

Abstracts

Marcus Höreth

Overly Adaptive and Out of Touch With Reality The Paradox of Deliberative Democracy in the EU

The theory of “deliberative” democracy has dominated the debate on legitimate governance beyond the nation-state for some time. However, it suffers from a peculiar shortcoming: it is both “overly adapted” to, and yet “out of touch” with political reality. It is *overly adapted* because it interprets the detachment of supranational decision-makers not as objectionable from a democratic standpoint, but rather as a normative added value. At the same time, it is *out of touch* because it fails to recognize that patterns of interaction in European decision-making processes only coincide with the principles of deliberative democracy in a few exceptional cases. While that by no means diminishes the virtues of deliberative theory in and of itself, it does give reason to serious doubts about its claims to being a European democratic theory.

Jürgen Neyer

The Strength of Deliberative Political Theories and the Miserable State of Orthodox Democratic Theory: A Reply to Marcus Höreth

Deliberative theory offers a very useful framework in the debate about legitimate governance in the European Union. It helps to understand the strengths and weaknesses of the EU by providing an analytical language free of the stalled nation-state canon. Deliberative theory opens up new avenues for justifying non-majoritarian structures of political authority and thus suggests an innovative approach for explaining the EU’s legitimacy and its shortcomings. Moreover, deliberative theory aids in bringing together the fragmented discipline of political science so long hampered by subdisciplines standing idle amongst one another. It has set into motion a lively discourse between the fields of Political Theory, Comparative Government, International Relations and European Integration Studies.

Sebastian Jäckle/Rafael Bauschke

Is Measuring Reform Capacity Possible? A Critical Appraisal of the Sustainable Governance Indicators

While benchmarks and indicators are being used in many areas of comparative politics, no such measure has been available to assess the ability and capacity of political systems regarding the planning and implementation of reforms. The paper evaluates a newly designed approach to measure the reform capacity of OECD countries, the *Sustainable Governance Indicators* (SGI), by using criteria tested extensively in the field of measurement of democracy. The analysis reveals several problems regarding the conceptualization, measurement and aggregation used by the SGI. Especially the inclusion of democracy as a constitutive element of reform capacity proves to be a key problem, negatively impacting on all three levels. Furthermore a statistical ex-post evaluation finds no clue that the SGI really measure a countries' capacity to implement reforms.

Aurel Croissant/Teresa Schächter

Patterns of Democracy in Asia

The article adapts Lijphart's majoritarian – consensus framework to analyze democratic institutions in eight new democracies in Asia. The study demonstrates that Lijphart's two-dimensional pattern of majoritarian and consensus democracy does not apply to Asia. Neither is there a distinct Asian pattern of democracy. The search for explanations for this unexpected finding provides support for recent criticism regarding Lijphart's theoretical and empirical assumptions. Furthermore, Asian experiences in democratization provide little support for the hypothesis that consensus democracy is the more attractive option for countries that transition from authoritarian to democratic rule. Whether majoritarian institutions provide a threat to the consolidation of new democracies or consensus elements strengthen the quality of democracy depends very much on the country specific context of democratization.