

DELIBERATIVE DEMOCRACY AND CITIZENSHIP

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ABSTRACT

The model of deliberative democracy poses a number of difficult questions about individual rationality, public reason and justification, public spiritedness, and an active and supportive public sphere. It also raises the question about what kind of civic involvement is required for the practices of democratic deliberation to be effective. The aim of this article is to examine the last question by looking at the role and value of citizenship understood in terms of participation. It argues that deliberative democracy implies a category of democratic citizens; its institutional framework calls for the activity and competence of citizenry, and consequently, the participatory forms of deliberative democracy come closest to the democratic ideal as such. Also, the model of participatory-deliberative democracy is more attractive as a truly democratic ideal than the model of formal deliberative democracy, but it certainly faces more difficulties when it comes to the practicalities, and especially the institutional design. This problem is raised in the last section of the article where the possible applicability of such a model to post-communist democracies is addressed. The major difficulty that the participatory-deliberative model poses for the post-communist democratization can be explained by a reference to the cultural approach towards democratization and to the revised modernization theory presented by Inglehart and Welzel. The problem of the applicability of such a model in the post-communist context seems to support the thesis presented here which suggests that active citizenship, civic skills and civic culture are indispensable for the development of deliberative politics.

MODELS OF DEMOCRACY

There are two dominant and competing theories of democracy today: the theory of liberal democracy (often described as procedural or “aggregative” democracy) advocated by Schumpeter, Dahl, Sartori, Riker, and others, and the participatory, deliberative, and republican models, sometimes described as “classical” models. The liberal-democratic models (elitism, pluralism) are descriptive-explanatory accounts of democratic politics and have realistic and objective goal. What is crucial to their approach to democracy is the role of various constitutional arrangements and rules in assuring fair competition among political leaders and the continuity of the regime. But one cannot deny that there are some normative assumptions about desirable democratic institutions and practices that these models presume.

Participatory, deliberative, and republican models of democracy are normative models within democratic theory; they offer an ideal view of democratic politics and democratic society and thus have prescriptive character. Arguably, the central role of participation is one of the main aspects of the normative democratic theory which distinguishes it from the theory of liberal democracy. Consequently, these three models – deliberative, participatory, and republican democracy – do not constitute separate democratic theories¹ since they all represent an attempt to overcome deficiencies of the liberal democratic theory: its formal, procedural character, and the view of the individual as a maximizer of his or her own expected preference-satisfaction. They also reject the concept of democratic politics understood in terms of fair bargaining among groups who pursue their own particular interests, and they are normative and not descriptive approaches to democracy. Moreover, they concern themselves with democratic politics which is, at least partly, shaped by citizens exercising their political rights, and they endorse a richer understanding of legitimacy and the decision-making process than the liberal democratic theory. Despite these obvious similarities, there are important differences between the three approaches, and there are significant differences within them. The starting point of the concept of deliberative democracy is a disaffection with the too limited vision of democracy that dominated political theory in the twentieth century, and instead the attempts to bring to the fore the issues of democratic deliberation and legitimacy. It focuses on the procedure of ideal deliberation that aims at a rationally motivated consensus² The participatory model puts emphasis on the value and importance of citizens’

¹ Por. F. Cunningham, *Theories of Democracy: A Critical Introduction*, London and New York: Routledge, 2002.

² J. Cohen, ‘Deliberation and Democratic Legitimacy’, in: D. Estlund (ed.), *Democracy*, Oxford: Blackwell, p. 93.

participation in the decision-making process at both local and national level, whereas the model influenced by the revival of republicanism stresses the role of such republican ideals as civic virtue and responsible citizenship in making democracy a more desirable and more substantive ideal. But since these three approaches seem to have more in common than it is usually assumed, I prefer to call them “models” within normative democratic theory and not “theories”. Consequently, I will try to examine whether the concept of deliberative democracy can be elaborated in more participatory terms as found in the other two models. In order to do that, I will first try to establish what concept of citizenship would be supportive of the ideal of deliberative democracy. Secondly, I will try to answer the question “who should deliberate?” in a more participatory way. Thirdly, I will argue that a more participatory deliberative democracy does not presuppose direct democracy, but can be reconciled with a representative model. The main thesis of this article is that the model of participatory deliberative democracy is more attractive as a truly democratic ideal than the model of formal deliberative democracy, but it certainly faces more difficulties when it comes to practicalities, and especially the institutional design. This problem will be raised in the last section of the paper where the possible applicability of such a model to post-communist democracies is discussed.

DELIBERATIVE DEMOCRACY AND THE IDEAL OF CITIZENSHIP

Deliberative democrats criticize the mechanisms of “aggregative democracy” that base collective decisions simply on the aggregation of votes which express the fixed preferences of citizens. They suggest that in order to improve the democratic process of decision-making, reasons not votes should be the most important factor. The concept of deliberative democracy has found its most powerful proponent in Jürgen Habermas whose theory of communicative action and discourse ethics paved the way for the idea of deliberation as a worthwhile mechanism for generating consensus.³ It is also a way of dealing with conflict and difference on the basis of mutual recognition, reciprocity, and “a commitment to communicative rationality.”⁴ Such rationality facilitates cooperation among participants and enhances the problem-solving and reason-giving competence of individuals. Public deliberation then is “the

³ J. Habermas, *Between Facts and Norms: Contributions to a Discourse Theory of Law and Democracy*, tr. W. Rheg., Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1996, p. 287–328.

⁴ J. Dryzek, *Discursive Democracy: Politics, Policy, and Political Science*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 18.

way in which the practical reasoning of agents enters into political decision making.”⁵ It is a test for democratic legitimacy. But what do we really talk about when we talk about deliberative democracy? Most deliberative democrats would probably agree that we talk about a specific democratic ideal.⁶ It seems inevitable that such an ideal has to be supported by some other ideals; the very fact that it is an ideal limits any more empirical exposition of its functioning. The problem arises when we try to develop its practical side, and specifically when we try to establish who – according to deliberative democrats – is to deliberate and how deliberation is supposed to influence the decision-making process. I argue that the practical side of the ideal of deliberative democracy is the practice of citizenship and a representative form of government. The practice of citizenship can again be constructed as an ideal, or, to put it differently, as a desirable practice that supports democracy. As the issue of citizenship is too complex to be fully addressed here, in the next section I will try to identify a concept of citizenship that can be seen as supportive of a deliberative democracy.

FOUR CONCEPTS OF CITIZENSHIP

Citizenship can be understood in terms of active and passive rights and duties that members of a given polity have been guaranteed by its constitution. Among them are social, political, and economic rights and freedoms, which can be exercised as long as the equal rights of others are respected. Being a citizen according to this view, call it liberal, does not presuppose an active exercise of available rights, but merely their equal availability to all adult members of the polity. Citizenship is then purely a legal status by virtue of being born and living within some territory. It is a status which brings certain civil, political, and social rights. In T. H. Marshall’s concept of modern citizenship, understood in terms of the recognition of certain rights, a citizen is viewed as, above all, a bearer of rights whose main duty is to obey the

⁵ J. Bohman, *Public Deliberation: Pluralism, Complexity, and Democracy*, Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1996, p. 2.

⁶ The understanding of democracy that implies perceiving it or some of its forms as an ideal is a novel, twentieth century development. Since antiquity democracy has never been viewed as tenable as an ideal; on the contrary, it has always been seen as one of the worst types of government. Only fairly recently has liberal democracy been given the status of the only game (worth playing) in town and has become a good thing (see, for example, I. Hampsher-Monk, ‘The Historical Study of Democracy’, in Graeme Duncan (ed.), *Democratic Theory and Practice*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983, pp. 25–35.; C.B. Macpherson, *The Real World of Democracy*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996, p. 1.

laws.⁷ The view of citizens as free and independent persons that was developed in the liberal tradition leaves individuals to themselves and to their own endeavours; civil, political, and social rights which are guaranteed in the liberal state, are exercised by individuals in the process of their self-realization.

Many schools of thought in current political theory – neorepublicans, communitarians, participatory democrats, critics of Rawls’ liberalism et cetera – have critically addressed the liberal conception of citizenship.⁸ The critique has generally focused upon the one-sided, individualistic preoccupation with rights seen as “political trumps”, to use Ronald Dworkin’s famous term, and the consequent neglect of values such as community, political liberty, and civic responsibilities. Contemporary proponents of republicanism argue that democratic theory is weak with regard to the practice of citizenship and the civic-republican tradition is strong in this respect.⁹ Civic republicanism brings to the fore a concept of citizenship focused not on individual rights, but on the duties and obligations of citizens to participate in the political decision-making process. One of the central ideals in the republican understanding of citizenship is civic responsibility for the common good; citizenship is viewed as the entire spectrum of activities and one of its main purposes is to secure freedom of citizens and to strengthen the republic based on a mixed constitution. Republican citizens associate with others and they find participation in the public life rewarding. It is a view that emphasises citizens’ duties rather than their rights, the fact that they understand and recognize their public duties; citizenship is a status that has to be earned and it can only be earned by those who take their civic duties seriously. Citizenship is “a public vocation” and the practice of citizenship gives individuals their real sense of autonomy. The republican model of citizenship envisages a population accustomed to political freedom and to respect for the public good. Contemporary advocates of civic republicanism usually try to link the liberal conception of the citizen as a bearer of rights with the republican view of the citizen as

⁷ T.H. Marshall, *Class, Citizenship and Social Development*, New York: Doubleday, 1964.

⁸ M. Sandel, *Liberalism and the Limits of Justice*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982; M. Sandel, *The Procedural Republic and the Unencumbered Self*, “Political Theory”, Vol. 12, no. 1, 1986, s. 81-96, ; R.N. Bellah et al, *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995; R. Dagger, *Civic Virtues: Rights, Citizenship, and Republican Liberalism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997; S. Avineri, A. De-Shalit (eds), *Communitarianism and Individualism*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.

⁹ Np. A. Oldfield, *Citizenship and Community: Civic Republicanism and the Modern World*

London: Routledge, 1990, pp. 156-57; R. Dagger, *Civic Virtues...*, chaps. 1 and 2; D. Heater, *What is Citizenship*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1999, chap. 2.

a performer of duties.¹⁰ While instrumental republicanism sees citizenship as a means of preserving individual freedom, rather than as an activity or relationship which has significant intrinsic value, strong republicanism emphasises the inherent value of participating in self-government and realising certain common goods among citizens.

The communitarian conception of citizenship stresses the cultural solidarity within a community of those who share a history or tradition. On this reading, citizenship refers to the membership in a self-determining ethical community and to the status of belonging that shapes citizens' identity. The communitarian conception of politics requires that membership of a political community is a constitutive attachment, and it presupposes participation in self-rule seen as the essence of freedom. The very existence and endurance of political community is secured through such constitutive attachments of citizens to the substantive principles, values, and traditions of their community.

The fourth conception of citizenship, known as multicultural citizenship, has now been widely discussed by political theorists who address the issues of global justice and multiculturalism.¹¹ As presented by Will Kymlicka, multicultural citizenship concerns extended minority group rights – from protection for cultural expression for ethnic groups to the rights to self-government for national minorities, as well as rights to representation and hence political participation for these groups. It also provides reasons for the practice of “differentiated rights” that should be recognized by a liberal state as long as they are not granted to groups whose internal structures are illiberal.¹² This new concept of citizenship provides grounds for and legitimizes the rights and needs of citizens to maintain commitments both to their cultural communities and to the national civic culture. The transformation of national civic culture in the way that it reflects and gives voice to the diverse ethnic, religious, racial, and language communities that constitute it is necessary to accommodate the needs of all of its citizens and to develop their commitments to the nation-state and its

¹⁰ B. Barber, *Strong Democracy: Participatory Politics for the New Age* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984); Q. Skinner, ‘The Republican Ideal of Political Liberty’, in: G. Bock *et al* (eds), *Machiavelli and Republicanism*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990, pp. 293–309.

¹¹ W. Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995; W. Kymlicka, *Politics in the Vernacular: Nationalism, Multiculturalism and Citizenship*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001; J. M. Delgado-Moreira, *Multicultural Citizenship of the European Union*, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000.

¹² Cf. I. Young, *Justice and Politics of Difference*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000, pp. 96–116.

ideals. The major problem that conceptions of multicultural citizenship try to address and solve is the problem of difference and liberal democracy's inclusiveness.

None of these conceptions on their own can be seen as a sufficient and adequate precondition for a deliberative democracy, although each of them contains some crucial elements that are necessary for deliberative politics to take place. The four conceptions should then be treated, to a large extent, as being complementary and not exclusive. Deliberative democrats address the issue of citizenship indirectly when they stress that one of the main conditions of deliberative politics is freedom and equality of persons, and respect for persons as moral agents and moral reasoners. On this reading, the state reinforces the system of equal rights that govern the interactions between equal citizens and groups of citizens. Furthermore, democratic politics which involves *public deliberation focused on the common good*, not only requires formal equality among citizens, but also "*shapes the identity and interests of citizens in ways that contribute to the formation of a public conception of common good*".¹³ Arguably, the liberal conception of citizenship is too narrow for any meaningful idea of deliberative practices, but it presupposes the necessary institutional framework that any meaningful conception of democratic citizenship needs to involve.

Deliberative democrats agree that the democratic model they advocate is a "pluralistic association" which, in accordance with Rawls's concept of political liberalism, is not grounded on any comprehensive moral theory, but on the fact of reasonable pluralism. Members of such association have different views, preferences, convictions and ideals as well as conflicting aims. For this reason, it can be argued that deliberative democracy cannot be based on the communitarian conception of citizenship, but rather on the conception of multicultural citizenship. On the other hand, democratic deliberation would not be possible without some grass-roots shared values and principles of a political community, as well as without some collective identities, which are crucial for its existence. Also, deliberative democracy can hardly be based on the civic republican view of citizenship with its strong emphasis on public duties.¹⁴ But it certainly shares the central element of the participatory concept of citizenship which is endorsed here, namely the value of active citizenship. Similarly, multicultural citizenship provides a good starting point for the discussion on the

¹³ J. Cohen, 'Deliberation and Democratic Legitimacy', p. 89.

¹⁴ Some democratic theorists find the conception of republican citizenship as the one deliberative democracy should rely upon. For example, David Miller suggests that republican citizenship is "better able to respond to cultural diversity" than liberal and libertarian models of citizenship "by virtue of its ability to draw groups who initially have very different priorities into public debate, and to find compromise solutions to political issues that members of each group can accept." (Miller, 2000, p.3, 53–61).

scope of public deliberation which needs to incorporate views of various minority groups. In multicultural societies, the practice of deliberation seems to be particularly desirable, but it also faces a number of challenges such as an equal representation of different groups and the development of inclusive participatory civic culture.

Taking all these crucial elements of each conception of citizenship into consideration, I would like to put forward a conception of citizenship that is understood in terms of participation in public life, which is only possible due to constitutionally guaranteed equal civil rights, as well as principles that are shared and accepted by all citizens, and their sense of political community. Often this conception of citizenship is characterized as “active citizenship” as opposed to citizenship understood as merely a legal status. What do we gain with such an understanding of citizenship and why should it be associated with deliberative democracy? If deliberation is viewed as guided by the preoccupation with the common good then those who are involved must be seen as citizens and not just individuals. The background of deliberative democracy is the idea of citizens as free and equal, and the fact of reasonable pluralism. Moreover, since deliberative democracy is “a form of political community”¹⁵, the whole democratic process is an enterprise which involves individuals as citizens who are equal members of the sovereign body and who share equal citizenship rights. The very existence and security of equal citizenship rights does in itself contribute to flourishing democratic deliberation; active citizens’ involvement can only take place within the framework of essential norms, rules, and attitudes of a given polity and its aim is not to undermine, reshape, or build such norms from scratch. The main task for deliberative democrats is then to prompt citizens to use their political judgement on issues of public concern and to develop the capacity of citizenship and its supportive virtues: civility and public responsibility. Such a model of citizenship is problematic in the context of post-communist democratization, mainly due to so-called communist legacy, but even in that context it can be seen as a desirable goal of a further democratic change, at least in those countries which have become consolidated and effective democracies in terms of the protection of civil and political rights and democratic accountability of their political elites.

In the next section, it will be explained why deliberative democracy should give individuals a real sense of citizenship, that is, of active involvement in the democratic process. The conception of active citizenship does not exclude those who do not want to participate or who cannot participate; it only stresses the importance and value of the practice of citizenship public rights, among them the right to express one’s views in the public forum, the right to associate with others, and the franchise.

¹⁵ J. Cohen, ‘Democracy and Liberty’, in: J. Elster (ed.), *Deliberative Democracy*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988, p. 222.

DELIBERATION AND PARTICIPATION

Theorists of deliberative democracy tend to focus their attention on the institutionalization of the procedures that facilitate deliberation and thus on formal conditions of communication.¹⁶ They try to identify a set of principles that prescribe fair terms of cooperation and hence imply that the success of deliberative politics depends above all on the institutional and procedural conditions. Such approach avoids the question of feasibility of democratic deliberation understood in terms of real involvement of those who are to deliberate. But if deliberative democrats are to answer the question “who is supposed to deliberate?” they will need to do that by addressing the issue of participation as well as some specific view of the self. A social and discursive view of the self – as opposed to the view of the self understood in terms of self-interests – seems to be a necessary postulate that a model of deliberative democracy should involve. It is a view of human beings as agents, as free and equal persons who have deliberative capacities, and of politics as public activity through which people manifest their role as citizens. In general, deliberative democracy relies on an optimistic concept of a rational self, and it requires high cognitive capacities, and the ability to reason and give reasons.¹⁷ For our further discussion it is important to establish whether there is an obvious linkage between the conception of deliberation and the ideal of active civic engagement of free and equal persons. In order to do that we need to look at various ways of conceptualising deliberation.

APPROACHES TO DELIBERATION

Procedural or formal accounts of deliberation usually require very narrow definitions of deliberation. Constitutional and procedural democrats such as Rawls or Dahl agree on the necessary conditions that have to be secured for public deliberation and participation to take place. Among them there are fundamental democratic institutions, equal political liberty, publicity, and democratic values such as equal respect for fellow citizens, reciprocity et cetera. But they do not see it as necessary or desirable to extend democracy beyond procedural and constitutional institutions, and to allow the public fora of civil society to play a more important role in influencing the overall decision-making process by giving deliberation greater scope. They fail to notice, according to deliberative democrats, that creating more deliberative fora that bring previously excluded voices into politics is the best way to resolve conflict and

¹⁶ J. Habermas, *Between Facts and Norms...*, p. 298.

¹⁷ M. Warren, ‘The Self in Discursive Democracy’, in: S.K. White (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Habermas*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995, pp. 181–195.

that “bringing people in” through deliberation is worthwhile as such. Among deliberative democrats, at least three approaches to deliberation can be distinguished: firstly, a narrow, procedural or institution-centred approach that gives a purely formal account of deliberation perceiving it as an ideal procedure for justifying and legitimising the democratic process; secondly, a broader, non-proceduralist, and more practical approach that locates deliberation in specific arenas of civil society and the public sphere, and focuses on the practical question of how public deliberation works; and thirdly, the “deliberation within” approach which stresses the importance of individual deliberation that precedes public debate. The last approach will not be discussed here. Suffice to say that “deliberation within” occurs before discussion and interaction with others: “it seems that informal, pre-group deliberation – ‘deliberation within’ – will inevitably do much of the work that deliberative democrats ordinarily want to attribute to the more formal discursive processes.¹⁸ A short discussion of the two main approaches to deliberation will illustrate that both approaches build upon the ideal of active citizenry.

The procedural approach is advocated by those deliberative democrats who search for an ideal procedure of democratic deliberation and focus their attention on the necessary conditions that need to be met for such a procedure to work. Some of them regard the institutions of the liberal state – constitutional assemblies, legislatures, juries, courts, and public hearings – as the most significant venues for deliberation. For example, Habermas seems to perceive voting in elections as the main means by which the influence of public opinion is converted into communicative power, which is then converted into administrative power through law-making. His discourse theory presents an ideal procedure for deliberation and decision-making. Discourse appears on the level of public opinion formation and it does not entail specific deliberative bodies. According to this view, practical reason resides “in the rules of discourse and forms of argumentation that borrow their normative content from the validity basis of action oriented to reaching understanding.”¹⁹ Similarly, Amy Gutmann and Dennis Thompson’s concept of deliberative democracy is concerned, above all, with the conditions that make deliberation in pluralistic and divided societies possible.²⁰ They go beyond Rawls’s proceduralism and the solitary deliberation on the principles of justice, and beyond Habermas’s approach advocating the practice

¹⁸ R. Goodin, J. Niemeyer, ‘When Does Deliberation Begin? Internal Reflection versus Public Discussion in Deliberative Democracy’, *Political Studies* 51(4), pp. 627–645. See also R. Goodin, *Reflective Democracy*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003, chap. 9

¹⁹ Habermas, *Between Facts and Norms...*, p. 297. Cf. Cohen, ‘Deliberation and Democratic Legitimacy’.

²⁰ A. Gutmann, D. Thompson, *Democracy and Disagreement*, Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1996.

of developing conclusive moral reasons through public discussions, and emphasising the need for moral deliberation. Gutmann and Thompson have no doubt that “by making democracy more deliberative, citizens stand a better chance of resolving some of their moral disagreements, and living with those that will inevitably persist, on terms that all can accept”, but at the same time they do not view citizens’ participation as desirable *per se*.²¹ To Gutmann and Thompson, participatory democracy seems analogous with direct democracy, and they conclude in their last book: “Democratically elected and accountable representatives of citizens may be better deliberators, and are likely to be democratically recognized as such”.²² But it seems that what matters is not only the content of deliberation, be it conflicting moral views or conceptions of the common good, and the adequate conditions for deliberation, but also its scope in terms of participants. Especially if deliberative reasoning based on the principle of reciprocity is supposed to encourage, as Gutmann and Thompson wish, the cultivation of civic virtues that guide citizens in a pluralistic society.²³

The second approach can have a number of variants. Democracy can become more deliberative if various associations are involved in the decision-making process [associative deliberative democracy].²⁴ Deliberation can be located in specific organizations and practices, among them civic and political organizations, it may involve courts and legislatures. Other examples are “deliberative opinion polls” and the practice of citizens’ juries, which provide the opportunity for a more active citizenship.²⁵ James Bohman develops a dialogical account of public deliberation defined in a more participatory way as “a joint social activity involving all citizens” and as a “dialogical process of exchanging reasons for the purpose of resolving problematic situations that cannot be settled without interpersonal coordination and cooperation.”²⁶ Such cooperation-based deliberation is to provide a moral ground for democratic participation in complex societies.

²¹ Ibid. p. 51.

²² A. Gutmann, D. Thompson, *Why Deliberative Democracy?*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004, p. 31.

²³ Gutmann and Thompson, *Democracy and Disagreement*, pp. 93-94.

²⁴ See for example J. Cohen and J. Rogers (eds), *Associations and Democracy*. London: Verso, 1995. Cf. P. Hirst, *Associative Democracy: New Forms of Economic and Social Governance*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994, pp. 23-47.

²⁵ J. S. Fishkin, *Democracy and Deliberation*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991, chap. 8; J. S. Fishkin, *The Voice of People*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997; B. Ackerman and J. S. Fishkin, ‘Deliberation Day’, *The Journal of Political Philosophy*, 10 (2), 2002, pp. 129-152; G. Smith, C. Wales, ‘Citizens’ Juries and Deliberative Democracy’, *Political Studies* 48 (1), 2000, pp. 51-65.

²⁶ J. Bohman, *Public Deliberation*, p. 17, 27.

With both approaches, a truly deliberative democracy requires active and responsible citizens' involvement, at least in the public opinion formation, and thus it calls for an institutional design that would facilitate participation or at least for some transformation of existing institutions and practices in order to make them more responsive to and more suitable for deliberative practices. In this context, the concept of the public sphere and its institutions and practices seems to be especially pertinent. Yet the formal, procedural design as offered by deliberative democrats does not by itself solve the problem of how to encourage the practice of active citizenship. Such involvement can be seen as a civic duty (civic republicans) or as an opportunity to advance fairer democratic decision-making and to influence its outcomes (deliberative democrats). The ideal of deliberation demands the ability and readiness to discuss issues of common importance to citizens. In a participatory deliberative democracy people do have the opportunity to participate in various forms of deliberation and debate and thus to fulfil their rights and duties as citizens, but they also perceive participation as worthwhile and beneficial to one's well-being. Hence, it can be argued that even if public deliberation that involves and encourages civic participation is not sufficient to bring about desirable political outcomes, it is necessary for a viable form of democracy

THE PARTICIPATORY TURN AND THE PROBLEMATIC VALUE OF PARTICIPATION

Participatory democrats who are preoccupied with the erosion of democratic vitality in the "thin democracy" assert that democratic participation has an intrinsic value, and the central ideal of democratic politics they advocate is the active involvement of citizens and achieving political consensus through dialogue.²⁷ Participatory governance is supposed to involve reforms that "rely upon the commitment and capacities of ordinary people to make sensible decisions through reasoned deliberation and empowered because they attempt to tie action to discussion."²⁸ It is a project which combines the values of participation, deliberation, and empowerment.²⁹ "Strong democrats", such as Benjamin Barber, emphasise that the liberal view of

²⁷ See especially, C. Pateman, *Participation and Democratic Theory*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970; B. Barber, *Strong Democracy...*; C. B. Macpherson, *Democratic Theory: Essays in Retrieval*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973; C. C. Gould, *Rethinking Democracy: Freedom and Social Cooperation in Politics, Economy, and Society*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988.

²⁸ A. Fung and E. Olin Wright, 'Thinking about Empowered Participatory Governance', in A. Fung and E. Olin Wright (eds), *Deepening Democracy*, London: Verso, 2003, pp. 3–45.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

citizenship creates weak and privatize citizens whose role is confined to regular voting and making their preferences clear. Barber argues that “strong democratic political processes aim to strengthen the role of ‘citizen’ – to re-establish its sovereignty over other roles.”³⁰

Deliberative democrats view participation as instrumental to political equality, and – in its educative function – to deliberation.³¹ On this reading, participation is not praised independently of these two values – equality and deliberation – but it has to be seen as a practice that facilitates achieving of these values. On the other hand, deliberative democrats value participation because it develops individuals’ capacity for practical reasoning and judgement as well as mutual respect that is necessary for any discursive practice. In a democracy, individuals are equal as citizens and this role gives them the sense of common political identity. Through participation, they become aware not only of the diversity of preferences and reasons, but also of the democratic principles they comply with and of equality that follows. This empowerment brings about trust in democratic institutions and practices and develops positive attitudes towards politics. Citizenship understood in terms of participation in democratic deliberative practices contributes to the vision of politics as an activity open to the differing and conflicting views of citizens. This meaning of politics has republican roots, but can also be applied to participatory deliberative democracy.³² In a sense, it is the only concept of politics that explicitly addresses participation as an intrinsic value. It presupposes that only through active participation the orientation towards truly public interest can be developed. Deliberative process requires that people make the effort to think and to express their opinions and judgements publicly, and that they want to enter a dialogue with others. Consequently, deliberation can be seen as rewarding not only because it makes decisions more legitimate, but also because it gives the opportunity for the practice of citizenship.

Such a conclusion might be obvious to participatory democrats or those influenced by civic republicanism, but not necessarily to deliberative democrats. Although it seems evident that the concept of deliberative democracy presupposes some form of citizens’ participation in the democratic process of decision-making, it is unclear how broad in scope such participation should be. Theorists of deliberation are quick

³⁰ *Strong Democracy*, p. 208.

³¹ J. Fishkin, *Democracy and Deliberation*, p. 53. See also T. Christiano, *The Rule of the Many: Fundamental Issues in Democratic Theory*, Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1996, p. 41.

³² In a participatory democracy politics becomes a discursive activity that has an educative character and is associated with active citizenship. In a liberal democracy the meaning of politics is usually confined to the arena of conflict, power, strategy, and interests, and it is an allocative or economic kind of activity concerned with the efficient delivery of governmental goods and services.

to specify what conditions would facilitate democratic deliberation, but they overlook the question of how active citizenry could be advanced and encouraged. Yet for the representative form of government to become more “discursive”, it must involve citizens’ participation in the decision-making process or at least some influence on that process by those who are subject to decisions. If decisions are made in the last resort by representatives, the role of citizens’ deliberation would be to come to terms with conflicting views and reasons and thus to facilitate the decision-making process undertaken after the results of deliberation are known. Such a framework would combine both deliberative participation and representation.

Consequently, on the conceptual level it seems that the three normative models of democracy – deliberative, participatory, and republican – despite some important differences between them,³³ share the ideal of democratic participation,³³ as a desirable and indispensable component of the democratic process. But if so the question about the scope and the locus of citizens’ involvement in a deliberative democracy has to be posed. John Dryzek’s version of deliberative democracy differs from many other similar visions due to his preoccupation with the participatory aspect of democracy. He views deliberative democracy as a theory of democratic legitimacy that depends on the ability of those who are subject to a decision to participate in “authentic deliberation.”³⁴ This kind of participation takes place not only within the state where it involves the institutions of the liberal state, but also, and more importantly, in the public sphere and civil society. I believe that this claim can be strengthened with a more substantive and citizenship-centred conception of civil society than the one that is usually taken for granted by advocates of liberal democracy. The idea of civil society understood as the network of nongovernmental associations and various forms of public activity that bring people together has a civic dimension that concerns the role of the individual as a citizen. It is a sphere where free persons act not only as private individuals, but also as citizens who associate with others in order to achieve some common goals, to articulate public will, and to converse about immediate common concerns. Therefore, as long as the practices within civil society do not violate democratic principles the model of deliberative democracy is based on, it can be seen as a broad and diverse forum for deliberation that guides public policy and the practice of active citizenship. It can constitute a better site for democratization than the state. As such, it requires education to citizenship and the development

³³ The language of civic duty is absent from the theory of deliberative democracy. Rather, participation in deliberation is perceived as a desirable way to protect our freedom and equality as citizens and to make use of our capacity for public reasoning.

³⁴ J. Dryzek, *Deliberative Democracy and Beyond*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000, p. 85.

of specific attitudes in citizens, such as responsiveness and accountability to others. It also requires a robust public culture and a flourishing public sphere that make participants conscious of themselves as a public, as well as institutions that sustain citizens' engagement in a public dialogue. If that dialogue aims at agreement about what constitutes the public good, then the opportunity to take part in deliberation must be widespread. It means that citizens must be provided with opportunities to advance some common goals with others through channels of communication.

The crucial practical question for deliberative democrats is how to make the practice of citizenship work, how to encourage people to think that responsible citizenship enhances their chance of well-being and opens new opportunities to them as members of the polity. Deliberative democracy is inclusive in the sense that it creates a space for debate for citizens whose views and goals might differ significantly, but who want to uphold a cooperative democratic framework. It allows those views to be expressed in the public forum where everyone has a say. The existence of that very forum is a necessary condition for discursive practices. "Deliberation within", as argued by Robert Goodin, is important, but as such does not affect any political development as long as its results are not expressed publicly.³⁵ The main problem for deliberative democracy, then, is how to encourage the development of a wider, rather than purely formal, sense of citizenship, and how to encourage the practice of this kind of citizenship. As I will try to illustrate in the last section, the practice of citizenship might be more essential than reaching an agreement through the medium of that practice, although from the deliberative perspective participation is not valuable in itself, but rather is seen as a good side-effect of deliberative politics. What matters is that deliberation based on the principles of reciprocity, publicity, and equality of arguments allows citizens to understand differences and to search for reasonable consensus or at least mutual understanding. Public debate is the method of seeking out principles that differing parties share or can agree upon. In contrast, participatory and republican democrats would value participation because it develops significant moral qualities in citizens, such as self-development, respect for others, and responsibility, and it also increases their sense of identity and autonomy.³⁶ This disagreement, however, disappears on a more general level, for as the above analysis aimed to demonstrate, both approaches to democracy should be understood as based on the ideal of responsible civic involvement of the governed. If this assumption is true, both deliberative and participatory democrats have to face a similar problem of

³⁵ R. Goodin, *Reflective Democracy*, chap. 9.

³⁶ Cf. C. Sunstein, *The Partial Constitution*, Cambridge MA.: Harvard University Press, 1991, p. 135.

feasibility of their models in terms of making the practice of active citizenship work.³⁷ Can the model of deliberative participatory democracy be attractive despite the fact that the ideal of widespread participation seems to be unattainable in contemporary democracies? In the next section I will try to address this question with a reference to a specific democratic context – that of post-communist democracies.

PARTICIPATORY DELIBERATIVE DEMOCRACY AND THE POST-COMMUNIST CONTEXT

There is no doubt that the institutional configuration of a deliberative participatory model depends on the specific limitations and opportunities of the particular social and political context, and especially on the cultural traditions to which participants of deliberation subscribe, as well as on the capabilities and preferences of the actors of deliberation.³⁸ To some extent, deliberative democracy could be described as “context-sensitive”. The question that I should like to address in this last section is whether the model of participatory deliberative democracy could be attractive from the perspective of East-Central European democratization.

The differences between ECE democracies and old well-established western democracies are usually explained in terms of democratic political stability and accountability, with emphasis on the role of democratic culture and a robust civil society. Post-communist democracies in comparison to most western democracies are less effective, less accountable, and are in the process of developing democratic political and legal cultures and civil societies. It can be argued that these differences are major obstacles to the development of deliberative politics in those democracies. In particular, the lack of a flourishing civil society and public sphere may be perceived as the main impediment to a broader, civil society-centred model of deliberation. This situation, however, can be tackled from a different perspective: discursive practices that involve the active participation of citizens can be viewed as a desirable way to the development of a robust civil society and democratic culture in ECE countries. The first step in this direction was undertaken in the 1980s by anticommunist associations of the democratic opposition – which might be viewed as an example of deliberative bodies – as open, public associations of citizens who shared common concerns about the future of their polity and the disaffection with their leaders and the imposed political, legal, and economic structures. Today the par-

³⁷ R. J. Dalton, W. Bürklin, and A. Drummond, ‘Public Opinion and Direct Democracy’, *Journal of Democracy*, 2001, 12 (4), pp. 141–153.

³⁸ J. Dryzek, *Discursive Democracy*, p. 41.

ticipatory, civil-society centred model might revitalize and strengthen democracy in these countries, making it less procedural and more substantive.

Another reason for advocating a deliberative participatory turn in the post-communist context is the problem of legitimacy which is crucial to democratic stability. Alienated political life and pseudorepresentation undermine democratic legitimacy. As Phillip Green has noticed,

what is nondemocratic about all forms of pseudorepresentative government – whether unitary or federalist, whether based on centralized or fragmented political parties... is that it turns political access and influence into an episodic and occasional or even nonexistent event in the lives of most people.³⁹

The model of deliberative democracy brings the problem of democratic legitimacy to the fore, and it is the question of legitimacy, not participation, that provokes the arguments of its proponents.⁴⁰ Deliberative democracy is a better model than “aggregative” or elitist democracy because it values public deliberation as a method of attaining legitimacy and holding political power to account. In participatory deliberative democracy, legitimacy derives from citizens’ participation, their practice of citizenship. Democratic legitimacy and trust in authority is generated through discursive practices which are themselves a necessary source of justification for political decisions.⁴¹ The institutions’ trustworthiness generates positive attitudes towards them among citizens who are therefore more likely to comply with them.⁴² It is worth exploring whether increased participation in discursive practices in post-communist countries would increase support for democratic principles and institutions and therefore would make them more legitimate. Admittedly, the obvious problem is that the scope and the number of decisions that have to be made in a democratic polity limit the scope of deliberation and thus participation, which is more likely to bring better results at a local or associational level. Another problem, widely discussed by Gutmann and Thompson, is the potential for disagreement concerning policies on controversial moral issues. Here a widespread debate can become polarized without

³⁹ P. Green, *Retrieving Democracy: In Search of Civic Equality*, London: Methuen, 1985, p. 179.

⁴⁰ B. Manin, ‘On Legitimacy and Political Deliberation’, *Political Theory*, 1987, 15 (3), pp. 338-368; J. Cohen, ‘Deliberation and Democratic Legitimacy’; S. Benhabib, ‘Toward a Deliberative Model of Democratic Legitimacy’, in S. Benhabib (ed.), *Democracy and Difference*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996.

⁴¹ This view is based on a concept of a “strong public” as opposed to Habermas’s “weak public” understood as the vehicle of public opinion.

⁴² N. Letki, ‘Investigating the Roots of Civic Morality: Trust, Civic Community, and Institutional Performance’, *Nuffield College Working Paper in Politics*, 2003-WP13; M. E. Warren (ed.), *Democracy and Trust*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

leading to some middle-ground solution or compromise. Despite these difficulties, it can be said that after the period of the communist oppression the model of deliberative democracy seems to be ideal for the countries whose citizens regained freedom to shape the future of their political communities; their voice should be heard especially at different stages of democratization when the institutional framework that affects various spheres of their lives is shaped. This conclusion, which is not obvious in itself, cannot be put forward without first addressing the question of the feasibility of such a development.

The main goal of post-communist countries at the beginning of their political and economic transformations was to create liberal and democratic institutions, such as the division of power, the rule of law, free and fair elections, democratic accountability, freedom of association, free media, and constitutionally guaranteed civil and political rights. This process was not influenced by a participatory concept of democratic politics, and some authors argued that, after the collapse of communism, a mild form of authoritarianism based on a strong executive along with a free-market economy would provide a stability that is necessary for the further implementation of western type liberal-democratic institutions and procedures. For example, John Gray concluded that “post-Communist states should build institutions that constrain democracy rather than to exalt it.”⁴³ Contrary to this view, those ECE countries which became leaders of democratic transformation and consequently members of the EU undertook simultaneous liberalization and democratization, creating western type liberal-democratic institutions and achieving a relatively high level of democratic stability. What Gray might have had in mind while formulating his conclusion was perhaps a concern that too radical a democratic model based on widespread participation of citizens in the decision-making process would not be desirable in the countries, which had not had much experience with democracy and liberal political culture. If so, such standpoint would pose another dilemma for deliberative democrats: are citizens of well-established democracies better prepared and thus more willing to actively participate in various deliberative practices than citizens of post-communist democracies? There is no doubt that consolidated democracy must come first, but what might happen once it has been established?

In their recent book based on the findings of the World Values Surveys, Ronald Inglehart and Christian Welzel provide reasons for the observation that society’s mass values have a strong effect on its subsequent democratic performance; there is

⁴³ J. Gray, ‘Totalitarianism, Civil Society, and the Limits of the Western Model’, in J. Gray, *Post-liberalism: Studies in Political Thought*, New York and London: Routledge, 1993, p. 213.

a casual link between democratic values and democratic institutions.⁴⁴ “Cultural factors shape levels of democracy more strongly than democratic institutions shape culture.”⁴⁵ This would imply that the cultural approach to democratization provides a good explanation for the link between successful democratization and the background social and cultural conditions of a given society. If, however, prodemocratic values are conducive to effective democracy and active participation, and they presuppose successful democratization rather than result from it, the question which needs to be addressed is this: what are the chances of democratic consolidation and the development of flourishing civil societies in those countries where democratic institutions have been introduced despite the lack of democratic culture and socio-economic development? If the sequence suggest by Inglehart and Welzel – socioeconomic modernization, value change, and then democratic institutions – has been distorted, does it mean that the reversal of this cycle would not result in effective democracy in the long term? If participation is strongly associated with human development and abilities to “make decisions and actions based on autonomous choices”⁴⁶, the establishment of liberal-democratic institutions in ECE countries might be enough to provide political and economic stability, but they are not likely to become participatory-deliberative democracies in the near future.

In Hungary and Poland new political party leaders tacitly agreed at the beginning of the democratic transformation that “the politics of participation was only a matter of yesterday.”⁴⁷ Paradoxically, although the road to democracy in these and other post-communist countries was paved by the development of a rich associational life, the dominance of party politics subsequently undermined the role of the public sphere and public discussion in shaping democratic outcomes, and discouraged citizens from taking part in the public debate. The model of democracy that was to be built was democratic elitism, a model that does not require widespread participation and robust civil society for democracy to succeed. The level of participation in both politics and civil society is much lower in post-communist countries than in older democracies and post-authoritarian state.⁴⁸ As a consequence, politics was

⁴⁴ R. Inglehart, C. Welzel, *Modernization, Cultural Change, and Democracy: Human Development Sequence*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 177.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 47.

⁴⁷ A. Arato, *Civil Society, Constitution, and Legitimacy*, Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2000, p. 67.

⁴⁸ According to the World Value Survey 1995–1997, older democracies (such as USA, Australia, Sweden or Switzerland) participation in civil society mean was 2.39, post-authoritarian mean 1.82, and post-communist mean 0.91. See M. Morjé Howard, “The Weakness of Postcommunist Civil Society,” *Journal of Democracy*, 2002, 13 (1), pp. 157–169; A. Smolar,

isolated from societal inputs. ECE democracies suffer from an increasing absence of *demos* or citizens willing to take part in the political process. For example, in Poland, which might be said to have achieved a high level of democratic consolidation, the turnout in the last parliamentary election in September 2005 was 40.57 percent. Commentators observe that many people in ECE are disappointed and disillusioned with the transformation.⁴⁹ Arguably, it is not so much dissatisfaction with the transformation, but rather with the type of democracy that has been introduced in these countries. If, however, we take into consideration the cultural approach to democratization as provided by Inglehart and Welzel, the main reason for low participation in democratic politics in post-communist democracies could well be an insufficient level of pro-democratic, self-expression values (conducive for trust and social capital) in society, which itself might be responsible for the overall disaffection with democratic transformation. 71% of Czechs, 81% of Slovaks, and 81% of Poles do not trust political parties (the highest level of trust for political parties is in Hungary – 29%). Similarly, 82% of Poles, 74% of Slovaks, and 71% of Czechs do not trust their MPs.⁵⁰ If East European citizens do not associate their citizenship with participation, often it is not so much because there are not many opportunities to participate, but because the people's attitudes are influenced by the belief that activity can make little or no difference.

It seems, from the above analysis, that at present the question of the feasibility of a more participatory-deliberative model of democracy in ECE post-communist countries can only be answered in the negative. Participatory-deliberative democracy requires the creation of conditions which allow ordinary citizens to exercise their capacity of critical judgement about questions of great importance to them. What has been absent in former communist countries is a democratic culture and democratic traditions (although some of these countries had some experience with democracy before the communist period), but it can be argued that in the post-communist context they can only be developed through the practice of democracy on many different levels. Yet widespread participation in itself is not going to solve all the problems; more deliberative forms of democracy can be successful in those societies which are not riddled by difference, ethnic divisions, and thus cultural and religious complexity. In a divided society, deliberation can bring the differences to the surface and widen the existing divisions rather than make them narrower.

⁴⁹ 'Civil Society after Communism: From Opposition to Atomization, *Journal of Democracy*, 1996, 7 (1), pp. 24-38.

⁴⁹ J. Curry, 'The Sociological Legacies of Communism', in Z. Barany and I. Volgyes (eds), *The Legacies of Communism in Eastern Europe*, Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press, pp. 55-83.

⁵⁰ CBOS (2004), BS/165/2004.

Democratic deliberation, as I emphasised above, does not appear in an empty space, but in an already existing normative framework. In ECE, however, the situation is a little bit more complicated, for as Ahg rightly notes, “consensus on fundamental values or ‘civic culture’ cannot be a precondition for systematic change, nor even of democratic transition; rather, it is the result of a process.”⁵¹ And although deliberative politics would be desirable in those countries not only after the goals of transformation have been achieved, but also during that process, the pattern of non-participation might prevail in the near future which would hinder such a development.

The main objections to this optimistic reading of the new possibilities for ECE democracies are empirical, but there is also empirical support for the participatory deliberative conception of democracy as being worthwhile. John Dryzek and Leslie Holmes in their empirical study of post-communist democratization identify both republican and participatory democratic discourses in some of the most advanced post-communist democracies (mainly the Czech Republic, Poland, and Slovakia) and they conclude that the republican path in these countries “would seek both formal (state) and informal (public sphere) opportunities for the exercise and development of active citizenship ... Networks of civic engagement are treated as more important than party systems and interest groups.”⁵² This optimistic reading of the course of democratic changes in ECE provides good grounds at least for the discussion about the goals of the transformation and about desirable models of post-communist democracy.

CONCLUSION

This article argues that deliberative democracy not only demands citizens’ participation in various deliberative fora and debates on public issues, but it also demands moral and cognitive competence of citizens, the ability to formulate and change preferences and arguments, and to accept reasons given by others. Proper deliberation also requires that citizens have the disposition to further public over private good.⁵³

⁵¹ A. Agh, ‘Political Culture and System Change in Hungary’, in F. Plasser, A. Pribersky, *Political Culture in East Central Europe*, Aldershot: Avebury, 1996, p. 127.

⁵² J. Dryzek, L. Holmes, *Post-Communist Democratization: Political Discourses across Thirteen Countries*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002, p. 270.

⁵³ On various aspects of citizens’ involvement in democratic politics see S. Verba, ‘Representative Democracy and Democratic Citizens: Philosophical and Empirical Understanding’, *The Tanner Lectures on Human Values* 21, Salt Lake City: The University of Utah Press, 2000, pp. 246–275.

The criteria that authentic deliberation should maintain are extremely high. Yet by arguing in favour of a more participatory model of deliberative democracy I tried to emphasise that active citizenship and participation can have intrinsic value even if they do not bring about agreement and even if people who participate do not have a high cognitive competence, and are not always capable of formulating reasons in a rational way. Active citizenship and deliberation can be seen as the way to revitalize democracy and to restore trust in political institutions both in the Western and Eastern contexts. But without citizens' participation in democratic processes and various fora of public deliberation and opinion formation, none of these can be achieved. The high level of distrust of political parties and members of parliaments in post-communist democracies indicates that neither parliaments nor political parties perform well their role as venues of democratic deliberation. The model of participatory deliberative democracy should result in better accountability of those in government and in a more responsible decision-making process. At the moment, however, the feasibility of such a model in the post-communist context is problematic.