

## Politics of Property

### Deepening of Democracy

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## Property to Democracy

- Property
- Prosperity
- Democracy
- Property Rights

## Road to Democracy

- Democracy in Athens (BC 594 - 431)
- Roman Republic (BC 509 – 31)
- Magna Carta in Britain (June 15, 1215)
- Birth of a federal republic in the US (1776)
- French republic and end of divine right of kings (1793)
- 19<sup>th</sup> Century democratisation in Europe
- 20<sup>th</sup> democracy wins the day (Post WW II)

## Decline of Authoritarianism

- King's law to Rule of Law
- Rise of the feudal class
- Need for the king to negotiate
- Separation of church and state
- Growth of property owning class
- Democratisation of society
- Taxation without representation

## Role of Property

- Paving the road to democracy
- Rise of wealthy feudal lords who could stand up to the monarch
- More rule based governance
- Growth and prosperity
- Greater capacity of people to claim and defend their property and rights
- Environment conducive for Rule of Law

## Democracy in Athens

- Rise of polis, defensible locations where farmers could fall back in times of war.
- The polis evolved in to city state, and became hub of trade and exchange
- 1066 BC, the last king replaced by magistrates for life
- 594BC, Solon became the magistrate
- 561 BC, Pisistratus, a military leader became the tyrant
- 508 BC, Cleisthenes founder of new political organization *demokratia*, or democracy – rule by the entire body of citizens
- 461 BC, Pericles – equality of justice and opportunity
- 431 BC, end of democracy, following the war with Sparta

## Roman Republic

- Elected consul / dictator
- Patricians and Senate from the elite
- Entry of Plebians
- Division of authority
- Recognition of the need to have checks and balances
- Lasted 500 years 509 BC to 31 BC

## Democracy: Is it Majority Rule?

A candid examination of history, we shall find that turbulence, violence, and abuse of power, by the majority trampling on the rights of the minority, have produced factions and commotions, which, in republics, have, more frequently than any other cause, produced despotism.

- *Madison 1788, Elliot's Debates*

## Aristotle

The basis of a democratic state is liberty.

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A good decision is based on knowledge and not on numbers. Plato

Plato is dear to me, but dearer still is truth.

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"In a democracy the poor will have more power than the rich, because there are more of them, and the will of the majority is supreme."

## Thomas Jefferson

A democracy is nothing more than mob rule, where fifty-one percent of the people may take away the rights of the other forty-nine.

## Alexander Hamilton

It has been observed that a pure democracy if it were practicable would be the most perfect government. Experience has proved that no position is more false than this. The ancient democracies in which the people themselves deliberated never possessed one good feature of government. Their very character was tyranny; their figure deformity.

## Edmund Burke

The tyranny of a multitude is a multiplied tyranny.

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In a democracy the majority of the citizens is capable of exercising the most cruel oppressions upon the minority whenever strong divisions prevail in that kind of polity, as they often must; and that oppression of the minority will extend to far greater numbers and will be carried on with much greater fury than can almost ever be apprehended from the dominion of a single scepter.

### Lord Acton

The most certain test by which we judge whether a country is really free is the amount of security enjoyed by minorities.

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It is bad to be oppressed by a minority, but it is worse to be oppressed by a majority.

### Winston Churchill

The best argument against democracy is a five-minute conversation with the average voter.

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It has been said that democracy is the worst form of government except all the others that have been tried.

### Mahatma Gandhi

What difference does it make to the dead, the orphans and the homeless, whether the mad destruction is wrought under the name of totalitarianism or the holy name of liberty or democracy?

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Evolution of democracy is not possible if we are not prepared to hear the other side.

### Democracy: Not majority rule

- Recognition and respect for dissent
- Appreciation of rule of law
- Protection of minority opinion
- Individual is the smallest minority
- Recognition of individual rights
- Recognition of property rights
- Moderating impact of democracy

### Rise of Democracy

- From apprehension to reluctance
- Acceptance of democracy as a desirable political ideal
- Prosperity and property paving the way for democracy
- Making popular participation in the democratic process possible

### Exception Proves the Rule

- Miracle of Democracy: India
- Universal adult franchise
- Constitutional government
- Regular free and fair elections
- Change of governments under rule of law

### Demise of Property Rights

- Is India defying history?
- Fundamental rights including property rights
- Constitutional democracy
- Political assault on property from the first amendment to the constitution in 1951
- Land appropriation and distribution
- Nationalisation of many industries

### Democratic participation

- Opposition to collective farming
- Opposition to suspension of democracy
- Moderating impact of democracy
- Participation in the political process
- Increased political competition
- Growing focus on governance and performance
- Market oriented reforms
- Recognition of diversities

### Rise of Property Rights

- Land acquisition and displacement of 20 to 50 million people for big projects
- Land distribution, even without clear title
- Political mobilisation on the ground of land distribution
- Growing protests on land acquisition
- Political competition capitalisation on protests

### Democracy: Politics of Property

- Land acquisition law of 1894 on the statute
- Millions of hectares have been acquired in the past
- Today, even 100 acres are proving too difficult to acquire
- The idea of property and ownership has percolated
- Democracy has given a sense of empowerment
- Use of democratic politics to secure the rights

### Property to Democracy

- Historically, property ownership, prosperity had enabled people to secure political rights
- Democratisation in Asian Tigers followed a similar pattern
- Per capita income of \$12k to 15k, usually signaled the movement towards political democracy
- In India, essence of democracy, making people aware of their political rights

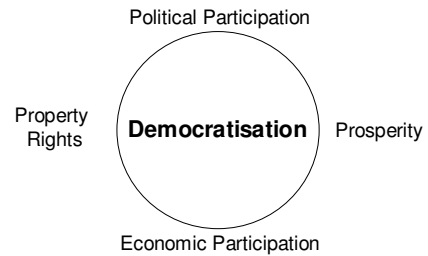
### Democracy to Property

- Social and ethnic diversity sustained democracy
- Moderation limits majoritarian tendencies
- Democracy has given rise to political rights
- Debate over Land rights, (property rights), is shifting the political ground
- Historic opportunity – From democracy to property rights?

## Property, Prosperity, Politics

- Property → Prosperity → Economic Freedom
  - Property → Political participation → Political Freedom
- &**
- Political Freedom → Participation → Protection of Property / Rights
  - Political Freedom → Participation → Prosperity

## Virtuous Cycle



## Thank You

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