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**DEMOCRATIC IDEAL AND DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTION  
——STUDY ON MIHAILO MARLCOVIC'S DEMOCRACY THOUGHT**

**Abstract:**

In the democratic history, there are inner conflicts always between democratic institution and democratic ideal. It is due to the inherent ideal dimension of democracy that each democratic society is inherent imbalanced regardless of which in history or in reality. Mihailo Marlcovic the philosopher of Yugoslavia Praxis Group, in the view of constructing people's genuine relationship, he reflected upon what the connotation of democratic ideal is. He argued the deviation between the democratic institution and the democratic ideal, as well as the hazard of this deviation. At the same time; he explored the possible ways to integrate these two democratic dimensions. His research is a significant contribution to nowadays democratic society's development.

**Keywords:**

Democracy Ideal ,Institution ,Human emancipation

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The word democracy comes from two Greek words, demos, meaning people, and krates, meaning rule. [1] Its etymological meaning is the rule of majority, the rule of people or people rule.

Rule's meaning is relatively stable, that is, control, dispose and manage by the power. However, people's meaning has kept changing. It is quite recent that "people" is generally considered as "everybody". [2] In the ancient Greece and ancient Rome, where democratic politics were carried out earliest, "the people" referred the men of slave owner and aristocracy, not including slaves and women. "In the medieval minority democratic city-state, the 'people' meanings spread into the feudal lord and the minority freeman". [3] In modern capitalist society, it is the first time in theory that people mean the entire civilian population. In fact, "people" do not mean all of the people, but only refer to the part of citizen. "Until the 1920s, nearly half of the female population in France was included in the people, who possess overall civil rights." [4] So far, theorists firstly reach an agreement namely referring the people to all citizens. The democratic ideal, namely, all of the people are equal, has been truly achieved in theory. But, actually, there is a great gap between democratic idea and democratic realization, and there are so many inconsistent factors in democracy themselves threatening the internal instability of the democratic society, even frustrating the construction of democratic institution in developing societies.

### **The dual dimensions of democracy: Democratic Ideal and Democratic Institution**

In ancient Greek, democracy had not been respected by the philosophers. Aristotle argued that the practical wisdom must be important. Constitutionally, the decision-making needs ever-increasing experiences. Thus "a person is not a citizen if he works just for living." [5] Aristotle regarded the democratic political system as the degenerate variant of the republican political system. However, the politicians such as Pericles believed that democratic system is the best political way and it benefited the majority rule. Unfortunately, the democracy mode invented by Herodotus was not be glorified or even "disappeared from the used word" [6] in nearly 1,000 years.

In the middle Ages, Thomas Aquinas held that democracy was the wicked rule implemented by the majority. Until modern times, Montesquieu set up a milestone for the democratic ideas of political system, that is, he put forward the idea of "popular sovereignty" according to political decentralization. But Rousseau argued that the democracy is the will of the people, it should include the social contents other than the politics internal the country. In this way, Rousseau gave the ethical value to democracy.

Into the 19th century, democracy has been widely understood in a positive sense. Tocqueville pointed out that democracy is people's existence which was based on equality. "There is only equal in the eyes of the people in democratic country", [7] However, he also argued that such democracy had its own limitation, that is, democracy of equal restricted the freedom and it would lead to concentration of power. John Stuart Mill opposed to explain democracy into management by the majority; he put forward the Liberal Democracy in which minority voters have their own representatives so the overall interests could be considered.

There is a different understanding on democracy in the modern society,

"democratic theory is still in a changing state." [8] Max Weber, an "absolute liberals", came up with a new democratic model named "competitive elitism". His definition of democracy is "the key mechanisms to ensure that political leaders work efficiency." [9] Another elitism person Joseph Schumpeter declared that democracy is the rule of politicians. For them, democracy is a kind of means to select policy makers and constrain their excesses behavior.[10] James Madison, the main representatives of pluralism who fought against the elitism, believed that "the unrestrained democratic rule will lead to majority rule, somebody will suppress individual rights and misappropriate other's property in the name of the people," [11] he advocated the bicameral and federal government to separate powers into several parts and to provide a variety of channels for competitive interest groups. One of the most influential theorist, Robert Dahl, a Contemporary pluralism, came to a conclusion in his book "*Who Governs?: Democracy and Power in an American City*" that the rich and political privileges exercise greater powers than the ordinary citizens, but they can't control the political process, as those dominant or fixed elites can do. Consequently, it is necessary to pursue political pluralism. Rolls was on behalf of the neo-liberal to insist that democracy is equal. He argued that in order to ensure the under-class' benefits we should seek the artificial equality controlled through rearranging income and responsibilities program according to "difference principle". Hayek, a conservative, pointed out that man was born in difference, equality is not given by the outside ways but gradually approached by free competition. Legal protected free competition. " Liberalism is the principle of for what the law is, democracy is just a way for determining the content of the law.... ... the goal of Liberalism is to convince the majority to follow certain principles".[12] Democracy is only a decision-making method, it "is a means to safeguard freedom." [13]

Different from the above-mentioned modern political theorist, one of the U.S. political scientist William Cohen argued that democracy is one of people's desired ideals, "it is a kind of self-government system ... ... Participation is the core of democracy." [14] For accomplishing the depth, breadth and scope of democracy, it is necessary to own the prerequisite, the means and conditions of democracy in full extent. Cohen pointed out that democracy may not guarantee ultimate success as developing the global democracy given the limited country democracy.

Throughout the history of political philosophy, it is not difficult to find that democracy is often seen as organization form of regime, a system as well as procedures of unified thinking. It pays little attention to democratic ideal dimension. Even if the past, limited, pure institutionalized democracy regards democracy as an ideal, its prospects are not very optimistic. In the latter part of last century, in the low tide of socialist and communist movement, Fukuyama and other liberals asserted: liberal democracy is the most perfect human government way. With the failure of communism, the politics come to the end. It is no doubt that liberal democracy is not the best social organizations form to solve the contradictions of human society. In this case, human's politics and history can never be halted.

Democracy is a kind of political way, a combination methods for different people, a correlation between human being. It can not be simply prescribed as calculation, rule, procedure of positivism, it also contains the contempt against the dictatorial and authoritarian, the ideal of beyonding the hierarchy, filling with equality and freedom, and

rebuilding the genuine people's relationship. It is a realization of philosophy in life and the performance of philosophy life, it is man's infinite ideal. It does not only concern how to organize the political community, but touches on issues of human social relations, in a deeper sense. Therefore, democracy "has become the world's most important political goals." [15]

### **Realistic background of Markovic's democratic thought**

Markovic's democratic theory has great significance. Markovic, who was a philosopher from Yugoslavia's Praxis Group, deeply explained the complexity of the democratic issues which has provided us with a different perspective to think the connotation of democracy.

On the exploration of building socialism democracy, there are two different models in socialist countries in 20th century. One is the model of former Soviet Union. Another is the self-government in the former Yugoslav. The former Soviet Union is characterized by dictatorship, but in a particular historical period, this kind of social model still leading the direction of the world. The former Yugoslav broken the shackles of the former Soviet Union and created their own model---self-manage socialism, which turned the country out as one of the world's medium developed countries in 1980s. Pursuing the value of philosophy was the source of the latter's success.

"Yugoslavia's socialist self-government system is neither purely economic phenomenon, nor a simple system of the rule of law, it has penetrated into all fields of social life, and has become the style in Yugoslav' live and think. More we research in Yugoslavia, more we know that there is an essential thing, namely, philosophy, behind the economic success and effectiveness of the rule." [16] Yugoslavia's socialist self-government theory profoundly touched on the philosophy aspect and ideal aspect on the issue of democracy. In 1950s, there appeared a radical philosophy in the self-government socialist system in Yugoslavia. Markovic has been recalled to the situation: Trotsky and Gramsci had passed away, Lukacs was forced to submit, Korsch disappeared in the United States, Bloch had less well known, the Frankfurt School had been in disintegration. In Yugoslavia, there was no convincing authority to the first generation philosophers after the world war, who came from the guerrillas to the University of Zagreb and Belgrade. Therefore, Marxism was the entire research interest to these philosophers. They believed in Marxism, and convinced that under the guidelines of Marxism they could establish a new, free, democratic and justicial social, and this kind of society also must be humanitarian. They targeted the former Soviet Union and criticized the bureaucratic system and the wrong understanding about socialism which is narrowed into the material growth, non-personal and sheep-style collectivism. If the socialism carried out in this way, human personality will be denied, human relations will be distorted into parochial political relations.

The parochial politics need political authority to rule people through grading people's relationship. However, philosophy put its focus on counteracting the authority to build the real relationship between people, so that, it aimed to fulfill the non-political politics. During the conflict between philosophy and politics, democratic ideal and democratic institution rapidly run in the opposite direction. Markovic has experienced

socialist democracy movement in person, he found that philosophy was gradually being swallowed by politics in the process of the building socialism in former Yugoslavia. In order to defend philosophy, Markovic remarked that "to keep to Marxism humanitarian . " [17]

Mihailo Markovic(1923-), a Yugoslav well-known philosopher, is the main representative of Praxis Group. He was born in Belgrade on 24th February 1923, he worked in the University of Belgrade from 1950 to 1975. In 1960s and 1970s, he was one of the editorial Board members of "Praxis" and the key organizers of "Summer School Korcula" which is an international annual conference in philosophy. In 1975, he was fired from Belgrade University by the federal parliament of Serbia just because he supported the students to fight against the Yugoslav self-government movement which was deviated from its formal path. But he had never given up academic research. In 1976, he became a researcher of Wilson International Center for Scholars. From 1976 to 1990, he gave lectures to the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia. In 1981, he continued to research "practical philosophy" with other expelled Praxis Group members, and he led them to found a magazine named "Praxis - International" in Oxford, UK. In 1983, he was promoted to be an academician of Art academic of Science of Republic of Serbia. In 1984 he became the director in the department of science of Art academic of Science. He was also an executive Chairman of international humanitarian and Federation of ethics, an academician of Paris International philosophy Institute, a member of international peace funds and a visiting professor in many University of America. In 1988, as a vice chairman of International Futures Association, Markovic attend Future academic issues in China, he introduced the situations of Yugoslav Marxist philosophy and the main schools of contemporary Western Marxism. In 1992, Markovic failed to compete in Yugoslav presidential election. All of these experiences made him continuing to engage in philosophical studies.

Experienced the dictatorship socialism, the self-manage socialism and the capitalism, Markovic began to reflect the disadvantages of developed industrial society, as well as the problems occurred in the process of building socialist society. He argued that the two socialist democracy models were not sustainable in put democratic ideal and democratic practice together. In the long run, they will inevitably be replaced by the real democratic socialism. It is obvious that, democracy is the real communist movement, it represents the revolution of social structure. Democratic ideal which was based on people's free and conscious activities in the level of practice philosophy concerns the conventional harmonious relations between man and man, human and the nature. Democracy ideal regulates the democratic institution to be a new institution which including new economic, political and cultural system. Democratic institution is the embody of democratic idea, it ensures the realization of democratic ideal, its main aim is majority decision, but all decisions should be made according to democratic ideal.

### **Markovic's democratic thought: as the Critical theory of the society**

Markovic argued that democracy is not only a complete change in social structure,

but it is also a revolution of human relations reconstruction. Everyone should consciously exist in practical way, in this case, everyone should be treated equally. Markovic deeply realized what socialist democracy is, he believed democracy is a movement which democratic ideal dimension and its institution dimension overcome the division and go towards reconciliation. "Only those changes may be characterised as radical that transform human relations - and this is precisely what socialism is about." [18] This kind of democracy laid a solid foundation of value for the socialist society, and this kind of socialist society can be called the real democratic socialism.

The socialist society derived from Marxism is just a transitional phase, its aim is "building radically new human relations" [19] but not to establish a permanent dictatorship and a hierarchy Community. In authoritarian and hierarchical society, all is imposed, accepted, fixed and given. People live with a set pattern and an unchanged routine just like machines. The society ideologies decide people's life even include how to think, how to act and what they need. "Under given conditions nothing else was possible." [20] This kind of society has not any civilization. Man is nothing but the part or spare part of a machine. Man has lost his essential character—Praxis, the human creative activities. In addition, it is also unilateral to explain socialist society as "a tool of accelerated industrialisation, and building an essentially bourgeois consumer-society without bourgeois liberties." [21] Actually, the development of a society is crowned all the totality. It is not supposed to ignore the people's relationship. The reason why a socialist society is full of vitality is that this kind of society is based on socialist values, that is, "solidarity, social justice, equality, human dignity, freedom from oppression and exploitation, abolition of privileges, the right to participate in social decision-making, a truly collective ownership of the principle means of production, control of all officials, and cultural creativity." [22]

Markovic was firmly convinced that capitalism is hopeless, it had no reason for people to adhere to. The most vital crisis of capitalism is the unlimited and cancerous production and consumption. "Industrial production has polluted the air, waters and earth to such alarming proportions that the limit becomes conceivable beyond which the destruction of life on earth would be total and irreversible. Growing ecological consciousness does not only make further production costlier, it clashes with its very basic premise: indiscriminate production for profit rather than careful selective production for genuine human needs." [23] At the same time, the bourgeoisie make mass media as the main ideological to lull the people. The bourgeoisie "manipulate the masses and turn them into docile, aping consumers." [24] However, "one returns to sanity when madness begins to look suicidal", [25] When people gradually can not confirm their identity as persons, they must begin to resist the external control. "When the costs of production become too high, domestic resources depleted and consumers resistant to manipulation, when foreign markets shrink, former colonies turn into exploiters and new colonial wars become unprofitable and self-destructive, capitalism reaches a point when its own middle classes begin to look for an alternative." [26]

In contrast, the democratic socialist society will continue to develop the knowledge to improve human capacity, the capacity provide services to a reasonable purpose, such as, satisfying people with the basic needs, reducing the working hours, ensuring a healthy natural environment, investing humanization and human culture and improving

higher productivity and better living standards with a little mechanical works and material productions. In these cases, measuring the level of living standards doesn't by the number of consumer goods but the quality of life, the amount of the bare necessities and the extent of the meaning fulfilling activities. All of these changes put the eyes on the genuine understanding of the relationship between man and man, man and nature, which changing from the manipulative, conquered and extractive relationship into harmonious, co-existence relationship, just like lips and teeth. The key of pushing forward the socialist democratic construction lies in how to know the genuine meaning of living standards. To solve this problem, Markovic arouses us to awake people's creativity and to put it into practice, particularly, to integrate democratic ideal and democratic institution into one unity forever.

### **Democratic ideal: just as human emancipation**

Markovic associated democratic issues with human liberation. He believed that "Marx was a true philosopher of human emancipation" [27] and democratic movement is a overall social revolution. The movement completely refuted "political hegemony", "economic exploitation" and "cultural monopoly" to accomplish reform in politics, economy and culture, as well as to establish a new relationship, to restore the entire relationship and to realize the human liberation.

First of all, on negating political hegemony with the same question as Aristotle once asked Plato, "Who will restrict the guards?" Markovic reflected Antonio Gramsci's cultural hegemony (1891 – 1937, an Italian philosopher, onetime leader of the Communist Party of Italy). In Markovic's view, hegemony cannot but bring about absolute power---"Power tends to corrupt; absolute power corrupts absolutely."--- Thus, in order to achieve social reconciliation the power must be decentralized. Decentralization means adopting polyarchy instead of bureaucratic politics, making direct democracy replacing representative democracy. But in what way everyone can efficiently join the management? Markovic argued that the best way to solve this problem is consultation. Since everyone has the veto, it need voluntary compromise to reach agreement. Without compromise the problems will not be tackled down for the moment. However, the humanized solution will be obtained finally through mutual trust obtained through gradual consultation and interaction.

Secondly, on negating economic exploitation, Markovic insisted that economic exploitation was born from alienation labor. The alienation labor can not be overcome by Gramsci's method—via proletarian organic intellectual spreading the ideology. The better way for this issue according to Marx was the Workers of all countries unite. "Freedom in the field of material production cannot consist of anything else but the fact that socialised man, associated producers, regulate their interchange with nature rationally, bring it under their common control, instead of being ruled by it as by some blind power; that they accomplish their task with the least expenditure of energy and under conditions most adequate to their human nature and most worthy of it. "[28] This ideal requests humanistic science and technology to take place the non-humanistic technology which ignoring ecological, natural resources and the human's relationship, and the latter only stresses commodity economy and efficiency.

Last but not least, on negating cultural monopoly, Markovic argued that in developed industrial society the socialization process turns false ideology into people's genuine existence, "all socialisation has always involved an authoritarian, individuality-suppressing, life-killing element"[29]. On the one hand, people acknowledge the social mode and the ruling authority as presumed the high-tech development and economic prosperity satisfy people the necessary of basic life; on the other hand, in the name of criticism and self-consciousness, the society continuously encourage and produce false need to people and make them into the disciplinarian in professional division and the loyal citizens in schooling training. Step by step, the people adapt to the authoritarian society and make sure that they will feel lonely and self-blame until they immerse themselves in the society. "It is tragic how often modern man is most enslaved when he has the illusion of being free." [30] Fortunately, the minority who fail to pass the education then have intent to pursue free. But to majority people, "the more he belongs to a mass society the less he is a member of any genuine human community"[31]. As a result, Markovic argued: "without a radical change of both the goals and institutions of education, all other social changes would succeed only superficially, without changing human motives, attitudes and relationships. " [32] Under the superficial social reform, politics is still politics neglecting philosophy, philosophy is still only belong to heaven and powerless to the earth's dirty, democratic institution is also bound to remove democratic ideal and demonstration pure madness.

As we know, the embodiment of democratic ideal in reality is democratic institution, democratic ideal must be premised to the radical social revolution. For instance, the system of bureaucracy, experts, interest groups, as well as ballot system must be based on democratic ideal then play a most important role to enhance People's creativity in democratic society. Otherwise "most statesmen cherish the illusion that their decision-making is rational and optimal under given circumstances. However, the result of so many "rational" decisions is a completely irrational situation: the collective suicide of mankind has become genuine possibility and it can happen at any moment, whether by choice or by accident". [33] Only the theory consists in the integration of ideal and institution is the real social philosophy. "This kind of social philosophy may be the only one which allows humankind to avoid the two pitfalls of ecological catastrophe and nuclear holocaust"[34].

To sum up, Markovic began with the practical philosophy to explain what is human emancipation, in one word, the true meaning of human emancipation is the innovation relationship between man and man, man and nature. Democratic ideal is human emancipation and the recovery of the people's all-around relationship, democratic institution and democratic ideal must be united and the social democratization is bound to push forward the process of human emancipation.

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