Wojciech Ufel, MA

Institute of Political Science

University of Wrocław

Summary of doctoral dissertation

Deliberation in Hermeneutic Perspective. From the Theory of Language to Political Practice

Deliberation is one of the dominant themes of developments within democratic theory for the last three decades. For deliberative scholars it is perceived as a response to recurring 'crises' of liberal democracy, both in practice and theory. Although its practical implementations are rather rare, a theory of deliberative democracy influences numerous researchers in academia, but also activists, politicians on many governance levels, and students of political science who carry it on to have impact on politics and policies. However, deliberation itself does not only refer to a specific set of democratic institutions and practices – the idea of common, rational reflection upon politics constitutes the very basics of all contemporary models of democracy.

However, the construction of foundations of the theory of deliberative democracy, raise numerous criticisms regarding its approach to reason, language and a construction of citizenship. A particular approach to rationality, that is a reflection of a universal use of language, constitutes a sound model of radically democratic legitimation of political decisions. However, post-foundationalist and post-structuralists scholars argue and prove, that this approach to language as a neutral medium of communication is flawed and omits some crucial social aspects of power, which are exerted alongside the use of language. The goal of my thesis is to identify the role these assumptions play in the theory of deliberation and re-approach it with a hermeneutic perspective, derived from a philosophy of language proposed by Ludwig Wittgenstein, and its later interpretations.

In order to reach these conclusions, I propose a hypothesis H1, that is supported by two additional hypotheses Hp1 and Hp2:

H1: A hermeneutic perspective, represented by Wittgensteinian approach to language, makes for a valuable supplement to a theory of deliberative democracy through a major reformulation of its main assumptions and goals, therefore allowing to better understand deliberation in practice.

Hp1: An analytic perspective, expressed especially in an approach to language and reason, constitutes a dominant theoretical ground to analysed models of deliberative democracy.

Hp2: Grounding the theory of deliberative democracy in analytic perspective became one of its seminal constrains, impacting its development, implementation and evaluation in political practice.

My doctoral research consists of three main phases. The first one is to identify the genealogy of the theory of deliberative democracy in order to examine the hypothesis that it is mostly constituted upon an analytical approach to language and (both individual and public) reason. The research method in this phase consists of a critical reading of publications of three different groups of authors: 1) "founding fathers" of deliberative democracy, who lay ideal, philosophical foundations of the theory (John Rawls, Jürgen Habermas); 2) their most influential followers within political philosophy and theory, who discuss it in order to turn it into real-world, applicable models (e.g. John Dryzek, Amy Gutmann, Iris Marion Young); 3) and of the use of those theories within contemporary political science—also known as an 'institutional' and 'systemic' turns within deliberative democracy—with a focus on works of Western and Polish Authors (e.g Dryzek, James Fishkin, Jane Mansbridge; from Polish scholars: Piotr Juchacz, Jacek Sroka). The genealogical method is applied in order to trace both the continuities and exclusions of different approaches to language and reason – analytic, pragmatic and hermeneutic. The initial findings of my doctoral research confirm the hypothesis Hp1 and show that the analytical approach is dominant—even if it is disguised as 'universal pragmatism' or supplemented by empirical criticism—and post-structural or hermeneutic approaches are either rejected or hardly apparent.

The second phase of my doctoral research is to focus on a post-foundational criticism of general analytical approach to language and reason, and to deliberative democracy in particular, both in theoretical aspects and in its practice as public policy. Therefore, in this phase my analysis focuses on three areas: 1) criticism of universality of language and reason, based on writings and debates of Michel Foucault; 2) criticism of liberal and deliberative models of democracy from the perspective of "the political" (Jacques Ranciere, Chantal Mouffe); and 3) criticism of an apolitical understanding of public policy in political science (Frank Fischer, Giandomenico Majone, Deborah Stone). The hypothesis examined in this phase is Hp2. This part of my research delivers a common set of criticism of deliberation as both theory and practice, and I argue that those critiques are aiming at problems that are rooted within the analytic genealogy of the deliberative democratic theory.

The third phase of my doctoral thesis is an attempt at reconstructing a deliberative democracy theory within the Wittgenstein-based, hermeneutic concept of language. This part of my research answers the hypothesis H1 that the hermeneutic perspective can have a positive impact on deliberative theory, adjusting its core assumptions and aims in order to: 1) broaden and systematize post-foundational criticism of deliberation, and therefore 2) provide a better understanding and enable more satisfying policy design for practical occurrences of deliberation. My interpretation of the thought of Wittgenstein lies mostly upon Conant-Diamond interpretation of the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* and *Philosophical Investigations*, which argue that his main philosophical idea was always to present limitations on analytic perspective of language, especially when compared to everyday use of language disguised as a network of multiple interlaying 'games'. Despite the fact that Ludwig

Wittgenstein himself did not provide any substantial political philosophy, my attempt will be based on works of other philosophers, who managed to propose theoretical frameworks on politics based on *Philosophical Investigations* (James Tully, Christopher Robinson, Michael Temelini), especially in its relation to deliberation (Aletta Norval, Lotar Rasiński). To conclude this chapter I reconstruct some core assumptions behind the notions of language, reason and person in deliberative democracy in order to create a draft concept of "hermeneutic model of deliberation" that can be implemented on a level of (re)designing and (re)assessing deliberative practices on different levels of a political life, without necessary grounding them in universal rationality or radical democracy. It is especially helpful in describing potential uses of deliberation (whether they aim at epistemic or civic goals) and 'leadership roles' of multiple actors (politicians, activists, experts, moderators, participants and media), who all can have direct or indirect impact on articulation and restructuring of 'language games' in the process of deliberation.

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