2008). This concept guarantees that the government represents the people's collective desire and interests, making it fundamentally responsible to those it rules. Popular sovereignty legitimizes political authority by creating a direct relationship between the governed and those in power, while also instilling individuals with a feeling of civic involvement and duty.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau's foundational book, "The Social Contract" (1762), established a sophisticated understanding of popular sovereignty in the context of democracy. Rousseau proposed that real democracy emerges when the general will of the people determines the state's policies and choices. This notion goes beyond simple majority rule to emphasize the value of consensus and the common good in government. Rousseau believed that when citizens engage in the creation of the rules and policies that govern them, they are exercising their sovereignty and fulfilling their civic responsibility. This active engagement not only improves democracy, but also guarantees that the government responds to society's changing demands and ambitions.

5. Periodic free and fair elections

Elections are the essential instrument for exercising popular sovereignty and upholding democratic accountability. In democratic constitutions, the provision of periodic, free, and fair elections is vital, guaranteeing that all eligible individuals have the right to vote for their representatives and shape the direction of government. This election process is critical to ensuring political openness, legitimacy, and competitiveness. Elections enable voters to express their choices and hold elected officials responsible for their actions and policies by allowing them to vote freely and without coercion (Devins and Fisher, 2015). In his seminal essay "Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy" (1942), Joseph Schumpeter underlined that the core of democracy is not only the electorate's involvement, but also the competitive contest for their votes.

Furthermore, free and fair elections strengthen the legitimacy of democratic institutions by guaranteeing that political power is obtained from the consent of the governed. They offer a calm and orderly method of transferring power and settling political issues within a constitutional framework (Wasco, 2020). By respecting the ideals of electoral integrity and inclusivity, democratic constitutions protect citizens' rights to actively engage in their government, as well as the fundamental concept that political authority stems from the will of the people. In essence, elections not only represent popular sovereignty, but they also serve as an important vehicle for protecting and strengthening democratic ideals and practices.

6. Judicial independence

An independent judiciary is essential for protecting rights and preserving the rule of law under a democratic constitution. It is critical that systems are in place to protect the judiciary from political interference, allowing judges to rule impartially and without external pressure. This independence means that the court may interpret and implement laws fairly and equally to all persons, regardless of status or political affiliation (Gyawali, 2022). Judges can defend individual liberty and uphold the integrity of the judicial system by keeping independent of party interests.

In his book "The Federalist Papers" (1788), Alexander Hamilton emphasized the need of judicial independence in maintaining the balance of power and averting tyranny. Hamilton maintained that an independent judiciary is critical for maintaining constitutional limits on government authority and protecting people's rights from infringements by the majority or strong interests. Judicial independence enables courts to operate as unbiased arbiters, ensuring that laws and policies adhere to constitutional principles and safeguard individuals' rights against arbitrary acts.

7. Federalism and decentralization

In varying societies, federalism and decentralization are critical strategies for integrating regional difference and promoting efficient local government within a democratic framework. A federal system, as commonly found in democratic constitutions, shares authority between central or national governments and regional or state-level authorities. This split allows regions or states to manage local matters autonomously while being part of the larger national government structure (Bhu, 2024). Federalism promotes stronger representation of varied regional interests in the political system, resulting in policies and choices that are more sensitive to local needs and preferences. Daniel Elazar's seminal work on federalism emphasized the relevance of federal systems in creating national unity and diversity. According to Elazar (1987), Federalism permits separate areas or states to maintain their own cultural, economic, and social identities while contributing to the common national interest. Federalism reduces the risks of centralization by decentralizing authority and ensuring that government is suited to regional realities, improving overall stability and inclusion. Furthermore, federal systems frequently encourage policy innovation by allowing regions to experiment with alternative methods to addressing local difficulties, which may then shape national policies.

8. Transparency and accountability

Transparency and accountability are critical components of good democratic governance, ensuring that government acts are carried out publicly and responsibly. In a democratic constitution, transparency rules demand that government operations and decision-making processes be carried out in such a way that citizens may freely access information and monitor the acts of their elected officials. This transparency not only boosts the legitimacy of government acts, but it also builds public trust by allowing citizens to hold their leaders responsible for their decisions and policies (Lamichhane, 2021). Transparency prevents against corruption and abuse of power by discouraging unethical behavior within government levels. According to Michael W. Fox (2007), openness is critical for successful administration and public trust in democratic institutions. Transparency guarantees that governments respond to the demands and interests of the people they serve by providing individuals with access to information regarding governmental operations, expenditures, and decision-making processes. It promotes educated public conversation and discussion, allowing individuals to actively engage in civic affairs and shape public policy.

9. Civil society and participation

A fit civil society and active public involvement are critical components of a strong democracy, since they provide responsive and inclusive governance. A democratic constitution should protect fundamental rights like free association and assembly, allowing civil society groups (CSOs) to function autonomously and advocate for various interests without undue intervention. These rights enable persons to establish associations, voice their opinions collectively, and actively participate in public affairs. By allowing CSOs to function freely, democratic constitutions provide a pluralistic atmosphere in which many points of view may participate to policy discussions and influence decision-making processes. In his landmark book "Bowling Alone" (2000), Robert D. Putnam emphasized the significance of civic involvement in maintaining democratic nations. He argued that active engagement in groups and community organizations not only increases social capital but also improves people's political effectiveness. When citizens form civil society groups, they may address shared issues, organize resources, and hold governments responsible for their actions. This collaborative activity encourages openness, accountability, and responsiveness in government, eventually strengthening the credibility of democratic institutions.

10. Equality and non-discrimination

Equality before the law and the prohibition of discrimination are fundamental values of democratic constitutions that seek to achieve justice, fairness, and inclusion in society. These principles ensure that all persons, regardless of color, gender, religion, or other traits, are treated equally under the law. By upholding equality, democratic constitutions aim to eradicate discriminatory behaviors and structural barriers that prevent people from exercising their rights and obtaining opportunities on an equal footing (KC, 2020). In his fundamental work "A Theory of Justice" (1971), John Rawls highlighted equality as a foundational principle of social justice. Rawls maintained that in a just society, everyone should have equal access to a fair set of rules and institutions that protect their fundamental liberties and rights. Maintaining equality before the law not only guarantees that legal judgments are made without prejudice or bias, but it also fosters social cohesion by instilling mutual respect and confidence in individuals (Uprety, 2018). It supports the concept that everyone, regardless of origin or circumstances, deserves decency and respect.

11. Equity

Equity is an essential principle in a democratic constitution that ensures all people are treated equally and without prejudice, regardless of their social, economic, or political origins. A democratic system based on equity aims to establish an inclusive society in which all individuals have equal access to opportunities, resources, and legal protections. This guiding principle expresses the dedication to human dignity, respect for variety, and the right to actively engage in public affairs (Kirk, 2001). A democratic constitution promotes equality by recognizing the value of each citizen's voice and the need for power to be wielded equitably to benefit society as a whole rather than a select few. Thus, fairness acts as a buffer against inequality, encouraging a system of government that aims for justice, social peace, and continuous improvement of societal conditions for everyone.

Contemporary Challenges

Today's democracies face a complicated set of difficulties that put their constitutional systems to the test. Despite the global embrace of democratic values, the growth of populism, authoritarianism, and political polarization pose serious dangers to democratic institutions and the rule of law. Populist

politicians frequently exploit public anger with existing political norms, offering rapid fixes while eroding democratic checks and balances (Levitsky & Ziblatt, 2018). This trend is worsened by the erosion of judicial independence, assaults on the free press, and limits on civil society, all of which undermine democratic regimes' ability to safeguard fundamental rights and ensure accountability.

Furthermore, chronic concerns like as corruption, injustice, and prejudice are significant barriers to achieving democratic principles. Corruption erodes public faith in government institutions, confuses decision-making processes, and perpetuates inequality by diverting resources away from public benefits and toward private interests. Economic inequality not only reduces social mobility and opportunity, but it also fosters discontent and weakens the inclusion required for democratic legitimacy (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2012). Discrimination, whether based on race, gender, ethnicity, or other criteria, violates human rights, destroys social cohesiveness, and undermines the values of equality and non-discrimination entrenched in democratic constitutions.

In response to these difficulties, modern democratic constitutions must adapt and change in order to protect democratic values in the digital era. Protecting digital rights and privacy is critical to ensure that individuals may engage in online conversation without fear of being monitored or manipulated. Constitutional protections must be enhanced to prevent the use of digital technology for political meddling or propaganda (Sunstein, 2018). At the same time, democratic constitutions must address the underlying socioeconomic disparities and systemic inequities that jeopardize democratic government. Building institutions that promote openness, accountability, and the rule of law is critical for eliminating corruption and rebuilding public faith in government operations. Ensuring equitable access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities can help to reduce disparities and promote a more inclusive society in which everyone has the chance to fully engage in democracy.

Conclusion

The principles included in democratic constitutions serve as the underlying pillars that ensure the integrity and longevity of democratic government across the world. These principles, based on centuries of political theory and historical struggle, provide a foundation for a just and equitable society in which the rule of law, separation of powers, preservation of fundamental rights, and popular sovereignty take precedence. The rule of law assures that all persons and organizations, including the government, are responsible to and subject to the law, therefore avoiding arbitrary governance and protecting individual rights. Meanwhile, the separation of powers distributes political authority among the legislative, executive, and judicial branches, avoiding power consolidation and encouraging checks and balances to reduce the possibility of tyranny and abuse of authority.

The preservation of basic rights, such as free speech, assembly, religion, and the right to a fair trial, is central to democratic constitutional design. These rights are critical for preserving human dignity, supporting pluralism, and creating a society in which people may freely express themselves and actively engage in civic life. Another basic premise is popular sovereignty, which claims that the legitimacy of government is derived from the consent of the governed, who exercise their sovereignty via periodic elections and public involvement. This concept reaffirms the notion that governments exist to serve the people, not the other way around, and emphasizes the significance of accountability and responsiveness in democratic governance.

In today's world, issues such as populism, the loss of democratic norms, and technological breakthroughs put democratic constitutions to the test. Populist leaders sometimes exploit public complaints and concerns, offering rapid fixes while eroding democratic institutions and values. The loss

of democratic standards, including attacks on judicial independence, media freedom, and civil society, undermines the checks and balances necessary to maintain democratic governance. Furthermore, although technology improvements provide unparalleled opportunities for communication and engagement, they also provide new concerns such as disinformation proliferation, privacy issues, and public opinion manipulation.

Furthermore, encouraging civic education and engagement is critical for developing an informed, engaged, and empowered population capable of meaningful participation in democratic processes. Educating citizens about their rights and obligations, as well as developing critical thinking and media literacy skills, prepares them to traverse complicated political environments and make educated decisions. It also improves social cohesiveness and faith in democratic institutions, reducing polarization and building a feeling of common purpose and identity.

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