What is “the Democratic” in Feminist Political Theory?
Mouffe, Pateman, Young and Citizenship

YAMADA, Ryusaku
Faculty of International Liberal Arts, Soka University
Hachioji-shi, Tokyo 192-8577, Japan
E-mail: ryusaku@soka.ac.jp

Draft version. Please do not quote.

Introduction

In the 1970s, “radical democracy” seemed almost equivalent to participatory democracy. Then, it is well known that Carole Pateman, a representative of participatory democrat, began to criticize democratic theory more “radically” from feminist viewpoint in the 1980s. However, after the appearance of Chantal Mouffe’s works Hegemony and Socialist Strategy (1985, with Ernesto Laclau) and The Return of the Political (1993), “radical democracy” often means agonistic pluralism. Mouffe is also a feminist thinker, and feminism is one of important intellectual sources of radical democracy. However, Mouffe is very critical about feminist thinking in general from her viewpoint of radical and plural democracy. In her feminist essay “Feminism, citizenship and radical democratic politics” included in The Return of the Political, she criticized not only Pateman but also another feminist democratic thinker Iris Marion Young. Mouffe finds in two other feminists’ arguments the “essentialist” nature that she strongly rejects.

Three of them seem to share the interest in further democratization of actually existing liberal-democracy. However, the notion of “what is democratic” would not be the same among them, because their strategies of radicalization of democracy are not the same. Furthermore, although Mouffe’s critique focuses on the notion of “differentiated citizenship” by Pateman and Young, they did not reply to Mouffe’s critique. There was no substantial debate among them, and it seems that their arguments were at cross-purposes. Nonetheless, these cross-purposes seem to be because of the different kind of the notion of “what is democratic” among the three feminists. Mouffe often argues “the political” in her radical democratic project, but it is not clear what is “the democratic” for her. In order to make clear why their discussions are at cross-purposes, it should be significant to investigate what is “the democratic” for three of them instead of what democracy means for them.

Thus, the aim of this paper is to find the meaning of “the democratic” in feminist political theory. It first examines Mouffe’s feminist essay that criticizes Pateman and Young. Then it attempts
to evaluate the relevance of Mouffe’s criticism through reconsidering Pateman’s and Young’s idea of democracy and citizenship. Finally, it argues the difference and commonness of the idea of “the democratic” of those three feminist theorists.

1. Mouffe’s radical democracy and feminism

The main point of Mouffe’s critique of feminist political thinkers is that they shared “essentialism” and that the abandonment of such essentialist idea is required if feminism is to be situated in her radical democratic project. In other word, Mouffe insists that the category “woman” does not correspond to any unified and unifying essence (1993, p. 78). In her radical democratic project, social agent is conceived of as an ensemble of “subject positions” that are constructed by a diversity of discourses among which there is no necessary relation. The identity of a subject is contingent and only temporarily fixed, and it depends on which social relations the subject identifies with. In this sense, social agent must be recognized as a plural one that is constructed by various social relations, rather than as a unified, homogeneous entity (Mouffe, 1993, p. 77). This is applicable to all subjects and social groups, including working class, women, blacks, homosexual, etc., and it is significant to transform the identity of different groups so that the demands of each group could be articulated with those of others. This requires what Mouffe (with Laclau) calls the principle of democratic equivalence. She states that

In order that the defence of workers’ interests is not pursued at the cost of the rights of women, immigrants or consumers, it is necessary to establish an equivalence between these different struggles. (Mouffe, 1993, p. 19)

The reason why Mouffe rejects any fixed and permanent identity of a subject is not because she attempts to deny all the notions of subjects like working class, women or blacks, but because she conceives of these subjects as those that open towards other subject positions through regarding all subjects as “nodal points” that are merely partially fixed through discourses. This enables variable and unpredetermined “articulation” among different subject positions. When this is considered in feminist context, the identity of “women” itself is a category that is constructed in various discourses, and the dichotomy of homogeneous “men” and homogeneous “women” is impossible. Therefore, the feminist politics as struggle against subordination of women must be diverse (Mouffe, 1993, p. 78). This means that various kinds of feminism must be situated in a broader project of radical democracy with other struggles for liberation. If the category of “women” is a constructed nodal point, such notions as “essential” womanhood and “true” feminism must be
abandoned (Mouffe, pp. 87-88).

From Mouffe’s viewpoint explained above, both Pateman’s and Young’s feminist political theory have the “essentialist” nature that should be criticized. First, we shall examine Mouffe’s critique of Pateman. Pateman repeatedly points out the patriarchal character of social contract theory that is the basis of modern democratic theory. There, “free and equal individuals” mean men as the head of a household, men who have their wives, and men as “breadwinners”. The social contract is merely the fraternal pact among men, and political and civil society is constructed by confining women, who are regarded as the cause of the political disorder, to the private, domestic sphere. In spite of this, democratic theorists tend to consider the categories such as “individuals” and “citizens” do not exclude anyone, and this makes the deep-rooted patriarchal nature of political theory invisible. Furthermore, they believe that the expansion of universal suffrage to women, which means the realization of women’s formal citizenship, has already solved all the democratic problems between men and women, without seeing the fact that women have been treated as the second-class citizens in many social relations. In other words, from the beginning “citizenship” itself has been constructed according to the mail-standard (typically, military service and tax payment) (Pateman, 1988, 1989). These critiques of patriarchal political theory by Pateman are agreed by Mouffe. What Mouffe criticizes is Pateman’s way to overcome the dilemma of citizenship that women must face.

Pateman calls the dilemma “Wollstonecraft’s dilemma”. On the one hand, liberal feminists admit the universal significance of citizenship and attempt to expand it to women. However, this way never succeeds because “citizenship” itself is constructed according to men’s attribute, capacity and activity: expanding such citizenship requires women to be (like) men, and those women who cannot do this are still regarded as second-class citizen and they cannot obtain full citizenship. On the other hand, another feminists insist women’s different ability, needs and concerns from men’s, arguing that women’s citizenship should be the different from men’s one: women’s unpaid works like mothering should be regarded women’s citizenship for those works are comparable with men’s employment (paid works). But, this latter way is not fulfilled because from the beginning citizenship excludes domestic (or “women’s”) works including child-bearing, child-rearing, housekeeping, caring family members. The latter way confines women to the domestic sphere as economically dependents and enforces unpaid works upon them (Pateman, 1989, pp. 195-197). Then, what is Pateman’s aim through overcoming such a dilemma? She states that

if women are to be citizens as women, as autonomous, equal, yet sexually different beings from men, democratic theory and practice has to undergo a radical transformation. (1989, p. 14)

It seems that her aim is to elaborate differentiated democratic social order “which rests on a social conception of individuality, which includes both women and men as biologically differentiated but
not unequal creatures” (1989, p. 136).

Here is the point that Mouffe directs her criticism to Pateman’s expression “as women”. According to Mouffe’s interpretation, Pateman pursues differentiated citizenship between men and women. In other words, Pateman conceives of two types of individuality that should be expressed in two different forms of citizenship: men as men and women as women. Mouffe insists that Pateman’s view “still postulates the existence of some kind of essence corresponding to women as women” and that Pateman’s “proposal for a differentiated citizenship that recognizes the specificity of womanhood rest on the identification of women as women with motherhood” (Mouffe, 1993, p. 81). In short, for Mouffe, Pateman tries to find the way to overcome the “Wollstonecraft’s dilemma” in the conception of the differentiated citizenship between men and women. Mouffe regards such a conception as an inadequate “essentialism” that never deconstructs men/women dichotomy. She shows her thesis that “in the domain of politics, and as far as citizenship is concerned, sexual difference should not be a valid distinction” (1993, p. 82).

Next, we shall shift our examination towards Mouffe’s critique of Young. Young’s “politics of difference” concerns not only women’s oppression and disadvantages but also those of other marginalized social groups. Young is very critical about the prevailing Schumpeterian interest group pluralism that reduces politics to the bargaining of private interests, and she sympathizes with participatory democracy. Nevertheless, she also criticizes the republican type of citizenship because it has the ideal of universal citizenship that is based on traditional, patriarchal public/private division. Such division presupposes the dichotomy such as “universal” vs. “particular”, or “common” vs. “differentiated”. The former of each dichotomy (“universal” and “common”) have been regarded as the ideal of the public sphere, and the latter (“particular” and “differentiated”) have been confined in the private sphere. The ideal of universal citizenship gives priority to “generality” so that particular, self-centred interests do not erode the public sphere. However, for Young, such a dichotomy and the universal ideal are irrelevant to the reality of large-scale society that has been multiculturalized and pluralized. The conception of the public sphere from the viewpoint of universality and generality identifies “equality” with “sameness”, and those who are regarded as different or particular from the mainstream viewpoint are excluded from the public sphere. Young continuously concerns the problem of structural injustice: domination by the mainstream of society (white, middle-class, heterosexual male) and oppression of different social groups (working class, women, blacks, native Americans, homosexuals, etc.) (Young, 1989, pp. 251-258; Young, 1990, chap. 2).

Although Mouffe sympathizes with Young’s concerns with many forms of oppressions in a society, she criticizes that Young’s notion of social groups have “essentialist” nature. Young’s politics of difference conceives of the public sphere as the plural one that is open towards the different social groups rather than as the domain that is dominated by generality and sameness. Therefore, she advocates “heterogeneous public” and “differentiated citizenship” instead of
traditional ideal of universality. She expects that the needs and voices of those who have tended to be marginalized because of their particularity and difference can be expressed and heard publicly. In order for this purpose, she proposes group representation (Young, 1989, pp. 258-267). However, from Mouffe’s viewpoint, Young’s argument on the politics of difference presupposes the existence of social groups that already have given interests and identity. Young’s notion of social group is not that of the group with particular political ideology or interest group, but cultural group with specific way of life and identity. Mouffe rejects Young’s conception of group differentiated citizenship, stating that

the notion of a group that she identifies with comprehensive identities and ways of life might make sense for group such as Native Americans, but is completely inadequate as a description for many other groups whose demands she wants to take into account, like women, the elderly, the differently abled, and so on. She has an ultimately essentialist notion of “group”, and this accounts for why … her view is not so different from the interest-group pluralism that she criticizes. (1993, p. 86)

2. Pateman’s democratic theory and feminism
Pateman mentioned critique by Mouffe’s at least twice, but both of them are not genuine counterarguments. First, in her essay “Democracy, Freedom and Special Rights”, Pateman insists that she never argues for “two different forms of citizenship” for men and women. However, this statement is done in a footnote (Pateman, 1992, p. 230, note 14), and she does not do her full-dress refutation of Mouffe’s decisive argument that Pateman is “essentialist”. Second, in her book (with Charles W. Mills) Contract and Domination, she wrote a chapter for responding to her critics with only touching on Mouffe. In this chapter, Pateman responds to two kinds of critique of “essentialism”. On the one hand, there are critics that Pateman’s arguments about patriarchy in her feminist major volume The Sexual Contract (1988) is essentialist because they fall into pessimism and fatalism because she regards patriarchy as the historically necessary and unchangeable. Pateman’s reaction to this kind of critics is that she cannot understand why her argument is misunderstood as if it were essentialist because she insists that patriarchy is not natural and universal but historical and social. She states that “[t]he message of The Sexual Contract … is that nothing can be changed” (2007, p. 227). On the other hand, there are critics that Pateman conceives of biological difference between two sexes as unchangeable. Here she quotes Mouffe’s passage that states that Pateman “postulates the existence of some kind of essence corresponding to women as women” mentioned above. Pateman responds that such critics confuse two different things: political theorist’s analysis of the conceptions of manhood and womanhood, and her/his own views (2007, p. 228). But,
anyway, we cannot find Pateman’s direct refutations of Mouffe’s critique. Arguably, for Pateman, critiques like Mouffe’s do not get to the heart of her own arguments.

Then, what is Pateman’s interest in feminist arguments? Recently she reflects her life-long study in political theory and mentions that it has been “democratization” that has run through all her work in different ways, and that her contributions to feminist political theory are also situated as part of her broader interest. Here, she means by “democratization” the creation of a more democratic and more participatory political system (Pateman, 2013). Before her turn to feminism in the end of the 1970s, she “radically” criticized liberal-democracy from the standpoint of participatory democracy. For her, liberal-democracy in the form of representative democracy with a huge bureaucratic system was nothing more than elite domination: in other words, the relationship between “free and equal individuals” was not realized. Pateman conceived that democracy which is based on consent among “free and equal individuals” can only be realize under participatory democracy because political obligation of citizens should be owed to fellow citizens and not to the state or its representatives (Pateman, 1989, p. 62). It can be said that Pateman’s interests existed in participation of concrete individuals’ actual participation in decision-making, rather than that of abstract individuals in general. Then, by the end of the 1970s, she came to realize that the permanent subjection of women to men cannot be the democratic relationship between “free and equal individuals” (Yamada, 2009, p. 104). Therefore, there exists the realization of the “free and equal individuals” relationship between two sexes at the core of Pateman’s interests in further (or radical) democratization.

Today Pateman admits that issues in feminism and environments surrounding women have changed since the 1960s when the so-called second-wave of feminism flourished. However, she refuses to think that problems that were raised by the second-wave of feminism have already become things of the past and that the second-wave of feminism itself has become obsolete. Rather, she continues to insist that the traditional problems still exist: “authoritative positions in all areas of political, judicial and economic life are still dominated by men. They monopolize the more prestigious and higher paying occupations and earn more than women, who continue to do the bulk of the unpaid caring work; men remain free riders” (Pateman, 2013, pp. 2-3). There are also other traditional problems including women’s poverty, violence against women, women’s unstable status as citizens, etc. (Pateman, 2010; Pateman, 2011). Her views seem to show that she, as a democratic theorist, is interested in the real problems that women have been facing, rather than in the development of the movements and/or thought of feminism itself. For her, the existence of what the second-wave of feminism revealed is requiring further democratization: in other words, democratization includes the actual betterment and improvement of women’s status, circumstances, and situations.

We can see this in Pateman’s interests in a basic income in the 2000s in the context of democratization of citizenship. According to her discussion, those who participate in debate about a
basic income tend to focus on such questions as social justice, relief of poverty, equality of opportunity, or promotion of flexible labour markets rather than democracy. However, individual freedom as autonomy or self-government is central to democracy. If such autonomy and self-government are required, individuals need to become free and equal “citizens” with rights, and here freedom is not a question of individual economic opportunity and participating in free and fair elections alone, but also a question of individual autonomy, including government in marriage or the workplace. Pateman states that

[s]elf-government requires that individuals both go about their lives within democratic authority structures that enhance their autonomy and that they have the standing, and are able (have the opportunities and means), to enjoy and safeguard their freedom. A basic income – set at the appropriate level – is preferable … because it helps create the circumstances for democracy and individual self-government. (2004, p. 91)

Pateman also insists the importance of a basic income from the viewpoint of women’s freedom. A basic income is often discussed as the problem of employment and free-riding of men, but the problem about the household is often ignored. If “work” only means paid employment, full-time housewives can be seen as free-riders. When we premise the private and public sexual division of labour in which husbands are breadwinners and women work part-time and earn less than men, the “reinforcement” that women must get married and men must be employed seems a rational arrangement. For Pateman, however, this causes the massive free-riding in the household by husbands (2004, pp. 98-99). From such a viewpoint, a basic income can be a means for realizing women’s freedom to live without being employed and getting married. In other words, a basic income has a potential for the democratization of citizenship that opens the door to a society in which women can be respected as equal “citizens”. Pateman already mentioned the similar point without using the term “a basic income” at the end of the 1980s. She expected that a guaranteed social income to all adults would break down the old dichotomies, for example, between paid and unpaid work, between full- and part-time work, between public and private work, between independence and dependence, between work and welfare, which is to say, between men and women (1989, pp. 202-203).

Now it should be clear that Pateman’s conception of the democratization of citizenship is very different from what Mouffe criticizes as differentiated citizenship between men and women. Rather, Pateman expects that a basic income can be a means that makes all individuals free and equal, insisting that “[a] right to a basic income is analogous to the right to vote – a democratic right of all citizens” (2008, p. 241). While Mouffe objects against Pateman’s statement “as women”, it would be reasonable to understand Pateman’s argument not as essentialism but as her interest in the
actual predicament of women in patriarchal liberal-democracy and in the realization of democracy in which both men and women are treated as equal citizens without enforcing women to become like men.

3. Young’s inclusive democracy

It seems that Young does not attempt to refute Mouffe’s critique on Young’s conception of differentiated citizenship. Rather, it can be said both Mouffe and Young have similar direction in their arguments. For example, in the 1980s Young discussed about the ideal of a “rainbow coalition” as what she calls heterogeneous public. According to her, while traditional coalitions tried to realize a unified public through making the differences of perspective, interests, or opinion among diverse groups not surface, a rainbow coalition ideally “affirms the presence and supports the claims of each of the oppressed groups or political movements constituting it” and “it arrives at a political program not by voicing some ‘principles of unity’ that hide differences but rather by allowing each constituency to analyse economic and social issues from the perspective of its experience” (Young, 1989, p. 265). If we consider this in the level of practical social movements, Young’s idea seems not so different from Mouffe’s conceptions of democratic equivalence in her radical democratic project.

For Mouffe, however, such a rainbow coalition can be seen “only as a first stage towards the implementation of a radical democratic politics” because it premises a fixed identity of each social group and therefore it never rearranges already established subject positions (Mouffe, 1993, p. 86). Does this mean that Young regarded group identity as fixed and permanent? In fact, it is not true. Young points out that a social group should not be understood as an essence or nature: rather, group identity should be understood in relational terms. She states that

[a]s products of social relations, groups are fluid; they come into being and may fade away… Group identity may become salient only under specific circumstances, when in interaction with other groups. Most people in modern societies have multiple group identification, moreover, and therefore groups themselves are not discrete unities. Every group has group differences cutting across it. (1989, p. 260)

John S. Dryzek also points out that Young are well aware of the problem of essentializing group identity and that “Young resists the use of the term ‘identity’ because it connotes an assertion of essential and unshakeable characteristics” (2000, p. 62).

Young’s notion of non-fixed group identity and her advocacy of group representation mentioned above are compatible. Her conception of group representation is not the one that presupposes fixed identity of oppressed particular groups and gives each of them the right to vote.
Instead, she advocates group representation only as an example of concrete policy that enables needs and desires of oppressed social groups to be expressed in the public sphere (actually, after the 1990s she did not further elaborate the concrete system of group representation). To conceive of the possibility of policy that consider the difference of marginalized and disadvantaged social group is one thing, and to understand group difference as an essence is another. When we confuse these two different things, it come to be possible for us to reject not only Young’s arguments but also other arguments, for example gender quota that Anne Phillips has considered for many years, in the name of “essentialism”.

How to make possible for oppressed and disadvantaged social groups to express their perspectives, needs, desires, and experiences in the public sphere – this question leads Young to her discussion of communicative democracy, which she developed in the mid-1990s and the 2000s under the influence of the “deliberative” model of democracy. In spite of this influence, Young are very critical about the so-called deliberative democracy in general, and it seems that what she calls “communication” closes to Mouffe’s agonistic pluralism. Here we examine Young’s idea of inclusive democracy that is based on her arguments of the politics of difference by paying attention to the two aspect of her communicative democracy: “struggle” and “co-operation”.

Young conceives of communication as struggle. She states that

I prefer to call to the normal condition of democratic debate a process of struggle. In a society where there are social group differences and significant injustice, democratic politics ought to be a process of struggle. Far from a face-off in enemy opposition, struggle is a process of communicative engagement of citizens with one another… The process of democratic struggle is an attempt to engage others in debate about social problems and proposed solution, engage them in a project of explaining and justifying their positions. (Young, 2000, p. 50)

The reason why Young criticizes deliberative democracy is because many of its advocates presuppose not only a common good that is required for agreement, but also a specific mode of expression (argument, articulateness, and dispassionateness) as universal for deliberation, although such a common good and a mode of expression are products of those in mainstream of society (in this sense, they are not universal but particular in fact). Consequently, for Young, deliberative democracy tends to exclude those who do not share such a common good and a mode of expression. If political communication is to be democratic in a mass society in which structural injustice exists, the communication must be open to difference. Although Young never denies agreements, she insists that all agreements are provisional and changeable. Young insists that even if we set well-structured deliberation, participants need to realize that conflict and disagreement are the usual state of affairs (Young, 2000, pp. 36-44). Then, just before the quotation above, Young mentions Mouffe’s idea of
agonistic pluralism that distinguishes “enemy” and “adversary”, quoting from Mouffe’s text that reads that “the opponent should be considered not as an enemy to be destroyed, but as an adversary whose existence is legitimate and must be tolerated” (Mouffe, 1993, p. 4). Young clearly states that she join with political theorists like Mouffe in endorsing the “agonistic” model of democracy (2000, p. 49). Here, struggle and conflict can be included in agonistic democratic communication.

Another aspect of Young’s communicative democracy is co-operation. According to Young, in differentiated large-scale mass society, what people share is not a common good but problems to solve. Therefore, she states that “[a] useful way to conceive of democracy is as a process in which a large collective discusses problems such as these that they face together, and try to arrive peaceably at solutions in whose implementation everyone will co-operate” (2000, p. 28). Then, what connects between struggle and co-operation would be Young’s notion of “reasonableness”. Briefly speaking, by reasonableness Young means a norm that people need to be willing to listen to others who want to explain to them why their ideas are incorrect or inappropriate, and also to be willing to change their opinions or preferences as a result of respectful persuasion by others (2000, p. 24). The absence of a common good is exactly the reason why such “reasonableness” is necessary. For Young, to be “reasonable” citizens means neither confining different needs, desires or modes of expression to the private sphere by pretending as if a common good exists, nor acting in line with the way of argument that is merely a product of dominating social groups and regarding protest and demonstration as uncivil and unreasonable. Instead, “reasonable” citizens would participate in “struggle” in which conflicting needs or interests are publicly expressed and at the same time engage each other in solving common problems through mutually hearing different voices (2000, pp. 27-30, 47-48). Young conceives of difference as a precondition and a resource of democratic communication, rather than its obstacle. The expression and sharing of different knowledge from different perspectives enrich practical wisdom for problem-solving (Young, 1989, p. 264; Young, 2002, p. 229). This process can be regarded as the co-operative aspect of communicative democracy.

As stated above, Young pursued inclusive democracy in which reasonable citizens with difference struggle each other towards solutions of shared problems. Mouffe might reject that her “agonistic pluralism” is interpreted as “communication”. However, it can be said that Young incorporated Mouffe’s agonistic pluralism into her elaboration of communicative democracy that is based on her politics of difference, instead of refuting Mouffe’s critique that Young’s argument accompanies “essentialism”.

4. Some faces of “the democratic” according to three theorists
Mouffe, Pateman, and Young, who are in the generation that is influenced by the second-wave of feminism, seem to share the idea that the modern notion of “free and equal individuals” has not been
realized in actually existing liberal-democracies, and that further democratization and/or “radical”
democracy need to be pursued. The question is the difference of their approach towards such
democratization. This is the question of the difference of their notion of “the democratic”. Before
closing this paper we shall briefly compare those notions of three theorists.

First, Mouffe’s radical democratic project is the struggle for further democratization in
many social relations, and she requires the articulation of various struggles for liberation. For the
realization of such articulation, it is vital for Mouffe to reject to regard identities of all subjects
(including “working class” and “women”) as a priori, fixed, ultimate foundation. Therefore, as
examined above, Mouffe criticizes “essentialism” and argues about the principle of democratic
equivalence. If labour movement is pursued at the cost of other social movements, deepening
democracy is impeded. Same thing can be said in feminist case. In order to radically deepen and
expand democracy instead of abandoning liberal-democracy, an equivalence between different
struggles for liberation must be established and these struggles must be articulated. This
accompanies the transformation of group identity. Therefore, it can be said that the core of Mouffe’s
notion of “the democratic” is the transformation of identity. From this viewpoint, feminism that fixes
women’s identity can be undemocratic.

Next, Pateman’s life-long critique of liberal-democracy has been based on the core ideal of
liberalism, “free and equal individuals”. Since the 1970s when she “radically” criticized
liberal-democracy from the standpoint of participatory democracy, she has consistently maintained
the ideal. After her feminist turn, she continued to ask the question of the reality in which the “free
and equal” relationship is not realized between men and women in patriarchal political society. Her
concern has been that the presumption of “free and equal individuals” as men (not women) is
oppressed and made invisible when the individual is treated as an abstract concept. Thus, by her
series of feminist works she has attempted to reveal, both theoretically and practically, the reality
that there is no equal citizenship between men and women (because still women often regarded as
the second-class citizens) and that the permanent subjection of women to men cannot be seen as
democratic relationship. As her commitment to a basic income shows, Pateman focuses on the life of
each (concrete, not abstract) individual, and it can be said that her notion of “the democratic” is the
ideal that all individuals – not men but literally all individuals – are admitted and respected as free
and equal citizens without being assimilated. Therefore, what she calls democratization is a practice
towards such are relationship, and the critique of traditional social contract theory and the
visualization of patriarchal characteristics of liberal-democracy were inevitable.

Finally, Young challenged the structural injustice (domination and oppression) in
liberal-democracy, and her further democratization was to make democracy serve justice. For this
purpose, what was necessary was that the voices of social groups that are disadvantaged and
oppressed can be expressed and heard in the public sphere, that the fixed perspectives of both
dominating groups and oppressed groups transform each other through “reasonable” communication, and that different individuals and social groups co-operate each other for solving common problems without abolishing the difference among the groups. Her communicative democracy never presupposes a common good: rather, group difference is a resource of democratic communication. If we dare to conceive of Young’s version of “the democratic”, the indispensable elements are inclusion, heterogeneity, plurality, struggle as engagement, co-operation, and reasonableness.

We need further consideration to think whether three of them are exclusive each other. At least one thing must be common understanding: the radical critiques of politics by feminist theorists are significant for all political theorists for more investigation of what is the democratic.

References


