

Elements of Democracy

THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES, CONCEPTS,
SOCIAL FOUNDATIONS, AND PROCESSES
OF DEMOCRACY



Center for Civic Education

Contents

I	INTRODUCTION	1
II	POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT	3
1	The Nature of Politics and Government	4
2	Political Authority	7
III	THE CONCEPTS AND FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES OF DEMOCRACY	11
3	The Overall Concept of Democracy	12
4	Popular Sovereignty	14
5	“The People” in a Democracy	16
6	Democracy and Equality	18
7	The Common Good	20
8	Majority Rule/Minority Rights	23
9	Democracy and Human Rights	26
10	Democracy and Representation	29
11	The Vocabulary of Politics: The Meaning of Common Terms	32
IV	DEMOCRACY AND CITIZENSHIP	35
12	Democratic Citizenship	36
13	Democracy and Responsibility	38
14	The Rights and Responsibilities of Democratic Citizens	41
15	The Roles of the Citizen in a Democracy	43
16	Democracy and Civic Participation	46
V	THE FUNDAMENTAL IDEAS, CHARACTERISTICS, AND SOCIAL FOUNDATIONS OF A FREE SOCIETY	49
	Liberty and the Protection of Fundamental Rights	50
17	Freedom and Liberalism	50
18	Privacy	53
19	Constitutions	57
20	Constitutionalism and Constitutional Government	59
	Justice	62
21	Distributive Justice	62
22	Corrective Justice	65
23	Procedural Justice	69

	Law	73
24	The Rule of Law	73
25	The Role of Law in Democracy	76
	Social Foundations and Arrangements	79
26	Democracy and Political Culture	79
27	Democracy and Civil Society	82
28	Democracy and Economic Freedom	85
29	Pathologies of Democracy: Corruption	88
VI	DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT	93
30	The Three Principal Functions of Government	94
31	Forms of Democratic Government	97
32	Federalism	101
33	Judicial Systems	103
34	Democratic Transparency and Accountability	106
VII	THE POLITICAL PROCESSES OF DEMOCRACY	109
35	Political Parties	110
36	Interest Groups	113
37	Communications Media and the Democratic Process	116
38	Public Opinion	119
39	Elections and Voting	122
VIII	CONCLUSION	125
IX	REFERENCES	127
X	INDEX	133