Interpersonal Confidence on Epistemic Democracy: Beyond Voting

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ABSTRACT

There is a huge dispute on epistemic populism about whether majorities' preferences can be treated as general will. Philosophers have different opinions on that, and they focus on the procedure of voting (during the voting), and the outcome of voting (after voting). This paper's goal is to discuss the precondition for arriving at democracy. That is, a high level of social bond is a prerequisite for effective voting; interpersonal confidence is crucial for achieving democracy: the voting system requires interpersonal confidence to ensure the voters' motivation from public interest; even though the result of voting may not lead to a just decision, interpersonal confidence is also a requirement to correct the mistakes.

Keywords: Epistemic Democracy, Social Choice Theory, Populism, Liberalism, Voting, Interpersonal Confidence.

1. INTRODUCTION

Philosophers have many disputes on epistemic democracy about whether majorities' will be treated as general will. Arrow's impossibility theorem shows that: When there are three or more alternatives for the group to choose from, it is not possible to define a social choice function that satisfies a number of reasonable constraints. He suggested a number of conditions exerted on the social choice function. William Riker argues that the complexity of modern society makes it impossible for the conditions proposed by Arrow to be met, while Gerry Mackie argues that the experience shows that modern society can meet these conditions. This review cries out, experience shows that both Riker's and Mackie's theories are individually applicable in different situations and conditions. This paper will focus on discussing the factors that affect the validity of voting before voting. The study of the factors that influence the voting process prior to voting would effectively resolve the disagreement among philosophers on epistemic democracy.

My study does not include all philosophers' discussions of epistemic democracy, and interpersonal confidence is not a very precise theory and still requires exhaustive argumentation. The main thrust of this paper is to address the philosophers' controversies from a dynamic perspective (see Table 1).

Table 1. Analysis on papers about Epistemic democracy

Social Bond Status	The good outcome of voting	The good procedure of voting
	Instrumental value of democracy	Intrinsical value of democracy
Social bond is tight	promote	promote
Social bond is loose	prevent	prevent

2. GENERAL WILL AND INTERPERSONAL CONFIDENCE

Riker criticized populism through applying social choice theory to epistemic democracy, specifically, the voting system; and he points out that populism is incoherent and empty. "Mackie's claims about the absence of historical evidence of cycling, or incoherence, in the U.S. Congress" Coleman and Ferejohn object to Riker's view by emphasizing the intrinsic democratic value of voting, and they suggest that the voting system still enhances loyalty, political competence, and the sense of community [1]. Joshua Cohen cries out that populism is not a precise theory, and Riker only discusses one interpretation of populism, there are still many other alternatives.

In the next section, the point is to discuss the views of these philosophers and shed light on the crisis in the conception of democracy arising from the application of Arrow's impossibility theorem to the understanding of democracy. In Part 3, the goal is to revisit Rousseau's views on general will and voting, and it will show that Rousseau believed that general will exists before voting and constricts the voter, but the question is how is general will formed before voting? In Part 4, this paper will review Ben Saunders' theory of lottery voting, and discuss Rousseau's idea about social bound which leads to a discussion of the issues raised in the previous section.

2.1 Ideas on "Social Choice Theory "

Riker against populism by citing Arrowin social choice theory. Suppose there are three choices A, B, and C to choose from， and there are three individuals 1, 2, and 3 whose preference is to inform this choice and they are asked to sort the alternatives according to their preferences from good to bad. The result of their personal preference ranking is:

A>B>C

B>C>A

C>A>B

That means, for person 1, he prefers A to B, prefers B to C, and prefers A to C. We can find A is more popular than B, B is more popular than C, and C is more popular than A. Therefore, we fall into a cycle and cannot figure out which one is the most popular choice. Arrow's theory points out that Arrow's theorem tells us that, except for the simplest case, no aggregation process can satisfy all requirements. There is no such a common will of all the people concerning collective decisions.

According to social choice theory, the social choice function cannot be defined as satisfying several reasonable restrictions when the group has three or more choices. Arrow proposed several conditions of social choice theory. Infinite domain, non-indicative, convertibility, completeness, and independence of irrelevant alternatives. Thus, Riker argues that social choice theory proves that the popular will cannot be an element of social governance. If the condition of popular will is a restorative preference, it seems that in contemporary complex societies this condition cannot always be satisfied. The popular will does not possess such property to make it avoid circularity.

William Riker applies social choice theory to epistemic democracy and he thinks populist voting can reflect people's will incoherently. Populism is empty because people's will is reflected by voting, and majorities exist cyclical. Populism is morally objectionable because populism can be exempt from constitutional checks by choosing the view of the majority.

2.2 Disputes on Epistemic Populism

Riker believes that populism is empty and morally objectionable. According to Riker, there are two interpretations of voting: the liberal interpretation of voting, and the populist interpretation of voting. In the liberal view, voting gives the electorate the right to restrict officials and this is also the only function of voting. The liberal view does not assume that the electorate's view is correct, and it is possible to get a wrong decision based on voting. Therefore, in the liberal's view, the voting merely makes the electorate can restrict their officials, and there is no guarantee of liberty. In the populist view, "Liberty and hence self-control through participation are obtained by embodying the will of people in the action of officials. [2]" Riker retrospective to Rousseau's theory of general will, according to Rousseau, " Liberty is an obedience to the law we have prescribed for ourselves". Liberty is the voice of sovereign people when they speak for the public interests. Therefore, the participation of rulemaking is crucial to liberty. The rule was made by sovereign people must be respected because it embodies liberty.

Riker also believes that the election which we have provides minimal liberalism because election Voting cannot reflect general will. The election only provides people the right to get rid of their rulers.

Coleman and Ferejohn criticized Riker's opinion, the object of the incoherence of Riker, and argue that the result of the election is random. The procedure of voting can enhance the sense of community. They provide different epistemic interpretations of voting: voting reflects social choice properly (Riker thinking voting only reflects populist's will)

2.3 Dissent to Riker's theorem

Ferejohn and Coleman argue that the crux of Ricker's argument is that he claims that all voting procedures produce arbitrary results, and implicitly argues that constitutional limits restrict the scope of arbitrary results in a way that populist institutions do not. However, neither of these claims is valid. On the first point, some recent results from social choice theory suggest that fair procedures may produce a limited range of outcomes-although there may be some ambiguity, the range is small. If so, it may be premature to reject populism in favor of liberal democracy on the grounds that populist institutions can produce arbitrary outcomes. On the second point, there is no ready theoretical justification for the idea that choices made by liberal institutions are more arbitrary than those made by populist institutions. In short, it is not clear that

constitutional restrictions on voting eliminate arbitrariness in social choice, nor is it clear that the range of arbitrariness expected in populist democracies is sufficient for them to be rejected. Constitutional restrictions that specifically aim to reduce the scope of outcome arbitrariness may be unnecessary, unsuccessful, or both. At the very least, we have no satisfactory theory to demonstrate that they are necessary or sufficient. In the absence of such comparative institutional knowledge, we believe that Rick's endorsement of a liberal regime is premature. Without a theory of the operation of liberal institutions, we do find unconvincing the claim that rational individuals would impose constitutional limits on the democratic process. Thus, the shift from a proceduralist to a contractarian model of justification may not guarantee support for liberalism and the rejection of populism.

Joshua suggests that people's voting is based on different factors, such as specific interests or the common good. Therefore he believes that it is necessary to provide a framework of voting to structure a normative political philosophy but not to explain people's behavior of voting. Joshua agrees with Riker's conclusion, but he criticized that Riker does not discuss that populism should be criticized because of its emptiness and incoherence. There are several crucial remarks on populism.

Populists could be influenced by the framework of public official institutions. As Joshua says, the Two parties system's "closeness, in turn, reduces the scope of public political debate and dampens interest and involvement in politics. [3]" The framework of collective decisions decides epistemic populists' judgemental competence.

Populists could vote based on their own interests. As Joshua concludes，"the epistemic populist cannot assume that the mere existence of a general will is sufficient to provide individuals with an incentive to vote their judgments of the common good rather than their personal preferences. [3]" We can not provide a statement to prove that a person will always vote for the public but not for himself. "The populist does not simply want procedures that in fact produce outcomes that are more likely to be correct than alternative procedures-that is, procedures that are reliable apart from their legitimacy effects" [3]. Joshua also believes that reliable procedures will produce a good outcome.

"Arguments for democracy can be subdivided into intrinsic and instrumental defenses" [4]. Riker's criticism of democracy seems to be focused on the instrumental value of democracy. Riker cries out that the outcome of voting may not satisfy all the people of the community. Estlund and Hees also focus on the outcome of voting [5] [6]. Other philosophers, like Ferejohn and Coleman, emphasized the intrinsic value

of democracy and the procedure of voting.

3. REVISIT ON ROUSSEAU

Rousseau points out that citizens are influenced by social ties when expressing their opinions. "When the social bond begins to relax and the state to grow weak, when private interests begin to make themselves felt and small societies begin to influence the large one, the common interests change and find opponents. Unanimity no longer reigns in the votes; the general will is no longer the will of all. Contradictions and debates arise, and the best advice does not pass without disputes". When social bonds are broken at all, " Everyone, guided by secret motives, no more expresses his opinion as a citizen than if the state had never existed" [7]. That is, when the social bond is stronger, the citizens will vote based on the general will rather than their individual interests.

Rousseau's argument also shows that general will exists before voting begins, and he points out that good social ties help citizens to consider issues from the point of view of the general will and to be courageous in expressing their opinions. A good social bond is necessary for the voting of the community.

As Wyckoff and Schwartzberg point out, Rousseau's description of voting implies a demand for civic ethics [8] [9]. When social bonds are strong, people will meditate about whether their ideas are consistent with the general will in the process of voting, and the intrinsic value of voting will be achieved through this. If social bonds are loose and people vote based on individual preferences, it is clear that an outcome that satisfies everyone is difficult to achieve. At the same time, it would be unrealistic to expect that the voting procedure could convey certain intrinsic democratic values to the citizens in such a condition.

4. INTERPERSONAL CONFIDENCE IN EPISTEMIC DEMOCRACY

Saunders uses lottery voting as one of the ways to substantiate his conclusions by testing the argument that lottery voting opposes the majority decision principle that he subscribes to. My point is that these do not provide a decisive general reason to support the majority decision principle over lottery voting.

For a group of friends, voting to choose which restaurant to go out to may not satisfy everyone, so random selection of a result through a lottery can satisfy everyone and at the same time satisfy democracy, because of the chance of everyone's plan being adopted is Equal. However, Sanders also stressed the need to avoid individuals re-calling for a vote because they are unhappy that their option was not chosen. If this is achieved it will require the good social bound that

Rousseau mentioned.

Saunders' lottery voting's precondition is that there is a good social bond. Just as the social bond of a group of friends is friendship, which makes it possible for them to accept a result that does not lead to his satisfaction, because the voting process is fair enough for everyone. The social bonds that bring people together are not just recognizable common interests, but religion, culture, blood, race, and faith are all important factors in forming social bonds. People prefer to stay and work with people who share their ideology and share the results rather than with a complete stranger. Even though the latter may bring more visible benefits than the former.

Both philosophers' assumptions on epistemic democracy are soundness, but they ignore the precondition of voting. Based on good social bonds, cycles can be avoided, and vice versa. Populist cannot accept others' views which is different from them and consider others' interests. It is crucial for a state to eliminate the stubbornness of populism whether we take the interpretation on the populism of which philosopher.

According to Arrow's theorem, except for the simplest case, no aggregation process can satisfy all requirements. There is no such a common will of all the people concerning collective decisions. Is there a possibility that through democratic discussions to simplify choices by changing voters' preferences? This paper is not supporting a dictator, what the goal of this paper is that people could make some coercion based on their confidence with each other from social bonds.

Of course, the final result may be wrong and harmful to the community. However, the state could still fix the error and finally find the correct way which is more crucial than the right choice. Because correcting an error is more crucial than making the right decision. No man and no state can guarantee can choose the best choice forever.

This paper is not objecting to Riker's theory, my point is that if Riker's theory based on Arrow's theorem is correct, what should we do? The courage to face error, and the negotiation to get a result for avoiding disputes requires high interpersonal confidence. There must be a high level of trust with each other in the community.

Even other philosophers provide their alternative theory, sufficient interpersonal confidence is also the prerequisite of their statement. However, populists do not concern others' voices, and only focus on their interests, that against democracy diametrically.

5. CONCLUSION

To Conclusion, this paper reviewed William Riker, Ferejohn and Coleman, Joshua Cohen's view on epistemic democracy and populism, and other philosophers' ideas who are interested in this topic. The goal is not to defend certain philosophers' theorem, but to emphasize social bonds when people review these philosophers' works. For Riker, if there is no common will, the task of politics requires us negotiating to get a result (such goal is crucial), and solving possible worse impact on community-based on the confidence between the member. Under the premise of a tight social bond, people will get the voting result like what Gerry Mackie expected. Joshua Cohen, Ferejohn and Coleman [10] emphasize the procedure of voting can enhance the loyalty of the state, political competence, and the sense of community. Their hypothesis will not come true if the social bonds are loose.

This research is not aiming to discuss is that possible and how to get the best result through voting. Philosophers have a lot of disputes on that. The goal is to point out that the arguments are true in the context of varying degrees of social bonds. Good social bonds are crucial for voting to achieve the ideal goal.

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