Democracy History Essay, Research Paper

The word democracy is derived from two Greek words: demos, meaning “the people,” and kratos, meaning, “rule.” A democracy is a way of governing in which the whole body of citizens takes charge of its own affairs. As citizens of towns, cities, states, provinces, and nations, the people are the sovereigns, the source of power. Democracy means that they can freely make the decisions about what is best for them: what policies to adopt and what taxes to pay. An authoritarian government is a government where they tell people what to do and expect the people to obey. This obedience is usually justified in the name of some higher value to which an individual??s interests and rights may be sacrificed. I believe that political decisions should be made democratically instead of using authoritarian processes because democracy provides equality, freedom and one of the most persistent defenses of democracy is that government policies are made in the interest of the people.Authoritarian government is a political system in which the power is in the hands of a ruling elite. The rule of a few will produce a government that passes laws for the benefit of the few. Therefore, an advantage for democracy is that the supreme power is vested in the people and will satisfy the interest of the people. The rule of the many will create a government that legislates on behalf of the majority. In other words, those people who hold political power cannot use it for their own benefit. Another argument in favour of democracy emphasizes its ability to safeguard individual liberties. Free competition among political parties provides a check against possible governmental tyranny and oppression, just as periodic elections provide a powerful antidote to the corrupting effect of political power.A word closely associated with democracy is equality. For a government to be a true democracy, there must be certain kinds of equality in society. The four most prominent are equality of rights, suffrage, schooling, and justice. There should also be participation by all citizens in the responsibilities of government by voting in elections. The American Declaration of Independence states that “all men are created equal.” This does not mean that all people are equal in every respect. It only asserts that all individuals are equally human. This being true, all people have the same natural rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. In a real democracy these truths–common humanity and natural rights–are recognized. In addition, all members of the society are regarded as citizens (except for resident aliens) and are entitled to the same civil rights. These are rights specified by law. In an authoritarian state individual have no guarantee of freedom and are characterized by political inequality. In addition individuals are stated, ?? not equal ??. Consequently democracy is a better system for society. Suffrage is the most basic civil right because it is the main safeguard of democracy. All citizens (except for children, the mentally incompetent, and convicted criminals) should have the right to vote. There can be no exclusions on the basis of race or ethnicity, sex, religion, or economic status. Where as in the authoritarian state people don??t get the opportunity to vote and their participation in the government decisions are controlled. In the 19th-century English philosopher John Stuart Mill, in his ‘Considerations on Representative Government’, insisted “the State should require and compel the education, up to a certain standard, of every human being who is born its citizen.” Regardless of inequalities of abilities, the state should promote schooling up to the best ability of each citizen. This means the same mandatory schooling for all, not different kinds of schooling for different economic classes. Democracies need citizens who are well enough informed to make proper political judgments after analyzing complex issues. While in the authoritarian state the citizens are not educated well enough for the everyday business of politics and power, therefore the work has to be done by the elite who are in power because of their attributes. According to the Declaration of Independence, governments derive their powers from the consent of the governed. Tyrannical or totalitarian governments use their powers unjustly, and their laws are not equally enforced. In a real democracy all laws apply to all individuals in the same way at the same time. The basis of equal justice is law. All citizens, from the president down to the homeless, are subject to the laws. Thus the quality of a democracy can be measured by the fairness of its law-enforcement policies. The courts in a democracy are independent and cannot be influenced by political pressure.

Freedom is another aspect of democracy that authoritarian government doesn??t have. In a democracy citizens are able to participate in the decision making process such as voting, through pressure groups, acting as jurors and the use of media. They also can criticize the government. The goals and principles of the authoritarian system are to control the participation of the citizens and eliminate any opposition. This is a disadvantage to any citizen cause they have to obey the decisions of the government. As a result democratic decisions are better.

Democracy is a system where citizens can make decisions what is best for them to satisfy their needs, where as in authoritarian state citizens participation is controlled and cannot make any decisions in the governmental process. Democratic decisions are more beneficial for the citizens and provide equality, freedom, justice, suffrage, and education. While authoritarian government man is not born equal, people are not educated, they use their power unjustly, their laws are not equally enforced, and freedom is limited to very little. Therefore I believe living in a democratic society is better than an authoritarian state because in democracy the policies are made in the interest of the people.