

Iris Marion Young, *Inclusion and Democracy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000, ISBN 0-19-829754-8, 304 pp. (Hardcover)

The book originates from a seminar the author gave at the Johann Wolfgang von Goethe University in Frankfurt, Germany, in the spring term of 1995. It is a reflection on the norm "Inclusion" which is normally invoked by individuals wishing to widen democratic practices. It explores additional and deep conditions of political inclusion and exclusion such as those involving modes of communication, attending to social differences, representation, civic organization and the borders of political jurisdictions.

The book consists of three main parts, each guided by a question central to democratic process. Chapters 1, 2 and 3 reflect on the norms and conditions of inclusive democratic communication under circumstances of structural inequality and cultural differences; Chapters 4 and 5 is a reflection on how inclusive democratic communication and decision-making can be conceptualized for societies with millions of people; chapters 6 and 7 explore the proper scope of the democratic polity and how exclusion enacted does restrict that scope.

The first three chapters (1, 2 and 3) of the book provide an expose of deliberative democracy, inclusion and justice. Young argues that deliberative democracy implies a deep and broader inclusion and political equality, whose implementation will eventually promote justice. Furthermore, deliberative comprehension of democracy has two sides to it. Firstly, it is the means through which citizens can promote their interests as well as hold the power of their rulers in check. Secondly, it functions as a collective problem-solving mechanism drawing its legitimacy from the participation and criticism of the members of the society. Thus, the practice of inclusive democracy, since it draws its sense of justice and wisdom from a wide catchment area of opinion, is therefore more likely to promote justice.

As regards political communication, Young further points out that contrary to what other theorists claim (e.g. Stanley Aronowitz in *Is A Democracy Possible?* and Walter Lipmann who tend to reserve political participation for the educated), deliberative democracy political communication is not restricted to arguments, dispassionate, orderly articulate expressions. On the contrary, these have exclusionary implications for they ignore other forms of political communication,

which promote inclusive democratic deliberation. Young identifies three such forms of communication, which she calls greeting or public address, rhetorics and narratives. Greeting or public address acknowledges the presence and opinion of diverse social segments in the political public. Rhetorics refer to the manner in which claims and reasons are presented. These categories of communication include the use of figurative speech, use of placards and street theatre. And narratives constitute steps in arguments by offering explanations of meanings and experiences. These three forms of communication are very important for deliberative democracy. Indeed, authentic egalitarian approach to democracy must promote inclusion and put a stop to privileged literacy and education.

The first reflection concludes with a refutation of the assumption made by democratic theorists such as Jean Elshtain, David Miller and David Harvey who claim that a properly functioning democratic discussion should be oriented to a common good. This claim is rooted in the assumption that politics constitutes an arena for competing private and conflicting interests or that a deliberative public demands that political participants put aside their interests and affiliations. This, according to Young, is a false dichotomy. In contemporary democratic politics, most group-based movements and claims originate from relationally constituted differentiations. Thus socially situated interests, proposals, assertions, experiences constitute a vital resources pool for deliberative democracy and the making of wise decisions.

The second reflection, which is in Chapters 4 and 5, is concerned with understanding of inclusive communicative democracy in the context of mass diverse societies. Young claims that many theorists and activists interested in deepening democratic practices have erroneously assumed that representative institutions are incompatible with "deep" democracy. They hold that genuine democracy is direct and face-to-face. The implication of this assumption is that large-scale mass societies cannot achieve deep democracy in the sense that in such societies, individuals cannot participate effectively. In other words, such societies are condemned to "shallow" democracy whereby the majority opinion has no impact on the decision making process.

According to Young, this position is due to the consideration of participation and representation as if they are in opposition. And yet, having many avenues and institutions through which citizens can engage both with each other and their representatives, offers citizens the legitimacy to authorize representatives and hold

them accountable. Representative systems are, therefore, more inclusive, especially when they encourage or create a platform for the marginalized and disadvantaged social groups to express their opinion or participate in the decision making process. Both civil societies organization and the state institutions i.e., voting schemes, electoral rules, can facilitate participation of such groups.

The third reflection (Chapters 6 and 7), which is also the last one, is concerned with the scope of the polity to which principles of justice ought to apply. Young notices that liberal political theorists, e.g. John Rawls and David Miller, assume "polity" as given. According to these theorists, democratic inclusion means that all members of a given polity should have equal opportunity and influence over debate and decision making within that polity. Young realizes that restricting the issue of inclusion to debate and decision making may constitute exclusion of other groups in society i.e., racial and class segregation. Most often segregated groups are normally included in a polity although they do not participate in the decisions making process due to social and economical factors. The process of segregation prevents other groups from political participation in favour of other groups i.e., when the scope of social and economic interactions does not match the scope of political jurisdiction. For groups to participate effectively, the scope of polity ought to correspond with the scope of social relations across which obligations of justice extend. Decentralization or local governance can widen inclusion and thus facilitate participation of various groups in a polity.

Young's book does indeed succeed in widening democratic practices by introducing new forms of communication, which are vital for deliberative democracy, thus making deliberative democracy more inclusive. Of course, Young is not the only democracy theorist concerned with justice and inclusion. But, her main contribution to the discourse on democracy, inclusion and justice is quite significant because for a democratic community to attain normative justice, it must be inclusive enough, allowing everyone to participate in the decision making process. Such a community must facilitate, encourage and enable its members to meet their needs and exercise their freedoms. In this sense, Young offers a remedy for ailing briefcase democracies with lots of voiceless, marginalized groups of people.

Young has presented her ideas in a systematic and lucid manner. Her book deserves serious engagement; a recommendable read for postgraduate students, democracy activists and anybody passionate about democracy, justice and inclusion.

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