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Participation and Deliberative Democracy

Analysing the relationship between participation and deliberation in deliberative democratic theory

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Abstract

Western liberal democracies are experiencing a crisis of political participation. Important indicators, including voter turnout, trade union membership rates and political party membership rates, have been in decline for decades. Furthermore, participation in the political process is becoming increasingly dominated by the rich and powerful. These trends pose a threat to the legitimacy of democratic governance as many justifications for the legitimacy of aggregative models of democracy require both high levels of citizen participation and participation across all sections of society. Embracing models of deliberative democracy is often cited as a potential way of increasing civic engagement and stimulating higher levels of participation. However, it is widely understood that a tension exists between mass participation and quality deliberation. Therefore, there is significant debate in democratic theory surrounding whether deliberative democracy would stimulate higher levels of participation or entrench existing inequalities of participation. Consequently, this paper addresses the following research question; to what extent have deliberative democratic theorists been able to incorporate mass participation and quality deliberation into a feasible model for democratic reform? The focus and aims of theorists in the field have evolved considerably over time. This evolution is popularly categorized through three different waves or turns of scholarship; the initial wave, the empirical turn and the systemic turn. To answer the research question, this paper examines how these three waves of theory address the values of mass participation and quality deliberation. Furthermore, it analyses how the relationship between quality deliberation and mass participation in deliberative democratic theory changed between each wave from a historical perspective. This is an interdisciplinary approach, combining insights from the disciplines of philosophy and history. It finds that deliberative democratic theorists have been unable to incorporate mass participation and quality deliberation into a feasible model for democratic reform. However, there are promising developments, which provide some avenues for further research.

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1. Introduction

Democracy in Western liberal states is experiencing a political participation crisis (Parvin 2018; Schlozman, Page, Verba et al. 2005; Solt 2008). Several important indicators of participation have been in decline for decades, including political party membership rates and trade union density (van Haute and Paulis 2016; OECD/AIAS database on Institutional Characteristics of Trade Unions 2021). Voter turnout, especially in local and European elections, is low (Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance 2021). Moreover, this crisis is not merely about the numbers of those participating but who is participating. An individual's involvement in the political process is largely influenced by their economic and social status (Schlozman et al. 2005; Solt 2008). Wealthier sections of society are far more likely to participate and influence decision-making (Lijphart 1997). With economic inequality levels growing considerably in recent decades, the democratic process is becoming increasingly dominated by the rich and powerful (Parvin 2018; Schlozman et al. 2005). These trends pose major problems for the legitimacy of democratic governance (Fung 2015). Western liberal democracies are highly aggregative, meaning the will of the people is determined by the counting of votes in elections. In this type of system, the legitimacy of decisions by democratically elected governments is derived from a majority principle (Knight and Johnson 1994, 277). Citizens have pluralistic values, preferences and interests, and hence it is argued that a majority vote leads to outcomes that stem from the will of most citizens (Habermas 1996, 291). However, with low and declining participation levels, democratic governments are disproportionately representing the will of a wealthy minority of citizens. Broad participation across all sections of society enhances the legitimacy of democratic governance by preventing the rise of civil oligarchies and ensuring lower socio-economic classes are represented (Parvin 2018, 32). Consequently, there is a widespread understanding in the field of democratic theory that current models of aggregative democracy in liberal states are not desirable and solutions are needed to ensure the legitimacy of democratic governance (Bohman 1998; Habermas 1996; Mansbridge, Bohman, Chambers et al. 2012)

The most influential and prominent concept in contemporary democratic theory is deliberative democracy (Dryzek 2007, 237). It is presented as a radical ideal for democracy, which emphasises the importance of deliberation between citizens in any practice of democracy (Bohman 1998, 401). This deliberation consists of the communication of preferences and interests regarding matters of common concern (Bächtiger, Dryzek, Mansbridge, et al. 2018, 2). The focus and aims of theorists in the field have evolved considerably over time. This evolution is popularly categorized through three different waves or turns of scholarship (Mansbridge et al. 2012; Smith and Owen 2015). While certain ideas of deliberative

democracy can be traced back to Immanuel Kant and even Aristotle, the formal origins of the contemporary theory emerged in the 1980s and 1990s (Bohman 1998, 400). This first wave formulated the philosophical foundations of deliberative democracy. The literature largely focused on developing an understanding of what ideal deliberation constitutes and presenting normative arguments for why deliberation is essential for the legitimacy of democratic decision-making (Cohen 1989; Habermas 1996; Manin, Stein and Mansbridge 1987). Then, the second wave of scholarship, also known as the 'empirical turn', studied how democratic institutions could practically apply deliberative democratic theory in the real world (Fishkin 2009; Steiner, Bächtiger, Spörndli, et al. 2004). This included the study of suitable forums where quality deliberation could take place, such as mini-publics and citizen assemblies (Fishkin 2009). The third wave, or the 'systemic turn', placed an emphasis on examining the deliberative qualities of whole political systems, rather than the previous tendency of studying individual institutions and forums (Goodin 2008; Mansbridge et al. 2012; Smith and Owen 2015). Scholars of this wave argue that the different elements of quality ideal deliberation can be spread across the system, rather than every individual institution needing to incorporate every element (Mansbridge et al. 2012, 1-2).

There is a growing consensus among political theorists that the legitimacy of a democracy is dependent on the quality of deliberation amongst both citizens and representatives (Mansbridge et al. 2012, 1). Deliberative democrats have always been critical of aggregative systems, independent of any crisis in political participation (Bohman 1998, 400). Still, the declining rates of participation have offered a strong justification for various theorists to argue for implementing a more deliberative model of democracy in liberal democratic states (Fung 2015; Dryzek 2012). However, there is significant debate in the field over whether embracing deliberative democracy would actually stimulate more participation or rather further alienate the poorer sections of society from the political process (Parvin 2018; Young 1996) Many theorists argue that there is a significant tension between quality deliberation and mass participation, which is very difficult, if not impossible, to overcome (Cohen and Fung 2004; Fishkin 2009).

This paper seeks to understand the relationship between quality deliberation and mass participation within deliberative democratic theory. If deliberative democracy can stimulate higher participation rates, the theory must show that this tension between deliberation and participation can be overcome. Thus, this paper will seek to answer the following research question; **to what extent have deliberative democratic theorists been able to incorporate mass participation and quality deliberation into a feasible model for democratic reform?**

There are two components of this research. First, it will analyse the place of participation and deliberation in each wave of theory. The shifting points of focus in each scholarly wave make it necessary to analyse the relationship between participation and deliberation in each wave or else key elements of deliberative democratic theory would be absent. Furthermore, a historical analysis is necessary because understanding how the relationship between participation and deliberation has changed across the waves will result in a better understanding of why place of participation and deliberation within the theory has changed (or not) over time. This would provide insights into the ability of deliberative democrats to overcome the tension between deliberation and participation. Furthermore, this historical analysis of the relationship between deliberation and participation in deliberative democracy is absent from the literature and it would add considerable value to the debate of whether deliberative democracy can stimulate higher levels of participation across society.

This is interdisciplinary research in the field of the history of political thought, which is a specific integration of the disciplines of history and philosophy. The core idea behind the history of political thought is that ideas have developed historically and these histories can be traced and understood (Charette and Skjönsberg 2020, 470). Deliberative democratic theory has undergone significant historical development, which creates the need for a historical analysis. The discipline of philosophy is required to understand the place of deliberation and participation within the theory. Therefore, an interdisciplinary approach is necessary to answer the research question because the paper aims to understand a historical development, and philosophical insights are necessary to understand this development. No other discipline would add considerable value to the research. There is a considerable amount of political science literature on the subject of deliberative democracy but the research will focus on the changing nature of the theory, rather than any measurable empirical phenomenon.

The paper will use a methodology based on a textual interpretation method developed by Quentin Skinner, which emphasises the importance of examining both the meaning of the text and the intellectual context of the text in order to understand the full meaning (Skinner 2002, 116). The analysis will interpret the relationship between quality deliberation and mass participation within seminal texts of each scholarly wave, starting with the origins of deliberative democratic theory. It is not feasible to analyse every single piece of literature within the field, but it is possible to pick out the most representative and influential literature from each wave to gain an approximate understanding of the relationship between participation and deliberation within each wave. Then, the findings will be compared to their intellectual context, which consists of the previous wave of theory.

The paper will be structured as follows; Section 2 will examine the participation crisis in liberal democratic states and how it impacts the legitimacy of democratic governance. Section 3 will introduce the core philosophy of deliberative democracy in a general sense and lays out why certain theorists argue it would enhance the legitimacy of democratic governance. Section 4 will explain the tension between quality deliberation and mass participation. Section 5 will clarify the aims, approach and methodology of the research. Section 6 will present the results and analysis of the research. Section 7 will provide concluding remarks.

2. The Crisis of Political Participation

Western liberal democracies are experiencing a crisis of political participation. Voter turnout, despite being quite stable, is consistently low and proportionally fewer people are voting in comparison to fifty years ago (Parvin 2018. 34). For instance, the three parliamentary elections between 2007 and 2017 in France had a mean turnout of 55.3% compared to a mean turnout of 74.6% in three elections between 1973 and 1981 (Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance 2021). Declines can also be seen in Germany, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and the United States over the same time period.[1] Low turnout is particularly apparent in local and European elections (Parvin 2018, 34). The four European Parliament elections between 2004 and 2019 had a mean turnout of 45.43% across the entire bloc (European Parliament 2019). Furthermore, political membership rates and trade union density, which are important indicators of political participation, have been declining consistently for decades. The two major political parties in Germany, Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands (CDU) and Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands (SPD), had 1,733,011 members combined in 1990. In 2013, this number had almost halved, with their combined membership totalling 940,738 (van Haute and Paulis 2016). In the Netherlands, the combined membership of the two major parties, Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie (VVD) and Partij van de Arbeid (PvdA), fell by 61% between 1979 and 2014 (van Haute and Paulis 2016). This trend can be seen across the OECD (Parvin 2018, 34). Similarly, trade union membership rates are continuing to decline. 22.8% of French workers were union members in 1975,

[1] Germany had a mean turnout of 83.5% in three parliamentary elections between 1971 and 1977. In three elections between 2009 and 2017, the mean turnout was 72.82%. The Netherlands had a mean turnout of 77.29% in three parliamentary elections between 2010 and 2017 compared to 83.66% in three elections between 1971 and 1977. The UK had a mean turnout of 73.69% in three elections between 1970 and 1979 and a mean turnout of 67.62% in three parliamentary elections between 2015 and 2019. The United States had a mean turnout of 75.93% in three parliamentary elections between 1970 and 1976 compared to 62.24% in three elections between 2014 and 2018. (Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance 2021)

which fell to 8.8% in 2018 (OECD/AIAS database on Institutional Characteristics of Trade Unions 2021). The Netherlands, Germany, and UK have experienced comparable declines in union membership rates.[2] These statistics show that civil society in Western liberal democracies is becoming less and less visible.

This crisis of political participation is worsened by the fact that the declines are largely attributable to an increasing lack of participation among the lower socio-economic classes (Parvin 2015, 34). Economic inequality has been consistently rising in liberal democratic states since the 1980s (Solt 2008, 48). Various studies have shown that economic inequality depresses political engagement, with a proven correlation between socio-economic inequality and overall levels of political participation (Lijphart 1997; Solt 2008). Social class is the most impactful characteristic that determines if an individual's political voice is heard and those with high levels of education are particularly likely to participate (Schlozman 2005, 19-22). Modern levels of economic inequality make the ideal of political equality between citizens nearly impossible (Gilens 2014, 1). Consequently, politics is increasingly becoming an elitist arena where the wealthy have a far greater influence than the rest of society.

Meanwhile, the advantages of wealth have become entrenched in the political process. Political campaigns have become far more expensive and, as a result, elected representatives have largely become reliant on wealthy actors to finance their campaigns, especially in the United States (Bartels 2012). The declines of political party and trade union membership have corresponded with professional lobby organisations and interest groups largely replacing grassroots associations as the voice of civil society in the political arena (Parvin 2015). This is despite being far less interested/capable in representing and mobilising the poorer sections of society (Bartels 2012, 1-2). These types of professional organisations engage in sophisticated lobbying campaigns and provide expert policy advice to representatives, despite rarely interacting with the population at large. In essence, a model of democracy that centred around representatives making decisions in consultation with citizens has shifted to a model where decision-making is conducted among elite political actors with very little to no relation with the general population (Parvin 2015, 35). It is a vicious cycle. As the democratic process becomes increasingly elitist, more people become disillusioned with the entire process, which leads to further declines in participation among the general population. The attitudes of citizens of the United Kingdom towards their political system exemplifies this situation. According to an audit by the Hansard Society (2019), 63% believe their system of government is rigged in favour of the rich and powerful. Furthermore, 47% think they have no influence over national decision-making (Hansard Society 2019). This is evidence of lower

[2] Trade union density in the Netherlands dropped from 37.8% in 1975 to 16.4% in 2018. In the UK, it dropped from 43.8% in 1975 to 23.4% in 2018. In Germany, it dropped from 34.6% in 1975 to 16.5% in 2018 (OECD/AIAS database on Institutional Characteristics of Trade Unions 2021).

socio-economic classes being left behind by the political system and feeling as though politicians do not represent their interests (Parvin 2015, 36). These developments have major consequences for our understanding of democracy.

Many justifications for the legitimacy of aggregative models of democracy require both high levels of citizen participation and participation across all sections of society (Fung 2015, 515). Western liberal states are pluralistic democracies, where citizenries have conflicting preferences, values and interests (Habermas 1996, 291). This diversity of political opinion makes it impossible for elected officials to represent the will of every citizen. Consequently, the legitimacy of decision-making in liberal democracies stems from a majority principle, as the elected government represents the will of the majority of society (Knight and Johnson 1987, 277). However, low participation rates result in elected governments representing the will of a minority of citizens, which undermines this justification for democratic governance. Moreover, broad participation across social classes is needed to prevent the rise of civil oligarchies and the control of democratic institutions by the rich and powerful (Parvin 2015, 32). Therefore, this crisis of participation within liberal democratic states impacts our ability to justify democratic governance because policies and decisions do not represent the political will of society at large. In response, many democratic theorists have embraced different ideas that they hope would strengthen the bond between citizens and political institutions, in order to revive public interest in democracy (Fung 2015, 515). In particular, the concept of deliberative democracy has risen to prominence in recent times.

3. Deliberative Democracy: An Introduction

Deliberative democracy is the most prominent idea in democratic theory, if not the entirety of political theory (Dryzek 2007, 237; Pateman 2012, 7). The increasing prevalence and influence of the concept, which largely emerged in the 1980s, is commonly referred to as the ‘deliberative turn’ of democratic theory (Chambers 2003, 307). The body of literature on the subject is extraordinary, with massive amounts of both theoretical and empirical research (Bächtiger et al. 2018). Moreover, deliberative democracy is becoming an increasingly prominent idea outside of universities (Pateman 2012, 7). Diane Mutz stated that the “amount of time and money invested in it by governments, foundations, and citizen groups is staggering relative to virtually any other current social science theory” (Mutz 2008, 535). It is argued that implementing a more deliberative model of democracy would enhance the legitimacy of

democratic governance (Bohman 1998; Habermas 1996; Mansbridge, Bohman, Chambers et al. 2012). This justification for deliberative democracy has been put forward against the backdrop of the participation crisis in liberal Western states, which is rendering aggregative models of democracy increasingly illegitimate (Fung 2015, 515; Parvin 2015, 32). However, there is significant debate in the field over whether embracing deliberative democracy provides a solution to declining political participation rates. Before delving into this debate, it is necessary to give a general introduction into deliberative democratic theory and explain why theorists argue deliberation lies at the centre of democratic legitimacy.

Deliberative democracy theory is an expansive field, in which there are various different traditions and models. Very generally, it is any practice of democracy where the public deliberation of equal citizens is a central component of political decision-making (Bohman 1998, 401). The exact meaning of deliberation, and what differentiates it from other forms of communication, varies among theorists. Simone Chambers put forward a broad definition, with deliberation constituting "debate and discussion aimed at producing reasonable, well-informed opinions in which participants are willing to revise preferences in light of discussion, new information, and claims made by fellow participants" (Chambers 2003, 309). In essence, deliberative democracy is a critique of aggregative models of democracy, where the extent of participation by most citizens is voting during the election of representatives (Bohman 1998, 400-401). In particular, deliberative democrats take issue with majority rule being the basis of legitimacy in aggregative democracies (Knight and Johnson 1997, 277). Jürgen Habermas, perhaps the most influential philosopher in deliberative democratic theory, argues that there is no objective standard for why the minority should accept being ruled by the majority in such systems (Habermas 1996, 291-295). It does not inherently lead to reasonable policies or an orientation to the common good for instance. Majority rule is only accepted because of an understanding that there is an internal struggle for power within democratic societies, and possessing a majority of votes gives that part of the population superior strength over the rest in that struggle (Habermas 1996, 292). This is not a satisfactory justification for majority rule. It results in strategic behaviour by political actors to maintain or gain power, rather than the crafting of optimal policy (Bohman 1998, 400).

Instead, there must be normative and objective standards for democratic decision-making (Habermas 1996, 292). Deliberative democrats argue that society must strive towards a consensus position on collective issues, which is reached through reason and an orientation towards the common good (Cohen 1989, 21). This is the essence of deliberative democracy. The goal of democracy should be to craft policies that all citizens can reasonably accept (Bohman 1998, 402). For deliberative democrats, the

ability of citizens to reach such a consensus is dependent on the quality of deliberation in political society. Therefore, deliberation is at the core of the legitimacy of democratic decision-making (Cohan 1989; Habermas 1996). Even if a consensus is not actually possible and majority rule is necessary, it is essential that the majority position is reached through rational and informed debate, in which the deliberating participants are focused on the common good (Cohen 1989, 23). Aiming for a consensus through deliberation, which is reached through reason and an orientation towards the common good, ensures that political outcomes are rational and represent the political will of the population as much as possible (Chambers 2003, 309; Cohen 1989). Moreover, in ideal deliberation, all participants must be equals, both formally and substantively. All rules regulating the deliberation must be the same for every participant at each stage of the deliberative process. Every participant can put an item on the agenda, can offer arguments for or against a proposal, and all must have an equal say in any decision. Furthermore, participants should be equal substantively, meaning that any existing differences in power or resources between the individuals must not influence the ability of a participant to contribute to the deliberation or impact the outcome of the deliberation (Cohen 1989, 22-23). Other standards for ideal deliberation include the need for mutual respect between participants, an absence of coercive power between participants and a requirement that deliberation generally occurs in public (Bächtiger et al. 2018, 4). If all these standards are met, it would result in political outcomes that are rational, broadly supported by the citizenry, and reflect the political will of the society (Dryzek and Braithwaite 2000, 241-242). It is important to understand that deliberative democracy is an ideal. The conditions and aims of perfect deliberation should not be seen as entirely plausible in the real world but offer a blueprint for democratic institutions to aim for (Cohen 1989, 22).

The provided understanding of deliberative democracy focuses on the normative foundations of the concept and why it is seen as a way of improving the legitimacy of democracy. These insights were largely formulated in the 1980s and 1990s, in what is considered the first wave of deliberative democratic theory (Cohen 1989; Habermas 1996; Manin et al. 1987). In the late 1990s and 2000s, the focus of the literature shifted to researching how deliberative democratic theory could be applied to political institutions in the real world. This second wave of scholarship, which is also known as the ‘empirical turn’, examined suitable institutional designs for quality deliberation, including the study of mini-publics (Fishkin 2009; Steiner, Bächtiger, Spörndli, et al. 2004) . Then in the late 2000s and 2010s, a third wave of scholarship emerged, known as ‘systemic turn’, which emphasised the need to evaluate the deliberative qualities of the political system as a whole, rather than just examining the quality of deliberation in individual institutions and forums (Goodin 2008; Mansbridge et al. 2012; Smith and Owen 2015). This approach to deliberative democracy claims that the standards of quality deliberation can be satisfied in

different institutions across the system and it is not necessary for every individual institution to meet all these standards (Mansbridge et al. 2012, 1).

4. The tension between deliberation and participation

There is significant debate surrounding whether striving towards this ideal of deliberative democracy would help to stimulate higher levels of political participation. Theorists often advocate for increasing both deliberation and participation in the same breath, but they are two different ideas and have stemmed from different traditions in democratic theory (Cohen and Fung 2004, 24). The concept of participatory democracy preceded deliberative democracy as a radical ideal, which placed a politically active citizenry at the core of democratic legitimacy. This tradition was prominent in the 1960s but its influence waned after various studies found most citizens were apathetic to politics (Pateman 2012, 7). Deliberative democracy then became the most influential radical ideal of democracy. Still, most deliberative democracy theorists favour greater citizen participation and tend to identify as participatory democrats as well (Goodin 2008, 266). However, Carole Pateman, an influential participatory democratic theorist, argues against the idea that deliberative democracy is a form of participatory democracy. She claims that while deliberation is a form of citizen participation and should be a central aspect of all models of democracy, deliberation should not be seen as the main condition that legitimises democratic governance (Pateman 2012, 8). In her view, mass citizen participation is more important and this distinction makes participatory democracy and deliberative democracy entirely different concepts with different aims. Also, she claims deliberative democrats have done little to promote political participation (Pateman 2012, 8). On the other hand, many deliberative democrats argue that deliberative democracy is merely an extension of participatory democracy. It just adds deliberation to the list of political activities that citizens participate in (Thompson 2008, 512).

However, the central debate is not whether deliberative democracy should be considered a form of participatory democracy but whether it is actually feasible to incorporate quality deliberation as a central component of a democratic system and maximise citizen participation at the same time. It is very possible that maximising either deliberation or participation would come at the cost of the other. Fung and Cohen laid out several reasons why quality deliberation and high levels of participation could be incompatible (Cohen and Fung 2004). First, embracing a deliberative model of democracy may systematically exclude

members of the public who are less capable of making informed and reasonable arguments. This could create an elitist system of government, where politicians are insulated from the public at large (Cohen and Fung 2004, 27). Second, maximising participation could very easily reduce the quality of deliberation. For example, referenda are a central mechanism for increasing the ability of the general public to contribute to a policy decision. However, they may actually discourage quality deliberation because the public is forced to vote yes or no on a predetermined policy position. This encourages exaggerated rhetoric on both sides, rather than reasoned public argumentation. Also, bringing the wrong group of people together to deliberate on policies could easily evolve into manipulation or posturing, especially if there is apathy towards addressing a common problem (Cohen and Fung 2004, 27). Finally, in a very general sense, Fung and Cohen state that high levels of deliberation and participation might just be undesirable. Deliberation requires that individuals have a certain degree of knowledge on the issues that are being addressed. The proportion of people that have expertise in a certain policy area will be small relative to the entire population, which means that the quality of deliberation would reduce as the amount of participants increases (Cohen and Fung 2004, 27).

James Fishkin further elucidates this tension between quality deliberation and mass participation. He does so by offering several reasons for why increased deliberation is not a path to bringing people back into the political process (Fishkin 2009, 1-8). The time-consuming nature of deliberation and the need for participants of deliberation to be informed on political issues makes it unlikely that deliberative democracy could stimulate higher levels of participation. He claims that motivating large numbers of citizens to become adequately informed on political issues is difficult because it is very unlikely that any one opinion will have an impact (Fishkin 2009, 2). Also, he claims that many people do not like to discuss their political opinions in public and the population actually has fewer political opinions than it is considered to have. Therefore, even if deliberative democracy could bring more people into the political process, it would likely have negative impacts on the quality of deliberation taking place (Fishkin 2009, 7).

Furthermore, various theorists have argued that deliberative democracy would actually have a negative impact on participation inequality between socio-economic classes (Parvin 2018; Young 1996). For instance, Phil Parvin rejects the idea that deliberative democracy provides a solution to the participation crisis. He claims that the erosion of civil society in recent decades makes a fully realised deliberative democracy, which empowers every citizen to contribute, is not feasible. A variety of different political, economic and social forces have caused large sections of society to be alienated from the political process and it is a fantasy to believe that these changes can be reversed (Parvin 2018, 33). The ideal of

deliberative democracy requires citizens to engage through a vibrant public sphere, which Parvin argues does not really exist anymore. Citizens are not participating due to a systemic exclusion from the political process, rather than not having the opportunity to contribute to policy (Parvin 2018, 36). Striving for a deliberative model of democracy would perpetuate existing inequalities of participation. Instead, he proposes smaller scale solutions, such as strengthening representative institutions and the implementation of mini-publics (Parvin 2015, 33). Moreover, Iris Young criticised the emphasis placed on reason and the common good within deliberative democratic theory. This advantages the educated and wealthier sections of society, because less educated people are less capable of providing reasoned arguments for their positions. She claims that forms of communications such as storytelling, rhetoric and specific cultural and gendered styles of speech should be valued (Young 1996, 129).

In response, some deliberative democratic theorists have defended striving for high levels of participation. Simone Chambers (2009) argues against advocating for smaller scale deliberative institutions and affirms a belief in a vision of deliberative democracy that incorporates mass participation by the public at large. She claims that if deliberative democracy abandons an ideal of mass participation, it would send the concept toward a path of "participatory elitism", where the tiny fraction of citizens that participate in small-scale deliberative institutions would have more democratic legitimacy than the mass electorate (Chambers 2009, 344).

5. Research Question & Approach

It is evident that there is a tension between the ideals of quality deliberation and mass participation. Deliberative democracy is the most influential and prominent idea in democratic theory and it is necessary to understand if it can overcome this tension. If it cannot, the possibility of deliberative democracy providing feasible solutions to the participation crisis by encouraging higher levels of political engagement is highly unlikely, since deliberative democrats will likely always prioritise deliberation.

Hence, this paper will seek to answer the following question: **to what extent have deliberative democratic theorists been able to incorporate mass participation and quality deliberation into a feasible model for democratic reform?**

As we have seen, deliberative democratic theory is popularly categorised through three different waves of scholarship, in which the focus and aim of the literature differs (Mansbridge et al. 2012; Smith and Owen 2015). Consequently, it is necessary to analyse the place of quality deliberation and mass participation in each of these three waves, or else the research would not be presenting a full picture of deliberative democratic theory. Therefore, the following sub-question is necessary for the research; **how does each wave of deliberative democratic theory address the values of quality deliberation and mass participation?**

Furthermore, the shifting focus and points of emphasis in the three waves of scholarship is a historical development. The literature of the empirical turn was researched and published after the initial wave already existed. Similarly, the literature of the systemic turn was largely developed after both previous waves of scholarship. Hence, it is possible to analyse how the relationship between quality deliberation and mass participation in deliberative democratic theory changed between each wave. By doing this historical analysis as well, it will provide a more thorough understanding into the ability of deliberative democrats to overcome the tension between participation and deliberation. Thus, this paper will also address the following sub-question; **how has the relationship between deliberation and participation changed through the development of deliberative democratic theory?**

This is interdisciplinary research, which is essentially a work in the history of political thought. This discipline is a specific integration of philosophy and history, in which the core idea is that ideas have developed historically and these histories can be traced and understood (Charette and Skjönsberg 2020, 470). It is necessary to study the philosophy of deliberative democracy to be able to grasp how participation and deliberation fit into the theory. Since deliberative democratic theory has developed over time through these waves, it is necessary to historically analyse this development to gain a more comprehensive understanding of why the relationship between participation and deliberation has changed (or not) over time. This would provide important insights into whether deliberative democrats can incorporate both values into a feasible conception of democracy.

This paper will use a method for textual interpretation, which was developed by Quentin Skinner, who is considered one of the most influential scholars in the discipline of the history of political thought (Blau 2017, 343; Charette and Skjönsberg 2020, 473). The following quote from Skinner sums up the method:

“We should start by elucidating the meaning, and hence the subject matter, of the utterances in which we are interested and then turn to the argumentative context of their occurrence to determine how exactly

they connect with, or relate to, other utterances concerned with the same subject matter." (Skinner 2002, 116)

There are two central components to this method, which fit correspondingly to each of the sub-questions. First, the research needs to interpret "the meaning, and hence the subject matter, of the utterances in which we are interested". To answer the first sub-question, it is necessary to understand how each wave of theory addresses the values of mass participation and quality deliberation. Since deliberative democratic theory is contained with philosophical and empirical texts, it is necessary to interpret the place of participation and deliberation from these texts. Second, the research must "turn to the argumentative context of their occurrence to determine how exactly they connect with, or relate to, other utterances concerned with the same subject matter". The argumentative, or intellectual, context of each wave of deliberative democratic theory was the preceding wave of theory. By analysing how the relationship of deliberation and participation in each wave relates to the corresponding relationship between these values within the previous wave(s), it is possible to answer the second sub-question. Combining insights from research into these sub-questions, it will be possible to come to an understanding of the ability of deliberative democrats to incorporate mass participation and quality deliberation into a feasible conception of democracy, which is the main research question of this paper.

To execute this research, it is necessary to pick out the most influential and representative texts from each wave of theory, since it is not feasible to analyse every important piece of literature in the field. For the initial wave of theory, this paper will analyse 'Deliberation and Democratic Legitimacy' (1989) by Joshua Cohen and chapter 'Deliberative Politics' in *Between Facts and Norms* (1992) by Jürgen Habermas. 'Deliberation and Democratic Legitimacy' has been labelled as one of one foundational texts of deliberative democratic theory (Floridia 2018, 7-8). Cohen develops an ideal deliberative procedure, which has been extremely influential and established many of the core ideals of deliberation within the theory (Floridia 2018, 9). Jürgen Habermas has possibly been the most important philosopher in deliberative democratic theory and 'Deliberative Politics' lays out his central ideas, which have influenced many of the important scholars in the field, including John Dryzek and Simone Chambers (Chambers 1996; Florida 2018, 14-15). For the empirical turn, the analysis will focus on the chapter 'Democratic Aspirations' in *When the People Speak* (2009) by James Fishkin and 'Recipes for Public Spheres: 'Eight Institutional Design Choices and Their Consequences' (2003) by Archon Fung. Fishkin developed the deliberative poll, which is one of the most important examples of a practical application of deliberative democratic theory (Fung 2003, 354). 'Democratic Aspirations' lays out institutional designs for public consultation, one of which is the deliberative poll. 'Eight Institutional Design Choices and

Their Consequences' is a widely cited and very informative survey article that lays out different design choices and justifications for mini-publics. This paper is very representative of the empirical turn (Smith and Owen 2015, 214). Finally, the analysis of the systemic turn will mostly examine 'A Systemic Approach to Deliberative Democracy' (2012) by Jane Mansbridge, James Bohman, Simone Chambers et al. This article was written by eight very prominent scholars in the field and has been described as a 'manifesto' for the systemic turn (Smith and Owen 2015, 213). It lays out exactly what it means to approach deliberative democracy from a systems point of view.

6. Results and Analysis

6.1 How does each wave of deliberative democratic theory address the values of quality deliberation and mass participation?

6.1.1 The First Wave

The analysis of the first wave of deliberative democratic theory will focus on 'Deliberation and Democratic Legitimacy' (1989) by Joshua Cohen and the chapter 'Deliberative Politics' in *Between Facts and Norms* (1996) by Jürgen Habermas. In 'Deliberation and Democratic Legitimacy', Cohen presents his formal conception of a deliberative democracy, which is substantiated through his ideal deliberative procedure. First, this analysis will examine the participatory elements of his formal conception of a deliberative democracy and then address the place of participation within his ideal deliberative procedure.

In Cohen's formal conception of a deliberative democracy, citizens have pluralistic values and preferences, citizens are committed to solving common problems through public deliberation and deliberative procedures are the source of the legitimacy of democratic governance (Cohen 1989, 21). There are two aspects of this conception that are relevant for this analysis. 1) Cohen states that democratic governance is legitimate when the rules of the game are developed through the public deliberation of free and equal citizens (Cohen 1989, 21). This is necessary because citizens have pluralistic values and preferences. This indicates that it might be necessary for every individual who will be subject to democratic rule to participate in the deliberations that establish the terms and conditions of

this democracy. Here, Cohen is drawing upon the idea of John Rawls' original position (Cohen 1989, 19-20). This is a hypothetical scenario, which presents an ideal situation where the rules of a democratic association are formed through deliberations, in which the values, preferences and interests of all in the association are represented equally (Rawls 1971, 221-222). This ensures that the rules of the association will be acceptable to every citizen. However, it is not stated that it is totally necessary for every citizen to participate, as long as their preferences and interests are being represented in this deliberation. Therefore, mass participation is not a requirement for establishing the rules of the game, even within this hypothetical ideal scenario, as long as every citizen is represented. 2) Cohen states that since citizens "share a commitment to the resolution of problems of collective choice through public reasoning", the legitimacy of democratic institutions are only legitimate if they create a framework for free public deliberation (Cohen 1989, 21). This component of his conception of a deliberative democracy does present an ideal of a highly engaged citizenry that is politically oriented. It is not a specific proportion of citizens who are dedicated to solving common issues through reasoned debate and discussion but all citizens. His requirement that institutions create a framework for these public deliberations illustrates that the society as a whole is deliberative and politically active (Habermas 1996, 305). Therefore, mass participation and deliberation work together to establish the legitimacy of democratic rule within Cohen's ideal conception of a deliberative democracy.

However, the analysis has yet to address what constitutes quality deliberation for Cohen, and how this relates to mass participation. Cohen defines the conditions and aims of quality deliberation through his ideal deliberative procedure, which acts as a blueprint that democratic institutions should mirror as much as possible (Cohen 1989, 22). It has four components. 1) Ideal deliberation is free, meaning that the participants can put forward any argument and consider any proposal without being bound to any norms or previous experiences (Cohen 1989, 22). This is fully compatible with mass participation, as no citizen is restricted in their ability to put forward arguments and proposals. 2) The essence of ideal deliberation lies in reasons, in which the better argument must prevail. Any participant that is for or against a proposal must state their reasons for why they occupy that position (Cohen 1989, 22). This condition can be critiqued from a participatory point of view. It can be viewed as favouring the more educated and wealthy parts of society who are more accustomed to presenting arguments based in reason and rationality (Bohman 1998, 410). However, within Cohen's conception of a deliberative democratic society, these differences in education and wealth are not considered because he is presenting an ideal vision of society, rather than something that should be applied to the real world. 3) There must be equality between participants, meaning that all rules apply to everyone and any difference in economic or social status has no impact on a participant's ability to take part or involve themselves in the deliberative process (Cohen

1989, 22-23). This does not create a tension with an ideal of mass participation as the involvement of all citizens is not impacted by external factors. 4) The final condition, which does relate to participation, is that there is an aim at achieving a consensus or, in other words, ideal deliberation results in reasoned outcomes that every citizen can accept (Cohen 1989, 23).

In Cohen's ideal conception of a deliberative democracy, which is a politically oriented society with a fully engaged citizenry that is motivated to solve common problems through deliberation, mass participation and quality deliberation are not in tension and both values provide the basis for democratic legitimacy. Cohen's ideas have been extremely important in deliberative democratic theory, especially his ideal deliberative procedure (Floridia 2018, 9). However, this ideal of a politically constituted society, which can be regulated by a procedure, has been criticised as an impossible ideal, particularly by Jürgen Habermas (Habermas 1996, 305-308). In Between Facts and Norms (1996), Habermas presents his hugely influential 'two-track' approach to deliberative democracy. This analysis will focus on the chapter 'Deliberative Politics'. Habermas, like Cohen, expresses a procedural ideal for deliberation in democratic societies. However, he is critical of how widely Cohen thinks his ideal deliberative procedure should be applied across social institutions . Habermas rejects the plausibility of the idea that societies can be politically oriented and shaped by widespread deliberation (Habermas 1996, 305). Therefore, he presents a less participatory vision of a deliberative democracy. He claims democratic procedures would not be able to regulate themselves in broader society because it is too complex. Instead, he strives to understand a procedure from which the legitimacy of decision-making is derived within a "separate, constitutionally organised political system" (Habermas 1996, 305). In other words, he wants to understand how an institutionalised political system, which is separated from broader society, can make legitimate decisions that represent the true will of the people. Unlike Cohen, this procedure should not be regulating social institutions across society but only certain government institutions (Habermas 1996, 305). It is a 'two-track' approach to deliberative democracy because Habermas emphasises the relation between formal government institutions and the informal public sphere, which cannot be regulated by democratic institutions (Habermas 1996, 307).

Habermas' two-track approach distinguishes the role played by formal government institutions and the informal public sphere. Since formal political institutions have the responsibility of making decisions and creating laws, deliberation in these institutions must be regulated by democratic procedures (Habermas 1996, 307). These procedures organise how assemblies are set up and run, as well as how deliberations between representatives should be structured within these institutions. They also ensure a process of justification, as representatives must provide reasons for why the public must be subjected to the laws that

they pass. It is in these formal institutions where ideal quality deliberation can be evaluated through these procedures (Habermas 1996, 307). Therefore, quality deliberation between representatives is central to the legitimacy of democratic governance, according to Habermas. However, this is not sufficient. Legitimacy is also dependent on the interplay between these formal institutions and a totally free and unregulated informal public sphere, made up of a vast anarchic network of civil associations and publics (Habermas 1996, 307-308). This is where it is possible to analyse the place of mass participation within Habermas' two-track approach. It is in this unregulated public sphere where the political opinions of the public as a whole are formed. The unregulated deliberations in this informal public sphere supply the formal decision-oriented institutions with opinions from which the legitimacy of decisions and laws are derived (Habermas 1996, 307-308). He argues that the advantage of unregulated deliberations is that discussions are totally unrestricted, which makes it easier to identify common societal issues than in regulated settings (Habermas 1996, 308). This vision of a public sphere, where widespread informal deliberations within a large number of civil associations and publics are necessary for the legitimacy of democracy, places a lot of emphasis on mass participation. Citizens are not directly contributing to the formulation of policies or laws, but they are engaging in widespread political discussions throughout civil society. This informs a political will that formal institutions must represent. Furthermore, Habermas states that good public discourse in the informal public sphere is dependent on an egalitarian political culture, with broad and active participation amongst the population (Habermas 1996, 490). The two-track approach presents a vision of society where quality deliberation and large-scale participation are both necessary for the legitimacy of democracy, but they occur in different domains.

Habermas and Cohen both present an ideal vision of deliberative democracy that it is not meant to be directly applied to the real world. This is indicative of the first wave of theory, which built the normative foundations of deliberative democracy (Bohman 1998). Both Cohen and Habermas present very participatory ideals of deliberative democracy. For Cohen, his formal conception of a deliberative democracy presents a politically constituted society in which free and equal citizens are committed to solving common issues through public deliberation. Habermas presents a two-track model where quality procedurally-regulated deliberations and mass participation are both essential for the legitimacy of democratic rule. However, they occur in two distinct arenas and legitimacy is derived from the interplay between these two arenas. The origins of deliberative democracy present conceptions of society that can incorporate mass participation and quality deliberation into a political system but in reality, these conceptions are not really feasible. They do not present ways to practically apply the theory to existing political systems but present ideal visions of society that are separate from reality. The tension between mass participation and quality deliberation is not natural but exists due to specific phenomena in modern

day societies, such as a widespread apathy/disillusionment with politics, educational inequality or time constraints (See Section 4) . Therefore, the initial wave of theory fails to illustrate that mass participation and quality deliberation can be incorporated into a feasible conception of democracy.

6.1.2 The Empirical Turn

In the empirical turn, the focus of research shifted to practical applications of deliberative democratic theory, in which the study of mini-publics became very prominent. The analysis of this 'empirical turn' will examine how mass participation and quality deliberation are addressed in 'Recipes for Public Spheres: 'Eight Institutional Design Choices and Their Consequences' (2003) by Archon Fung and the chapter 'Democratic Aspirations' in *When the People Speak* (2009) by James Fishkin. In 'Eight Institutional Design Choices and Their Consequences', Fung presents an overview of different institutional designs for mini-publics. Mini-publics are organised public deliberations that convene a limited number of citizens (Fung 2003, 338-339). Fung argues that, despite having a limited number of participants, deliberative democrats should embrace mini-publics. They offer one of the most promising ways to enhance engagement in the political process and promote public political discussion. Also, the proliferation of mini-publics may prove more effective at improving the public sphere than large-scale reforms to the system (Fung 2003, 338). The analysis will examine the place of participation in the institutional designs that Fung explains.

Mini-publics can be organised in a multitude of different ways, depending on what one considers to be ideal conditions for deliberation (Fung 2003, 340). The most common type are educational forums that create the conditions for quality deliberation where citizens can form opinions and put forward arguments about certain public problems (340-341). Furthermore, these specifically designed forums can approximate ideal deliberation much more closely than public debates in the public sphere at large (Fung 2003, 340). Quality deliberation is generally the priority for the advocates of mini-publics, who share the aim of increasing civic engagement through the deliberation of citizens. Some mini-publics try to include voices that are usually less heard in a natural public sphere due to structural disadvantages, like the lower socio-economic classes (Fung 2003, 340). By trying to empower certain groups that might otherwise be silent in public debates, these mini-publics do have certain participatory benefits, which could benefit political equality. However, the most common mechanism for choosing participants in mini-publics is voluntary self-selection, which Fung is critical of (Fung 2003, 342). People who volunteer are likely engaged in the political process anyway, and they have the time and resources to be able to participate.

This results in a disproportionate number of wealthy and highly educated individuals taking part in comparison to the overall population (Fung 2003, 342). Fung suggests various solutions to this issue. Mini-publics can choose their participants in order to ensure that the make-up of the mini-public is demographically similar to that of the population. Also, the organisers of mini-publics can actively recruit participants (Fung 2003, 342). While mini-publics can have certain participatory benefits by ensuring that the composition of the mini-publics reflects the composition of the public at large, they still have very limited amounts of participants. Unless democratic systems can establish vast networks of mini-publics that can inform decision-making processes, it seems likely that embracing mini-publics is abandoning an ideal of mass participation.

The chapter 'Democratic Aspirations' in *When the People Speak* by James Fishkin contemplates how deliberative models of democracy can effectively incorporate the values of inclusion and thoughtfulness (Fishkin 2009, 1). He claims that achieving both large scale participation and quality deliberation is extremely difficult, because embracing one often results in a decrease in the other (see Section 4). Fishkin argues that small scale deliberations can have a sufficient level of inclusion if the participants are a representative and random sample of the general population (Fishkin 2009, 8). He claims the solution lies in the institutional design of small-scale deliberations, or mini-publics as they are commonly referred to. Achieving thoughtfulness and representativeness in these mini-publics depends on the quality of the institutional design (Fishkin 2009, 8). Hence, Fishkin examines eight different methods of public consultation, four of which assess raw public opinion through aggregation and the other four assess refined public opinion, in which participants can explain their preferences and voting decisions. The four different methods in each category are distinguished by whose opinion the method is assessing, from self-selected participants to "everyone" (Fishkin 2009, 21-31).

This analysis will focus on two of the methods for assessing refined public opinion that Fishkin claims achieve both values of inclusion and deliberation (Fishkin 2009, 30). First, there is the method that assesses the refined opinions of a random sample of the population. The main example of such a method is deliberative polling. The explicit goal of deliberative polling is to combine random sampling with deliberation (Fishkin 2009, 25). Participants are selected at random and take an initial survey on a certain issue. Then, they are invited to a weekend of in-person deliberation and the participants are given a basic balanced briefing on the issue. Over the course of the weekend, the participants engage in deliberation in small random groups with trained moderators, in conditions that approximate an ideal deliberative forum. At the end of the weekend, they retake the initial survey they took before the weekend and these results are published along with certain specifics from the discussions (Fishkin 2009, 26). Fishkin argues that

deliberative polling is highly representative and quality deliberation takes place. However, the ideal of mass participation is totally absent within deliberative polling. The explicit goal is to combine random sampling with deliberation to understand the refined opinions of a small representative group of the population. Fishkin admits that while deliberating polling promotes political equality through random selection, it does not achieve another aspect of inclusion, which is mass participation (Fishkin 2009, 28). Consequently, he proposes the second interesting method of public consultation, which he labels "Deliberation Day". The goal of Deliberation Day is to assess the refined opinions of "everyone". The idea is that one week before elections, there is a national holiday in which all voters are invited to participate in randomly assigned discussion groups in order to prepare for the election. Furthermore, citizens are incentivized to take part as they would get paid for a full day's work of citizenship (Fishkin 2009, 29-30). Fishkin claims that this is the first practical institutional proposal that incorporates both mass participation and quality deliberation (Fishkin 2009, 30). However, there are issues with Deliberation Day. Mass participation in deliberation would only occur before elections, which are relatively infrequent events. It is very beneficial to inform voters but citizens would not have a lot of practice in the art of discussion and debate. This may result in low quality deliberation. Furthermore, educational inequalities between participants in different discussion groups would likely have a large impact on who participates in the discussions effectively. It must be ensured that discussions are quite general, assuming that there are participants with relatively little knowledge on certain topics, and that political jargon is avoided. This provides another reason for why the quality of deliberation may be impacted by such large scale participation. Nonetheless, Deliberation Day does provide a promising foundation for deliberative democrats who value both participation and deliberation.

This analysis illustrates that the empirical turn has struggled to incorporate mass participation and quality deliberation into practical applications of deliberative democratic theory. The institutional designs of mini-publics that Fung laid out can create the conditions for ideal deliberation and approximate certain values of political equality through random selection but they remain small-scale institutions with very limited capacity. Fishkin's method of deliberative polling is a specific type of mini-public that embodies this problem. It is clear mini-publics have many benefits, including informing voters and ensuring less powerful and wealthy sections of society are heard. However, from a participatory perspective, it is problematic to inform policies and decisions through deliberations in mini-publics, as these decisions would be representing the will of a small portion of the population. The idea of Deliberation Day presents an encouraging institutional proposal, which incorporates mass participation and deliberation. However, ensuring a high quality of deliberation seems a difficult obstacle.

6.1.3 The Systemic Turn

Finally, the analysis reaches the systemic turn of deliberative democratic theory. This wave of theory focuses on deliberation that occurs throughout the political system, rather than any one institution. This section will analyse 'A Systemic Approach to Deliberative Democracy' by Jane Mansbridge, James Bohman, Simone Chambers et al (2012). This paper explains what a systemic approach to deliberative democracy entails and justifies why a systemic approach is valuable (Mansbridge et al. 2012). The analysis will examine the effect of embracing a systemic approach on stimulating participation and facilitating quality deliberation. Mansbridge et al. state that most research into practical applications of deliberative democratic theory have concentrated "on a single episode of deliberation, as in one-time group discussions, or on a continuing series with the same group or in the same type of institution" (Mansbridge et al. 2012, 1). However, they argue that no single institution or forum can possibly incorporate all the necessary conditions for ideal deliberation (Mansbridge et al. 2012, 1). Therefore, most policies cannot be legitimated by a single forum or institution of deliberation. Mansbridge et al. state the democratic societies are complex and a vast network of different institutions and associations have an impact on the political process, including the media, schools, government institutions, lobbyist groups, and informal networks (Mansbridge et al. 2012, 2). Consequently, it is necessary to look at how individual institutions interact within the entire political system and shift the focus of research away from solely examining the deliberative qualities of individual forums (Mansbridge et al. 2012, 2). The authors call this a systemic approach to deliberative democracy. A system, as defined by the authors, is a "set of distinguishable, differentiated, but to some degree interdependent parts, often with distributed functions and a division of labour, connected in such a way as to form a complex whole" (Mansbridge et al. 2012, 4). Within a deliberative system, these different parts can embody different elements of ideal deliberation, rather every single institution needing to have all of these deliberative qualities, such as publicity, equality and a requirement for reason (Mansbridge et al. 2012, 5).

By looking at the contributions of different non-government institutions and associations, a systemic approach increases the scope for participation within the political system (Mansbridge et al. 2012, 2). There is far more room to incorporate the general public into a deliberative system than into single forums. However, it is important to understand how these institutions, which are not directly involved in decision-making and the formulation of policy, are influencing representatives and officials. This is not clear within the paper. A substantive procedure for judging the quality of a deliberative system is absent. Still, the participatory benefits of a systemic approach are clear, because it is at least possible to involve a large number of citizens. However, the benefits for quality deliberation are less clear. Mansbridge et al.

argue that a benefit of a systemic approach is that certain institutions which embody negative deliberative qualities can be a valuable part of a deliberative system by advancing certain other beneficial deliberative qualities. For example, the authors argue that partisan rhetoric can benefit deliberation by fostering inclusion, despite violating other essential ideals of deliberation like mutual respect (Mansbridge et al. 2012, 3). While this may be true, the authors are making ideal deliberation less demanding and easier to achieve. By embracing this division of labour and allowing different institutions and associations to contain different elements of quality deliberation, it is possible that a system can be labelled sufficiently deliberative without any quality deliberation taking place in any one forum (Smith and Owen 2015, 218). It feels as though deliberative democrats are trying to increase the scope for participation within the system by abandoning an ideal of quality deliberation between free and equal citizens.

6.2 How has the relationship between deliberation and participation changed through the development of deliberative democratic theory?

Thus far, this paper has analysed how each wave of deliberative democratic theory addresses the values of mass participation and quality deliberation. This section will examine how the relationship between mass participation and quality deliberation changed between each wave of theory. Understanding the nature of the development of this relationship over time will provide valuable insights into the ability of deliberative democrats to incorporate both mass participation and quality deliberation into a feasible conception of democracy.

The analysis of how the values of mass participation and quality participation are addressed in 'Deliberation and Democratic Legitimacy' (1989) by Joshua Cohen and the chapter 'Deliberative Politics' in *Between Facts and Norms* (1996) by Jürgen Habermas showed that the initial wave of deliberative democratic theory did embody ideals of mass participation and quality deliberation. Cohen presents an ideal of a democratic society with a highly engaged and active citizenry that engages in free and equal discussions with an orientation to the common good. These discussions are all regulated by an ideal deliberative procedure that ensures that any decisions based on these deliberations can be considered legitimate (Cohen 1989, 22-23). Habermas elucidates a two-track approach to deliberative democratic theory, in which the legitimacy of laws is derived from the interaction between an active and egalitarian informal public sphere and formal government institutions, where deliberations are procedurally regulated to ensure decisions represent the will of the people (Habermas 1996, 307-308). These texts illustrate that

theorists in the initial wave of deliberative democratic theory did value both mass participation and quality deliberation. However, Cohen and Habermas both formulate ideal conceptions of a deliberative democracy, which do not address the structural issues that depress participation rates.

The initial wave of theory provided the intellectual context for the empirical turn in deliberative democratic theory. This paper analysed 'Eight Institutional Design Choices and Their Consequences' (2003) by Archon Fung and the chapter 'Democratic Aspirations' in *When the People Speak* (2009) by James Fishkin to develop an understanding of the place of mass participation and quality deliberation in the empirical turn of theory, where deliberative democrats shifted the focus of research to institutional designs for quality deliberation in the real world. There are stark differences in the relationship between mass participation and quality deliberation in the empirical turn compared to the initial wave of theory. The focus became on creating conditions for ideal deliberation in reality, and theorists embraced mini-publics and small-scale institutional designs where this was possible. Consequently, mass participation was abandoned as an ideal by many theorists (Chambers 2009). This illustrates that theorists could not develop feasible large-scale institutional designs where quality deliberation can take place. It is clear that moving towards a more deliberative model of democracy needs to be done incrementally. Ideal visions of deliberative democracy where highly engaged citizenries are instrumental for the legitimacy of democratic decision-making cannot be implemented quickly. They require a total shift in political culture, where populations are far more politically active and inequalities of power and education are less impactful on who can participate in the political process. Therefore, it is very logical to argue that it is necessary to focus on small-scale solutions first. However, it remains that deliberative democrats in the empirical turn did not present ways to move beyond small-scale solutions. Fishkin's concept of a Deliberation Day is a rare attempt at incorporating both mass participation and deliberation into an institutional design but whether it can facilitate quality deliberation is questionable (see Section 6.1.2).
As deliberative democratic theory moved from ideal visions of democratic society to the real world applications, the tension between quality deliberation and mass participation became evident and theorists in the empirical turn struggled to overcome this tension.

The ideal conceptions of deliberative democracy in the initial wave and the study of institutional applications of the theory in the empirical turn provide the intellectual context for the systemic turn of deliberative democratic theory. The analysis of 'A Systemic Approach to Deliberative Democracy' by Jane Mansbridge, James Bohman, Simone Chambers et al. illustrated a concern among deliberative democrats that research was too focused on the deliberative qualities of single institutions and forums. Instead, the deliberative qualities of entire political systems should be analysed because it is impossible to

incorporate every ideal of deliberation into a single institution (Mansbridge et al. 2012, 1-2). The place of mass participation and the nature of ideal deliberation changed considerably compared to the empirical turn. The analysis in Section 6.1.3 showed that a systemic approach increases the scope for participation considerably, compared to judging individual institutions, by valuing the role of a wide range of civil associations and institutions in creating a quality deliberative system. This is embracing certain ideas from the initial wave of theory and seems particularly inspired by the ideas of Habermas. His two-track approach valued the contributions of a vast network of publics and civil associations in an informal public sphere. The role of civil society at large in quality deliberation is absent in prominent literature of the empirical turn. It could be argued that deliberative democrats felt that incorporating different social institutions was the best way to increase the scope of participation within a deliberative system. However, the systemic approach is problematic for quality deliberation. Mansbridge et al. argue that different elements of ideal deliberation can happen in different institutions and even practices that are considered damaging for deliberation can be present if they stimulate other ideal qualities of deliberation (Mansbridge et al. 2012, 3). Consequently, the presence of ideal deliberation where free and equal citizens have reasoned discussions may not be necessary for a system to be considered sufficiently deliberative. Therefore, by increasing the scope for participation, it is unclear how a deliberative system can ensure that there is high quality deliberation taking place in any one institution or forum. A procedure for judging the deliberative qualities of a deliberative system is also lacking. This is in stark contrast to the empirical wave of theory where creating the conditions for quality deliberation were the priority at the expense of large-scale participation. Therefore, the tension between ideal deliberation and mass participation is extremely apparent in the historical evolution of deliberative democratic theory. Both of these values are prominent in the normative visions of deliberative democracy that were developed in the initial wave. However, as theorists started applying this theory to the real world, attempts to incorporate either mass participation or ideal deliberation had a negative impact on the other.

7. Conclusion

To what extent have deliberative democratic theorists been able to incorporate mass participation and quality deliberation into a feasible model for democratic reform?

The aim of this research is to understand whether deliberative democratic theorists can incorporate values of mass participation and quality deliberation into a feasible model for democratic reform. This involved answering two sub-questions that provided insights from two different perspectives. First, this paper examined how each wave of deliberative democratic theory addressed the values of mass participation and quality deliberation. Second, it analysed the historical evolution of the relationship between mass participation over the three waves of theory. This conclusion will combine the insights from each of these perspectives to form a more comprehensive and interdisciplinary understanding of the ability of deliberative democracy to stimulate more political participation, while also placing quality deliberation at the centre of the political process.

The analysis of the first sub-question provided valuable insights. The initial wave of theory placed a lot of importance on both mass participation and quality deliberation. Cohen places a politically-engaged citizenry, which is committed to solving common issues through free deliberation, at the core of his ideal conception of a democracy. Meanwhile, Habermas argues that the interaction between unregulated deliberations in a vast and active informal public sphere and procedurally regulated deliberations in formal institutions to be vital for the legitimacy of democratic governance. However, the literature focuses on developing an ideal conception of deliberative democracy and what constitutes ideal deliberation. Therefore, it does not provide substantive ways to reform current democratic systems and thus suffers from a lack of feasibility. The empirical turn focused on practical applications of deliberative democratic theory by researching institutional designs that create the perfect conditions for ideal deliberation. The literature on small-scale solutions, such as mini-publics, and consequently largely abandons an ideal of mass participation. Finally, the systemic turn placed more emphasis on the deliberative qualities of the entire political system, instead of focusing on single institutions and forums. This allows one to consider the role of civil organizations and associations in a deliberative political system, which increases the scope for participation. However, focusing on the system, rather than individual deliberative institutions, makes it difficult to ensure that quality deliberation is taking place and it is unclear how to fully judge what constitutes an ideal deliberative political system. Overall, deliberative democratic theory has been unable to successfully incorporate mass participation and quality deliberation into realistic methods for reforming democratic systems.

The historical analysis of this evolution within deliberative democratic theory illuminates the difficulty of theorists to overcome the tension between mass participation and quality deliberation. It is possible to view the shifting focus of research over time as an attempt by deliberative democrats to find ways to get

around this tension. When deliberative democractic theorists started to research how to apply the theory to real political systems in the empirical turn, they embraced mini-publics and small-scale solutions. These solutions could be inclusive through representing the demographic composition of the general population or through random selection but largely abandoned mass participation. Then, the systemic turn rejected this focus on small-scale solutions and tried to reincorporate large-scale participation by judging the deliberative qualities of entire political systems. However, it can be argued that a systemic approach could lead to lower standards of deliberation taking place. Therefore, despite repeatedly trying to overcome this tension between mass participation and quality deliberation, deliberative democrats have been unsuccessful.

Combining these insights presents a pessimistic view of whether deliberative democrats can incorporate both mass participation and quality deliberation into a feasible model for democratic reform. The central literature in each wave has been unconvincing in this effort. Furthermore, the historical development illustrates that they have tried various different approaches to overcome this tension, which illuminates the lack of compatibility between mass participation and quality deliberation. However, it would be too critical to argue that deliberative democracy should be abandoned as a possible solution to the crisis of political participation. The systemic wave is a promising development from a participatory perspective. The central issues that this paper has with a systemic approach is that there is a lack of substantive methods for how to judge a deliberative system and a lack of clarity over how different parts of the system work together to facilitate quality deliberation. It is possible that these issues could be overcome with further research. Furthermore, the idea of Deliberation Day does present a feasible institutional solution that does combine mass participation and deliberation but could suffer from lower quality deliberation. However, this is an obstacle that could be overcome with further research as well.

This paper has provided a detailed overview of the tension between mass participation and quality deliberation and how this tension has impacted the evolution of deliberative democratic theory. The existing literature lacks such a comprehensive analysis of the relationship between mass participation and quality deliberation and this paper has illuminated the difficulty that deliberative democrats are facing in providing solutions to the crisis of political participation. The interdisciplinary approach, combining philosophical and historical analysis, resulted in a more substantive and comprehensive understanding of this tension. The absence of either discipline would make this research less valuable because both elements of the analysis produced insights that were necessary to fully grasp the nature of the relationship of mass participation and quality deliberation in deliberative democratic theory, namely what is the nature of this relationship and why it evolved in the way that it did. However, there are elements of this research

that could have been improved. It would have been more valuable if the analysis included more literature from each wave. There was an attempt to pick out the most representative and important literature from each wave due to time constraints, but there is a large amount of important literature that has been left out and thus it does not present a full account of deliberative democratic theory. Moreover, this paper did not provide any possible solutions to the problem. It is necessary for further research to be undertaken to further develop a systemic approach to deliberative democracy, which this paper sees as the most promising avenue for providing a feasible model for democratic reform that can incorporate high levels of participation and quality deliberation.

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