

東大過去問 2006年 第1問

次の英文の内容を、65~75字の日本語に要約せよ。句読点も字数に含める。

Democracy is unthinkable without the ability of citizens to participate freely in the governing process. Through their activity citizens in a democracy seek to control who will hold public office and to influence what the government does. Political participation provides the mechanism by which citizens can communicate information about their interests, goals, and needs, and create pressure to respond.

Voice and equality are central to democratic participation. In a meaningful democracy, the people's voice must be clear and loud — clear so that policymakers understand citizen concerns and loud so that they have to pay attention to what is said. Since democracy implies not only governmental action in response to citizen interests but also equal consideration of the interests of each citizen, democratic participation also must be equal.

No democratic nation — certainly not the United States — lives up to the ideal of participatory equality. Some citizens vote or engage in more active forms of participation. Others do not. In fact, a majority of Americans undertake no other political activity aside from voting. In addition, those who do take part are in important ways not representative of the citizenry as a whole. They differ in their social characteristics and in their needs and goals. Citizen activists tend to be drawn more from more advantaged groups — to be well-educated and wealthy and to be white and male. The voice of the people as expressed through participation thus comes from a limited and unrepresentative set of citizens.

*From Voice and Equality by Henry E. Brady and Kay Lehman Schlozman et al., Harvard University Press