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A STUDY OF POLITICAL LEADERSHIP<sup>31</sup> IN DEMOCRATIC THEORY.

THESIS

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This thesis offers an alternative of political leadership through a literature review of democratic theory as categorized into three models: classical, elitist, and egalitarian.

The three models considered an ethical, an institutional, and an economic institutional postulate of political elites and their relationships. Still, the democratic elitist model emerging as the dominant model has been challenged by the egalitarian model enforcing economic institutional elites to be accountable to mass interest. As a competing idea, the egalitarian democratic model has been analyzed for its desirability over the democratic elitist model.

This study is worthwhile in instigating an underscored concern surrounding economic institutional elites in the scope of accountable political elites, and in calling forth a further study on the preferred alternative, democratization of economic institutional elites.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The study of political elites has been central to political analysis ever since Aristotle first categorized government according to the number who rule, the one, the few or the many. The term "political elites" has traditionally referred to a collective group of powerful individuals existing within their own political and economic system (Mills 1959, 18). This definition implies coercive power arbitrarily exercised in the hands of elites who alone dominate the lives of the masses. Political elites have traditionally been thought to be an exploitative class determined to form and allocate social values, seeking their own self interests while repressing the interests of the masses.

The existence of political elites is considered to be inconsistent with democratic ideals, especially as western democratic ideals tend increasingly toward political equality. The issue to be addressed in this paper stems from this incompatible relationship between political elites, who would be assumed to be an exploitative class, and democratic ideals, which have penetrated the consciousness of the public, inspiring a classical

democratic norm of widespread mass participation in which all citizens are expected to play a substantial role in determining public policy. This democratic tendency seems to be an expansion of mass power for the sake of popular interest in the context of a socio-political system stratified into the elites and non-elites, the rulers and the ruled, and the haves and the have-nots. The traditional mass-elite relationship has been considerably affected by the democratic process in several institutional and structural contexts. For instance, political elites may occupy several electoral positions authorized by the masses and maintain a checks and balances relationship in institutional settings. In practice, this democratization attempts to guarantee the principle of responsibility of political elites for the actualization of the public interests, and to prevent the inclination of political elites to satisfy private interest.

In the face of the incompatible issues of political elites and democratic ideals, democratic theory suggests the accountability of political elites to the masses. Additionally, it suggests methods for guaranteeing this principle. From the prescriptive and normative standpoint, democratic theory asks the questions: 1. How much scope for political leadership is consistent with democratic ideals? and 2. What conditions are necessary to enhance the

principle of accountability to the masses? The purpose of this study is to review the arguments of democratic theory responding to those questions. Democratic theory to be discussed in this paper is divided into three models: the classical democratic model, the democratic elitist model, and the egalitarian democratic model.

The democratic models can be distinguished by their different views of democracy, the degree of political leadership, and the alternatives leading to accountable political leadership. The classical democratic model posits democracy as rule by the common people. On the principle of mass participation in political affairs as a normative guideline, the classical democratic model argues the populist view of political leadership in that political elites must function to stimulate mass participation. Democratic ideals can be accomplished by this principle of mass participation through the functional role of political elites. However, the classical democratic model reveals some problems in principle and practice in societies.

Primarily drawn from empirical conclusions, modern democratic models have raised questions about the normative and practical aspects of the classical democratic model, insisting on the tension between idealistic and realistic democracy (Dahl 1956; 1982, 15). The democratic elitist model conceives of representative institutions through which

democratic ideals are accomplished. And then, it asserts the elitist view of political leadership that emphasizes the positive role of political elites in achieving the democratic ideals. Modern democratic models--elitist and egalitarian--are fundamentally based on a theoretical position more or less supporting the elitist political leadership. Nevertheless, the modern democratic models are differentiated by their prescriptive alternatives primarily relying on the empirical understanding of who governs and with whom political elites are identified. Additionally, they have raised questions concerning the power relationship between the masses and elites. The egalitarian democratic model emphasizes egalitarianism as the basis for democratic ideals.

The different views seem to reflect an intellectual struggle among the democratic models in that a thesis (the classical democratic model) has been countered by an antithesis (the democratic elitist model), and that has produced a synthesis (the egalitarian democratic model). Through a serial theoretical effort to realize their views of democracy, the three models offer competing ideas concerning the degree of discretion permitted political leadership and, furthermore, the practical alternatives for maintaining accountability of political elites.

Chapter Two will review the historical debates of the three models focusing on the issue of political elites in the relation between democracy and elitism. In a strict democratic egalitarian sense, the existence and activities of political elites are considered to be inconsistent with democratic government goals: widespread mass participation, political equality, and egalitarianism. A power structure incorporating political elites would presumably be rejected since such a condition would pervert the achievement of democratic ideals. Speculatively, elitism has been perceived as a formidable rival to democracy because it is vulnerable to totalitarianism (Girvetz 1967). As a result, the democratic ideals have preferred a wider power base of people in trying to constrict the elite power in the elite-mass relations. Nevertheless, elitism has been defended on the utilitarian ground that the capacity of a few elites can accomplish or maximize any social utility to benefit the whole society such as materialistic and technological advancement (Kann 1979). Even the modern democratic elitist model (often called pluralist) emphasizes the importance of political elites in favor of elitism.

These contrasting arguments on democratic and elitist origins, which have recurred in the history of political thought since ancient times, illustrate the difference between the democratic models. The literature review of the



democratic models will reveal theoretical and further practical diversification within democratic theory, stemming from two perspectives. In democratic theory, the focus of argument consists in asking a question: what sort of political leadership is needed to achieve democratic ideals? Basically, by arguing that political leadership can be accommodated to democratic ideals and is, in fact, indispensable to the achievement of democratic ideals, democratic theory seems to be dependent on a considerable free will of political elites for innovation. If political elites exercise no substantial will or ability, little can be accomplished. The lack of will and ability of political leadership has also been shown to interrupt the progress of democratization. Thus, this study focuses on the core agent of action, the role of political leadership, for the fulfillment of democratic ideals.

Nevertheless, if this study only attempted to describe the normative temperamental qualities and ethical imperatives of political leadership for democratic ideals, it would not contribute to the debate within democratic theory concerning a realistic achievement of democracy. The arguments of political leadership may be merely an ethical postulate, apart from realistic conditions. Even when it can be assumed that political elites are willing and qualified to achieve the democratic ideals, theorists are

prodded to consider the power structure surrounding these political elites. As a result, it requires an attempt to induce qualified political elites to act for democratic ideals through institutional and structural change.

With this issue in mind, crucial concern will be given to the next issue of how to lead political elites to act on behalf of mass interests. What is furthermore dealt with is their debate concerning realistic achievement of political leadership. The debate on practical application provides a breakthrough leading to an ethical postulate under realistic conditions. The contemporary democratic models (democratic elitism and egalitarianism) have developed into different ideas of the political power structure. These models endeavor to discover a means of accomplishing theoretical ideals which require that political elites execute their power for the public good at the expense of their own interests. Chapter Three will analyze and assess the means suggested by the two models--democratic elitist and egalitarian--in an attempt to find the most practical method for the implementation of democratic political leadership.

This study will ultimately defend the egalitarian democratic model as a synthesis of the democratic elitist model and the classical democratic model. The egalitarian democratic model presents a positive alternative--a necessity of democratization of economic elites--calling for

a change in the on-going system for implementing democratic political leadership. This alternative, which tends to sway economic elites toward egalitarianism, needs to be reconsidered in a given realistic situation. Such a situation would be a capitalistic system. It can be assumed that the assertion of the egalitarian democratic model is an attempt to eradicate the problem emerging in applying democratic political leadership to a realistic condition. In comparison with the egalitarian democratic model, the democratic elitist model will be analyzed and assessed.

This study will suggest a turning point in the contemporary research that is predominated by the democratic elitist model. Chapter Three will attempt to demonstrate a normative-theoretical basis for further study of alternatives on the egalitarian democratic model. Nevertheless, the egalitarian democratic model faces strong academic and popular opposition or reluctance in proposing its alternative, the accountability of economic elites to the masses, for it may be accomplished only at the expense of private property rights. In defense of egalitarian democratic ideas, this study recommends that active research be undertaken on the normative justification of the egalitarian model and that it be tested to prove its validity beyond the normative justification that will be demonstrated throughout this paper.

## CHAPTER II

### DEMOCRATIC THEORY AND POLITICAL LEADERSHIP

#### Democracy versus Elitism

Historically, there have been different positions taken by theorists on the subject of elites. The study of elites has concentrated upon descriptive and explanatory questions, who actually are elites, how do they maintain themselves, and what is the nature of elites (Bill and Hardgrave 1973, 157), unlike the democratic theorists who ask normatively, are elites necessary and for what purpose? In other words, the theoretical position of democrats differs considerably from that of the elitists who take the elite-mass dichotomy based on unequal distribution of power to be a natural phenomenon. The elitists do not justify why this unequal division should be necessary (Medding 1982, 393-394). In fact, all factual history has shown an elite-dominated form in that a few able (powerful or wealthy) individuals or groups influence the decision making processes. To the democratic theorists, however, the natural phenomenon has been defended on the prescriptive and normative basis.

The difference between democrats and elitists can be summarized as follows: the elitists believe in the value of the idea that "the few exercise a relatively great weight of

power and the many comparatively little" (Bill and Hardgrave 1973, 159; Parry 1970). The democrats conceive of the possibility of the redistribution of power between the masses and elites on a more purposeful basis. That the transfer of power from elites to the masses is a goal to be pursued is illustrated by Bachrach and Baratz (1962): "the many exercise a great weight of power and the few relatively little."

Under this teleological aspiration of democratic theory, the subject of elites has been studied in democratic theory. Recognizing the existence of elites and the necessity of their activities, democratic theorists debate the substantive relationship between political elites and democratic ideals. Debates on democratic models focus on the crucial question, how much leadership is compatible with how much democracy? In other words, what kind of leadership is compatible with democratic ideals?

Disagreement among democratic models, thus, stems from the degree of leadership between the participatory and the elitist leadership. The participatory leadership addressed in democratic theory holds that leadership must be limited to enhanced popular choice through popular participation (Kann 1979, 203). The elitist leadership, which has been also addressed among democratic models, aims at influencing and shaping public choices like the guardianship of a few

experts (Dahl 1985a, b). Disputes between these democratic models seem to vacillate on a continuum ranging from democratic (rule of full individual sovereignty) to elitist implications (rule of the few). Disagreement of the democratic and elitist positions is explained by the fact that the two positions begin with very different implications. The democratic position usually implies an expansion of popular choice, while the elitist position implies a constriction of popular choice.

The different positions shown in democratic theory have developed as a consequence of philosophical strands of consent and utility (Kann 1979). In general, the utilitarian philosophical strand recommends a utilitarian leadership in which the ability of a few experts benefits all. It supports elitist leadership. Political power is authoritative when it maximizes the sum total of social happiness (Kann 1979, 208). In contrast, the consent philosophical tradition considers popular consent the primary basis for legitimate authority. It links popular choice (political process) to political authority, while the utilitarian tendency links social utility (political outcomes) to political authority (Bachrach 1967).

The following review will deal with the differences in three democratic models in terms of the degree of leadership derived from what they think of as democracy. The

literature review will consider each of the three models, in turn, showing the alternatives for guaranteeing democratic leadership.

### Nature of Political Leadership in

#### Classical Democratic Model

Corresponding to participatory democracy, the classical democratic model emphasizes the political process rather than the political consequence. Widespread mass participation becomes the fundamental principle through which all citizens would decide public policy (Dahl 1956; Benello and Roussopoulos 1971). Participation is deemed necessary "to prevent rulers from deliberately disregarding citizens' interests; ensure that all interests are expressed and considered in the political processes; enable citizens to develop knowledge of what their interests are; promote a sense of legitimacy; and foster individual self-development" (Kariel 1970, 414).

Herein, the scope of mass and elite activity appears to be duplicated on the basis of an assumption that there is a conflict between the mass and elite interests in allocating the social values. The normative preference of the popular choice needs an objective standard for the questions of the amount of popular choice and elite activity. The classical democratic model suggests the enhancement of popular choice under participatory leadership. In favor of majority rule,

participatory leadership is postulated as a "mediating function" to stimulate rather than repress popular participation (Kann 1979, 213). This mediating function requires several traits of elites to be developed by conscience and reason, which can induce their citizens to participate and succeed in the decision making process. For example, Rousseau's prototype of democratic leaders was depicted as the self-disciplined, knowledgeable, and charismatic Great Legislator. The legislator is able to satisfy the will of people (Girvetz 1967, 90).

In order to discover what social regulations are best suited to nations, there is needed a superior intelligence which can survey all the passions of mankind, . . . .

Whoso would undertake to give institutions to a People must work with full consciousness that he has set himself to change, as it were, the very stuff of human nature; . . . .

The Legislator must, in every way, be an extraordinary figure in the State. He is so by reason of his genius . . . . He is neither magistrate nor sovereign. His function is to constitute the State, yet in its Constitution it has no part to play. It exists in isolation, and is superior to other functions, having nothing to do with the governance of men. For if it be true that he who commands men should not ordain laws, so, too, he who ordains laws should be no longer in a position to command men. Were it otherwise, the laws, mere ministers to his passions, would often do no more than perpetuate his acts of injustice, nor could he ever avoid the danger that his views as a man might detract from the sanctity of his work.

Whoso codifies the laws of a community, therefore, has not, or should not have, any legislative right, a right that is incommunicable, and one of which the People, even should they wish to do so, cannot divest themselves. For, by reason of the social compact, the general will alone can constrain the individual



citizen: nor is there any other way of making sure that the will of the individual is in conformity with the general will, save by submitting it to the free votes of the People. This I have said once already; but it is well that it should be repeated. (Rousseau 1978, 204-209)

Rousseau's leadership derives from the fear of historical autocratic leadership that decides and plans all decision-making affairs in the hands of an absolute power. The degree of leadership in the classical democratic model places emphasis primarily on popular consent. In order to support to this, the crucial traits of moral self-discipline and knowledge are proposed as fundamental requirements of the participatory leadership that would be compatible with democratic ideals. The rules of mass and elite enjoy a harmonious relationship with democratic ideals under the leadership in that political elites function to lead the masses to participate in decision-making processes.

The imperative attributes of political elites, however, raise some questions. It is difficult to think that the traits of political elites have direct correlation to their performance. The traits seem to be highly abstract to apply to the actualization of democratic political leadership. A trait approach is an attempt to identify the desired characteristics of democratic political leaders, and results in a list of factors. Appearance, height, weight, intelligence, morality, and specific-task related skills have all been discussed in other literature (Paige 1978,

179-186). Some of these factors appear to be scarcely related to desirable leadership and performance of political elites. It should be also noted that there has been historically no ideal leadership possessing these desired traits.

The classical democratic model has thus set up an imperative postulate of democratic leadership in that leaders must possess certain characteristics. This normative assertion of the classical democratic model raises several questions concerning the possibility of accomplishing the goals. Who possesses the traits of ideal political leadership? To what extent are the traits related directly to the actualization of participatory democracy? Although perfect leaders or groups may be hypothesized, there remain situational difficulties in the relationship between political elites and the masses, and among political elites themselves. For instance, the precondition of participatory leadership assumes that the people must be expected to be rational in deciding political affairs. Moreover, this can be expected by the possibility of consensus within popular choices. The difficulties are specifically traced in modern elitist and egalitarian democratic models, which are skeptical of the ideas of participatory leadership presented by the classical democratic model.

The democratic elitist model, recognizing practical difficulties (or impossibilities) of participatory democracy, criticizes the principle of widespread mass participation in the policy decision-making process (Dahl 1982, 20-35). It contends that the classical democratic model offers no realistic guideline as to how the imperative postulates can be incorporated into a historical system. Furthermore, the democratic egalitarian model points out the structural problem, preventing political elites possessing an innovative will from furthering democratic ideals.

The problems of the classical democratic model could be condensed into those of two categorical relationships, which are the vertical relationship between the masses and elites and horizontal relationship among elites. Modern democratic models respond to a number of difficulties emerging from the vertical and horizontal relationships. Their efforts seem to proceed dialectically, as noted in Chapter One. In the following sections, the problems of vertical and horizontal relationships will be dealt with from the perspectives of the democratic elitist and egalitarian models.

Institutionalization of Political Leadership  
in the Democratic Elitist Model

The democratic elitist model is especially concerned with the competence of the masses, which cannot be ignored in the vertical relationship between the masses and political elites. It points out the lack of competence of the masses in support of the utilitarian argument that widespread mass participation is problematic. Many recent empirical studies of factual phenomena, especially irrational, anti-democratic, and apathetic mass behavior in political affairs, conclude that mass participation is unrealistic and probably dangerous (Kendall 1950; Berelson 1952; Dahl 1956; Downs 1957; Dye and Zeigler 1972; Dahl and Lindblom 1976).

This proposition of the democratic elitist model has considerable historical support. For example, Hitler's rise to power through popular choice provokes the fear of mobocracy in academic circles. Such historical experiences and factual evidence (for example, voting for candidates on the basis of charm rather than issues; demanding greater government services, but refusing to commit the necessary taxes; denying the right of equal participation to blacks, communists, etc.) demonstrate the problematic characters of mass participatory democracy emphasizing popular choice. As a consequence, this concern has dominated the thought of

many democratic theorists since Madison's writings (Dahl 1956, 37-38), and led the democratic empiricists to emphasize the importance of elites in political affairs.

The democratic elitist model argues that extensive popular participation is unnecessary in policy decisions (Danielson 1971, 241), stressing the positive role of elites in maintaining and sustaining a democratic system (Lijphart 1969). The democratic elitist model stresses the role of political elites in shaping and influencing political affairs on the basis of superior technical knowledge and political skills. A legitimacy of political leadership depends upon political outcomes, and not a political process in which political elites function to educate the masses and let them participate in the decision making.

Preferring elitist leadership to participatory leadership, the democratic elitist model attempts to formulate interpersonal rules, that is, institutions. This idea is based upon the utility of institutions that affect social outcomes just as much as popular choices. It also presumes that popular preferences and values are condensed into institutions which are simply rules of behavior, especially about making decisions. Thus, based upon the possibility that the institutional approach can produce an equilibrium of decision making, the model aims at institutionalizing the relationships between the masses and

elites, and among political elites. This approach can be regarded as a substitute for a trait approach shown by the classical democratic model. Unlike the imperative dependency on the ethical and temperamental traits of leaders, the institutional approach can shift the traits of leaders towards the possible and desirable. As a result, the democratic elitist model construes the scope of popular choice to be confined to accepting or rejecting political elites, whereas it expands political elites to play a vital role in decisions on political affairs (Schumpeter 1950). The relationship between political elites and the masses appears to culminate at the voting moment when the masses select political elites (Downs 1957, 22-23; Fiorina and Noll 1979).

The roles of the masses and political elites seem to be set up in the hands of elitist democratic theorists who have defended the role of political leadership on the ground that it is essential to achieving and sustaining the democratic system. Expertise and competence of political elites are regarded as necessary traits to operate the democratic political system. They are assumed to lead to the satisfaction of mass demands in political outcomes, in comparison with the classical democratic model emphasizing the political process as mass participation in decision making. According to the elitist democratic model, the

institutionalization designs the securing of accountability to the masses.

Beyond the institutional relationship between the masses and elites, the democratic elitist model develops the topic of the elites themselves. Basically observing the power community of political elites, the model sees the plural social forces as many institutional or organizational groups that constitute the socio-political system and act to maximize their institutional interests (Huntington 1968; LaPalombara 1975; Almond and Powell 1978). The model argues that they must commit to constitutional ideals in which political life ought to be carried out by means of procedures and rules. The democratic elitist model envisions institutional separation among political elites in a sense that a vast number of competing and equal groups interact freely in the political decision-making process. This pluralism has been inherited from liberal democratic theory consistent with constitutional ideals (Riemer 1984, 113). In this notion, procedural and institutional arrangements are required in order to secure the equal and free activities of political elites and increase their accountability to the masses.

The pursuit of plural institutional democracy is designed to control human behavior through routines and rules. As a consequence, this idea draws academic attention

to the active project concerning the institutional and procedural aspects of the system (Dahl 1982, 190-203). Robert A. Dahl (1982) prescribed several structural changes, such as decentralization of relatively autonomous subunits in which decisions are regulated in part by markets and competition (1982, 203), decentralization of enterprises and decision-making structure (1982, 170), and constitutional change for checking the excessive concentration of power (1982, 191). The changes are intended so that plural political elites will be compelled to respond freely and equally to mass interests. As a crucial theme of the democratic elitist writings, the emphasis on institutional arrangement may set up a stable democratic political system. It means that the enhancement of political leadership in the democratic elitist model has been restricted by the reciprocal checks and balances of plural political elites. Eventually, the rationale of the democratic elitist model has a root in the belief of the possibility of equilibrium among the plural elites.



### Egalitarian Democratic Model

The egalitarian democratic model arises from the critique of democratic elitist principle concerning the problem of the horizontal relationship among political elites in institutional settings. Egalitarian democratic theorists criticize the democratic elitist principle in the same way that elitist democratic theorists opposed the classical democratic theory. As much as classical democratic theorists believe in the abstract vanity of popular consensus like general will in participatory democracy, plural-elitist democratic theorists are caught by the same phantom of the equilibrium pluralism in institutional and procedural democracy. However, the democratic elitist model has overlooked an issue which the egalitarian democratic model seeks to address: the unequal power structure of elites. Plural elite groups or organizations do not equally participate in the decision making processes.

In modern democratic theory, there are two major contrasting analyses of community power structure: the pluralist analysis in which various institutional groups are considered as powerful as business men (Dahl 1961, 468-569); the Marxist structural analysis in which capitalists are considered predominant in the decision making process (Hunter 1953, 6; Schulze 1958, 3-9). In those analyses, the

relationship between political and economic elites appears to be imbedded in the community power structure. The analysis of the egalitarian democratic model is identified with the Marxist structural analysis due to several similar aspects, such as the concept of economic class, the domination of the economic elite class, and the conflict among classes (Manley 1983). The economic elite class exercises its power over the other classes or groups in the decision-making process.

Resting on the Marxist structural analysis, the egalitarian democratic model insists on an irrational commitment of private elites and economic enterprises to decisions and decision-making processes (Lindblom 1982, 324; Dahl 1982, 40). Moreover, it contends that the democratic elitist model shows too little concern about the misuse of elitist leadership for expanding their private wealth (Kann 1979, 205). Even the power relationship is criticized in that it is comparable to "a business of compromise" (Kariel 1970, 129), because of the enormous influence of economic power over the political process. To the egalitarian democratic model, the horizontal relationship among political plural elites becomes of great importance.

As Charles E. Lindblom (1982, 324) points out, the decision making mechanism of capitalistic systems includes relations between public elites and private elites who

influence the decision making processes. Some empirical studies reveal the fact that political elites use rational methods to prevent changes in the distribution of wealth to the disadvantage of entrenched elites. "When we come, however, to that cluster of institutions called business, business enterprise, or the market, just such a mechanism is in fact already operating. Many kinds of market reform automatically trigger punishments in the form of unemployment or a sluggish economy. Do we want business to carry a larger share of the nation's tax burden? We must fear that such a reform will discourage business investment and curtail employment" (Lindblom 1982, 325). Lindblom studied the decision on taxes as evidence of an overwhelming influence on the decision-making processes, which has been also extensively dealt with in several other writings (Bachrach and Baratz 1970; Green 1982; Lane 1985 and 1986; Bates and Lien 1985). Robert A. Dahl indicates that "groups may help to stabilize inequality, to deform civic consciousness, to distort the public agenda, and to alienate final control over the agenda" (Dahl 1982, 40). Dahl perceives an inherent conflict within the power structure of political elites influenced by the capitalistic democratic political system.

This theoretical position may further perceive that the private economic elites are inherently inconsistent with the

other public political elites in seeking the egalitarian principle. The criticism turns to the inherent problem of the capitalistic system from which the unequal power relation is derived (Dahl 1985 b; Lane 1985 and 1986; Lindblom 1982; Manley 1983). Some post-pluralists, like the egalitarian democratic model, have recently posed the issue of socialism versus capitalism (Manley 1983, 370-371). Although they are reluctant to change the on-going capitalistic democratic system, their awareness of the tremendous influence of economic elites on the decision-making processes in the capitalistic system helps us further explore our ideology (Dahl 1985b). Concerned with the present problem of unequal activities and relations among political elites, especially between political and economic elites, the new trend of post-elitist (pluralism) theory and the egalitarian democratic theory seek to fundamentally change the on-going system.

Relevant to the concern of recent egalitarian democratic theory, Marxist criticism of capitalistic democracy may be well applied to the arguments of egalitarian democratic theory. It suggests a loophole of democracy that all the people govern only part of the governmental body (Moore 1957, 85) and further, only part of the elites, public elites, not private elites.

Democracy is defined as government by the people, in contrast with monarchy, which is government by one, and with aristocracy, which is government by a few.

Bourgeois democracies differ in two important respects from other class democracies, those of slave societies, for example. First, in democracies of slave societies official exclusion of slave from the governing people stamps these governments as instruments of class rule. But in capitalist democracies official inclusion of Proletarians in the governing people seems to stamp those governments as presenting the members of all classes. Second, in democracies of slave societies the governing people participate directly in legislative, judicial, and executive functions. But in capitalist democracies the people neither make the laws, nor interpret them, nor enforce them.

Interpretation and enforcement of laws, on the other hand, are effectively monopolized by bureaucracies-hierarchies of paid officials whose selection and activities are to a great extent independent of popular control [such example can be represented as an insufficient mechanism of check and balance, and even disequilibrium of plural power relationship]. When it is said that the people govern in democracies of slave and capitalist societies, both 'people' and 'govern' are ambiguous terms. In democracies of slave societies 'govern' means all the governing, but 'people' only part of the people. In democracies of capitalist societies 'people' means all the people, but 'govern' only part of governing. (Moore 1957, 86-87)

By democratic political means, for example, periodical elections, the relationship between the masses and political elites has been institutionally connected. The people may be able to govern the policies relevant to mass lives through the institutional mechanism. However, as the Marxist criticism argues, "the executive power of the modern state is simply a committee for managing the common affairs of the entire bourgeois class" (Moore 1957, 88). As a result, political outcomes tend to be advantageous to the privileged specific groups. Therefore, the disequilibrium

in the decision-making process is a core concern of the egalitarian democratic model. In addition, egalitarian theorists argue that economic elites, who had been excluded from the scope of political elites in the democratic elitist model, should follow the imperative role of political elites accountable for the mass interests. The assertion is put forth as a way of solving the disequilibrium of plural elites in the egalitarian democratic model.

The egalitarian democratic model provides an alternative model concerning the normative questions. Which groups in the community must follow political leadership accountable to the masses? Who must be the political elites? ". . . Corporations themselves have been frightened at any suggestion that they might emerge as political institutions in their own and separate right. It is perhaps time that political theorists take courage and recognize that the giants among these institutions are in fact political elites-accountable only to themselves" (Bachrach 1967, 81-82). Furthermore, why must private economic elites be political elites accountable for the mass interests? The alternative model is confronted with on-going structural problems, particularly between private and public institutional elites, since private elites are excluded from the scope of political elites in the democratic elitist model. That the democratic elitist model believes in the

possibility of equilibrium without any restriction on private elites is regarded as a provocative cause resulting in a failure of the procedural democracy. There remains the task of incorporating the activity of private elites into political leadership, which has been overlooked by the democratic elitist model.

## CHAPTER III

### ANALYSES AND ALTERNATIVES

#### Analyses of the Democratic Models

Along a sort of teleological line on the topic of leadership, the theoretical models have concentrated on making political leadership possible and desirable. The democratic political leadership has been manifested as a figure accountable to the masses. In the elitist leadership, accountability is regarded as a pivotal principle of connecting the power of political elites to democratic ideals. Compared with participatory leadership, the accountability of political leadership becomes a more positive role in the consequences of decision making.

To guarantee the principle, the three models have shown differently their alternatives as follows: The classical democratic model proposes the importance of traits of political elites in that maintaining the principle depends on the quality of the political elites. On the contrary, the democratic elitist model turns to the objective approach like the institutional arrangement from the subjective and uncontrollable trait approach. The institutional arrangements between political elites and the masses and among elites themselves are used to restrict the elitist



leadership to be accountable for citizenry interests. Nevertheless, the unequal power structure among plural elites is highlighted by the egalitarian democratic model. The egalitarian model points out the exclusion of economic elites in the institutional arrangement. The alternative of the egalitarian democratic model cannot be regarded as an extension of the institutional reform sought by the democratic elitist model. The idea touching the private sector faces a limitation in given circumstances.

The democratic elitist and egalitarian models differ from each other concerning several issues related to their alternatives to achieve democratic political leadership. These modern democratic models appear to be competing academic trends which attempt to represent their theoretical system in a possible world. The following analyses of the two models suggest a useful framework for comparing and judging a possible and desirable alternative.

#### Analysis of the Democratic Elitist Model

In examining the democratic elitists' writings, three fundamental issues can be raised.

##### 1. Profit Seeking Nature of Political Elites

The democratic elitist model is based upon the perception that the behavior of political leaders is designed to their own interests. It is a common assumption

of mainstream modern political analysis that this materialistic seeking nature dominates the behavior of the political elites (Frohlich, Oppenheimer, and Young 1971). This egoistic nature may be considered as a core of human behavior and helps to measure and control the behavior of political elites. It is a clue to understanding human thought and behavior. Regardless of the separation between public and private figures, political elite behavior may well reflect the profit-seeking nature. Undoubtedly, political elites can and do pursue their own interests rather than the public interest.

However, political elites are imposed to be a public figure that must be accountable for the public interests. There is a central dilemma between the behavioral nature of individuals, which seeks to be rational and self-interested, and political leadership, which is forced to be accountable to the public good. In order to solve this dilemma, the democratic elitist model suggests that "there are cases in which the members of a group can be induced to contribute to the supply of a collective good if they receive some positive, private-good payoffs at the same time" (Frohlich, Oppenheimer, and Young 1971, 6). The private interests are regarded as the incentives in recruiting political leaders to help achieve public goods. If there is no reward like private interests (profits), it can be easily assumed that

individuals will not voluntarily act to achieve the public good. As a consequence, the democratic elitist model merely provides a counteracting mechanism to prevent political elites from the abuse of power for their own interests or for a specific institutional interest, while ignoring the public good. The notion of institutional arrangement is an alternative for checking and balancing their self-interested nature, and guaranteeing the principle of accountability.

## 2. Enhancement of Private Elites' Activities

The democratic elitist model considers the parallel relationship between political elites (in this model, political elites are identified with public elites) and private elites as the best way of inducing political elites in terms of cost-benefit analysis. The private elites, especially business people who are excluded from the scope of political elites, are assumed to be able to affect political elites to seek the public good by such motivations as "positive and private payoffs" (Frohlich, Oppenheimer, and Young 1971, 5). "Any individual who acts to supply a collective good without providing all of the resources himself we will call a political leader or political entrepreneur. Such an individual will only find this role valuable when the total resources he can collect as a leader exceed his costs, thereby producing a leader's surplus. Political leaders will have four potential sources of

revenue from contribution" (1971, 7). Such contributions are exemplified as donations, extortion, purchases, and taxes (1971, 7). Since it necessitates considerable benefits and economic resources to motivate political elites to serve for the masses, the achievement of public good relies upon the economic sectors' positive supplies (1971). This logic implies the assumption that the motivation of political elites in the service of public good depends upon strategies designed to balance private and public interests.

### 3. Equilibrium Relation among Plural Elites

The democratic elitist model assumes the equilibrium of the relationship between public elites and private elites to be fundamental to the power system of an actual democracy. The plural elites are believed to represent mass demands equally and freely in the decision-making process. The equilibrium of plural elites supports the assumption that equal plural elites will be responsible for final decisions, without intervention of arbitrary power groups. The idea is caught up in the belief in the possibility of the popular consensus. This assumption justifies political stability, when the mass demands can be channeled into policies through equal participation of elites. The democratic elitist model is embedded into a search of the equilibrium possibility in structuring political outcomes. However, it fails to consider the disequilibrium of political elites. According

to a new political analysis proving the disequilibrium (Ordeshook 1982), all decision processes and outcomes are based upon economic elite preference. Some egalitarian writings show that public policy is skewed to expand special private wealth (for example, oil depletion allowances) or to prevent the distribution of wealth disadvantageous to a few influential elite groups (Wolff 1968; Dolbeare 1974). To the egalitarian democratic model, the equilibrium of political elite power, which was regarded as a precondition of democracy in the democratic elitist model, seems to be a mere illusion.

#### Analysis of the Egalitarian Model

The democratic elitist model has several limits which are criticized and complemented by the egalitarian model.

##### 1. Emphasis on Altruistic Nature

The profit-seeking nature of political elites is vulnerable. The democratic elitists consider only a unilateral aspect of the self-interested nature of political elites, but fail to recognize the altruistic nature of an individual or plural groups who values public interest more than self-interest. The democratic elitist model takes for granted that political elites seek a satisfaction of private interest rather than a fulfillment of public interest. The egalitarian model, however, emphasizes altruistic nature.

The political elites who are endowed with the nature may be well reconciled with citizenry interests and egalitarian value. The emphasis on the altruistic nature implies a self-perpetuating basis in that political elites can value the public good and maintain value in themselves. In other words, political elites can serve citizenry interests without any motivation of profit or market value, which is typical of economic elites.

## 2. Criticism of Parallel Relationship

The main criticism of the egalitarian democratic model is that the democratic elitists exclude a mass role in preventing political elites from deliberate disregard of citizen interests. In the democratic elitist model, the institutional arrangement would insulate political elites from the demands of the citizenry (Lindblom 1980, 62-63) and increase mass apathy. No straightforward relation exists between what the citizen demands and what policies the political elites make. According to the democratic elitists, some kinds of governmental affairs require the limiting of mass participation and, conversely, the placing of superior technological knowledge and political power in elites' hands (Dahl 1985a). It unintentionally supports elitism in that a pattern of decision making is characterized by limited mass participation in this community and dominated by small groups of specialized or general leaders.

Thus, in the democratic elitist model, private economic elite activities instigate a viable competition among many elites. Competitive politics is regarded as a crucial factor in the pluralist equation bringing the system into equilibrium. However, this condition brings about the fact that many private organizations compete and cooperate with government in determining the allocation of governmental largesse (Kariel 1970). Real competition on any specific issue is limited to a relatively few powerful groups. "Modern democracy becomes. . . . transformed into a system of technique sans telos. And democratic politics is reduced to a constellation of self-seeking pressure groups peaceably engaged in a power struggle to determine the allocation of privilege and particular advantage" (Rousseas and Farganis 1963, 349).

The egalitarian democratic model provides two reasons to explain why the democratic elitist model remains structurally problematic: first, the democratic elitist model rules out widespread participation; second, it disregards the fact that the influential economic groups, including those in business, finance, and industry, made the key decisions to affect the entire community. As a result, the democratic elitist model gives power to a few influential elites without consideration of mass control and equality of political elites. Therefore, extensive mass

participation and the expansion of popular choice must be emphasized in the egalitarian democratic model to prevent arbitrary elite decisions. It may be a method of extensive mass participation represented in order to bring the economic elites into the democratizatiional process.

### 3. Disequilibrium of Plural Elites

More realistically, the democratic plural-elitist claim concerning the equilibrium of the plural elites has been criticized by the democratic egalitarian theorists, who argue that only a few leaders among plural elites or leaders exert influence on decisions. Private economic elites rule over public governmental elites and compromise with public governmental elites for reciprocal interests in order to maintain the status quo without disadvantageous change in their privileged positions and interests. From empirical analyses of community power structure, egalitarian theorists argued that the government becomes a business of compromise for the elites' interests (Kariel 1970, 129). The breaking of equity among plural elites is attributed to minority desire for power, prestige, status, and interests. It remains an awkward reality for those who take democracy seriously.

In sum, the democratic egalitarian model provides a self-developmental attribute of political elites, an altruistic nature to be reconciled with mass interest;



reemphasizes extensive mass participation; and in the long run, leads to a detailed argument on the scope of political elites in an attempt to resist the powerful influences of private economic elites. The following argument on the scope of political elites will provide an approach to explain the ultimate assertion of the egalitarian democratic model.

### The Scope of Political Elites

There is a problem of identifying political elites within the horizontal relationship among elites. Who are the political elites? By what attributes are they political elites? Who must be political elites? As an unsettled problem, the concept of "political" appears to be important to placing parameters on the scope of political elites. Contrary to the democratic elitist notion that separates public and private elite groups, the egalitarians conceive of a united political elite without the distinction between public and private elites. Since the expansion of the political concept denotes a broader scope of political elites than just governmental political elites, the democratic egalitarian model centers on the notion of political elites that contain economic as well as governmental elites.

In accordance with the expansion of the scope of political elites, the imperative principle concerning the

nature of political elites must be commensurately broadened to include economic elites (Bachrach 1967, 75-76). Private elites as well as public elites must be disciplined for public good.

This concept of political elites has been proposed with several definitions of "elite" to become an inclusive one. Elites are defined as the "holder of manipulative power," distinguishable from non-elites. By this definition, traditional elitists state that "the few who get the most of any value are the elite: the rest, the rank and file" (Bachrach 1967, 7). This manipulative power of political elites is further specifically conceptualized concerning decisions and the decision-making process that clarify the attributes of manipulative power (Rustow 1966, 692; Charlesworth 1967, 176-177). This notion is based on the premise that the activities of plural elites are generally linked to decision making, and extends the scope of political elites to the economic realm due to the degree of importance of economic elite decisions.

Despite a contrasting tendency to distinguish private and public sectors, several scholars attempt to equate private and public decisions and formulate concepts of political decision-making in firms and households in the same terms (Charlesworth 1967, 178). With respect to the equalized private-public relation, the notion that economic

elites play a similar role to that of political elites implies a logical aim of imposing the principle of political leadership on private elites as well. Conclusively it indicates that the performance of leadership for public good must be carried out within private institutions as well as within public institutions. As one of the principles of democratic political leadership, accountability to the masses must be also applied to private institutional elites.

The positively enforced principle of accountability must be required on the grounds that political and economic elites are engaged in the decision-making processes that influence or shape policies relevant to mass lives. Because of the relevance of economic elites to political decision making, economic elites ought to be included in our conceptualization of political elites. The economic elites also participate in decision making processes that considerably influence the distribution of national resources.

Thus, the expanding scope of political elites may impose the democratic imperatives of the public leadership model on economic elites. Under the agreement of the assertion that economic elites, as political elites, must be accountable to mass interest, there remains an additional question. How can they be made accountable to the masses? As the classical democratic model and the democratic elitist

model formulate political leadership and its procedural institutional arrangement, the egalitarian democratic model urges that private elites be democratized.

### Alternatives

The democratic elitist view ignores the unequal relationship between public and private elites and also excludes the masses from the decision-making process. It conceals the inherent inequality among political elites in a false belief that plural elites play equal roles for public good through checks and balances. On the contrary, the democratic egalitarian model highlights the functional importance of private institutional elites, which are inseparable from governmental institutions. This model requires the democratization of economic elites.

Peter Bachrach (1967), an authoritative scholar of the egalitarian position, concludes The Theory of Democratic Elitism: A Critique with three comprehensive solutions. The first is formulation of a constitutional law that may influence private institutions to follow democratic principles, such as accountability of leaders, popular participation, and political equality (1967, 102). The second relies upon the moral innovation of elites to defend democratic principles at the risk of their own personal status, prestige, and power (1967, 105). The third is the enlightenment of mass participation to emphasize conscious

popular support to make democracy meaningful in the lives of all men (1967, 106).

The alternative of the democratic egalitarian model--the democratization of economic elites--is required as a remedy to change the economic deterministic structure of plural elites, resulting in a conflict between public and private elites. In capitalistic democratic systems, leaders are influenced by the institutional principles that public elites must be guided by the postulate of the egalitarian principle, whereas the private elites are guided by the utilitarian principle. The difference between the institutional principles suggests distinct values that public and private elites respectively pursue. The different values indicate a conflict between them, bringing the domination of market value of the private elites over the public elites.

In recent writings (Lane 1986; Bates and Lien 1985), it has been shown that the difficulties in changing the existing system arise from different conceptions of justice. That is, while people claim to prefer the egalitarian value, they pursue their own particular interests at the expense of equal distribution of benefits for the whole society. Institutional principles instigate the relative, materialistic market value of the people only to maximize their profits rather than the egalitarian value. Present

market-oriented society indulges only in maximizing market values without considering a just distribution of them. The expansion of profit does not return to the whole society but causes an even greater conflict. Thus, the materialistic pursuit may well be explained by the citation that "the dynamism of history is confined to market dynamics--technical and material, but not ethical" (Lane 1986, 393).

The preferences of the people in the market place has been justified by the belief that conflict can be harmonized when profits are reinvested for the prosperity of the whole society. Eventually, the acquired surplus is supposed to contribute to the increase of the well being of the whole society. Herein, the political elites appear to have a task of redistributing the expanded surplus on the basis of the egalitarian principle. However, public and private elites repeatedly show a difference and even conflict of their own values in perceiving what social justice is and how to achieve it.

Democratization of economic elites seems indispensable. Private economic elites must be accountable to the public interests in the same context that political elites are accountable to the masses. The egalitarian democratic model provides a theoretical breakthrough for approaching egalitarian democracy under the circumstances of this capitalistic system.

## CHAPTER IV

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

It can be said that the democratic theory discussed in this paper has sought for an agreement between a democratic leadership, motivated solely by a desire to fulfill the needs of society, and its actualization. Three models in democratic theory have shown systematic alternatives. Their alternatives are supplementary to each other, not exclusive. The trait approach of the classical democratic model can be regarded as being essential in expecting the possibility of democratic leadership. Nevertheless, it is accepted by the democratic elitist model that the alternative is merely necessary, not sufficient. As a result, the institutional arrangement appears to make political elites more accountable for popular interests. It is a result of these basic ideas: first, the institutional groups or organizations are representatives of popular interests. Second is the possibility that their activities of maximizing interests can be equalized.

The alternative of the democratic elitist model includes limiting the scope of institutional arrangement in that economic elites of the community power structure are excluded. The democratic elitist model scarcely mentions

the problem of an elite power structure institutionally arranged to increase the responsibility of political elites. In the egalitarian democratic model, the inherent problem has been presented as the exclusion of economic elites from the scope of political elites. It charges that the democratic elitists are not aware of self-interested leadership in that some elites skew public interests. Private economic elites, only materialistic-seeking in nature, play a role de facto like political elites. Though they play a similar role in terms of decisions and the decision-making process, which may be identified with that of other governmental public elites, private economic elites have never been given constituent bond or any political accountability. Even the political decision-making system has been empirically influenced by the amoral profit-seeking nature of economic institutions. They rule over the whole society and distort the principle of public sectors.

Most studies of political leadership overlook the problem that economic elites are excluded from the scope of political elites, accompanied by the imperative nature of political leadership in terms of egalitarian justice. Since the dominant academic position is also intermingled in the capitalistic-materialistic communities, the egalitarian analysis deplores the on-going systematic structure in which the decisions and the decision-making process are negotiated



by a few powerful decision makers. The challenge of economic elite leadership of the egalitarian democratic model is revolutionary in a widespread market-oriented environment, whose characteristic form of self expression appears to be the pursuit of individual profit.

Compared with the egalitarian model, the democratic elitist model seems vulnerable to the pursuit of self-interest by political elites. This vulnerability is caused by the emphasis on the capacity of the elites to protect the system against the masses, and the exclusion of economic elites from the conception of political elites. An alternative of the egalitarian democratic model--democratization of economic elites--becomes a competing idea against the predominant tendency which appears to be born out of a struggle between evolution and revolution. The egalitarian model contends that the democratic elitist model advocates a gradual improvement in society through plural-institutional rearrangement but is not appropriately sensitive to the problem of a self-interested leadership. A technically capable political leadership sanctioned by egalitarian justice is possible only in a pure elite structure free from any self-interested political elites.

This paper has attempted to defend the argument of the democratic egalitarian model. Though this paper has argued

that accountability of private economic sectors to public good contributes to accomplishing egalitarian democracy, there still remain some questions. How much does the democratization of economic elites counteract the efficiency of contributing to the technical advancement of society? Does the realization of ultimate egalitarian justice depend upon the ethical problem of political elites or the technical-economic resources problem? According to the predominantly divided values between political sectors and economic sectors, political sectors primarily emphasize the egalitarian value through distribution, and economic sectors the increase of the surplus value returned to the total society. In the economic value, the materialistic expansion is a priority rather than the egalitarian distribution. In the long run, the relationship between political justice and market justice becomes a trade-off. The alternative--the democratization of economic elites--compels further study to face the choice.

This above-raised problem may be subsequential to the primary problems. Although the egalitarian model suggests a meaningful turning point, in that economic elites have been touched as the object of argument, there is no substantive way of knowing how economic elites can be democratized. Applicable methods might have been a basis of proving the theoretical framework of the egalitarian model. Therefore,

the project to design the democratization of economic elites remains a task of further study.

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