

## Characteristics of First-Class Democracies The Role of Political and Economic Factors

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### ABSTRACT

Democratic regimes have some common characteristics and differences. These characteristics might be also understood as necessary prerequisites for countries that want to establish first-class developed democracies. This article aims to analyze common characteristics of first-class democracies in the world in terms of per capita income, population, location, dominant religious affiliation, education level and basic principles of the state.

### Introduction

There have been many studies about democracy and democratization in various social science branches. These studies focused on the historical, sociological, economical and political situations in order to understand the conditions that help flourishing a democracy. This study aims to make a brief literature review focusing on some of the most important classics and determine the common characteristics of developed (first class) democracies in the light of internationally accepted democracy and freedom indexes. However, it should be noted that this study is a preliminary work that should be further developed by subsequent works.

### Democracy and Its Conditions

*“Democracy is the worst form of government, except for all the others.” – Winston Churchill*

Democracy is one of the most outspoken and frequent themes in politics. The term is often used by politicians in their daily speeches as a populist argument in order to garner more votes and increase their legitimacy in the eyes of people. However, democracy and democratization is an important topic and research area in political science as well. For many decades, political scientists have been trying to

define the concept of “democracy” and to come up with a list of prerequisites for democracy. Accordingly, they try to determine the differences between democratic and anti-democratic regimes.

Classically defined as “government by the people; a form of government in which the supreme power is vested in the people and exercised directly by them or by their elected agents under a free electoral system”<sup>1</sup>, democracy has hundreds of different definitions. Among these definitions, some of them require a special focus since they are made after important scientific studies and observations. For instance, American scholar Seymour Martin Lipset defines democracy as “a political system which supplies regular constitutional opportunities for changing the governing officials, and a social mechanism which permits the largest possible part of the population to influence major decisions by choosing among contenders (competitors) for political office”.<sup>2</sup> In his idea, this definition needs to be supported by some conditions that are required for a consolidated democracy;

1. A political formula, a set of beliefs shared by all people about the legitimacy of certain institutions (political parties, free press).
2. A set of political leaders holding office.
3. One or more recognized political leaders attempting to gain office.

Andreas Schedler on the other hand, in his article “What Is Democratic Consolidation”, analyzes the concept of “democratic consolidation” and defines it as “the challenge of new democracies secure, of extending their life expectancy beyond the short term, of making them immune against the threat of authoritarian regression, of building dams against eventual reverse waves”.<sup>3</sup> Schedler accepts four basic categories in relation to democracy level:

- Authoritarianism,
- Electoral democracy,
- Liberal democracy,
- Advanced democracy.<sup>4</sup>

Adam Przeworski et al., in their book *Democracy and Development: Political Institutions and Well-Being in the World, 1950-1990*, question the modernization theory and the widespread myth about the positive correlation between economic development and success of democracy in different countries. Authors provide examples of countries refuting the classical Western-oriented modernization theory such as the “Asian tigers” of the world economy during the 1970s, including Singapore, South Korea or Taiwan; authoritarian countries that created economic miracles during these years. They eventually make these conclusions:<sup>5</sup>

- Wealthy countries tend to be democratic not because democracies emerge as a consequence of economic development under dictatorships, but because, democracies are much more likely to survive in affluent societies.

<sup>1</sup> Dictionary.com, Date of Accession: 26.10.2016 from <http://www.dictionary.com/browse/democracy>.

<sup>2</sup> Seymour Martin Lipset, *Political Man The Social Bases of Politics*, 1963, Anchor Books, p. 27.

<sup>3</sup> Andreas Schedler, “What is Democratic Consolidation?”, *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 9, No: 2, 1998, p. 91.

<sup>4</sup> Andreas Schedler, “What is Democratic Consolidation?”, *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 9, No: 2, 1998, pp. 92-93.

<sup>5</sup> Adam Przeworski & Michael E. Alvarez & Jose Antonio Cheibub & Fernando Limongi, “Economic Development and Political Regimes” in *Democracy and Development: Political Institutions and Well-Being in the World, 1950-1990 (Cambridge Studies in the Theory of Democracy)*, Cambridge University Press, 2000, p. 137.

- Survival of democracies is easy to predict. Per capita income seems to be the best predictor unit for researches.
- Education helps countries to consolidate their democracy, but without economic success, it would serve nothing.
- Presidential democracies are less likely to survive and parliamentary systems are more convenient for a secure democratic regime.

Valery Bunce also, in her article “Democratization and Economic Reform” tries to explain the relationship between economic and democratic performance. She analyzes Latin American, Southern European and post-socialist countries in order to draw conclusions. She first defines democracy as follows: “The experiences of democratization over the past 25 years suggest that a precise definition providing analytical leverage is one that treats democracy as a regime combining three characteristics: freedom, uncertain results, and certain procedures”.<sup>6</sup> By economic reform, she means marketization, privatization, free trade, macroeconomic stabilization, microeconomic liberation and more specifically the abolishment of government control in economics such as the elimination of price control, withdrawal of subsidies etc. After providing many examples of the failure of economic reforms in developing democracies, she asserts that there could be three types of relationships between economic reform and democracy. First, democratization and economic reform can be incompatible. Secondly, for economic reforms to be successful in developing countries, the insulation of decision-makers from external pressures may be required (maybe more authoritarian rule to make broad reforms). Thirdly, democratic governance may need to be consolidated first and economic reforms may be introduced after the democratic consolidation.

Lastly, Dankwart Rustow in his article “Transitions to Democracy: Toward a Dynamic Model” explains different perspectives of explanation arisen in the recent writings of American sociologists and political scientists about the necessary conditions for the consolidation of democracy. The first explanation favored by scholars such as Seymour Martin Lipset and Philips Cutright connect stable democracy with certain social and economic conditions like per capita income, rate of literacy and density of urban residence.<sup>7</sup> The second type of explanation is proposed by academicians including Walter Bagehot, Ernest Barker, Daniel Lerner, Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba and it emphasizes the need for certain beliefs and psychological attitudes among the citizens. Barker calls this as the “agreement to differ” by which he means civic attitudes based on participation, tolerance and compromise.<sup>8</sup> The third explanation deals with the certain features of social and political structure. Authors like Carl J. Friedrich, E. E. Schattschneider, David B. Truman, Bernard Crick, Ralf Dahrendorf and Arend Lijphart favor this explanation and underline the importance of the certain social and political structures` commitment to democracy. For example, Harry Eckerstein, in his theory of “congruence” claims that “to make democracy stable, the structures of authority throughout society, such as family, church, business, and trade unions, must prove the more democratic the more directly they impinge on processes of government”<sup>9</sup>. Rustow later explains the necessity of “puzzling” in comparing different

<sup>6</sup> Valerie Bunce, “Democratization and economic reform”, *Annual Review of Political Science*, 4, 2001, p. 45.

<sup>7</sup> Dankwart Rustow, “Transitions to Democracy: Toward a Dynamic Model”, *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 2, No. 3, 1970, p. 337.

<sup>8</sup> Dankwart Rustow, “Transitions to Democracy: Toward a Dynamic Model”, *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 2, No. 3, 1970, p. 338.

<sup>9</sup> Dankwart Rustow, “Transitions to Democracy: Toward a Dynamic Model”, *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 2, No. 3, 1970, p. 338.

democratic regimes.<sup>10</sup> He mentions that there may not be a single way to democracy and countries' development models can differ. In fact, slow and gradual installment of democracy in Britain and quick and military invasion based consolidation of democracy in Germany and Japan after the Second World War showed us clearly that democracy can prevail over other regimes in different ways. In addition, Rustow warns us to keep away from drawing quick conclusions based on causal explanations. He names national unity, economic development, democratic procedures, constitutionalism, opposition, compromise-conflict and pluralism as essential conditions of a democratic regime.

### **Measuring Democracy: Democracy Indexes**

There have been many efforts in the academic world in order to classify countries from best to worse in terms of their democratic progress. For this study, two well-known indexes are chosen: Economic Intelligence Unit's "Democracy Index" and Freedom House's "Freedom in the World" report. Countries that are ranked in the best category in both of these two indexes will be used as sample for this study.

#### ***A-) Economic Intelligence Unit's "Democracy Index"***

Economic Intelligence Unit's "Democracy Index" is one of the most important efforts to classify regimes around the world in terms of their democratic progress. The index is based on 60 indicators grouped in five different categories measuring pluralism, civil liberties and political culture. In addition to a numeric score and a ranking, the index categorizes countries as one of four different regime types;

1. Full democracies,
2. Flawed democracies,
3. Hybrid regimes,
4. Authoritarian regimes.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Dankwart Rustow, "Transitions to Democracy: Toward a Dynamic Model", *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 2, No. 3, 1970, p. 339.

<sup>11</sup> According to Economic Intelligence Unit;

- **Full democracies** are nations where civil liberties and basic political freedoms are not only respected, yet are also reinforced by a political culture conducive to the thriving of democratic principles. These nations have a valid system of governmental checks and balances, independent judiciary whose decisions are enforced, governments which function adequately, and media which is diverse and independent. These nations have only limited problems in democratic functioning.
- **Flawed democracies** are nations where elections are fair and free, but may have issues (e.g. media freedom infringement), and basic civil liberties are honored. Nonetheless, these nations have significant faults in other democratic aspects, including underdeveloped political culture, low levels of participation in politics, and issues in the functioning of governance.
- **Hybrid regimes** are nations where consequential irregularities exist in elections regularly preventing them from being fair and free. These nations commonly have governments which apply pressure on political opponents, non-independent judiciaries, widespread corruption, harassment and pressure placed on the media, anemic rule of law, and more pronounced faults than flawed democracies in the realms of underdeveloped political culture, low levels of participation in politics, and issues in the functioning of governance.
- **Authoritarian regimes** are nations where political pluralism has vanished or is extremely limited. These nations are often absolute dictatorships, may have some conventional institutions of democracy- but with meager significance,

The index was first prepared in 2006 and continued to be published in the following years since then. According to Economic Intelligence Unit's "Democracy Index" 2015 report<sup>12</sup>, 20 full democracies are as follows; Norway, Iceland, Sweden, New Zealand, Denmark, Switzerland, Canada, Finland, Australia, Netherlands, Luxembourg, Ireland, Germany, Austria, Malta, United Kingdom, Spain, Mauritius, Uruguay and United States of America.

### **B-) Freedom House's "Freedom in the World" Report**

"Freedom in the World" is a yearly survey and report prepared and published by the US-based non-governmental organization Freedom House, which regularly measures the degree of civil liberties and political rights in every nation and significant disputed territories around the world. The report provides an index assessing the democratic maturity of different countries.<sup>13</sup> It produces annual scores representing the levels of political rights and civil liberties in each state and territory, on a scale from 1 (most free) to 7 (least free). Depending on these ratings, the nations are then classified as

1. Free,
2. Partly Free,
3. Not Free.<sup>14</sup>

According to 2015 report<sup>15</sup>, a total of 89 countries and 2 disputed territories are classified as "free countries" by the Freedom House. The countries that are classified as "free" by Freedom House match 100 % with countries that are listed as "full democracy" countries in Economic Intelligence Unit's "Democracy Index". So, it might be a wise decision to focus on these 20 countries as our sample in order to understand the socioeconomic and political necessities for establishing a full-scale and first-class democracy.

### **Common Characteristics of Democracies**

**A-) Per Capita Income:** According to World Bank 2015 statistics, these 20 countries per capita income averages are detected as follows (\$ per year):

Norway – 74,734

Iceland – 50,173

Sweden – 50,272

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infringements and abuses of civil liberties are commonplace, elections- if they take place- are not fair and free, the media is often state-owned or controlled by groups associated with the ruling regime, the judiciary is not independent, and the presence of omnipresent censorship and suppression of governmental criticism.

For details see; "Democracy Index", *Wikipedia*, Date of Accession: 27.10.2016 from [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Democracy\\_Index](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Democracy_Index).

<sup>12</sup> "Democracy Index 2015: Democracy in an age of anxiety", *The Economist Intelligence Unit*, Date of Accession: 27.10.2016 from [http://www.eiu.com/public/topical\\_report.aspx?campaignid=DemocracyIndex2015](http://www.eiu.com/public/topical_report.aspx?campaignid=DemocracyIndex2015).

<sup>13</sup> The methodology of the report can be read from here; <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world-2015/methodology>.

<sup>14</sup> For details see; "Freedom in the World", *Wikipedia*, Date of Accession: 27.10.2016 from [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Freedom\\_in\\_the\\_World](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Freedom_in_the_World).

<sup>15</sup> "Freedom in the World 2015", *Freedom House*, Date of Accession: 27.10.2016 from [https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/freedom-world-2015#.WJAr\\_tSLTwc](https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/freedom-world-2015#.WJAr_tSLTwc).



New Zealand – 37,808

Denmark – 52,002

Switzerland – 80,214

Canada – 43,248

Finland – 41,920

Australia – 56,327

Netherlands – 44,433

Luxembourg – 101,450

Ireland – 51,289

Germany – 41,219

Austria – 43,438

Malta – 22,776 (2013)

United Kingdom – 43,734

Spain – 25,831

Mauritius – 9,116

Uruguay – 15,573

United States of America – 55,836

With the exception of Mauritius and Uruguay, all of these countries have annual per capita income more than 20,000 \$ per year. The average annual per capita income for these 20 countries on the other hand are approximately 47,069 \$ per year. Among them, Luxembourg is the richest country (101,450 \$) and Mauritius is the poorest one (9,116 \$). These statistics clearly show that democracy might not be the best alternative for underdeveloped, developing or newly established countries having socioeconomic problems and low level of per capita incomes. Moreover, minimum average of 15,000 \$ per year per capita income seems to be the limit for a first-class democracy if we do not include Mauritius, a very small and interesting country to our analysis. Whether it is democracy that creates wealthy nations or only wealthy nations could implement democracy is also an interesting topic that is open to debate.

### ***B-) Population***

According to CIA's The World Factbook statistics<sup>16</sup>, these 20 countries' population sizes are as follows:

Norway - 5,265,158

Iceland - 335,878

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<sup>16</sup><https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/rankorder/2119rank.html>.



Sweden - 9,880,604  
New Zealand - 4,474,549  
Denmark - 5,593,785  
Switzerland - 8,179,294  
Canada - 35,362,905  
Finland - 5,498,211  
Australia - 22,992,654  
Netherlands - 17,016,967  
Luxembourg - 582,291  
Ireland - 4,952,473  
Germany - 80,722,792  
Austria - 8,711,770  
Malta - 415,196  
United Kingdom - 64,430,428  
Spain - 48,563,476  
Mauritius - 1,348,242  
Uruguay - 3,351,016  
United States of America - 323,995,528

With the exception of small island countries like Malta, Iceland and Mauritius as well as the city-state of Luxembourg, these countries' population size is above 3 million people. Among them, United States is the most crowded one (323,995,528) and Iceland has the least population (335,878). The average population size of these countries on the other hand is approximately 32,583,660. This shows that democracy can be implemented both in largely populated and less populated countries and the population size is not a decisive factor by itself in democratization. However, population size can play a crucial role since it affects the per capita income (per capita income is equal to total income divided by the population size).

***C-) Location/Geopolitics***

Norway – Europe (Scandinavia)  
Iceland – Europe (island)  
Sweden – Europe (Scandinavia)  
New Zealand – Oceania (island)



Denmark – Europe (Scandinavia)  
Switzerland – Europe  
Canada – North America  
Finland – Europe (Scandinavia)  
Australia - Oceania (island)  
Netherlands – Europe  
Luxembourg – Europe  
Ireland – Europe (island)  
Germany – Europe  
Austria – Europe  
Malta – Europe (island)  
United Kingdom - Europe (island)  
Spain – Europe  
Mauritius – Africa (island)  
Uruguay – South America  
United States of America – North America

Among these 20 countries, 14 of them are situated in the European continent (4 in Scandinavia), 2 in North America, 2 in Oceania, 1 in Africa and 1 in South America. Moreover, it is interesting note that 7 of these countries are islands. In terms of location/geopolitics, we can clearly say that the geopolitical factors give European countries more chance to become democratic since they are mostly surrounded by other democratic countries that are not pursuing expansionist policies towards their neighbors. Thus, it might not be a coincidence that there is not even one single first-class democracy in the Middle East, which clearly shows that terrorism and political instabilities as well as expansionist policies advocated by states are detrimental for democratic development.

#### ***D-) Dominant Religious Affiliation***

According to CIA's The World Factbook statistics<sup>17</sup>, these countries can be listed as follows in terms of their dominant religious affiliation:

Norway – Christian (nearly all Evangelical Lutheran)  
Iceland – Christian (nearly all Evangelical Lutheran)  
Sweden – Christian (nearly all Lutheran)  
New Zealand – Christian (different sects)

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<sup>17</sup><https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/fields/2122.html>.



- Denmark – Christian (nearly all Evangelical Lutheran)
- Switzerland – Christian (Roman Catholic majority)
- Canada – Christian (Roman Catholic majority)
- Finland – Christian (nearly all Lutheran)
- Australia – Christian (Protestant majority)
- Netherlands – Christian (Roman Catholic majority)
- Luxembourg – Christian (nearly all Roman Catholic)
- Ireland – Christian (nearly all Roman Catholic)
- Germany – Christian (Equally divided between Roman Catholics and Protestants)
- Austria – Christian (nearly all Roman Catholic)
- Malta – Christian (nearly all Roman Catholic)
- United Kingdom – Christian (different sects)
- Spain – Christian (nearly all Roman Catholic)
- Mauritius – Hindu majority
- Uruguay – Christian (Roman Catholic majority)
- United States of America – Christian (Protestant majority)

Except of Mauritius, a country having Hindu majority (48.5 %) in addition to 26.3 % Roman Catholic and 17.3 % Muslim minorities, all of these countries are largely Christian in terms of their people's popular religious affiliation. However, religion might not be a very decisive factor in the daily lives of people in some of these countries such as New Zealand (no religion 38.5 % and not stated or unidentified 8.2 %) and Australia (no religion 22.3 % and unspecified 9.3 %). This shows that, at least statistically, democracy seems to be a very product of the Christian world. However, it should never mean that other countries having other dominant religions could never develop their own democratic model in the future. Moreover, Orthodox Christian countries are not considered as first-class democracies, an important indicator of the cultural differences between Western and Slavic Christians.

### ***E-) Education Level***

The United Nations publishes a Human Development Index (HDI) every year, which also includes an "Education Index".<sup>18</sup> Education Index measures countries' educational development over the years by looking at mean years of schooling as well as expected years of schooling. Education Index's 2013 results are as follows:

- Norway – 0.910 (ranked 1)
- Iceland – 0.847 (ranked 13)

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<sup>18</sup> "Education Index", *UNDP*, Date of Accession: 26.10.2016 from <http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/education-index>.

Sweden – 0.830 (ranked 12)  
New Zealand – 0.917 (ranked 7)  
Denmark – 0.873 (ranked 10)  
Switzerland – 0.844 (ranked 3)  
Canada – 0.850 (ranked 8)  
Finland – 0.815 (ranked 24)  
Australia – 0.927 (ranked 2)  
Netherlands – 0.894 (ranked 4)  
Luxembourg – 0.762 (ranked 21)  
Ireland – 0.887 (ranked 11)  
Germany – 0.884 (ranked 6)  
Austria – 0.794 (ranked 21)  
Malta – 0.733 (ranked 39)  
United Kingdom – 0.860 (ranked 14)  
Spain – 0.794 (ranked 27)  
Mauritius – 0.718 (ranked 63)  
Uruguay – 0.712 (ranked 50)  
United States of America – 0.890 (ranked 5)

Statistics prove the widely spoken positive effect of education over democratization. The top 20 democratic countries are all in good position in terms of education level except Mauritius (63) and Uruguay (50), which have middle rank positions. This shows that, a good educational system promoting democracy can help countries in democratization and democratic consolidation.

### ***F-) Basic Principles of the State and Government Types***

#### *1. Federal vs. Unitary*

Norway – Unitary

Iceland – Unitary

Sweden – Unitary

New Zealand – Unitary

Denmark – Unitary

Switzerland – Federal

Canada – Federal

Finland – Unitary

Australia – Federal

Netherlands – Unitary

Luxembourg – Unitary

Ireland – Unitary

Germany – Federal

Austria – Federal

Malta – Unitary

United Kingdom – Unitary

Spain – Unitary

Mauritius – Unitary

Uruguay – Unitary

United States of America – Federal

Out of these 20 democratic countries, 6 of them are federal and 14 of them are unitary states. Although the number of unitary states in the first-class democracy list is higher, federal states are also numerous. This shows that democracy can be implemented in both of these regimes and this may not be a decisive factor for democratization.

## 2. *Presidential vs. Parliamentary System*

Norway – Parliamentary

Iceland – Parliamentary

Sweden – Parliamentary

New Zealand – Parliamentary

Denmark – Parliamentary

Switzerland – Directorial republic with thorough elements of direct democracy

Canada – Parliamentary

Finland – Parliamentary

Australia – Parliamentary

Netherlands – Parliamentary

Luxembourg – Parliamentary

Ireland – Parliamentary

Germany – Parliamentary

Austria – Parliamentary

Malta – Parliamentary

United Kingdom – Parliamentary

Spain – Parliamentary

Mauritius – Parliamentary

Uruguay – Presidential

United States of America – Presidential

Out of these 20 countries, 17 are parliamentary regimes, 2 of them (United States, Uruguay) have presidential systems and one of them (Switzerland) uses a model of directorial republic with the use of direct democracy elements. These statistics prove that parliamentary model can be more efficient in implementing democracy. Scott Mainwaring also previously pointed out and statistically proved that among the 25 stable contemporary democracies; only 4 of them are based on presidential system.<sup>19</sup>

3. *Secular vs. Religious-Based*<sup>20</sup>

Norway – Religious-based, official church<sup>21</sup>

Iceland – Religious-based, official church<sup>22</sup>

Sweden – Secular

New Zealand – Secular

Denmark – Religious-based, official church<sup>23</sup>

Switzerland – Secular (at federal level)

Canada – Secular

<sup>19</sup> Scott Mainwaring, “Presidentialism, Multipartyism, and Democracy”, *Comparative Political Studies*, July 1993, Vol. 26, No: 2, p. 198.

<sup>20</sup> Secular in this section is used to describe countries not having an official religion or church and leaves the religious matter completely out of its governing system.

<sup>21</sup> Article 2 of the Norwegian constitution states that “Our values will remain our Christian and humanist heritage. This constitution shall ensure democracy, a state based on the rule of law and human rights.” and article 4 dictates “The King shall at all times profess the Evangelical-Lutheran religion”. Moreover, article 16 states that “All inhabitants of the Realm shall have the right to free exercise of their religion. The Norwegian Church, an Evangelical-Lutheran church, will remain the Norwegian National Church and will as such be supported by the State. Detailed provisions as to its system will be laid down by law. All religious and philosophical communities should be supported on equal terms.”. See; <https://www.stortinget.no/en/Grunnlovsjubileet/In-English/The-Constitution---Complete-text/>. But the country is making steps towards further secularism in recent years. See; <http://iheu.org/state-and-church-move-towards-greater-separation-norway/>.

<sup>22</sup> However, article 64 states that “If a person who is not a member of any religious association shall pay to the University of Iceland the dues that he would have had to pay to such an association, if he had been a member. This may be amended by law.”. Moreover, article 62 states that “The Evangelical Lutheran Church shall be the State Church in Iceland and, as such, it shall be supported and protected by the State. This may be amended by law.”. See; [http://www.wipo.int/wipolex/en/text.jsp?file\\_id=190955](http://www.wipo.int/wipolex/en/text.jsp?file_id=190955).

<sup>23</sup> Article 4 of the Denmark constitution states that “The Evangelical Lutheran Church shall be the Established Church of Denmark, and as such, it shall be supported by the State”. See; [https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Denmark\\_1953.pdf?lang=en](https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Denmark_1953.pdf?lang=en).



Finland – Religious-based, official church

Australia – Secular

Netherlands – Secular

Luxembourg – Secular

Ireland – Secular

Germany – Secular

Austria – Secular

Malta – Religious-based, official church<sup>24</sup>

United Kingdom – Religious-based, official church<sup>25</sup>

Spain – Secular

Mauritius – Secular

Uruguay – Secular

United States of America – Secular

Among these 20 first-class democracies, 6 of them are religious-based countries in the sense that their constitutions promote Christianity and establish an official state church. However, this is not a barrier for secular regulations in all other aspects of life in the sense that the state does not discriminate people from other religions. 14 countries out of 20 on the other hand, promote secularism and do not establish an official national church in their constitutions. In these countries, religion is left to believers without state's involvement. Although democracy can work in both of these models, secular model seems to be a more efficient way of deepening democracy since most of the democratically developed countries have secularism as their common characteristic.

#### 4. *Capitalist vs. Communist*

Norway – Capitalist

Iceland – Capitalist

Sweden – Capitalist

New Zealand – Capitalist

Denmark – Capitalist

Switzerland – Capitalist

Canada – Capitalist

<sup>24</sup> Article 2 of the constitution states that “(1) The religion of Malta is the Roman Catholic Apostolic Religion, (2) The authorities of the Roman Catholic Apostolic Church have the duty and the right to teach which principles are right and which are wrong, and (3) Religious teaching of the Roman Catholic Apostolic Faith shall be provided in all State schools as part of compulsory education. See; <http://justiceservices.gov.mt/DownloadDocument.aspx?app=lom&itemid=8566>.

<sup>25</sup> See; [http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/christianity/cofe/cofe\\_1.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/christianity/cofe/cofe_1.shtml).

Finland – Capitalist

Australia – Capitalist

Netherlands – Capitalist

Luxembourg – Capitalist

Ireland – Capitalist

Germany – Capitalist

Austria – Capitalist

Malta – Capitalist

United Kingdom – Capitalist

Spain – Capitalist

Mauritius – Capitalist

Uruguay – Capitalist

United States of America – Capitalist

All of these democratic states implement capitalist mode of production system and they have well-functioning free-market economies. This shows that democracy is clearly a product of capitalism. However, this should never mean that some statist regulations or various degrees of socialist models should not be implemented in democracies. In fact, many of these democracies including Scandinavian countries and Canada have very efficient social state systems, which show that there is still an important place for left-wing (social democratic) policies within the capitalist system.

#### 5. *Monarchy vs. Republic*

Norway – Constitutional monarchy<sup>26</sup>

Iceland – Republic

Sweden – Symbolic monarchy

New Zealand – Constitutional monarchy

Denmark – Constitutional monarchy

Switzerland – Republic

Canada – Constitutional monarchy

Finland – Republic

Australia – Constitutional monarchy

Netherlands – Constitutional monarchy

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<sup>26</sup> Article 1 of the constitution states that “The Kingdom of Norway is a free, independent, indivisible and inalienable Realm. Its form of government is a limited and hereditary monarchy.”. See; <https://www.stortinget.no/en/Grunnlovsjubileet/In-English/The-Constitution---Complete-text/>.



Luxembourg – Constitutional monarchy

Ireland – Republic

Germany – Republic

Austria – Republic

Malta – Republic

United Kingdom – Constitutional monarchy

Spain – Constitutional monarchy

Mauritius – Republic

Uruguay – Republic

United States of America – Republic

Among these 20 democratic states, half of them are republics and the other half implements different degrees of constitutional monarchy models. Among these 10 countries, Swedish monarchy is clearly the most symbolic or ceremonial one, whereas in others monarchs traditionally have a more important place in politics. These results prove that democracy can be implemented both in republican and constitutional monarchy models and there is not so much difference between these two systems unless there is a functioning parliamentary or presidential democratic model.

### Conclusion

This study aimed to determine some common characteristics of first-class democracies around the world in order to detect prerequisites for a democratic system. In accordance with this aim, most important features of these 20 countries including per capita income, population, location, dominant religious affiliation, education level and basic principles of the state were analyzed by using official statistics. The research concluded that minimum average of 15,000 \$ per year per capita income, closeness to democratic countries, large Christian population, high education level, an efficient Westminster parliamentary model, secular state structure, implementation of free-market economy and capitalist model can be positive factors for the consolidation of democracy in a country. On the other hand, population size, federal-unitary governance model difference or constitutional monarchy-republican system divergence may not be that important for the democratic maturity.

It should not be forgotten that this study is not based on field work and it used literature review and democracy indexes (statistical information) to reach conclusions. Moreover, this study should be thought to be a preliminary study and should be supported with further studies and evidences.

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