La crisi cronica della democrazia.
La razionalità limitata come condizione pre-politica del disagio democratico

GABRIELE GIACOMINI

The Chronic Crisis of Democracy. Bounded Rationality as a Pre-condition of the Democratic Political Unease

Abstract: Through an analysis of the discussion about the crisis of democracy, the crisis factors can be divided into two categories: on the one hand, permanent aspects, structural, therefore chronic, on the other hand events of sharp crisis connected to the historical period. The main purpose of this paper is to prove that the crisis of democracy, chronically meant as a recurrent discontent, shows itself in the absolute distance between the idealist view of the citizen and the actual reality. From Hobbes to Rawls, till the application of the rational choice theory to democracy, the political theory has often laid the foundations of its assumptions in the rationality of the players. By contrast, in the last decades, empirical researches have pointed out the bounded rationality of the individuals and theirs cognitive shortcomings. These findings explain in some ways the troubles of democracy and the dissatisfaction towards a system based on imperfect individuals, only partly and superficially committed in the public field. As a matter of fact, the nature of cognitive process rouses doubts on the factual ability of the citizens of obtaining information and being rational, of standing for their own interests independently, consciously and consistently and thus of creating a democracy able of fulfilling the expectations in the field of decision-making performances.

Keywords: Crisis of democracy, Normative democratic theory, Rational choice theory, Bounded rationality, Heuristics and biases, Experimental psychology.

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