

Why Democracy?

Political Science

The arguments for majority rule, and its known weaknesses.

Arguments for

- Equal respect for each citizen
- Aggregates dispersed knowledge
- Peaceful transfer of power
- Accountability constrains rulers
- Legitimacy through participation

Known problems

- Majority can oppress minorities
- Voters have little incentive to inform themselves
- Short electoral horizons
- Intensity of preference is not captured
- Capture by organised interests

THE DIFFERENCE THAT MATTERS

Most defences are comparative: not that democracy is good, but that the alternatives are reliably worse.

Educational reference. Constitutional limits and rights protections exist largely to address the majority-tyranny problem.