RATIONALITY, VALUES, AND VOTING:
DELIBERATIVE DEMOCRACY AND DELIBERATIVE EDUCATION

ABSTRACT: This paper has four parts. In the first, I discuss criteria for determining whether outcomes of individual and social choice are relevant. I examine the criteria listed in Arrow’s theorem and how they pertain to Arrow’s conclusion that there are no rational outcomes of social choice. In the second part, I discuss values that democratic institutions ought to embody. I try to show that the procedural system of voting does not always embody such values. I then examine differences between procedural and deliberative democracy, the latter being proposed as a potential resolution for the problem of irrationality of social choice. As empirical research shows, however, the level of deliberation is still fairly low. Because the success of deliberative democracy lies in its efficient implementation, in the fourth part of the paper I argue that the best route toward implementing it is not in discussing how deliberative process ought to work, but in developing deliberative education programme.

KEYWORDS: Rationality, preferences, social choice, democracy, deliberation, deliberative education, voting.

1. Introduction

In this paper, I first examine the criteria for rationality of individual and social choice. I start by listing basic requirements for rational preference ordering on an individual level: asymmetry, completeness and transitivity. I move on to outlining the rationality criteria for social choice found in Arrow’s impossibility theorem. As Arrow proved, there is no order of preferences that satisfies all of the, arguably fairly lax, criteria. In other words, it turned out that, worryingly, no procedural aggregation of votes can yield a rational outcome. However, this result hinges on preferences being viewed as fixed. I thus describe the difference between deliberative and aggregative view of preferences and, consequently, deliberative and procedural (liberal) democracy. Because the former is the most commonly proposed candidate to resolve the irrationality problem of the latter, viewing preference ordering as flexible (changeable), it is important to see just how the deliberative proposal attempts to achieve a solution. To this end, I discuss values we expect to be embodied by democratic institutions in general and the voting institution in particular. As I will try to show, there are numerous issues surrounding the implementation of deliberative institutions – how many people should participate in deliberation, how should their decisions be viewed, how difficult is it to introduce deliberation into mass societies, and many more. The goal of this paper is to show that in order to implement deliberation properly, we first must try to formulate a detailed deliberative education programme and only then work out the details of how deliberation ought to function. Furthermore, both lines of inquiry need to be undertaken only in light of extensive empirical research, due to the predominantly pragmatic nature of deliberative democracy – the nature that stems from the need to solve the problem of irrationality of social choice.
2. Rationality of Individual and Social Choices

In order to properly assess merits or demerits of an act, that act must be rational. At the most general level, our acts – our individual choices – have to satisfy several basic conditions for rationality. If, in some situation, I am faced with three possible alternatives x, y and z, and I choose x over the other two, I will put it at the top of my preference list. Let’s say I can further decide between two losing alternatives. To order the three as x, y, z means that I prefer x to y and y to z (xP y and yPz). However, preference is not the only relation that can exist between options. For example, I could also be indifferent with respect to two options, so that xPy and xPz, but yIz. That said, we can now state the rationality conditions:

1) Asymmetry – If xPy, then it is not rational to choose y (yPx).

2) Completeness – Each alternative must be in some relation to every other on the list, be it preference or indifference.

3) Transitivity – If xPy and yPz, then xPz.

We will be rational only if our choices satisfy all three conditions. This is the case, however, only for individual lists considered in isolation. The real challenge we face in decision theory is formulating a way in which social choices can be rational because, even if each individual in a society is rational, i.e. satisfies all the three conditions mentioned above, the social choice can still fail to be rational.

One well-known example is Condorcet’s paradox. Let’s assume we have three citizens A, B, and C in a society who rank their options in a following way:

A: x, y, z
B: y, z, x
C: z, x, y

Condorcet’s method compares alternatives in a binary way. Now, if we compare x and y, the group illustrated here will prefer x, because xPy in two of three cases (A and C). If we then compare y and z, the result will be yPz by the same two-to-one margin (A and B). Finally, if we compare z and x, the group will prefer z for the same reasons (B and C prefer z to x). As we can see, the group will, according to this decision rule, prefer x to y, y to z, and z to x. Thus, the society comprised of three rational individuals will not be able to reach a rational decision because the transitivity condition will not be satisfied on the group level. However, if we want to explain fully a social decision it is not enough simply to state rationality conditions.

Instead, we need, on the one hand, a way to calculate the outcome of a voting by choosing a decision rule that will explain how the lists that individuals in a society submit can form a single preference list. On the other hand, because of the complex voting procedures that take place in such cases, even the standards for rationality will depend on more than the three aforementioned conditions. What we are looking for, in other words, is an acceptable social welfare function (SWF), to use the term Arrow introduced. This function should map the rankings of each individual list onto a single list that will rank alternatives as rationally

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2 In the previous example we have seen how a society can fail to be rational, and one of the problems, it might be said, is that we have chosen the decision rule which is problematic because it compares alternatives binary.

chosen by society. What this means is that we need a way to properly aggregate preferences as stated on each individual list through a voting procedure that will reflect the standards of rationality.

However, before Arrow, there were major difficulties with advancing such a result because of the number of existing possibilities. As Suzumura notes, even in our simplest society [six members, each having a list with three options, x, y and z, ranked in every possible ordering], there are $6^{3^6}$ possible social welfare functions. One of the biggest achievements Arrow made was enabling us to calculate all the possible SWFs at once and reach a conclusion based on the calculation. He also formulated probably the best-known set of conditions for rationality in such a case. There are five axioms in the first edition of his *Social Choices and Individual Values*, which he reduced to four in the second edition. The latter list is the one I will consider:

1) Unlimited domain (U) – Each individual is free to form and express any preference ordering she chooses. This prevents anyone from excluding of any preference ordering he may not like.

2) Pareto Principle (P) – If each individual prefers x to y, then SWF has to yield the same result. Thus the entire society has to prefer x to y.

3) Independence of Irrelevant Alternatives (I) – If we determine that SWF yields result that xPy, then introduction of the alternative z being on the bottom of each individual list, the initial result must not change. In other words, the appearance of the alternative that is in this sense irrelevant must not change the preference ordering at the top of the list.

4) Non-Dictatorship (D) – There cannot be an individual who will determine the outcome of a choice, that is, an individual whose preference ordering will automatically become the preference ordering of the entire society.

Based on these four axioms, or conditions, Arrow proved that there could be no rational choice on the societal level, because some of the four conditions will always be violated, most often through the appearance of a dictator in a society. This result follows not only from the particular conditions, but also from the most widely accepted view of democracy – liberal, or procedural, democracy. Now, a general aim of any such theory of democracy is to say something about how we make choices in our society. It presupposes a certain type of voting, aggregation, which is why this type of democracy can also be called aggregative democracy.

The main reason Arrow’s theorem had such repercussions on aggregate theory is because the axioms were largely based on its tenets, and were relatively intuitive. None of the axioms, it seemed, was overly stringent, nor did it presuppose anything other than what the most widely accepted theory of democracy presupposed. Now, there are several reasons why liberal democracy is accepted the way it is, and I will sum them up in the following way:

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5 Arrow, ibid.
6 Both names are present in literature. Compare, for example, Resnik, Choices: Introduction to Decision Theory, and Suzumura, ibid.
7 I will not go into details of Arrow’s proof. If we accept his axioms, the proof is valid and unambiguous.
1) Participation in voting is not restricted to any specific group or class of citizens, which is to say that anyone is able to participate in voting, provided he or she satisfies minimal age criteria.

2) Each member of society is equal in his or her right to vote, which means that neither citizen will be favored over any other.

These conditions, of course, ought to guarantee the freedom and equality of citizens in electing a government (or reaching any other socially important decision, for that matter). Within such a theory, aggregation of preferences seemed like a most natural way to reach the outcome of voting. Namely, when all the individual lists are in place, the one thing left to be done is to decide upon the outcome based on a rule. This assumes, of course, that the preference ordering on the list is final and fixed. As Goodin says, liberal democrats “respect people’s preferences, no questions asked.”

3. Deliberation and preferences

Unfortunately, the stated equal respect for preferences does not yield the rational outcome in and of itself. Namely, the Arrow theorem is convincing in showing that voting rules do not enable a society to rationally choose their representatives in elections. One theory that has been prominent in the past few decades, and perhaps goes as far back as Ancient Greece, is the theory of deliberative democracy. As the name suggests, this theory takes as its starting point not the aggregation of preferences, but a process of deliberation. Christian List defines the difference between the two approaches in the following manner:

Aggregation and deliberation are often contrasted as two very different approaches to collective decision-making. While aggregation is the merging of conflicting individual opinions into a social outcome, deliberation involves the discussion of these opinions and their possible transformation by the individuals deliberating.

In short, to deliberate simply means to ponder an issue by stating reasons (either rational or personal) within an interested group of individuals which do the same. We engage into a back-and-forth with other members of our deliberating group. The ideal goal of deliberation is agreement between all engaged individuals. John Elster writes that:

The core of the [deliberative approach] … is that rather than aggregating or altering preferences, the political system should be set up with a view to changing them by public debate and confrontation … [T]here would [then] not be any need for an aggregation mechanism, since a rational discussion would tend to produce unanimous preferences.

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8 I will discuss different rules for calculating such results a little bit later. Here it will suffice to say that the rule most often used here is a simple majority rule.
10 See, for example, John Dryzek, *Deliberative Democracy and Beyond*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000
Deliberative democracy suggests that our preferences are flexible, and thus susceptible to change (transformation). That potential for change can be found precisely within the deliberation. The process actually means the interaction and the debate among the future voters, where two important problems of liberal democracy are eliminated. First, any possible manipulations aim to be prevented because each voter is in a position to state not only what he prefers, but also why. This presumed goal initiates a process of debating these reasons and reaching something like a common ground among voters.\(^{14}\)

The second problem deliberative democracy tries to solve is closely tied to this consequence – preventing discontent among the voters. What kind of discontent is here in question? Namely, because the common voting procedure in democracy is such that a little over the half of the citizens will decide upon an outcome x, there is a potential problem of a vocal, but dissatisfied minority. More than that, the legitimacy of democratic decisions is in question if a large number of citizens opposes them, or consider themselves discriminated against.\(^{15}\) In addition, since it is possible for x to be near the bottom of the list for most of the losers, it is clear that the chosen outcome is not the most optimal one. Through debate, and potential reaching of the common ground, the reasons for discontent ought to dissipate. Namely, even when the vote ends in a minority losing, it will presumably feel less aggrieved because of the chance to be more heavily involved in the voting process, and because of the opportunity to hear other reasons as well.

One of the most prominent deliberative theorists, David Miller, states several other reasons why the deliberative theory is more acceptable.\(^{16}\) He cites various psychological experiments that claim that debates in the large number of cases prevent various manipulating schemes and radical preference orderings. Miller mentions how a person with racial biases is, through the debate, forced to change preferences to be in accord with generally acceptable democratic standards. Mentioning such standards explicitly introduces value component and, according to Miller, even undermines the axiom U. In that case, not every preference ordering is acceptable, and democratic standards of a country will actually influence any radical member to make more moderate list. In his opinion, this accounts for less possible SWFs, and makes finding the one that is rational more attainable.

However, there are several problems with this approach. In rejecting the axiom U on the grounds Miller proposes, the deliberative democracy theorists are in danger of falling into a paternalist trap. The problem with this is that, if we accept that all members of a society are equal, no standards should be initially prohibiting. Even though this may sound overly lenient, and too tolerant for some extremist groups, the possibility of introducing one set of socially acceptable standards is perhaps even more dangerous. For example, we may introduce a set of standards so that we initially disable a certain set of preferences, in order to permit the ones that will yield the result acceptable to us. In other words, in order to manipulate the outcome of voting, one could formulate standards that will exclude any preference list that would change the desired outcome. This, however, is no different from the outright strategic manipulation this theory of democracy wants to avoid.

Nevertheless, even if we set aside this implication of deliberative approach, there are other dilemmas it faces. We can divide the dilemmas as pre-deliberation, deliberation and post-deliberation dilemmas. When it comes to the preparation of a deliberative process, it is pertinent to determine how many

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16 David Miller, „Deliberative Democracy and Social Choice“, *Political Studies* (1992), XL, Special Issue.
people will participate in the process. What is our optimal goal? Should every adult member of a society be allowed to deliberate? Should every member be compelled to? How do we decide how many participants is enough, once we assume, as we must, that not every voter can be a part of such process? In addition, it is not clear how long such a process last. How long should we deliberate before a goal is met or before it is admitted that there is no ultimate agreement, or even a change in preference ordering? If one makes the process too short, then it never got the chance to succeed. If one makes it as long as needed, then the institution is in danger of becoming wildly inefficient.

When it comes to issues that may arise during the deliberation, we can point out two as very significant.17 First, it is important to determine what will be the role of a moderator of a deliberative process. Should a moderator be merely passive, or rather active? Should he help participants formulate the clearest possible versions of their statements, or would such a demand be too open for manipulation?18 Second, just what kind of arguments and inputs are to be found relevant? Should we accept only the logically well-formed and rational arguments, as Habermas thought,19 or is there a particular value to the personal stories that often come up during the process of deliberation?20

As for the post-deliberation issues, perhaps the most significant question is what sort of role will the outcome of a deliberative process have. Is a deliberation to be as binding as the outcome of the standard voting? If so, should it supplement it, or even replace it? Or, should the outcome merely serve as an indication of what it is that engaging in a dialogue can accomplish, thus attempting to make participants in the process more empathetic of and open and receptive towards one another’s viewpoints?21

One can fairly easily see that all of these dilemmas merit quite different responses and a wide range of articles reveal both the deep disagreement and, seemingly, inherent ambiguity of deliberative processes. However, instead of abandoning deliberative democracy as hopelessly mired in the aforementioned debates, we have to use them to refine it. Namely, there is a deep asymmetry between procedural and deliberative approaches that has to be recognized if we are to properly determine the relation of the two and the prospects of the latter.

At its core, the procedural approach is based on values we believe should found every society: freedom and equality. These are, to borrow from aestheticians who discuss artistic values, ‘good things to be had’, i.e. inherently valuable, and thus we can claim that a mere acceptance of goodness of such values makes procedural, or liberal democracy significant to implement. On the other hand, if we try to examine the deliberative approach at the same level, we will at once render it more ambiguous and less successful.22 Consequently, it will remain unclear how it can help us overcome the serious problem that liberal approach has. Furthermore, we will be unable to maximize what is valuable about deliberative approach and we will fail to recognize just how it can supplement the liberal view.

18 As Steiner reports, it turns out that the more is at stake at a deliberative event, the more will moderators act manipulatively. However, before more research is done, we have to refrain from any general conclusion.
20 *Foundations of Deliberative Democracy*, ch. 2.
To alleviate these issues, we first have to recognize that our decisions about implementing deliberative democracy are not ideological, or even value-based, but pragmatic. In other words, deliberative democracy stands on the basis of how it performs. However, in order to see its effects, we first have to implement it, at least experimentally. Thus, the ‘armchair’ approach that works for liberal democracy simply isn’t enough for the deliberative approach. This is precisely what was recognized in the past decade or so.

4. Deliberative process

In one of his final papers, Laslett wrote about the institution of deliberative polling. He considered it to be both a utopia and also necessary to meet the challenges (particularly environmental challenges) that stand before humanity. Writing about what they call the ‘deliberation day’, Ackerman and Fishkin suggest the significance of having well-informed and active citizens. But how is such a project to be undertaken, especially if it is conceived (as Laslett think it has to be) on a global level?

To answer this, we have to know just what it is that the opportunity needs to achieve. What are the requirements that our democratic institutions have to fulfill? Analogously to our discussion of deliberative process, we can examine pre-voting, voting, and post-voting context. Respectively, in order to maximize voters’ rationality, and (try to) make the entire voting process (more) rational, institutions have to: 1) Motivate participation (pre-voting), 2) inform voters (pre-voting), 3) render the process open to reason-giving (voting), 4) provide accountability on the part of the elected officials (post-voting), and 5) take into account the preferences of the electoral minority by making the members of this minority more open for the winning side’s preferences (post-voting).

However, as is generally recognized, it is genuinely difficult to hold those one voted for accountable throughout their mandate, leading to voters’ perception that their actions have few consequences. Thus, to draw from Anthony Downs, a voter may be more motivated to avoid ‘long queues on foul weather’ than to vote. When combined with the result of Arrow’s theorem that states that the outcome of such a vote doesn’t satisfy reasonably formulated standards of rationality, it seems that, due to both pre-voting (1, 2), voting (3), and post-voting (4,5) aspects of democratic elections, something significant has been lost to the idea of mere (procedural) equality. In other words, it is fine to respect preferences ‘no questions asked’, but it is also unavoidable to ask the right questions. This is because reasons for preferences are as relevant as the preferences (that is, preference-ordering) themselves. This is where a deliberative process should start from.

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Unfortunately, if one tries to ask questions about someone’s preferences, the answer may not always be forthcoming. It is often noticed that, in order to be a quality participant in a deliberation, one must first reflect on their own set of preferences, try to outline reasons (or at least formulate some stories) for them and then express them in a public forum, being open both to defend his views and to criticize or accept someone else’s opinion. As we can see, the common presumed direction is from the individual aspect to collective aspect. However, it is precisely this idea that leads to all the debates about deliberative process and its practical viability. As we have mentioned, because the deliberative theory is essentially pragmatic in nature (trying to solve a very concrete and significant problem) any questions of and ambiguities about its implementation render deliberative proposals speculative and utopic at best and outright failures at worst.

24 Bruce Ackerman and James Fishkin, „Deliberation Day“, in: Debating Deliberative Democracy, 7-30.
I don’t, however, suggest that discussions about deliberative processes are unproductive or unimportant. On the contrary, they are significant. However, they are significant chiefly as questions for devising empirical research and experiments in deliberative situations. The empirical aspect of deliberation has been recognized in recent years and is currently in its infancy.\(^{26}\) On the other hand, it still isn’t enough for us to conclude that deliberation as such can be actually implemented on a wide scale in a society. For instance, Steiner’s seminal experiments yield the results that tell us a lot about the quality of deliberation\(^ {27}\) (the left-hand side of the column represents the measurement of how many participants spoke, and to what degree they did so; the right-hand side of the column measures how the participants spoke about the topic at hand):

**Colombia:**

| Did not speak up at all: | 34% | No justification at all: | 36% |
| Spoke up once or twice: | 30% | Justification with an illustration: | 34% |
| Spoke up 3–10 times: | 28% | Reason given, but no connection with opinion: | 17% |
| Spoke up 11–20 times: | 7% | Reason given, connection with opinion: | 10% |
| Spoke up 21–30 times: | 1% | More than one reason, connections with opinion: | 3% |
| Total participants: | 100% | Total speech acts with opinion: | 100% |

**Bosnia:**

| Did not speak up at all: | 18% | No justification at all: | 79% |
| Spoke up once or twice: | 7% | Justification with an illustration: | 12% |
| Spoke up 3–10 times: | 18% | Reason given, but no connection with opinion: | 3% |
| Spoke up 11–20 times: | 23% | Reason given, connection with opinion: | 6% |
| Spoke up 21–30 times: | 15% | More than one reason, connection with opinion: | 0% |
| Spoke up 31–40 times: | 10% | Total speech acts with opinion: | 100% |
| Spoke up 41–50 times: | 7% |
| Spoke up 51 times or more: | 2% |
| Total participants: | 100% |

As we can see from the data above, the quality of deliberation is actually fairly low in both Bosnia and Colombia. In both countries, the significant number of participants did not speak at all. Of those who did, a large percentage either didn’t speak in connection to given topics or didn’t try to justify their views in any way. The figures were, perhaps predictably, much better in cases of Belgium or at Europolis,\(^ {28}\) but are still far from ideal. What we can see when we compare all these figures is that deliberation cannot have as much effect as one would expect of a theory formulated to supplement the liberal democracy and alleviate its main issues. While it is clear from the aforementioned that all of the sides in various disputes we noted have to be represented in different experiments if we are to see just what effects each proposal

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28 Foundations of Deliberative Democracy, p. 48, 81. Europolis was a deliberative event, held in Brussels in 2009. Unlike in cases of Bosnia and Colombia, moderators had active and supportive role, making sure that everyone talked at least once (Foundations, ch. 1-2). However, more research is needed to determine the exact effect of different moderating approaches on the outcome of deliberation.
has, it is also pertinent to conduct the research on an even wider scale and to examine results both synchronically and diachronically. Being essentially pragmatic, deliberative democracy has to examine its empirical implications on concrete cases if it is to be effectively implemented.

5. Prospects of Deliberative Education

However, one aspect of the deliberative approach that can be actually implemented without much ambiguity has been neglected (or at least insufficiently recognized as a part of deliberative approach) – the deliberative education. As Steiner notes, deliberation ought to bridge deep divisions, and such divisions are even deeper in societies that are not deliberatively efficient (such as Colombia and Bosnia).\(^{29}\) It turns out that the places where it is the hardest to conduct deliberative research and discussions such research and discussions are the most important to be had. In order to mend this problem, and to make deliberation more effective, we have to recognize the significance of deliberative education.

Namely, we have to reverse the direction of our approach that aims to transfer the effects individual reflection to the successful input in collective deliberation. Rather, each individual has to use the deliberative process to refine its own set of preferences, to clarify and develop reasons for holding certain preferences, not only to other participants, but predominantly to itself. By participating in such a way, every potential voter will hear others’ opinions, reasons for them or stories behind them. If so, the primary effect of deliberation will be seen on an individual level. However, to participate in deliberation effectively, citizens have to be properly educated in it, and that process has to begin as early as possible (Steiner suggest 6\(^{th}\) grade as the starting point). In other words, a properly performed act of deliberation will be focused first outward, then inward. To understand why this is important, we have to remember the essentially pragmatic nature of deliberative democracy. It was proposed to solve a problem with social choice that stems from the procedural nature of vote aggregation. Since we cannot and should not expect to eliminate voting at the free elections, the proposed reversal represents a concrete gain for each participating voter. Namely, one of three positive outcomes will almost certainly take place: 1) A participant will transform his beliefs, preferences, etc. and agree with his opponent, thus yielding an outcome that is more desirable than outright conflict or division; 2) A participant will not transform his beliefs, and will continue thinking as before, but now will understand why he holds his beliefs. Thus, his choice will be more representative of his global attitudes; 3) A participant will not transform his beliefs, but he will better understand his collator’s preferences. Thus, regardless of the voting outcome, he should be much more accepting of a rivaling opinion. If his view won, he will not mind if institutions also represented the losing minority. If he lost, he will understand why others voted the way they did and will be more open for representation by those he did not chose himself. None of these three outcomes (and the second two are perfectly compatible) is to be automatically expected if we only care about voters’ preferences ‘no questions asked’.

In addition, the initial aim to see deliberation as being preceded by individual reflection (inward-outward) left open for deliberation to be mainly competitive – the goal being to achieve victory over opponents in such a process. This is the way mock trials or model UN events are set up. On the other hand, the new direction of approach (outward-inward) needs to render the process cooperative and educational. In that sense, Dewey’s approach to education has considerable merits.\(^{30}\) Dewey saw schools as institutions in which the child is, for the time…to be a member of a community life in which he feels that he partici-

\(^{29}\) Deliberation Across Deep Divisions, ch. 8.

pates, and to which he contributes”. It is precisely this view that Steiner et al. emphasize at the end of their examination of possibility for deliberation in societies where deep divisions persist. As we can see, there is nothing new about the idea of using school environment for fostering democratic values through education. On the other hand, deliberative democracy has provided a new context for realizing this idea, and an opportunity clarify just the aim of such an endeavor. In a sense, by implementing civic education with the specific goal of improving deliberative skills we are directly attempting to improve the quality of participation in future deliberative events. Furthermore, it is precisely this endeavor that helps enhance deliberative potential and, thus, improve the prospects for effectively implementing deliberative democracy (which is, to stress again, the main concern due to the predominantly pragmatic character of such an approach).

In other words, by participating in deliberation, we have to seek to understand ourselves and others, to learn more about why we think what we think and thus be better equipped to vote once the polling day arrives. The experimental research that still has to be done should pose questions on various fronts. For instance, as the primary goal of deliberation is the agreement between participants, we would have to examine how the agreement most efficiently takes place. One of the questions posed by Steiner is how humor influences susceptibility to hearing, empathizing with and accepting others’ point of view. Expanding upon this line of inquiry we could formulate several other questions. To what degree does discussing and agreeing upon a trivial matter render a deliberating group more susceptible to agree or be more open toward another group’s views for another trivial matter? To what degree does discussing and agreeing upon a trivial matter render a deliberating group more open toward another group’s views on significant matters? To what degree does discussing and agreeing upon a significant issue render a group more open toward another group’s views on a different significant issue? As is fairly clear, none of these questions can be decided independently of empirical data, but each is a perfectly adequate starting point for formulating experiments in deliberation. In addition, these three questions seem relevant if we are to start bridging gaps in views between two or more groups and mending more or less deep divisions. Analogous to the issue of conditions for acceptance of differing point of view, each aspect of deliberative process ought to be empirically researched.

However, the prospects for effective deliberation go beyond the better understanding of how potential voters behave during their participation in deliberative processes. The first step for implementing such processes has to go beyond potential voters and focus on the future voters. In other words, deliberation will be most effective if it is first taught in schools (from the elementary level onwards), where children would learn how to participate in such events and learn the importance of listening to others and understanding their own views, future voters will be educated in the way that will make them much better equipped to approach the voting ballot with clear idea of their preference ordering. Even though precise, detailed and extensive research still has to be conducted, we can safely claim that deliberative education and subsequent deliberative practice will raise awareness for participation in various voting opportunities. Since deliberative processes can help citizens and representative institutions meet criteria 1-5, the deliberative education is the first crucial step toward implementing deliberative democracy in a clear, efficient and unambiguous way. Of course, full implementation is still a long way off. As we mentioned,

31 Democracy and Education, 88.
32 Deliberation Across Deep Divisions, ch. 8.
33 Deliberation Across Deep Divisions, ch. 4.
34 I say ‘trivial’, but I mean it solely in the sense of ‘being fairly harmless in consequences’ - say, the sort of issues that, even when decided one way or another do not make significant ideological or existential difference. Such issues could range from being able to agree upon neighborhood cleaning, choosing between various cafeteria menus, etc.)
a wide range of different experiments still has to be conducted in order to see the effects of different proposals. A proper program for deliberative education still has to be formulated and tested. However, the unambiguity of its importance and the prospects of its positive results should be sufficient to accept the idea that it, rather than the extant disputes about various aspects of deliberative process, should be our primary focus. After all, as Laslett concludes:

We have come to an end by forecasting a spiritual awakening and by discussing and recommending a technique rather than a programme of political and intellectual change, though both are implied by the statements which have been made. It is a technique which, if it could be implemented, might permit us to [...] [be] secure in the knowledge that the totality of inhabitants of our planet had at last acquired a voice of its own which the powers-that-be could not ignore. Some might say that this hoped-for solution is no more realistic than global revolution, or even the Platonic utopia, notwithstanding it is so much closer to the interests and outlook of ordinary people.35

The crucial upshot of Laslett’s concluding remarks is twofold. First, the full solution to existing problems is so far off that it could be considered utopic. Second, this solution would serve the interest of ordinary people. I agree on both points and add: by shifting our focus toward implementing deliberative education, we would take the first key step toward developing the complete deliberative programme. This, in turn, would make it more realistic and its implementation more viable. In short, to serve the interest of ordinary people through deliberative process they would participate in, the secondary goal is to discern the best way to develop and implement it, while the primary goal is to focus on teaching present and future voters the proper participation in it. If such a project is successful, then the utopia discussed by Ackerman, Fishkin, Laslett and many others would be that more realistic and that much closer.

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35 „Environmental Ethics and the Obsolescence of Existing Political Institutions“, 223. My italic.


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**Racionalnost, vrednosti i glasanje: deliberativna demokratija i deliberativno obrazovanje**

(Apstrakt)


Ključne reči: Racionalnost, preferencije, društveni izbor, demokratija, deliberacija, deliberativno obrazovanje, glasanje.