

## Introduction

This volume comprises some of the papers that were presented at the workshop "The Viability and Desirability of Global Democracy" which is the second workshop organized within the research project "Democracy Unbound". The event took place in Paris 24-26 April 2006, and was hosted by Centre de Recherche Sens, Éthique, Société (CERSES). CERSES is a branch of Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS) and is located at Université René Descartes, Paris 5. Two of the researchers at CERSES (Marc Fleurbaey and Bernard Reber) participated in the workshop. In this short introduction, I shall indicate the content of the papers in the volume.

A central question in democratic theory, and a question that has a special bearing on supranational democracy, is the question of how to constitute the *demos*. Who are eligible to take part in which decision-making processes? For example, what is the relevant constituency for a democratic solution to the conflict in Northern-Ireland? Should a treaty be approved by the citizens (or their representatives) of Northern Ireland alone or should it also involve those of the United Kingdom and the Irish Republic as well? Presumably, the present solution, with the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland on the one side, and the Republic of Ireland on the other, could be "democratically" supported by a referendum in Northern Ireland or in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. It is the latter entity that an old-style Unionist considers the relevant domain for a democratic process. Yet, such a referendum would not impress an Irish nationalist who would consider these boundaries arbitrary and illegitimate, nothing more than a kind of international gerrymandering. Still, both the Unionist and the Irish nationalist could be dedicated democrats.

This problem has received attention from several of the researchers within the project right from the start, and is addressed by two papers in the present volume, Lars Bergström's "Democracy and political boundaries" and Bob Goodin's "Enfranchising All Affected Interests". It has been claimed by political scientists, e.g. by Robert Dahl and F. G. Whelan, that democratic theory cannot solve the problem of determining the boundaries of the collectivities that should govern themselves by democratic methods. Bergström argues that this claim is mistaken. His argument uses distinctions between democratic theory and democratic methods, and between decision problems and normative problems. He then

considers the relevance of the so-called “all-affected principle” and the possible conflict between democracy and efficiency. The all-affected principle is discussed also by Bob Goodin. Goodin explores two different interpretations of this principle and argues that, under each of these interpretations, the principle faces difficult problems.

Girts Dimdins and Henry Montgomery represent the psychologists that are tied to the project. In their paper “Effects of framing on perceptions of economic freedom, economic equality, and social justice”, they present the results of a study whose aim was to examine peoples’ perceptions of the economic dimension of the dilemma between individual freedom and collective equality in society. Their previous research within project had suggested that the economic aspect—rather than political freedom and equality—elicit the strongest differences in people’s opinions. A tax reform proposed by a number of conservative parties in Sweden served as a background of the study. The proposed reform was aimed at improving the state budget by increasing the incentives for working and decreasing the incentives of receiving social benefits from the state.

Seventy-two Stockholm University undergraduates participated in the study. Each participant read descriptions of several possible tax plans in an imaginary society. When presenting the plans, Dimdins and Montgomery manipulated several factors. First, the plans were formulated in a way that the tax reform would lead either to increase of income for working people (reward), or a decrease of income for those receiving benefits for the state (penalty). Second, the plans would either affect everyone (meritocratic), or would be aimed at benefiting the low-income groups in society (egalitarian). In addition, the plans were presented either as a change to an existing tax system, or as a new tax system to be introduced. The difference in tax size between workers and social benefit receivers was constant (in favor of workers) in all formulations. The participants evaluated the tax plans according to three criteria—how much each plan would contribute to social justice, to economic freedom, and to economic equality in the society.

The wording of the tax plans mattered most for evaluations of equality; these evaluations also elicited strongest differences between liberal and conservative respondents. The wording mattered least for evaluations of social justice, and had moderate effects on evaluations of freedom. The results showed that different factors influenced judgments of economic freedom and equality. For example, whether plans were worded as reward or penalty had a stronger

influence on evaluations of freedom than on evaluations of equality. On the other hand, meritocratic vs. egalitarian formulation had a much stronger effect on evaluations of equality than on evaluations of freedom. The results show that, although freedom and equality are often depicted as opposing ends of the same continuum, people think about different things when evaluating—at least in economic terms—these two concepts. This, in turn, suggests that by careful framing of social issues it may be possible to avoid juxtaposition of values of freedom and democracy, and to reduce controversy in society.

Marc Fleurbaey is an economist with interests that border to philosophy. In his paper “Democracy as a Public Good”, he argues that democracy is systematically underprovided, due to its public good features. Public goods are underprovided when their provision is left to voluntary contributions, because individuals, if they are sufficiently selfish, ignore the positive impact of their contributions on the others and therefore compare their private contribution to their personal benefit whereas efficiency requires taking account of the social benefits of their contribution as well. Democracy, however, is not a simple consumption good and therefore cannot be simply understood in the standard terms of public good analysis. But it does have some of the features of public goods, according to Fleurbaey, which is important to acknowledge if one wants to strengthen and increase the scope of democracy in a society. In the context of the EU, which according to many commentators suffers from a “democratic deficit”, explorations of this kind are obviously crucial.

Anna Petré is employed within the project as a graduate student of philosophy. In her paper, “On Proportionality as a Democratic Ideal in Political Decision-making” she explores the version of the all-affected principle that says that the people for whom there is more at stake in the case of a particular decision should also have more influence over it. Petré argues that this idea, plausible as it may seem, is problematic for two reasons. First, it presupposes that the alternatives to the decision in question are already determined. Second, it presupposes a generally accepted conception of relevant interests. Both these presuppositions are, according to Petré, questionable.

Technological innovations are key issues in politics and economics. The political decision-makers’ need for expert advice – decision-makers who are not able to understand and anticipate all aspects of these complex questions – is at the genesis of so called Technological Assessment (TA), which is the focus of Bernard Reber’s paper “From Expert Advice to

Participatory Approaches”. Reber points out that the dialogue is not an easy one: every technology, like the two-faced Janus, has two sides. Innovations carry with them risks as well as advantages. In the extreme, “meliorism” is in competition with responsibility: to put it in terms of the opposition between Ernst Bloch and Hans Jonas, doing ‘better’ technologically may also incur grave costs and “rampant apocalypticism”. In certain cases, like GM foods or brain sciences, the scientists are not in a position to produce robust evidence and to declare a given innovation innocuous, contrary to the hopes of politicians or other stakeholders. Are politicians then condemned to take “strong decisions on the basis of weak certainties”, given that they are accountable for public welfare and must safeguard the common good?

TA research – principally in the US and in Europe – has for thirty years tried to make these choices less arbitrary, better informed and more clearly justified. The need for advice is driven not only by the so-called ‘pure technological’ questions (existing largely in the realm of fiction), but most often by socio-technological aspects of innovations. Reber explains that TA can be many different things, from scientific advice till Participatory Technological Assessment (PTA), matching “facts” and “values” in contexts of uncertainty. These “socio-political” innovations – implemented in the complexity of European technologies and societies – constitute rare occasions to confront directly philosophical questions like the interrelations of fact and value, issues of pluralism in both political and moral philosophy, as well as questions concerning the proper role of the precautionary principle (PP) in risk analysis. In his paper, Reber starts by looking at Participatory Technological Assessment (PTA)- mainly in Europe. Secondly, he describes briefly some procedures and criteria for evaluating PTA thus conceived. Thirdly, he discusses roles and impacts of TA (completing the article of R.E. Goodin and J.S. Dryzek, 2005). In conclusion, he considers anew two further questions: the relationship of facts and values in TA (or PTA) procedures, and the articulation between ethics and TA (or PTA) and the precautionary principle in risk assessment.

The aim of May Thorseth’s paper “Worldwide deliberation and public use of reason online” is threefold: (i) to trace the idea of deliberation back in the history of philosophy and establish the link to the Kantian concept of public reason; (ii) to pave the way for rhetoric as a constituent part of public deliberation; (iii) to undertake an applied ethical approach to worldwide deliberation online. The two former aims are treated in part one of the paper, whereas the applied analysis is undertaken in part two. I want to show how the fundamental

philosophical thoughts in political and moral philosophy are challenged and need to be revised in the light of deliberation in modern media. Another important task is to demonstrate in what ways the Internet as a new and powerful venue for deliberation both challenge the old theories of public deliberation, and also points in the direction of certain revisions of our basic ideas about deliberation.

Ola Zetterquist's article "International Courts and Supra Statal Democracy - Part of the Problem or the Solution?" is concerned with the questions of the role of law and international courts in the new legal order that has emerged after World War II, particularly in Europe. The aim is to ascertain which notions of democracy will be reconcilable with the new international institutional and legal system and to assess the role of an international court (such as the ECJ or the ECHR), and whether they form part of the problem or the solution of supra-statal democracy. The world has seen a tremendous development both in terms of international regulation, often assuming the form of international legislation, and international institutions, among them courts of justice. The emergence of a new body of international rules and institutions that directly affect individuals in different states has raised the question of whether this development is compatible with a democratic system of government and to which extent democracy can and should be exercised within these new organizations. The question is whether we can divorce the concept of state, democracy and rule of law or whether they are intrinsically and indivisibly linked one to another.

The answer to these questions depends on what purpose one ascribes to democracy. Two main competing views can be found. First, democracy may be seen as primarily about political will-formation and execution whereby the will of the sovereign people is articulated. This view of democracy may be called "popular sovereignty". Secondly, democracy may be seen as the most efficient way to secure the moral rights and autonomy of individuals against oppression of a despot or a minority since the power of the governors depends on the approval of the majority of the governed. This view of democracy may be termed "constitutionalism". The two theories have clear institutional implications (particularly concerning the role of the courts) and two different notions of the character of the legal order. The article investigates the role of the state and the legal order in these two theories and ascertains to what extent these are compatible with the idea of a supra-statal democracy based on legislative measures and adjudicated by international courts. It is argued that the theory of constitutionalism is more readily compatible with a constitutional order that is not synonymous with that of the

state whereas the theory of popular sovereignty will call for either new state-formations of previous states or a re-patriation of power from international institutions to the states.

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The articles in his volume, as in the former one, are *preprints*. This means that they may be revised and published elsewhere. For this reason, the authors welcome comments and objections (contact information can be found through the project's web site). In preparing this volume, I have received important help from Karin Enflo and Marcus Linnér. Special thanks are also due to Marc Fleurbaey and Bernard Reber at CERSES, who provided many different kinds of assistance during the workshop and who arranged so that we could use the facilities at Université René Descartes, Paris 5. Finally, I gratefully acknowledge the generous support from the Swedish Research Council.

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