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Developing Deliberative Minds- Piaget, Vygotsky and the Deliberative Democratic Citizen

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Abstract

The Piagetian account of development has been extremely influential in the deliberative democracy literature. It has been either explicitly or implicitly assumed by the majority of theorists working in this area. It encourages deliberative democrats to make at least four key assumptions about the development of deliberative citizens and their capacities. Firstly, that development is an *organic* process. Secondly, that it is a *universal* process. Thirdly, that it is an *evolutionary* or stage-centric process. And finally, that it is a process which is best encouraged through *facilitative* teaching methods. In this paper I will suggest that this Piagetian influence on deliberative democracy is not as positive as it is often assumed to be. It encourages a *laissez faire* attitude to development and does not properly explain how we can create deliberative citizens with a wide range of deliberative capacities. However, there is an alternative account of development which I believe offers a much stronger basis for the development of deliberative citizens. It was originally proposed by Piaget's great rival, the Soviet developmental psychologist Lev Vygotsky. He provides four corresponding ideas about development that could also be applied to the development of deliberative citizens. Firstly, development is primarily a *cultural* process. Secondly it is *contextual* process. Thirdly, it is a *revolutionary* or crisis ridden process. And finally, it is a process which is best encouraged through direct and *mediatory* educational techniques. In this paper I will show how this alternative developmental perspective can provide a much stronger foundation for the cultivation of deliberative minds.

Keywords

Deliberative Democracy, Development, Education, Competence, Piaget, Vygotsky

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Introduction

Deliberative democracy rests on an assumption that citizens will be capable of reasoning about issues, both by themselves and with others (Rawls 1993; Habermas 1984). A number of deliberative skills and virtues are therefore assumed which may help with this process, enabling and motivating citizens to think and act deliberatively. However, there is a growing body of literature which suggests that many citizens show clear signs of deliberative incompetence (Somin 1998; Posner 2003; Smelsund 1963; Delli Carpini and Keeter 1991, 1996). That is, they are often incapable of reasoning to the necessary standards which deliberative democracy requires. Many citizens simply do not possess the level of internal skill to reason critically and with humility in deliberative arenas. This critique of the deliberative citizen therefore points to a serious threat to the practical realisation of the deliberative project. If citizens remain incompetent in these ways, effective participation in deliberative democratic arenas will more than likely be undermined.

Nevertheless, rather than accepting incompetence as an unchangeable feature of the democratic system, citizens could (and should) be encouraged to develop their deliberative capacities. There are options for development in society which can help citizens become more skilled in the act of deliberation. However, whilst deliberative democrats are increasingly aware of this 'public ignorance' problem, they have still tended to ignore this important task (Rosenberg 2007; Talisse 2005). There is little discussion about the educational techniques that, in practice, could accelerate this process so that citizens develop the necessary capacities. Instead, there has been a widespread assumption amongst deliberative democrats that citizens will either possess these capacities above a necessary threshold or will develop them as they participate with each other in deliberative arenas. In this respect, although education (as a more general concept) may be accepted as a necessary component of a theory of deliberative democracy, there is little emphasis on developing educational programmes that are specifically designed to actively produce citizens with essential deliberative capacities. The emphasis, instead, is on free development, and on allowing the deliberative citizen to organically develop through the act of participation. As a result, the internally competent deliberative citizen has largely become (and at present remains) an *assumed* component of the wider deliberative project.

In this paper, will explore and then challenge these assumptions. In section one I will begin by considering some of the key developmental theories that have been employed over the past two centuries. I will consider how these can be applied (successfully and unsuccessfully) to describe and explain the development of the deliberative citizen and their capacities. In the second section, I will explore a modern account of development that has gained predominance over the past few decades - the constructivist account of

Jean Piaget. I will suggest that since its inclusion in the earliest models of deliberative democracy, this model of development has had a significant influence on the deliberative project. It has encouraged a number of assumptions that are not always conducive to the practical development of internally competent deliberative citizens. In the third section, I will outline an alternative constructivist account, which I believe is much more compatible with the developmental requirements of deliberative democracy. I will consider the work of the Soviet psychologist, Lev Vygotsky, and suggest that his account of cultural mediation could play a much more effective role in developing the type of citizens that deliberative democracy requires.

Section One: Developmental Psychology and the Deliberative Citizen

Today, it is commonly accepted that two key factors play an interactive role in the development of individuals. The first of these is the natural or genetic factor. This represents the particular characteristics that individuals have genetically inherited from their parents. In our context, the relevant genes are those which predispose individuals towards developing higher or lower levels of internal deliberative capacities (Plomin et al 2001). The second factor that plays a key role in individual development is the social environment or, more precisely, the way that we nurture our children. In this respect, the social environment that children are placed within, the kinds of people that they interact with, and the various external stimuli that they encounter throughout their childhood, will play an important role in the development of internal deliberative capacities (Baldwin 1888; Vygotsky 1934; Piaget 1970). Merely possessing the genes that predispose someone to develop high levels of deliberative capacities does not guarantee that they will develop these capacities to a high level. The individual only possesses a natural *potential* for development and in some cases individuals may develop their capacities to a much lesser extent than others who have a much more limited (natural) potential.

In the history of developmental psychology, these two factors -nature and nurture- have been central to the debate about individual development. In many accounts, if one of these aspects has been accentuated, the other has often (sometimes unnecessarily) been demoted in importance. I will now explore some of these accounts in a little more detail and consider their appropriateness for a theory of deliberative democracy and the development of internally competent deliberative citizens. The earliest examples of scientific study of children tended to focus upon the natural aspects of development. They studied and recorded, in meticulous detail, the subtle changes in the new born infant and young child through practical observation. In the mid-nineteenth century, Charles Darwin was the first person to *scientifically* study and record the development of a new born child. Darwin observed his own baby son for the first three years of his life in order to record and later compare the earliest developments of motor and sensory skills with those of

other animals.¹ The notebooks he compiled tended to focus upon the natural occurrence of different capacities and characteristics in the growing child. The social and environmental influences upon development were given very little consideration at all.

Darwin's work in this area, although not his primary concern, set the tone for those trying to formulate theories of child development throughout the nineteenth century. A number of leading psychologists from this period, including G. Stanley Hall, employed this naturalistic examination in order to try to understand the maturation of the child and their capacities.² Hall was a pioneer in the area of child development and, as the leader of the "child study" group, he was the first to employ a "questionnaire model" in an attempt to understand the contents of young people's minds (Hall 1883). Throughout the 1880's, he studied kindergarten children by questioning their knowledge on a wide variety of issues from their bodies to animals and even religion.

French psychologist, Alfred Binet, was also influenced by this naturalistic approach. Binet was especially interested in the measurement of higher reasoning skills in the developing child. He, like Darwin, studied his own children (two daughters in this case) as well as others, in order to invent a scale which could place children into various categories based upon their cognitive abilities. This scale, later termed the Stanford-Binet scale, was used for a number of years as a form of IQ test to measure children's abilities in the United States (Roid and Barram 2004). In many respects however, much-like Darwin and Hall, his scientific studies seemed to focus heavily upon the natural occurrence of intelligence and wider development within children. These studies rarely considered the impact of cultural and environmental factors on the process of development, - a limitation that the modern IQ test is still severely criticized for even today.

This approach to child development had the most impact in the earliest days of psychology. Nevertheless, its influence can still be found in the perspectives of a number of political theorists working today. It is especially prevalent amongst 'realist' critics of deliberative democracy who propose that children and future citizens are unsuited to its participatory demands. These critics suggest that the empirically observed low levels of political knowledge and critical reflection amongst citizens prove deliberative democracy to be an unrealistic aim. However, these theorists (much like the psychologists discussed above) do not properly consider the social factors which lead citizens to develop in particular ways. They merely record their observations and then conclude that individuals do not have the internal capacities for

¹ See Charles Darwin's notebooks, for example, especially his notebooks M and N which record his observations of his young son and babies more generally. These can be found in Barrett, P., Gautrey, P., Herbert, S. and Kohn, D. (Eds.) (2009) *Charles Darwin's Notebooks 1836-1844*.

² For Darwin's influence on G.S Hall see Lerner, R.M. (2002) *Concepts and Theories of Human Development*, pp. 26. It seems that it was the aim of many of the earliest developmental theorists to become the 'Darwin of the mind'.

deliberative democracy to be a practical success. They do not consider the possibility that the observed behaviour of individuals in contemporary societies is contingent upon environmental factors, such as education, societal norms and the influence of the family. In other words, they can only indicate that at present (in these particular circumstances) many individuals could not act as competent deliberative citizens. Although deliberative democrats should be willing to accept and address these concerns, they do not provide grounds for abandoning the deliberative project.

In the twentieth century, the behaviourist school of psychology had a similarly one sided perspective on the development of children. However, rather than favouring the natural aspects of development, they tended to accentuate the social or external factors in this process. The behaviourist school, defended in particular by J.B Watson and B.F. Skinner, claimed that the development of children could only be explained through observable behaviours in the social environment. There was no need to understand either the minds or the natural inheritance of the individual at all (Watson 1930). It was also suggested, by these theorists, that individuals could be conditioned in their social environment so that over time they could become better suited to it and more successful in it. The most famous example of this behaviourist position is the one provided by Ivan Pavlov and his salivating dogs. He observed that his animals watered at the mouth, not only when they saw their food, but when they were in the same room as the lab technician who regularly gave them this food (Pavlov 1927). These experiments suggested conditioning occurred over time, as the dogs behaviour varied with the changing factors in its environment. They also laid the foundations for later theorists to apply these behaviourist principles to human children. Watson (1930, 104) suggested that if he were given twelve healthy babies he could raise them, regardless of their talents, abilities or genetic makeup, to become any kind of specialist that was desired, including a doctor, a lawyer or even a master thief. The only thing that required attention was the social environment. This could be tailored to ensure that the child learned the behaviours or skills that were deemed necessary for the performance of any of these professions.

On first inspection, Watson's behaviourist theories suggest that we can simply *produce* deliberative citizens with the internal skills and virtues necessary for competent deliberation. If children are understood as "blank slates", then, given the right environmental circumstances, it should also be possible to mould children into citizens who are expert deliberators. However, on closer inspection, this does not seem to be the case. If we accept that citizens are only determined by their environmental circumstances (as the behaviourist does), the internal realm, as a natural and distinct realm of free or reasoned choice, is seriously undermined. Citizens become predictable (rather than deliberative) creatures. This is why the behaviourist model of development cannot be used to understand or explain the development of the deliberative citizen and their internal deliberative capacities. A model of development that is compatible with the creation of deliberative citizens must

avoid the extremes of both genetic determinism and behaviourism. It must take seriously both the citizen's internal or cognitive realm, in which they can make free decisions and choices about the world around them, and the possibility of social influences, such as education, promoting the development of the deliberative capacities, that enable citizens to make their free choices.

There is now a consensus in psychology that the most plausible model of child development needs to consider both natural *and* social factors. James Mark Baldwin (1895, 1896) was the first developmental psychologist to present such an account.³ Although heavily influenced by Darwin, Baldwin built upon the earlier work by suggesting that social environments play a pivotal role in the natural development of human beings. Moreover, he claimed that this social element affects both the individual in their natural development, and, perhaps even more radically, that it effects the development of the species in evolutionary terms from generation to generation. Baldwin suggested that the child should not be characterized as a "passive recipient of the behaviours and beliefs endorsed by larger society, [instead] he described the child's emerging self as a product of continual reciprocal interactions between the child and others" (Bukatko and Daehler 1995, 10). He was, therefore, one of the first theorists to argue that the cognitive development of children does not rest entirely upon the gathering of knowledge and information. Instead, he argued that the development of children's minds, in various small steps or stages, relies upon their interactions with other people. They adapt to their particular environments and develop new ways of thinking about the world around them.

However, Baldwin's work was largely overlooked during his own lifetime. The naturalistic accounts of theorists like Hall and Binet were predominant in the nineteenth century and behaviourist psychologists, like Watson and Skinner, dominated the first half of the twentieth century. Nevertheless, Baldwin's dual approach did still have a major influence upon some of the most important theories of modern developmental psychology. In particular, it influenced Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget, and, in doing so, laid the foundations for the constructivist school of development (Cahan 1984; Bornstein and Lamb 1999; Broughton 1981). In developmental psychology, constructivism refers to an epistemological approach wherein the mind is viewed not as a static container of information but as a natural and dynamic system -a system that children develop by purposefully interacting with the world around them (Raskin 2002).

The constructivist framework is considered the first that scientifically investigates the *dual role* of both social and natural elements in the development of children and their capacities. It is this dual element that makes constructivism a much more suitable developmental framework for

³ This effect of culture on the evolution of man is today commonly referred to as the 'Baldwin effect'. He argued that specific behavioral and cultural choices by mankind could in fact shape the human genome (over long periods of time) just as effectively as natural selection.

understanding the creation of deliberative citizens. Deliberative democracy shares many of its most foundational assumptions with constructivist theory. They each find a role for human deliberation and cognition that, in contrast to the previously dominant behaviouralist models, is not considered predictable or in opposition to the free agency of the individual. The child or the citizen is not portrayed as the passive recipient of knowledge but as the discoverer of knowledge, and truth, in an interactive and participatory environment. The individual develops their natural capacities to pursue truth and greater understanding as they interact in this way with other people.

It is important to recognise that during the 1970s many of the foundations of deliberative democracy were emerging alongside the further development of constructivist theories in developmental psychology. Both were challenging the traditionally rationalist and behaviouralist paradigm of this period, which had tended to 'black box' the mind rather than actually understand the internal deliberative (or cognitive) processes within. Deliberative democracy therefore found a common ally in the constructivist model of development through which it could build a new direction for political engagement and democratic accountability. In fact, reflecting on the deliberative democracy literature today, it is possible to recognise the influence of constructivism in three key ways. Firstly, there is the explicit or direct influence of constructivism upon deliberative democrats. Jean Piaget, in particular, had a considerable effect on the two seminal accounts of deliberative democracy provided by John Rawls (1971, 405-414) and Jurgen Habermas (1976, 69-75).⁴ In addition, similarly influential theorists such as Amy Gutman (1988, 59-63) cited and discussed Piaget extensively in her early work on democracy and education.⁵ More recently, deliberative theorists like Shawn Rosenberg (1988) have a history of endorsing a Piagetian perspective in relation to how people think about political issues. In each of these accounts, the development of children into fully competent deliberative citizens is said to take place in almost exactly the ways that Piaget describes.

Secondly, however, there are many deliberative theorists who do not explicitly endorse a Piagetian or constructivist account of development but build their accounts from a Rawlsian or Habermasian model (Gutmann and Thompson 1996; Bohman 1996; Cohen 1989; Benhabib 1996; Goodin 2003). Clearly in doing so, they *implicitly* assume this kind of constructivist account.

⁴ For secondary literature which discusses the relationship between Habermas and Piaget see Schmid, M. (1982) "Habermas' Theory of Social Evolution" in J. B. Thompson and D. Held (Ed.) *Habermas: Critical debates*, 162-80; Ingram, D. (1986) *Habermas and the Dialectic of Reason* Ch 8 and Smith, L. (1996) *Critical Readings on Piaget* 41. A number of secondary sources also discuss the link between Rawls and Piaget including Samuel Freeman's (2007) *Rawls* pp. 256; S. Brennan and R. Noggle's "Rawls' Neglected Childhood" in V. Dawson and C. Wolf (Eds.) (2000) *The Idea of Political Liberalism* pp. 46-72.

⁵ Gutmann endorses Piaget's general account of development. However, she suggests deliberative democracy aim to educate children to the middle stage of 'associations' which Piaget identifies rather than the higher stage of principles he also outlines. This is because the former is more achievable and less controversial in a pluralistic society.

These theorists will often use the same assumed model of the internally competent citizen that Rawls and Habermas adopted from Piaget. They will also implicitly assume that the child develops their internal deliberative capacities by interacting with other people in their social environments. Finally, there are the deliberative theorists who do not explicitly endorse Piaget *or* follow a Habermasian or Rawlsian model of deliberative democracy. However, through their silence on educational issues and developmental psychology, they allow constructivist theories to remain dominant and unchallenged in the deliberative democracy literature (Rostboll 2008; Christiano 1995; Krause 2008).

In the deliberative democracy literature, constructivism, and particularly Piagetian constructivism, is the dominant model of developmental psychology. It is not, however, the only constructivist account that deliberative democrats could potentially employ. There are other accounts, that share many things in common with the Piagetian account, but also have some significant differences. Nevertheless, deliberative democrats have chosen to adopt (or, at least assumed) a Piagetian account of individual development. In section two, I will now examine this Piagetian account in more detail to better understand what it offers deliberative democracy. I will argue that there may be good reasons for deliberative democrats to reject a Piagetian account of individual development. In short, I will question whether it can really offer an account which will directly develop the internal deliberative capacities of citizens and which can properly address and undermine the public ignorance critique of deliberative democracy.

Section Two: Piaget and Deliberative Democracy

The developmental account proposed by Jean Piaget is commonly referred to as *cognitive* constructivism. It was developed over the course of fifty years and it skilfully describes how the young child becomes a fully grown adult (Piaget 1926, 1928, 1952, 1963, 1970). It shows how children gradually become endowed with a whole range of capacities to reason, including the capacity to make moral choices. As I suggested at the beginning of this paper, deliberative democracy requires citizens with the internal deliberative capacities to make decisions. Therefore, it requires an account of psychological development that can explain the development of these capacities.

However, it is important to ask whether Piaget's cognitive constructivism offers the most appropriate account of psychological development for theories of deliberative democracy. I will, therefore, examine four key aspects of his account and ask how each of them helps us to understand the development of internal deliberative capacities. I will look at: 1) the origin of development; 2) the scope of development; 3) the process of development; and 4) the technique of development. This should provide a clear picture of the strengths and weaknesses of Piaget's theory. It will also allow me to trace its influence on theories of deliberative democracy.

2.1 Origin of Development: Organic

Piaget applied a general methodological approach to the study of young children that he called genetic epistemology. His key research question was: “How does knowledge develop in the mind of a growing human organism?” His most basic hypothesis suggests that “the purpose of all behaviour is to adapt to the environment in ever more satisfying ways” (Thomas 2004, 245-6). That is, human knowledge (and the capacity to extend this knowledge further) is encouraged as individuals participate in the world around them. In making this claim, Piaget considers the natural *and* the social elements that interact to lead the child into adulthood. However, despite seriously considering both of these pivotal elements (in a way that many previous developmental psychologists had failed to do), there is still a different emphasis placed upon each. That is, despite being valued equally, they are given different roles in the developmental process and, therefore, take on a different significance in his account.

We can see the first difference in the roles that Piaget attributes to natural and social elements in the origin of development. For Piaget, human development is undoubtedly, at its core, a natural process. It involves organic or biological *schemes* which initiate the process of adaptation to the environment. According to Piaget, a “scheme is the structure or organization of actions as they are transferred or generalized by repetition in similar or analogous circumstances” (Piaget and Inhelder 1969, 249). These organic actions can be used to guide both mental and physical processes. For example, a scheme may involve the mental activities involved in determining the area of a right-angled triangle (base x height/two) or the ability to predict the next number in a particular sequence of numbers by observing the relationship between each separate integer. A scheme may also entail the pattern of physical actions required to kick a football or swat a fly.

Piaget also identified two key processes by which the developing child adapts to their environments by altering or replacing these cognitive schemes. The first of these is called assimilation. It involves individuals taking in new experiences or information and reshaping their understanding of these things to fit in with their pre-existing schemes. Assimilation is a common practice in young children as they encounter objects and new environments and try to classify the world and its contents into the already existing schemes within their minds (Glaserfeld 1996, 23-24). The second adaptive process is called accommodation. Unlike assimilation it involves the modification or complete alteration of a particular scheme. The child may have sifted through a whole host of schemes and determined that none of these adequately represent the object or experience that they are trying to interpret or classify. As a consequence, the child may radically alter a particular scheme or perhaps even invent new ones that more accurately represent the thing that they are trying to capture (Piaget 1962).

It is clear, therefore, that these two biological processes of adaptation are central to the cognitive development of the young child. However, a stable balance between these two processes is also considered essential. If the child over-employs techniques of assimilation, they will tend to see too little of a difference between various objects. They will create too few schemes that fail to represent the subtle nuances and unique characteristics of the world around them. This shortcoming, in turn, will make it difficult for them to formulate perspectives on, or recognise solutions to, the issues and problems that they encounter. Conversely, if the child over-employs techniques of accommodation, it will lead them to distinguish even the smallest differences between things. They will create too many schemes and that will undermine their attempts to formulate more general claims. It is extremely important, therefore, that when interpreting and discovering new environments the child employs these processes in a balanced way.

According to Piaget, this balance between accommodation and assimilation is achieved by a self-regulatory biological mechanism within the child. He calls this mechanism equilibration (Piaget 1985). This mechanism acts when the two processes of adaptation are out of balance (disequilibrium). The child is biologically compelled to re-establish this balance (equilibrium) by taking whatever adaptive action is necessary. This rather fluid and ongoing process of equilibration is the biological engine of the Piagetian account of adaptation. It is the organic mechanism by which the child modifies, regulates and develops their capacities over time.⁶ In the Piagetian account, therefore, capacities “emerge inevitably in normal human ontogeny [individual development] through a combination of organism maturation and experience with the constant, universal properties of the physical world.” (Duncan 1995, 466)⁷ It is only by not employing these capacities freely and regularly in a participatory environment that children will fail to develop into fully (albeit not necessarily equally) competent citizens.

In the first instance, adopting a Piagetian account allows deliberative democrats to assume that the psychological development of children is regulated by these natural and biological mechanisms. This makes it easy for them to assume that the deliberative citizen develops organically in the normal course of development. As a result, deliberative democrats tend to pay less attention to the social and cultural factors that might causally contribute to individuals’ psychological development. In my view, this is damaging to the deliberative democracy project because it encourages a *laissez faire* attitude

⁶ This account of development was not formed in a single book however, it was formed over many years in a number of different publications. Including, Piaget, J. (1972) *Biology and Knowledge: An Essay on the Relations Between Organic Relations and Cognitive Processes*; Piaget, J. (1954) *The Construction of Reality in the Child*; Piaget, J. (1952) *The Origins of Intelligence in Children*.

⁷ In many respects, as noted by Duncan, this is the best example of Kant’s influence upon Piaget. It demonstrates the teleological assumption made about the organic, almost inevitable, development of cognitive capacities in the individual.

towards the development of skills, virtues and emotional intelligence. It encourages deliberative theorists to assume that the biological mechanisms within children will do most of the work. However, if the development of these capacities is not so straightforward i.e. if development is *not* the natural – or inevitable -outcome of these organic processes, then serious problems may arise. The failure to pay more attention to how the internal capacities can be *directly* developed or cultivated in the minds of citizens may in fact compromise the deliberative project. Therefore, we should reconsider the appropriateness and plausibility of this organic account of development in the context of a theory of deliberative democracy.

2.2. *The Scope of Development: Universalist*

The Piagetian approach also defends a universal application of this organic account of development. From this perspective, *every* normal child naturally develops his capacities in this way, through these specific biological processes, employing these techniques. In this respect, although Piaget considers the influence of the social environment on development, a consideration of more contextual factors, like history, tends to be missing from his approach. In fact, it has even been claimed that his developmental account assumes an “epistemic subject that has no social class, sex, nationality, culture or personality” (Murray 1983 cited in Lourenco and Machado 1995, 146).⁸ Instead, Piaget maintains a neutral perspective on these issues so that his account can remain universally applicable. This makes it possible to say that every child, regardless of context, develops in these specific ways.

Piaget’s commitment to a universalist account of development also has serious implications for those integrating his theories into deliberative democracy. It may, on first inspection, seem like an attractive idea to provide a universal account because it is then applicable to the psychological development of every deliberative citizen. There is no need to worry about the contextual details of various societies, communities and individual children, because no matter what the differences are between them, they all essentially contain the same biological mechanisms and will develop in similar ways. If Piaget’s theory provides an account of how children become internally competent deliberative citizens in one society, it provides an account of how they can become internally competent deliberative citizens in any society. In other words, we need only allow children to freely develop and they will naturally acquire capacities for reasoning and internal deliberation.

However, there are some problems with Piaget’s universalist account of psychological development. Piaget fails to address how different *contextual* factors may alter the character and tools of development that each society employs to guide and develop its children into citizens. This oversight, in

⁸ In many respects this description of the epistemic subject sounds very similar to the citizen described in John Rawls’ original position. This is an interesting and revealing similarity to which I shall return and elaborate upon in the final section of my chapter.

itself, could be considered quite problematic. After all, the practical education of deliberative citizens may be very different in each society. A universalist account does not properly consider the role of each society's culture and history and how these might be most effectively utilised to develop the internal capacities of the deliberative citizen.

In addition, a universalist account bypasses the question of what kind of citizen a society wants to endorse in the first place.⁹ There should be no assumption that all societies and cultures will and should fall into line with the specific Piagetian understanding of human development. Moreover, there should be no assumption that all societies will necessarily be, or want to be, deliberative. The deliberative project should not be viewed as an institutional reflection of man's nature as a 'deliberative animal'. Instead, it should be understood as a product of a particular time and place, born out of the history of a society and its citizens over a number of years. The universalist approach, in trying to remain timeless and applicable to all, becomes far too vague and non-specific to act as a platform for the emergence of an internally competent deliberative citizen. As a result, the developmental account adopted by deliberative democracy should take these contextual factors into account, so that the internally competent deliberative citizen, and deliberative democracy by extension, becomes a much more practically realisable prospect.

2.3. *The Process of Development: Evolutionary Stages*

Piaget also claims that children develop their internal capacities through four distinct evolutionary stages. According to his account the child does not, and cannot, skip stages of development. At the same time, children cannot regress into earlier stages that they have already passed through. The stages are incremental. The first stage that Piaget identifies is the *sensorimotor stage of intelligence*. This occurs from birth until the age of two years.¹⁰ Although the young infant cannot think in terms of concepts he can begin to construct schemes as he begins to experience the world around him. However, most of these newly developed schemes will involve very basic motor and sensory processes such as the ability to suck on his thumb or return a smile to his parents. The second stage that Piaget identified is the stage of *preoperational thought*. He suggested that, on average, this occurred between the ages of two and seven. During this period, the child develops language and reasoning skills

⁹ This would imply that purposive and conscious reproduction by a society is possible, a view held by a number of different theorists, most notably Pierre Bourdieu. These accounts suggest that a society can be deemed collectively purposive and conscious in their creation of a citizen without being particularly deliberative or reflexive in the ways that they do so. See Bourdieu, P. (1973) "Cultural Reproduction and Social Reproduction" in R. Brown (Ed.) *Knowledge, Education and Cultural Change: Papers on the Culture of Sociology Education*, pp. 71-112.

¹⁰ A good summary and discussion of these stages of development can be found in Lin, S. (2002) Piaget's Developmental Stages) in B. Hoffmann (Ed.) *Encyclopaedia of Educational Technology* accessed from <http://www.etc.edu.cn/eet/eet/>

that can be applied to the world around them. At this stage, however, the child is confined to their own particular and immediate perceptions of the world -the child is egocentric.¹¹

Thirdly, the child enters *the stage of concrete operations*. This usually lasts from the age of seven to approximately twelve years old. During this period, children start to think logically and in doing so begin to take the viewpoints of other people much more seriously. They begin to cooperate and discuss concrete (but not abstract) subjects socially with other human beings. The first signs of a deliberative individual begin to emerge during this stage. Finally, however, from the ages of twelve into adulthood the individual enters the *stage of formal operations*. During this period, the child (or young adult) can develop the ability to think abstractly about concepts and may become competent in the most complex deliberative skills, like inductive and deductive reasoning.

However, there are no guarantees that all citizens will reach the very highest stage of development. In fact, Piaget accepts that many people will not progress past the third stage of concrete operations. However, this evolutionary understanding of development, coupled with the organic and universal mechanism that drives this evolutionary process, allows (and in some cases encourages) deliberative theorists to portray the emergence of internally competent citizens as an inevitable part of an open and free democratic society. In this sense, although Piaget accepted that some would fall below the highest levels of development, all individuals still evolve through these cumulative and incremental stages to *improve* their internal deliberative capacities. As an account of development, it allows deliberative democrats to assume progression and to put to one side individual or collective cases of regression or crisis. Cases that might easily be addressed by specific and contextual action are, therefore, overlooked and the internal competency of citizens is neglected in ways that undermine the overall practicality of deliberative democracy.

2.4. *Techniques of Development: Facilitative*

Piaget (1965, 58-65) also suggests that the best techniques to assist the child's development are facilitative methods. This facilitative approach was inspired (in part) through the philosophical writings of Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Rousseau (1782, 91) claimed that the parent or teacher should "never command [the child] to do anything whatever, not the least thing in the world." Instead, the guardian was to act as a much more passive symbol of authority and it was the child who played the active role, interacting with, and

¹¹ Piaget noticed, through numerous experiments, that children at this age were incapable of taking the viewpoint of other individuals and they could not apply or understand concrete logic. He called this phenomena egocentrism and it is the key characteristic of the preoperational stage. Kitchener, R.F (1996) "Jean Piaget: The Unknown Sociologist?" in L. Smith (Ed.) *Critical Readings on Piaget* pp. 28-51 [38].

adapting to, their environment, in recognition of their own natural development. In the Piagetian account of facilitation, therefore, the role of education is to provide environments where the child will encounter new experiences. In doing so, it is thought that the child will develop new schemes, to represent these experiences through the organic processes of equilibration and adaptation. Moreover, by developing these new schemes and learning more about the world around them, the child will gradually, over the course of their education, evolve into a fully socialised adult.

The easiest way to present this facilitative approach is to consider a few examples of it in practice. Most famously, the facilitative method can be found in Piaget's use of moral dilemmas. In one such case, a group of children would be presented with two stories. In the first story, a young child had broken ten plates whilst helping his mother wash the dishes and, in the second story, a child had broken a small cup whilst trying to steal a cookie. Piaget asked the children to decide amongst themselves which of the characters in these two stories deserved to be punished more. He found that children of a younger age (or a lower level of development) tended to give more weight to consequences rather than intentions and, therefore, tended to believe that the child in the first story (who had broken more dishes) deserved to be punished more (Piaget 1932, 137).

Moral dilemmas of this kind were later developed into much more extensive values clarification exercises. These were used in classrooms as educational tools. In one such exercise, devised by Piagetian psychologist Lawrence Kohlberg (1981), a lifeboat stranded in the middle of the ocean is overcrowded and needs to lose one of its twelve passengers otherwise it will sink. Children are presented with this dilemma and provided with the details of the passengers on the boat. They are told that, amongst others, there is a single doctor, an athlete with three children, and a world-renowned artist. They are then asked to discuss and decide who, out of these twelve characters, should be thrown overboard to save the remaining eleven people.

The important thing to notice from these two examples is the role that the teacher plays in these processes. It is purely facilitative. The teacher provides the information and then allows the children to discuss what they believe to be right or wrong. Essentially, there is no correct answer in each of these cases, only what the children deem to be correct. However, the answers provided by the children are not the point of this educational technique. Instead, by considering the reasons provided by the children for their selections, it can be determined how developed the children are at any given time, i.e., which stage of development they have reached. At the same time, these techniques can also be used to encourage the child to investigate new situations and environments, and thus develop their internal capacities further. Moreover, because stages of development are evolutionary and cannot be skipped, Piaget explicitly rules out the more intrusive or direct methods of teaching. This does not mean that the facilitative teacher has no active role to play in the educative process, but that the direction that they provide is very

limited in terms of what they do to guide the child.

This facilitative model of development is, in many respects, a reflection of the organic, universal and evolutionary characteristics of the Piagetian account. It represents the real-world actualisation of these conceptual ideas and, therefore, plays a key role in developing the citizen. Moreover, when integrated into an account of deliberative democracy, the facilitative approach has significant implications. In defending this approach, deliberative democrats ally themselves with a free developmental approach to learning wherein children are facilitated in environments that might stimulate their developing minds. It is assumed that this freedom will allow children to develop their capacities so that quite naturally, over the course of time, they will become internally competent deliberative citizens.

In fact, the only obstacle that citizens might face on their journey towards becoming deliberative citizens is the lack of opportunity to participate in these free environments. This fits with deliberative democrats tendency to focus on the creation of various institutions so that citizens can discuss issues, clarify their values, and, through practice, develop their deliberative capacities. However, because of this emphasis upon free development, there is very little emphasis on how other educational techniques might encourage this process further. There is no consideration of the role that educators might play in actively guiding children so that they can develop deliberative skills and virtues as well as emotional intelligence. There is also no consideration of mediation as a key developmental process. Nor is there a mechanism to help educators introduce tools that will push children towards their maximum potential. These aspects are currently missing from deliberative accounts and, as a result, those accounts do not provide a plausible explanation of how internally competent deliberative citizens are created.

At present, deliberative democracy is associated with an account of development which is essentially unsuited to its most fundamental requirements. There is little or no recognition that a deliberative democratic citizen and their internal capacities needs to be actively forged and moulded over time through a society's culture and practices. Instead, there are one-sided assumptions about organic mechanisms, universal growth and evolutionary change in the human child, which encourage deliberative democrats to simply assume that the right kind of citizen will emerge. In my view, the Piagetian account of psychological development is not a complete account of developmental psychology for deliberative democracy. There are alternative options which have not yet been considered.

In section three, I present an alternative account of development that remains true to the constructivist tradition but includes many of the important features missing from the Piagetian account. This alternative account, based on the work of Lev Vygotsky, offers an illuminating way of thinking about the psychological development of citizens in the context of deliberative democracy – and it explains why deliberative democrats should pay more attention to the role of education in creating competent deliberative citizens.

Section Three- Vygotsky and Deliberative Democracy

In this section, I will explore an alternative account of development that potentially offers a more solid foundation to deliberative democracy. There are, in fact, two constructivist accounts of child development that have dominated the field of study in recent years. The first of these accounts (as we have seen) was developed by Jean Piaget and is called *cognitive constructivism*. The second account was first proposed by the Soviet psychologist Lev Vygotsky during the 1930s and is commonly referred to as *social constructivism* (Vygotsky 1929, 1934).¹² However, Vygotsky remained largely unknown in the West until the 1960s when some of his work was translated into English for the first time. This may be one of the key reasons that his lesser-known theories were not, and have not, been taken up by deliberative democrats. Vygotsky's work has gained prominence in the West over the last three decades but it has not had a noticeable influence in political theory. In this section, I will consider what Vygotsky's work might offer to theories of deliberative democracy. I will examine four key areas of Vygotsky's account and consider how each of them helps us to understand the development of internal deliberative capacities. I will again look at: 1) the origin of development; 2) the scope of development; 3) the process of development; and 4) the technique of development.

3.1. The Origin of Development: Cultural

In contrast to Piaget's organic approach, Vygotsky concentrated on the cultural origins of development. Nevertheless, as a constructivist, he began his account by stressing the importance of representing the *various* influences on the cognitive development of the child. He called these different influences 'genetic domains.' Each of these separate domains represents a different perspective from which we can understand how infants develop to become fully-grown, autonomous citizens and in this context, how they can grow and develop the skills, virtues and emotional intelligence to be internally competent deliberative citizens.

Vygotsky identifies three genetic domains, each of which has a unique influence on development. The first of these domains is called the phylogenetic line of development and is most commonly understood as the Darwinian process of evolutionary growth (Wertsch 1985, 27-28). This includes, for example, the genetic inheritance of weaker and less prominent jaw muscles that is now thought to have made cooperation and higher reasoning skills possible (and to some extent a necessity for survival) in some of our earliest ancestors (Simon-Silver 2008). The phylogenetic line, or 'natural' line of development, primarily involves the biologically determined

¹² Vygotsky's contributions cease in the mid-nineteen thirties due to his untimely death from Tuberculosis at the age of 38.

growth of elementary mental functions in the mind of the very young infant. These include mental capacities, like perception, memory and attention, in their most basic forms, allowing the child to recall the position of a favourite toy or concentrate upon a particular task for a period of time.¹³

The second genetic domain that Vygotsky identified was the socio-cultural line of development. This relates to the influence that our cultures and societies can have on the course of human development, both at present and over previous generations. Unlike Piaget, Vygotsky does not believe that the cultural domain works in tandem with the natural or phylogenetic domain from birth. Instead, he suggests that they are, at first, distinct domains working separately to influence the development of the child (Wertsch 1985, 41). The natural line is dominant in the earliest stages and it explains the development of a whole range of lower mental capacities. According to Vygotsky, “by origins most lower mental functions are genetically inherited. By structure they are unmediated, by functioning they are involuntary, and with regard to their relation to other mental functions they are isolated individual mental units” (Subbotsky 2001).

However, this separation of the ‘natural’ and the ‘cultural’ and the dominance of the ‘natural’ does not continue indefinitely. Vygotsky outlined a third genetic domain that explains how the natural and cultural lines of development eventually intersect, mingle and converge to form a single “socio-biological” line within the young child.¹⁴ He called this the ‘ontogenetic domain’ and he claimed that it is essential for explaining how the child develops the highest and most complex forms of mental functioning. In contrast to lower functions, a higher mental function “is socially acquired, mediated by social meanings, voluntarily controlled and exists as a link in a broad system of functions rather than just as an individual unit” (Subbotsky 2001). Vygotsky hypothesized, therefore, that in order to develop the highest forms of mental functioning, like logical memory and inductive reasoning, society and culture rather than organic mechanisms will have the central and primary influence. The “*ontogenetic domain*” will be the origin of these most complex components of internal deliberation.

In order to appreciate the value of the Vygotskian account it is important to ask how culture itself is relevant to the creation of deliberative citizens. This can be most clearly seen by considering Vygotsky’s account of the employment of cultural tools, which help the citizen to develop their internal capacities. These cultural tools can be either technological, such as a

¹³ Vygotsky perhaps underestimated the effect of cultural factors in these earliest years of development and also paid relatively little attention to these natural processes. He preferred to concentrate on the later effect of cultural processes on higher mental functions. Despite these omissions and underestimations I do not believe it undermines his overall argument in any serious way.

¹⁴ The term socio-biological is one used by Vygotsky in his posthumously translated (1981) “The Genesis of Higher Mental Functions” in J. Wertsch (Ed.) *The Concept of Activity in Soviet Psychology* pp. 144-188.

computer or a plough, or psychological, such as works of art, maps, diagrams, counting systems, language, symbols and gestures. There is a key distinction between these two subcategories of tools. The former seeks to exert control externally over nature, for example, the plough might break up the soil to make it more fertile. The latter (often referred to as signs) seek to master the internal world, by enabling and ordering our thought processes. It is this psychological cultural tool, therefore, which is of particular significance in the development of the highest internal capacities and is most relevant to the development of internally competent deliberative citizens.

The sign begins as an external process that children encounter in their everyday lives. For example, they may witness the virtuous behaviour of an older peer, demonstrating signs of great humility at a time when it takes courage to back down from his convictions. They may witness a debate in which a fellow classmate displays signs of critical awareness by cutting to the heart of an issue with great skill and eloquence. Finally, they may witness an adult with highly developed emotional intelligence, managing to remain calm in the face of extreme provocation. If these various signs are celebrated by the society's culture and displayed on a regular basis, individuals may begin to internalise them and acquire the capacity to perform them. Moreover, at a later stage, the growing child may even begin to "extend the boundaries of their understanding by integrating socially elaborated symbols [signs] (such as social values and beliefs, the cumulative knowledge of their culture, and the scientifically expanded concepts of reality) into their own consciousness" (Steiner and Souberman 1978, 126). As they internalise these cultural tools, they should become increasingly capable individuals.

This cultural developmental perspective has potentially significant ramifications for deliberative democracy. If we adopt the Vygotskian account, a culture or society actively creates internally competent deliberative citizens. In this sense, children are immersed in a distinct political community with its own unique culture. They are individuated from this community by drawing on particular tools of this culture that promote deliberative behaviour. This contrasts with the Piagetian account, which suggests that children are inducted into their society - they are initially separate from it and are socialised into it over time as they participate and interact. The difference is significant: in a Vygotskian account the "true direction of the development of thinking is not from the individual to the social [as it is in Piaget], but from the social to the individual" (Vygotsky 1934, 36).

The key implication is that, on a Vygotskian account, the absence of deliberative citizens in a society is likely to be caused by that society's culture. This is important because it implies that it is the collective responsibility of the society to provide a culture that produces internally competent deliberative citizens. In the Piagetian account, the responsibility for development lies with the individual themselves – it is an 'internal' and organic process. Piaget's account encourages us to assume – often wrongly – that everyone will naturally develop into competent deliberative citizens if only we allow them

the freedom to develop.

The Vygotskian approach, by inverting Piaget's account of the relationship between the individual and society and, thereby, recognising the cultural origins of our internal deliberative capacities, can provide an account of psychological development for deliberative democracy that may be more consistent with empirical accounts of the levels of competence of most contemporary democratic citizens. With a Vygotskian understanding of psychological development, we must pay attention to the cultural tools that are provided for both children and adults to ensure that our society purposefully and deliberately creates competent deliberative citizens.

However, one possible objection to relying on this cultural element is that many societies lack a strong deliberative element to their culture. This means that these deliberative elements cannot be celebrated or promoted so easily and they will, therefore, be unable to rely on it to push the deliberative agenda forwards. There are two possible replies to this objection. First, it could be argued that those societies without this deliberative element to their culture are not ready to adopt deliberative institutions. Depending on one's perspective, they either require more time to develop their democratic culture or they are simply better suited to another way of organising themselves. Second, it could be argued that this cultural element need not do all of the work by itself. Instead, it could work alongside the organic element and in doing so may, in fact, bear more fruit in the long run. While both of these replies are feasible, the possibility of a dual approach (combining the best of Piaget and Vygotsky) is an interesting one that will also be relevant in the three remaining categories I explore. With this in mind I will hold judgment on the extent to which this integration is possible (or even desirable) until the conclusion of the paper.

3.2. The Scope of Development: Contextualist

Vygotsky also rejected Piaget's universalism. Instead, he suggested that the psychological development of children will always be relative and contingent upon the needs of a society in a specific time and space. The society, whether it is Marxist, liberal or traditionally conservative, will unavoidably, by conscious or unconscious reproduction, shape the capacities that are being internalised by its children. These capacities will be considered necessary functions because they will, ideally, serve the requirements of the children in meeting their future needs to function and flourish in this particular society. However, because different societies and different cultures from across history have had very different ideas about what it means to flourish, there will, of course, be a wide variation in the kinds of skills and virtues which are the focus of pedagogic reproduction. Consequently, in Vygotskian terms, there can be no universal process of development that the child could or should go through, only one that is culturally and historically specific to their contextual needs as future citizens in a particular society.

In my view, Vygotsky's account provides a more plausible

understanding of psychological development, which has important implications for those interested in the practical realisation of deliberative democracy. Vygotsky's account helps us to understand the differences between individuals in different societies (and at different times). Moreover, it allows us to make more sense of the empirical evidence regarding the lack of deliberative capacities among contemporary democratic citizens while also holding out the hope that if we pay attention to the cultural context, we might be able to promote deliberative competence in future generations. Vygotsky's account encourages us to consider the specific contextual details that will encourage the development of competent deliberative citizens. It suggests that we should seek to identify deliberative characteristics in contemporary liberal democratic culture and actively promote and direct children towards these positive examples of good practice. Examples can be drawn from a society's politics, their arts, entertainment and various other sources and these can act as the basis for context-specific cultural tools. In time, these tools can help to encourage a society to actively celebrate or reaffirm the most deliberative aspects in its institutions, its laws, and in the allocation of its public funding.

3.3. *The Process of Development: Revolutionary*

Vygotsky suggested that, in the course of their development, the child would pass through five 'psychological ages' (Vygotsky 1984, 247).¹⁵ This is essentially how citizens will develop the skills, virtues and emotional intelligence to deliberate effectively. He defined a psychological age "as a definite, relatively self-contained period of development" (Vygotsky 1934b, 192). This may, at first inspection, sound fairly similar to the Piagetian *stage* centric approach. However, Vygotsky suggested that these "ages of stability are interrupted by ages of crisis. And these latter [ages of crises] are the breaks and turning points in development, again confirming the thesis that the development of the child is a dialectical process, a process in which the transition from one stage to the next occurs not through evolution, but through revolution" (Vygotsky 1934b, 205).

An example of a revolutionary change is the sudden disruption in the third year of a child's life, where egocentric speech (thinking out loud) is internalised. An internal revolution occurs at this point when the natural and cultural lines of development merge so that the growing infant can now begin to develop their highest mental capacities. This suggests that "in the transition from one age-level to another we find the emergence of new structures that were absent in earlier periods; we can see a reorganization and alteration of the very course of development" (Vygotsky 1934, 192). Maturation does not take place by building upon what came before in a gradual manner, but occurs through a process that relies on crises and sudden transformations to create

¹⁵ He proposed that they occurred between the ages of two months to one year old, one to three years old, three to seven years old, seven to thirteen years old and finally thirteen to seventeen years old

entirely new planes of higher thinking.

In my view, Vygotsky's concept of 'revolutionary ages' might make a particularly useful contribution to understanding the development of the deliberative citizen. Piaget's descriptive account of various evolutionary stages encourages us to believe that citizens will gradually develop deliberative capacities in a participatory and free learning environment. However, we have seen that this assumption does not fit well with the empirical evidence regarding the general levels of deliberative competence among contemporary democratic citizens. Vygotsky's account, by contrast, recognises the importance of paying particular attention to specific social and cultural factors, which will have a 'revolutionary' effect on the development of internal deliberative capacities.

In a Vygotskian account, the development of competent deliberative citizens will be a much more complex and unsteady process, full of progressions and regressions. The creation of the internally competent deliberative citizen would rightly be considered a difficult task -something that requires active guidance and direction. This acceptance of the revolutionary ages of development would open up our understanding of how and in what ways the deliberative citizen is created. It might also allow us to accept that there are many different ways of creating internally competent deliberative citizens. Each child's development will be uniquely dependent on their own cultural and personal context and education for deliberative competence will be a complex and demanding task for any society.

3.4. Techniques of Development:Mediation

According to Vygotsky, facilitation is not the most effective way to promote development. Instead, guidance for children should come in the form of mediatory techniques. The easiest way to understand mediatory techniques is to outline a concept which Vygotsky called the 'zone of proximal development' (ZPD). The ZPD works by predicting future growth in the child by concentrating on the 'buds' of development rather than the already available 'fruits' (Vygotsky 1978, 86). In this sense, Vygotsky was not concerned with assessing the child's *current* performance in a free environment where they are unaided in a given task or test -this is representative of the facilitative approach. Instead, the mediatory approach provides the child with subtle tools (often in collaboration with older peers) which can then help to qualitatively measure what they can *potentially* achieve -the zone of proximal development. In doing so, mediation works on establishing new developments and on encouraging the growth of the various skills and virtues that citizens should possess.

The specific characteristics and the tools of the mediatory account can be recognised in Vygotsky's most famous experiments. In these experiments, Vygotsky tested the memory skills of young children. He began by providing a long list of various words that had no special relation to one another and asked

the child to remember as many as possible. In this first instance, the child would usually remember very few of the words. However, Vygotsky then repeated the experiment but, this time, asked the child to draw pictorial aids that might help them to remember the various words that he had asked them to memorize. So, for instance, they could draw a bone to help them recall the appearance of “dog” on the list or perhaps even more abstract symbolic representations such as a block of cheese to remind them of “the moon”.

Vygotsky found that by using these memory tools the child could remember a significantly larger proportion of the words (Daniels 1996, 203). More interestingly, however, when he repeated these experiments with adolescents and adults, he discovered that with or without these pictorial or symbolic tools to aid their memories, the results were largely the same. This pointed towards a period of development in early childhood where these tools moved from the external world, (e.g. being written or drawn on pieces of paper), to the internal world, where they became internalised or became what Vygotsky termed mnemonic systems (Vygotsky 1987, 301-311). The Vygotskian account suggests that the development of internal capacities is mediated by ‘cultural tools’, like symbols, pictorial aids or language more generally. The more successfully a child is socialised into a world of cultural tools, the easier it is to use techniques of mediation to develop the child’s internal capacities to their full potential.

It should be made clear that mediation is not about pure instruction. It is not about telling the child the correct answer. Instead, it is about pushing or ‘nudging’ children further to consider *why* they hold particular positions and encouraging them to display particular skills, virtues and standards of emotional intelligence whilst considering issues.¹⁶ It is also important to note that mediation is primarily external during the earliest years of a child’s life. At this stage, it is usually conducted by older peers and adult teachers. However, if educated properly, this process will be internalised so that metacognitive mediation or self-regulation becomes the means by which the deliberative citizen learns to consider their own and other citizens’ perspectives. This could ultimately help to undermine things like ideological dogmatism and the growing phenomenon of what Cass Sunstein calls ‘information cocoons’, in which groups of people no longer engage with the opposite side of the debate or critically reflect upon their own positions (Sunstein 2008, 9).

Vygotsky’s account of mediation has much to offer a theory of deliberative democracy. It emphasises the importance of purposefully designing educational interventions –or mediatory tools- that promote internal

¹⁶ The term nudging is a reference to the work of Cass Sunstein and Richard Thaler as well as their wider philosophy of libertarian paternalism. See Sunstein, C. (2001) *Republic.com*; Thaler, R.H. and Sunstein, C. (2009) *Nudge*. I have explored the connected between Vygotsky and Republicanism elsewhere, see Griffin, M. (2012) ‘Culture, Community and Cognition: A Vygotskian Foundation for a Republican Deliberative Approach’ *Studies in Marxism*, Forthcoming.

deliberative capacities. This is an essential element of a theory of deliberative democracy if we actually want to create deliberative citizens who can participate effectively in deliberative arenas. If we make the decision (as a political community) to endorse mediation, it allows us to utilise cultural tools and implement policies that encourage this deliberative model of thinking both in the classroom and beyond in to society. For example, we can begin by proposing examples of good deliberative practice for children to emulate and aspire towards, highlighting great thinkers, films or artists that represent or exemplify internal deliberative capacities in different ways. We can also re-direct public funding to support art projects and community groups that incorporate, celebrate and reaffirm these essential characteristics.

With a Piagetian facilitative model of psychological development, we may hope that citizens develop into internally competent deliberative citizens without recourse to such direct intervention. Those who adopt the facilitative model may be concerned to avoid alienating those groups and individuals who refuse to think deliberatively or who consider deliberative thinking incompatible with their ways of life. The adherents of the facilitative model may prefer to assume that, in the right environment, the development of deliberative capacities will happen quite naturally and those who fail to develop those capacities or reject their importance will be in the minority. However, this kind of optimistic adherence to the facilitative model is too passive. The empirical evidence of contemporary democratic societies does not support this kind of optimism. If we want to make deliberative democracy real, we will need to integrate a mediatory approach to educating children and creating internally competent deliberative citizens.

Conclusion

The Piagetian account of development has been extremely influential in the deliberative democracy literature. It has been either explicitly or implicitly assumed by the majority of theorists working in this area. However, in this paper, I have suggested that this account of psychological development is not the most appropriate for a practical account of deliberative democracy. Considered alone, it encourages a complacent approach to the development of internally competent deliberative citizens, and coupled with the empirical evidence it leads to a worrying practical reality for deliberative democracy. In response, I have contrasted the Piagetian account of psychological development with a Vygotskian account and I have argued that the latter account's features provide a novel and illuminating way of thinking about educating deliberative citizens. To conclude, I will now briefly restate the key differences between these accounts and tentatively suggest how they could be used as a new foundation for deliberative democracy.

The first difference concerns the organic and the cultural elements of these accounts. The former of these encourages deliberative democrats to believe that the development of internal capacities will happen quite naturally

over the course of a child's life. It also leads to an optimistic assumption that the child will be appropriately socialised into a deliberative model of decision-making as they participate with others in their society.

Instead, this article claims that communities must play a larger role by identifying cultural tools that can act as the driving force in the individuation of internally competent deliberative citizens. This shift places the onus on deliberative democrats to seek to create competent deliberative citizens rather than following the assumption that children will naturally develop these higher capacities. Nevertheless, this organic approach can still be considered valuable. It remains the central mechanism in the development of lower capacities and where deliberative culture may be lacking, it is useful to rely (but not rest) upon the belief that man at a basic level is deliberative in nature. The problem is that without a supportive culture this belief will not be translated into the types of individual and collective behaviours that deliberative democracy relies upon.

The second difference between these two accounts is the universal and contextual elements. I suggested that Piagetian universalism encouraged deliberative democrats to assume that all children go through the same general pattern of development regardless of their circumstances. I suggested that the Vygotskian account could provide a contextual analysis of development by accepting that the internally competent deliberative citizen is the product of a particular time and place. However, this should not lead us to a relativistic position. A distinct set of deliberative skills and virtues are still being defended as universally valuable. Instead, it leads us to appreciate the context in which individuals are developed and to recognise that it will shape the precise nature of these capacities as well as techniques which are best suited to their development. In many respects, Vygotsky further enhances a language through which a 'contextual universalist' approach to development can be elaborated.¹⁷ This could be valuable to a number of theorists who approach deliberative democracy in this way.

The third difference concerns the evolutionary and revolutionary aspects of the Piagetian and Vygotskian accounts. The central flaw of the former approach is that there is no consideration of crises or regression in the child's maturation; it is simply a description of how they develop in incremental stages. I claimed that this model has encouraged deliberative democrats to assume that development is not only a smooth process but one that requires little explanation. In response, I considered an alternative, which suggests that development in children is a variable process full of sudden changes, regressions and progressions that need specifically tailored action to ensure that individuals develop to their full potential. Consequently, whilst Piaget's approach may be valuable in describing the emergence of lower capacities in human beings, it is the Vygotskian approach which seems to offer

¹⁷ Writers like G.H Mead also provide a central contribution to this language. See G.H. Mead (1934) *Mind, Self and Society*.

a more realistic and convincing account of how complex deliberative skills and virtues will be developed.

The fourth, and final, difference between these two accounts is possibly the most fundamental and involves the facilitative and mediatory characteristics. In the paper I explained how this free developmental perspective encourages deliberative democrats to adopt a laissez-faire attitude towards education rather than developing direct methods of cultivating deliberative citizens. With this in mind, I introduced Vygotsky's mediatory techniques, which utilise cultural tools and can be employed by older peers and adults to help the child develop their internal capacities and fulfil their potential.

Deliberative democrats have clearly neglected the mediatory aspect of development. Nevertheless, this does not mean that it alone should (and could) provide us with deliberative citizens. There will be situations and contexts where cultural mediation is able to develop citizens' skills and virtues in a way that organic facilitation simply cannot. Similarly though, there will be times when cultural mediation finds itself limited by other external or internal circumstances. In these situations it will be necessary to rely on the design of deliberative institutions and the innate capacities of individuals so that development can be facilitated with less direct methods. In this respect, although mediation is important and undervalued by deliberative theorists, to concentrate solely upon it and its qualities may limit the developmental opportunities of citizens. To do so would, in fact, leave a deliberative account just as guilty as those accounts who endorse only a Piagetian-facilitative approach. Instead, mediation should be seen as yet another dimension to developing deliberative minds- a dimension that has so far been given far too little attention and in the future must be taken much more seriously.

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