

From aggregative to deliberative democracy.

Towards and ecological form of democratic self-government

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Political liberalism and *democratic minimalism* argues against elitist tendencies both in political theory and in the practical realm that – at least from a post-metaphysical perspective, which respects the fact of reasonable pluralism – the only justified normative requirement for the sound use of public reasoning consists in *inclusive procedures* in that citizens themselves provide advice, which reasons *they themselves* accept as suitable for political outputs. So reasonableness does not apply to the content of public reasons but *only to the procedure of finding them*. In contrast to strong epistemic models of democracy (SEMD), which interpret public reasoning as an instrument for evaluating *true, scientifically rational outcomes*, liberals and democratic minimalists emphasise in their political theory that good democratic decisions should *not* be measured as to whether they are true *but justified* by the affected *in situ*. Yet, nowadays the public discourse is shifting successively from deliberating what should be done (questions of justice) to questions of how to interpret the world (questions of truth), especially when ecological aspects are deliberated. For example, the discourse about coping with climate change does not primarily affect the question if environment protection is a *right thing to do* but whether the assumption that there is an anthropogenic cause for climate change is *true*. (For many ecological critiques of democracy this fact is also used as an argument against democratic decision making as outdated and not complex enough for today’s ecological obstacles.) Considering the new role truth claims take in so called post-truth times for justifying political action, it seems necessary for political liberalism and democratic minimalism to rethink the role of truth claims for justified political outputs. My thesis is that facing ecological problems, we should not bypass democratic procedures but merely aggregative conceptions of democratic procedures.

In the first part of my talk, I would both like to outline a strong epistemic idea of deliberation subsequent to contemporary Critical Rationalism and retrace liberal’s and democratic minimalist’s apprehension that the realisation of a strong epistemic process of will formation might be *authoritarian*. I would like to show that SEMD must rest on a truth monism that *cannot be realised under pluralistic conditions* without discursive, antidemocratic hegemony. Yet, with regard to the case of climate change I would furthermore like to show that a stance, which argues that democracy is *just about justice and not truth is normatively counterintuitive*. Therefore, I would like to go back to Habermas’ discourse theoretical basic research about the differentiation between truth and justice to develop a *three-dimensional model of the dialectical role of truth claims in deliberation*. Truth claims have to be considered in deliberation in discourses about tolerance, pragmatic solutions and defying the group of the relevantly affected. Yet, in contrast to SEMD liberals and democratic positivist’s reference to truth is not authoritarian because it understands truth dialectically as truth by the people. In this sense, it can bypass the authoritarian traits

of strong epistemic democracy. In the end, I would like to defend a deliberative conception of democracy as suitable for Anthropocene where political decisions cause effects on ecology.