



Rubens Guimarães

Public school teacher in the state of Paraíba (Northeast Brazil). He has a master's degree in Political Philosophy from UFPB (Federal University of Paraíba) and a degree in Philosophy from the same university. Published research on Democracy, Forms of Government and Elitism. He worked in different areas in different countries before starting his teaching career.

DEMOCRACY & ELITISM

OF ANCIENTS AND MODERNS

-ESSAYS-

Democracy is a concept so worn out by intensive use and polysemy of meanings, and at the same time so essential to contemporary political theory and practice, that it deserves to be recurrently revisited and reinterpreted. That's what we want to do in this book, raising some questions and confronting different theories about democracy, without any claim to completeness. Our objective is not to cover the entire discussion about democracy, but to restrict itself to the debate between democracy and elitism. Our central working hypothesis is that a compromise between democratic and elitist theory is possible, through the so-called democratic elitism, which embraces elements of both theories and promotes a synthesis. From this perspective, democracy, realistically, is not the "government of the people, by the people, and for the people", but the government of elites by competing among themselves for popular consensus, to achieve power. This does not mean denying the possibility of popular participation if this is understood not as an alternative to representative democracy, but as its necessary complement. This thesis is developed through a history of the main concepts in dispute: people, elite, government, citizenship, representative, direct, plebiscitary, participatory democracy, which change according to different historical, political, economic and social contexts.



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Editora CRV

Giuseppe Tosi - Rubens Guimarães



Giuseppe Tosi

PhD in philosophy from the University of Padua (1999), and post-doctorate in Theory and History of Human Rights from the University of Florence (2006) and Camerino (2012). Retired Full Professor of the Department of Philosophy at UFPB. Former Coordinator of the Citizenship and Human Rights Center and the Post-graduate Program in Human Rights, Citizenship and Public Policies. Professor of the Post-graduate Program in Philosophy at UFPB. Member of the Research Group "Theory and History of Human Rights and Democracy", and "Philosophy & Law" at ANPOF. Areas of interest: Political Philosophy, Theory and History of Human Rights and Democracy, Human Rights Education. Authors: Aristotle, Bartolomé de Las Casas, Norberto Bobbio. E-mail: pinuccio@uol.com.br

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