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Abstract: Schumpeter’s redefinition of representate democracy as merely leadership competition was canonical in postwar political science. Schumpeter denies that individual will, common will, or common good are essential to democracy, but he, and anyone, I contend, is forced to assume these conditions in the course of denying them. Democracy is only a method, of no intrinsic value, its sole function to select leaders, according to Schumpeter. Leaders impose their views, and are not controlled by voters, and this is as it should be, he says. I respond that his leadership democracy is implausible, both descriptively and prescriptively. Competitive election is a necessary, but not a sufficient condition of democracy, not sufficient even for the limited empirical purpose of regime classification. Any adequate definition of democracy must make reference to the common will, the common good, and other values, I submit.

Keywords: Joseph Schumpeter, democracy, elections, common good, common will.

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INTRODUCTION

In 1942, Joseph Schumpeter, an Austrian economist settled in the USA, published his *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy*, an analysis of the inevitability of socialism.\(^1\) Schumpeter, a reactionary monarchist, did not welcome socialism, but even less did he welcome popular democracy.\(^2\) A few chapters of his book offered a debunking redefinition of democracy, a construction intended to preserve elite domination in the unwelcome socialist democracies of the future.\(^3\) In the name of realism, his definition stripped democracy of all ethical content. Schumpeter’s redefinition, shorn of its dark origins, became canonical in postwar American political science.\(^4\)

Schumpeter criticizes what he calls the classical doctrine of democracy, that the people through their common will elect representatives to realize the common good. He says there is usually no will of the people nor common good, and when there is then autocracy often better realizes both. There is no unique and unanimously endorsed common good, he objects. Nor is there a will of the people. Individual wills about political matters are neither definite nor independent. Individual will is more definite with respect to consumer choice, because consumers directly experience the consequences of their choices, but is indefinite with respect to democratic choice because voters do not. Individual will is not independent in politics, because it is mostly formed by the propaganda of leaders and their parties, again because of no relation between voter choice and consequence. Even if individual wills were definite and independent, they would be too diverse to be combined, he says.

In its stead he proposes his modern doctrine of democracy, that democracy is only about the competition of leaders for votes. Democracy is just a method, neither valuable in itself nor tending to right action or good ends. The will of the people, usually, is not genuine, but is manufactured by the leader. It is not true that voters control parliament, which controls its leader; rather the leader manufactures the will of
the people and followers accept it, which is as it should be, since the judgment of a qualified leader is generally superior to that of parliaments and publics. This is also a useful definition, as it is easy to measure whether or not a country’s leader is appointed by election, according to Schumpeter.

I reply that minimalists such as Schumpeter have no choice but to appeal implicitly to the will of the people and to the common good, counterfactuals that inform institutional design; and that democracy is generally better than autocracy at realizing them. I claim that there is a vague and generally approved common good. Individual wills are defective, but the common good can be approximated by design of a proper public sphere and representative democracy, each of which refines and enlarges the public view, I contend. In a proper democracy, voters mostly control parliaments, and parliaments mostly control leaders, through prospective voting, public opinion between elections, and ultimately through retrospective voting in recurrent elections. The notion that individual wills are too divided neglects that people have secondary preferences for fair settlements. Democracy is valuable for being a fair procedure, and is, of the fair procedures, imperfectly best at yielding the best outcomes. Competitive election is a necessary but not sufficient condition for representative democracy; competitive election must also be conducted rightly and tend toward the common good. Measuring democratic procedures is much easier than measuring democratic outcomes; but that does not vitiate the necessity that democracy aim at the common good, I say.

The remainder of the essay runs as follows. First, Schumpeter’s account of the classical doctrine is explicated and challenged, as are his arguments that there is no common good, will of the people, or individual will. Next, the intrinsic and instrumental values of democracy are discussed and clarified. Then, Schumpeter’s proposal for a modern doctrine, democracy solely as leadership competition, is set forth, and criticized, as is his concept of leadership supremacy. Schumpeter’s modern doctrine is insufficient for descriptive purposes, not to mention for prescriptive purposes, I argue. I conclude
that competitive election is a necessary but, contrary to Schumpeter, not a sufficient condition for representative democracy.

NO COMMON GOOD, NO COMMON WILL

Schumpeter’s main rhetorical strategy is to contrast a bankrupt classical doctrine of democracy as the common good and the will of the people to a solvent modern doctrine of democracy as competition for political leadership. The classical doctrine is defined as follows: “the democratic method is that institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions which realizes the common good by making the people itself decide issues through the election of individuals who are to assemble in order to carry out its will” (CSD, 250). Schumpeter says that the classic doctrine holds that the common good exists, that it is obvious, simple to define, available to all by rational argument, and that it implies definite answers to all political questions. There is a common will of the people that exactly coincides with the common good. There is a division of labor such that the whole people directly decides on only a few questions, and otherwise they elect by popular vote an assembly to represent their will, and the assembly elects an executive and cabinet. Representatives are merely specialists who “act to carry out the will of the people exactly as a doctor acts in order to carry out the will of the patient to get well” (250). All of these considerations are matters of fact, and all are false, says Schumpeter.

First, he says, there is no uniquely determined common good that all people could agree on by rational argument (251). This sets up a false dichotomy.⁵ He is surely right that there is no uniquely determined common good, and that unanimous agreement on the common good is never practically attainable. But in the liberal-democratic polity there is a small range of policies, far less than the range of all possible policies, that does indicate a vague common good, and they are policies that many people agree on. To begin with the less controversial goods, there is national defense, the rule of law, constitutional government, liberal guarantees, prohibition of slavery, religious toleration,
no official racism, regulation of externalities, management of inflation and unemployment, and the like. In the more social democracies there is government action on majority preferences for health, education, welfare, labor-market and old-age security, and the like. The exact shape of these policies is highly disputed, but contrary policies are contrary to the common good, in the eyes of many. A concept may be useful if it is inevitably vague rather than precise, and a policy may be in the common good even if some citizens disagree that it is. Schumpeter argues that rational argument cannot reconcile conflicting values. Conflicting values are reconciled by rational argument, however, often by rationally agreed upon arrangements that allow individuals to pursue their own values without interference; sometimes conflicting values are harmonized, sometimes they are brokered by a rationally endorsed process of compromise, and sometimes they are tragically irreconcilable. That rational argument about values sometimes fails does not establish that it always fails.

Second, he says, if there is no common good there can be no will of the people. Schumpeter is attacking utilitarianism, and he believes that the utilitarian view is that there is an independently defined utilitarian principle of the greatest good for the greatest number that all would assent to in rational argument (252). If there is no greatest good for the greatest number, then there is nothing for the people to assent to.

Third, suppose that there is no independently defined common good. We still might be able to construct a common will somehow by combining the individual wills of the people. This won’t do, says Schumpeter. The public opinion that “may still be said to emerge from the infinitely complex jumble of individual and group-wise situations, volitions, influences, actions and reactions of the ‘democratic process’” (CSD, 253) lacks rational unity and rational sanction. As for rational unity, Schumpeter seems to be claiming that almost any aggregation or reconciliation of individual views is meaningless. As for rational sanction, we are now defining the common good as the will of the people, but it is clear from experience that outcomes of actual democratic
procedures may be evil or stupid, and thus contrary to the common good. Schumpeter is correct that the common good can’t be *defined* as the output of actual democratic decision. Rather, we design democratic institutions in the hope that they will best *approximate* the common good. Rousseau, for example, distinguished the ideal general will (or common good) from the empirical will of all. The will of all, actual decision, might err in attaining the general will, because people are mistaken about some fact of the matter or because individuals are pursuing partial interests instead of the general interest. The general will is a yardstick by which to measure the shortcomings of the will of all. For a utilitarian it would be the greatest good for the greatest number, for John Rawls it would be his principles of justice, for a Catholic her church’s social teaching, for a Habermasian the hypothetical output of an ideal-speech situation. In a developed liberal democracy, plural conceptions of the common good contend, but within a range of ideals related by family resemblance and tending to converge on basic practical issues. If there were no appeal to reasonable independent standards, then political debate would be empty: merely assertions that an action is right because I, or we, want it.

Further, he objects, a rational combination of individual wills assumes that those individual judgments about the common good are definite and of equally good quality. In opposition to the assumptions of the rational-actor tradition, however, Schumpeter argues that it is unrealistic to suppose that the will of the individual citizen is either independent or rational, rather, the individual’s will is “an indeterminate bundle of vague impulses loosely playing about given slogans and mistaken impressions” (*CSD*, 253). And even if individual judgments were definite and of equally good quality, but divided, their combination would not result in any will of the people, would not indicate what people want. Schumpeter is not clear about why he is so confident about the last point, but I venture a guess. Many thinkers mistakenly conceive of democracy on the model of plurality voting, as a method which only registers first preferences, for example, Dahl’s characterization of democracy as the product of many minorities. On any given topic it
is likely that first preferences are a confusing jumble of irreconcilable demands, partial and unshared. But people have second, third, fourth, and lower preferences about a topic, preferences that tend to be more general and shared. Irreconcilable higher preferences cancel each other out until reconcilable lower preferences emerge. Here is an example. Suppose that the question is purely redistributive, and suppose that each individual first wants everything for himself, second wants everything for his minority faction, third would settle for an equal distribution, fourth would prefer less than a fair share, and fifth would prefer nothing. In these circumstances, there’s no point in proposing one’s first or second preferences, there’s not a majority vote for either. The third preference, for fair distribution, would be proposed, and would pass unanimously.\textsuperscript{13} Although recently neglected in political science, the claim is nothing new: Bentham observed of the voter pursuing partial interest that, “for the gratification of any sinister desire at the expense of the general interest he cannot hope to find cooperation and support from any considerable number of his fellow citizens.”\textsuperscript{14}

Nor can it be claimed that the combination of wills would be a fair compromise, says Schumpeter, because on qualitative measures, such as whether or not to persecute heretics or enter upon war, the compromise obtained may be unacceptable to all, whereas a compromise imposed by an autocrat would be acceptable to all. Here, Schumpeter attempts to convert a possibility into a regularity. He claims that Napoleon, as military dictator, better settled the religious question in 1802, in accordance with the will of the people and the common good, than would have a representative democracy. We are perilously close to the claim that there is no common good, but that autocracy is better at providing it than is democracy. His reasoning is, to use my terminology, that the first preferences of the leading interests would result in “deadlock or interminable struggle” (CSD, 255), and that only an autocrat could elicit a settlement based on second preferences. But democracies settle issues based on second preferences all the time, and autocracies frequently fail to settle issues except temporarily by repression. That
autocracy better provides for the public good than does democracy is an audacious empirical claim not supported by recent historical experience.

Schumpeter’s discussion of the classical definition alludes to the philosophes, but is mostly attributed to the “utilitarian fathers of democratic doctrine” (CSD, 252). The utilitarian justifications of representative democracy centrally address, however, what Schumpeter claims they neglect, both the need for expert representation and the ignorance of the citizenry. John Stuart Mill in 1861:

The meaning of representative government is, that the whole people, or some numerous portion of them, exercise through deputies periodically elected by themselves, the ultimate controlling power.

It is essential to representative government that the practical supremacy in the state should reside in the representatives of the people.

The positive evils and dangers of representative government, as of every other form of government, may be reduced to two heads: first, general ignorance and incapacity, or, to speak more moderately, insufficient mental qualifications, in the controlling body; secondly, the danger of its being under the influence of interests not identical with the general welfare of the community.15

Schumpeter neglects this major danger of government. Yet, we are told, his modern doctrine is realistic, and the supposed classical doctrine is naïve.

Some skeptical approaches to democracy, for example certain interpretations of social choice theory, concentrate their attack on the concept of the common good. But in claiming that some forms of democracy are bad, or that neutered forms, such as Schumpeter’s mere election, are good, they are forced to appeal, overtly or covertly, to
some concept of the common good, or so it seems to me. I shall illustrate with the case of Schumpeter. He reiterates that “both the will and the good of the people may be, and in many historical instances, have been, served just as well or better by governments that cannot be described as democratic” (CSD, 269-270). He says that politicians often fail to serve the interest of their class or group (285), which assumes a common will and a common good for the class or group. He complains that the “dosing [of measures] that a government decides on with an eye to its political chances is not necessarily the one that will produce the results most satisfactory to the nation” (287), which assumes a common good for the nation. He says that “the case for democracy stands to gain from consideration of the alternatives” (289), which assumes that some alternatives better realize the common good. True, Schumpeter concedes that there is sometimes a common good, but in a fashion that opportunistically serves his argument: there may be such a thing in local affairs, or in small, unified communities, contrary to his initial requirement that it be unique and unanimous, but no common good in large, divided communities, except for France in 1802 (255), Switzerland at time of writing (267), the U.S. before World War I (268), and so on.

NO INDIVIDUAL WILL

Schumpeter’s most famous passages have to do with, if we may say so, the idiocy of the electorate: “the typical citizen drops down to a lower level of mental performance as soon as he enters the political field. He argues and analyzes in a way which he would readily recognize as infantile within the sphere of his real interests. He becomes a primitive again. His thinking becomes associative and affective” (CSD, 262). The manifestly false beliefs of American voters on recent issues of peace and war, and much else evidence besides, suggest that it would be foolish to deny the ignorance of the voter. For example, although I am a well-informed voter, I know little about most political issues. What are the details of Schumpeter’s argument?
Humans in politics possess neither a definite nor an independent will, says Schumpeter, following Pareto (CSD, 256). One sort of irrationality is the madness of crowds, as theorized by LeBon and other reactionary antidemocrats in the late 19th century. Individuals’ behavior in unruly mobs is generalized to apply to any and all human groups:

Every parliament, every committee, every council of war composed of a dozen generals in their sixties, displays, in however mild a form, some of those features that stand out so glaringly in the case of the rabble, in particular a reduced sense of responsibility, a lower level of energy of thought and greater sensitiveness to nonlogical influences….Newspaper readers, radio audiences, members of a party even if not physically gathered together are terribly easy to work up into a psychological crowd and into a state of frenzy. (257)

LeBon’s class prejudices are not defensible social science. There are many varieties of group behavior, some tending to irrationality such as perhaps a Parisian mob and some tending to rationality such as scientific communities. In business, do sole proprietorships outperform partnerships, which outperform corporations? Pooled judgment can be more accurate than the individual judgments pooled, according to Aristotle, and according to the Condorcet jury theorem. Nevertheless, Schumpeter holds that the judgment of a qualified leader is generally better than the pooled judgment of lesser beings, which is one reason why he so emphasizes individual leadership. There is no defensible generalization, however, that individuals in groups are more irrational than individuals alone. A line of thought in contemporary social psychology rejects the “evil collective” hypothesis: groups do influence their members to undertake actions not taken in individual life, but group actions can be either positive or negative, depending on members’ expectations of the specific role they should play. If so, rightly designed
democratic institutions would encourage reciprocal expectations of fairness and rationality, and discourage expectations of their opposites. Indeed, widely endorsed theories about the epistemic and moral emptiness of democracy could be destructively self-fulfilling, as in the fall of the Weimar Republic. An additional reason for leadership is that properly bred talent is a precondition of democracy (CSD, 290), and “the modal individual in the bourgeois class is superior as to intellectual and volitional aptitudes to the modal individual in any other of the classes of industrial society. . . . the same holds true for all ruling classes” (CSD, 204).

Another sort of irrationality is exemplified by advertising, which relies on repetition and association of the targeted product with basic needs such as sex and social approval. There is a check on commercial advertising, says Schumpeter, in that the consumer accumulates favorable and unfavorable experiences with products, improving evaluation. Thus, he is rational about “most of the decisions of daily life that lie within the little field which the individual citizen’s mind encompasses with a full sense of its reality….the things which are familiar to him independently of what his newspaper tells him” (CSD, 258-259). But even within this familiar field individuals are irrational; humans did not possess the germ theory of disease until recently, and their ignorance of true causality caused great suffering. This is a silly charge, as such ignorance prevailed in the predemocratic era, and was not irrational – people did not deny the theory, they lacked it. Nevertheless, with qualifications, it is possible to distinguish the genuine from the manufactured will within this familiar field, he says.

Individual will might be definite and genuine with respect to local politics, or with respect to “many national issues that concern individuals and groups . . . directly and unmistakably” (CSD, 260), but less so than within the familiar field. Otherwise, with respect to national and international affairs unlinked to personal concerns:
the sense of reality is . . . completely lost. . . . the great political questions take their place in the psychic economy of the typical citizen with those leisure-hour interests that have not attained the rank of hobbies. . . . One has one’s phrases, of course, and one’s wishes and daydreams and grumbles; especially one has one’s likes and dislikes. (261)

There are two further ominous consequences, he says. First, in political matters the typical citizen would yield to extra-rational or irrational prejudice and impulse, and relax his usual moral standards. Well, this is true in some cases, but in other cases democratic participation encourages rationality, impartiality, and an improvement in moral standards. Again, we would want to identify specific institutional features and situations that go one way or another, and design accordingly. Second, the absence of the rationalizing influence of experience and responsibility in political affairs means that the typical citizen is vulnerable to advertising by groups with an ax to grind, and “they are able to fashion, and within very wide limits, even to create the will of the people. . . . we are confronted with . . . not a genuine but a manufactured will” (263). Unlike the consumer, the citizen does not accumulate favorable and unfavorable experiences with political products. But that is not quite so. Depression, unemployment, corrupt officials, military draft, uninsured medical crisis, confiscatory regulation, air pollution, you name it: the citizen suffers from bad government. One does not need direct experience with fascism or communism in order to reject politicians offering such alternatives. Schumpeter exaggerates. He complains further that political information is one-sided and selective, but a moment’s reflection suggests the remedy. In an adversarial debate, such as in a criminal court or a political contest, one side challenges the claims of the other, in a manner such that a nonspecialized audience can adjudicate among the claims made by the specialists.²²
Neutralizing the rhetorical excesses, let’s concede that Schumpeter is correct that the typical citizen has little motivation to study and decide the panoply of political issues, and that the special interests often do manufacture the popular will. Where does that leave us? It leaves us with a powerful argument for a healthy public sphere and for a properly designed representative democracy. Bernard Manin suggests that democracy is not legitimized by the unanimity of predetermined individual wills, but rather is legitimized by the process of public deliberation which reforms and reconciles the uninformed, incomplete, intransitive, and unjustified preferences of individuals. The existence of contesting political parties in a representative democracy is essential for such deliberation, he argues.

Schumpeter wants us to be scandalized that special interests can manufacture the popular will. But we would be scandalized only if we believed there were a genuine will that was being disregarded. Just as the skeptic cannot but assume a genuine common good, so she cannot but assume a genuine will of the people. Perhaps this genuine will is counterfactual: what would be decided if people were fully informed and deciding only in the public interest. But we would design democratic institutions so that outcomes best approximate that counterfactual ideal, an assembly that would “refine and enlarge the public views”, and since we are not paternalists we would require that officials delegated to rule be regularly accountable in elections to those ruled.

That design would be informed by rigorous programs of political research. Newer research hypotheses propose that voters are cognitive misers who use low-information shortcuts, like party identification, or voting out incumbents when times are bad, to approximate full-information choice. Rational choice theory assumes that humans possess perfect information; in fact, they possess little information, a costly good, and economize on obtaining it, not just in politics, but in all pursuits. Voters do not need complete information about political choices, they need knowledge sufficient to
judge whether a party or candidate has made or would make things better or worse (you don’t need to be a cook to judge the meal, nor to choose among untried restaurants).

In a footnote, Schumpeter suggests that the distinction between genuine and manufactured will is only heuristic, that today’s genuine will is the result of yesterday’s social influences including the propagandistic (CSD, 260). He denies that the wishes of the electorate are the ultimate data of the democratic process (282), he denies that the people are the best judges of their own individual interests (260). But his whole story ultimately assumes a genuine will: that the more immediate the consequences, as with many consumer transactions, the better that will is discovered (258); similarly for local public affairs (260); that citizens are capable of extrarational or irrational prejudice or impulse contrary to their best interest (262); that a better will would be discovered if it were possible to experiment with decisions at leisure and at moderate cost (263). Party leaders manufacture the public will, but, he says, parties adopt almost exactly the same program (283): that leaders converge on similar programs, however, entails that there is an independent public will they are converging on.

DEMOCRACY ONLY A METHOD

Schumpeter insists that democracy is only of instrumental value, if any; a mere method “like a steam engine or a disinfectant” (CSD, 266). He begins with a polemic against the socialist parties of his day. He denies the proposition that the socialist parties uniformly championed the democratic creed (237), at first citing the record of the Soviet Union and the Bavarian and Hungarian soviets. Second, he claims that the social democratic parties, those which in political practice subordinated socialist goals to democratic allegiances, were democratic only because they never had a chance or a motive to be undemocratic. They found democracy merely useful, to shelter their activity and to advance their socialist goals; and for them to be undemocratic would have thwarted their activities and goals. The second claim is without force: if it is shown that
the parties found democracy useful, it is not thereby shown that they found democracy to be valuable only insofar as it is useful. Third, he claims that whenever social-democratic parties found autocracy to be useful, they abandoned democracy. As a generalization, the claim is plainly false. The German Social Democrats did resist the autocratic temptation, as Schumpeter concedes, but he foolishly objects that a minority of the party did not agree with the majority's decision to support democracy and suppress the communist insurrectionists. Only the third claim would uphold the view that social democrats support democracy only when it is useful to their socialist purposes, and the third claim is generally false.

To demonstrate universal opportunism on the democracy question, Schumpeter proposes a mental experiment. Suppose that a country, “in a democratic way, practices the persecution of Christians, the burning of witches, and the slaughtering of Jews” (242). No one would approve of such outcomes just because they are the result of a democratic procedure, he continues. We would prefer a nondemocratic constitution which avoided such outcomes to a democratic constitution which did not. Even the most ardent liberal democrat puts the liberal values above democracy, he concludes. In reply, suppose for the moment that democracy is merely equivalent to any popular will as expressed in a raw majority vote. Is it possible that a liberal democrat might support democracy except when its results are contrary to the liberal values? Certainly. Does that imply that the liberal democrat only instrumentally values majority rule? Not necessarily; the liberal democrat might additionally value democracy for any number of intrinsic properties, but also place priority on intrinsically valued liberty. Intrinsically valued liberalism and democracy might easily conflict, they might require tradeoffs; that they would, however, does not negate any of the values at stake. As so often, Schumpeter offers a false dichotomy. What if the choice were instead among a liberal democratic constitution, an illiberal democratic constitution, or a liberal undemocratic constitution? The liberal
democrat would choose the constitution that best balances the liberal and democratic values.

It may be that liberalism and democracy are logically independent constellations of values. It also may be that liberalism and democracy presuppose one another, both in concept and, developmentally, in practice. Both liberalism and democracy might be founded on more ultimate values of freedom and equality; indeed, it is far less plausible to deduce liberal autocracy from such fundamental values. A liberal democrat could honestly hold that an apparently democratic decision to persecute a minority is not a properly democratic decision. It is crucial that Schumpeter’s mental experiment brings liberalism and democracy into contact – it is not just conceivable but likely that the typical practical democrat would in principle reject democratic override of basic liberal guarantees. What if Schumpeter’s mental experiment had supposed instead that some people support democracy, except when it is an obstacle to their socialist goals? We would say of such people that they are socialists first, and democrats second or not at all. Suppose he had argued that some people support the principle of democracy, except when they are outvoted. We would say of them that, although they claim to be democrats, they are not.

Schumpeter insists that democracy is a method, is only instrumentally valued; “democracy cannot, any more than can any other method, be an end in itself” (CSD, 242). But of course methods can be ends in themselves. The journey can be of no importance, it can be as valuable as the destination, it can be more valuable than the destination, and it can be of exclusive importance. A doctor needs an income to survive, but he can gain that income in Doctors Without Borders or in a Park Avenue practice; and that survival in turn can be devoted to responsible family life or to narcissistic indulgence. Schumpeter immediately concedes that methods, logically, can be ends in themselves, but fulminates that this would entail endorsing any criminal or stupid outcome that is the result of democratic procedure. There is no such entailment: as above, one can hold
either that liberalism trumps democracy, or that the two presuppose one another, or that each is derived from freedom and equality.

The liberal might compare democracy to oligarchy to monarchy, and on the basis of reasoning and evidence reach the conclusion that the democratic form of government is generally more likely to promote freedom and equality than oligarchical or monarchical forms of government. Again, Schumpeter resorts to a false dichotomy. An allegiance to democracy can only be an “unconditional allegiance” (CSD, 242-243). It is not true, he says, that democracy “will necessarily, always and everywhere, serve certain interests or ideals for which we do mean to fight and die unconditionally” (243). But why can’t an allegiance to democracy be strong but qualified by allegiance to liberal values? Why can’t an allegiance be based on the judgment that democracy is the least bad arrangement?

Suppose the goal of a criminal justice system is fairly to convict the guilty but above all to acquit the innocent. We might compare trial by combat to modern trial before judge or jury, and conclude that modern trial is both more fair and more accurate, even though it inevitably fails in some individual cases. If all methods are practically imperfect, and if modern trial is the most accurate of the fair systems, then modern trial is the best system, despite its imperfections. And we might value modern trial not only for its ability to yield the goal of correct verdicts, but also because of feasible procedures it best embodies and expresses values of fairness, deliberation, participation, and so on. Although we’d have a strong allegiance to modern trial, our allegiance would not be uncritical: we’d deplore its individual failures, and would always seek institutional improvements to minimize such failures, without falling into formal or practical contradiction.29

Democratic decision-making has two evaluative aspects, according to Christiano.30 We evaluate the democratic method by the quality of its outcomes: whether they promote justice, efficiency, liberty, equality, or the common good. And we
evaluate the democratic method by the quality of its procedure: whether it is inclusive and fair (specifically, says Christiano, whether it permits the public realization of equal advancement of interests). Democratic decision-making provides the only just response to the circumstances of disagreement, even though it does not always yield the just outcome. Estlund says that democracy is best conceived of as epistemic proceduralism: the best decision method is one that is both procedurally fair and is epistemically valuable in approximating a procedure-independent standard (such as justice or the common good). The democratic method in practice does not guarantee the best outcome, either in any one instance or in all instances taken together, but of the procedurally fair methods it tends to deliver the best outcome. Suppose that due to his sojourns in ideal realms a citizen named Plato possesses the actually best answer to every political question, and claims exclusive authority to rule on that basis, what Estlund calls epistocracy. Estlund says that even then it is reasonable for citizens to refuse to surrender their moral judgment on important matters, reasonable to reject epistocracy and to affirm democracy. I would add that democracy does not deny moral expertise; rather, it simply requires that such experts make their case by honest persuasion rather than by deceit or coercion.

Schumpeter is wrong that democracy can only be of instrumental value; it is also of intrinsic value. Thus, his argument that everyone is necessarily an opportunist about democracy does not go through. Empirically, it may be true that everyone is an opportunist about democracy in periods of transition to democratic rule, but it does not have to be true. And, it does not seem to be true of the leading forces in established democracies.

LEADERSHIP SUPREMACY

Schumpeter’s modern doctrine is as follows: “the democratic method is that institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire
the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the people’s vote” (CSD, 260). For the classical doctrine, says Schumpeter, the primary purpose of the democratic arrangement is to vest in the electorate the power to decide political issues and the secondary purpose is the selection of representatives. For the modern doctrine, the primary purpose is to select representatives and the secondary purpose is the deciding of issues by the electorate (260). His modern doctrine could be an interesting formulation, its exaggeration calling to our attention what might be a neglected difference between direct and representative democracy. But one is baffled to find a few pages later that Schumpeter exactly denies the secondary purpose: the issues that shape the electorate’s fate “are normally raised and decided for them” (264). Democracy is only of value as a means to some end, but the end, whether the common good, the common will, or the individual will, does not exist.

Moreover, Schumpeter’s inversion is peculiar. Suppose that I, the principal, own property far away, and that I wish to select from a distance a local agent on an annual basis to manage that property. Is my primary purpose to have the property managed, or is my primary purpose to select an agent? The question is misconceived: I select an agent in order to have the property managed, and I select a representative in order to have political issues decided. If the agent manages so as to yield the desired results, then I retain her for another year; if not, I select a new agent. Nor do I rely only on what the current agent tells me about her performance; rather, I solicit the views of competing agents on her performance and on how they might do the job better. A patient selects a doctor, as Schumpeter says, in order to carry out the will of the patient to get well. The patient does not know how to get well on her own; she seeks both goodwill and competence from the doctor, the doctor has both moral and legal obligations to provide both, patients seek second opinions, and are free to change physicians. An electorate selects a representative to decide political issues. Representatives are bound by moral and legal obligations. If the representative’s methods and outcomes are those
that the electorate approves, then she is retained; if not, then they select a new representative. They do not rely only on what the current representative tells them about her performance; rather, they hear the views of competing candidates on her performance and how they might do the job better.

In a democracy, political leaders do not acquire the power to decide, rather, they acquire the authority to decide *rightly* governmental issues. Such leaders are not authorized to rule arbitrarily, for example, by decree, or to suspend the rule of law, or act contrary to unwritten and written constitutional principles, or to violate the law. Most such actions we would rightly term undemocratic. Similarly, it’s not true that anything goes in the electoral contest. Rather, we demand that officials be elected in a *right* contest: for politicians and parties to use force or fraud in the election, to pay for votes, to unjustifiably limit access to office, such actions would rightly be termed undemocratic. Naturally, we can point to many instances of force and fraud in elections, but no one would argue that force and fraud are right, and we can point to many instances of their absence as well. Moreover, it is not any people’s vote, but rather the *right* sort of vote that helps define democracy. There are many conceivable voting systems, but only a few of them are democratic. A voting system should be responsive, for example: it should not find out what the majority wants and then do the opposite. Except for good reason, it should count each voter equally, and each alternative equally, all should be eligible to vote, the agenda should be open, and so on.

True, Schumpeter acknowledges the evaluative component of his definition with the qualification that he means “free competition for a free vote” (*CSD*, 271), but by doing so he only means to demarcate free election from military insurrection, and, he emphasizes, the difference between the two is one of continuous variation rather than of dichotomy. Why, other than for rhetorical advantage, the classical doctrine should be confined to unsatisfiable dichotomous variables, but the modern doctrine enjoy satisfiable continuous variables, is not clear. Further, for him, unfair or fraudulent
competition counts as democratic; otherwise, he remarks, the definition would indicate an unrealistic ideal rather than a method. This amounts to the claim that nothing about democracy requires that elections be fair and free. Rousseau’s complaint against Grotius applies as well to Schumpeter: “His usual method of reasoning is always to present fact as proof of right. A more logical method could be used, but not one more favorable to tyrant.”34 In Zimbabwe, a quarter of the population is starving. Its government brought on famine by clumsily expropriating the rich, and systematically denies emergency food aid to political opponents, including those who merely voted against it. “What little food is available is being ruthlessly used in a cynical food-for-votes policy to force people to vote for the pariah president.”35 Zimbabwe would be democratic by Schumpeter’s reckoning.

Schumpeter also says that his modern doctrine properly recognizes the vital fact of leadership, a fact largely ignored by the classical doctrine. “Collectives act,” he says, “almost exclusively by accepting leadership” (CSD, 270).36 True, any group larger than a handful of people employs a division of labor: those who are more articulate and energetic develop issues, and usually someone presides over a meeting. Often groups employ recording secretaries and treasurers, but we would not say that collectives act by accepting recording secretaries. Some groups are headed by reluctant leaders, persuaded by the collective to organize affairs, but accountable to the members of the collective. And many democratic associations have several contesting leaders in waiting, not a single leader; such leaders develop and represent the conflicting ideals and interests of the less active members; and often there is little that such leaders have in common as an interested faction within the organization.

Schumpeter quite carefully avoids the usage that a group actively approves of leadership, rather he subtly conveys that a group can only passively accept leadership. But acceptance is an undemocratic notion: those who only accept leadership, by definition, have no further inclinations to approve or disapprove of it. He continues that
insofar as there are genuine group volitions, such as the will of the unemployed to receive benefits and the will of other groups to help, his theory does not neglect them: as a rule, they remain latent unless called to life by political leaders. Some issues become public through Schumpeterian leadership, for example the Bush administration’s declaration of the global war on terror. But is that generally true of democratic politics? Trade unionism, environmentalism, feminism, property tax revolt, all originated among the people originally in opposition to the elected officials of the day. There are plentiful instances of influence running from public opinion, or from the popular vote, to official position-taking. Schumpeter recites several himself, all of them negative, for example: the Empress Maria Theresa reluctantly prohibited witchcraft in response to her people’s will (CSD, 241), or the dependence of the leader on parliament’s and the electorate’s votes leads to short-term policies contrary to the long-term common good (287).37

The most puzzling feature of Schumpeter’s rendition of democracy is his assertion that the electorate does not control the elected official. Schumpeter’s reader, he writes, “may have thought that the electorate controls as well as installs,” but “electorates normally do not control their political leaders in any way except by refusing to reelect them” (CSD, 272). What he means by control here is control between elections, such as by imperative mandate or discretionary revocability (recall), or by an outpouring of public opinion on an issue sufficient to change official’s prior views, all of which he would legally prohibit as contrary to the spirit of the democratic method. Control within election, by the voters’ threat not to reelect an official whose policies they disapprove, is minimized to the mere “acceptance of a leader,” or “withdrawal of this acceptance” (272). But one must have a reason to withdraw acceptance. As I said before, Schumpeter is careful to use the word acceptance, which allows him to construe democracy as a serial autocracy, and to avoid the word approval which puts power back into the hands of the voters.
Manin corrects Schumpeter by directing our attention to the recurring character of elections as “the most important feature of representative systems that allows voters to influence the decisions of their representative.”\textsuperscript{38} Schumpeter’s modern definition of democracy “does not include the empirical fact that electoral competition is repeated.”\textsuperscript{39} Manin continues that it would be possible to elect officials to life terms, but that modern representative democracy is distinguished by the principle of regularly renewed popular consent.

The central mechanism whereby voters influence governmental decisions results from the incentives that representative systems create for those in office: representatives who are subject to reelection have an incentive to anticipate the future judgment of the electorate on the policies they pursue. . . . That is the channel through which the will of the governed enters into the calculations of those in power. . . . It is because Schumpeter failed to note the central importance of anticipation in the decision-making of representatives that he wrongly believed that representative democracy could be reduced to the competitive selection of decision-makers and that he could dismiss as myth the idea of voters influencing the content of public decisions.\textsuperscript{40}

Voters also control officials prospectively, through the selection of one candidate over another.

The primary function of the people’s vote is to produce government, says Schumpeter. At the national level, this amounts to deciding on the leading man, call him prime minister (\textit{CSD}, 273). Parliament is merely an intermediate organ between the mass vote and the leader. Schumpeter’s definition of the classical doctrine explicitly requires an assembly of representatives; but his modern doctrine does not count legislative
assembly as essential to democracy, and the omission is no accident. Just as the citizens do not control parliament, parliament does not control the leader (277). Parliament decides by acceptance rather than by initiative:

the wishes of the members are not as a rule the ultimate data of the process from which government emerges. Members . . . are driven by the man whom they “elect” – driven to the act of election itself exactly as they are driven by him once they have “elected” him. Every horse is of course free to kick over the traces and it does not always run up to its bit. But revolt or passive resistance against the leader’s lead only shows up the normal relation. And this normal relation is the essence of the democratic method. (277)

Democracy is portrayed by the image of a team of horses harnessed to a carriage driven by an aristocrat with a whip. A second aristocrat might seize the team from the first one, if he is stronger. Nothing more. The horses accept, they do not approve, they are driven by one leader, and then by the next.41 Manin must be correct that Schumpeter lacks an understanding of counterfactual anticipation in human affairs, the phenomena so richly illustrated by noncooperative game theory.42 A potential leader normally is inclined to run, and refines her platform, in orientation to the views of the electorate, and in office is disciplined by the threat of removal by the electorate. Good leaders do shape some views, but not out of nothing: they are constrained to offer a more coherent reconciliation of the disparate beliefs and desires of the electorate than a competitor’s reconciliation.43

For Schumpeter such leadership is and should be controlling and primary. Schumpeter claims that his analyses are purely descriptive: although unwelcome, socialism is inevitable, for example. Yet prescriptive judgments are implicit throughout CSD’s account of democracy, and at moments transude into explicitness.44 From 1916 to
1918 Schumpeter advocated that the aristocratic class of the Austro-Hungarian empire organize a “tory democracy” movement that would “dominate” parliament and public opinion, in order to defend the monarchy against popular demands for democratization. The prescriptions of 1916 are the descriptions of 1942. In response to Schumpeter, one freely acknowledges that leadership is important in democratic politics. For a properly democratic theory, however, leadership should be controlled and secondary in the process.

Could these be Schumpeter’s views, or has this essay, through an accumulation of crafty and uncharitable interpretations, drawn a sinister caricature of the man? They really are his views. Bourgeois German political thought of the period, according to Struve, converged on an “open-yet-authoritarian” elitism (3), far more romantic than realist in its origins (25-26), and on democracy as “personnel selection rather than decision-making” (5). In 1920, citing Sorel, Schumpeter forecast the inevitable demise of liberal democracy. In 1925, he joined Carl Schmitt at Bonn, and there are several strong parallels between their critiques of democracy. In summarizing the intellectual history of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Schumpeter identifies an anti-democratic and anti-intellectualist trend in opposition to liberal notions of rationality, progress, and humanitarianism; exemplified by Sorel and Pareto. “Anyone who knew Schumpeter personally can testify that he had a thorough knowledge of the theories of the elite of the late nineteenth century (Nietzsche, Pareto, Mosca, Michels, LeBon) and took pleasure in flirting with such ideas.” In an appreciative biographical sketch, Schumpeter writes that Pareto best exemplifies the violent disgust felt for democracy by an increasing number of French and Italians in the same period, also expressed by Sorel and Mosca. The sketch uses Pareto to improve on Marx, and Marx to improve on Pareto. The resulting brew differs little from Schumpeter’s own, more “soberly” expressed, views on the subject of class. In concluding his sketch, Schumpeter praises Pareto as a “healthy antidote” to the malady that we now “cultivate the subnormal,” who make up 25% of
the population (*CSD*, 213). Elsewhere, he says that Francis Galton (along with Vico and Marx) is one of humanity’s three great sociologists.53 In his diary, he laments that “the true problem is the problem of the subnormal, but instead of solving it, we take them into consideration.”54

Schumpeter is frequently evasive about his own views, but for his intellectual heroes of the elite school, society and class are explained by an adaptationist group functionalism: pseudo-biological, irrationalist, and amoralist.55 Individuals’ beliefs, intentions, actions are meaningless byproducts of the struggle among groups, led by ruling elites, to survive and function. For Marx they are ideology, for Pareto they are derivations. Thus, Schumpeter improving on Pareto on Sorel:

> the masses of thought and the conceptual structures that form the conscious surface of the social and in particular of the political process have no empirical validity whatsoever. They work with entities such as liberty, democracy, equality, that are as imaginary as were the gods and goddesses who fought for and against Greeks and Trojans in the *Iliad*. . . . they are nonsense unalloyed.56

Groups function to pursue group interest (1951, 140).57 Leadership is a function of the social group.58 “Acceptance of leadership is the true function of the electorate’s vote” (*CSD*, 273). If there is no right, if all is ideology or derivation, then there is nothing to make Schumpeter’s theory right. We know that “Schumpeter theorized an elite conception of democracy because he recognized the egalitarian, radicalizing potentialities of democratic ideologies and democratic movements.”59 Thus, how can we “be certain that Schumpeter’s own ‘democratic method’ is not just another myth in the employ of aspiring elites in the ‘naked struggle for power’ – against defenders, perhaps, of the processes of political and social democratization so despised by Schumpeter?”60
COMPETITIVE ELECTIONS THE BEST EMPIRICAL CRITERION

Schumpeter holds that an advantage of his definition of democracy is that it serves as an efficient criterion by which to distinguish democratic government from other forms of government, since electoral competition for political leadership is usually easy to measure (CSD, 269-270). Such was the appeal of his definition to the behavioralist movement in political science.\(^6\) Schumpeter’s definition of democracy is proceduralist. Generally, it is easier to measure procedures than the outcomes they imperfectly yield. It’s easier to count antidepressants administered to patients than it is to conceptualize and measure levels of happiness. It’s easier to count the presence and absence of elections than it is to conceptualize and measure the common will or the common good.

Schumpeterian electoralism was accidentally useful with an earlier population of regimes, when countries with competitive elections typically shared free and fair elections, real civil liberties, civilian control of the military, and other democratic features. However, the population of regimes has changed considerably, and empirical investigators now find it useful to distinguish a spectrum of categories. For example, Diamond suggests the categories of liberal democracy, electoral democracy (regular elections but illiberal), intermediate, electoral authoritarian (multiparty elections but authoritarian), and closed regimes.\(^6\) In 1974, less than five percent of regimes were electoral authoritarian; but today somewhere between a fourth and a third of regimes are. “Democracy” is now a requirement for international legitimacy, and “democratic” regimes receive direct benefits in assistance and indirect benefits from regional and global integration. Diamond says that, “Virtually all hybrid regimes in the world today are quite deliberately pseudodemocratic, ’in that the existence of formally democratic political institutions, such as multiparty electoral competition, masks (often, in part, to legitimate) the reality of authoritarian domination.’”\(^6\) The proportion of pseudodemocracies among world regimes is growing faster than is the proportion of actual democracies, partly in response to incentives created by the widespread definition
of democracy as merely competitive election. The troubling proliferation of pseudodemocracies shows that the democracy we appreciate is the bundle of institutions and values we call liberal democracy, not Schumpeter’s electoralism.

There is no final or all-purpose definition of democracy. For one thing, democracy is a project always under construction, as shown, for example, by the unexpected universalization of suffrage. Further, the appropriateness of a definition is relative to one’s scholarly or practical purposes. The Schumpeterian definition fails its purposes, however, both prescriptively and descriptively.

CONCLUSION

For Schumpeter, competitive election is a necessary condition of representative democracy. I doubt that there exists a student of politics who would deny the proposition. That it is nothing new is shown by the fact that it is contained in his definition of the rejected classical doctrine. Schumpeter’s only innovation in this regard was to insist that competitive election is a sufficient condition of democracy, a proposition that cannot stand.64 The purpose of elections, contrary to Schumpeter, must be to pursue the common good through the common will. Suppose that a theorist of criminal adjudication were to propose this definition: “The trial method is that institutional arrangement for arriving at criminal-justice decisions in which individuals acquire the power to decide guilt or innocence by means of a competitive struggle for the judge and jury’s verdict.” We would be puzzled. Does the trial method fairly and accurately determine the innocence and guilt of defendants? The definition neglects the main point, in the same way that Schumpeter’s definition neglects the main point of democracy. Also, the definition inappropriately inflates the role of the prevailing attorney, in the same way that Schumpeter’s inappropriately inflates the role of the winner of the election.
If it is Schumpeterian to acknowledge that competitive election is a necessary condition of representative democracy, then we are all Schumpeterians. But, I hope the essay has shown, the original and pure Schumpeterian doctrine is intellectually and morally incoherent.
ENDNOTES

1 Joseph Schumpeter, *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy* (New York: Harper, 1942); hereinafter cited as CSD.

2 John Medearis, *Joseph Schumpeter’s Two Theories of Democracy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), 36, 68-77; Willam E. Scheuerman, *Carl Schmitt: The End of Law* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 1999), 204-207. These critical contextualizations of Schumpeter’s theory of democracy are especially valuable, and are presumed by this essay.

3 Medearis, *Joseph Schumpeter’s Two Theories of Democracy*, 100-102, 133-139.


5 Medearis, *Joseph Schumpeter’s Two Theories of Democracy*, 15, points out that Schumpeter’s destructions of common good, common will, and individual will each depend on false dichotomy. It is his frequent tactic.

6 Some understand the common good to require an actual good identical and universal across each individual in the collective, which renders its existence unlikely. More often, the common good is understood as something more general, more hypothetical, and more pluralistic. For our purposes here, justice is another word for the common good. See further Jules Coleman and John Ferejohn, “Democracy and Social Choice,” 97 *Ethics* (1986):6-25.

7 See the large literature on deliberative democracy, and on this point especially the webpage of the MIT Workshop on Deliberative Democracy and Dispute Resolution, Summer 2005 (and for further references the tab titled “Readings”).
The American Constitutional Convention and the Federalist Papers are an exemplary if antiquated instance of institutional design. Madison sought to refine and enlarge the common will so as to pursue the common good, by selecting the most talented representatives through competitive election, and by keeping them responsive through repeated elections: Alexander Hamilton, John Jay, and James Madison, *The Federalist: A Comment on the Constitution of the United States* (New York: The Modern Library, 1937), #10, #57. The social sciences have since accumulated an admittedly imperfect abundance of theory and empirics about the effects of different political institutions among different populations. For more on design, see Robert Goodin, ed., *Theories of Institutional Design* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), and the Cambridge University Press series, “Theories of Institutional Design.”


11 Schumpeter’s early application of economic models to political science might suggest him as a forefather of rational choice analysis, but his empirical doubts about the rationality and equilibrium assumptions make him more of an uncle than a father. See Scheuerman, *Carl Schmitt: The End of Law*, 318-319 for references about the relationship of Schumpeter to rational choice theory.

13 Gerry Mackie, *Democracy Defended* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 101. Of course if there were a preference for a majority faction to beggar the minority, that would prevail, and this sometimes happens, but in developed democracies distributive measures tend to be passed by huge majorities, indicating that a critical mass of the actors may be directly motivated by fairness concerns. Ibid., 106.


16 See Mackie, *Democracy Defended*, for extended discussion.


18 Schumpeter was a self-described monarchist (Medearis, *Joseph Schumpeter’s Two Theories of Democracy*, 35-36). His elitism also extended to the market. He rejected Hayek’s argument that centralist socialist planning would be impossible because there is no practical substitute for the capitalist price system, which swiftly aggregates trillions of pieces of information across the globe. Schumpeter was confident that a talented bureaucracy could set market-clearing prices (*CSD* 185).

19 Antinormative deindividuation theory – today’s LeBonism – has little empirical support in human-subject experiments, according to a recent meta-analysis by Tom Postmes and Russell Spears, “Deindividuation and Antinormative Behavior: A Meta-Analysis,” *Psychological Bulletin* 123 (1998): 238-259. Group effects, whether for good or for evil, are due to local group norms, the authors suggest. However, attenuation of responsibility in a group is observed of helping behavior in emergencies: Bibb Latane and John Darley, *The Unresponsive Bystander: Why Doesn’t He Help* (New York: Appleton-Century Crofts, 1970).

20 But, to revise Schumpeter, consumer error is not self-correcting when there are negative externalities: advertising of sport utility vehicles leads to despoliation of the wilderness scenes the advertising invokes, makes driving more unsafe for smaller vehicles, contributes to global warming, and distorts foreign policy.

21 Schumpeter also neglects the fact that municipalities quarantined epidemics even in absence of the germ theory of disease.

analyzes a variety of constraints working to promote speaker credibility, including adversarial debate. Therein, an audience might usefully assume that a claim of one side is true unless refuted by the other side, among other effects. That I think it practical to improve the informational quality of democratic decision does not mean that I am happy with the informational quality of decision in, say, the actual American democracy.


26 “Everything is what it is,” and not something else, complained Isaiah Berlin, about the compulsion in political thought to render all good things compatible in practice and identical in concept. See his “Two Concepts of Liberty,” in Berlin, Four Essays on Liberty (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969), 125.


32 Dennis Thompson, *Just Elections* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 6-8, objects that electoral competition is not sufficient for democracy, and observes that its maximization could be undesirable. If electoral competition were to define democracy, then would we maximize democracy by maximizing competition? I surmise that maximization of competition would defeat some of Schumpeter’s central objectives. The more firms there are in competition, the more efficient is the economy. Schumpeter (*CSD*, 273) is explicit, however, that the more parties there are in competition, the less efficient is government. Would it help to maximize elections rather than alternatives? Under Schumpeterian assumptions, I suggest, that might wrongly increase voter control over leaders.

33 Jeffrey E. Green, "The Intractability of the Obvious: Reading Schumpeter as a Political Philosopher" Manuscript, 2005.


36 Schumpeter does not celebrate the market on the basis of consumer sovereignty: “Consumers merely respond to the creative achievements of the entrepreneur,” says Scheuerman, *Carl Schmitt: The Rule of Law*, 189.
37 In his arguments for the modern doctrine in Chapter XXII of CSD Schumpeter hails the power of the leader to manufacture the will of the people, but in his arguments against the classical doctrine in Chapter XXI it is “groups…of professional politicians or of exponents of an economic interest or of idealists of one kind or another “ (263) who manufacture the people’s will. If the individual leader, then Schumpeter’s function of plebiscitary leadership is fulfilled. If a variety of groups, however, then common will formation is the product of many, likely countervailing, forces in society. In 1888, James Bryce, American Commonwealth, vol. 2, chs. 76-87 (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1995) provided a realistic and more accurate account of elections and public opinion in democratically advanced America. Bryce was clear that the average voter was far from the virtuously informed citizen of orthodox democratic theory (911). He found, however, that, “there is no one class or set of men whose special function it is to form and lead opinion. The politicians certainly do not. Public opinion leads them” (960). American “leaders do not, as sometimes still happens in England, seek to force or anticipate opinion; or if they do, they suffer for the blunder by provoking a reaction” (938). Schumpeter, citing a secondary reference, ridicules Bryce as a mere idealist (CSD, 256), but plainly knows nothing about his work.


39 Ibid. Schumpeter (CSD, 273) notes in passing that his definition intends to include both the election and the eviction of the leaders, but explicitly denies that eviction is a means of voter control, because voters merely accept rather than approve.


43 Mackie, *Democracy Defended*, 301.


45 Medearis, *Joseph Schumpeter’s Two Theories of Democracy*, 34-35. Medearis argues that Schumpeter finds no value in participation or even in wide suffrage, and that his idea of democratic liberty is thin (105-106, 124-127). I add that Schumpeter holds that human equality is not factually true (*CSD*, 246), and that there is no rational warrant for equality as an ethical postulate (265).


48 Ibid., 198-199.


56 Schumpeter, *Ten Great Economists*, 139.

57 Ibid., 140.


59 Medearis, *Joseph Schumpeter’s Two Theories of Democracy*, 15.


63 Ibid., 24.

64 In a little-noted passage, Schumpeter, referring directly to his modern doctrine of democracy, defines fascism as the political method of monopolistic rather than competitive leadership (*CSD*, 404). Is this his main difference with Schmitt (Scheuerman, *Carl Schmitt: The Rule of Law*, 183-207): that for Schmitt plebiscitary leadership should be monopolistic, but for Schumpeter it should be competitive? Or are the definitions purely descriptive? The definition raises further difficulties. Fascism too must be a method of no intrinsic value. It fulfills the leadership function as much as does
democracy. As well, “both the will of the people and the common good may be, and in many instances have been, served just as well or better by governments that cannot be described as democratic” (CSD, 269-270). Finally, “the acquisition of political leadership by the people’s tacit acceptance of it” is democratic even if not in accord with the “technicality” of his definition (CSD, 271, see also 246). Scheuerman, ibid., 324, observes that Schumpeter termed Franco a democrat but Roosevelt a potential dictator.