Editorial

Jean-Paul Gagnon and Mark Chou

This general issue of *Democratic Theory* begins with an important contribution by George Vasilev (La Trobe University) that reflects on Chantal Mouffe's notion of democratic agonism. Mouffe has, primarily as part of her critique of deliberative democracy, asserted that consensus necessarily creates exclusion. What is important is that democratic dialogue remains open-ended. For her this means that democrats should view themselves as adversaries rather than antagonists who bring discussions to a close. Vasilev critiques Mouffe's assertion by arguing that she holds a one-sided understanding of consensus that creates a less credible form of adversarial politics. By crafting a "norm of consensus", Vasilev thus demonstrates that consensus formation can ensure the very condition of democratic freedom itself. In doing this, Vasilev's argument brings a fresh perspective to ongoing debates in deliberative and agonistic democracy.

The second article in this issue is by Jose Marichal (California Lutheran University). He rightly argues that diversity in the United States, and we would add elsewhere, is misconceived in discussions about civic health and democratic life. Conventionally, diversity in such discussions is framed as an obstacle to be overcome. It is in the way of, for instance, conceptions of the good democratic life because diversity is by its nature divisive. Against this backdrop, Marichal crafts an alternative view of diversity that shows that it can be instrumental for building civic health and democratic life. Diversity is actually a strength for societies to draw on because diversity leads to self-reflection (doubt), better decision making, and civic wisdom gained through communication with "others". This article is a compelling read and a starting point for a new discussion about pluralism, diversity, and race relations in democracies such as the United States.

Amanda Machin's (Zeppelin University) article on the physical embodiment of deliberation is the third contribution in this issue. Machin's is an important and novel argument in democratic theory. She claims that the communication that happens between physical bodies in deliberation is commonly overlooked in deliberative democratic theory. Drawing principally on Merleau-Ponty's "habitual knowledge" concept, she demonstrates how body language is a part of the communicative action

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that happens in a deliberation. Bodies can inhibit, interrupt, and "facilitate and enliven" deliberative communication because bodies emphasize selves and their particular viewpoints. In the silences between words or the actions made during them, bodies accentuate the person and their difference to – or sameness with – others. Machin's article ends with a question for deliberative democracy: is it able to "incorporate the bodies that deliberate"? While adding to the plurality of ongoing discussions in deliberative democracy, Machin's fine article speaks more broadly to democratic theory as a whole, where, as Michael Walzer emphasizes, the body very much has its place.

The final, and fourth, research article in this issue is by Jeffrey Jackson (University of California, Los Angeles). His argument separates deliberative democracy and participatory democracy by way of John Dewey's thought. Jackson's principal thesis is that Dewey's emphasis on righting social inequalities is lost on deliberative democracy and that it is participatory democracy that stays truer to the Deweyan tradition. This is because deliberative democracy is not as willing to employ coercive measures to address social inequalities, a problem for deliberation in action but also for the wider functioning of democracy, whereas participatory democracy does not take this as a pronounced issue. What Jackson's article does is bring into relief the commonalities and differences between deliberative and participatory democracy as understood through Dewey. There is a call to arms in this interesting article, one that tasks the reader with giving participatory democracy a greater share of the attention at a time where some quip that democratic theory is now simply a synonym for deliberative democracy.

Following the four research articles, this issue features *Democratic Theory*'s first book symposium. Jeffrey Green's *The Eyes of the People* (Oxford University Press, 2010) is reviewed by Richard Avramenko (University of Wisconsin, Madison) and Lars Tønder (University of Melbourne). Jeffrey Green (University of Pennsylvania), the author, responds in turn. *Democratic Theory* is, and we should say was from the outset, fully committed to book symposia, as they offer a rich engagement with books – certainly different to but not detracting from standard book reviews – that are often useful devices for opening discussion. As the reader can see through the symposium on *The Eyes of the People,* Avramenko and Tønder's remarks lead Green to crystallize two key points from his book. There is value in this, and we look forward to readers' thoughts about it – especially in the form of replies to the discussion.

An interview with Stephen Elstub (University of the West of Scotland) on the genealogy of deliberative democracy appears after the book symposium. One of the major contributions Elstub makes in this conversation

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is his handling of the complexity inherent in the literature on deliberative democracy – which is immense. He explains at least three different existing narratives (types I and II, established by Bächtiger and colleagues in 2010; micro versus macro; and Elstub's own three generations), which we think rightly gives the impression that Elstub is discussing deliberative democracy in an ecumenical way. Because of this, but also due to a number of other virtues in his discussion, we highly recommend this interview as essential reading for those studying deliberative democracy.

Last, the issue closes with two book reviews. Daniele Santoro (LUISS University) reviews Alessandro Ferrara's *The Democratic Horizon* (Cambridge University Press, 2014) with the *Charlie Hebdo* events in mind, and Joseph Lacey (European University Institute) reviews Jane Mansbridge and John Parkinson's edited *Deliberative Systems* (Cambridge University Press, 2012).

REFERENCE

Bächtiger, André, Simon Niemeyer, Michael Neblo, Jürg Steiner, and Marco R. Steenbergen. 2010. "Disentangling Diversity in Deliberative Democracy: Competing Theories, the Blind-Spots, and Complementarities." *Journal of Political Philosophy* 18 (1): 32–63.

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