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RATIONALITY AND DELIBERATIVE DEMOCRACY

ABSTRACT: In this paper I will give a short description of deliberative democracy, its advantages over the aggregative model of democracy and its strategies for overcoming the obstacles which the social choice theory puts before the defenders of democracy. I will continue with the argument that the aim of deliberative democracy should not be reaching the consensus or unanimity, but obtaining preference single-peakedness. For, there is a practical impossibility of consensus reaching and the single-peakedness criterion is sufficient for prevention against the “paradoxes of democracy”. Through the analysis of the given explanations of the ways in which deliberation can lead to the realization of single-peakedness, I will make an attempt to defend the position which holds that acquiring single-peakedness, in the impartial conditions of deliberation, is a goal that is as equally unreachable as is reaching of the consensus because of the multidimensionality of the alternative evaluation criterion. However, I will show that even if deliberation does not necessarily lead to a preference single-peakedness, which would prevent Condorcet’s paradox from happening, in accordance with Arrow’s ethical conditions of democratic choice, it nevertheless reveals why these paradoxes are created in the first place, and it is providing us with an insight into how we can redefine the alternatives so that we can obtain a true single-peakedness of our preferences.

KEY WORDS: Rationality, deliberative democracy, social choice theory, preference

What is deliberative democracy?

One of the main and certainly one of the oldest problems of political theory is answering the question: Who should make the decisions in the domain of politics – people or elite¹? If the answer to this question is that elite, namely, experts should be the decision makers in the public domain we are forced to abandon the requirement for the political equality. On the other hand, if the answer is that only people can be the legitimate actor in the political domain, then we are exposed to the objection that “crowd does not know what is best, because it is not the case that every particular individual has enough time for consideration of the problems of politics in order to make a reasoned decision at the elections, which would con-

1 Experts are seen as a particular kind of elite.

tribute to the common good. Deliberative democracy should provide us with the reconciliation between these two conflicting poles, both having intrinsic values; the former insists that decisions which concern the whole of society should be made in a rational and competent way and that they should contribute to the common good, i.e., good governance, while the later insists on the validity of the cornerstone of democracy – political equality.

Deliberative democracy should be the cure for all sicknesses from which other forms of democracies suffer, especially direct democracy. Plato and Hobbes were amongst the first to point out these weaknesses. In the sixth book of *The Republic*, Plato says that democracy is the worst of all possible forms of state organization, it is worse than monarchy and aristocracy, because it favors those who are skilled in winning the elections – demagogues, and not those who are most skilled in the good governance of the state. The reason for this Plato saw in the lack of talent in people needed for the consideration of the difficult political issues. The basis for the inferiority of democracy Hobbes found not in the lack of abilities or capacities of the individuals, but in their general lack of interest for political issues, and in the deficiency of the sense of responsibility, both resulting from the feeling that no particular individual can significantly influence the final outcome of the decision making².

Deliberative democracy adopts virtues of both sides; it includes every citizen in the process of decision making, but under the conditions of organized exchange of information about the alternatives which are the subject of decision making. In that manner, every citizen included in the deliberation process is becoming an expert, and the principle of political equality and the right of every citizen to be a part of public decision making stays intact.

As the representative description of deliberative democracy we can take Michelman's claim that "deliberative politics connotes an argumentative interchange among persons who recognize each other as equal in authority and entitlement to respect, jointly directed by them towards arriving at a reasonable answer to some question of public ordering ... [it] refers to a certain attitude toward social cooperation, namely, that of openness to persuasion by reasons referring to the claims of others as well as one's own. ... [and] a vote, if any vote is taken, represents a pooling of judgments."³ Thus, in accordance with deliberative model of democracy every individual is invited to participate in deliberation, which occurs under the

2 Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Hackett Publishing Company, 1994, chapter XIX (*Levijatan*, Naklada Jesenski i Turk, Zagreb, 2004, chapter XIX, p. 134.)

3 Frank Michelman, "Conceptions of democracy in American Constitutional Argument: The Case of Pornography Regulation," cited according to Gauthier's paper, David Gauthier, „Constituting Democracy“ in: David Copp, Jean Hampton, John E. Roemer (ed.), *The Idea of Democracy*, p. 315. („Konstituisanje demokratije“, *Treći program*, 139-140, 2008, p. 120)

conditions of mutual respect, and as a political procedure it is organized in such a way AS to provide every participant with sufficient information in order to make a judicious decision after taking into account the opinions of other participants. In addition, it had to be borne in mind that deliberative democracy is not trying to solve any of the moral disputes using a complete theory, such as utilitarianism, communitarianism, libertarianism, etc., and exclude all other theories, it as a second-order theory, by being primarily oriented on the reasons citizens give in order to justify their preferences, i.e., on the theories themselves that justify the given preferences⁴. Deliberative model itself is not supplying us with answers to the question how should we choose, but enables us to take into consideration all of the offered reasons for particular choices and to reshape and, perhaps, change our own reasons in the light of new information. This view of deliberative democracy, as the second-order theory, is defended by Amy Gutmann, who in contrast to deliberative democracy posits another second-order theory – aggregative model – according to which the collective will is expressed through the aggregation of the given individual preferences led by a particular rule of aggregation.

Introduction of deliberation into the democratic procedure significantly changes the character of democracy. Those who choose are not choosing from the perspective of disinterested and insufficiently informed observer, the perspective endangering the sole legitimacy of democracy. On the contrary, they are making decisions on the basis of rethinking and reviewing all of the options. In this manner, deliberative form of democracy can eliminate some of the problems existing in the democratic societies. Some of these problems can be defined as “rational ignorance” – why should anyone be interested in the issues of politics, when his voice is only one in the million, “phantom opinions” – individuals frequently pretend to have opinions regarding particular political strategies, when they are only randomly picking out the alternatives, and “the problem of the integrity of social subclasses” – some people already deliberate, in a certain way, in smaller groups, but the members of these groups are usually sharing the same opinions, so no real exchange of ideas and reasons is taking place⁵.

Deliberative democracy and social choice theory

So far we have seen that deliberative democracy can save us from some evils of democracy in general, but it can also, at least its proponents claim, save us from

4 Amy Gutmann and Dennis Thompson, *Why Deliberative Democracy?*, Princeton University Press New Jersey, 2004, p. 13.

5 Fishkin, „Deliberative Democracy: What and Why?“, September 25. 2007. http://www.opendemocracy.net/blog/dliberation/what_and_why, retrieved 03.01.2010.

persistent difficulties discovered in the social choice theory in the second half of the twentieth century. If we put aside the question of the desirability of democracy *per se*, Plato's and Hobbes' objections and conclusions favoring monarchy, and assume that obstacles they identify can be surpassed and that democracy has more advantages than other political models, we are still obliged to answer the question – what is the proper democratic procedure and is it possible to get satisfactory results using voting systems? In democracies we are necessarily faced with individual preferences, with particular choices which have to be transformed into collective preferences, or choices. This suggests that it is of the utmost importance to discover and select the rules of aggregation enabling the clear definition of collective preferences which are not in a collision with rationality and basic democratic principles. However, it is exactly at this point where problems for democratic procedures were born. It was in the eighteenth century that Marquise de Condorcet proved that the cases of pairwise majority elections, with three or more alternatives, create a possibility for majority cycle generation, in other words, the final ordering of the preferences can lack the property of transitivity, which is one of the basic preconditions for the rationality of the given choice. Therefore, the paradox, Condorcet identified, consists in the fact that collective preferences can be cyclic, although individual preferences are not. That is, the majority rule, in some cases, cannot decide the winner, because equal number of voters prefer different alternative to others; for example, voters from the first group prefer x to y , those from the second group prefer y to z , but those from the third group prefer z to x ⁶. Collective preferences ordering is in this case irrational, although each individual ordering was rational. However, Condorcet's paradox is not by itself sufficient to warrant that there *cannot* exist a voting system that can safely lead us to gratifying results every time we employ it. It can be objected that, despite Condorcet's success in proving that majority rule is not an unmistakable guide to collective ordering of preferences which should produce the Condorcet's winner, majority voting system is not the only democratic voting system. Although this objection enables us to hope that there must be at least one possible voting system satisfying the democratic criteria, needed for its legitimization, which at the same time leads to a single social winner, another important political thinker presented us with a logical proof that there is no such system and that there could not be one. Kenneth Arrow formulated a theorem, in the year 1951., by which he proved that there could not exist a voting system which can reliably transform orderings of individual preferences into rational ordering of social preferences, unless it violates at least one of the postulated ethical conditions, and if there are three or more alternatives from which voters are obliged to choose. Proposed ethical criteria are: unrestricted domain, non-imposition, non-dictatorship, Pareto efficiency, and independence of irrelevant alternatives. Without

6 In the given example x , y , and z are representing the given alternatives.

going into the further details and the explication of all consequences of Arrow's theorem, it will be assumed that Arrow proved that it is impossible to construct a fair democratic voting system with an ability to transform orderings of individual preferences into a rational collective ordering of preferences.

Nevertheless, this does not inevitably mean that democracy is "meaningless", as Riker claims⁷; because Arrow's theorem is valid under one condition that can be weakened, but still remain "democratic". It is the unrestricted domain condition, which requires that all preferences and all orderings be allowed. The classical model of deliberative democracy does not weaken this condition explicitly, but in contrast to aggregative models it does not take the orderings of individual preferences as they are found in the society, in formation of the collective choice, but it counts on certain transformation of the given preferences during deliberation. This transformation of preferences can yield the restriction of the domain, and some particular theorists will consider this restriction as the sole purpose of deliberation and they will use it to explain why deliberative democracy turns out to be more successful than aggregative. Scottish economist Duncan Black defined one possible way of restricting the domain of the social choice function, and he called it „preference single-peakedness“⁸.

Therefore, the aim of the deliberative democracy theorists was to show that deliberation can rescue us from the problems which were insoluble for aggregative models, primarily Condorcet's paradox and the results of Arrow's theorem. The question which we have to answer now is how does deliberative democracy save us from these problems which deprive democracy of its sense. First of all, we have to clarify what are the basic assumptions of the deliberative model, namely, what are the assumptions that most of the proponents of deliberative democracy⁹ accept. We can specify these assumptions without presupposing any particular order between them. They are: mutual respect; openness to arguments of others discussion between representatives of the people, which portray the structure of the society, or, ideally, between every member of a society; dedication to learning new information; absence of coercion; and political equality.

We can conclude, from the assumptions listed above, that the procedure of decision making in deliberative model should not infringe the ethical principles of democracy, it only prescribes an exchange of ideas, information, and giving reasons for particular decisions, conducted in the atmosphere of tolerance, and invites to deliberation for which every citizen is capable as a rational person. Moreover, it

7 William H. Riker, *Liberalism Against Populism*, San Francisco, W. H. Freeman, 1982, p. 128.

8 Duncan Black, *The Theory of Committees and Elections*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1958.

9 Some of them are Jon Elster, Jürgen Habermas, David Held, Joshua Cohen, John Rawls, Amy Gutman, John Dryzek, James Fishkin, and Dennis Thompson.

demands that the participants in the deliberation be free, in a negative sense – not to be coerced, and equal, which confirms its legitimacy. The issue regarding the scope of deliberation, namely, the question about who is deliberating, all citizens or only representatives, although important, is not going to be dealt with in this paper. It is important to notice that most of the proponents of deliberative democracy are skeptical about the possibility of deliberative democracy where *all citizens* are supposed to participate in a political discussion. This skepticism arises because of the practical reasons - high prices of deliberative “sessions” organization, lack of time, etc. But in spite this, they still strive towards it and consider it as the ideal¹⁰. Similarly, as there is no consensus regarding the scope of deliberative democracy, there is no unique answer to the question – what should be the end result of deliberation. Certainly, everybody agrees that deliberation should lead to some kind of transformation of preferences, inspired by envisaging the problems from “another angle“, and that these new orderings of individual preferences are the results of greater forethought and that they represent a better basis for formation of the ordering of collective preferences. However, it is not completely clear how will we avoid the difficulties that aggregative models cannot overcome using deliberation as a part of a decision making procedure.

Aims of deliberation - overcoming paradoxes of democracy

The previously posed question, about the possibility of overcoming problems discovered in social choice theory through deliberation, can be answered in at least two ways. Firstly, we can claim that deliberation creates the conditions needed for the reaching of the consensus, and secondly, we can defend a weaker claim that deliberation leads to obtaining the preference single-peakedness¹¹. Jürgen Habermas¹² and Joshua Cohen¹³ believe that rational discourse should be oriented towards consensus reaching. According to these authors, participation in political debates has inner tendency to produce such an effect, because participants in the debate become more sensitive towards common interest issues. This kind of sensitivity,

10 Cohen, Gutmann, Habermas, etc.

11 Besides these two possible goals of deliberative decision making, it is, also, possible to take yet another result as an aim of deliberation. Namely, that it should lead us to cooperation and compromise. In this paper I will consider only consensus and single-peakedness reaching, because of their prevalent dominance in the literature. See James Bohman, William Rehg (ed.), *Deliberative Democracy*, The MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1997, p. xviii

12 Juergen Habermas, “Popular Sovereignty as Procedure”, in *Deliberative Democracy*, pp. 35-67.

13 Joshua Cohen, “Deliberation and Democratic Legitimacy”, in *Deliberative Democracy*, pp. 67-93.

together with temporary abandonment of personal interests, leads a way to mutual *agreement* about issues which concern everyone. Cohen goes even further and claims that reaching of the consensus is not only the aim of deliberation, but he believes that “outcomes are democratically legitimate if and only if they could be the object of a free and reasoned agreement among equals”¹⁴, that is, that a source of political legitimacy is precisely the existence of consensus. Cohen’s and Habermas’ opinion that deliberation leads to consensus is shared by John Elster, who explicitly claims that in a deliberative democracy there is no place for aggregative mechanisms, because deliberation leads to unanimity or essential agreement, and in that way it secures its independence from them¹⁵.

If we take this course, we are facing at least two problems. We have to give reasons for the assumption that consensus is desirable, and to show that it is realizable. Namely, we have to ask ourselves are we going to lose the existing pluralism of social values if we endorse a consensus as a goal of deliberation, and is this possible loss desirable or undesirable in itself. Whichever way we decide to answer this question, my opinion is that it is better to choose a goal that would not oblige us to make such a decision in advance, particularly because today we live in vastly multicultural societies. On the other hand, inability to reach a consensus through short-termed discussions is a fact recognized by both proponents and adversaries of the claim that deliberation should lead to unanimity; they differ only in the opinion whether the unanimity can be accomplished in the future, after extensive and long-termed political deliberation which would include all citizens. Long-termed deliberation would also imply certain changes in education in order to make citizens accustomed to decision making in accordance with principles of mutual respect, dedication to deliberation and consideration of reasons provided by other participants. Gerald Postema’s opinion is that agreement between members of a community should be “an endless project in which practical reason acts”¹⁶ and that “the public debate has to remain open until common conviction is reached”¹⁷. However, if deliberation, carried out in a determinate period of time, regarding particular political strategies, does not lead us to the consensus, but only steers us in its direction as a regulative principle, then we have to employ standard voting procedures, that we left behind at the beginning, in order to make some temporary

14 Ibid., p. 73.

15 Jon Elster, “The Market and the Forum”, in J. Elster and A. Hylland (ed.), *Foundations of Social Choice Theory*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1986, p. 112.

16 Gerald J. Postema, “Public Practical Reason: Political Practice”, in Ian Shapiro and Judith Wagner DeCrew (ed.) *Nomos XXXVII: Theory and Practice*, New York, New York University Press, 1995, p. 356., cited according to Gerald F. Gaus, “Reasons, Justification, and Consensus: Why Democracy Can’t Have It All”, in *Deliberative Democracy*, p. 206.

17 Ibid., p. 359.

decisions until we acquire a true consensus. Such a view of deliberative democracy is fundamentally idealistic. According to this view the goal of deliberation is a substantial agreement reached through the process of deliberation of perfectly rational subjects in ideal conditions. This kind of deliberative procedure would be largely dependant on different decision making systems, and it is not quite clear in what way it would be able to solve problems, mentioned above, when it comes to making political decisions. In the “best case“ scenario, it could serve as an ideal, regulating creation of political institutions and processes. Because of the aforementioned reasons, potential destruction of pluralistic values, dubitable possibility of its realization, I consider that, in the case where we already have an alternative aim of deliberative democracy, which does not succumb to these objections, and which obviates the results Condorcet and Arrow attained, we should choose this other goal as a legitimate aim of deliberation.

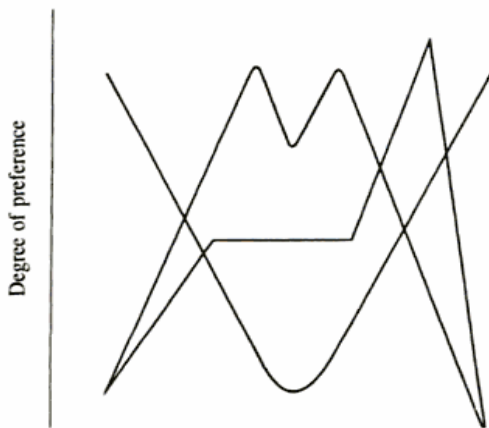
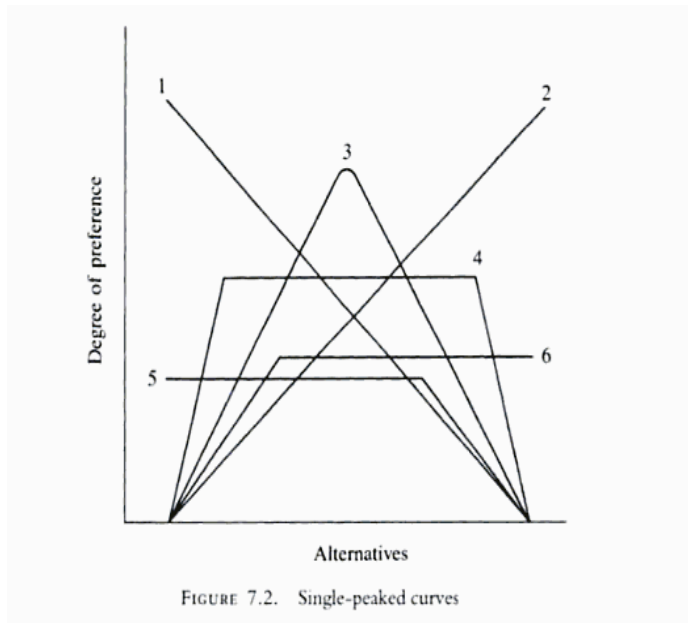
Preference single-peakedness and how it is attained

An alternative goal of deliberation¹⁸, satisfying all preconditions, is preference single-peakedness. A combination of preferences is single-peaked for particular individuals when there is an ordering of alternatives, represented on the left to right oriented line, such that every individual 1) has an alternative he prefers the most comparing to others and 2) all other preferences are ordered in such a way that less preferred alternatives are ordered around the favorite in accordance with the degree of preferring. Thus, orderings of individual's preferences are single-peaked in a relation to the same structural dimension (geometrical linear representation of alternatives) if they form a continuum of preferences which has only one peak in the geometrical model representing all alternatives and a degree of the preference of these alternatives.

In so far as the orderings of individuals are single-peaked, collective ordering of preferences cannot be intransitive, and Condorcet's paradox is evaded¹⁹. This satisfies the third and the last condition, alongside reflexivity and completeness, and that guarantees the rationality of the given choice. Still, we have to make sure that Arrow's ethical conditions are satisfied as well. Arrow's theorem presupposes

18 Deliberative procedure is taken here as a finite, time determined procedure. The paradigmatic example would be the procedure Fishkin named „deliberative polling“, which consists in several days of information sharing and debating among the members of the selected group of individuals (representing the nation, and in average consisting of 200 individuals).

19 See Duncan Black, “On the Rationale of Group Decision-making”, *Journal of Political Economy* 56, 1948, pp. 23–34.



an unrestricted domain, meaning that orderings of individual preferences cannot be restricted by any standards. However, if the aim of deliberation is transformation of preferences resulting in a preference single-peakedness it is clear that the domain upon which the evaluation of the “winner“ is going to be conducted is not going to be unrestricted. The domain will be limited, but not in a way that forbids certain preferences, i.e., no choices will be imposed, the limitation will consist in restrict-

ing preference orderings to a single structuring dimension. Other conditions should be completely satisfied, if we take into consideration that the material provided for the participants in deliberation was gathered in a most objective way, so that “imposing“ of opinions is eliminated. Hence, the preference single-peakedness requirement does not demand the agreement in respect of preferences themselves; it allows every preference inasmuch as their ordering is relative to the same structuring dimension. Single-peakedness is sufficient to eliminate majority cycles because it guarantees transitivity of the collective preference ordering. The alternative, which is preferred by a median “voter“ is a Condorcet’s winner according to Black’s theorem of median voter.

In so far, it seems that single-peakedness is an ideal goal of deliberation, it is coherent with conditions for democratic procedures, it excludes the possibility of majority cycles, it does not oblige us to abandon the plurality of values, etc., there is only one question remaining – how are we supposed to accomplish single-peakedness and is it even possible to realize complete single-peakedness. Fishkin et al.²⁰ suggest two explanations of how deliberation leads to single-peakedness. First explanation states that participants in the deliberation accept the same conceptual framework. The agreement is made on the semantic plane, and this leads to the acceptance of the same alternative ordering (structural dimension). Hence, deliberators acquire an agreement on the “meta level“, that is, the structure of their preferences is the same, although their preferences are different, and that is because there is a conceptual agreement which did not exist before the deliberation. After the discussion deliberators conceptualize their choices in a common semantic dimension. Through conversation, they give reasons for their own choices among offered alternatives, and through consideration participants in the deliberation come to a common conceptual framework and reach an agreement regarding the structural ordering of the alternatives. When we agree on that, for instance, that a social-democratic party is more similar to a communist party than to a fascist political party, then we are in a position to form a common structural dimension.

The other way, in which deliberation can lead to single-peakedness, is not through the meta-agreement, but through the acceptance of the given preference orderings. Given orderings could be provided by political elites with whom we identify. And if those profiles of preference orderings of political elites are single-peaked (probably because of the meta-agreement between them), then the profiles of public preferences will be single-peaked as well. However, acquiring single-peakedness in this manner is normatively less valued and it requires a far less deliberation and learning, and it should be seen as a result of mere signal picking.

20 Christian List, Robert C. Luskin, James S. Fishkin and Iain McLean, “Deliberation, Single-Peakedness, and the Possibility of Meaningful Democracy: Evidence from Deliberative Polls”, <http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/20069/> p. 9

How is meta-agreement achieved?

Proponents of deliberative democracy think that sufficient amount of information in the conditions of mutual respect will lead us to the agreement on the conceptual framework, enabling us to acquire single-peakedness. Empirical data gathered by “deliberative polls” backs up the claim that it is the amount of information participants have that advances single-peakedness²¹. Nevertheless, results of “deliberative polling” show that this increase in single-peakedness is not always present and that it does not occur in the same measure depending on the situation and the issues that are taken into consideration²². One of the main results confirmed by “deliberative polling” is that the increase of single-peakedness is lesser when deliberation is conducted on the issues better known to public. Simple answer to the question why is this happening would be that, not strictly speaking, certain deliberation already took place before the “deliberative polling”. However, this answer is not providing us with an explanation of the way in which we are acquiring the same structural dimension, enabling single-peakedness, and is this adoption of the single conceptual framework, as a precondition for single-peakedness, possible in every situation. Namely, it is not at all certain that all of the issues of public importance are susceptible to this kind of conceptual framing. So, we have defined the goal of deliberation as attaining the preference single-peakedness, and as the explanation of means for obtaining this goal we assumed the acceptance of a single conceptual framework. But it is still abstruse how this semantic harmonization happens. It is taken for granted that the discussion is taking place in the circumstances of mutual respect and that reasons given by others are necessarily taken into account, and that the result should be represented in the common structural dimension. But how can we define a common structural dimension according to which we are going to compare Bounty (b), Twix (t), Mars (m) and Snickers (s)? We can form different orderings according to different criteria, for instance, peanut content, size, sugar or coconut content. If the size is the criterion that leads our decision, then we will probably get the following structural dimension: t s m b, in that way a person counting every calorie because she is dieting is going to compare them b P m P s P t, a person with a “sweet tooth” is going to compare them t P s P m P b, while those preferring a regular amount of sugary treats is going to compare them s P m P t P b. Preference profiles which we got using this criterion are single-peaked in relation to

21 Christian List, Robert C. Luskin, James S. Fishkin and Iain McLean, “Deliberation, Single-Peakedness, and the Possibility of Meaningful Democracy: Evidence from Deliberative Polls”, <http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/20069/>, ff. 14, tables 3 and 4, pp. 30-31.

22 Ibid. Issues regarding the constitutional referendum in Australia and British monarchy, pp. 34-36.

the structure $t s m b$. However, if we take the content of peanuts as a criterion of evaluation, preference profiles are going to be single-peaked in relation to some other structure, for instance, $s m t b$, and profiles formed regarding this criterion are not going to be single-peaked with profiles formed in accordance with some other criterion, and they will not have the same structural dimension. For different criteria we will get different structural dimensions. In order to achieve single-peakedness we have to compare alternatives using only one criterion. Hence, if we want to have rational collective ordering of preferences, then we have to evaluate preferences in the same way, but where is the *conceptual* agreement? Conceptual agreement and adopting of single evaluation criterion seem to be different things. In the previous example we would not say that disagreement occurred due to different conceptual frameworks. It is indubitable that sometimes different structural dimensions result from “bad” comparison of the options, i.e., such a comparison which is not based on good reasons, namely, one that does not rely on a clear and determinate evaluation criterion. In those cases, discussion would lead us to adopt a single conceptual framework, in a sense that, as rational subjects, we would accept the reasons in favor of one particular ordering, but under the condition that only one evaluation criterion is of the utmost and indisputable importance. However, in the cases where there is a greater number of equally valid evaluation criteria, agreement concerning structural dimension cannot result from the conceptual agreement alone.

Disagreement and possible acceptance of differing structural dimensions, described above, concerned a relation to an importantly apolitical choice. There is no social importance in choosing between different chocolate products. Still, when it comes to choices of public importance similar disagreement will surely occur, although to a lesser extent, because circumstances under which we are evaluating given alternatives are already well known. In that respect, the choice between different political parties will be dependent, in great measure, on already existing structural dimension where political parties are compared according to well known division on left, right and central political options. And in regard to this familiar ordering and suitable determination of the position of the particular party in this linear ordering, the choice will be ordered in such a way that a person who maximally prefers the extreme left position, in an ideal case, will prefer moderate left party less, and extreme right least. This case, also, allows a possibility of non-single-peaked orderings of individual preferences, at least for two reasons concerning evaluation criteria, and not with respect to poor judgment. It is possible that there is no general conformity on the issue of the exact position of a particular party in the one-dimensional political spectrum, in other words, it is quite possible that certain political party can be left-oriented in regard to one important issue, but right-oriented in regard to another, so that this party cannot be uniquely assigned to

any of the political poles. Some would position it more to the left, using a particular evaluation criterion and thinking that the issue on which this party is taking a left-oriented stand is more important than the one on which it is taking a conservative position. The second possibility, introducing non-single-peakedness into preference orderings, would be the evaluation of the political parties and their representatives on the basis of the additional criteria, for instance, on the grounds of behavior, previous scandals, etc., besides the criterion which is solely concerned with the character of the party's political ideology. Thus we have isolated one of the central causes of non-single-peakedness, besides the unreasonable judgment, as plurality of the alternative evaluation criteria and now the question arises - how do we decide which criterion to employ and what governs this decision?

Uniqueness of the alternative evaluation criterion

Evaluation criteria should be seen as reasons deliberators give for their decisions. In that respect, a person maximally preferring Twix, as the reason for his choice will name its size. On the other hand, a person preferring Bounty the most will point out the coconut contents in his defense. This means that during the discussion different reasons, that is, evaluation criteria will be brought to the fore. Thus, single-peakedness can be reached in two ways. One way is to accept one particular criterion as *the only* criterion, and that will guarantee the creation of the common conceptual framework. The second way of attaining the same result is to divide the originally given alternatives in such a way as to create different groups of alternatives which could be evaluated in accordance with a single clearly defined criterion.

The first of these strategies consists in asking us to choose a unique criterion, which creates a problem of how is this choice to be made, which procedure we should employ to pick out the best criterion. This potentially leads us to a regress, which is not necessarily unstoppable, but which can take us back as far as to the different conceptions of good itself, and jeopardize the very idea of deliberative democracy as the procedure not obliging us to any particular ethical theory. Also, a unique criterion strategy creates an inconsistency in the theory of deliberative democracy, because although it was noticed that the formation of the consensus is unattainable on the first level, while choosing from the given alternatives, consensus is necessary on the second level, when we are selecting a unique evaluation criterion in order to achieve single-peakedness. It can be objected that disagreements on the higher levels in the hierarchy are much rarer, but we have to notice, also, that in many issues, especially in those with little public exposure, there is a true disagreement resting on differently valued criteria. Empirical research confirms this, and show that in the cases where deliberators were deciding on, for

instance, energy production strategies (and public is mainly unfamiliar with issues concerning energy generation), non-single-peakedness of preferences was extremely high, and although it was decreased through deliberation, it was still predominant among individual preferences. The assumption, defended in this paper, is that the initial non-single-peakedness is a result of multitude of evaluation criteria which decreases through deliberation, but never reaches only one universally accepted criterion. This result should not surprise us if we take into consideration that we have already discarded consensus reaching as an option on the first level decision making. From that perspective it is rational to assume that attaining a consensus on the higher level, namely, in cases of deciding on evaluation criteria, will be equally unachievable, and that for this reason reaching of single-peakedness must be an ideal in the same sense as unanimity is on the level of choosing between given alternatives (we can only strive towards it, but never completely fulfill it). On the other hand, empirical data show that in the cases where public decides on matters largely known to everyone, approaching to single-peakedness is very little, while the initial single-peakedness is much higher compared to the one regarding the lesser familiar issues. The hypothesis, which I would like to defend in this paper, is that the very modest success of deliberation in these cases is the result of different criteria which the minority still values more than those offered by the majority (it is assumed that this is the criterion of the majority because single-peakedness exists in the larger subset of the deliberators). The justification for this claim is provided by the fact that it would be implausible to suppose that it is only the conceptual disagreement that prevails in this group. Because if this were the case single-peakedness would increase in these cases equally as in those where familiarity with the subject matter of deliberation is low, in addition high familiarity with the topics of deliberation implies clear framing of the issues considered. Also, the fact that the “leftover amount” of non-single-peakedness is persevering in nature is in favor of this thesis, because it points out that the structural dimension, which resists the transformation through deliberation, is the result of the values which certain individuals do not want to abandon, and which most probably constitute different evaluation criteria.

Now we can offer a new and revised goal of deliberation, in the light of the objections considered above, as an illumination and explication of the criteria individuals use in the evaluation of the alternatives. Bringing to light of the criteria is progressing in the process of the reason-giving for our decisions, and newly discovered criteria can be used in order to reformulate initial alternatives in way that will enable achieving true single-peakedness. Thus, the mistake that the aggregative model was making is taking the individual's preferences as given, and a mistake that deliberative model can undo is taking alternatives as given and unchangeable. Analysis of the results gathered by “deliberative polling” can help us

realize why, in the first place, non-single-peakedness is occurring and why cyclic majorities are created. Disagreement and divergence are consequences of different preferences on the higher level, which create different structural dimensions in boundaries of different groups. As a way out of this difficulty we can suggest the partition of alternatives, namely, to vote on alternatives defined in such a manner which will include explicit indication of the evaluation criteria. For instance, if we want to decide which energy resource should be predominant in power-plants and heating-plants, and offered alternatives are coal, gas and nuclear energy, preference orderings could be divided into three groups: those who consider that low price is the evaluation criterion we should adopt and who compare these options in the following way: coal P nuclear energy P gas, orderings of the pessimistically oriented Greens which take the risk of nuclear catastrophe into consideration: gas P coal P nuclear energy, and orderings of optimistic greens with the opinion that this risk is justified in the light of the benefits we have from the nuclear energy which is cheap and minimally polluting: nuclear energy P gas P coal²³. Here we have a conflict between, at least, two dimensions in which alternatives are evaluated and the possibility for cyclic majorities arises. First of them emphasizes the importance of the balance between the price and environmental suitability, and the second is bringing to the fore the relation between predictable, but greater, and unpredictable, but probably lesser, pollution. In this case “elections“ can be divided so that citizens would not be asked which type of power-plants do they prefer, but which type of power-plants do they prefer with respect to the technology used, and what kind of power-plants do they prefer with respect to the efficiency and environmental safety.

But what are we really accomplishing with this solution? Certainly we are going to get our Condorcet’s winner for each particular voting, thanks to the unique structural dimensions created by the defined criteria (technological advancement, consumption, pollution – in cases of energy systems), but we are still short of a winner when we take all the criteria into consideration.

Conclusion

So far it was shown that attaining single-peakedness is almost equally difficult to achieve through deliberation as is acquiring of a consensus, primarily because single-peakedness itself, in many cases, depends on the existence of a consensus on a higher level of evaluation. Nevertheless, deliberation can help us in discovering

23 See David Miller, „Deliberative Democracy and Social Choice“, in *Debating Deliberative Democracy*, James S. Fishkin and Peter Laslett, Blackwell Publishing Ltd, Oxford, 2003, p. 192.

and explicating different evaluation criteria and in the redefinition of the initially offered alternatives in accordance with them, although this approach leaves the question of the method for selection of the unique winner open. We can now accept as a revised goal of deliberation either the increase of the single-peakedness, progressing by the endorsement of the common evaluation criterion (there will be no consensus regarding this particular criterion, but only approximation), promoted with the conceptual framing, or in the cases of an extreme non-single-peakedness (after the deliberation) redefining of the alternatives with the help of clearly defined evaluation criteria, determined in the process of deliberation. If we take this into account, a question still remains how does deliberation help us in cases where high degree of single-peakedness is already present, and those are the cases of the greatest political importance, namely, this property pertains to „old“ political issues. When a society is deciding on matters of great political importance, A single structural dimension is already accepted by a large number of deliberators, and further deliberation does not affect the approximation to single-peakedness. In that case it would be *ad hoc* to redefine the alternatives, as significant agreement in respect to structural dimension already exists.

This threatens the sole meaning of deliberation and its efficiency. Deliberation considerably helps when new, socially important, issues enter the public scene, like different strategies regarding new technologies and scientific discoveries, but when we are deliberating about issues which are present in the public life in the long run, and those are the matters deserving our greatest attention, its effects are negligible; and that was confirmed in „deliberative polls“. In that sense, deliberative democracy fails us when we need it most. It limits itself to, just slight, increase of single-peakedness - which only decreases the probability of the cyclic majorities forming, but it does not eliminate it - and better defining of the alternatives offered to citizens when they are deciding on relatively new and unfamiliar social problems.

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Rationality and Deliberative Democracy

(Apstrakt)

In this paper I will give a short description of deliberative democracy, its advantages over the aggregative model of democracy and its strategies for overcoming the obstacles which the social choice theory puts before the defenders of democracy. I will continue with the argument that the aim of deliberative democracy should not be reaching the consensus or unanimity, but obtaining preference single-peakedness. For, there is a practical impossibility of consensus reaching and the single-peakedness criterion is sufficient for prevention against the "paradoxes of democracy". Through the analysis of the given explanations of the ways in which deliberation can lead to the realization of single-peakedness, I will make an attempt to defend the position which holds that acquiring single-peakedness, in the impartial

conditions of deliberation, is a goal that is as equally unreachable as is reaching of the consensus because of the multidimensionality of the alternative evaluation criterion. However, I will show that even if deliberation does not necessarily lead to a preference single-peakedness, which would prevent Condorcet's paradox from happening, in accordance with Arrow's ethical conditions of democratic choice, it nevertheless reveals why these paradoxes are created in the first place, and it is providing us with an insight into how we can redefine the alternatives so that we can obtain a true single-peakedness of our preferences.

KEY WORDS: Rationality, deliberative democracy, social choice theory, preference