

Abstracts

Van Stokkom

Deliberation without democracy?

Inequality and authority in interactive policy-making

Following political theorists as Jürgen Habermas deliberative democracy would produce the best answers to political issues whilst democratic procedure would guarantee a proper representation. Strengthened by these ideals theorists attempt to reconcile the contradictory principles of democracy and deliberation: in their view both equality (inclusion) and qualitative solutions are served. Over the past decades the premises at the basis of the enlightened-rational variants of deliberative theories have been criticised extensively. Many critics stress the role of inequality, authority, rhetoric and emotions in deliberative projects. But these critics likewise exhibit high expectations: participation should be based on perfect representation. Therefore a more modest approach to the ideal of equality is needed. The ability to challenge authority and power seems of greater importance than continual participation

in all kinds of decision making forums. Expertise and authority play an indisputably key role in deliberative projects. Besides, many times individual reasoning is outplayed by a collective, creative learning process. These learning experiences are best placed in the early stages of opinion and planning formation, that is, prior to decision-making. It is in these stages that participants are prepared to suspend their opinion in favour of the qualitative input of creative experts. It is not until the final stages of the decision-making process that the democratic rule of one-man one vote should be decisive. In this way an alternative approach to deliberative democracy emerges, one in which authority, expertise, rhetoric and emotions get their legitimate place, an approach that might be better suited to the motives, expectations and competence of participants in deliberation projects. This approach attempts to handle the conflicting principles of democratic procedures (equality) and deliberative qualities (legitimate results) in more practical ways.

Geerlings/De Jong

OEEI: a new CBA method for the evaluation of transport infrastructure in the Netherlands: building block for econocracy or basis for even-handed policy information

Decision-making on transport infrastructure projects in the Netherlands has been facing a remarkable wind of change in recent years. After a period of about a decade in the 1990s in which both academics and practitioners in policy analysis, public policy and planning have claimed that the traditional policy analysis methods were obsolete (be they CBA or MCA) because of their assumed one sidedness and lack of adaptability to the requirements of multi-actor settings, they experience a sudden resurgence since the year 2000 in the form

of OEEI (Overview of Economic Effects of Infrastructure), a refined application of the well-known CBA method. Astonishingly and despite all political and administrative theory on the types of information policy actors can process, the need for transparency and active actor involvement in the evaluation and decision process, all at odds with traditional policy analysis, OEEI has become highly successful. This paper delves into the issue of why this new version of Cost Benefit Analysis has become so politically successful despite predictions made to the contrary. In addition, it will focus on the question if this resurgence may lead to 'econocracy' (conceptual hegemony by economists and their ideologies and methods over other approaches) or not, and if so, how this can be prevented.