



The Role of Collective Recognition on Political Power¹

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Abstract

Most Filipinos neglect the consequences of their choices by electing popular personalities to office without considering—or perhaps realizing—that they are at the losing end. The undesirable effects of these choices on their lives, including poor governance, the implementation of harmful policies, increased corruption, and other factors contributing to the erosion of democracy, are significant. Consequently, they deprive themselves while denying others access to better benefits from the government. With this backdrop, I argue that the Filipino electorate is not careful in granting power to politicians because their choices are based on candidates' personalities rather than political ideologies. They may understand that, through their votes, candidates become public officials by the power bestowed upon them. However, what seems unclear to them is how this power permeates all government institutions, often resulting in the delivery of low-quality services and the neglect of their duties to the people. I will draw insights from John Searle's concepts of constitutive rules, status functions, deontic power, and collective recognition to shed light on how power is generated and permeated. These building blocks of social reality provide a framework for understanding the creation of power, particularly political power. Of these, the most crucial is collective recognition, which serves as the linchpin for either

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undermining or rectifying the purpose and use of power. This concept is central to decision-making by the general electorate.

Keywords: Power, decision-making, collective recognition, Filipino electorate, political candidate or politician

Introduction

In a representative democracy, the people are the most essential element in shaping the future of political life. It is both a privilege and a responsibility for them to participate in choosing leaders to govern the country. Their collective preference determines the kind of democracy that will prevail in their homeland. In the Philippines, the decision-making process undertaken by the majority of Filipino voters is often based on popularity, particularly on personality. This has become the norm in successive electoral exercises in the post-authoritarian period, primarily due to the absence of a strong political party system where political ideologies are meant to serve as anchors.

The consequence of basing one's vote on personality and popularity often results in negligence, incompetence in governance, and a lack of accountability. People have observed how they have been governed by past administrations, with their approaches to governance rarely transcending the term limits given to them. Instead, these leaders often focus on remaining in power for the maximum allowable period. Furthermore, the general electorate lacks the foresight to recognize that elected officials should align government priorities and policies with their collective preferences.² If voters considered this alignment more carefully, it would provide a clear path to hold leaders accountable and elect different officials who better represent their priorities and aspirations.

This paper will be divided into the following sections to present the case. First, it will examine how the national and local elections have occurred. This will shed light on how candidates come to the political scene from different political clans and other sectors of society. Second, it will discuss how political powers thrive in the

² Daniel Little, "Electoral Democracy," in *A New Social Ontology of Government: Consent, Coordination, and Authority* (United State of America: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020), 115.

country, particularly in the post-authoritarian period. These political powers are identified with the prevailing patronage system or the patron-client relationship. Third, explaining how political power is generated and permeated will draw some insights into John Searle's social ontology. It will illustrate that political power depends on the majority's choice. It is common knowledge that the abuse and proper use of political power occur in the systematic relations of institutional reality in the hands of elected officials. And lastly, it will show how collective recognition is considered pivotal in determining the status of political power. From this point, the author hopes that the general electorate will see their crucial contribution when participating faithfully in the decision-making process.

I. Personality over Ideology

Democracy is a system of governance where power emanates from the people. This power becomes the foundation for politicians in shaping the future of their country and its citizens. But how can we determine whether politicians' intentions in wielding power align with the advancement of democracy? It is challenging to discern their true motives, as candidates may present either partially true or entirely false information. The campaign period offers the only opportunity for Filipinos to learn about and evaluate the ideologies of political candidates. Ideally, the best platform for expressing such ideologies is through political parties. Candidates can articulate their beliefs, priorities, and policy preferences by affiliating with political parties. It is believed that true democracy thrives within a functioning political party system. As the primer on *Building the Philippine Political Party System* notes, such systems are "... built on valid political platforms that intend to foster progress and development."³ Unfortunately, a working political party system in the Philippines has become a relic of the past, as no law mandates its establishment. This lack of structure results in democratic deficits. Clarita R. Carlos and Dennis Lalata have "analyzed some of the root causes of these deficits,

³ "Building the Philippine Political Party System," *Office of the Ombudsman*. Accessed September 30, 2024.
<https://www.ombudsman.gov.ph/UNDP4/wpcontent/uploads/2013/03/KP4.Primers-1-Building-the-Philippine-Political-Party-System.pdf>.

which have hindered Philippine democracy since the aftermath of EDSA I in 1986.”⁴

Some of the key deficits in the absence of a working political party system are worthy of mention, namely, party accountability, national strategy, and loyalty to party leaders. Promises made by the candidates cannot be treated as an alternative to national strategy. The usual consequence of promises is that voting citizens demand that elected officials fulfill and execute them since the latter have made them during the campaign either in Congress, in the House and the Senate, or in any executive positions. Citizens would think that the content of their promises is aligned with their demands. National strategy should have been laid out first on their respective political platforms. It serves as policies that the party members will be guided when they get into power.⁵ However, members frequently change party colors because political parties in Philippine politics are not continuing organizations. Instead of developing loyalty to the party, it depends on who leads it. Hence, loyalty among members is towards the party leaders.

What is left is the choice of the general electorate, and the method of persuading the voters is through personality, from the time of failure to pass the bill about the political party system into law. Since then, it has been a trend in the Philippine political scenario that the most exposed personalities usually win in local and national elections. From this view, those in the entertainment industry, religious groups, and family connections take advantage of the situation. Their affiliation with those groups becomes their social capital in getting elected to government office. Personality has become the mode of persuasion for the Filipino electorate to vote for them instead of ideology.⁶ Some of the past presidents belong to one of the

⁴ Arnel A. Morte, "The Collective Goals of Nation-Building: How Citizens Must Respond," *Social Ethics Society Journal of Applied Philosophy*. Special Issue (2022), 263; Clarita R. Carlos et al., *Democratic Deficits in the Philippines: What Is to Be Done* (Konrad Adenauer Foundation, 2010), 14.

⁵ Carlos et al., *Democratic Deficits in the Philippines: What Is to Be Done*, 14.

⁶ One can mention about the Ethos of Aristotle as means of persuading the voters to choose candidates. This ethos is one of the modes under the artistic means in the art of persuasion, together with pathos and logos. Ethos means the (communicator) candidates' source of credibility while pathos means the (communicator) candidates' emotional appeal and logos means the (communicator) candidates' reasoning and

groups. They take advantage of the situation amidst the absence of mass access to social media because most of the electorate is poor. Their attention is mainly spent on making a living instead of giving time to listen to social and political issues. The basis of their decision to choose candidates to govern them is personality. They do not have much time to inquire whether candidates are qualified for office, have a track record, and whether their political platforms are viable and feasible to promote the common good.

According to Andrea Chloe Wong, "Filipino voters go to the polls who will govern them but not necessarily how they will be governed."⁷ Personality for most Filipino voters becomes the basis of their choice. It is not that voters are just focusing on the candidates' personalities per se because some would listen to their plans or dreams in running the political affairs. But sadly, the majority have put less importance on scrutinizing and demanding the political agenda or platform of the candidates,⁸ which gives a tangible direction to Philippine political affairs.

II. The Practice of Political Powers in the Philippines

The idea of democratic participation is well-observed in the Philippines in the post-authoritarian period. Before this period, the supposed regular elections were disrupted by two events: the Japanese occupation and the declaration of martial law in 1972. The first event was dubbed the Japanese occupation that began on January 22, 1942, whose propaganda was to build a New Philippines that is free "of material and psychological dependency on the United States"⁹ It would only happen after achieving victory in the so-called Greater East Asian War during the occupation. There was no national

argumentation. See Phillip K. Tompkins. *Communication as Action: An Introduction to Rhetoric and Communication*. (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1982).

⁷ A. C. Wong, "Philippine Elections and the Politics Behind It," available from <https://www.lowyinstitute.org>, 22 November 2024.

⁸ Julio Cabral Teehankee and Yuko Kasuya, "The 2019 Midterm Elections in the Philippines: Party System Pathologies and Duterte's Populist Mobilization," *Asian Journal of Comparative Politics* 5, no. 1 (2020), 5. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2057891119896425>.

⁹ Nakano Satoshi, "Appeasement and Coercion," in *The Philippines Under Japan: Occupation Policy and Reaction*, ed. by Ikehata Setsuho and Ricardo Trota Jose (Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1999), 22.

or local election taking place because the Japanese Military Administration (JMA) prepared the Second Philippine Republic with Jose P. Laurel as the president. The second event is when former president Ferdinand E. Marcos Sr. declared martial law in 1972 to justify his policy to reform the country. He had modeled his kind of government according to a survey conducted on how the public supports authoritarian regimes in other Pacific Asian countries.¹⁰ The return of the national election happened in June of 1981 and on February 7, 1986, under the same Marcos Sr. administration. The first election took place due to a constitutional plebiscite. Marcos Sr. had given the opposition twenty-eight days (28) days to organize and campaign, but the electoral result was in his favor. The second election also took place in which Marcos Sr. won due to electoral cheating. But this last election eventually led to his downfall. These two events caused the regular national and local polls to cease momentarily until the exercise of suffrage by all citizens of the Philippines was realized and is now enshrined in Article V of the 1987 Constitution.¹¹

After the post-authoritarian period, the political power of the electorate has never been realized in full because of the country's political standing throughout its history. From the pre-martial law to the post-Edsa era, political parties focus on personalities and personal ties. That is the reason why the patronage system, or the patron-client relationship, remains aside from the massive fraud, political violence, and money politics.¹² The prevailing patronage system, or the patron-client relationship, prevails since sitting politicians use state resources to get loyalty and political support from their constituents. Hence, the political power that they wielded could eventually influence the turnout of every election result. Daniel Little suggests that to obtain political equality from disproportionate influence in politics under democracy, "citizens can remain vigilant and courageous in the face of corruption and anti-democratic actions by government, legislators,

¹⁰ William H. Overholt, "The Rise and Fall of Ferdinand Marcos," *Asian Survey* 26, no. 11 (1986): 1140. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2644313>.

¹¹ 1987 Constitution of the Philippines, accessed September 30, 2024, <https://www.set.gov.ph/resources/philippine-constitutions/1987-constitution/#:~:text=Suffrage%20may%20be%20exercised%20by,months%20immediately%20preceding%20the%20election>.

¹² Julio C. Teehankee, "Electoral Politics in the Philippines," in *Electoral Politics in Southeast and East Asia* (Routledge Taylor and Francis Group, 2002): 188.

and powerholders. Citizens can return to the streets when their government deviates from constitutionality and democracy.”¹³

For now, the patronage system has been on hold during the presidency of Rodrigo R. Duterte. His strategy is unique from the prevailing patronage system that happens in some local elections. It was a populist mobilization that was not ideology-driven. He has anchored his populism on the collective goals shared by most Filipinos towards nation-building.¹⁴ However, compared to Duterte’s strategy, the current political situation under Marcos Jr.’s administration returns to a patronage system that uses two strategies. The first kind is more focused on money politics, where political allies engage in vote buying rather than promoting their platform. Hence, this malpractice has motivated many poor Filipinos to exchange their votes for material gains. The second kind is pork-barreling, in which incumbent holders of offices use public service delivery for electoral purposes.¹⁵ This purpose is no other than “to cultivate political support.” Hence, this other malpractice has motivated many poor Filipinos to become beholden to these candidates in the coming election.

The patronage system, or patron-client relationship, has significant consequences for Philippine democracy. It motivates the voters’ dependence on the dirty moves of the politicians and weakens their capacity to demand accountability from their leaders. Moreover, this system inhibits the removal of corrupt and incompetent civil servants,¹⁶ affecting decision-making and advancing nation-building.¹⁷

III. Political Power under Constitutive Rule

What is the basis of understanding the nature of political power? And what is the ground for decision-making when choosing a political

¹³ Daniel Little, "Electoral Democracy," 114.

¹⁴ Arnel A. Morte, "The Collective Goals of Nation-Building: How Citizens Must Respond," 264.

¹⁵ Andrea Chloe Wong, "Philippine Elections and the Politics Behind It," *The Interpreter*, February 07, 2022. <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/philippine-elections-politics-behind-it>; Julio Cabral Teehankee and Yuko Kasuya, "The 2019 Midterm Elections in the Philippines: Party System Pathologies and Duterte’s Populist Mobilization," 3-6.

¹⁶ William H. Overholt, "The Rise and Fall of Ferdinand Marcos," 1138.

¹⁷ Arnel A. Morte, "The Collective Goals of Nation-Building: How Citizens Must Respond," 267.

leader? The ground in selecting a political leader is a kind of political knowledge that gives them the capacity to influence, control, and direct others' actions, behavior, and decisions within a political system. The power given to candidates has two things that are inherently within it, namely, enablement and requirement. Enablement makes the receiver of power do something as prescribed by the position entrusted to them, such as the power to create laws and the power to be the voice or representation of a specific district and marginalized sector of the society, or the power to govern through the execution of the law of a particular locality, province or an entire country. The occupation of power defines the kind of political position that entails the type of task to be carried out by the receiver. This requirement constrains the receiver of power from doing something beyond its bounds.

Moreover, the power given to politicians can be illustrated through constitutive rule, which is one of the building blocks of social reality. This rule is expressed as "X counts as Y in Context C."¹⁸ The purpose of the form is to show the transition mark from X to Y. The X may refer to any candidate who is running for public office. When that candidate wins the election, they assume the role of Y in a particular context called C. For instance, Bong Go, as an ordinary citizen, is X. He is transitioning to Y or becomes a senator when duly elected by the people. This will be realized when he officially joins the House of Senate of the Republic of the Philippines as context C. But once his term ends, or after six (6) years in that position, he will be stripped of his position. In that case, he will be back to position X.¹⁹ Through the constitutive rule, any government official can perform a particular action or activity;²⁰ otherwise, there would be no Senator Bong Go in this case. The position of Y is a fact of social existence insofar as it is collectively held that Bong Go is a senator.²¹ In other words, the Y is a status function given to him to become senator "... in virtue of the collective imposition or recognition of the entity in question as having

¹⁸ John Searle, "Social Ontology and the Philosophy of Society," *Analyse & Kritik* 20, no. 2 (1998), 151. <https://doi.org/10.1515/auk-1998-0201>.

¹⁹ These are forms of symbolism in any institutional facts such as the government, money, marriage, etc. See John R. Searle, *The Construction of Social Reality* (The Free Press, 1995), 28.

²⁰ John R. Searle, *The Construction of Social Reality*, 27.

²¹ Corlett, J. Angelo. "Searle on Human Rights," *Social Epistemology* 30, no. 4 (2016): 440–463. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02691728.2015.1119912>.

a certain status, and with that status a function."²² This status function is likewise confirmed to all other key positions in the government. When a candidate takes the status Y, political power is generated through the people's votes.

Given that the general populace knows that they bestow political powers on the candidates, the problem is that they would never have the foresight to the extent of the consequences of their actions. The problem both lies at the beginning and the end of the election. How do we address this problem? The choice of the general electorate is of ultimate significance in achieving the desired collective goals of nation-building. These collective goals depend on the nation's situation and the sitting administration. As of the moment, the Bong-Bong Marcos (BBM) administration prioritizes the 10-point agenda such as national reopening, public-private partnership, infrastructure development, fiscal discipline, transparent and efficient governance, digital Philippines, energy security, future-ready Filipinos, affordable healthcare, food for all.²³ So, when candidates face the constituents during the pre-election gatherings, they are in the status of X as nobody and powerless. To achieve the Y status with all the rights, privileges, and power, they would appeal and persuade the voters to trust them by asking them to invest in their future. Only then do the people in post-election see how powerful the sitting politicians are in status Y. Status Y happens in the imposition of status function. John Searle speaks of status function primarily under physical structure through collective intentionality (CI). This function, as time goes by, will still be *recognized or accepted or acknowledged*, but not anymore under physical structure alone. Holders of political powers under the executive or legislative branch will function following their office. However, that institutional fact is not limited to their office and particular role. They can even function even if they are out of the office so long as people recognize them as such. Recognition without physical structure has a deontic status or a form of power under the assignment of function. In other words, as long as there is collective recognition, a politician's office is recognized due to its function, not its physical structure.²⁴

²² John Searle, "Social Ontology and the Philosophy of Society," 153.

²³ For detailed explanations of the priorities of the present administration, see "PBBM's Priorities," accessed September 30, 2024, <https://pbbm.com.ph/priorities/>.

²⁴ John R. Searle, *Rationality in Action*, (MIT Press, 2003), 199.

The abuse of power is usually manifested by not advancing institutional reforms. Searle speaks of counterfeit money to illustrate the nature of X. If a kind of paper is used to create a banknote, it is easy to imitate or present something similar to satisfy the very X by photocopying or printing real money. It is in the X where the potential abuse of power comes in. Likewise, people can see whether candidates are faithful to their political duties by doing some background checks. Only counterfeit candidates do not do anything to implement institutional reforms. They do something for what is advantageous to them. The role of the Commission of Election (COMELEC) is limited to identifying whether a candidate is a nuisance. Hence, it is recommended that the requirements for those seeking government positions and exercising political powers be revised from being able to read and write to being a holder of a professional degree, which leads to acquiring the skills of governance with track records and legitimate political platforms. Speaking on the abuses committed by the sitting government officials must be extensive. The institution of government may be at par with other institutions such as family, education, and money, among others. However, the institution of government is the ultimate of all institutional structures since it has police and military power.²⁵ There would be no government without those powers. In other words, a government cannot survive by relying on political power alone. Filipinos need to learn from their history. They had already experienced how the dictatorial government of Marcos Sr. was totally in control of the whole armed forces (or AFP) and the police (or PNP).

Qualified candidates with a precise ideology are significant because they have to deal with other institutions outside the field of their power. For instance, a legislator has to look into different agencies in the government to see whether they function following the law. They have to look into different private entities to know whether they comply with government regulations. In other words, it is a kind of job that needs utmost dedication and deals with all aspects affecting the lives of ordinary people, particularly the basic needs of food, clothing, and shelter. Moreover, when a candidate in the original state of X assumes power in status Y in the context of C, they have to

²⁵ John R. Searle, "Social Ontology and Political Power," in *Socializing Metaphysics: The Nature of Social Reality*, ed. Frederick F. Schmitt (Rowman & Littlefield, 2003), 204.

organize and regulate the lives of millions of Filipinos through a set of interlocking institutions.²⁶ In other words, they have to use their power to energize other institutions to deliver goods and services to their constituents effectively. Hence, they can organize power relations in the society.

IV. Collective Recognition

The CI of Searle is different from that of other philosophers of social ontology. For instance, Margaret Gilbert's CI involves more than one person sharing the same intention for a joint activity. There is an element of commitment among members to do something. In this commitment, there is an obligation criterion where a member can rebuke others who deviate from fulfilling the group's commitment.²⁷ Another philosopher named Michael Bratman highlights the importance of joint activity among group members, in which the individual's intention forms a collectivity with another individual's intention.²⁸ The commonality between Gilbert and Bratman is the term "joint," where the individual attitudes of the members are geared towards the group's activity.

In the case of Searle's CI, he shows the impossibility of joint activity in Gilbert's or Bratman's sense that the general electorate would gather themselves literally to talk, discuss, and decide as to who they are going to choose who is deemed best to lead the nation and the local. However, some apparent factors that hinder collectivity are ethnic identity, dialect, and geographical identity. When it comes to ethnic identity and dialect, there is already a clear divide among Filipinos; for instance, the Ilonggo people support political candidates of their kind just as the Bisaya and Tagalog would do. This kind of difference has already hindered achieving a common goal for nation-building. Another divisive matter arises when the general electorate identifies as coming from the north (of Luzon) or from the south (of

²⁶ John Searle, "Social Ontology and the Philosophy of Society," 156.

²⁷ Michael E. Bratman, "I Intend That We J," in *Faces of Intention: Selected Essays on Intention and Agency* (Cambridge University Press, 1999), 121.

²⁸ Margaret Gilbert, "Shared Intention and Personal Intentions," *Philosophical Studies: An International Journal for Philosophy in the Analytic Tradition* 144, no. 1 (2009): 177. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11098-009-9372-z>.

Visayas and Mindanao). We have seen this during the 2022 national election wherein the northern people support the sitting president while the southern people support the sitting vice president. This is geographical identity.²⁹ Despite the impossibility of attaining collectivity in terms of oneness of heart and mind, its role of recognition is significant in the existence of any institutional realities like the government, marriage, and money. This only implies the fact that collective recognition of the Filipino people can diminish any sitting politicians. In other words, the general public's support can weaken due to the mishandling of political power by any possessors. In this case, the power possessor must live up to what the Y-position entails in context C.

The collective recognition of Searle is based on methodological individualism in which "society consists of nothing but individuals."³⁰ It means that collective recognition must come from the individual elector as to who they will vote for. However, the content of the elector's decision might be shared by other electors depending on how the candidates persuade the general electors to choose and vote for them. When a candidate can govern the people with access to power, it is a status function accorded to them. That status function "has powers, rights, and obligations that he or she would not otherwise have."³¹ Moreover, this power is deontic since it exists only "as long as they are acknowledged, recognized, or otherwise accepted."³² Hence, when people recognize or accept that the candidate deserves to be in a particular government position, their deontic power is generated.

²⁹ Yet this divisiveness has already been proven when people from the southernmost part of the country have expressed their disappointments towards national leaders who prioritize Mindanao as the least beneficiaries in terms of economic and infrastructure projects. See Christopher Ryan Maboloc, "War and Peace in Mindanao: Tracing the Roots of Historical Injustice," *Indonesian Journal of Political Studies* 4, no. 2 (2024), 113. <https://doi.org/10.15642/iips.2024.4.2.108-123>.

³⁰ John R. Searle, "Collective Intentions and Actions," in *Intentions in Communication*, ed. Philip R. Cohen, Jerry Morgan, and Martha E. Pollack (MIT Press, 1990), 96.

³¹ John R. Searle, "Social Ontology and Political Power," 201.

³² *Ibid.*, 201. This is in contrast with the functions of artifacts in which an object with imposed status function functions in virtue of its physical features such as screwdrivers and hammers. See also Frank Hindriks, "Collective Acceptance and the Is-Ought Argument," *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice* 16 (2013), 467. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10677-012-9353-8>.

People instinctively participate in selecting the right candidates when what they have in mind is the purpose of advancing democracy. They must be aware of the existing problems and issues in society. The institution of government, which the people create, is the ultimate concern since it has the power to regulate other existing institutional realities. It can regulate public entities (like government agencies) and private entities (like the corporate world). Therefore, they must be more watchful and concerned regarding unqualified candidates and counterfeit politicians who would regulate those entities; otherwise, they put the whole country at peril. Concurrently, the institution of government, just like any other institutional realities, remains fragile through collective recognition. This collective recognition determines the status of power, particularly political power. Take, for instance, the case of the presidency of Marcos Sr. Filipino people during his time never thought that the latter's dictatorial government would collapse one day.³³ It was in the year 1986 that Filipinos marched onto the street to oust the leader from Malacañang Palace. Despite holding on to power for almost twenty years, Marcos Sr. yielded to the will of the collective.

This scenario can be a stern warning to holders or aspiring holders of political power that the office they hold is not permanent. On February 24, 1986, the deposed dictator experienced collective imposition and recognition. Collective action will only occur when most people have discerned the status of political power well. In other words, the people assign status functions to holders of political power. Only when the holders receive that status through oath-taking can they function with power. The absence of collective acceptance occurs when people see that incumbent politicians are not functioning on the grounds of morality or betrayal of public trust. Hence, the collective people can express their disapproval through impeachment or recall.

Overall, the general electorate must realize that when they dream of having a well-functioning society, they can collectively give their power to the rightful owner of political power. But the rightful owner must also realize that they owe their deontic powers to the general electorate. From this perspective, deontic powers depend on the collective acceptance of the general electorate.³⁴ When the

³³ William H. Overholt, "The Rise and Fall of Ferdinand Marcos," 1156.

³⁴ Frank Hindriks, "Collective Acceptance and the Is-Ought Argument," 467.

electorate chooses candidates based on personality and not ideology, the enormous effect that is not visible to the public is how the elected politicians use power to regulate other institutional structures.³⁵ From a macroscopic lens, we see how a society is organized, and thus, power relations are organized. We also see that somebody is elected while their nemesis is defeated in the election. The cause of politicians' actions affects institutions other than their own. For instance, if a politician does not approve the budget of particular agencies, then they cause the malfunction of people's services.

Conclusion

The collective recognition of the general electorate is crucial in shaping the kind of democracy they wish to prevail. There are two stages in participating in political affairs. First, participation occurs before elections, where voters must discern who the rightful possessor of political power should be—the X-status. The basis for this discernment should ideally be the candidate's political ideology. However, this discernment does not end once the possessor of power assumes the Y-status. This leads to the second stage, wherein the general electorate can express their disapproval if the possessor of power fails to perform according to the inherent requirements of the role or their approval if the officeholder fulfills their political obligations in line with the electorate's preferences. This ongoing engagement is significant because of the absence of an authentic platform for conveying the candidate's beliefs, priorities, and policy preferences.

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³⁵ John R. Searle, "Social Ontology and Political Power," 203.

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