Democracy beyond aggregation: the participatory dimension of public deliberation

Leonardo Avritzer, U.F.M.G.

Abstract
Democratic theory passed through two major developments during the last 20 years: the first one was deliberative democracy. Deliberative democracy is a critique of the aggregative view of democracy that dominated post-war democratic theory. Instead of aggregation through elections, deliberative democracy proposes different forms of improving the quality of the democratic through public reasoning and argumentation. The second innovation in the democratic debate is the recent theory of representation that assumes that a renewal of representation is needed in order to reconstruct the quality of democracy. Both innovations in democratic theory shared one central assumption, namely that there is a crisis of democracy and that this crisis is linked to lack of quality in political will formation. Deliberative democracy and the new theory of representation disagree on two major issues, one theoretical and the other practical. Theoretically, they go beyond the opposition between representation and participation as they seek to move beyond Hobbes and Rousseau. On a practical level they disagree of the role of broadening participation in the process of improving the quality of democracy. In this article, I propose a different way of going beyond Rousseau that preserves the community of equals dimension. My proposal involves the integration of participation and representation through a new design. This new model, which is being broadly implemented by governments across the developing world, seems more promising because it can accept the critique to the sovereignty side of participation without relinquishing its equality dimension. It is only through the expansion of political equality through both participation and representation that contemporary democracies will be able to overcome their legitimacy crisis.

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