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Review of: Liberalism and Pluralism: Towards a Politics of Compromise

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Richard Kuper also deals with the problem of exclusion. He argues that the democratic deficit of the European Union should be conceptualized in broader terms than those used to date. His chapter shows how, in contemporary democracy, procedures and outcomes are intertwined "for outcomes react back on and influence the conditions of existence of democracy itself" (p. 153). Making democracy function in the EU is not only about the right institutions, but also about the social movements democracy entails, and even more about a welfare state that enables individuals to participate. Drawing on Lipietz, he points out that a different and socially just Europe is indeed possible. I concur with Kuper's position that democracy as a process is fundamentally about struggling for full democracy, where citizens have to wrest "concessions and control from powerful elites" (p. 153).

The strength of Carlos Closa's contribution lies in the distinction between a normative and an empirical concept of democracy. Our general understanding of democracy is always conditioned by the traditional embedding of democracy in the nation-state. The conceptional crux is now to disentangle the notion of democracy from the national setting, thereby moving from an empirical to a theoretical understanding. As he addresses the problem of EU citizenship and supranational democracy he concludes that in the emerging EU polity "identity cannot have a founding role, but results only from the practice of citizenship" (p. 184). For a genuine European democracy we do not need a European identity that is moulded in a slave-like manner after the national one: European identity will either be different or not at all. Carlos Closa's arguments echo to some extent the well-known concepts of Joseph Weiler et al., who speak of two *demoi* being distinguished by different subjective factors of identification. One can be a French or German national in the sense of ethno-cultural identification and belonging, but at the same time a European citizen in terms of transnational affinities.

Although this collection of papers contributes considerably to our understanding of democracy in the European context and addresses difficult conceptional questions, I miss an explicit treatment of the question whether democracy is elite or mass-driven. This odd omission is unnecessary, as many articles can be placed easily on a continuum ranging from the most elitist to the most egalitarian attitude. Weale's paper on representation and constitutionalism, for example, draws on Madisonian pluralist/elitist ideas. Gustavsson's work on the democratic deficit represents an elitist view, too, whereas Nentwich's ideas on opportunity structures are egalitarian and participatory. Kostakopoulou's article on EU citizenship for foreign third-country residents, Closa's treatment of supranational democracy, Føllesdal's analysis of democracy, legitimacy and majority rule as well as Kuper's extended view of the democratic deficit of the EU are all firmly rooted in the egalitarian tradition of political theory. Of course, somebody could interject that the egalitarian/elitist dichotomy is just another label for notions widely used in this book, such as democratic deficit, legitimacy, constitutionalism, multi-level/multi-dimensional polity, majority rule, supranational governance, supranational democracy, participation, citizenship, reform, representation. Never-

theless, each contribution as well as the overall structure of the book would have benefited from the adoption of an overarching framework, juxtaposing egalitarianism against elitism/pluralism.

Franz Stefan Steinbauer

Richard Bellamy, *Liberalism and Pluralism: Towards a Politics of Compromise*. Routledge, London 1999, ISBN 0415196620, \$ 27.99.

Liberalism and Pluralism is a sequel to Richard Bellamy's *Liberalism and Modern Society: An Historical Argument* (1992). The main thesis of the latter book was that "liberalism assumes a homogeneous community devoted to promoting a certain pattern of individual development, and that this model is implausible in modern complex and plural society" (1999: ix). Nineteenth century state-building enabled liberalism, according to Bellamy, to establish a national political community with shared interests and values. With the subsequent development of a plural society, liberalism was no longer endowed to handle conflicting interests and values. The thesis of Bellamy's sequel is that "we need to reconstruct the liberal constitutional consensus in terms of a fair compromise achieved through new forms of democratic politics" (1999: ix). This new form of constitutional democracy is labelled the 'negotiating democracy' – a democracy that must take account of conflicting pursuits and values.

In *Liberalism and Pluralism* Bellamy describes three different answers to modern problems of pluralism: (i) Hayek's conservatism; (ii) Rawls's political liberalism; and (iii) Walzer's communitarism. Each of these three views is a potential rival theory to Bellamy's solution. He argues that these three theories provide no answer to modern problems of pluralism, while his notion of the 'negotiating democracy' can handle conflicting values. As one would expect, the discussion of the political theories of Hayek, Rawls and Walzer focusses on their weak points. Nevertheless, Bellamy's arguments are interesting to read.

First, he discusses the conservative fear of the practices of democracy. The political view of Friedrich Hayek is chosen as the ideological father of the New Right. According to Hayek, democracy encourages politicians to spend money to gain political power. The politics of spending is justified by ideals of social justice, but often this spending is the exploitation of well-organized groups that lobby behind closed doors. More fundamental is Hayek's claim that there can be no consensus on principles of distribution in pluralist society. Bellamy is less pessimistic about the working of democracy. Organized interests need not produce a rigid economy if they bargain with other players in an open forum and if they are subject to democratic control. Hayek's notion that no consensus is possible on principles of justice is solved with the suggestion that democratic decisions must be consistent with Dworkin's notion of equal respect for persons. This means that these decisions are the outcome of political

discussion that can always be reconsidered. Bellamy's discussion of Hayek's view is an interesting introduction to the main ideas of a political philosopher who hesitates between being a rule-utilitarian and a conservative. Bellamy's answers to the conservative fear of democracy are well argued and convincing.

Second, Bellamy discusses Rawls's notion of political liberalism. In *A Theory of Justice* Rawls assumes that all individuals share the same conception of justice and fairness on the basis of a comprehensive philosophical doctrine. Modern societies, however, show pluralism of incompatibility of several comprehensive philosophical doctrines. In *Political Liberalism* Rawls defines a democratic regime that must deal with this incompatibility and that must guarantee the stability of a well-ordered society. Bellamy claims that "Rawls's political liberalism avoids the role of politics" (1999: 66). For example, he criticizes Rawls's view on the legitimacy of civil disobedience. According to Rawls, civil disobedience is acceptable only when fundamental matters are at stake. Civil disobedience is not suitable for disputes about tax politics. Bellamy argues that the campaign against the Poll Tax in the UK was not only about tax politics. The anti-Poll Tax campaign revealed the wider context of 'fundamental' issues (1999: 61). Bellamy claims that this example proves that Rawls's view on the subject and nature of politics is too narrow. However, Bellamy's answer to Rawls is not well argued and not convincing. Rawls does not exclude the empirical case that a specific campaign against tax politics could reveal a more fundamental problem. Moreover, if tax politics reveals a more fundamental problem, civil disobedience is no longer unacceptable. Rawls's point is simply that citizens in a democratic regime must – at some point – accept the outcome of a political decision-making process. If civil disobedience were accepted for each group of citizens who are dissatisfied with the political outcome, no democratic system – including the negotiation democracy – could work.

Third, in contrast to Hayek and Rawls, Walzer does not believe in universal and general principles of justice. Walzer's communitarianism combines pluralism with an egalitarian account of justice, i.e., Walzer wants to reconcile the diversity of pluralism with the uniformity of equality. However, the difference between the concepts of 'diversity' and 'uniformity' is insurmountable and Walzer's 'art of separation' in different spheres of justice is begging the question. Walzer has an optimistic view in which social solidarity is a shared value in the public culture of modern societies. This notion of solidarity is society's cement – it holds together the different spheres of justice. Bellamy does not share Walzer's faith in solidarity, which he labels the value of democratic socialism. One of the biggest problems of modern societies is the social division, i.e., the fragmentation of different spheres of the rich and the poor. According to Bellamy, "social solidarity cannot be assumed, as he [Walzer] believes, but needs to be politically constructed" (1999: 88). Bellamy rightly argues that arguments for social justice must transcend the different spheres within a country. Moreover, given the deplorable state of most countries in the Third World, social justice must apply across societies as well.

Bellamy's chief criticism of the theorists, Hayek, Rawls and Walzer, is that they

"restrict politics within a putative consensus on constitutional or communal values" (1999: p. 93). His solution is the negotiating democracy that creates agreement through political compromise. His description of the design and working of the negotiating democracy is very familiar to most Dutch citizens. The 'politics of compromise' is the essence of Dutch political practice for as long as anyone can remember (with the exception of a short period in the late sixties until the seventies when New Left expected polarization to bring them more political gain than the politics of accommodation). This form of constitutional democracy is a pragmatic and non-ideological way to manage the political struggle between groups, based upon class, religion, culture, language, gender, ethnicity, or any other identities one can distinguish. The negotiating democracy is a decision-making procedure in which politicians deal with situations of 'overlapping dissents'. In practice it means that groups are subsidized (paid off) and their leaders offered a seat at the negotiation table. This practice is fine as long as it works, i.e., as long as it guarantees political stability. The politics of compromise has nothing to do with political views on the dangers of democracy, nor with comprehensive ideas about a well-ordered society or social solidarity. The crux of the (Dutch) negotiating democracy is that the political elite subtracts politics out of the political sphere. As a result, Dutch politics is rarely a fascinating spectacle. Bellamy presents his notion of the negotiating democracy as a reconstruction or modernization of liberalism. Yet, it cannot be considered a reconstruction of liberalism. It is not even a *model* for constitutional democracy. The politics of compromise is an empirical rather than a political philosophical notion.

Finally, Bellamy's assumption, that nineteenth century liberalism performs well in a homogeneous community only, is arguable. In my view, liberalism is a political doctrine that does not assume any requirements of the identities of persons per se. Instead, it requires that all persons (no matter who or what they are) abide by the same rules of law. Liberalism is not just a specific form of democratic politics or politics of compromise. Liberalism is a political philosophy that has, no, *must* have, a coherent political view of well-ordered society. In this respect, Rawls's theory is still the Archimedean point of the reflective equilibrium in modern political philosophy. Put differently, his work is a hard act to follow.

Huib Pellikaan

Carles Boix, *Political Parties, Growth, and Equality: Conservative and Social Democratic Economic Strategies in the World Economy*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1998, ISBN 0521585953, £ 12.95.

Let me be clear at the outset, this work is an absolute masterpiece of scholarly research in the best traditions of comparative politics, political economy and party politics. In fact, I can honestly say that few books have left such an impression on my own thinking