

Viorel ȚUȚUI
"Al. I. Cuza" University of Iasi (Romania)

Theoretical Models of Deliberative Democracy: A Critical Analysis

Abstract: My paper focuses on presenting and analyzing some of the most important theoretical models of deliberative democracy and to emphasize their limits. Firstly, I will mention James Fishkin's account of deliberative democracy and its relations with other democratic models. He differentiates between four democratic theories: competitive democracy, elite deliberation, participatory democracy and deliberative democracy. Each of these theories makes an explicit commitment to two of the following four "principles": political equality, participation, deliberation, non-tyranny. Deliberative democracy is committed to political equality and deliberation. Secondly, I will present Philip Pettit's view concerning the main constraints of deliberative democracy: the inclusion constraint, the judgmental constraint and the dialogical constraint. Thirdly, I will refer to Amy Gutmann and Dennis Thompson's conception regarding the "requirements" or characteristics of deliberative democracy: the reason-giving requirement, the accessibility of reasons, the binding character of the decisions and the dynamic nature of the deliberative process. Finally, I will discuss Joshua Cohen's "ideal deliberative procedure" which has the following features: it is free, reasoned, the parties are substantively equal and the procedure aims to arrive at rationally motivated consensus. After presenting these models I will provide a critical analysis of each one of them with the purpose of revealing their virtues and limits. I will make some suggestions in order to combine the virtues of these models, to transcend their limitations and to offer a more systematical account of deliberative democracy. In the next four sections I will take into consideration four main strategies for combining political and epistemic values ("optimistic", "deliberative", "democratic" and "pragmatic") and the main objections they have to face. In the concluding section, I will argue that any theoretical model is confronted with the "the paradox of democratic deliberation": the legitimacy of political decisions demands for the 'raw' opinion of the citizens, while the epistemic rightness of political decisions demands for a 'filtered' public opinion. And, in my opinion, this paradox reveals a deep inconsistency in the core of the deliberative model which suggests that the deliberative procedure should not be conceived as an authentic alternative to the classical theories of democratic legitimacy.

Keywords: theoretical models, deliberative democracy, epistemic values, political values, paradox of democratic deliberation.