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ON THE EDGES OF THE POLITICAL: EPISTEMIC DEMOCRACY AND POLITICAL LEGITIMACY

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ABSTRACT
This article questions some of the assumptions about politics and democracy made in Ivan Cerovac's book (*Epistemic Democracy and Political Legitimacy*, 2020, Palgrave Macmillan). We claim that rational proceduralism and democratic deliberation rest on an idea of democratic citizens that is far too idealistic and in tension with the concept of truth advanced in the book. Following arguments developed by Merleau-Ponty, Rancière, and Lefort, we also question Cerovac's understanding of politics and point to a neglected but essential role that perceptions play in politics. The second part of the article stresses the importance of power and conflict in politics following Schmitt and Neumann. Schmitt and Neumann's contributions portray power, conflict, irrationality, and apathy as phenomena inherent to democracy. We conclude that this valuable book on epistemic democracy avoids too many of politics' complexities and is thus best placed to contribute to a certain taming of democracy.

KEYWORDS
Homo democraticus, appearance, deliberative democracy, irrationality, political anxiety.

1.0. INTRODUCTION

Epistemic Democracy and Political Legitimacy is a relevant and exciting contribution to the discussion covering the liberal principle of legitimacy prompted by John Rawls' *Political Liberalism* (1993) and the subsequent theoretical developments of deliberative democracy and public reason. Our comments on the book follow a long strain of complaints against liberal political theory (Guess, Honig, 1993) that stress its lack of engagement with the nature of politics and the consequent portrayal of democracy as a rational deliberation procedure. We start by presenting some of the basic assumptions of the deliberative model of democracy offered in the book and then, as political scientists, partly take up the challenge the author puts in front of us to implement the ideas presented in the book into contemporary politics (Cerovac, 2020: 2). However, we stop short of delivering institutional proposals for everyday politics. We primarily point to those Cerovac's rational proceduralist model's assumptions that stand in tension with the real world of politics and impede its implementation.

In the first part of the article, and following arguments developed by Merleau-Ponty, Rancière, and Lefort, we introduce the concept of *homo democraticus* (the democratic man) to critique what we see as an overidealized view of the democratic citizen as a truth seeker and an ideal of democracy as a truth and equality hunt. We conclude the first part by aligning Cerovac's proposal with other attempts to discipline or tame democracy. Here we mostly rely on Simendić and Pavićević's book Disciplining democracy (2016). The second part of the article emphasizes the need for greater engagement with political life's complexity. The main idea here is to show the impact that irrational antagonisms, political power, and political community prerogative have in democratic decision-making. Furthermore, we warn that contemporary democracies are under a severe threat of a constant narrowing of the public sphere, which is also a threat to society's quest to arrive at the right decisions. In other words, we confront Cerovac's model with political reality, which can be disappointing for rationalists given the unescapable insecurity in political life.

1.1. Contours of the deliberative model

Cerovac's book is about different legitimacy-generating features of the democratic decision-making procedure. He contrasts pure proceduralist and instrumentalist accounts of democracy's legitimacy generating features in an elegant exposition, only to arrive at his preferred rational proceduralist account. Cerovac, builds on David Estlund's rational proceduralist account of epistemic democracy and argues that both the fairness of the procedure and its result assessed by independent criteria of truth are substantial for legitimacy. In order to achieve a right combination of both features

without compromising either of them, Cerovac builds a deliberative democratic model with a proposed division of epistemic labor between citizens and experts where citizens set the goals, aims, and values of the political community and experts devise the means, i.e., policy proposals.

Specifically, Cerovac establishes a model that builds on the political community's intelligence, assuming that an individual can reach a wealth of information only if he approaches public deliberation where he will see arguments, reasons, and evidence of other perspectives and positions (Cerovac, 2020: 184-187). Thus, only in deliberative democracy, the citizen is in a situation where she can see and evaluate other people's positions. Only in deliberative democracy, the citizen lands in a public space of evidence, arguments, and reasons based on which she can revise her position and make better decisions. These deliberative democracy features make it a better decision-making model than either the pure proceduralist or instrumentalist ones. Cerovac tries not to put too much of a burden on the citizenry in all this. Therefore, he introduces epistemic labor division to position citizens in a leading position and experts to follow citizens' direction (Cerovac, 2020: 204-209). However, he adds a deliberative moment to this simplified model of epistemic work – citizens should be in interaction, that is, in two-way communication with selected experts (Cerovac, 2020: 209-212). Deliberation then seems to be a constant of his model, i.e., deliberation permeates all phases in the process of policy creation, from placing the problem on the agenda to creating and evaluating a specific policy solution. Cerovac is right when, based on Ermanova and Möller's (2016) work, claims that our search for truth is not absolute. However, one can object that his argument rests on precisely the same things that he criticized in the other models. Namely, although our search for truth is not absolute, indeed, he does not see the ultimate consequences of that insight. More precisely, if our search for truth is not absolute, then our will to deliberate cannot be absolute either. We are talking about a very responsive model that requires citizens to see deliberation as something that benefits themselves. The whole model is based on citizens' willingness to enter the deliberation space that is supposed to inherently benefit them because it would lead to a betterment of society.

1.2. The desire to change the democratic man

So, no matter how much the whole process tries to facilitate the citizens' position by introducing experts and their responsibility, it still rests on the citizens' presumed will for deliberation. Citizens must be willing to enter deliberation, and they should also be ready to change their established positions. Our initial question is simple: is the desire or the duty to publicly debate enough to get citizens out of the comfort of their positions, which are often shaped by a whole host of more or less rigid factors? Regardless

of their quality or validity, political attitudes depend on many factors such as primary and secondary socialization, education, environment, wealth, peer groups, parents' education, existing social divisions, and so on. It is tough to imagine that an individual would overcome all these forces that determine him based solely on participation in public debate if he is willing to participate at all. Of course, here we leave aside all those poisonings of the public discussion that can happen or are happening. For the sake of argument, let us look at Žižek's (2020: 56) example of a modern man, precisely, a man from whom Cerovac expects to be above all deliberative and therefore willing:

> (...) we stay at home, work on our computers, communicate through videoconferences, exercise on a machine in the corner of our home office, occasionally masturbate in front of a screen displaying hardcore sex, and get food by delivery, never seeing other human beings in person.

While this is an example aggravated by the current pandemic, it is clear that we are seeing an old photo robot of the *homo democraticus* that we are familiar with since Plato. The example is lacking since it does not portray the political "embedding" of the individual. Still, it faithfully depicts citizens' condition who the deliberative democratic model expects to exchange reasons, arguments, and evidence constantly. But, we repeat, the example is a kind of overture to a more profound symptom, the symptom of a democratic man. With this typically Žižekian example, we get the image of a man reluctant to approach the public. Actually, both withdrawal and participation define the democratic man since, as Plato teaches us, *homo democraticus* can not be permanently reduced to either of those moments. Although Žižek sees the potential for change since the isolation caused by the pandemic could lead us in the direction of rethinking our nonsense, he warns us that the constant need for participation is a recipe for doom. "[T]he urge to fill in every moment of the time allotted to us with intense engagement unavoidably ends up in a suffocating monotony "(2020: 57). In this context, instead of constantly participating and thus rationalizing, the individual prefers to go public covertly, through gadgets he uses daily, watching content that interests him (or is served to him), without much desire to argue and change his position.

On the contrary, Cerovac requires each citizen to constantly articulate her position and provide evidence for it while being open to criticism, which could consequently lead to the demystification of our prejudices and biases, to their abolition.[1] In short,

[1] More clearly, Cerovac (2020: 190) talks about the establishment of a community that, by establishing quality public deliberation, that is to say, by serving our positions to the public, would provoke a kind of testing of our positions and thus show prejudice and bias in our assumptions. The whole mechanism is seen as valid in the process of disclosing bias, precisely, biases are, according to him, a valid resource for detecting other biases. But this can very easily go in another direction - in this way, our biases can be strengthened because from the public space of evidence and arguments, we can only take what suits us,

Cerovac asks a reluctant voyeur who approaches the public reluctantly and to his pleasure to be a deliberative enthusiast who would have nothing but the search for truth on her horizon. In his search for the epistemic validation of democracy, it seems like Cerovac is looking for an agent that can be found only at one moment, the moment of participation. He doesn't seem to realize that moments of respite immanent to the vibrant nature of the *homo democraticus* are also the manifesto of that vibrancy.

It could be said that Cerovac is looking for a transformation of the democratic man, more precisely, he wants the democratic man to be what he is not. *Homo democraticus*, as Rancière (2008) shows, has been the same since Plato - he is a glutton who wants one thing in the morning and something else in the evening.[2] Therefore, it is difficult to find a constant will to participate in deliberation in such an agent because he has no constant desire for anything. In Plato's (2008: 1647-1648) words, he is colorful and beautiful, interwoven with different passions, namely, he:

> (...) lives from day to day indulging the appetite of the hour; and sometimes he is lapped in drink and strains of the flute; then he becomes a water-drinker, and tries to get thin; then he takes a turn at gymnastics; sometimes idling and neglecting everything (...) His life has neither law nor order; and this distracted existence he terms joy and bliss and freedom; and so he goes on.

So, the problem before us is twofold: on the one hand, we have a citizen who finds it difficult to leave the warmth of his own (political) position. At the same time, he is a democratic man who is not permanently attached to anything but the variability of his desires. *Homo democratic* may want deliberation, but his drive will only be an expression of something momentary in whose place, in the *perpetuum mobile* of his passions, something else will take the next hour, day, or week. Žižek's example was used here only as a reminder of a long-detected phenomenon - the phenomenon of a democratic man who, through contextually conditioned moments of withdrawal, i.e., through the instability of his desires and passions, cannot be reduced to the subject of a deliberative model.[3]

moreover, we can only further cement our own position. Although Cerovac uses this argument to show that the deliberative variant of democracy is a better solution than simply adding up the votes (which it is), this does not mean that deliberative democracy cannot result in less rational solutions.

[2] Moreover, if we adopt Rancière's position, Cerovac's division of epistemic work, which is based on the recognition of knowledge tenet (there are people that just know more), becomes questionable since *"Homo democratic* becomes impatient whenever faced with competence, including that of a physician or lawyer. Competence calls into question his own sovereignty." (Rancière Prema Schnapperu, 2009: 17-18).

[3] It is precisely this double vitality that Rancière speaks of: on the one hand, democratic excess is that people of democracy retreat into the individuality of the private sphere (which can result in new aspirations and demands), while on the other hand they at times manifest surplus collective activity (2008: 14 -

1.3. Politics as l'apparaître

On the other hand, the deliberative model of epistemic democracy presented by Cerovac is highly insightful. Assuming that relevant information is dispersed throughout the political community, Cerovac concludes that deliberative democracy is good because it provides a shared space for the community's stakeholders to see different perspectives, i.e., the light and darkness of other people's positions. With this, Cerovac acknowledges Merleau-Ponty (2013) lesson that the only haven for us is available through other people's presence. The proposed model recognizes this - we are inevitably referred to the other, to their opinion, point of view, and arguments. In other words, we cannot speak of any political venture without the other.[4] The tremendous political lesson of Merleau-Ponty is that the other is always constitutive of ourselves. In this sense, Cerovac's model is beneficial - it shows that the initial step must be openness to the other, receptivity to other people's positions, arguments, and perspectives. But the model neglects what this openness to the other immanently implies. Openness to the other always means a new contingency because what the other brings is never predictable and cannot be calculated - it is always incomprehensibly surprising.[5] In this sense, politics is a contingency, and one can not reduce it to the predictability of the models that should lead us to correctness. Therefore, the truth of politics has no ultimate location - it simply happens precisely in that encounter of people, in their activity (Althusser, 1999: 22) that is contingent and thus unpredictable.[6] People's activity and their encounters are not guaranteed to fit the deliberative democracy model, although it could indeed happen.

The problem deepens here: namely, the whole project of seeking the truth in politics is doomed in advance if we seek the truth in political action *per se* or in the quality of

15). Of course, Rancière ironizes the situation and says that evil is a democratic life itself which, somewhat paradoxically, should be ruled by good democratic government. Of course, all of the above is an introduction to his point - democracy is unmanageable, and all attempts to control it are in fact symptoms of hatred of democracy, which will be discussed later.

[4] Merleau-Ponty describes it vividly: "There is a circuit between the self and others, a Communion of Black Saints. The evil that I do to myself, and in struggling against others I struggle equally against myself"(1964: 212).

[5] It is in this context that Lefort called Merleau-Ponty a thinker who destroys any certainty, one who knew that real questions are never exhausted in its answers (2000: 135), thus referring to constant openness to the other and the world, of course, alluding that the answer is never the final answer - the search never over, it lasts permanently.

[6] "[Machiavelli] knows that there is no truth - or rather, nothing true - other than what is actual, that is to say, borne by its effects, nonexistent outside them; and that the effectivity of the true is always merged with the activity of men.." (Althusser, 1999: 22). Apropos former, the substance can be sharpened to the end, as Althusser (1999: 102) does in the footnote, illustratively mentioning Lenin: "truth is always concrete, realized in concrete forces, *actual*; and it is effective because it is actual".

the procedure that produces decisions that should be legitimate. Since we are always directed to the other or to her view, the meaning is given only in the reflection that the political act has in the eyes of others. The truth in politics is, in that sense, trapped in the perceptions of others. In this context, the main condition of politics is first and foremost a mirage or semblance since it takes place in the realm of appearance – this is what Merleau-Ponty (2013) and Lefort (2012), interpreting Machiavelli, want to tell us. The truth of politics is conditioned by the fact that politics takes place in front of the eyes of others:

> (...) Or as mirrors set around in a circle transform a slender frame into a fairyland, acts of authority reflected in the constellation of consciousness are transfigured, and the reflections of these reflections create an appearance which is the proper place – the truth, in short – of historical action.[7] (Merleau-Ponty, 1964: 216)

Therefore, Cerovac's claim (2020: 4) that assessing a political decision's legitimacy doesn't mean analyzing other people's opinions, but the procedure's moral and epistemic qualities necessarily reveal only one part of the story. The constitutive field of politics takes place exposed to others' views. Therefore, we cannot speak of legitimacy in isolation, i.e., without considering other people's perceptions as a particular political truth condition. Although Cerovac makes a laudable move by recognizing deliberation as a place of openness to the other, or to something new, at the same time, he isolates political legitimacy from the fundamental condition of politics, that is, from the field of perception and opinion of people (*l'apparaître*), from which it cannot be separated.

1.4. Squaring the democratic circle

It seems unfair to leave Rancière in the shadow of Plato's photo robot of a democratic man. That would be wrong because Rancière uses Plato only as an ancient window into the world of modern critics of democracy. Moreover, although he builds on

[7] Let us just look at Lefort's (2012) example that thematizes Agathocles: Agathocles was a lowborn man which is not a problem in itself, but he failed because he didn't realize the need to change such a perception of himself in the eyes of the people, that is, in the eyes of those to whom he is constantly exposed. Therefore, the truth of politics is a mirage, that is, it takes place in the medium of the opinion of others. Of course, here, at least for now, we leave aside the question of power, a question that Cerovac, building his model, also left aside. It should only be mentioned here that Lefort thought that politics (political debate) should not be reduced to a struggle of ideas - ideas become operational as the work of subjects (that are woven into power relations) and the success of their maneuver depends on the power of the discourse they establish in order to change the very field in which they operate, precisely, to open it to what was hitherto foreign to it (Lefort, 2012: 156-157). Thus, politics always involves more than the argument itself, and the deliberative space of evidence and reason never comes as such - it always involves actors as holders of power and discourse as the discourse of power.

the image of a democratic man, he rejects Plato's view of democracy because he believes that it represses the singularity of democracy and politics by reducing democracy to regime, way of life and/or character (1999: 101). It brings us to Rancière's understanding of democracy and the final stage of our argument's first part. Albeit Cerovac's model is commendable in many ways, for example, in recognizing the necessity of strengthening equality in the informal sphere (Cerovac, 2020: 220-230), we consider the deliberative democratic model in its entirety, i.e., the model has a precise role for the citizens, for the expertise and representative government. It means that even though the citizens are at the helm, in effect, the *demos* has a precise and limited role assigned to it. Although deliberation, taken ideally, is praiseworthy as an attempt to intensify the *demos'* political life, we still talk about reducing democracy - embedding the demos in a broader model means reducing democracy to what it is not. Quite precisely - in this model, by vary the fact that it is a model, democracy is attempted to be governed.

Rancière's lesson is that democracy is unmanageable. For Rancière, democracy can not be modeled or predicted. It is an unpredictable subjectivization process that pushes the boundaries imposed by the existing order, even if it is a democratic order (1999; 2008: 62). The democratic subjectivization process disrupts existing models of order and their harmonious functioning (Rancière, 2008: 76):

> Democracy is not a regime or a social way of life. It is the institution of politics itself, the system of forms of subjectification through which any order of distribution of bodies into functions corresponding to their "nature" and places corresponding to their functions is undermined, thrown back on its contingency (1999: 101).

In *Epistemic Democracy and Political Legitimacy*, deliberative d democracy is a decision-making procedure where every subject (citizens, experts, the government) has its predefined role to play. As opposed to that, Rancière sees democracy more as a stage where the *demos* defines and redefines itself and does not have a pre-set scenario in which it reads its part. Moreover, democracy disrupts routine models based on a definite distribution of positions and chances; the excess of democracy exploits its contingency. In short, we see democracy as subjectivization that does not coincide with anything already given by the state or society. We see it as subjectivization that does not need politics as a fixed sphere, which Cerovac's model seems to assume (Rancière, 1999: 99-100; Kursar, 2012: 57).[8]

[8] Continuing Rancière's problematization of experts presented in the second footnote, it should only be briefly pointed out that it is not an essential problem in *homo democraticus* - Rancière uses it only to arrive at his own understanding of democracy. Therefore, the focal point here is not a critique of the democratic man as one who does not admit expertise because it destroys his sovereignty, but, on the contrary, it is a critique of the seemingly democratic order that the author sees as something essentially oligarchic, that is, an oligarchy built with the help of scholars or experts who are working on the fixation

We are approaching Lefort's understanding in which indeterminacy is a fundamental feature of democracy, that is, democracy is about constant openness to the uncertain that is coming - in a word - it is a dissolution of markers of any certainty (1988: 19). In a democracy, there is no final word; there is no truth that has finally been found and then recorded in stone, *au contraire*, it is a phenomenon of constant openness to the context of endless history (Lefort, 1986: 303-304; Bilakovics, 2013: 149). Consequently, in a democracy, no certainty is persistently hunted by alternative procedures, democracy is not reducible to the output of any model – it is precisely that which avoids any modeling and certainty. The democratic society is always architecturally open (Bilakovics, 2013).

In terms of the previously stated interpretations of democracy, it seems justified to conclude that Cerovac's model is epistemically superior to the others he presents in his book. Still, his model, from the point of view of Rancière and Lefort, is not open and indeterminate enough. In this sense, he adds to the tradition of disciplining democracy and mastering the democratic process and its outcomes (Pavićević and Simendić, 2016: 14).[9] The vitality of democracy depends on the subjectivization it carries, that is, on its ability to "change and expand the space for effective citizen participation in the political process" (Pavićević and Simendić, 2016: 180)[10]. Still, Cerovac's modeling of democracy seems more like an attempt to finally write down the democratic truth in an elegantly defined procedure.

2.0. RETURN OF THE POLITICAL?

In the first part of this review, we challenged the author's ideal of the deliberating democratic citizens and contrasted it with the ancient Plato's photo robot of the *homo democraticus*. Following Rancière and Lefort we stressed that neither the identity of the democratic citizens nor the identity of the demos can be determined in advance, not even for the sake of a reasonable deliberating procedure. The identity of the democratic citizens is usually (and always temporarily) established in a political process that is rife with conflicts, not of comprehensive doctrines, but power. Epistemic democracy

of division of places and competences (see the fourth chapter of *Hatred of Democracy* and the third point of Leonardo Kovačević's afterword which deals with the struggle against forms and networks of power that "turn individuals into their objects in the field of knowledge, truth, consciousness and discourse" (pp. 124-125). (translated from Croatian).

[9] Cerovac is aware of this interpretive feat of Pavićević and Simendić (2016), since he wrote a review of their book in which he emphasized that their text represents a challenge for theorists of epistemic democracy (2017: 109).

[10] Translated from Serbian.

presupposes a rational exchange of arguments as a waypoint to producing the right and just outcome. As critics of liberalism usually stress, political life is plagued by irrationality and existential conflicts that are hardly reconcilable through rational means.

One need not go as far as the controversial Carl Schmitt (1995: 26), who defined the political as the struggle between friend and foe to acknowledge that even a deliberative search for truth may turn nasty where the outcome of the deliberation is implemented by force. Democracy thus cannot be equated solely with a deliberative procedure in which people and experts aim to reach a rightful decision. In many cases, it is "a procedure "of establishing "who we are "and that question does not have a valid answer outside the decision (always temporary) of a concrete political community. That's probably why Chantal Mouffe (1996: 8-9) writes that it is impossible to conceive political community and democracy without the "us "vs. "them "distinction:

This antagonistic dimension is precisely what the consensus approach is unable to acknowledge. This distinction is overlooked by rationalists... since they overlook a conception of the well-ordered democratic society as free from antagonism and without exclusion—in order words, the illusion that it is possible to establish a 'we' that would not imply the existence of a 'them".

We can repeat here our fear from the beginning of the review that Cerovac expects too much of the democratic citizen. He hopes that she will put aside her social, private, and even irrational aspects to become a public person enthusiastic about what is right. As Chantal Mouffe points out, political life cannot be understood merely as a dialogue in which we exchange rational agreements to reach a consensus. (Mouffe 1996: 10-14). The Epistemic approach put forward by Cerovac is a consensus-seeking approach, truth being the thing that makes the consensus possible. Rational debate leads us to the truth, but political life is not just about rationality. Schmitt urges us to accept a dimension of political life that we cannot reduce to a set of technical moves and neutral procedures. Schmitt's position is maybe an extreme one, but it is a necessary reminder of antagonistic struggles between various power positions which can never be entirely rationally resolved.

2.1. Neumann's view: unhealthy public sphere

Irrational political conflicts are not the only irrationality in politics. Franz Neumann was a critically oriented social scientist who searched for a precise definition of political concepts and warned us of another irrationality plaguing politics - anxiety. As noted, the epistemic approach presupposes a healthy public sphere to reach the right decision. Neumann's analysis of democracy can help us comprehend the state of contemporary democracy that negatively impacts the track of truth. We shall reconstruct some of Neumann's intriguing insights mainly in his writings on anxiety, power, and freedom.

Neumann opts for democracy because it is a system that maximizes political freedom and tracks the truth, but the truth is political freedom for him. Freedom must be understood comprehensively, together with its negative aspects, before one could think about a rational decision-making procedure for truth-tracking.

In *Anxiety and Politics,* Neumann writes about anxiety that paralyzes nations and makes citizens incapable of making individual decisions. Using Freud's conceptual tool, he tries to enlighten the danger in which anxiety can be transformed into political apathy, leading to rejection of a political systems' rules (Neumann 2017: 614). Neumann states that anxiety is omnipresent and can be destructive for a political community. Anxiety is perpetuated by external dangers and leads to an abandonment of one's ego and irrational identification with a mass movement. This theory comes in handy in explaining how masses sometimes identify with their leaders. Identification is not rational but affective, and every notion of truth tracking becomes irrelevant.

Anxiety is inextricably linked with creating an enemy's image and fostering fear. In this constellation, demagogues encourage irrational feelings towards certain groups of people. Anxiety poses a severe challenge to democracy and its ability to reach the right decision. Yet, it is a process that often plays out in contemporary democracies, where it plagues the public sphere. Populist leaders utilize this kind of anxiety by imposing a national enemy's image. The current political system is not responsive enough, meaning many citizens rely on populist leaders who supply them with their version of the truth. It is what Neumann (2017: 618) calls caesaristic identification which,

> may play a role in history when the situation of masses is objectively endangered, when the masses are unable to understand the historical process, and when the anxiety activated by the danger becomes neurotic aggressive anxiety through manipulation.

In this way, some citizens abandon the rules of a democratic system and identify on an irrational basis with the leader who creates false concreteness. Contemporary democracy failed to realize adequate possibilities for meaningful political action, and ever-rising populist movements institutionalized citizens' anxiety. Such institutionalized anxiety truly takes place in political life and seriously damages capacity for individual political action. Autonomous individual action is one of the critical aspects of Cerovac's model since it leads to the right decision. Nevertheless, anxiety transformed into political apathy poses a grand challenge for this conception of democracy.

As a political scientist, Neumann often speculates about prerogative power which circumvents the legal system. Democracy is naturally conceived as fortified by legal rules. The state's dictates can sometimes be different from the need to search for the right decision leading to the state's autonomous action. The epistemic model propped up by Cerovac relies heavily on a debate between citizens and experts. Whatever conclusion that debate may foster can sometimes be irrelevant since the state can act

independently. Also, this exchange between citizens and experts is happening in a real political system where power plays an important role: "The efforts of the individual, his intelligence, his vision, his readiness to take risks, are easily shattered by the constellations of power "(Neumann 2017: 625). Politics is a battle for ideas, but it is also a power struggle. Cerovac's model overlooks the power constellation in society, although he insists on the equality of conditions, including power, to achieve the best outcome. Still, we must cope with the fact that power is unequally distributed and it affects truth tracking.

Some features of political life are omnipresent and cannot be overlooked. Therefore, Cerovac's approach needs to apprehend political power, which structures the public sphere and affects the deliberative model. What is right in politics is always submitted to some constellation of power, and it may be a result of a political leader's action. And even though this political leader may lead people in the wrong direction, he still can amass people beside him who forge an alliance with him on some irrational basis.

2.2. Something to consider besides political anxiety

The main idea of this section is to show how a demos is stripped from its power. We shall point to some of the negative processes happening in a democratic society that undermine the notion of a public man's. The main idea of narrowing the demos' power in democracy springs from an attack on the public sphere. Offer (2013: 23) notes that ever since the neoliberal turn, public institutions are losing control over quality, price and allocation of public services. In the name of economic concepts like effectiveness, privatisation, deregulation etc., the public sphere is in danger. This leads citizens losing faith in democracy and are pulled in a private sphere to become mere consumers. Neumann also saw this:

> The last type, the most dangerous, is the result of the malfunctioning of the democratic state. Its symptoms and causes have often been analyzed: the growing complexity of government; the growth of bureaucracies in public and private life; the concentration of private social power; the hardening of political parties into machines which, because of the high cost of politics, tend to exclude newcomers from the political market (Neumann 1953:932).

Offe notes a double loss of control – the goverment's loss of control of the economic sector and citizens' loss of trust in democratic control. It is an appalling situation that renders people uninterested in political life. Cerovac claims that equality is essential in both the private and public sphere. But our contemporary problem is that the vast majority of citizens are being pushed in the private sphere. Deliberation, on the other

hand, exists only in the public sphere. We believe that any notion of truth tracking can only be conceived in a healthy public sphere.

Reducing the quest for the right decisions to an exchange between experts and citizens is not encompassing the entire political life. The experts-and-society model should be enriched by considering other organized actors trying to put forward their truth, for example, the mass media. They sacrificed their quest for knowledge to attain more readers, and they perpetuate their version of the truth.

The quality of tracking the political process is very much falling which further complicates reaching the right decision. Stoker (2012) also notes that the cause for citizens' unhappiness and apathy is that political debate in contemporary society is complicated, and many people have lost interest in it. The majority of decisions are compromises of political elites. Sometimes the right decision is sacrificed for the benefit of the state. These few notions are just some thoughts that the epistemic model of democracy should consider.

CONCLUSION

Epistemic Democracy and Political Legitimacy is a book that should be much appreciated for its sincere theoretical effort to square and coherently combine different legitimacy generating features of democratic decision making. The proposed deliberative democratic model that rests on a division of epistemic labor between citizens' and experts balances the value of true or right political decisions and the importance of an inclusive, fair, and equal democratic procedure. We criticized the model for its otherwise admirable ambition to bestow the democratic citizenry with an overidealized view of a truth seeker. We contrasted the ideal with the *homo democraticus* (the democratic man) known since Plato as a photo robot of a citizen whose interest in public affairs comes and goes and who is not a democratic deliberation enthusiast. In the second part of the article, we emphasized the need for greater engagement with real politics complexities. We concluded that this valuable book on epistemic democracy avoids too many of those complexities and is thus best placed to contribute to a certain taming of democracy.

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