

Rethinking the Future Sensitivity of Democracy through the All Affected Principle

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Introduction

- ▶ Pressing and obvious problems: climate change and care for the Earth, sustainable energy and resource regimes, stable and solvent social security systems
- ▶ These are problems of collective action (increasingly global) that require sustainable and trustworthy democratic institutions
- ▶ But as global economic and security regimes fail, high capacity states are hardening their borders and pulling back from global responsibilities under pressure from right-wing populists
- ▶ Future issues may be losing their present constituencies, let alone sites of collective action

Is there a democratic theory response?

- ▶ Democratic populist ideology: “popular sovereignty” imagined as a unified people contained within borders, represented by a strong leader or party
- ▶ How did right-wing populists gain so much control of both the “democracy” idea and the “future sensitivity” idea?
- ▶ Standard democratic theory is not very helpful, as it is state-centric, and thus border-centric
- ▶ Democracy beyond without present-centric boundaries?

Rebuilding democratic theory

- ▶ The “all affected” principle: people become co-dependents through chains of affectedness
- ▶ A principle of inclusion: Those who are affected by collective decisions and actions should be included in collective decisions
- ▶ The principle should help us to attend to our present effects on future people, and thus find ways to include them in present collective decisions and actions

The conflict between the AAP and standard democratic theory

- ▶ Standard democratic theory: the powers and responsibilities of citizenship are tied to membership in a jurisdiction
- ▶ Membership-based democracy: increasingly at odds with both ethics and interdependencies
- ▶ A decision taken “democratically” in one polity or point in time can be experienced as oppression, domination, or tyranny in another jurisdiction or point in time
- ▶ No justification of exclusions based on membership can make such effects democratically acceptable

Arguments against the AAP

- ▶ The APP is unworkable or unorganisable owing to its expansiveness
- ▶ Membership trumps weaker or more extensive externalities owing to thicker ethical obligations among co-nationals
- ▶ Being affected in itself provides no ethical claims for inclusion

The All Affected Principle: an interpretation

- ▶ AAP is primarily a democratic principle (or norm) of inclusion, not a theory of political organization or replacement for ties of membership
- ▶ The normative force of the AAP should be derived primarily from social justice
- ▶ The AAP concerns *equities* more than *equalities*
- ▶ Equity claims are proportional to effects that impact social justice
- ▶ The AAP in this sense is *already* well-known and practiced
- ▶ Equity for future generations requires that future conditions of social justice be represented in the present

The AAP

- ▶ Scope: relative to effects that impact individuals' capacities for self-determination and self-development
- ▶ Responsible collectivities: the AAP helps to identify responsible collectivities, *or* needs for responsible collectivities where they are missing
- ▶ Responsible regimes can be created where the AAP identifies demands (or unorganized/latent constituencies)

Empowering the AAP

- ▶ Many forms of effect-specific kinds of empowerment: voice, association for a purpose, protest and resistance, representation by advocacy groups, capacities to exit, etc.
- ▶ Many kinds of effect-specific entities
- ▶ The challenge of extending the AAP to future issues: representing these issues within present issue-specific regimes

Equality and equity

- ▶ Democracy needs both equalities and equities
- ▶ Equalities, such as rights to liberty and autonomy, positive rights to vote, speak, and organize, as well as welfare rights such as rights to education, a basic income, etc., provide citizenship powers
- ▶ Not surprisingly, a future-sensitive democracy should enfranchise individuals with democratic equalities as soon as they are present and enabled

Equities

- ▶ Note that most use citizenship powers quite selectively
- ▶ Ideally, the way people use their *equal* political powers is to exert *proportional* effects on politics, according to the issues they prioritize
- ▶ For example, welfare services (health, education...) should be demanded, delivered, and used according to needs—equitably, not equally
- ▶ The AAP gives these kinds of proportionality their democratic substance by relating it back to self-government

The challenges

- ▶ For current generations, we can think of this problem from two perspectives: that of the powers individual/citizen might employ for inclusion, and that of institutions and organizations that might respond (or might be created to respond)
- ▶ Creating and distributing powers
- ▶ Creating sites of response

Does the AAP help us to think beyond temporal and human/non-human boundaries?

- ▶ Need to think about the AAP in light of the following:
- ▶ Empower key existential intuitions leaving better worlds to our children: Weber on politics: “what should we do and how should we live?”
- ▶ Refine these intuitions through deliberation (PALO!)
- ▶ Protect these intuitions from short-term strategic interests and actors
- ▶ Build into or interface with existing sites of decision
- ▶ Trustworthy, sustainable institutions...

Thank you!