

Summary

Deliberative Democracy and Aristotle's Arguments Concerning the Reasoning Power of the Many

The theoretical debate on *deliberative democracy* is contemplated in the light of certain attempts at perfecting the existing forms of government as well as at correcting and compensating for the obvious flaws of present-day representative democracy. The global domination of government by the people established toward the end of the 20th century induced efforts to further improve and perfect it. In this process, *deliberative democracy* stood out and became widely accepted due to its particular appeal. Today we speak of the *deliberative turn*, which occurred in 1990. A new approach to government by the people is being sought, one that emphasises deliberation, scrutiny, discussion, discourse, debate and verification in the process of reaching important decisions affecting a political community. The closest, even if not entirely equivalent term describing this is *discursive* or *consultative government by the people*. The implied attempts at improving democracy in a way bear witness to the fact that government should not be based only on majority decisions as a method of reconciling opposed interests. The wider substantial meaning of government by the people is being explored, which is based on certain normative assumptions and on *consensus* in a pluralistic society. Most representatives of this school of thought tend to combine the elements of majority rule with the concord of opinion in the decision-making process.

The revival of *deliberative democracy* has once again highlighted the origins of democracy in Ancient Greece and Aristotle's understanding of politics in particular. The philosopher from Stagira performed a theoretical analysis of the centuries-old tra-

dition of Hellenic deliberative political practices and his unique philosophical discourse is a significant guidepost in this respect. While reflecting on the contemporary discussions about deliberative government by the people, this paper points out some of the fundamental elements of Aristotle's understanding of politics. It takes a closer look at his aporia, parables and arguments in favour of public discussion and consensus decision-making. It further examines the arguments used by Aristotle to corroborate his assertion that public discussion and mutual explication of views among citizens is essential. The paper opens with the development of the term *deliberative democracy*. Connected with this is an excursus on the origin and meaning of the word 'deliberation' as well as a brief presentation of the terminology used in discussing deliberative democracy based on three definitions. Aristotle's understanding of collective deliberating and his so-called *summation theory* are subsequently placed in their historical context and examined by comparing them with the corresponding theories of his predecessors. Finally, the arguments in favour of collective reasoning and virtue are summarised in the following five forms: the *ethical*, the *political*, the *dianoetic*, the *teleological* and the *collective responsibility* form. Aristotle's postulates and thoughts presented in the paper are recommended as valuable testimonies and useful counsel for the present-day discussion of deliberative government by the people.

Key words: deliberation, democracy, debate, discussion, the many, reasoning power, Aristotle