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Democracy was defined by Abraham Lincoln as the Government of the people, by the people, for the people[1]. The foundations are embedded in political freedom, participation and free and fair election representative of the electorate. However in recent years there has been a decline in the faith of this system by younger generations. The lack of political literacy and participation doesn't bode well for the future as the next generations will lack good political leaders and the literacy to understand politics[2]. In order to restore faith reform is required, in order to establish the changes necessary to restore faith in the system we must first consider what causes the disillusionment of the system and what can fix it.

A key area depicting the shortcomings of democracy is the lack of participation in the democratic system. In the USA, only 50% of eligible voters aged 18-29 voted in the presidential election in 2020[3] compared to the 66% of those 65+ shows that young people fail to engage in the political system, this is mirrored in the election turnout in Canada where in the 2015 election only 38% of eligible voters 18-24 voted[4] providing a stark contrast to the 70% of those 55+ that voted[5]. This is a problem as it means the democratic system isn't representative and therefore not entirely for the people, as a result reduces the faith of the system and the legitimacy of the process. In order to fix this it may be useful to revert to a compulsory voting system such as in Belgium And Australia[6] or perhaps encouraging young people to vote when they're younger as in Scotland 2014 referendum[7] where 16 year olds could vote. However, it is more beneficial to focus on the root of the problem and address that instead. These turnouts are a result of lack of education, apathy, and barriers to information. By making these things more accessible for all people there will be a surge in

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politically literate people and in participation[8]. Despite this, low turnout can be taken two ways. It could also be as a result of 'Political Apathy'[9] where the electorate are content with the governing and have no desire to change anything. Despite this, when considering the amount of strikes on living conditions, taxes and abortion rights it is legitimate to conclude this isn't the case and the change is needed.

Another probable cause for the lack of faith in the democratic system is down to the people in positions of power acting irresponsibly; corruption and scandals are large contributors. A 2020 survey[10] found that only 23% of people in the UK trust politicians to tell the truth. For example, in the UK in 2013, former Conservative MP Patrick Mercer was accused of accepting payments from a fake lobbying firm in exchange for asking questions in Parliament. In addition to the series of expenses scandals by members of parliament in the early 2010's and late 2000's. Even abroad, in Brazil, former President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva was convicted of corruption and money laundering for accepting bribes from construction companies[11]. And in South Korea, former President Park Geun-hye was impeached and later convicted of corruption for accepting bribes from large corporations[12]. With similar acts of corruption occurring all across the globe it may be reasonable to say a large proportion of the lack of faith in the system comes from those in government positions rather than the system itself. In order to restore faith there must be a new level of accountability within the democratic system and ministers must be held to a greater account and scrutiny, and those who are corrupt and thus contributing to the failings of the system must be removed from office[13].

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However despite corruption cases often being infrequent, there are legal lobbyists who are often ex-members of parliament who partake in using their political contacts to promote better policy for the company they represent in exchange for financial reward, done by ex prime minister David Cameron[15] and illegally done by Owen Patterson in 2021[16]. These are undemocratic elements that remove the 'free and fairness' of the democratic system making it less for the people and of the people by Lincoln's definition, therefore showing the lack of faith in democracy is caused by a lack of democracy, and changing of these structural issues are needed.

Another problem with the democratic system is lack of representation within them especially of western countries, thus meaning that minority groups and young people are often underrepresented for example in the UK system both House of Lords and Commons are unrepresentative, the Lords are selected rather than elected which is a democratic illegitimacy as they aren't of or for the people as well as granting a Conservative dominance within the Lords, and the Lords blocking more than 528 legislation under New Labour between 1997 and 2010[17]. This is relatively similar in the USA due to their lack of representation creating what is essentially a two party system of the republicans and democrats, mirroring that of the Labour and Conservative in the UK[18]. The lack of representation of this system is shown in the fact that 10% of the commons are ethnic which is 5% lower than the population mix, as well as 34% women which is 16% lower[19]. In order to fix this fault in representation a new system may be adopted for example the proportional representative system as used in Germany and New Zealand which elects a government based on the proportion of votes that are received[20], this will mean

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young people will see their votes in effect rather than being rendered insignificant by the first past the post systems. However, the PR system has had large faults in the past. The Weimar Republic system in Germany in the 1920s and early 1930s which PR system allowed extremist parties such as the Nazi party to thrive leading to the Nazi Regime under Hitler and so may not be in the best interest of democracy and so may not be the best to restore faith[21].

Another factor is the failure to deliver on promises and lack of appeal to the young people. There are many examples where government officials and leaders have promised one thing but then done the reverse. In 2010, a coalition of Liberal Democrats and Conservatives came to power. The liberals had a main campaign point on the reduction of university fees for students. However, under the coalition university fees rose to record highs at the time, resulting in ultimately the downfall of the party and young people were blatantly affected negatively by what consequently became false promises[22]. This shows why there is a lack of faith in democracy as often the promises aren't met. This is a very common occurrence as UK governments also failed to deliver on promises in the case of the United Kingdom's Brexit referendum, in which the government promised to deliver on the result of a referendum to leave the European Union. However, the process of negotiating and implementing the Brexit process has been highly controversial and has resulted in significant economic and political instability in the UK as the deal was forced through[23], another example is the government of the United States, which has a history of making promises to address issues such as racial injustice, healthcare reform, and climate change, but has failed to deliver on these promises due to

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political polarisation and gridlock enhanced by the federal system in the US[24]. A rather unambiguous change that would restore faith in democracy would be a bigger responsibility and acknowledgement of the promises that get a party into power and stress on delivering those policies. However, this may cause problems in democratic systems where the winner may not be able to deliver on promises due to unforeseen circumstances or lack of support from other parties. It is important to hold leaders and put greater stress on them delivering it. However, this may present challenges in democratic systems where the winning party doesn't gain a large majority or a coalition is formed due to conflicting ideologies within a party. Additionally, there is a risk that if governments are legally obligated to implement manifesto policies, parties may sneak in unpopular policies if they are aware they are likely to win, as seen with Theresa May's 'dementia tax' proposal in 2017, which wasn't blockable by the Lords due to the Salisbury Convention of 1945.

Despite the various reforms and changes needed, there is a common theme among these issues: the problems that cause a lack of faith in democracy among young people often stem not from the democratic systems themselves, but from those who hold positions of power within these systems. Prime ministers, senior ministers, and presidents have frequently misled the people they are meant to represent, often promoting their own individual agendas. This has led to a lack of participation from young people, as they feel their vote is futile and that policies don't apply to them or aren't delivered upon, as seen with the university fee controversy under the Liberal Democrats in 2010. Furthermore, corruption among ministers around the world, such as the cases of Lula Da Silva in Brazil and Park Geun-hye in South Korea, as well as

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lobbying and attempts to dissolve parliament by figures such as Boris Johnson, further undermines the representation of the people and contributes to a lack of faith in the system. To restore faith in democracy for young people, a significant reshuffle of those who stand for election and those who are elected is needed, in order to bring in individuals who are more transparent, honest, and devoted to serving the needs of the people, including young people. This could be achieved by introducing voting at an early age, such as 16 years old, and providing education on the importance and mechanics of voting. This would lead to a more politically engaged youth, who may be more likely to bring positive change and restore faith in democracy for future generations.

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