

Abstract

This thesis attempts to explore deliberative practices in Pakistan. In doing so, it draws on and extends the literature produced under two relatively new academic fields—the fields of deliberative theory and comparative political philosophy—which are gaining prominence in the academic world. Although these two academic fields appear quite different but this thesis argues that they are not only complimentary but can also benefit each other in their further theoretical development. In order to show this complimentary relationship between deliberative theory and comparative political philosophy, this thesis explores deliberative practices in an authoritarian non-Western context. More specifically, it explores the role of deliberation in the democratization of Pakistan. This thesis analyzes the case of Pakistan Lawyers' Movement during the military dictatorship (2007-2009) and how it paved the way to the process of democratization in the country. Although democratization of societies at large has always been at the core of deliberative theory, but comparative studies of democratization have completely missed the deliberative aspect which makes transition to democracy possible. Through Dryzek's concept of deliberative capacity, this thesis investigates the role of Pakistan Lawyers' Movement in building this capacity across different locations in the political system. The concept of deliberative capacity is being used in the larger context of systemic turn in deliberative theory. This latest trend helps us to study deliberation at a macro level and is not specifically tied to liberal institutional arrangements of states in the West. This thesis attempts to interpret Pakistan Lawyers' Movement through the lens of deliberative theory. Pakistan Lawyers' Movement throws new light on the normative aspects of deliberative theory and also helps us to understand the nature of deliberation in Pakistani context. The case of Pakistan Lawyers' Movement provokes reflection on normative principles of deliberative democracy, helps us understand the nature of deliberation in an authoritarian context, extends current scholarship on the comparative studies of democratization by spelling out the deliberative potential of the regime, and contributes to the ongoing debate on comparative political philosophy as an academic field in the age of globalization.