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DIGITAL GOVERNMENT I
WEEK 3: DELIBERATIVE
DEMOCRACY AND ITS
DISCONTENTS (PT 2)

Jan 20, 2009

Democracy: (our consensus def'n)

“A system of governance in which adult citizens and members subject to collective process have equal access to information on the political process, equal influence on the political process either directly or through representatives, and are free to question the workings of their leadership, which is accountable and transparent to its constituents. Democracy should allow people to pursue their vision of a good life, subject to the rights and freedoms of others.”

[full document available in Ctools wk 2 discussion folder]

Democracy (Charles Tilly definition)

- Def'n: “A regime is democratic to the degree that political relations between the state and its citizens feature **broad, equal, protected and mutually binding consultation.**” (14)
- **Breadth:** extension of rights of participation to steadily larger segments of the population
- **Equality:** collapsing / equalizing the categories of citizenship and forms of participation vis-à-vis the state
- **Protection:** against arbitrary exercise of state power
- **Mutually binding consultation:** clear and enforceable obligations on part of state in response to recognized consultative processes

Typologies of democratic regimes

What Is Democracy?

19

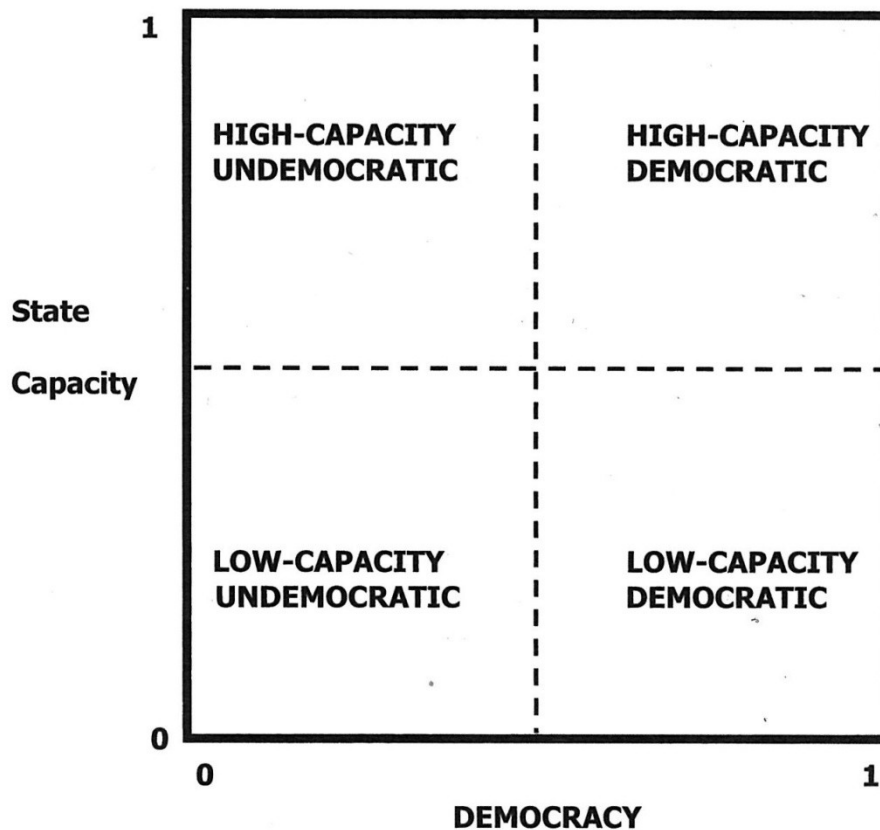


FIGURE I-2. Crude Regime Types

Source: Undetermined.

Deliberative Democracy (Gutman and Thompson)

Def'n: “a form of government in which **free and equal citizens** (and their representatives), **justify decisions** in a process in which they **give one another reasons** that are **mutually acceptable and generally accessible**, with the aim of **reaching conclusions that are binding** in the present on all citizens but **open to challenge in the future**” (p 7)

Advantages of deliberative over ‘aggregative,’ simple pluralist, or technocratic models:

- Deliberation promotes the legitimacy of collective decisions.
- Deliberation encourages public-spirited perspectives on public issues.
- Deliberation promotes mutually-respectful processes of decision-making.
- Open deliberative processes expose decisions to critical scrutiny, surfacing weakness, errors, and injustice. (pp 10-13)

Typologies / tensions of deliberative democracy: six big questions (Gutmann & Thompson)

instrumental vs. expressive

(what good does deliberation do?)

procedure vs. substance

(does democracy need foundations? can democracy be judged on its *content*?)

consensual vs. pluralist / agonistic

(how to deal with persistent difference? how to deal with power and conflict?)

representative vs. participatory

(can (strong) democracy be delegated? politics of ideas vs. presence?)

government vs. civil society

(what is the appropriate *target* of democratization efforts?)

domestic vs. international/cosmopolitan

(can we imagine and build democratic forms / processes above the level of the state?)

Three approaches to the *study* and *justification* of democratic deliberation (McAfee)

Preference-Based Model	Grounded in economics / social choice theory; deliberation corrects information problems that prevent: 1: transformation and stabilization of individual preferences, and 2: aggregation of individual into collective preference; transformation from 'self-regarding' to 'other-regarding' individual
Rational Proceduralist Model	Grounded in normative political theory (arguments around justice (e.g. Rawls) and legitimacy (Habermas)); moral claims to be couched in rationalist debate, language and reasons knowable to all (the 'reason-giving requirement'); the better argument wins, leading to assent and legitimacy of collective decisions.
Integrative Model	Grounded in American pragmatist social theory; collective working through of consequences of collective choice, integrating heterogeneous views and publics; deliberation <i>integrates</i> a public as public (produces a public where none existed)

The LIMITS of deliberation:

- Marion Young, Schudson, Mansbridge (also Gutmann & Thompson, Button and Ryfe, book reviews, etc.)
- Your OWN thoughts / critique about the deliberative theories and projects we've talked and read about so far...

DG 1 Group Assignment 3: The LIMITS of deliberation

[scribe: moderator: group members:]

- a) drawing on Marion Young, Schudson, and Mansbridge (plus any of the other authors read or reviewed in the course so far (e.g. Gutman & Thompson, McAfee, Button and Ryfe, etc.), outline 3-4 distinctive **limits** or **critiques** of deliberative democratic theory and practice (as represented by the various projects detailed in the Gastil and Levine book, for example); and
- b) develop 3-4 **design recommendations** (relating to process or architecture) that would make one or more of the online dialogues, town meetings, and large-scale deliberations described in this week's readings more sensitive and responsive to these critiques.