2. Misconceptions around Democratic Theories

This chapter will try to clear up some typical misconceptions around democratic theories. Many of these misconceptions have been brought about and used by participationists in their effort to press for more participation and turn down liberal-democratic theory.

2.1 Classical Theory

2.1.1 The Participatory Classical Theory
The “classical” theory of democracy has been understood, not only by participationists but also by their critics, as advocating participatory or direct democracy. This understanding of the classical theory was first widely propagated by Schumpeter through his book *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy* (1943). According to him, the classical theory or “doctrine” defined democracy as “that institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions which realizes the common good by making the people itself decide issues through the election of individuals who are to assemble in order to carry out its will” (p.250). Therefore, what the elected “individuals” should do was just to enforce “the will of the people”. He stressed the necessity of revising this classical theory, because it granted an unrealistically significant role to citizens, while it unfairly played down the role of leadership. For the classical democracy to work, “[e]veryone would have to know definitely what he wants to stand for” (p.253), and “a clear and prompt conclusion as to particular issues would have to be derived according to the rules of logical inference” (pp.253-4). These conditions are utterly impossible to meet, because, as seen earlier, “the typical citizen drops down to a lower level of mental performance as soon as he enters the political field” (p.262). For Schumpeter, the will of the people, which is deified by the classical theory, is in fact “manufactured” by leaders.

Schumpeter ushered in the 1950s and 60s “revisionists”, who tried to revise the classical theory as Schumpeter criticised it, and some put forward procedural views on democracy, while others advocated pluralism. However, this interpretation or labelling of the classical theory has been rather “gratefully accepted” by participationists themselves since the 1960s, because this “makes them appear to be in the mainstream” (Birch, 1993, p.51). Therefore, participationists have insisted that the classical theory is still viable and should be restored, placing on their side various classical theorists, such as Aristotle, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, J.S. Mill, Lindsay, Ernest Barker, and so on.

For example, according to Bachrach (1967), “Classical theory (...) is based on the supposition that man’s dignity, and indeed his growth and development as a functioning and responsive individual in a free society, is dependent upon an opportunity to participate actively in decisions that significantly affect him” (p.98). This means that he has just succeeded the classical theory, although “in underscoring the importance of widespread
participation in political decision-making, it offers no realistic guidelines as to how its prescription is to be filled in large urban societies” (p.99). Jack L. Walker (1966) criticises behaviourists for abandoning the basic ideals of the “classical theory of democracy”, which is the “familiar doctrine of popular rule, patterned after the New England town meeting”. According to him, “By extending general participation in decision-making the classical theorists hoped to increase the citizen’s awareness of his moral and social responsibilities, reduce the danger of tyranny, and improve the quality of government” (p.285). Arblaster (1987) argues, “It is only in the twentieth century that theorists have attempted to produce a version of democracy in which popular participation is treated with suspicion”. “This represents a fundamental departure from the traditional understanding of what democracy is, or was”, he insists. He demands to stick to the classical theory: “There is no good reason why that traditional understanding should now be abandoned” (p.63). Writing late in the 1960s, Pateman (1970) laments, “No longer is democratic theory centred on the participation of ‘the people’, on the participation of the ordinary man, or the prime virtue of a democratic political system seen as the development of politically relevant and necessary qualities in the ordinary individual” (p.104). In other words, in her view, the past democratic theory was “centred on” these aims.

2.1.2 Who Are the Classical Theorists?
It is in fact difficult to identify the classical theorists who should have advocated the above classical theory. The almost only candidate for such theorists would be Rousseau. In The Social Contract (2002), which was published in 1762, he indeed argues that all the “laws” have to be decided by the people casting votes. The “legislative power” should belong to the people. “Every law which the people in person have not ratified is invalid” (p.221), he says. Therefore, the people in person have to attend popular assemblies. “Besides the extraordinary assemblies which unforeseen events may require, it is necessary to have regular and periodic ones that nothing can cancel or postpone” (pp.218-9), he suggests.

As a guarantee for consensus at such assemblies, he turns to the “general will”. As long as the people stick to the general will, which concentrates on the “common good”, in place of the personal “particular will”, they can reach a consensus, according to him.

He calls this “State” a “republican”, and mentions desirable conditions for it. The size of the State should be “very small” (p.223), and the people should be “already united by some bond of interest, origin, or convention” (p.188). He does not argue for complete economic equality, but the disparity between the rich and the poor should not be so large as to induce slavery: “no citizen should be rich enough to be able to buy another, and none poor enough to be forced to sell himself” (p.189).

However, his argument has in fact much more in common with liberal-democratic theory rather than participatory theory. First of all, his central concern is neither public participation nor self-development but liberal freedom against state power. For example, the “fundamental problem” for the “social contract” is, he says, to “find a form of association that may defend and protect with the whole force of the community the person
and property of every associate, and by means of which each, joining together with all, may nevertheless obey only himself, and remain as free as before" (p.163). Although a citizen loses “his natural liberty and an unlimited right to anything that tempts him and that he can attain” thanks to the social contract, he instead gains “civil liberty and property in all that he possesses”. Having defined the main function of the social contract in this way, successively, he puts forward his more famous concept of freedom: “We might also add to the advantages of the civil state moral freedom (…); (…) obedience to a self-prescribed law is freedom” (p.167).

His views on citizens and leadership also bear similarities to liberal-democratic theory. He argues that the people can agree, once based on the general will, but he does not believe that the people alone can do this. He says, “the general will is always right and always tends to the public good; but it does not follow that the deliberations of the people always have the same rectitude. Men always desire their own good, but do not always discern it; the people are never corrupted, though often deceived” (p.172). He asks himself, “How would a blind multitude, which often knows not what it wishes because it rarely knows what is good for it, execute by itself an enterprise so great, so difficult, as a system of legislation?”. Therefore, the public need “guides”. More frankly, “the public must be taught to understand what they want” (p.180).

That is why, he emphasises the necessity for a “legislator” or a “superior intelligence”, who should be “in all respects an extraordinary man in the State” (p.181):

In order to discover the rules of association that are most suitable to nations, a superior intelligence would be necessary who could see all the passions of men without experiencing any of them; who would have no affinity with our nature and yet know it thoroughly; whose happiness would not depend on us, and who would nevertheless be quite willing to interest himself in ours; (p.180)

The people should have the final say, but legislators should “frame” the laws and present them to the people. However, he is still anxious about behaviour of the people or “the vulgar”: “Wise men who want to speak to the vulgar in their own language instead of in a popular way will not be understood” (p.182). He seems to recommend legislators to appeal to religious authority, saying, “The legislator puts into the mouths of the immortals that sublime reason which soars beyond the reach of common men, in order that he may win over by divine authority those whom human prudence could not move” (p.183).

Rousseau has a distrust not only of the people, but also of their discussion, which, in his view, just facilitates personal interests. He says, “long debates, dissensions, and tumult announce the ascendancy of private interests and the decline of the State” (p.229). Therefore, he even seems to insist on banning discussion at popular assemblies. The “simple right of voting” must not be taken away from the people, but, concerning “the right of speaking, proposing, dividing, and discussing”, “the government is always very careful to leave to its members only” (p.228). He uses the word “government” in a narrow sense, meaning only the executive office consisting of “magistrates”. The people should rather
deliberate in an isolated manner: "If citizens deliberate when adequately informed and without any communication among themselves, the general will would always result from the great number of slight differences, and the resolution would always be good" (p.173).  

He expects that some citizens might resist the general will agreed on by the majority. But he does not insist on unanimity. Particularly, "in deliberations which must be decided immediately, the majority of a single vote should suffice" (p.230). This does not undermine the freedom of the minority, because it is just “forced to be free” (p.166). In other words, he places a priority on the public interest over the personal moral freedom.  

In addition, popular assemblies are not held frequently, because, as long as well governed, a State “needs very few laws” (p.227). Spontaneous assemblies are illegal: “every assembly of the people not convoked by magistrates appointed for that duty and not corresponding to the prescribed forms, must be seen as illegitimate and all that is done in it as invalid” (p.219). After all, what the people should do is just to meet sporadically, and gently approve laws “framed” by legislators. Naturally, society cannot be managed only with these very few laws, whose “object” “is always general” (p.179). But the popular assembly is not the place to discuss and decide concrete public policies. It is the responsibility of the “government”.  

Rousseau classifies the government into three categories, namely, democracy, aristocracy, and monarchy, based on how it is organised:  

The sovereign may, in the first place, place the responsibility for the government in the whole people, or in the majority of the people, in such a way that there may be more citizens who are magistrates than simple individual citizens. We call this form of government a democracy. Or, it may confine the government to a small number, so that there may be more ordinary citizens than magistrates; and this form bears the name of aristocracy. Lastly, it may concentrate the whole government in the hands of a single magistrate (...). This third form is the most common, and is called monarchy, or royal government. (pp.199-200)  

Among these, he clearly dismisses democracy, based on which the people themselves not only make the laws but also execute them. Because if those who make laws, which should serve the general interest, are involved in their execution, which is necessarily oriented toward particular interests, then laws inevitably degenerate into measures to facilitate particular interests. He warns that “the body politic, thus deformed, would soon become prey to the violence against which it was instituted” (p.223). In this respect, the Athenian democracy was far from being ideal for him, where the people “elected or deposed their leaders, decreed honors to one, imposed penalties on another, and by multitudes of particular decrees exercised indiscriminately all the functions of government” (p.175). In other words, to protect political freedom, he rejects democracy as he defines it. As “historians have documented his indebtedness to Montesquieu” (Qvortrup, 2003, pp61-2), Rousseau resorted to the separation of the executive power from the legislative power to limit state power.
He even insists that democracy is against the “natural order”: “It is contrary to the natural order that the majority should govern and that the minority should be governed. It is impossible to imagine the people remaining in perpetual assembly to attend to public affairs” (Rousseau, 2002, p.201). Mentioning that liberty was “secured only through slavery” in Greek democracy, he says, “Everything which is not according to nature has its drawbacks” (p.222). His conclusion is, “If there were a nation of gods, it would be governed democratically. So perfect a government is unsuited to men” (p.202).

On the other hand, Rousseau highly appreciates aristocracy that consists of a small number of elected magistrates. In aristocracy, “integrity, intelligence, experience, and all other grounds of preferment and public esteem are so many fresh guarantees”, and “assemblies are more easily convened; issues are better discussed and are dispatched with greater order and diligence”. “We should not pointlessly multiply means, nor ask twenty thousand men to do what a hundred chosen men can do still better”, he says. Therefore, aristocracy can realise “the best and most natural order of things”, which means for him that “the wisest should govern the multitude” (p.203). This is exactly what J.S. Mill advocated.

These Rousseau’s remarks must be surprising for those who have supposed his theory only based on participationists’ account of him. Even Rousseau is a highly dubious advocate for contemporary participationists, let alone other classical theorists put forward by them. Participationists seem to hesitate to place Tocqueville on their side, but often do place J.S. Mill, who was anxious about “collective mediocrity” and cautious even about universal suffrage. For example, Arblaster (1987) says as follows:

It is noticeable that even a writer like J.S. Mill, for all his apprehensions about public opinion and mass ignorance, never abandoned the basic democratic principle that as far as possible the people should govern themselves, and that therefore the ultimate objective had to be the maximum of direct, personal participation: (p.63)

As a proof for this, he quotes Mill’s following remark in Considerations on Representative Government (1926):

… it is evident that the only government which can fully satisfy all the exigencies of the social state is one in which the whole people participate; that any participation, even in the smallest public function, is useful; that the participation should everywhere be as great as the general degree of improvement of the community will allow; and that nothing less can be ultimately desirable than the admission of all to a share in the sovereign power of the state. (cited in Arblaster, p.63)

Arblaster omits Mill’s conclusion successively following the above quotation: “But since all cannot, in a community exceeding a single small town, participate personally in any but some very minor portions of the public business, it follows that the ideal type of a perfect government must be representative” (Mill, 1926, p.28). Therefore, Mill did abandon the “basic democratic principle” as espoused by Arblaster.
For Pateman, Mill is, alongside Rousseau, one of the theorists of participatory democracy. In fact, Mill accepted representative democracy with universal suffrage, as opposed to a benevolent despotism, considering, “what sort of human beings can be formed under such a regimen” (Mill, 1926, p.19). According to Pateman (1970), however, based on this consideration, Mill seems to have opted for participatory democracy: “It is only within a context of popular, participatory institutions that Mill sees an ‘active’ public-spirited type of character being fostered” (p.29). Or Pateman explains Mill’s argument concerning “participation” at the local level as follows: “Mill argues that it is no use having universal suffrage and participation in national government if the individual has not been prepared for this participation at local level; it is at this level that he learns how to govern himself” (p.30). Again, she slips the word “participation” alongside universal suffrage, so Mill seems to have advocated direct participation in national government as well as universal suffrage, although this is, of course, not the case. With regard to participation at the local level, according to her, “for Mill, it is at local level where the real educative effect of participation occurs, (...) where he also stands a good chance of, himself, being elected to serve on a local body” (p.31). As can be seen, what Mill stood for was after all representative democracy also at the local level, whereas Pateman understands that Mill advocated citizens’ “participation in local government” (p.34). Pateman argues, “in the participatory theory ‘participation’ refers to (equal) participation in the making of decisions” (p.43). On the other hand, Mill did not accept even equal votes, advocating multiple votes dependent on citizens’ intellectual levels. It is evident how distant these two theorists are in their theories.

Lindsay is also quoted by some participationists as their side. Arblaster (1987) argues, “A popular participatory democracy is a system in which decisions are taken, and policies made, as a result of the widest possible free and open discussion”, and successively quotes Lindsay’s remark (see p.7), saying, “As Lindsay puts it” (p.97). That is why, it looks as if Lindsay had supported a “popular participatory democracy”, although he just stressed, in this remark, the importance of public discussion for representative democracy. As mentioned later, Pateman (1970) insists that Schumpeter disseminated the “myth” of the classical theory. In an effort to challenge this myth, Pateman refers to Cole in detail, following Rousseau and J.S. Mill, in the same chapter. She calls these three together the theorists of participatory theory. As a result, Cole also seems to be the classical theorist advocating participation. He indeed advocated participation at the workplace, but he (1889-1959) is a little bit younger than Schumpeter (1883-1950). It is irrelevant to refer to Cole to justify the classical theory as criticised by Schumpeter.

On the other hand, Dryzek (1990) tries to connect with classical theory based on, not participation, but communicative rationality. His classical theorist is Aristotle. According to him, “This idea that rationality consists of cogitation in interaction does have a respectable heritage”, and, “Aristotle is a key figure in this history” (p.14). “Aristotelian practical reason”, so-called phronesis, “involves persuasion, reflection upon values, prudential judgment, and free disclosure of one’s ideas” (p.9), he says. However, what Dryzek advocates is not just phronesis but “communicatively rational participatory democracy”, in which “[n]o
concerned individuals should be excluded” (p.43) from decision-making. On the other hand, Aristotle was highly critical about his contemporary Greek democracy. His ideal was the rule of the best persons, and he classified democracy as one of “deviant” types of states, in which many or “the poor” took into account only the interests of their own class. Dryzek does not mention this profile of Aristotle at all. Based on this profile, Aristotle can be again connected to liberal-democratic theory.

2.1.3 The Myth of the Classical Theory
That is why, with only Rousseau scarcely on their side, participationists could not justify arguing that their theory is based on the classical theory. The so-called classical theory is rather historically prevailing popular belief in democracy, which dreams of Greek-type democracy or the New England town meeting. According to this belief, democracy is a “system in which the people decide what they want done about the larger issues that face the community and choose deputies to put their decisions into effect” (Plamenatz, 1973, p.39). In other words, theorists who try to come up with a realistic theory about states have not put forward such a belief since and even in the middle of the Greek democracy, at least until the 1960s. Plamenatz (1973) concludes that the classical theory advocating participation is nothing more than “construction out of bits and pieces”:

This theory or idea is I suggest, much better called popular than classical; it is to be found much more in the speeches of radical politicians, in newspapers and journals with a wide circulation, and in ordinary talk about politics than in the works of serious students of government, not to speak of books that are recognized “classics”. It is an idea (or set of ideas) that belongs much more to political rhetoric than to systematic, political theory. What political scientists, especially in America but not only there, call “the classical theory of democracy” is, I suggest, an invention, or rather construction out of bits and pieces (p.39)

Pateman (1970) tries to restore the classical theory, appealing to the “myth” of the classical theory. According to her, revisionists, or “contemporary theorists” to use her term, have been convinced that “the theories of earlier writers on democracy (the so-called ‘classical theorists’) which have the idea of the maximum participation of all the people at their heart, are in need of revision” (p.1). On the other hand, the “critics of the contemporary theory”, that is, participationists, “[a]ll agree that maximum participation by all the people was central to” the “ideal contained in the ‘classical’ theory” (p.16). That is why, the contemporary theorists and their critics understand the classical theory in the same way, and this understanding was disseminated by Schumpeter, according to Pateman. She argues that this “notion of a ‘classical theory of democracy’ is a myth”, which led to the “inconclusive nature of the criticisms of the contemporary theory” (p.17). At first glance, she seems to have reached the same conclusion as Plamenatz.

However, she develops her argument into an unexplored direction. First, she quotes Schumpeter’s understanding about the classical theory, namely, that the democratic method is “that institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions which realises the common good by making the people itself decide issues through the election of individuals who are to assemble in order to carry out its will”. She argues, “taking these
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Remark as a guide, we arrive at the names of Rousseau, the two Mills and Bentham, all of whom have a good claim to the title of ‘classical’ theorist of democracy” (p.17). The most promising candidate for Schumpeter’s classical theorists ought to be, naturally, Rousseau. Surprisingly, however, Pateman argues that, among others, “Bentham and James Mill provide examples of writers from whose theories one could extract something which bears a family resemblance to Schumpeter’s definition of the ‘classical’ theory” (p.18). This argument is surprising all the more, because Pateman correctly understands Bentham and James Mill, saying, “Like the latter, Mill and Bentham are concerned almost entirely with the national ‘institutional arrangements’ of the political system. The participation of the people has a very narrow function” (p.19). But then why are these two utilitarians “Like the latter”, namely, like “Schumpeter’s ‘classical’ theory”? Her thinking is completely confused at this point. Schumpeter should be at least partly blamed for this confusion, because he clearly mistakenly credited his classical theory to utilitarianism. However, Pateman herself insisted that the classical theory disseminated by Schumpeter centred on the maximum participation.

According to Pateman, “For Bentham and Mill participation thus had a purely protective function, it ensured that the private interests of each citizen were protected (the universal interest being merely a sum of individual interests)”. So, they denied the existence of the common good. This is correct, and again their theories are utterly opposite to Schumpeter’s classical theory. Anyway, being confused, she concludes:

The very importance of Schumpeter’s influence is that it has obscured the fact that not all writers who have claim to be called “classical” theorists of democracy took the same view of the role of participation. In the theories of J.S. Mill and Rousseau, for example, participation has far wider functions and is central to the establishment and maintenance of a democratic polity, the latter being regarded not just as a set of national representative institutions but what I shall call a participatory society (pp.19-20)

Therefore, in her view, although not all the classical theories gave limited functions to participation, Schumpeter identified the classical theory with utilitarianism, making all the classical theories look indifferent to participation. In fact, Schumpeter did not “obscure” Pateman’s classical theory at all. Both of them regard the classical theory as advocating the maximum participation, and their classical theory is a myth.

2.2 Liberalism

2.2.1 Liberalism = the Laissez-Faire Principle

The ultimate goal of liberalism is to protect, through the constitution, individual political freedom against arbitrary exercise of state power (Sartori, 1987). However, liberalism has not necessarily, or rather not mostly, been understood as such. Liberalism has been historically confused with utilitarianism, and this confusion has prevented a correct understanding of liberal-democratic theory.
This confusion dates back to the early nineteenth century, precisely when the term “liberal” of liberalism was coined. This turned out to be an “unfortunate timing” for the term (Sartori, 1987, p. 370), because this was also the period when the industrial revolution was going on, under the name of economic freedom. The driving force of this revolution was the emerging bourgeoisie, which organised the first political parties, naming them “Liberal” parties (for this economic “liberal”, I will use the capital letter). According to Ware (1996), Liberal parties “developed in the nineteenth century, and towards the end of that century.” “Liberals were a powerful force in many of the emerging liberal democracies” (p.29), says Ware, who seems not to recognise the difference between two “liberal”s. Liberal parties opposed state intervention and pressed for abolishing existing restrictions on commerce. As a result, this laissez-faire creed of Liberal parties has been identified with “liberal” and even with liberalism, which has meant capitalism for Marxists.

For example, explaining historical development of political parties, Ware says, “There is another phenomenon on the right, dating from the 1970s and 1980s, the anti-government, anti-tax, parties. From one perspective they might be seen as an extreme form of Liberalism” (p.42). Or, in an attempt to explain the two-party system in the United-State, he introduces a theory, based on which “the birth of the independent state in a revolutionary war fostered a range of anti-government, anti-state attitudes that have persisted” (p.210), and as a result “there was no place for a multiparty system - all that there was ‘room for’ was conflict within liberalism” (p.211). Therefore, for him, liberalism is a political attitude striving for small government.

Referring to the “Whig Founding Fathers” or Madisonians, such as Jefferson and Hamilton, Arblaster (1987) argues that their idea was “rooted in the perception of society as a collection of disparate and even conflicting interests (...) with a democratic system of government being one in which these different interests are recognized as legitimate”. As an contrasting idea, he refers to Rousseau and his common good:

In France, however, quite a different tradition of thinking about democracy was developing. This saw the common interest as something other than the sum of, or compromise between, a diversity of group interest. The prime source of this tradition of thought was Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Rousseau’s conception of society (...) was the exact opposite of that of individualist writers like Hobbes and Bentham, for whom society was in essence a collection of discrete individuals, held together by laws and authority. (p.41)

That is why, Arblaster regards Madisonians as those with similar thinking as utilitarians, although they were in fact liberals of genuine liberalism, putting emphasis on the common good or the public interest.

Liberals of genuine liberalism and liberal democrats have advocated neither a laissez-faire economy nor a minimal state. Indeed, they have opposed socialism aiming at social levelling, but this is because, as mentioned earlier, they have feared the resulting complete concentration of political and economic power in the state, crushing individual freedom. However, liberals around the turn of the nineteenth century had another distinct feature
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from utilitarians, and thanks to this feature, they could still be differentiated from utilitarians. Namely, they were reluctant in granting universal suffrage, while utilitarians, particularly Bentham, extended open arms of welcome to it. Arblaster recognises this difference, and therefore places utilitarians in those days in the category of democrats, saying, "Bentham, and to a lesser degree James Mill" "were not afraid to proclaim their faith in the virtues and good judgement of the people as a whole" (p.47).

2.2.2 Liberalism = Pluralism

However, once twentieth century liberal democrats, incorporating democrats, have accepted universal suffrage, there remains no distinction between liberal democrats and utilitarians. The fact that Schumpeter’s theory was named the "competitive theory" based on his definition of democracy must have been influential in facilitating this identification, because the name has indeed a utilitarian connotation. That is why, liberal democrats and utilitarians, including pluralists and public choice theorists, have been lumped together, with the label of "revisionists", a "general theory", a "cotemporary theory", and so on. Such mixing up has been particularly conspicuous when participationists criticise liberal-democratic theory.

After introducing Schumpeter’s theory, as mentioned in this study so far, Arblaster (1987) turns to some of "those who followed in Schumpeter’s footsteps in the 1950s":

Another central plank in this revisionist argument was that there was no such thing as the popular will. All these writers, and many others, stressed what Crick termed "the essential perception that all known advanced societies are inherently pluralistic and diverse". If this is so, then any attempts to conjure up a single popular will can only be factitious (...). (...) The revisionist theorists were also, however, much concerned with strong and stable government. Many of them therefore tended to favour the single-party governments produced by two-party-dominated systems of the American or British type rather than coalition governments, however accurately the latter might reflect the "pluralistic and diverse" character of society. A way out of this dilemma was found by elevating interest and pressure groups to a central role in the new version of democracy. (...) It is the business of government to listen to them, mediate between them, and evolve the compromise settlements (...). John Plamenatz announced enthusiastically that "the voice of the people is heard everlastingly" through the spokespersons of these organizations, and Robert Dahl believed in the 1950s that the United States possessed "a political system in which all the active and legitimate groups in the population can make themselves heard (...)". (pp.54-5)

Here, he intends to explain a single consistent theory, although he in fact mixes up liberal democrats and pluralists. Those who are “much concerned with strong and stable government” are liberal democrats, while those who argue for “elevating interest and pressure groups to a central role in the new version of democracy” are pluralists. Liberal democrats by no means agree with the utilitarian idea that “It is the business of government to listen to them” even between elections. Plamenatz has become an ally of Dahl, although Plamenatz (1973) himself thoroughly criticises Dahl and Lindblom for having a “strong utilitarian bias”: "Their conception of what constitutes rational political action and of what makes a political system rational are, at bottom, very much like..."
Indeed, neither liberal democrats nor pluralists believe in the collective popular will, based on which government can decide and implement policies. However, liberal democrats admit the existence of the public interest, while what exists for pluralists is only a sum of individual interests. Arblaster passes such a substantial difference, forcing pluralism onto liberal-democratic theory:

Or, to put it another way, does the concept of the general interest or the general will have any part to play in democratic thinking? The consensus of modern liberal thinking has been that it does not; it has preferred to stress the “inherently pluralistic and diverse” nature of modern societies, and the consequent need to reach a consensus or compromise among the various competing interests and groups within society. (p.74)

As opposed to participatory theory, Bachrach (1967) refers to a “general theory of democracy which is supported by most leading theorists”. This is a “theory largely explanatory rather than normative in approach”. So, he seems to target pluralists or behaviourists. Successively, however, he turns to liberal-democratic theory, although he still explains the same general theory:

This general theory purports to be above ideology but is in reality deeply rooted in an ideology, an ideology which is grounded upon a profound distrust of the majority of ordinary men and women, and reliance upon the established elites (…). (...) conceived as political method, the standard for judging democracy is not the degree of centralization or devolution in the decision-making process but rather the degree to which the system conforms to the basic principles of the democratic method: political equality (universal suffrage), freedom of discussion, majority rule, free periodic elections, and the like.

This is not a correct description of liberal-democratic theory, but much closer to it than to pluralism. Successively, however, again he changes the target, still explaining his general theory. Here, he refers not only to pluralists but also to public choice theorists:

This defense of democracy construes the interests of the people narrowly and the democratic elite theorist has little difficulty in accepting it. He posits that the value of the democratic system for ordinary individuals should be measured by the degree to which the “outputs” of the system, in the form of security, services, and material support, benefit them. On the basis of this reasoning, the less the individual has to participate in politics (…), the better off he is. With rare exception elites are available to represent his interest in the decision-making process, relegating to him the comparatively painless task of paying nominal dues and occasionally attending a meeting and casting a ballot. (pp.93-5)

Particularly, participationists tend to stress the “Schumpeter-Dahl line” (Sartori, 1987). For example, Pateman (1970) argues that Dahl’s definition of democracy “closely follows Schumpeter’s definition” (p.8), quoting Dahl’s remark that “democratic theory is concerned with the processes by which ordinary citizens exert a relatively high degree of control over leaders” (p.3). In Dahl’s view, “In a modern theory of democracy ‘political equality’ refers to
the existence of universal suffrage (...) and, more importantly, to the fact of equality of opportunity of access to influence over decision makers through inter-electoral processes by which different groups in the electorate make their demands heard" (p.9), according to Pateman. Then, why can Dahl’s theory be traced to Schumpeter, who admonished citizens against interfering in politics, once they elected representatives? Gould (1988) also places these two theorists in the same category, saying, “Pluralist theories, such as those of Schumpeter or Dahl, generally make the claim to being value-free descriptions or empirically based accounts of how actual democracies function in fact” (p.8). In these theories, “Democracy is seen as a functional system in which an equilibrium among conflicting groups is established by means of the mechanism of periodic elections” (p.9), she argues. However, those who see democracy “as a functional system in which an equilibrium among conflicting groups is established” are pluralists, whereas those who rely on “periodic elections” are liberal democrats.

Although participationists force utilitarianism onto liberal-democratic theory, utilitarianism has rather characteristics in common with participatory theory. Both utilitarianism and participatory theory place infinite trust in citizens’ political capabilities, although the content of expected capabilities is different, and therefore, for both theories, what government should do is just to implement wishes of citizens. In this sense, both theories can be called populist. That is why, as seen earlier, Arblaster appreciates the early days’ utilitarians. Or, while dismissing direct democracy, Dahl (1970) supported the workers’ control and suggested establishing “advisory councils to every elected officials”, which would “consist of several hundred constituents picked by the same procedure used to insure randomness in modern sample surveys” (p.149). L.G. Sharpe (1973) calls Dahl a “firm populist”, quoting his assumption “that a key characteristic of a democracy is the continuing responsiveness of the government to the preferences of its citizens considered as equal.” (p.132). Dahl further yielded to participationists in his latter day work (1989), in which he proposed a “minipopulus” “consisting of perhaps a thousand citizens randomly selected out of the entire demos”. “The members of a minipopulus could ‘meet’ by telecommunications”, and are selected yearly, dealing with issues in turns. While admitting existing representative institutions, he argues that the “judgement of a minipopulus would ‘represent' the judgment of the demos” (p.340).

The confusion between utilitarianism and liberal-democratic theory is not the exclusive speciality of participationists. Some liberal democrats also contribute to such confusion. For example, to describe his definitions of democracy. Sartori (1987) uses the term “polyarchy” coined by Dahl and Lindblom. This usage is somewhat confusing. Dahl and Lindblom used the term “poly”, probably, to connote a society where many pressure groups competed for political influence, including between elections. On the other hand, the “poly” for Sartori exclusively means political leaders or political parties, competing for vote only at elections. Like Schumpeter, Sartori invites unnecessary confusion by using a term with utilitarian connotation. It ought to be sufficient just to describe those definitions as “regular and free election”, although this expression is mediocre.
As mentioned earlier, Schumpeter mistakenly credited his classical theory to utilitarianism. Revealing this mistake, Plamenatz (1973) argues that utilitarians "made a case for democracy which is in some ways remarkably like the case made by Schumpeter". To support this argument, Plamenatz appeals to the similarities between Schumpeter and J.S. Mill, who was "the most influential of Utilitarian democrats":

If we take the most influential of Utilitarian democrats, John Stuart Mill, we find him qualifying in several ways Bentham's postulate that every man is to be accounted the best judge of his own interest, and we also find him attributing a large role in democracy to the politically experienced and the well informed. Not only are makers of law and policy drawn mostly from their ranks, but it is also with them that most of the demands made on behalf of the people originate. That the politically active are a minority was as clear to John Stuart Mill as to any political scientist of the twentieth century. (...) it is a pity that Schumpeter should (though in all innocence) have chosen the Utilitarians as the target of his attack, for they (more than any other political theorists of the nineteenth century) come close to thinking about democracy on a large scale in the way that he does. (p.98)

However, the fact that Mill qualified "in several ways Bentham’s postulate" is the proof that Mill “soon moved away from the robust democratic faith of his early mentors” (Arblaster, 1987, p.47), and therefore the fact that there are similarities between Mill and Schumpeter is just the proof that both of them were in fact liberal democrats. Indeed, Plamenatz thoroughly criticises Schumpeter, but interestingly his criticism mostly focuses on Schumpeter's misinterpretation of the classical theory. Plamenatz seems to have no substantial objection to his democratic theory itself, including his definition of democracy.

2.2.3 Liberalism = Socialism
Among participationists, Dryzek, in his book Discursive Democracy (1990), particularly clearly reveals the confusion between utilitarianism and liberal-democratic theory: "liberals generally celebrate the irreducible plurality and ultimate arbitrariness of normative positions (...). They disparage the idea of any public interest beyond the sum of individual interests" (p.124). He of course adopts the Schumpeter-Dahl line: "The resulting ‘empirical’ models of liberal democracy (associated with names such as Schumpeter, Dahl, Eckstein, and Sartori) are happy if ordinary people are spectators in the game of politics. (...) Thus the more popular contemporary normative theories of liberal democracy have strong pluralist overtones" (p.120). This statement is not only wrong, mixing up different theories, but also illogical, because theories that expect ordinary people to be "spectators" cannot have "strong pluralist overtones".

He takes a further bold step in confusing liberal-democratic theory. According to him, "Over the centuries since the Enlightenment, rationality has come to demand two things", namely, instrumental rationality and objectivism:

Instrumental rationality and objectivism go hand in hand. The former governs rational behavior, the latter rational belief and morality. Thus they provide a complete guide for the would-be rational individual. In social life, objectivism provides glue for the coordination of the actions of large numbers of instrumental rationalists (pp.3-4)
Judging from the above remark, instrumental rationality seems to mean individual rationality as assumed by utilitarians. However, he also says, “‘Technical’ rationality is synonymous with instrumental rationality” (p.222), and, “Together, instrumental rationality and objectivism conjure up a clean and orderly world where modern science, technology, and economics flourish” (p.4). This rationality is rather rationality embraced by early socialism, originating from Saint-Simon and Auguste Comte and followed by Marx and Engels, all of whom dreamed of “government of science” or “administration of things” (Sartori, 1987). Dryzek concludes, “So instrumental rationality under conditions of free criticism undergirds liberal polyarchy, the dominant kind of political system in the West” (p.4). First of all, the term “liberal polyarchy” cannot form a consistent idea, combining two conflicting concepts. Because this is “the dominant kind of political system”, this probably means liberal democracy. That is why, he forces not only utilitarianism but also socialism onto liberal-democratic theory.

However, whether it is utilitarian rationality or socialist rationality (in other words, scientism), instrumental rationality does not undergird liberal democracy. Liberal-democratic theory does not accept that individuals are absorbed in maximising their own interests, nor is prepared to delegate everything to science or experts. Concerning the latter, Sartori (1987) raises two objections to “scientific-positivistic rationalism”, from the point of view of a liberal democrat. The first objection is related to political freedom. According to him, “the idea of a government of science (thereby including the ‘scientific’ Marxist promise of an administration of things) owes all its attractiveness to the idea of a frictionless government of Reason in which the best among the projects put together by the experts - scientists and technocrats - somehow chooses itself”. For him, this idea is too naïve, based on unfounded trust in experts: “it would be plain silly to say that we have succeeded in transforming the politician into a public administrator of the public interest, that is, into a selfless discharger of social functions” (p.438). Second, he distinguishes a “good society” from a “Rational Society” exclusively based on scientific-positivistic rationalism. It might be possible for “present-day scientists and techno-experts to design a Rational Society”, but such a society is not necessarily a “good society” (p.439), which should be the ultimate goal. In realising a “good society”, essential is not “expert leadership” but “democratic leadership”, Lindsay (1947) argues. The democratic leader has to have an “understanding of the common life”, which is acquired “not by expert knowledge but by a practical experience of life” (p.279).

Furthermore, Dryzek implies that liberal democracy is related to authoritarian regimes. In his view, “modern politics, deductive-nomological theory, Horkheimer’s subjective reason, objectivism, and instrumental rationality” constitutes the “second set”, as opposed to the “first set” including communicative rationality or critical theory. He argues, “This second set is associated with both bureaucratic-authoritarian and liberal democratic political forms” (p.13). So, there seems to be little difference between the Soviet regime and liberal democracy. Moreover, he says, “A long tradition encompassing such otherwise varied figures as Plato, Comte, Saint-Simon, Weber, Lenin, Mussolini, Herbert Simon, and Robert
Heilbroner argues that the most instrumentally rational arrangements are those in which power is centralized and authority is organized on a hierarchical basis” (p.32). That is why, through instrumental rationality, liberal-democratic theory is related to Lenin’s communism and even Mussolini’s fascism. In this respect, Marcuse is more straightforward: “it is liberalism that ‘produces’ the total-authoritarian state out of itself, as its own consummation” (cited in Cranston, 1970b, p.90).

2.3 Elitists

2.3.1 Classical Elitists

Participationists have not only mixed liberal democrats with other theorists, but also called this mixture “elitists” in a pejorative sense. However, so-called elitists or elite theorists consist of still more mixed ingredients than “liberals”, ranging from those who advocate elite ruling through those who accept it to those who reject it. As a result, the simple label “elitist” is almost useless for academic discussion.

As classical examples of elitists, three theorists have been frequently mentioned as if they had been a triad. They are Geatano Mosca, Vilfredo Pareto, and Robert Michels. All of them were writing in the face of developed representative democracy around the turn of the twentieth century, but their elite theories are quite different from one another.

Both Mosca and Pareto were driven by the fear of the then fashionable egalitarian idea of democracy, which had brought about universal suffrage. They denied not only the possibility but also the desirability of democracy, although they equated democracy with direct democracy. All societies had been and should be ruled by the minority, that is, the “political class” (Mosca) or “elites” (Pareto). However, these two theorists separated from each other when it came to concrete suggestions.

Admitting various “drawbacks” of the representative system, Mosca (1939) after all supported it against mounting criticisms about it. The inevitable alternative to the system was “exclusively bureaucratic”, and, considering “the dangers and drawbacks involved in giving absolute predominance to a single political force that is not subject to any limitation or discussion whatever”, the drawbacks of the representative system were “merest trifles” (p.256), he insisted. In his view, the representative system was effective precisely in “limit[ing] the influence of bureaucracy” (p.258). He hoped that the electorate was “made up in the majority of the second stratum of the ruling class”, that is, the middle class so that “success [did] not depend on paying homage to the beliefs and sentiments of the more ignorant classes” (p.413). Therefore, he regarded the granting of universal suffrage as a “mistake”. However, he accepted it, saying, “one could not go back on it without committing a second mistake” (p.492).

On the other hand, Pareto was sceptical about the representative system, let alone universal suffrage. However, he did not take trouble of coming up with an alternative
system. Instead, he focused on the required character of elites, because, for him, essential for the success of a society was the quality of elites, not governmental systems. He distinguished between two types of elites, namely, “foxes” and “lions”. While foxes were cunning and prevailed in the representative system, lions resorted to coercion. His ideal elites should be able to use both characters according to circumstances.

Michels also denied the possibility of democracy, although his interpretation of democracy was extremely loose. He reached this conclusion not based on the analysis of society as a whole, but based on the analysis of political parties, to be precise, the German Social Democratic Party. He put forward the “iron law of oligarchy” as the “fundamental sociological law” (1966). Based on this law, all political parties inevitably develop organisation or bureaucracy within themselves, which means for him oligarchical tendency detrimental to democracy. The law reads, “It is organization which gives birth to the domination of the elected over the electors, of the mandataries over the mandators, of the delegates over the delegators. Who says organization, says oligarchy” (p.365). Therefore, in his view, the organisation is “the source from which the conservative currents flow over the plain of democracy, occasioning there disastrous floods and rendering the plain unrecognizable” (p.62). Organisation necessarily accompanies leadership, which also undermines democracy: “there is great scientific value in the demonstration that every system of leadership is incompatible with the most essential postulates of democracy” (p.364). By relying on the loose interpretation of democracy, he argued that organisation or leadership of political parties inevitably undermined intra-party democracy, moreover, democracy of society as a whole. He just settled for presenting this pessimistic law, repeating that democracy was nothing but rhetoric. Whereas the “elite” should play a leading role for Mosca and Pareto, it merely undermines democracy for Michels.

2.3.2 Modern Elitists

Liberal democrats, such as Schumpeter, Sartori, and Plamenatz, have been criticised for being elitist by participationists. As mentioned in Section 1.2.1, they indeed put emphasis on the role of leadership. However, they advocate measures to hold political leaders accountable to the electorate, and try to restrain leaders through the constitution. That is why, they have many in common with Mosca, but very few with Pareto and Michels.

Pluralists, particularly Dahl, have also been labelled as elitists by participationists. This is because he turned down citizen participation in governmental decision-making, and gave room to representatives, that is, elites, although they should be, in Dahl’s view, nothing more than agents for pressure groups. According to Bachrach (1967), “As a liberal democrat, he [Dahl] is sympathetic to the idea of equality of political power, but as a scientist he believes that it is impossible to realize in any large political system” (p.85). The “political power” here means the right to directly participate in decision-making. According to Dahl, because of a technical reason, “It goes without saying that except in exceedingly small groups, specific decisions must be made by a relatively few people acting in the name of the polity” (cited in Bachrach, p.86). As an alternative criterion of democracy, he put forward “equality of opportunity”, to which he again ascribed a unique meaning. Based
on his equality of opportunity, “each adult citizen should have an equal and indefinitely enduring opportunity to exercise as much power over key governmental decisions as any other citizen exercises” (p.89). This criterion ought to be far from being elitist but too populist for liberal democrats.

At the opposite extreme end of the spectrum from populists are neo-elite theorists, such as Albertoni (1987) and Field and Higley (1980), who place infinite trust in elites. While focusing on the historical role of elites, they almost completely neglect responsibility to be assumed by these elites to the people, who should be just skilfully managed (Wintrop, 2000). For example, according to Field and Higley, elites play “a decisive role in the explanation of major political variations between and within societies”. To realise “stable, representative political institutions” (p.118), those elites have to constitute “consensually unified elites”, “co-operating tacitly to keep the public’s consciousness of really divisive issues to minimal proportions” (p.72), they argue.

Birch (1993) categorises even Marxists into elitists, because “they believe liberal democracy to be essentially a facade which disguises the power of a minority” (p.170). That is why, Marxists are elitists, because they regard current society as being ruled by the minority or an economic class, although they try to bring about revolutionary changes in such society. In the same sense, Birch also categorises C.W. Mills as an elitist. As mentioned earlier, Mills argued that American society was dominated by a power elite. However, participationists have regarded him as an elitist based on a different reason. Indeed, Mills thoroughly attacked the power elite in his 1956 book, *The Power Elite*, but later he accepted it, and stressed the role of intellectuals in curbing and directing the power elite. As a result, participationists criticised Mills as an elitist, because, in their view, he resorted not only to the power elite but also to the intellectual elite: “Despite his vigorous attack on the ‘power elite’, the late C. Wright Mills did not advocate that it should be radically disturbed. Instead he argued that the ‘power elite’ must be made responsible to the humanizing force of an intellectual elite” (Bachrach, 1967, p.49). That is why, Mills stimulated participationists through his criticism about American society at the beginning, but he was later discarded as an elitist by them.

It is evident that the term “elitist” does not have a consistent meaning at all. In addition, as opposed to liberalism, it does not have a core meaning based on historical development of political theories. Whereas the classical theory is a myth, elitists are just a hotchpotch.

### 2.4 Democratic Theories in Planning

So far, this chapter has dealt with theories in political science. Now, I move on to theories in urban planning. I focus on three theories all of which were put forward by American theorists. These theories have been frequently mentioned with regard to the democratisation of planning. Their democratic nature, however, have not been well understood or even grossly misunderstood.
2.4.1 Arnstein’s Ladder Concept

Sherry Arnstein’s famous “ladder” concept, particularly the figure of the ladder (Figure 2.1), has been understood as a scale to decide the extent of citizen participation. As a result, it has been used as an effective tool to criticize actual participation provided by government, pressing for higher rungs of the ladder to realize more substantial participation. However, if we precisely read her paper “A Ladder of Citizen Participation” (1969), which introduces this concept, we will find that her ladder is not pertinent to such use. At the beginning, she says, “The idea of citizen participation is a little like eating spinach: no one is against in principle because it is good for you. Participation of the governed in their government is, in theory, the cornerstone of democracy” (p.216). Aside from the fact that such “theory” is limited to participatory theory, she herself is not participationist, judging from the following argument.

She begins by defining citizen participation, because “there has been very little analysis of the content of the current controversial slogan: ‘citizen participation’”. Based on her definition, “citizen participation is a categorical term for citizen power”. However, citizen power is the etymological meaning of democracy. Therefore, in clarifying the meaning of citizen participation, she rephrases it with a more general term. Successively, she reinterprets citizen power:

It is the redistribution of power that enables the have-not citizens, presently excluded from the political and economic processes, to be deliberately included in the future. It is the strategy by which the have-nots join in determining how information is shared, goals and policies are set, tax resources are allocated, programs are operated, and benefits like contracts and patronage are parceled out. (p.216)

![Figure 2.1. “Eight Rungs on a Ladder of Citizen Participation”](source: Arnstein (1969, p.217))
That is why, what she in fact strives for is to increase political power of the “have-nots”. Although she does not define “have-nots” clearly, they stand for the poor, mainly blacks, judging from the cases she mentions in the paper. However, it is one thing that citizens as a whole directly participate in decision-making. It is another that the have-nots increase their political power. By returning to the general term “citizen power”, she replaces issues. In fact, she does not try to increase the have-nots’ power through participation. She still believes in representative democracy, and argues for increasing the have-nots’ power based on it. This is evident from her explanation of the ladder.

The title of the figure is “Eight Rungs on a Ladder of Citizen Participation”. Therefore, those who rely only on this figure would understand that, the higher the rung is, the more widespread and intense citizen participation is. This is far from being the case, as she indicates by saying, “the eight types are arranged in a ladder pattern with each rung corresponding to the extent of citizens’ power” (p.217). That is, not corresponding to the extent of citizen participation.

From the point of view of participationists, the most promising rung is in fact Rung 4 “Consultation”, whose “most frequent methods (...) are attitude surveys, neighborhood meetings, and public hearings”. In combination with Rung 3 “Informing”, participationists would demand that these opportunities should be transformed into places of substantial decision-making. However, Arnstein does not trust these methods, including informing. When these methods are used, people “are primarily perceived as statistical abstractions, and participation is measured by how many come to meetings, take brochures home, or answer a questionnaire”. “Residents are increasingly unhappy about the number of times per week they are surveyed about their problems and hopes”, she says. In addition, “Attitude surveys are not very valid indicators of community opinion”. She also quotes a case in which residents were manipulated into agreeing with a proposal at a “community meeting” (p.219). That is why, she relegates these methods to the lower or middle position of the ladder.

Placed above these methods is “Placation”, whose example is “to place a few hand-picked ‘worthy’ poor on boards of Community Action Agencies or on public bodies like the board of education, police commission, or housing authority” (p.220). Although those who participate are limited to a “few hand-picked ‘worthy’ poor”, this measure is better for Arnstein than the consultation, where all the citizens can participate. Moving into “Degrees of citizen power”, at the first rung “Partnership”, citizens and powerholders “agree to share planning and decision-making responsibilities through such structures as joint policy boards, planning committees and mechanisms for resolving impasses”. These boards or committees are attended by “citizen leaders”, who are paid “reasonable honoraria for their time-consuming efforts” (p.221). So, again, this rung is participation by representatives, not citizens themselves. At the next rung “Delegated power”, the majority of the seas of these boards are dominated by the have-nots’ representatives.

Finally, the top rung “Citizen control”, which is ideal for Arnstein, means “separatist forms
of neighborhood government that can create and control decentralized public services such as police protection, education systems, and health facilities” (p.224). That is why, what she ultimately demands is decentralisation within municipalities, particularly to poor neighbourhoods. These decentralised neighbourhood governments themselves are operated based on representative democracy, electing representatives of citizens, who are normally called councillors or politicians. In addition, “neighborhoods” where she wants to decentralise power seem to be not so small. To support the idea of neighbourhood government, she quotes the criticism of the prevailing representative system by Adam Walinsky:

In the Bedford-Stuyvesant ghetto of New York there are 450,000 people (...). the area has only one high school, and 80 per cent of its teen-agers are dropouts; the infant mortality rate is twice the national average; there are over 8000 buildings abandoned by everyone but the rats, yet the area received not one dollar of urban renewal funds (...). Clearly, Bedford-Stuyvesant has some special needs; yet it has always been lost in the midst of the city’s eight million (...). In what sense can the representative system be said to have “spoken for” this community, during the long years of neglect and decay? (pp.223-4)

According to Arnstein, this criticism is applicable to the “ghettos from coast to coast”. Even based on the standard of representative democracy, it is remarkable that “eight million” citizens have only one municipal government. It is by no means a radical idea to decentralise power to a “neighborhood” of “450,000 people”. In addition, she does not necessarily insist on decentralisation. “In cities likely to become predominantly black through population growth”, it can be sufficient to strive for a “black city hall, achieved by the elective process” (p.224).

As can be seen, nowhere does she demand citizen participation as participationists understand it. She just demands fair representation. The figure of the ladder should have been titled “A Ladder of the Have-Not’s Power based on Representative Democracy”. The ladder concept was “designed to be provocative” (p.216) for the have-nots. However, by using an incorrect term, her paper, particularly the figure of the ladder, turned out to be provocative for participationists.

2.4.2 Davidoff’s Advocacy Planning
Paul Davidoff’s advocacy planning, which was introduced in his paper “Advocacy and Pluralism in Planning” (1965), has also been stimulating for participationists. Judging from the title of the paper, he seems to encourage planners to offer technical support to citizens’ organisations, particularly those unprivileged, and try to realise a pluralistic situation where many organisations compete with one another, presenting their own plans. In fact, advocacy planning has been understood as such, and advocate planners have strived for such planning. For example, advocate planner Lisa R. Peattie (1968) argues that the increasing influence of experts in public policy is the most disadvantageous to the “people at the bottom of the system - those who are, through lack of education and of technical sophistication, particularly ill-prepared to deal with the presentation of issues in a technical framework”. That is why, she says, "Advocacy planning has its origins initially in the
perception that such groups need planners to make their case, to express their interests” (p.81). Davidoff himself says in this paper, “Pluralism and advocacy are means for stimulating consideration of future conditions by all groups in society” (p.334). This is essential for democracy: “The recommendation that city planners represent and plead the plans of many interest groups is founded upon the need to establish an effective urban democracy” (p.332). He seems also convinced of the necessity of citizen participation: “There is something very shameful to our society in the necessity to have organized ‘citizen participation’. Such participation should be the norm in an enlightened democracy” (p.335). However, advocacy planning as he advocates it in this paper is far from being democratic, whether in terms of liberal-democratic theory or participatory theory or utilitarianism.

According to Davidoff, the idea of advocacy planning is derived from legal process, where legal advocates compete with each other. However, lawyers just help clients based on their legal expertise, if they are asked to do so, regardless of clients' values. Davidoff’s advocate planners are much more choosy. It is, at least today, not remarkable to say, “Appropriate planning action cannot be prescribed from a position of value neutrality”, and, “values are inescapable elements of any rational decision-making process” (p.331). Such values should be expressed by politicians based on liberal-democratic theory, and by citizens based on participatory theory and utilitarianism. However, in Davidoff’s view, they should be expressed by planners. Moreover, “the planner should do more than explicate the values underlying his prescriptions for courses of action; he should affirm them; he should be an advocate for what he deems proper” (pp.331-2). So, the first priority lies in planners’ values, not clients’ values. The advocate planner is allowed to “persuade his client”. On the other hand, “In some situations persuasion might not be necessary, for the planner would have sought out an employer with whom he shared common views about desired social conditions and the means toward them” (p.333). In other words, citizens’ organisations whose views are different from planners’ and are not persuaded by planners are left without technical support. Davidoff does not oblige planners to defend whatever citizens’ organisations come to them.

Once the advocate planner finds a sympathetic client, he offers technical support but still insists on his idea: “The advocate planner would be more than a provider of information, an analyst of current trends, a simulator of future conditions, and a detailer of means. In addition to carrying out these necessary parts of planning, he would be a proponent of specific substantive solution” (p.333).

Although this advocacy planning is aimed at facilitating planners' personal values, it should be paid, in Davidoff’s view. He expects financial support “from foundation or from government” (p.335).

Then, what happens with citizens’ organisations that cannot find sympathetic planners? Davidoff argues that citizens have to be able to respond “in the technical language of professional planners” (p.332) to various alternatives proposed by planners. In addition, as
one of advantages of advocacy planning, he says that it would “force those who have been
critical of ‘establishment’ plans to produce superior plans” (p.333). Citizens’ organisations
are not allowed just to criticise governmental plans. They have to submit alternatives,
which “will require much information concerning the present and predicted conditions in
the community” (p.334). Therefore, if organisations cannot find sympathetic planners, they
would be necessarily excluded from decision-making process.

Davidoff encourages even municipal planners to put forward their plans based on their
values: “planners should be able to engage in the political process as advocates of the
interests both of government and of such other groups, organizations, or individuals who
are concerned with proposing policies for the future development of the community”
(p.332). These public planners should be assigned to “the executive or legislative office
perhaps” to both. However, the executive and the legislature themselves are only
“informed by their own planning staffs”. Furthermore, he suggests establishing “minority
and majority planning staffs in the legislative branch”, because “there is or should be a
Republican and Democratic way of viewing city development” (p.335).

Indeed, there should be such a division of views. Striking, at least from the European point
of view, is that he suggests civil servants competing among themselves based on their
political creeds, independent of politicians. It does not matter whatever the political
executive or the government party tries to do or whatever the municipal council discusses.
This is certainly bureaucracy in a sense that bureaucrats rule. Such thinking originates
from a uniquely American situation that I mentioned in Introduction. Davidoff himself
reveals it in this paper. Considering the leading actor in the “plural planning process”, first
of all he mentions political parties, but quickly discards them, because “[t]here is very little
evidence that local political organizations have the interest, ability, or concern to establish
well developed programs for their communities”. A situation where the “majority and
minority parties” in the municipal council discuss individual proposals based on “political
platforms” is a “dream”, which “will not turn to reality for a long time” (p.335), he predicts.

That is why, neither politicians nor citizens but “the planning profession must engage itself
thoroughly and openly in the contention surrounding political determination” (p.332). Far
from being pluralism. Davidoff’s advocacy planning is nothing more than competition within
a family of planners. But then who selects the final plan from those many plans proposed
by private and public planners? Davidoff is highly critical of the planning commission that
currently decides plans: “A major drawback to effective democratic planning practices is
the continuation of that non-responsible vestigial institution, the planning commission”.
Judging from his remark that “the failure to place planning decision choices in the hands of
elected officials has weakened the ability of professional planners to have their proposals
effected” (p.335), he wishes that the municipal council decides plans. However, it is almost
impossible for councillors to decide for themselves, in the face of many plans each of
which is completely elaborated. On the other hand, Davidoff allows advocate planners to
engage themselves in political activities: “In order to make his client more powerful
politically the advocate might also become engaged in expanding the size and scope of his
client organization” (p.333). That is why, the municipal council could decide plans in response to political pressure driven by planners. Such decision-making by no means guarantees responsibility to citizens, although he criticises the planning commission for not being responsible. He seems to have chosen the municipal council as the place for decision-making, just because he wants to guarantee “professional planners to have their proposals effected” (p.335).

At the end of the paper, Davidoff stresses the necessity to dramatically expand the function of planners, saying, “state planning enabling legislation should be amended to permit planning departments to study and to prepare plans related to any area of public concern”, or, “the professional planning association should enlarge its scope so as to not exclude city planners not specializing in physical planning” (p.336). As can be seen, he does not just tell physical planners to take into account social aspects. What he substantially strives for is not democracy, but, beyond bureaucracy, planocracy, so to speak, in which citizens have to appeal to planners for mercy. However, his ambition is still modest in comparison to Forester’s, which will be seen in the next section.

2.4.3 Forester’s Critical Theory of Planning

John Forester’s “critical theory of planning”, which was elaborated in his book Planning in the Face of Power (1989), relies heavily on Habermas’s philosophy. This book was very influential in bringing Habermas’s philosophy closer to planning researchers, some of whom put forward communicative planning theory.

However, whereas communicative planners require citizens to be communicatively competent, Forester requires only “planners” to be so. His planners, whom he also calls “planning analysts”, stand for “a broad array of future-oriented actors, including project and program managers, public administrators, program evaluators, and policy analysts, as well as local, regional, state, and federal agency planners” (p.4). In his view, these public and private planners should understand that their actions are basically communicative and that, as Habermas argues, communication always has social and political aspects. For example, Forester encourages planners to “listen to” rather than “hear” the speaker. Whereas hearing means to pay attention only to the “literal meaning of his or her words”, listening means to try to understand the “meaning of what is said in the context of the speaker’s life” (p.108), considering “what the speaker has done” or “what important events make up the backdrop of the speaker’s words” (p.116).

Forester, however, does not just suggest planners organising public meetings based on such knowledge. He urges planners to actively engage themselves in politics. They should not settle for a neutral, technical role. In this respect, he is very frank, saying, “Planners (...) work within political institutions, on political issues” (p.3); “planning analysts face a recurrent political choice” (p.22); or “The practical tasks facing the progressive planner, then, are like those that community organizers and political actors have traditionally performed” (p.33). In the face of conflicts, for example, planners should decide “how much information to give a developer or a neighbor, when or with whom to hold informal
meetings, how to hold the meetings, whom to invite, or how to negotiate with either party”. All these questions involve political decisions, and Forester acknowledges it, saying, “So (...) planning staff can exercise substantial discretion and exert important influence as a result” (p.84). “Both organizing and mediated negotiation work require planners to exercise political judgment and skill” (p.103), he says.

Particularly, Forester encourages planners to manoeuvre public attention: “Planners and students alike must explore the management of citizens’ attention” (p.161). Planners should be “selective organizers of attention to real possibilities of action” (p.14). Indeed, he well realises, “How analysts organize attention is the central political problem”. But this fact does not trouble him at all: “They must stress some issues and downplay others”; “They clarify some opportunities but obscure others”; and “They encourage the participation of some citizens, but not that of others” (p.19). He even encourages planners to organise citizens to “build political support”. They should be engaged in “‘organizing’ practices, actively mobilizing concerned and affected persons” (p.156), “encouraging coalitions of affected citizens’ groups and soliciting political pressure from them” (pp.155-6). Such “progressive planning practice”, in his view, “represents a refinement of traditional advocacy planning” (p.46).

For those who picked up a smattering of political science, his theory would be striking. Particularly for liberal democrats, this is completely against democracy. If the word “planners” were replaced with “politicians”, there would be no problem. Because politicians are authorised to make political decisions through elections, and citizens can hold politicians responsible for what they did during their tenure of office at regular intervals. But if the word “planners” were replaced with “bureaucrats” or “private consultants”, and this is what Forester intends, then it would be evident how undemocratic his theory were. He never tells those planners to act based on directions from politicians. Rather, “they have to shape the expectations of elected officials” (p.16). Moreover, “Planners and analysts should also work to counteract the political noise and flak” (p.23), “anticipating political pressures and mobilizing countervailing support” (p.46).

He recognises that planners, or bureaucrats, can accumulate formidable power in their hands. “A key source” of such power is the “control of information” (p.28). In addition, “The complexity of permit-granting processes is a source of influence” (p.84). It ought to be all the more important to place planners under political control in terms of democracy. However, while he does not mention any measures to control planners, he rather recommends planners to use their substantial power effectively, saying, “the complexity of the planning process produces more opportunities than headaches” (p.85).

His theory is not democratic for participationists, either. He does not regard participation as the right of citizens. Planners should “shape” participation, deciding “who is contacted, who participates in informal design-review meetings, who persuades whom of which options for project development” (p.28).
Viewed from another angle, the fact that such theory can be put forward indicates how incapable politicians and political parties are at the local level in the United States. His theory also reveals how indifferent Habermas’s philosophy is to democracy.

However, Forester himself puts forward this theory as democratic theory, that is, theory to democratise society. At the beginning of the book, he states, “this whole book is about the vulnerabilities of democracy, about power and professional responsibility, about political action and ideology, inequality, domination and resistance, illegitimate authority and democratizing practices” (p.xi). Moreover, he considers that planners should play an active role in democratising society. They should worry about “social justice” and “existing inequalities”, and engage themselves in “[d]emocratizing the state” (p.151).

With regard to the content of democracy, Forester reveals his socialist or even Leninist inclination here and there in the book. For example, he says:

In a society whose capital accumulation and investment is privately rather than democratically controlled, it follows that the organizational form of that capital, its investment, and the state agencies protecting it will also be nondemocratically controlled. Thus, planners can expect (…) that the organizations in and with which they work will systematically reproduce sociopolitical relations that (1) ignore ways to socialize and democratize accumulation; (2) discourage widespread participation and representation (…); (3) deter cooperative, well-organized, community-based organizations (…); and (4) distract public attention from social needs and instead focus on the promotion of individual consumption. (pp.78-9)

Therefore, in his view, “capital accumulation and investment” should not be privately controlled; “accumulation” should be socialised; or the public should not focus on “individual consumption”. In addition, he repeatedly uses the neo-Marxist term “critical”, such as “critical judgment”, “critical listening”, and a “critical theory of planning”. And planners have to take an initiative in realising such socialist changes:

By seeking to play an educative and organizing role, informing citizens about forthcoming projects and ensuring citizens access to relevant information, planners may resist social relations of knowledge that might otherwise leave citizens practically ignorant. By aiding citizens’ political and community organizing toward democratic control of resources and investments (…), planners may work to alter political relations of consent that would otherwise allow formally democratic but substantively autocratic policies to ensue. (p.79)

That is why, he almost expects planners to act as the “vanguard”, who educates, organises, and directs citizens through a good command of communication.

A sharp distinction should be made between liberal-democratic theory and utilitarianism. Liberal-democratic theory has nothing to do with the laissez-faire principle, and the label “elitist” is too loose to describe the theory. On the other hand, participatory theory is not entitled to be the successor to the classical theory, and some planning theorists like those mentioned in Section 2.4, who have provided theoretical support for participationists, are
in fact not so dedicated to participatory theory.

Note

1 In facilitating such deliberation of the people, Rousseau regards “factions” as harmful: “when factions, partial associations, are formed to the detriment of the whole society, the will of each of these associations becomes general in relation to its members, and particular with reference to the State”. Therefore, it “is important, then, in order to have a clear declaration of the general will, that there should be no factions in the State”. However, he does not necessarily insist on banning them, saying, “if there are factions, it is necessary to multiply their number and prevent inequality” (p.173).