

PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTION

UPSC 2017 · 15 marks

Deliberative democracy does not have its salience without participation and participatory democracy does not have its credence without deliberations.
Comment.

FLOW SNAPSHOT — how the answer moves

Intro routes

- (R1) not rival models → two halves of one legitimacy → participation = demos, deliberation = logos
- (R2) statement marks the exact failure point → each collapses without the other
→ breadth needs depth, depth needs breadth

Body flow

participatory democracy = active citizen beyond the ballot → **Pateman**: participation revives civic life, counters alienation → but headcount alone turns populist → loses credence → deliberative democracy fills the gap: quality of reasoning → **Habermas**: communicative action, better argument over power → reasoned debate gives participation its credence → but narrow expert deliberation = elite discourse → loses salience → each completes the other: inclusion makes deliberation authoritative, reason makes participation credible → **Barber**'s strong democracy = participation + debate → **Rousseau**: sovereign people who must continuously deliberate

Counter-view

fusion is a demand, not a guarantee → **Fraser**: single public sphere reproduces inequality, needs counter-publics → skilled speakers form an epistemic elite → mobilisation can still capture participation

Conclusion routes

- (R1) statement holds → deliberation alone = elite talk, no salience → participation alone = populist noise, no credence
- (R2) **Fishkin**'s deliberative polling / citizen assemblies fuse wide participation + evidence-based reason → legitimacy needs demos and logos together

The participatory and deliberative democracy are not rivals, one prizes the breadth and the other depth. They are better seen as two halves of a single democratic legitimacy: participation supplies the demons, deliberation the logos.

Participatory democracy places the active citizen at the centre, taking democracy beyond the ballot to continuous self-government. According to Carole Pateman, participation revitalises civic engagement and counters alienation, as people develop the very capacities in demand.

But numbers alone do not make a verdict wise. Participation reduced to headcount or mobilisation turns emotional and populist, and there it loses its credence - a crowd's decision weight only when it is reasoned.

Deliberative democracy answers this gap. According to Habermas deliberation works through communicative action, where agreement rests on the better argument, not power. Such reasoning is what lends participation its credence.

But deliberation confined to a narrow expert circle becomes elite discourse, cut off from the people it claims to speak for, and so loses its salience.

The two complete each other. Benjamin Barber suggests, joining active participation with open public debate. Rousseau saw it earlier: the people stay sovereign, yet must continuously deliberate on policy. The two were never meant to stand apart.

The union is a demand, not a guarantee. Nancy Fraser shows that a single public sphere can reproduce inequality, as dominant voices crowd out the marginalised, who then need their own counter-publics.

Fishkin's deliberative polling and citizen assemblies provides the solution, fusing wider, randomly chosen participation with evidence-based reasoning. Democratic legitimacy needs the demos and the logos together.