Editorial

That democracy has won is common cause. The vast majority of states of the world today are termed 'democratic', a fact that stands in some contrast to the global order just some fifty years ago. Even more importantly, there is no competing alternative model of political rule, other than perhaps forms of radical Islam. Yet at the very moment of its triumph, democracy finds itself in trouble. Recent survey evidence from the United States suggests both political disengagement and a growing cynicism towards parties and elites, and similar trends are evident in Europe. Moreover, democracy faces substantial problems in the developing world, whether a tangible fragility among newly democratic states in Africa, or serious discontent at the responsiveness of government in many middle-income countries. Hence, at the very moment of hegemony we have increasing talk of democratic deficit.

This is the empirical context in which the notion of deliberative democracy has found currency in political theory. Moving from a recognition of the limitation of electoral or associational models of democracy, even the more sophisticated versions like Dahl's, several generations removed from Schumpeter's mechanical conception, deliberative democracy seeks to reinvigorate the ancient virtues of participatory democracy in light of the linguistic turn in philosophy. Hence notions of the common good, the transformation of individual preferences in a collective process, and equal participation in decisionmaking are reborn in a discursive frame that finds champions in remarkably diverse range of theorists from Rawls and Habermas, to Cohen, Bohman and Rehg. Further, there have been a significant number and range of attempts to enhance deliberation in practice from better forms of inclusion in parliamentary forums to new institutional initiatives like citizen's juries, many of which show positive dividends.

Despite its initial promise, the last few years have seen deliberative democracy come under attack from a variety of sources (feminists, activists, minorities, traditional liberals) for a number of reasons both theoretical and practical. Much theoretical criticism has been aimed at the claims of a universally inclusive and fair process, the particular impositions of 'rationality', the precise nature of the common good assumed, especially given our culturally plural, economic and politi-

cally unequal societies, conditions usually exacerbated in the developing world which holds the vast majority of the world's people. For many, deliberative democracy is a little too much like decision-making by academic seminar, with all its gendered and elitist baggage.

This edition of *Theoria* engages with this theoretical debate on the limits of deliberative democracy, affirming the importance of deliberation for any democratic future, but alongside other democratic participatory and representative practices. While the precise relationship between these conceptions of democracy remains unresolved, there is something of an emerging consensus that deliberation alone will not get us the equality and freedom we deserve, and neither will focusing solely on grand institutional design. Rather, a better imagined democratic future requires acknowledging not just the 'voices from below' but organic practices and discursive strategies too. Ironically, a more modest affirmation of deliberation makes it more accessible to the sceptical democrat too. All in all, the papers in this edition suggest a greater modesty around deliberation, whilst affirming the possibilities of pragmatic theoretical partnership with democracy as participation and democracy as representation.

In many ways the strongest affirmation of deliberative potential is to be found in Baynes' arguments for the significance of equality alongside liberty, as a social value, rather than always 'in the back seat'. Reviewing the 'luck egalitarian' debate, Baynes affirms that the right of citizens to an equal opportunity to influence political outcomes is upheld both because political equality is a condition for securing other basic capabilities of respect, but also because political equality is a fundamental value in its own right. This reveals the equal standing of equality and liberty in any democratic society. It is also held that this is an end best attained indirectly through the design of basic social structures rather than in metrics like income. The aim is not to compensate for brute bad luck but to promote institutions in which citizens are free from oppression and stand in relations of equality. Hence the pursuit of liberty requires an egalitarian process which decides which liberties are worth pursuing, and to what extent.

Subsequent articles point to the ways in which deliberation must be supplemented by other forms of democratic practice, often over and above the issues of institutional design. Hence Gerald F. Gaus argues that the consensus sought by deliberation is an outcome qualitatively different from majority decision, and that this poses a real challenge for deliberative democracy, especially constructivist theories of public reason like Habermas' discourse theory. Indeed, Gaus argues that

for this version of deliberation, optimal deliberative voting rules require extraordinary majorities as simple majority rule is likely to endorse decisions that have been defeated in deliberative argument. Hence, 'constructivist' deliberative democracy is caught in a dilemma between, on the one hand, the imperative to stop deliberating and make a decision, and on the other, the violence done to deliberation by majoritarianism.

Building on the limits of democracy as only deliberation, Steven D. Mahoney and Joshua A. Miller argue that an appropriate conception of democracy must embrace conceptions of politics which include not only obviously militant forms of political action, but also less public forms of participation as social advocacy. Further, social advocacy is defended as legitimate democratic agency even when it rests on personal conviction and is not discursively redeemed in the public realm. For Mahoney and Miller deeds count in ways that are not expressive but are clearly political. They argue that we need separate accounts of activism, deliberation and participation that mutually reinforce the values of each other. Democracy is thus never just about deliberation, or just deliberation and activism; less publicised versions of social advocacy count too.

Echoing the importance of action to agency is Kadlec in her advocacy of Deweyan 'critical pragmatism' as an alternative to traditional models of deliberative democracy, that are all limited. Kadlec holds that Deweyan pragmatism allows for new approaches to deliberation that are more attuned to power relations than traditional models, and make more inventive use of everyday life to pursue more meaningful deliberative opportunities for citizens. At the heart of the Deweyan approach is that nothing is as important for democracy as the development of flexible, if hard-fought, practices and skills. It is the challenge of learning how to creatively and critically embrace the idea that, despite our different identities, interests and aims, we are on this journey together. (Reading in a little, deliberation can only ever be one aspect of this.) This implies a role for intermediary organisation and not just the design challenges of the basic structure of society.

In the final paper, Judith Squires reaffirms the significance of a more modest account of deliberation to democratic theory by pointing out certain insights valuable to feminists entailed by deliberative theory. Many feminists criticise deliberative democracy on the grounds of an untenable assumption of abstraction and impartiality which appears to exclude the expressive and the aesthetic. However, deliberative democracy remains appealing to feminists through its empha-

sis on a dialogical conception of impartiality. This acknowledgement would allow a more explicit interrogation of what ‘lack of bias’ and ‘inclusion’ would mean, and generate a more empirical concern with identifying and redressing the institutional and material conditions for securing inclusion in empowered forms of deliberation.

In sum then, the dominant view emergent from this edition is that deliberative theories of democracy are here to stay, although in forms more modest than intended by their champions, and are best related to accounts of democratic representation and participation in ways that mutually reinforce the democratic imaginary.

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ON BEHALF OF THE EDITORS