• Democracy helps people to protect their fundamental interests
• Democracy guarantees its citizens fundamental rights that non-democratic systems do not, and cannot, grant
• Democracy provides people with a maximum opportunity to live under laws of their own choosing
• Only democracy provides people with a maximum opportunity to take moral responsibility for their choices and decisions about government policies and equality
• Only in democracy can there be a high level of political equality
• What is the alternative? → see following lectures

Barriers to Unrestrained majority rule
• Incorporating a bill of rights into the constitutions (e.g. the English Bill of Rights and the United States Bill of Rights)
  o Fear of the tyranny of the majority – need to protect the individual via various rights – e.g. ‘inalienable rights’ ‘human rights’
• Requiring a supermajority of votes – such as two-thirds or three-fourths – for constitutional amendments and other important kinds of legislation
• Dividing the executive, legislative, and judicial powers of government into separate branches (separation of powers)
  o Argument that these should be separate in order to spread power (diluting of public authority)
  o Balancing and containing of powers
• Giving an independent judiciary the power to declare laws or policies unconstitutional and hence without the force of law
  o Ensuring that their majority cannot force their point of view on others – protection of the minority and their rights
• Adopting institutional guarantees of significant autonomy for states, provinces, or regions (federalism)
  o Attempts to restrain utilitarian power or the power of the majority
• Providing by statute for the decentralisation of government to territorial groups such as towns, counties and cities
• Adopting a system of proportional representation
• If democracy is defined from a liberal perspective there is a philosophical/ideological justification for grounding these institutional mechanisms into the political system

Liberal Democracy
• Democracy as a method for selecting or appointing a government = system of rule
• Intellectual tradition
  o Liberalism = “normative individualism”
  o Political order is:
    ▪ Related back to the enlightened (reasoned) self-interest of the individual (person)
    ▪ Legitimate to the extent that it provides the protection of the liberties of the individual
• Background