
Elstub S.

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A Genealogy of Deliberative Democracy

Stephen Elstub

Abstract

Stephen Elstub articulates that deliberative democracy, as a theory, can be seen as having gone through various distinct generations. The first generation was a period where the normative values and the justifications for deliberative democracy were set out. This prompted criticism from difference democrats who saw the exclusion of other forms of communication by the reification of reason in deliberation as a serious shortcoming of the theory. This in part prompted the growth of the second generation of deliberative democracy, which began to focus more on the theory's operability. These theorizations, from the mostly 1990s and early 2000s, have led to the third generation of the theory—one embodied by the empirical turn. Elstub uses this genealogy as a foundation from which to argue that the current focus of deliberative democracy is on implementing deliberative systems rather than only deliberative institutions and this could potentially represent a fourth generation of deliberative democracy.

Keywords

associational democracy, deliberative democracy, democratic theory, Dryzek, Habermas, Rawls, Young

Gagnon: How do you conceptualize democracy?

Elstub: I usually start by going back to the traditional, original meaning of rule by the people. But that still leaves a massive scope for interpretation. What do we mean by “the people”? What do we mean by “rule”? And what do we mean by “rule by”? (A similar disambiguation of “rule by the people” was given by Held [2014].) All of the former questions can be subject to a large number of different interpretations. I agree with Michael Saward (2002) that

democracy is the contest over its meaning. The classic statement made by Walter Bryce Gallie (1956), that democracy is an essentially contested concept, means that there isn't a single agreed meaning about democracy that everyone is going to share. However, I think you can say more than just that. Democracy can be conceived as being scalar. It is scalar in the sense that it is something you can have more or less of. I quite like David Beetham's (1994) rather general definition of democracy, which gives a scalar approach that allows for things to be measured as more or less democratic. Beetham defines democracy as a model of decision making about collectively binding rules and policies over which people exercise control. And the most democratic arrangement would be that all members of the collectivity enjoy effective equal rights to take part in such decision making directly. The scalar element is there: more direct citizen input into decision making about binding rules and policies the more democratic. Similarly the more equal this input the more democratic. However, I also agree with Albert Weale (2007), who says that there needs to be a sortal element to definitions of democracy. We need to be able to acknowledge the fact that some arrangements are democratic while others are plainly not. We need to be able to have the capacity to say, "This isn't democratic but this is." So you do need a sortal element alongside the scalar element.

Gagnon: Democracy as something contested, scalar, and sortal. Your conceptualization recognizes the uncertainty over democracy's meaning, but also that it needs to be both measurable and classifiable. There's a tension between uncertainty and certainty in your answer which, I think, is a condition pre-empted by scholars of democracy who, today, are giving very careful disclosures about what they consider to be democracy or democratic before advancing their arguments on such things. Where does deliberative democracy fit into this?

Elstub: I think deliberative democracy has become more amorphous and diverse. In some ways that's a good thing. You don't want the definition of anything to be static or fixed—or too reified. It needs to be contingent. It must have the ability to adapt and to develop with change in circumstances, change in ideas, and change in interpretations. But definitions of democracy and deliberative democracy are not imprisoned by their many interpretations and ideologies that make both seem morphological. There are some core concepts in play that we can use to determine whether something is a democracy or a deliberative democracy. These core concepts provide boundaries for valid interpretations to be made so that we are not left with the meaningless and vacuous use of these terms where basically they come to mean anything to anyone. In deliberative democracy there's a little bit of danger that that has already happened. The huge amount of work that has gone into deliberative democracy in the last decade, especially empirical research, has led to a number of concepts falling into deliberative democracy that really shouldn't be. People are, for example, implying that if there is any dialogue or conversation observable among participants that deliberative democracy is occurring. That's too general and, as I hope to show in this interview, a specious argument.

Deliberative democracy is something more specific than a group of people talking. I have tried (e.g., Elstub 2006, 2008, 2010a, 2010b, 2010c, 2012, 2014) to offer a definition that incorporates the different interpretations that exist about deliberative democracy. My definition tries to put some boundaries on deliberation altogether. I think it can be split into two parts. You've got the democracy part, which can be justified by articulating that there is collective decision making and the participation of relevant actors. And then you've got the deliberative part, which goes back to Bohman and Rehg's (1997) definition. They see deliberation as a dialogical process in the exchange of reason for the purpose of resolving

problematic situations that cannot be settled through interpersonal coordination or cooperation. Here we have a preference for different positions, the determination of existing preferences, and the formation of new preferences. These are central to deliberation. Overall, the definition of deliberative democracy has a general core that most deliberative democrats could, I think, agree to: it is the making of collective decisions involving the participation of relevant actors. The more equal the participation the more democratic it will be through the consideration and exchange of reason aimed at the transformation of preferences.

Gagnon: How does deliberative democracy differ in this case from associational democracy?

Elstub: I have, in my work, tried to discuss deliberative and associational democracy together. The argument I make is that they are two different models of democracy. They both have weaknesses. The key weakness of deliberative democracy is its practicality. How can it actually be operationalized, institutionalized, and made into something that can work in life outside of the mind? The problem with associational democracy is that it can lead to the pursuit of private interests and the mischief of factionalism. My contention is that by combining the two you can enable the strength of both to be enhanced. The two models can be together developed and actualized while, at the same time, avoiding some of their weaknesses.

This wouldn't be a perfect system. No democracy is. But I think that deliberative and associational democracy can be mutually supportive. Deliberative democracy is a specific approach to a set of principles about how decisions should be made, whereas associational democracy is a type of institutional focus. I define the latter as a model of participatory democracy based on the self-governance of internally democratic voluntary and functional groups. By combining the two, associational democracy helps deliberative democracy

overcome the social and practical issues that make deliberative democracy so hard to achieve. One issue for deliberative democracy is scale: it is difficult to get everybody together to make decisions together. It is the time that decision making requires, its space logistics, and so on at the higher scale that makes things difficult. But if you use the approach of associational democracy, where ultimately decisions are being devolved to specific associations, then those issues of scale are potentially alleviated.

Complexity and diversity are other pertinent problems for deliberative democracy, as that democratic form looks for the exchange of all relevant reasons. In plural and diverse societies that means a whole lot of different reasons and perspectives. But associations specialize around certain types of identities, interests, beliefs, and opinions and are therefore quite good at communicating and representing those different discourses. Devolving to associations can help deliberative democracy deal with the issues around pluralism. We should also consider the need for scientific knowledge and expertise in deliberation (as it is inherently based on reason), which is a real challenge for deliberative democracy. Again, associations are good at developing, for example, levels of scientific expertise. Associations can be very specific. They can develop high levels of expertise in a particular field. And they are quite good at communicating this expertise but also representing it. We also see globalization as a problem for deliberative democracy, which perhaps enhances all of the other issues we discussed above. Associations are flexible and diverse. They can operate from local, regional, national, transnational, and global levels. That flexibility can help deliberative democracy adapt to the issues of complexity spurred on by globalization.

I argue that we should make associations themselves democratic and deliberative. We should make the interactions *between* associations democratic and deliberative. Both propositions are each huge challenges—I accept that—but I do think it's possible. This takes us to the use of public reason in associations. Sacralizing public reason within institutions can

take away the pursuit of self-interest and the mischief of factionalism. Accusations of, for example, self-interest and factionalism have been famously leveled at civil society and associational models of democracy. There is a way for associations to meet this criticism. In order to try to justify their preferences, beliefs, and attitudes on certain issues, associations need to adopt public reason, which means that they have to slow down to focus on the common good and not on their own private interest. Combined, deliberative and associational democracy are consequently mutually supportive. Deliberative democracy is a mode of, and an approach to, making decisions. Associational democracy is a specific set of institutions. They can be deliberative, but there is no reason why they necessarily would be if they didn't have to be; which is why we need to focus on making them democratic and deliberative. I think that associations of the democratic and deliberative sort can contribute significantly to the success of deliberative democracy. These are all issues dealt with in-depth in my first book (Elstub 2008).

Gagnon: Can you tell us the story of how deliberative democracy broke apart into tautology or, in the words of Agamben (2011), amphibology?

Elstub: There have been a number of good statements on the breakup of deliberative democracy. I'll offer my own reflection—which I think touches on a number of the other existing statements. I've written, for instance, about deliberative democracy's breakup in an article for the *Political Studies Review* called the "Third Generation of Deliberative Democracy." I think that's where we are now. The third generation of deliberative democracy has a much greater focus on practice and institutionalizing deliberative democracy. Something embodied by the empirical turn. That's to be welcomed. But it is in that focus on practice, in that engagement with empirical evidence, where we've seen the diversity and

amphibology of deliberative democracy develop. To try to answer the question fully, I'll give the narrative of what I think the three generations of deliberative democracy are. It's a heuristic that gives us one idea of what deliberative democracy's genealogy might be. That then will give a fuller picture of how this breakup occurred.

If we go back to the origins of deliberative democracy we have to talk about Jurgen Habermas (e.g., 1985a, 1985b, 1991) and John Rawls (e.g., 1999, 2001, 2005). Habermas and Rawls give two distinct interpretations of Kant (1781, [1788] 1898, 1790) and his idea of public reason. What we see with Habermas and Rawls is that they are debating the normative justifications of deliberative democracy. That is a key component of the theory and where deliberative democracy's great strength originates. The normative justifications for the theory were the first stage of the development of deliberative democracy. However, what Habermas and Rawls didn't do is take into account the sheer complexity of contemporary societies. Their theories are normative and were criticized for being utopian—for being impractical and counterfactual, as Habermas freely admits. The ideal of deliberative democracy—that exchange of pure reason under the auspices of selflessness, the authentic concern for advancing the greater good, and the genuine will to issue resolution—is a methodological fallacy. It is never going to happen. Yet, although it is a counterfactual ideal, it nonetheless can inform practice. The ideal can act as a very good way of criticizing practice. It can be a norm that we can try to approximate. But because of that failure to acknowledge the complexity of contemporary societies, Habermas and Rawls thought that these exchanges would be the only applicable form of communication in deliberative democracy. That this would result in uniform preference change and would result in consensus formation. That is a key similarity for Habermas and Rawls, despite their differences on how they see public reason operating and public reason's normative foundations.

That was the first generation. This leads, of course, to the second generation. This second generation is embodied by deliberative democrats like James Bohman (1996) and Amy Gutmann and Dennis Thompson (1996), among others. They were the ones that started to consider the institutionalization of deliberative democracy much more seriously than Habermas and Rawls did. In doing so they took the complexity of contemporary societies into account in reforming the theory of deliberative democracy. Bohman, Gutmann, and Thompson fused the first generation of deliberative democracy with these practical requirements and transformed deliberative democracy in the process. Although the second-generation thinkers see that preferences will adapt to public reason and new information, as Habermas and Rawls suggested, they don't see this as occurring in a uniform manner due to the diversity and plurality of societies. Not everybody is going to develop the same preferences to the same reason. Therefore, consensus isn't going to be achieved.

Not only that, other forms of communication, other means of exchange, should be included. This is a response by deliberative democrats to the criticisms leveled at the theory by the likes of Iris Marion Young (2000), Lynn Sanders (1997), and the difference democrats, who said that relying solely on public reason as the only form of communication for deliberation can actually exclude subordinate and minority groups. The exclusive nature of communication in deliberation would make it, in the sense of the difference democrats, less democratic because it would be biased to those individuals and groups that practice the convention of communicating through reason. Deliberative democrats have taken on board these criticisms. This is a key aspect to the second generation. Other types of communication came to be included. This includes storytelling, rhetoric and greeting. These other forms of communication don't displace public reason, as perhaps some of the more radical difference democrats would have liked to have seen. They are, rather, included alongside public reason.

Transforming deliberative democracy in this manner made it a much more practical theory. It increased the potential of deliberative democracy to be actualized in complex societies.

Bohman, Gutmann, and Thompson and the other second-generation deliberative democrats therefore transformed the theory to make it more practical. But they didn't substantively engage with the nitty-gritty of deliberative democracy's institutional design. That is where the third generation has come in. It is preoccupied with the specifics of how different institutions would operate deliberatively and democratically. In the turn into this third generation, we have actually seen a proliferation of different deliberative processes and events. These are occurring all over the world—the evidence of which has been, and continues to be, subject to empirical scrutiny. We now have a large amount of empirical evidence on which to form the third generation of deliberative democracy. And I think the theory's transformation has a great deal to do with its engagement of practice. That engagement is what is leading to this breakup of deliberative democracy.

And as I mentioned before, I have tried to offer a general, scalar definition of deliberative democracy—one that can incorporate a number of these different interpretations but at the same time still provides a sortal definition. A conversation between two groups does not make that an instance of deliberative democracy. The third generation promotes an institutional design of deliberative democracy that accepts the plural nature of public reason. This has led to concerns with self-interest and the need to have a broader understanding of communication beyond just reasonable exchange. In some ways this breakup of deliberative democracy, its diversity, has made it a more universal theory. Deliberative democracy is now a less specific, distinct model of democracy. It has much more in common now than it did before (in its first generation, for example) with other models such as liberal democracy. Deliberative democracy has generalized to an extent. The breakup of it has led to it being more ecumenical in a way—it is certainly a less distinct model.

We should discuss whether that is a good thing or a bad thing. It is both. It means that deliberative democracy has become more practical and more relevant to a range of contexts, situations, and processes. At the same time, because deliberative democracy has become less distinct, we risk losing those normative foundations established by the first generation: Habermas and Rawls. While we want the theory to be practical, we don't want to lose what was seen as being good about deliberative democracy in the first place. Its normative appeals are what really caught people's imaginations back in the 1980s and early 1990s.

Gagnon: I agree. We have to be very careful not to lose the theory's normative foundations in our appreciation of its recent epistemic bloom. I wonder—where does John Dryzek fit into your heuristic of deliberative democracy's three generations?
Elstub: That's a good question. I would say that he is simultaneously part of the second and third generations. I think Dryzek (e.g., 1994, 2002, 2006, 2010, 2013; Dryzek and Dunleavy 2009) is a definite leader in having brought deliberative democracy into the third generation—particularly for the empirical turn in deliberative democracy. He is drawing on a wide range of empirical evidence, perhaps more so than Bohman (1996) and Gutmann and Thompson (1996). He has taken a distinct approach to the interpretation of Habermas, and his reform of this theory has made a significant contribution to the second generation of deliberative democracy. For example his work has highlighted the centrality of discourses to Habermas' theory and deliberative democracy more generally. He even sometimes calls it “discursive” democracy rather than “deliberative” democracy. Although he does still use “discursive” democracy, he has accepted that “deliberation” is what the majority of the people in the field are calling it. One of his latest works is, for example, the *Foundations and Frontiers of Deliberative Governance* (2010). Along with Simon Niemeyer he has advanced our understanding of the relationship of public reason to consensus. Here they argue that although deliberation is

unlikely to result in consensus a 'meta-consensus' can be produced which includes recognition and acceptance of the legitimacy of disputed values and beliefs, and agreement on the nature of disputed choices (Niemeyer & Dryzek 2007). In sum Dryzek has helped mould the theory of deliberative democracy to make it more practical and therefore contributed significantly to the second generation. Moreover, his discursive/deliberative approach has institutional implications, particularly at the global level, and this has enabled him to contribute to the third generation of deliberative democracy too. He places a primary role on civil society to institutionalise deliberative democracy, and has outlined how they can produce global deliberative public spheres that can hold international decision-making bodies to account (Dryzek 2006). In addition, he has also advanced our understandings of minipublics, one of the most lauded and practiced methods to try to institutionalize deliberative democracy. A minipublic is effectively a group of diverse people chosen through random sampling. This group is typically asked to deliberate about an issue and come to a consensus through a shift in preferences based on reason-able exchange. Dryzek's point is not about how diverse the people you have are, but rather about how diverse their discourses are. Therefore he advocates a 'chamber of discourses' where selection is made to guarantee a diverse range of discourses rather than a diverse range of people. That's the key to his approach to deliberation, and I have a lot of sympathy for this argument. However, I'm not convinced a chamber of discourse could gain the trust of the public to the same extent as more traditional mini-publics. Therefore, in many ways Dryzek bridges the second and third generations.

There is more to the categories I have enumerated, those three generations of deliberative democracy. Those generations are a heuristic that I use to show the history and current practice of deliberative democracy. Other heuristics exist. Deliberative democracy has, for instance, been summed up by André Bächtiger, Simon Niemeyer, Michael Neblo,

Jürg Steiner, and Marco R. Steenbergen (2010), who give a distinction between type I and type II deliberation. We can relate Bächtiger et al.'s two types with the three generations discussed above. The first generation of deliberative democrats say much of the same as type I deliberation. Both prioritize public reason above all forms of communication. Both see this as something that will result in uniform preference change and that that preference change will result in a decision geared toward the common good. That would be the type I way: talk, conversation, and information sharing do not necessarily directly qualify as deliberation. There's something more than that. Deliberation requires certain standards of rational justification.

But then, in light of the criticisms from the difference democrats I mentioned before, you see the emergence of type II deliberation, where it's not just rational discourses included but other types of communication, like storytelling, rhetoric and greeting. Type II is not necessarily a repudiation of type I, but it does change the essence of deliberation. It makes deliberation perhaps easier to achieve in practice—which is what I articulated about the importance of the second generation. For my part, I think these unformed communications are part of deliberation. Storytelling, for example, should be included. But although non- or less rational communications are necessary, they are not sufficient. For instance, if you have solely reason exchange you will have deliberation. If you have solely storytelling (a form of rhetorical exchange) you will *not* have deliberation. Reason is necessary. It has to be there. As discussed, reason in itself is sufficient to ensure deliberation, but insufficient to ensure deliberative democracy's practicality. These other forms of communication can be part of deliberation, they can indeed improve it and make it more inclusive, but they are not essential.

The focus on institutionalization in the third generation (maybe in the future we will come to see an articulation of type III) is where the main parts of the breakup of deliberative

democracy's theory occur. There are huge differences here in how people think deliberative democracy should be institutionalized. Should it be a focus on citizens and citizens' participation? Or is it something for elites and professional politicians to engage in? Can we look to establish institutions such as parliaments and public hearings and so on as forms of deliberative democracy? Or do we need to engage in democratic innovation and use participatory budgeting and minipublics? Should the forums be partisan, where people in conflict are pitted against each other to make a decision? Or should we use nonpartisan forums, like minipublics, where it is up to a random sample of the population that don't have a stake or an interest in the decision to deliberate?

There are also the distinctions between micro and macro approaches to deliberative democracy, a distinction from Carolyn Hendriks (2006). The micro approach, , is about staying focused on institutionalized decision making, face-to-face, synchronous dialogue with a clear output and decision at the end. The macro approach to institutionalization sees deliberation in the public sphere and across civil societies where there is an asynchronous exchange in discourses across time and space—where there isn't necessarily a need to formally institutionalize deliberation. Deliberation falls outside of the state and often against the state. It is not necessarily leading to final decisions. It doesn't have a clear or direct link to final decisions. I think we need elements of both but also elements of all of those different approaches that I listed above. That is perhaps where we are seeing the discord of deliberative democracy.

The discord in deliberative democracy, over what way is the best way forward for its praxis, has I think led to the idea of the deliberative system—an idea that is being developed, for example, by Jane Mansbridge and John Parkinson (2012). The central idea behind the deliberative system is that we don't just want one focus, one forum, one type of institution to be deliberative. We need a deliberative system, and that means a division of labour for

communicative activity that occurs in a diversity of spaces, and the need to sequence all of these different spaces so that they become part of an interconnected system. Some institutions and parts will achieve some of the norms of deliberative democracy, others will achieve others, but all the norms will not be produced in one place at one time. Therefore, we need to try to sequence them to try to achieve a deliberative system where institutions can have their performance measured against the total norms. We need a combination of citizens and elites. We need a combination of established institutions and democratic innovations. We need partisan and nonpartisan forums. We need the micro and the macro spheres. We need it all.

I think the challenge is centered on how we might come to combine all of these different institutions and processes to achieve this deliberative system. Although deliberative democracy has fragmented, it seems to perhaps be unifying again around certain concepts—the deliberative system being one of them.

The implications for our understanding of deliberative democracy that a systems approach brings should not be underestimated. It is highly significant, and could even lead to a fourth generation of deliberative democracy. It is too early to say at this stage at the ramifications of the systemic approach are still emerging. Nevertheless, as with the progression through the previous generations of deliberative democracy, the systemic approach makes deliberative democracy more practical and easier to achieve. Indeed all the elements of deliberative democracy no longer need to be approximated in one place at one time. It means that talk that is not ostensibly deliberative can play an important role in the system. It means demonstrations and non-dialogic communication are crucial to a deliberative system. As Owen and Smith (2013) recently highlighted this means we could have a ‘deliberative system’ where no deliberation actually takes place and this would be perverse. Once again then as the theory of deliberative democracy does become more

practical in its latest systemic generation it also becomes more general and less distinctive to other models and approaches to democracy.

Gagnon: I think there's a lot to be said about that—about fragmentation and unification. The discourse of democratic theory has, for example, been blown into a million bits of literature. All of these bits in their immense totality feel chaotic. There's little to no way, for example, for a scholar of democracy to come to know them all. But there seems to be the possibility for unifying them. This unification, a cosmopolitan endeavor at its heart, could provide for a shared mind-dependent decision about what democracy's objective truth will be—something that will most likely change 300 or 500 years from now (for more, see Gagnon 2013). I like the genealogy of deliberative democracy that you have given us through two heuristics: your three generations and Bächtiger et al.'s two types. It seems that we have reached the apex of deliberative democracy's theory, where it has answered its critics, it has resisted having its original meaning lost; and now it is looking for its empirical self. It is chasing operability, practicability, and quality performance in the institutions to which deliberative democracy is most relevant. Its diversity is being sequenced as a means to a systemic end. What we have here is evidence of the engineering of deliberative democracy.

Elstub: I think what we're seeing, and this might hold true for most theories of democracy, although that is something I need to think further about, is that the distinctiveness of the different models of democracy is reducing. Deliberative democracy is a way of demonstrating this. The distinctiveness of deliberative democracy as it has moved through these three generations has made the theory more compatible with liberal approaches to democracy. It does have connections with associational democracy, as discussed before. It does incorporate a number of elements stemming from the agonistic theory of democracy. As

a result, deliberative democracy is becoming less distinct in relation to these other models. But the same might be said about the other models—they too are becoming less distinct.

This domination of deliberative democracy, not in practice but in academia, has had a significant effect on the understandings of and approaches to democracy in these other models. Possibly as a result of this growth in the shared distinctions between models of democracy we see, for example, the articulation made by Michael Saward (2003) of the need for an ecumenical approach to democracy. For me, the most appropriate way to get to this ecumenical understanding is by initially focusing on the specific models. As these models engage with practice, a dialectical relationship between practice and theory can emerge. In order to adapt to the practical requirements of reality, the theoretical models move toward each other, and become more similar. In this process models of democracy end up accepting certain hard facts while still retaining a normative approach. Although you don't want to be overly realist and simply say, "The world is what it is and we can't change it," I believe at the same time that there are limitations on what can be changed and limitations on the extent of these changes. The various models of democracy are normative, but 'ought' implies 'can' as Robert Goodin (2005) reminds us. This dialectic between theory and practice is at the heart of Archon Fung's (2007) 'pragmatic equilibrium approach', which I have myself adapted specifically to deliberative democracy (Elstub 2014)

Gagnon: Yes, we can see, for example, the way that different articulations of different theories of democracy feed into one another. For example, type I deliberative democracy requires the parties involved to have enough information to be capable of making a reasonable exchange. The need to find this information might be a muckraking endeavor. One party might have to employ this journalistic technique to establish their position in reason. That activity, though, that necessity of finding sensitive information that will permit a party to be

in a position of reason, and then to use that information in a deliberative exchange, brings to mind the role of the individual citizen in, for example, John Keane's (2009) theory of monitory democracy.

Elstub: I think there are many instances of significant overlaps in all of these models. But, at the same time, I do think that having this modelist approach is useful. These models of democracy do have distinct normative features and normative foundations while at the same time they have major crossovers, especially when they become engaged with practice and institutionalization.

Gagnon: This dialectic of overlap and distinctiveness between models of democracy is interesting. Recognizing that there are over 50 ways of articulating democracy either as a theory, concept, or practice, and that each of these articulations has overlaps and distinctive features, leads me to envision that this forms a type of fabric—a cloth of democracy. When we look, for example, at a simple cloth we can see two parts to it: flat parts and raised parts. The flat parts in this instance are the overlaps between articulations of democracy. And the raised parts are their distinct features—their normative aspects.

Elstub: I do see some value in articulating ecumenical approaches to democracy. I am, for example, an admirer of Michael Saward's work (e.g., 1998, 2002, 2003, 2009, 2010 and 2011). He talks about having a more reflexive approach to the study of democracy.

Something in practice where we don't go in with an arsenal of normative values prior to looking at what's happening in democracy. Saward argues for the need to first look at what's happening and take value from that democratic enactment—whether what's happening is an associative or deliberative or any other approach to democracy. And I do have a great deal of

sympathy for this position. However, I still think that normative interpretations are important and I think normative differences are important. I'm not just a scholar of deliberative democracy; I'm a believer in it. I do believe that the public reason that's at the heart of deliberative democracy can lead to a deeper, if you like, enactment of democracy. It comes back to why you think democracy is a good thing in the first place. There are, of course, a number of very different justifications. Justifications exist for all the different models of democracy. I, for example, argue that democracy's value is that it cultivates personal autonomy equally (Elstub 2008). Deliberative democracy will cultivate personal autonomy *more and more equally* than other approaches. That doesn't mean that these other models don't concern themselves about personal autonomy, for they do, but that deliberative democracy if it can be achieved in practice will bring about personal autonomy the most.

If you were to take a different justification of democracy, then you might end up favoring a different model or a different approach to democracy. That being said, many have argued that deliberative democracy is the fairest procedure. Others have argued that it is the model most likely to have epistemic outcomes. There are others that say that deliberative democracy is the best for other reasons. I think it's the best because it is most likely to cultivate personal autonomy, and that's why I think democracy's a good thing.

Now, the answer I've given is more for the implementation and justification of democracy. There's another part to it. And that's about how fragmentation might be affecting the study of democracy. The fragmentation of theories makes the study of one or more theories more difficult. Whereas the literature on, for example, deliberative democracy was still readable in its entirety nearly 15 years ago, today it would be near impossible to read all that has been written about it due to the sheer volume. And that's brilliant. It shows how important deliberative democracy has become—how it's captured people's attention. It's

great to see all of this empirical work published about it. That's exactly what deliberative democracy needed.

That being said, it does make it difficult to keep up with everything in the field. It makes it particularly difficult to keep track of the interpretations of deliberative democracy in this big body of literature. Not everyone is using deliberative democracy correctly. Now I don't want to sound like the deliberative democracy police or something like that. But there does have to be a boundary over what deliberative democracy means. And I do think that this empirical turn in deliberative democracy, as Dryzek (2010) terms it, has bowdlerized some of the concepts central to deliberative democracy. So when reading some of these empirical works you have to take them into consideration with an especially critical eye. A key question to ask is whether this actually is deliberation that is being measured or instrumentalized.

Yet, at the same time, I want that diversity. Going back to my argument about sequencing deliberative democracy, lots of different kinds of institutions can contribute to the enactment of deliberative democracy. Peter McLaverty and Darrin Halpin wrote, for example, "Deliberative Drift" (2008). They argue that institutions that are not ostensibly set up to be deliberative can still drift toward deliberative values. Consequently, I think deliberative theorists can be looking to all types of different arrangements to see whether they are deliberative or capable of this drift. They need to be methodologically innovative to determine whether deliberation is occurring in the arrangement being studied. They can't just say, "Oh, there's dialogue here so deliberation has occurred." To reiterate deliberative democracy is more than that.

Some measures have, for example, helped in this regard. The Deliberative Quality Index (Steenbergen et al. 2003) or Niemeyer and Dryzek's (2007) and Q-Index can be used to determine whether deliberation is occurring—and with what quality or to what extent. All of

these methods need to be used in conjunction with each other. In another example, Fishkin and Luskin (2005) have convincingly shown that preferences change during their deliberative polls. But their conclusion that this was the result of deliberation needs further thought. We don't necessarily know that preference change during the polls was the result of deliberation. We need to combine these different methods to begin to answer these questions. Fishkin has begun this project himself through further innovations to the methods used in his deliberative polls (Fishkin 2009).

I think the fragmentation of deliberative democracy has given us the resources and the opportunity to gain greater understanding about it, but that it has also made the challenges I mentioned above quite difficult to overcome. It does mean at times that people are looking for deliberative democracy in the wrong places or using the wrong methods to ascertain whether deliberation is actually occurring. The other thing we have to remember is that this is deliberative *democracy*. Not just deliberation. We need to see how democratic these processes are. That's one of the problems with deliberative polling. They are what they are. They are a sophisticated form of opinion polls. They can act as a heuristic for policy makers and the public, but they rarely influence decision making. There are exceptions in China, Bulgaria and in Texas, where they certainly have. But given the huge number of deliberative polls there have been, very few have actually influenced decision making. That compromises the democratic credentials of it. Basically, the empirical evidence of deliberative democracy is both challenging in its demands for innovative methods but also a fantastic resource for scholars and practitioners to draw upon.

Gagnon: That's interesting. I'm curious to know where you see all of this heading.

Elstub: We definitely seem to be going toward this idea of a deliberative system. There has not yet been a huge amount published on this, as it is quite a new turn within deliberative democracy. Parkinson and Mansbridge (2012) have, for example, published a recent book about deliberative systems. It is now not sufficient just to ask, “Is this process deliberative?” It’s about how we can combine these to make a whole system deliberative. And I think that was implicit in the original ideas of deliberative democracy going back to the first generation—Habermas and Rawls—but given the fact that we have focused on specific institutions so much in the third generation of deliberative democracy, I think we have lost sight of that. It’s good that we are bringing that original focus back as part of the theorization and implementation of deliberative systems. The key recognition is that this turn to the deliberative system is building on the third generation. It’s looking to specific institutions and empirical evidence while still retaining normative values to try to change practices. Consequently, as discussed before the systemic focus to deliberative democracy could potentially mark a fourth generation.

Stephen Elstub is a senior lecturer in politics at the University of the West of Scotland. His research interests are on the cusp between democracy in theory and practice, particularly in relation to deliberative democracy and its institutionalization in practice. He is the coeditor of the forthcoming book *Deliberative Democracy: Issues and Cases* (Edinburgh, 2014).

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