Diarchy and elections: a discussion of Urbinati's *Democracy Disfigured*

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Breno Franco*

ABSTRACT

In this article, I intend to present some difficulties to Urbinati's account of democracy in her 2014 book Democracy Disfigured. In the first section, I'll present a brief sketch of Urbinati's paradigm of democracy as a diarchy of will and opinion. In the second and final section, I'll raise two objections to Urbinati's views: first, that diarchy doesn't pertain to electoral democracy in any special or exclusive way, so that the diarchic paradigm has no internal commitment to it; and second, that the diarchic paradigm actually favors non-electoral forms of democracy over electoral democracy.

Keywords: Urbinati. Democracy. Elections. Diarchy. Landemore. Brennan.

Diarquia e eleições: uma discussão sobre a Democracia Desfigurada de Urbinati

RESUMO

Neste artigo, pretendo apresentar algumas dificuldades para a teoria da democracia que Nadia Urbinati expõe em seu livro Democracy Disfigured, de 2014. Na primeira seção, apresento um breve esboço do paradigma de democracia como uma diarquia de vontade e opinião proposto por Urbinati. Na segunda e última seção, levanto duas objeções às teses de Urbinati: primeiro, que a diarquia não diz respeito à democracia eleitoral de nenhuma maneira especial ou exclusiva, de modo que o paradigma diárquico não tem nenhum compromisso interno com ela; e segundo, que o paradigma diárquico, na verdade, favorece formas não-eleitorais de democracia sobre a democracia eleitoral.

Palavras-chave: Urbinati. Democracia. Eleições. Diarquia. Landemore. Brennan.

*Mestrando em Filosofia pela Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS). Interessado em História da Filosofia Moderna, História do Ceticismo, Descartes, Espinosa, Hume, Kant e Schopenhauer. E-mail: brenofranco97@gmail.com. Orcid: https://orcid.org/0009-0009-9189-6159

Introduction

In her 2014 book *Democracy Disfigured*, Nadia Urbinati articulates what she calls a "diarchic" paradigm of representative democracy. In this essay, I intend to present some difficulties to Urbinati's account. In the first section, I'll present a brief sketch of Urbinati's paradigm of democracy as a diarchy of will and opinion. In the second and final section, I'll raise two objections to Urbinati's views: first, that diarchy doesn't pertain to *electoral* democracy in any special or exclusive way, so that the diarchic paradigm has no internal commitment to it; and second, that the diarchic paradigm actually *favors* non-electoral forms of democracy over electoral democracy. In many ways my reflections on these and other issues were prompted by Hélène Landemore's 2020 book *Open Democracy*. I'd like to acknowledge this essay's huge debt to that work[1].

1 Democratic Diarchy

The fundamental thesis of Urbinati's book is that representative democracy is (and should be) *diarchic* in nature. "Diarchy" comes from the greek δι- (di-, "two") and ἀρχή (arkhḗ, "principle, power"). The diarchic paradigm takes political power in a representative democracy to be essentially twofold: the power of "will" and the power of "opinion". Simply put, this means that democratic citizens should have an equal share of two basic powers, the power of decision ("will", in her terminology) and the power of influencing decisions ("opinion"). The former, formal power is embodied in citizens' power to vote for representatives and run for office and in the institutional domain where representatives and other government officials, elected or appointed, make authoritative decisions (implement laws, regulations and policies, for example). The latter, informal power is embodied in the extra-institutional domain of the public sphere where citizens voice their opinions and where representatives and institutions are scrutinized and assessed (URBINATI, 2014, p. 2 and *passim*). Succinctly put, "[s]uffrage and the forum of ideas are intertwined powers" (URBINATI, 2014, p. 19).

[1] Needless to say, I take full responsibility for whatever flaws may be found in the following pages.

Will and opinion are "the two powers of the democratic sovereign" (URBINATI, 2014, p. 22).

The fundamental reason behind Urbinati's proposal may be captured in the claim that, in an electoral democracy, the voting power of the citizens represents only a fraction of actual political power. If democratic participation is reduced to casting one's vote in the ballot, then citizens are not actually "in charge": they're being deprived of self-rule. "As a twin power, the public forum should be approached from the perspective of the same egalitarian value that is embodied in *people's equal right to be self-governing*'" (URBINATI, 2014, p. 24, my emphasis). Urbinati explains, quoting (approvingly) a passage by Schumpeter:

> 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'. In sum, procedural democracy does not mean simply voting computation or institutional correctness but also using free speech and freedom of the press and of association in order to make the informal or extrainstitutions domain an important component of political liberty (URBINATI, 2014, p. 18).

The diarchic paradigm has to do with the twofold nature of *political power* in a democratic society: if citizens are to control parliaments and through them leaders, then their political participation cannot be reduced to voting.

> Indeed, democratic citizens use all the means of information and communication they partake in to manifest their presence, argue for or against a proposal, and monitor those who are in power, and they know this is no less valuable than the procedures and the institutions that produce decisions. The broad work of political life in a democratic civil society is what I include under the category of political judgment or *opinion* (URBINATI, 2014, p. 23, my emphasis).

There's more to political power than decision power (will). The power of influencing decisions (opinion) is just as important.

It's important to emphasize the *normative* nature of Urbinati's framework (that's why I'm favoring the "paradigm" terminology). This comes out rather clearly in her talk of the "figure" of democracy as opposed to its "disfigurements" or "disfigurations" (URBINATI, 2014, p. 1-2). In saying that her account is "normative" or in talking about the "normative value" of democratic diarchy, Urbinati seems to be implying that any other political arrangement – at least any other *representative* political arrangement –

is, in a sense, *worse*. According to Urbinati, representative, electoral democracy, in its diarchic nature, is unique in its capacity to protect and promote central political values such as liberty or self-rule and peace or social stability (URBINATI, 2014, p. 17-21). As to liberty, both "the equal right to vote" and the "equal chance to take part in a wide-open and robust public forum" are said to be *essential* to it, regardless of the quality of the outcomes they tend to produce (URBINATI, 2014, p. 19). Urbinati writes that "[d]emocracy's normative value lies in its process's *unmatched capacity* to protect and promote equal political liberty" (URBINATI, 2014, p. 19, my emphasis). And later, in relation to peace, she says that "liberty *and peace* together are the goals of the equal distribution of political power to make authoritative decisions upon which the democratic process of decision rests" (URBINATI, 2014, p. 20, my emphasis).

2 Diarchy and Elections

In this section, I'll raise two objections to Urbinati's views. Urbinati contends that the diarchic paradigm applies specifically to *electoral* democracy; I'll argue that, on the contrary, it applies also to non-electoral forms as well. *Pace* Urbinati, the diarchic paradigm doesn't commit us to electoral democracy. Here I'll mobilize as my primary counterexample Hélène Landemore's paradigm of "open democracy" and some cases of democratic practices and innovations that give this paradigm its main empirical support. Open democracy is no less diarchic than electoral democracy. Additionally, Urbinati claims that electoral democracy, when assessed in the light of her diarchic paradigm, is normatively superior to other forms of government. In opposition to this, I'll defend a provocative claim: Urbinati's diarchic paradigm actually *condemns* electoral democracy (unless better options are unavailable). I'll argue in addition that non-electoral forms of democracy fare much better than electoral democracy when measured by reference to the diarchic paradigm. Here again I'll mobilize Landemore's forceful idea of "open democracy" as the basis of my argument.

2.1 Non-Electoral Diarchies

Diarchy has to do with the existence of two heterogeneous and reciprocally irreducible political powers: the formal, institutionalized power of decision (will), and

the extrainstitutions power of influencing decisions (opinion). It's clear that electoral democracies have this feature. But is there any reason to think that they are unique in this respect?

Urbinati seems to think there is. She writes that "the representative system", by which she means *electoral* democracy in particular,

> [...] gives the forum a determinant role because it consists in putting politics in public, as citizens are required to judge and *choose* politicians according to what they say and do or exercise their *prospective and retrospective judgment* on them (URBINATI, 2014, p. 25, my emphasis).

Much more explicitly, she contends that "voting for or electing a representative is what makes the forum share in sovereignty and the reference point in relation to which opinion plays its role" (URBINATI, 2014, p. 25) and that, for this reason, "election is the only truly democratic institution" (URBINATI, 2014, p. 25). Without voting, there would be no role for opinion to play in sovereignty.

I think this is a mistake. A case in point is the paradigm of "open democracy" proposed by Landemore (see LANDERMORE, 2020). Let me explain Landemore's proposal in its main outlines.

Open democracy is meant to be a more inclusive and egalitarian form of representative democracy (LANDEMORE, 2020, p. 17). In order to achieve this, it replaces elections for more truly democratic mechanisms for the selection of representatives: lotteries and self-selection (see *ibid*. p. 89-93 for "lottocratic representation" and p. 93-97 for "self-selected representation"). These are two possible means for the selection of the members of a legislative assembly, for example. Both lottocratic and self-selected legislative assemblies are "open": that is, *anyone* can in principle be a member. This openness is primarily *temporal* in the case of lottocratic assemblies. At any point in time, only a few citizens are able to exercise representative functions, but with sufficiently frequent rotation every citizen stands a realistic chance of being a representative over the course of a lifetime (URBINATI, 2014, p. 90-91). In the case of self-selected assemblies, this openness has also a *spatial* component (URBINATI, 2014, p. 93-94). If you want to be a representative in the assembly, you just have to "enter the room", either literally as in Classical Athens, or metaphorically

as in crowdsourced experiments such as the Icelandic 2010-2013 constitutional process (for an analysis of this latter example, see chap. 7 of LANDEMORE, 2020).

Why would a non-electoral form of representative democracy such as the one just described be *mono*-archic? Why would it eliminate opinion as a "twin power" alongside with will? Urbinati's reasoning seems to be that, without the possibility of exercising prospective and retrospective voting, citizen's opinions in the public sphere would be rendered *powerless*. After all, elections are not just a way of *selecting* representatives; they are also a way of *pressuring* them to be accountable and responsive. If, for example, they don't account for their votes or refuse to at least attempt to explain them, or if they are not appropriately responsive to the interests of their constituencies, then the electorate can *punish* them by exercising retrospective voting. An open forum of opinions, where representatives are publicly scrutinized and assessed, is therefore a site of *power* in an electoral democracy, insofar as it enables voters to *pressure, punish or reward* representatives according to their performance. It provides the basis for retrospective voting. This is why Urbinati writes that voting "is the reference point in relation to which opinion plays its role" (URBINATI, 2015, p. 25).

Beforing moving on, it's important to note that this argument is based on the *incentives* available to representatives in an electoral democracy. The prospect of citizen's retrospective voting, together with reelection ambitions, is supposed to discipline representatives, i. e. to prevent bad behavior and promote good behavior, by providing them with the relevant incentives. (I'll return to this point later, in discussing the other side of the coin, namely, the incentives available to the *represented* in an electoral democracy).

It is a mistake, however, to think that without elections there would be no mechanisms for ensuring accountability and responsiveness, or that public opinion would play no role in ensuring these values. As Landemore has argued, electoral mechanisms of accountability and responsiveness are not even the best such mechanisms, let alone the only ones (LANDEMORE, 2020, p. 98-104; 202-205). Besides, and more importantly for my purposes, public opinion is central in non-electoral ways of ensuring accountability and responsiveness.

Let me start with non-electoral mechanisms of accountability and responsiveness. As Landemore points out, random selection with frequent rotation have themselves a role in ensuring accountability and responsiveness. At least, they

pose obstacles to bad behaviors such as corruption, nepotism, bribery, etc. (LANDEMORE, 2020, p. 100). But as a response to Urbinati's argument, this misses the point. After all, this accountability – and responsiveness-ensuring mechanism is grounded in the very nature of the process of sortition-with-rotation and doesn't depend to any extent on citizen's activity in the public sphere. A similar problem, for my argumentative purposes here, affects the non-electoral mechanisms identified by Landemore in Classical Athens' democracy, such as vetting of candidates for sortition, examination of a representative's performance on expiry of his office, ostracism, etc. (LANDEMORE, 2020, p. 100-101). The question is rather whether open democracy is compatible with people's opinions in the public sphere operating as a *power* that promotes accountability and responsiveness.

Landemore's paradigm includes one crucial principle in this regard, which she calls "participation rights" (LANDEMORE, 2020, p. 134-138; 203-204). These are supposed to constitute "inroads for greater participation in and control of the government by the citizens" (LANDEMORE, 2020, p. 136). She explains:

> On my proposal, participation rights thus include all imaginable rights that can clear a path from the periphery of power to its center. Participation rights, in particular, ensure access of ordinary citizens to agenda-setting power rather than just allow citizens to consent to power or protect citizens from power (LANDEMORE, 2020, p. 136).

If properly institutionalized, this principle transforms public opinion into a much more impressive power than it currently is (or arguably can be) under electoral democracies.

One might object that, under idealized circumstances, opinion could of course constitute a central power alongside with will in open democracy, but that this possibility doesn't matter much if the circumstances in question were *overly* idealized. But they aren't, as it becomes clear once one takes a look at more concrete ways of institutionalizing participation rights. One such way is through "citizens' initiatives". Indirect citizens' initiatives "allow citizens to have the first say on law – and policymaking by putting a proposal on the agenda of the legislature" (LANDEMORE, 2020, p. 136). Direct citizens' initiatives allows them to put a proposal "to a constituency-wide referendum" (LANDEMORE, 2020, p. 136). Another such way is through "rights of referral", that is, the rights of citizens "to trigger a referendum on any

existing law" (LANDEMORE, 2020, p. 136). Both citizens' initiatives and rights of referral give the public forum of opinions an important role to play in monitoring, assessing and pressuring representatives and the government more generally.

> 'Citizens' initiatives [...] and rights of referral [...] would indeed empower sufficiently strongly motivated minorities to fight against majoritarian mistakes or injustices. [...] The participatory rights just described allow them to initiate solutions for the problems, either via a new idea for a law (direct or indirect citizens' initiative) or the repeal of an existing law (right of referral). As a result, it would be in the interest of the legislature [...] to anticipate, and avoid, such predictable counter-reactions (LANDEMORE, 2020, p. 203-204).

Importantly, these institutional mechanisms of popular participation have already been instantiated in some democratic practices and experiments which can be mobilized as providing the open democracy paradigm with indispensable empirical support. Switzerland's practice of citizens' initiatives is a case in point (LANDEMORE, 2020, p. 136). Another one is the Icelandic 2010-2013 crowdsourced constitutional proposal which included both citizens' initiatives and rights of referral, alongside with other "institutional avenues for popular participation" (LANDEMORE, 2020, p. 167; see also p. 167-170). (To be sure, this latter proposal wasn't implemented in the end).

Now, let's turn briefly to electoral mechanisms of accountability and responsiveness. These do indeed rest on the power of people's opinions in the public sphere, on the basis of which people exercise retrospective voting. The basic point, as we saw, is that the threat of being punished or the hope of being rewarded through retrospective voting is supposed to provide *representatives* with the right kind of incentives. As Jason Brennan has argued, however, electoral democracies such as ours have a serious incentive-related problem on the other side of the coin, namely, the side of the *represented*. This incentive-deficit on the side of the represented, I'll argue, tends to vitiate the incentives made available by electoral mechanisms on the representatives' side, thereby neutralizing or weakening the supposed "threat" of retrospective voting. Let me explain.

As Brennan has argued, mass democracies such as those we live in distribute political power in such a way that each citizen's share in it is infinitesimally small. We don't have a slice of the pie of power, in Brennan's metaphor, but only crumbs (see BRENNAN, 2016, p. 109-111). At the same time, our political life is very complicated. It's extremely difficult and cognitively costly to be politically informed. However, "[w]hen

the expected costs of acquiring information of a particular sort exceed the expected benefits of possessing that sort of information, people will usually not bother to acquire the information" (BRENNAN, 2016, p. 30). As a result, citizens lack incentive to be informed and rational. After all, it doesn't seem to make much of a difference anyway. "Democracy has a bad incentive problem" (BRENNAN; LANDEMORE, 2022, p. 40-43). "Individual citizens have almost no power over government, and individual votes have almost zero expected value. Citizens don't invest in acquiring political knowledge because the knowledge doesn't pay" (BRENNAN; LANDEMORE, 2022, p. 31). Simply put, it may be said that democracies (at least mass democracies such as ours) have an "incentive-deficit" problem on the side of the represented (see also BRENNAN, 2016, p. 48-49; 52-53).

This has an obvious result: citizens generally either don't engage in retrospective voting or rather do so in a pretty bad way (BRENNAN; LANDEMORE, 2022, p. 25-26; see also LANDEMORE, 2020, p 102-103). In fact, retrospective voting, if properly done, is very cognitively demanding:

> You need to know who was in office. You need to know what they did and what they could have done. You need to determine cause and effect, for instance, to determine whether the current recession resulted from forces in or beyond a particular politician's or party's control. You need to know who the challengers are and whether they are likely to perform better (BRENNAN; LANDEMORE, 2022, p. 25).

Given the amount of knowledge required (and its complexity), together with the vanishingly small importance of an individual citizen's vote, this citizen lacks incentive to acquire the knowledge for engaging in responsible retrospective voting. And it is clear that, as political psychology studies repeatedly find, most citizens lack that knowledge (see BRENNAN, 2016, chap. 2)[2].

A result of all of this is that the supposed "threat" represented by citizens' retrospective voting is neutralized or at the very least weakened. Elected representatives therefore either lack electoral incentives to be accountable and responsive or else they have perverted, distorted incentives (for example, incentives to please powerful or majority groups, especially in electoral years, with irresponsible,

[2] There are other problems with retrospective voting as a way of pressuring or disciplining government officials. It's a "blunt tool" because of "the number of issues that are bundled into one vote on a candidate's legacy" (LANDEMORE, 2020, p. 102-103).

opportunistic or flashy policies). Public opinion between elections is still a political power, insofar as it provides the basis for citizens' retrospective voting and thereby for their pressuring, punishing or rewarding of representatives, but it tends to be much easier for representatives to ignore or go against citizens' interests and expectations with electoral impunity. Opinion, in an electoral mass democracy, tends therefore to be a much weaker and much less impressive power than Urbinati's paradigm seems to suggest.

I've defended two main claims in this section so far, both in opposition to Urbinati's views: first, that opinion can still be a political power alongside with will in non-electoral democracies, so that democratic diarchy doesn't belong exclusively to electoral democracy and the diarchic paradigm doesn't commit us to it; and second, that in electoral democracies, opinion tends to be a weaker power than in some forms of non-electoral democracy. This second claim already anticipates the thesis I'll defend in the next section, namely, that the diarchic paradigm actually *favors* non-electoral forms of democracy over electoral ones. That claim, however, is not enough as a defense of this thesis. First, it is size-related, for the incentive-deficit problem has to do with the infinitesimally small amount of political power that *mass* democracies assign to each citizen. Besides, this incentive-deficit is arguably a contingent feature of mass democracies. Although it may seem to be a consequence of size, it could in principle be amended without reducing the size of the polity. Bryan Caplan has suggested, in Brennan's words, that "paying the people to know" could have a positive impact on the incentives available to citizens (see BRENNAN; LANDEMORE, 2022, p. 96-97). In the next section, I'll present a different argument for the thesis that non-electoral forms of democracy fare better in light of Urbinati's diarchic paradigm than electoral ones.

2.2 Electoral Democracy is Itself a Disfiguration of Democracy

Urbinati's diarchic paradigm requires an inclusive and equal distribution of power in both the domain of will and the domain of opinion. She is especially concerned with unbalances of power in the domain of opinion. In particular, she suggests legal interventions are needed in order to block socioeconomic inequalities from translating into political inequalities (URBINATI, 2014, p. 52-53; 58). She writes:

> [W]hen opinion is introduced in our understanding of democratic participation, then political representation must attend to the question of the *circumstances of opinion formation*, an issue that pertains to political justice, or the equal opportunity citizens should have to meaningfully enjoy their political rights. Citizens' equal rights to an equal share in determining the political will (one-person-one-vote) ought to go together with citizens' meaningful opportunities to be informed but also to form, express, voice, and give their ideas public weight and influence" (URBINATI, 2014, p. 28; see also p. 228-229).

But what about unbalances of power in the domain of will? Paying attention to these unbalances, I'll argue, allows us to turn on its head Urbinati's normative defense of electoral democracy on the basis of the diarchic paradigm.

Landemore argues that, insofar as they employ elections as their main mechanism of selection of representatives, electoral representative democracies fall short of the democratic ideal. They concentrate power in the hands of an "elite" and push "ordinary citizens" away from the central sites of political power (I'll return soon to this use of "elites" and "ordinary citizens"). In this way, they violate the central democratic values of inclusiveness and equality. Moreover, Landemore contends, this is not a contingent feature of electoral democracy. Electoral democracy suffers from a "*constitutive* democratic deficit" (LANDEMORE, 2020, p. 17, my emphasis). It has "*by construction* exclusionary effects" (LANDEMORE, 2020, p. 23, my emphasis). It has a built-in oligarchic bias, and thus must be seen for what it is, namely, "elected oligarchy" (*ibid.* p. 19) or, as Robert Dahl calls it, a "polyarchy" (LANDEMORE, 2020, p. 33). Let us take a look at Landemore's argument for this bold conclusion.

Before going on, it's important to make a terminological elucidation (LANDEMORE, 2020, p. 18). "Ordinary people" here is a statistical category. It refers to those individuals we are most likely to pick at random from the larger population. "Elites", in turn, is a sociological category. It refers to "a socioeconomic group of privileged people who would not likely be selected at random" (LANDEMORE, 2020, p. 18). With that, let us ask: Why should elections be seen as favoring the latter over the former?

Well, the reason is simple. Elections are based on a "principle of distinction" (LANDEMORE, 2020, p. 89; Landemore traces this expression, and the line of reasoning explained in this paragraph, back to MANIN, 1997). I think the point can be best explained as follows. It's a platitude that elections work as a selection mechanism *because* people differ. Different people have different characteristics, and it is on the

basis of these differences that preferences for one candidate over another emerge. But not all differences in personal characteristics are important for the creation of preferences. Some traits give their possessor a greater public visibility; other traits exert a greater appeal on people's preferences, in virtue of the very mechanisms (including biases and heuristics[3]) of human choice. As a result, the possession of these traits increases the likelihood of an electoral victory. Some people, by possessing these traits, have therefore a much more realistic chance of exercising representative functions and wielding a greater amount of political power. They come from influential and well-connected families, sometimes with a long history inside the political system. They have more economic power. They are more educated and ambitious. They are more charismatic, articulated, and eloquent. Perhaps they are even prettier or more attractive[4]. These are characteristics that, given either the political and social structures we live in or the psychological biases and heuristics of human choice, make their possessors significantly more likely to win an election and hold office. But these features are obviously unevenly distributed among the population. Ordinary people, in the statistical sense explained above, that is, those we are most likely to pick at random from the larger population, are likely not to have *any* of these characteristics. In this way, elections are biased toward "extraordinary" people (again, in a statistical sense), and among them, in particular, toward socioeconomic elites (for Landemore's exposition of this line of reasoning, see LANDEMORE, 2020, p. 34; 89).

It could be objected at this point that, in idealized circumstances, the impact of these irrelevant, arbitrary factors on people's preferences for one candidate over another could in principle be neutralized. The important question, however, is whether these idealized circumstances are actually compatible with human inherent psychological biases and heuristics. Circumstances where those arbitrary factors don't influence people's electoral choices are at risk of being overly idealized. As Landemore puts it:

> [E]ven under ideal circumstances (a perfectly egalitarian society in which money would play no role in politics), elections simply rely on human choice,

[3] I'm taking these terms as they are usually understood in the psychology of reasoning and choice. See (e.g. KAHNEMAN, 2011).

[4] I highlight these characteristics instead of others because, to my mind, they point to a deep source of dissatisfaction with contemporary democracies: their tendency to allocate political power in elitist, dynastic, plutocratic, or otherwise politically arbitrary ways.

> which is inherently discriminatory and biased toward certain traits (charisma, eloquence, height, for example). In other words, even at the level of the ideal, elections operate as a "principle of distinction" (Manin 1997) between ordinary citizens and those fated to become a political elite of sorts. As a result, elections will systematically close off access to power to people who are too ordinary to stand out in the eyes of other citizens (LANDEMORE, 2020, p. 89).

If this is right, then electoral democracy's exclusionary, oligarchic tendency is not an unfortunate contingency but rather a constitutive, original design flaw.

In this way, Urbinati's diarchic paradigm, with its commitment to an egalitarian allocation of political power in both the domain of opinion and the domain of will, provides us with grounds for a negative assessment of electoral democracy. Simply put, it issues an impugnation of electoral democracy. To be sure, this is only a presumptive impugnation, since in the absence of more egalitarian and thus more authentically democratic mechanisms for the selection of representatives, electoral democracy would be the only, albeit deficient, option available. So, let us ask: Is there a realistic way of shielding the selection of representatives from these elitist, plutocratic, dynastic or otherwise politically arbitrary biases?

The answer to this question is known since democracy's first inception in Classical Athens: *lotteries*. As Landemore puts it, "[l]otteries [...] are historically *the* paradigmatic democratic selection mechanism" (LANDEMORE, 2020, p. 89). Sortition, properly implemented, is immune to biases of any sort; it's truly and inherently random. There is no better way of ensuring that each citizen stands an equal chance of being selected as a democratic representative than using the lot as a selection mechanism. Landemore explains:

> The view that lotteries are the ultimate democratic selection mechanism rests on a sound conceptual basis. Lotteries express a strict principle of equality as well as a principle of impartiality between citizens. Random selection, unlike election, does not recognize distinctions between citizens, because everyone has exactly the same chance of being chosen once they have been entered into the lottery. Given enough rotation and a small enough population, actual access to power is strictly equalized over the long term (LANDEMORE, 2020, p. 90).

Importantly, sortition must be supplemented with frequent rotation, lest political power remain closed off to most citizens.

Now, since there are more egalitarian selection mechanisms available as alternatives to electoral ones, the diarchic paradigm's impugnation of electoral

democracy loses its merely presumptive character. It actually condemns electoral democracy.

Thus, Urbinati's normative framework of democracy as a diarchy of will and opinion provides the basis for a negative assessment of electoral forms of democracy and for a positive assessment of non-electoral ones. The diarchic paradigm actually *favors* the latter over the former. Succinctly put, electoral democracy is itself, *pace* Urbinati, a "disfiguration" of democracy.

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