FREEDOM AS A FOUNDATION OF LIBERAL DEMOCRACY:
A NORMATIVE PERSPECTIVE

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The paper analyzes the connection between freedom and liberal democracy and claims the former to be a fundamental reason of the later. It claims that the two constituent parts of liberal democracy, namely liberal and democratic, embody the two dimensions of freedom substantiated by Isaiah Berlin – negative ("freedom from") and positive ("freedom two"). The paper summarizes key philosophical arguments that led throughout history to the articulation of freedom as a key social value, including the ideas of Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and other thinkers. In the end, it establishes three political and philosophical conditions that make freedom possible: 1. The distinction between Vladimir Lefebvre's two ethical systems; 2. The value of *isegoria* (the Greek term for political equality)*;* 3. The differentiation between common good and common weal. The paper makes a particular emphasis on the topicality of the discussion of freedom as a key underpinning of democracy: the world is entering the epoch of the unprecedented crisis of liberal democracy with a growing number of scholars arguing that it should give its way to other types of government. In this paper, I claim that liberal democracy is much more that the approach to the organization of society and the election of rulers, but the political embodiment of freedom, which inevitably becomes endangered when democracy is under attack.

Key words: freedom, liberal democracy, social contract, two ethical systems, isegoria, common good, information age.

Statement of the problem. The development of contemporary technologically advanced society poses many challenges to the established norms and foundations of its existence. Liberal democracy is one of such foundations. It is widely claimed that the world is amid the third global crisis of liberal democracy (the previous two refer to the situation in Europe and the United States in the 1910ˢ and 1930ˢ, respectively, that ended in two world wars). The biggest threat comes from populist regimes, post-truth politics, international terrorist groups, aggressive foreign policy, global financial crises, climate change, etc. But while these dangers are widely examined by scholars, one is often overlooked, especially, by the Ukrainian researchers. It comes from the attempts to resurrect what may be called *the Utopian narrative*, by which I understand a sort of hubris of human reason, into which it slips when it believes in the ability to engineer a "perfect" society beyond the existing one. Starting from *The Republic* by Plato, such imaginary communities were often conceived in the form of strict regimentation of their citizens by the caste of dispassionate administrators who have solved the existing social evils through the application of rationally instrumental techniques. The American author Parag Khanna has recently envisaged a new kind of Utopia, specifically tailored for the digital age. In his book *Technocracy in America: Rise of the Info-State* (2017) he tries to give weight to the idea that "American democracy just isn't good enough anymore. A costly election has done more to divide American society than unite it, while trust in government – and democracy itself – is plummeting. But there are better systems out there, and America would be wise to learn from them" [11]. Khanna dreams

about a scientifically run and perfectly governed society, in which modern technologies will assist a caste of dispassionate rulers, and sees this model as an alternative to liberal democracy.

Liberal democracy is indeed often flawed and the idea to replace it with the type of government Khanna envisages can be truly tempting (as any kind of utopia, by the way). What is left out of the story, though, is the price that we would have to pay for these bold experiments. I will discuss the ideas of Parag Khanna later. In this paper, I am going to analyze the intimate connection between freedom and democracy. I am going to argue that the attempts to dismiss democracy as "flawed" or "inefficient" will inevitably lead to the loss of freedom. Maintaining democracy in the society does not necessarily lead to wealth, status or effective governance (though these are mainly democratic societies that are lucky to boast these features), however it secures freedom. This is important to highlight, as long as such authors as Parag Khanna talk a lot about the expected benefits of abandoning democracy. What they remain silent about, though, are the losses, namely the loss of freedom.

Analysis of recent research and publications. The problem of whether liberal democracy is declining in the modern world has been recently highlighted in numerous research and publications. In particular, Eric Rosenbach and Katherine Mansted claim in their paper *Can Democracy Survive in the Information Age?* (2018) that "The Information Revolution has most radically reinvented the way in which states wield information power, ushering in changes to the nature of state competition, conflict, and international relations in the 21ˢᵗ century" and point out that key features of democracy, e. g. freedom of speech, elections, private sector, and the separation of powers, fuel its troubles due to the new nature of information production and distribution in the digital age [15]. In the paper *Will Democracy Survive Big Data and Artificial Intelligence?* by Dirk Helbing, Bruno Frey et al. the authors argue "that we are in the middle of a technological upheaval that will transform the way society is organized". Our core values, including the values of liberalism and democracy are going to face profound challenges, and "we must make the right decision right now" if we want to keep them for the future [17]. The Israeli philosopher Yuval Noah Harari suggests that liberalism is about to face even a greater threat from modern technologies than it the one that came from Communism and Fascism in the past [9]. He also maintains that the future we are about to witness the rise of "the most unequal societies in history" as long as the masses loose their political power and a huge underclass of "useless people" is under making throughout the globe [10]. Other authors, such as Parag Khanna, acknowledge that liberalism and democracy are amid troubled waters in the modern world, however they are far from re-asserting their value and believe that their replacement by new forms of political organization, more "fit" for our age, is a natural process resembling the Darwinian evolution. In light of their attacking arguments, a number of scholars, including David Betham [4], Russel Bova [6]. Fareed Zakaria [18], Paulo Freire [7], Francesca Polletta [14] etc., establish a profound connection between liberal democracy and freedom, while warning against extreme skews toward either illiberal populist regimes or top-down authoritarian technocratic power assisted by modern technologies.

The **purpose** of the paper is to reveal the deep inner connection between liberal democracy and freedom. As long as the voices grow louder that claim that liberal democracy has outlived and should give its way to the top-down technocratic rule or any other form of government, there is an urgent need to speak out for its defense, re-assert its intimate conjunction with freedom, and warn against the attempts to displace it, since these attempts will inevitably lead to the loss of freedom.

The main material. The connection between freedom and democracy is so profound that these terms are often used interchangeably. To say nowadays that society is "free" automatically implies that is democratic, and vice versa. The same interrelation was true 2 500 years ago, in

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ancient Athens, which is often credited as the birthplace of democracy. The Athenian leader Pericles in his famous Funeral Oration (circa 430 BC) praised the values of freedom and openness and attributed them to the democratic Athenian society, which he contrasted to the autocratic and militarist Sparta. Aristotle believed that freedom was the telos, or goal, of democracy, while Plato caricatured democracy as "bursting with the spirit of freedom". Nevertheless, the ancient and modern understanding of the relationship between freedom and democracy are very different and only partly refer to the same phenomena. In order to understand this difference and, hopefully, establish the connection between freedom and democracy, we should look closer at what is called "liberal democracy" and find out why its two components, liberal and democratic, are bound together in this term.

The term "liberal democracy" refers to a political system, in which the main political offices are elected regularly by universal ballot and equal suffrage, with effective choice between candidates and parties, and which simultaneously protects basic human rights under the law, including the right to life, property, speech, assembly, and religion, and grants these rights equally to all its citizens and residents. The two parts of "liberal democracy", therefore, include the method of selection of rulers (and, at least indirectly, policies) and the protection of human rights under the law. These components, liberal and democratic, are also widely recognized as "positive" and "negative" dimensions of freedom, as these were formulated by Isaiah Berlin. "Positive freedom" relates primarily to the participation in the political life of one's community, as well as the ability to influence – directly or indirectly – the policies, which affect one's own life. More formally, it is equated with passive and active suffrage, or the right to elect and be elected for public offices. "Negative freedom" deals with the principle of noninterference, or the freedom of an individual from arbitrary intrusion into his life, which for most of history meant the power of the state.

The causal link between the power of the people to elect their leadership, on the one hand, and the protection of human freedoms, on the other, is a matter of old scholarly dispute. "On the one hand, liberty is sometimes treated as a consequence of democracy," writes the scholar Russel Bova.

"Democratic governments, though varying among themselves in level of respect for human rights, are assumed to do a better job of protecting those rights than do their authoritarian counterparts. On the other hand, liberty is frequently treated as a precondition of democracy, to the point that most scholars include civil and political liberties as a third element (beyond participation and contestation) of the definition of democracy itself" [6].

But while these two components of "liberal democracy" are widely understood in a unity, they, in fact, have different historical and intellectual roots. They also don't always go hand in hand (even in the West), and sometimes can be extremely at odds with each other. "Suppose elections are free and fair and those elected are racists, fascists, separatists," writes Fareed Zakaria in his book *The Future of Freedom: Illiberal Democracy at Home and Abroad* [18]. Or consider it the other way around: such countries, as former Yugoslavia or Indonesia, were more secular, tolerant, and protective of human rights when they were ruled by autocrats (Tito and Suharto, respectively) then they became afterward as democracies. Great Britain has a long tradition of limiting public authority and protecting individual rights, but it became an electoral democracy only much later in time. In 1830, for example, it allowed only 2 percent of its population to vote. America's Founding Fathers highly valued liberalism, but were also afraid of democracy, which they believe could evolve into a "tyranny of the majority". Therefore, they instituted a number of checks on a popular vote, including the Electoral College and the unrepresentative Senate, as well as the "Bill of Rights", which is basically the list of things the government would not do even if the people wished.

Though "liberalism" and "democracy" can exist independently from each other, making it easy to find the examples of both "democracy without liberalism" and "liberalism without democracy", in the long run they are inconsistent and self-defeating without one another. They are both political cripples waiting to evolve into full-fledged "liberal democracies". And while some politicians (and even scholars) try to pitch them against each other, arguing either that nothing should frustrate "the will of the people" (especially, those "despised minorities"), or that there are much better ways to organize the society and protect individual rights than asking those "shortsighted and irrational voters", I believe that liberalism and democracy are two wings, which it takes for freedom to fly. In order to explain why it might be the case, let's do a little bit of history.

Ancient Greece is widely credited as a birthplace of democracy. Back them it was viewed not only as one of possible ways to organize a society, but the institutional embodiment of freedom – one of the highest and the most precious human possessions. A dialog between Atossa, the queen of Persia, and the leader of chorus from Aeschylus' tragedy The Persians (472 BC) may serve as a testimony to this point:

Atossa: Where, in what clime, the towers of Athens rise?
Leader: Far in the west, where sets the imperial sun.
Atossa: Yet my son will'd the conquest of this town.
Leader: May Greece through all her states bend to his power!
Atossa: What monarch reigns, whose power commands their ranks?
Leader: Slaves to no lord, they own no kingly power [3].

Yet, as it was said, the Greeks understood freedom very differently from modern Westerners. Benjamin Constant, writing in the first quarter of the nineteenth century, described the Athenian understanding of freedom as direct participation in public affairs and contrasted it with a later notion, which has to do mainly with the protection of individuals' rights and private interests. In classic Athens, freedom meant the right (but also the duty) to participate in public affairs. It was also used in reference to the independence of one nation from the other – a criterion, under which even today's North Korea would be considered a free country. The Greeks also had no clear demarcation line between the public and the private sphere. They equated democracy with the rule of the majority and there were no boundaries on its decisions. For the Greeks, there was nothing wrong in ostracizing or even executing citizens whose opinions diverged from the opinions of the majority. In Constant's words, democracy in Athens meant "the subjection of the individual to the authority of the community" [Quoted in: 18]. The death of Socrates, which was "democratic, but not liberal" [18], provides, perhaps, the best illustration to this point.

The notion of freedom as a protection of individuals under the law also has ancient roots but goes down to the Roman rather than the Greek heritage. According to Fareed Zakaria, "If the Greek roots of Western liberty are often overstated, the Roman ones are neglected" [18]. In order to understand why it is the case, it is necessary to recall the main difference between Greece and Rome. Rome was not a cluster of city-states, but a vast empire. While the Greek city-states could be ruled *ad hoc* just by gathering their citizens on the square, it was no longer possible in Rome with its huge territory and diverse population. The empire could be ruled effectively only by abstract law, which for the first time in history equalized its citizens and granted him a sort of legal protection. A good example can be found in another prominent trial of the ancient world, namely the trial of Jesus. When the mob shouting "Crucify!" brought Him before Pilate, the prefect of Judea initially responded that he had found "no fault in this man" (Luke 23:4). Pilate was obviously reluctant to put to death an innocent person, but the prospect of rebellion, which seemed inevitable if he would release Jesus, forced him to "wash his hands" and declare himself "innocent of the blood of this just person" (Matthew 27:24). While the death of Socrates

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embodies the excess of democracy over liberalism, the trial of Jesus hints, at least, at some legal protection of the individual against the wishes of the crowd, though flawed and conniving.

Though the foundations of liberal democracy as a precondition of freedom could be found already in the ancient world, only after many centuries later they were rediscovered and reinterpreted in what would later become the today's West. Fareed Zakaria argues that "Liberalism came to the West before democracy. Liberalism led to democracy, not the other way around" [18]. It is hard to disagree with this statement, as long as universal suffrage became a norm in the West only a few decades ago (women in the United States couldn't vote until 1920, while black Americans, though formally eligible for voting after the Civil War, were effectively disenfranchised from it under the "Jim Crow laws" until 1965), but the idea of individual rights and their protection by the state is much older. The opinions of scholars are divided regarding what was the driving force behind modern liberalism. Some attribute it to the progress of moral consciousness, while others point out to more down-to-earth economic or political reasons. Having no space for a lengthy discussion, I will specify only the most widely accepted arguments.

One of them traces its origin to the European geography, which is mostly a patchwork of rivers, valleys, and mountain ranges. Historically, they served as natural barriers for armies and, thus, promoted diversity and impeded political centralization (Russia and China, on the contrary, are plains, which were easily crossed by troops and, therefore, facilitated the formation of empires). The second argument finds the source of liberalism in the separation between the Church and the state, which happened in 324 AD when the emperor Constantine moved his capital from Rome to Constantinople. This political move left the West for the next millennia with two powers, political and religious, which contested each other so that none of them, in the end, has become absolute (the Byzantine and later Russian model favored the unity between political and spiritual powers, which together suppressed the individual). This early separation of powers foreshadowed the future idea of "checks and balances", as formulated by Charles-Louis Montesquieu in *The Spirit of the Laws* (1748). The third source was the influence of Christianity, which stressed the universal value of human beings in the claim that they were created "in the image of God" (Genesis 1:26) and, therefore, had equal spiritual worth, for "there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3: 28). Along with the Greek and the Roman sources, this idea laid the foundation of the so-called *ius naturale* (natural right) in the Middle Ages, which served to protect the individuals against the arbitrary and unlawful persecution. And though it didn't protect them if such persecution was justified by some "higher" moral goals, such as saving the world from evil (which legitimized the Inquisition), it still contributed to the idea that justice does not proceed exclusively from the state, but rather the state itself should obey to a higher justice, which emanates directly from God or nature. A secularized version of this belief was put in the foundation of several key legal documents, including the American Constitution and the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The fourth and, perhaps, the most important source was the development of capitalism and the rise of the new bourgeois class of merchants and traders. This class found itself outside the medieval aristocracy and began fighting for its rights. Since the medieval world, which was dominated by religious orthodoxy and aristocratic privileges, allowed no room for the bourgeois class, the justification of its claims demanded a totally new ideology. While some early capitalists found such justification in the Reformation, the others turned to a completely new rationalist outlook. Thomas Hobbes in *The Leviathan* (1651) suggested a fully secular interpretation of the origin and purpose of state power, which he traced to the social contract between individuals attempting to end the so-called "war of all against all" and protect their rights. Hobbes was one of the first philosophers to treat the state primarily as a defender of individual rights. Later, John Locke in his *Two Treatises of Government* (1690)

showed how rights naturally proceed from private property and contractual relations between the individuals who establish a political union solely for the purpose of protection of those rights. In the age of Enlightenment, in the world still dominated by aristocrats and "the divine rights of kings", liberalism became a leading ideology of the new progressive bourgeois class. After the English (1688), the American (1776), and the French (1789) revolutions it gradually became the leading system of values in the world today. And, though, it faced many challenges in the past (the biggest one from the Communism), it still remains a defining normative framework, which emphasizes the limitation of state power, the protection of individual autonomy, and the right of everyone to freely pursue whatever lifestyle they want, as long as they don't harm the others and their property. Liberalism, thus, refers to a political system, which recognized freedom as the supreme social value and protects it under the law, so as to secure its enjoyment for everyone.

Though liberalism has to do primarily with "negative" dimension of freedom, or protection of the individual against unlawful interference, this freedom is still meaningless if the individual lacks, at least, minimum resources to support her autonomy. "If freedom is a good only because of the value that lies in exercising it, then those who lack the capacity or resources to exercise a given freedom are being denied the enjoyment of it, even though they may not formally be obstructed from it", writes David Beetham [4]. The recognition of the principle that freedom should not be just formally declared but also supported with resources is an important watershed between the 20th century liberalism and its earlier historical predecessors. Classic liberalism in the 17th – 19th centuries secured the rights of only those people who had already amassed enough property and resources to be independent and self-reliant. And since in those centuries it was rather a small percentage of people, liberalism, though progressive in its values, was rather a cynical cover of oligarchic interests than a true protector of universal freedoms. The idea of granting necessary resources for living to each member of the society initially matured not inside liberalism, but within its historical antagonist, Communism, which appealed to equality and social justice only to institute a gruesome tyranny. The threat from the Communism (along with the economic crisis of 1929) stimulated the augmentation of liberalism with the idea of social justice, which has become widely accepted as an integral part of freedom. "What is needed is a floor below which no one is allowed to fall, plus specific resources such as legal aid; at the top end, there should be regulations to limit the advantages of the wealthy in access to public office, and to prevent their undue influence over officeholders and channels of public information", summarizes Beetham [4].

Liberalism, despite its intrinsic value, refers not to the whole freedom, but only to a part of it, namely to the part, which involves the protection of personal autonomy and the person's ability to master her own life. The other part, however, can be exercised not by the individual alone, but only in a community, together with other individuals. Should society have lower taxes or more social welfare? What is more important at a given moment – good infrastructure or high-quality medicine? These issues concern not so much each citizen alone, but the whole body of citizens who may well have different opinions about these matters. Therefore, if it is presumed that freedom can be exercised not only in private life, but also in public, and the people should have a say in what concerns them all as a community, the liberal part of freedom should be necessarily coupled with the democratic.

As it was said, early liberal thinkers were hesitant in recognizing this part of freedom. Thomas Hobbes faced a dilemma: if a sovereign state is born out of the anarchy of "war of all against all" and serves as a protector of order, who should then control the state? Hobbes had a negative answer to this question and claimed, rather paradoxically, that only the unchecked power of the state would do the best job protecting freedom (he also strongly opposed the separation of powers, because, in his opinion, it would cause the same anarchy in the government,

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which it was instituted to prevent in the first place). Locke recognized only very limited suffrage, Tocqueville feared that democracy would lapse into a "tyranny of the majority", and America's Founding Fathers had many surprisingly anti-democratic quotes. For example, John Adams wrote that "Democracy will soon degenerate into an anarchy, such an anarchy that every man will do what is right in his own eyes, and no man's life or property or reputation or liberty will be secure", and Benjamin Franklin famously said that "Democracy is two wolves and a lamb voting on what to have for lunch. Liberty is a well-armed lamb contesting the vote!" [19]. These arguments reflect an elitist outlook of the privileged social class, which feared the empowerment of people who in those times were mostly poor, badly educated, and easily manipulated. And these concerns aren't new at all. The Greek philosophers made a sharp distinction between a moderate democracy and the rule of the mob. Plato, probably, would have agreed with Winston Churchill that democracy is "the worst form of government", but not except for "all the others", but only except for a tyranny.

The most powerful argument for the democratic aspect of freedom has come not from liberal thinkers, but from the philosopher who, along with Hegel, Marx, Nietzsche, and Heidegger, is often considered as one of the most dangerous and anti-liberal minds of all times, namely Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Though in the age of Rousseau the European monarchs had already been familiar with liberal ideas and even tried to follow the principle that their rule should benefit the whole mass of their citizens rather than the privileged upper-class, an outlook named the enlightened absolutism, the idea that the people themselves were a source of power and should form the government was still alien to them. The monarch rules not only because he "knows best" how to rule, but primarily because he has a divine mandate for ruling, which only the Church or another legitimate ruler could grant. Despite in the Age of Reason some kings were really efficient rulers, they still did not require consent or approval for their policies from those who were affected by them.

Rousseau believed that all people are born free and abhorred that power has been instituted over them without their approval. "Man is born free, and everywhere he is in chains. How did this change come about? I don't know. What can make it legitimate? That's a question that I think I can answer", he boldly claimed in his 1762 treatise *The Social Contract* [16]. He saw the solution to this dilemma only in redesigning the society from the bottom up. Power, he believed, should be taken from kings and queens and put in the hands a popular sovereign, representing what he called the "general will". Unlike Hobbes and Locke, whose "social contracts" happened in the past, Rousseau foresaw it for the future. He also claimed that, though it was impossible to directly translate the popular will into policies and representative institutions were still required, those institutions had to be made distinct from the sovereign. The government may only act on behalf of the popular sovereign, but should never be allowed to substitute it – in a straightforward opposition to the formula of Louis XIV "L'état c'est moi" (I am the State).

The ideas of Jean-Jacques Rousseau about popular sovereignty and representative government are reflected in the constitutions of the majority of democratic countries on the planet, including the Ukrainian Constitution, which declares in its Article 5 that "The people are the bearers of sovereignty and the only source of power in Ukraine. The people exercise power directly and through bodies of state power and bodies of local self-government" [2]. However, as much as Rousseau was pro-democratic, he was equally anti-liberal. He believed that nothing should frustrate the popular will, and if there were divergent voices, it was not only the right but also the duty of the majority to suppress them. By giving a new endorsement to the ancient principle "Vox Populi – Vox Dei", his theory was used to legitimize many wrongdoings against the minorities and the opposition. A rare dictator in the 20th century justified his crimes by his own will, and not by the "people's".

Early liberal philosophers and Rousseau approached freedom from just one side and utterly ignored the other. However, if it is presumed that freedom consists of two parts, negative and positive, then the two approaches should be combined and the protection of individual rights should balance the rule of the people. "With the perspective of hindsight", writes the researcher Russel Bova, "one might argue that precisely this Tocquevillean fear of democratic tyranny – rooted in decades of Enlightenment thought and reflected, for example, in the statesmanship of the framers of the US Constitution – has helped to develop and maintain the essentially liberal character of Western democracy" [6]. At the same time, these two dimensions of freedom, negative and positive, should not be mechanistically contrasted, because such contrasting essentially overlooks the connection between them. David Beetham suggests that every single democratic freedom is tied to another and cannot be exercised in full unless the others are neglected. "The guarantee of civil and political rights", he writes, "provides an essential foundation for all the other dimensions of democracy. If we consider political participation, then citizens will be deterred from becoming politically active, or even involving themselves in the associational life of civil society, if their freedom to communicate and associate with others is obstructed, or compromised through government surveillance. Without such freedom, the development of an attentive and critical public opinion will also be impaired. Draw out any strand of the complex web of democracy, and you will find it leads to some specific civil or political right, without whose security the fabric will start to unravel" [4].

Russel Bova, on his part, gives weight to the idea that democracy, as a procedural way of forming the government, does a much better job in protecting freedom compared to authoritarian countries. "Democratic checks on rulers", he argues, "make it much more difficult for them to abuse their power or oppress their subjects, and they provide the opportunity for citizens to act to expand the range of rights to which they are entitled" [6]. Bova also illustrates this point with data. He analyzed the 1993–1994 scores of the Freedom House, which measured two independent values, "political rights" and "civil liberties", on the seven-point scale in 190 countries in the world, and found a strong correlation between countries, which were electoral democracies, and those, which were the most effective in protecting human rights. In 94 cases (49 percent), the scores on two dimensions were exactly the same; in another 81 cases (43 percent), the difference in the scores was only one point. Only in 15 cases (8 percent) the difference was two points, and in no case it was more than that [6]. These numbers show that while autocratic regimes occasionally can protect the rights of their subjects better than democracies, this is rather an exception than a rule. For each "good" dictator, such as Lee Kuan Yew of Singapore, there is, at least, a dozen of Roberto Mugabes.

All these arguments prove that freedom and the institutional setting of liberal democracy are inseparably combined. However, in my opinion, it is possible to reformulate them in a more generic way, such that goes beyond asking which political and legal conditions (i. e., regular competitive elections, the separation of powers, the rule of law, independent judiciary, etc.) are required so as consider a given society free, and looks, instead, into the nature of these formal conditions. In order to develop an argument against technocracy, it is necessary to view liberal democracy in a more abstract framework. For this purpose, I would like to suggest three conditions, which transcend the formal attributes of freedom and, instead, deal with its underlying ethos.

1. *Two ethical systems*. What is the purpose of society? Is it freedom for its members, or something else? In other words, what is considered to be the primary goal of its existence – granting freedom to its citizens (in both negative and positive aspects) or anything apart from this goal, such as maximizing GDP, conquering other countries, winning new markets, achieving Communism, exporting the revolution, etc? Most societies on the planet historically were (a) not

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democracies, and (b) serving some other goals than empowering their citizens, such as maintaining the religious order (as in the Middle Ages) or conquering new lands and markets. Modern societies have become more peaceful, more prosperous and more tolerant than their predecessors only because they have rethought the ultimate purpose of their existence and made freedom the ultimate value. David Beetham claims that democracy is only good, because it serves just one purpose – delivering freedom to its citizens, or rather "specific rights needed to realize democratic freedom" [4]. This argument does not deny, of course, that democracies should aspire to the efficient economy, good infrastructure, high-quality medicine, or securing their position on the international arena, but all these benefits should be considered not as independent goals, but only as means for a fuller realization of freedom of their citizens. Political and legal institutions of liberal democracy (the rule of law, regular elections, social welfare, etc.) reflect this ultimate purpose of their existence.

Totalitarian countries, on the contrary, have a different purpose. Though even in these societies there was some degree of protection of human rights, historically they all served some "higher" purpose, such as winning the war on imperialism or pushing the world into Communism. In this case, there is a legal or moral demand (usually the two come together) to the citizen to surrender his freedom and rally up with the others to fight for these goals. And the political and legal institutions of unfree societies (official ideology, one-party rule, state control on media and the economy, abolition of independent public organizations) serve the goal of imposing a universal discipline beyond the normal requirements of law and order. The whole society, thus, becomes a sort of business corporation or military unit, fighting for the goals set by its leadership.

The idea that society is an end-in-itself and should not be subjected to any "higher" goals can be traced back to Aristotle and the opening chapter of his *Politics* [1]. More recently, the American-Russian mathematical psychologist Vladimir Lefebvre gave a new endorsement to this idea in his book *The Algebra of Consciousness* (1981), in which he proposed the distinction between two ethical systems as two different ways of organizing the society [12]. The first ethical system bans evil, the second promotes good. If there is a conflict between bad means and good ends, the first system emphasizes that one should be concerned. If some anticipated social, political or economic benefit can be obtained only through violation of someone's rights, it should be discarded. Banning evil is more important than achieving good. According to Lefebvre, this system is characteristic of the West, including Europe, North America, Australia, and New Zealand. The second system claims that if there is a conflict between bad means and good ends, one should not be concerned. Harm is justified if the obtained benefit is greater than it. This system was characteristic of the Soviet Union. As Lenin said in 1920, "We repudiate all morality that proceeds from supernatural ideas or ideas that are outside class conceptions. Morality is entirely subordinate to the interests of class war. Everything is moral that is necessary for the annihilation of the old exploiting social order and for uniting the proletariat" [Quoted in: 8]. The society which treats freedom as a supreme value and the ultimate purpose of its existence clearly belongs to the first system, whereas the one which sees its goals in something else would allow its trade-off for a "higher" benefit and, thus, belong to the second.

2. *Isegoria.* Should politics be a free enterprise, open to all citizens, or a closed domain accessible only to the initiated? In order to be considered free, the society should allow the whole body of its adult citizens (some limitations can be justified by law) to participating in the process of political decision-making, i. e. to elect their representatives and be elected. Non-free society, on the contrary, establishes criteria whereby it excludes a large part of its citizens, or even the majority of them, from deciding on the issues that concern them all as a community and, thus, exercising their positive freedom. Historically, these criteria included aristocratic privileges, ethnicity, race, gender, etc. Though the modern world (or, at least, its democratic part) has long

abandoned such limitations, there is still one which continues to be taken seriously and, in my opinion, can pose a threat to freedom in the future, namely the criterion of knowledge and skills. Should political participation of some citizens be limited on the premise that they don't possess enough expertise, so as to be eligible to decide? In some cases, such as judges of the Supreme Court, such limitations are justified. However, my argument is more generic: Should the right to decide on public policies be shifted to unelected bodies of experts? These bodies, according to the supporters of such a view, should be independent of popular opinions. They may, of course, consult with the citizens or probe them for their opinions, but essentially their decisions will be autonomous. The ancient Greeks had a specific term denoting the equality of political participation of all adult citizens, regardless of their knowledge or professional training. They called it *isegoria* (᾽σηγορία), which literally translates as "equality of speech". An excerpt from Plato's dialogue Protagoras serves as the best illustration of isegoria:

"Now I observe that when we are met together in the assembly, and the matter in hand relates to building, the builders are summoned as advisers; when the question is one of ship-building, then the ship-wrights; and the like of other arts which they think capable of being taught and learned. And if some person offers to give them advice who is not supposed by them to have any skill in the art, even though he be good-looking, and rich, and noble, they will not listen to him, but laugh and hoot at him, until either he is clamoured down and retires of himself; or if he persist, he is dragged away or put out by the constables at the command of the prytanes. This is their way of behaving about professors of the arts. But when the question is an affair of state, then everybody is free to have a say – carpenter, tinker, cobbler, sailor, passenger; rich and poor, high and low – any one who likes gets up, and no one reproaches him, as in the former case, with not having learned, and having no teacher, and yet giving advice; evidently because they are under the impression that this sort of knowledge cannot be taught" [13].

This excerpt illustrates a fundamental difference between any practical activity, such as shipbuilding, and participation in public affairs. When it comes to any professional activity, which serves specific goals and, therefore, should be subordinate to these goals, then it is really better to entrust it to the professionals. But this approach ultimately contradicts the ethos of the republic embodied in the Latin words *res* and *publica*, which translate as "common cause". The republic is a "common cause" of its citizens, the form of living freely and responsibly together. It cannot be instrumentalized because, as Aristotle wrote, it has a supreme value in itself. To instrumentalize the republic means to treat it not as a goal, but as a means of achieving independent goals, and, thus, surrender its a priori value as a collective exercise of freedom. And if cultivation of freedom is no longer the highest priority for the society, than it really makes sense to entrust it to those who "know better" how to achieve other goals.

3. *Common good vs. common weal*. There is a long-standing philosophical problem whether it is possible to approach the common good as a kind of "objective" truth which exists independently of the will of the citizens and can be discovered through philosophical contemplation of scientific measurement, or whether it is identical with their expressed will, the common weal. The answer to this question can serve as another demarcation line between democracies and nondemocracies. Whereas a democratic res publica identifies the common good with the expressed will of its free and responsible citizens, non-democratic forms of power approach it as an abstract concept, conceivable only to the elite. According to the researchers Christopher Bickerton and Carlo Accetti, "the outputs of party democracy as political regime are considered legitimate not because they approach to some pre-political conception of "truth" or "justice", but rather because they are expressed through a specific set of procedures that are taken to be expressive of the constitutive values of democracy, i. e. freedom and equality" [5]. Rousseau elaborated

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his concept of general will in direct opposition to the understanding of common good in the age of Enlightenment as an "objective truth", which exists independently of the citizens' wishes or interests. It was believed in those times that such a "truth" could be grasped only by an enlightened ruler and proceeds from his knowledge. And this assumption inevitably led to the second catch, namely to the limitation of political participation based on the knowledge criterion. "Once we accept the assumption that there exists an "objective" and pre-political standard of political legitimacy", continue Bickerton and Accetti, "it seems difficult to resist the conclusion that some individuals are more competent than others in knowing what this standard requires, and should therefore be entrusted with responsibility of ruling the others" [5].

The criterion of indistinguishability between the common good and the expressed will of the citizens, or the common weal, requires, of course, some forms of limitation of such will, so as to prevent it from lapsing into what Tocqueville called "tyranny of the majority" (in the United States the Bill of Rights serves as an effective check against it). However, freedom can flourish only if it sides with the government "of the people, by the people, for the people". And as long as it concerned, even the wisest ruler cannot substitute "we, the people" by his own understanding and will. Yes, the democratic majority can often be reckless and short-sighted, creating a temptation to replace it with some unelected bodies of experts, however, it should be remembered that this tradeoff is always paid by the loss of freedom.

Conclusion. Therefore, only liberal democracy fulfills the three criteria: treats freedom of its citizens as the highest value, empowers them to participate in public affairs, and regards their will as a supreme command. Though these criteria are imperative for freedom, they may not be necessary for other desirable goals, such as having a successful economy, good infrastructure, efficient healthcare, or strong military. Despite this, I am concerned primarily with how freedom can be endangered, not with what gains can be extracted from its limitation. In my future papers, I am going to consider the concept of informational technocracy, presented in the work *Technocracy in America: Rise of the Info-State*, as a challenge to freedom. In this work, Khanna suggests that liberal democracy should yield to technocracy, which he regards as the most optimal form of political organization for the digital future. I am going to show that beyond the shiny promises of his cutting-edge technocratic power lies a great damage to freedom about which the Canadian philosopher Charles Taylor warned about when he wrote about its loss in the hands of "immense tutelary power". For this reason, I am going not to only to inquire into his arguments, but also compare them with another work, which has become synonymous with great promises in an unfree world, namely Thomas More's *Utopia*.

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СВОБОДА ЯК ОСНОВА ЛІБЕРАЛЬНОЇ ДЕМОКРАТІЇ: НОРМАТИВНА ПЕРСПЕКТИВА

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У статті аналізується зв'язок між свободою та ліберальною демократією та стверджується, що свобода – це основоположна цінність демократії. Дві частини ліберальної демократії, а саме «ліберальна» та «демократична», розглядаються як форми політичного вираження позитивного та негативного вимірів свободи, постульованих Ісаєю Берліном. Стаття узагальнює найважливіші філософські аргументи, які впродовж історії трактували свободу як ключову соціальну цінність, включаючи ідеї Томаса Гоббса, Джона Локка, Жана-Жака Руссо й інших мислителів. Наприкінці статті встановлюються три політико-філософські умови буття свободи в суспільстві: 1) дві етичні системи В. Лефевра; 2) ізегорія (давньогрецький термін, який позначає політичну рівність); 3) розмежування суспільної згоди та суспільного блага. Особливий акцент зроблено на актуальності трактування свободи як фундаментальної цінності демократії: сучасний світ входить в епоху безпрецедентної кризи ліберальної демократії, яка низці авторів дає підстави висунути аргумент, що демократія нібито відходить у минуле і повинна поступитися іншим формам правління. Стаття доводить, що ліберальна демократія – це не просто один зі способів політичної організації суспільства та формування влади, а насамперед політичний простір буття свободи, яка неминуче опиняється під загрозою, якщо під загрозою є демократія.

Ключові слова: свобода, ліберальна демократія, суспільний договір, дві етичні системи, ізегорія, суспільне благо, інформаційна епоха.