
Knowledge and Democracy: A 21st Century Perspective, edited by Nico Stehr. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2008. 240pp. \$49.95 cloth. ISBN: 9781412807067.

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A long tradition in Western culture echoes the biblical promise that “the truth shall set you free” (John 8:32). Romantic thinkers following Rousseau question that view, as do critics of surveillance technology, genetic testing, and other sources of knowledge that may threaten freedom. Thinkers like John Dewey, in contrast, see knowledge, freedom, and democracy as mutually reinforcing. Most of the essays in this volume share more with Dewey than Rousseau, but they all raise difficult questions about the meaning and purpose of freedom in democratic societies that increasingly revolve around various forms of knowledge.

Stein Ringen argues that knowledge is neither irrelevant to freedom (as rational choice theories assume), nor merely an instrumentality of freedom (as standard liberal theory suggests): “freedom is something it is difficult to have, know and understand—not just to use” (p. 27). Both Ringen and Thora Margareta Bertilson draw on Isaiah Berlin’s famous distinction between negative and positive freedom. As Bertilson rightly notes, Berlin insisted that freedom and democracy are only contingently related: both knowledge and negative freedom may flourish under a benign dictatorship. Bertilson goes on to argue that knowledge may also enhance positive freedom: the capacity for individual and collective self-government. Ringen also defends a certain conception of positive freedom, arguing that choice is not only about *doing* what one wants but also *determining* what one wants. Freely choosing one’s purposes requires “skills, competence, self-control and so on—in short, knowledge” (p. 29).

Another set of papers focuses on knowledge and democracy. J. Rogers Hollings-

worth notes that science today produces new *information* at a enormous rate, leading to increasing specialization and a decline in the sort of interdisciplinary work that generates genuine *knowledge*. This lack of integrative knowledge threatens informed citizen participation and democracy. Erhard Busek criticizes recent politicization and commercialization of science, but he recommends avoiding both sentimental yearning for a golden age of pure science and the “pseudo-progressive position” that “declares science to be just one game among many others” (p. 62). This split between rationalism and irrationalism in prevailing views of science echoes a similar split between technical expertise and popular will in prevailing views of democracy (p. 63). As Rainer Grundman argues, laypeople do not merely voice preferences but also make reasoned arguments, and they typically draw on expertise to further their goals. In a more skeptical vein, Peter Weingart offers sardonic reflections on the “discourse” of democratized expertise, animated by his dogged attempt to pin down the precise meaning of “socially robust knowledge.” He insists that the analytical distinction between power and knowledge must be preserved for any realistic assessment of public engagement efforts. Michael Böcher illustrates participatory expertise with a case of integrated rural development. Alistair S. Duff draws on leading theorists of social democracy to raise doubts about the liberating potential of postindustrial “knowledge society.” Stephen Turner’s paper is one of the few to explicitly compare different conceptions of democracy: American interest-group pluralism and Scandinavian bureaucratic planning. Turner discusses the former with reference to a committee created during World War II to advise the U.S. government on the atomic bomb. Although the committee was formally insulated from outside influence, Turner shows how democratic accountability became “the dog that didn’t bark” (p. 126): the committee’s anticipation of congressional inquiry and popular reaction, were it to recommend against dropping the bomb, had a powerful influence on its deliberations.

Uli Schreiterer and Steve Fuller highlight the role of universities. Fuller argues that expertise is democratized when it is “decom-

missioned" and socially redistributed through university teaching. Schreiterer discusses the campaign for an "Academic Bill of Rights" (ABR), an attempt to counteract the perceived bias against conservative students on U.S. college campuses. The ABR debate highlights a basic tension in American universities between public accountability and intellectual autonomy, which has traditionally been mediated with the idea of the university's civic mission.

A few papers address the subversion of democratization efforts. Grundman notes that scholarly critiques of technocracy are now being used by governments to manage public expectations regarding technological risks. Myanna Lahsen explores the power of private corporations to shape public discourse on climate change, using front organizations and fake petitions to assume the trappings of both scientific and popular authority. Lahsen calls for structural transformations to reduce inequalities of power and influence, without which efforts to democratize expertise become mere window dressing.

In a helpful concluding essay, Alan Irwin states, "Discussion of knowledge and democracy quickly takes us into fundamental questions of *which* knowledge and *which* form of democracy" (p. 219, original emphasis). Unfortunately, as with most recent work in this area, the authors barely mention empirical and theoretical research on democracy. With regard to style, several of the pieces could have used more aggressive editing, and a few challenge the reader's travel-readiness with scattershot intellectual history: from the Webbs to Rawls to Daniel Bell (Duff), or from Socrates to Lyotard, Putnam, and Kitcher to the intellectual biographies of selected science studies scholars (Fuller). And that is not to mention Charles Lemert's lurid Freudian romp through modernity, which he intertwines with personal meditations on his adopted daughter. Irwin puts a sympathetic spin on such eclecticism: "One concludes that the editor wisely decided to open up the issues rather than close them down, to attack them from many different directions rather than offer a false or misleading synthesis" (p. 221). Whether or not readers share this judgment, this volume has much to offer anyone

interested in the changing relationship of knowledge and democracy.

Beyond Sacred and Secular: Politics of Religion in Israel and Turkey, by **Sultan Tepe**. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2008. 413pp. \$39.95 cloth. ISBN: 9780804758642.

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How religious parties in Israel and Turkey steadily broadened their electoral support and became pivotal political actors in both countries is the subject of Sultan Tepe's *Beyond Sacred and Secular*. Her analytical focus is on the Israeli ultra-orthodox Shas (International Organization of Torah-observant Sephardic Jews), who won seventeen seats in the May 1999 elections and thus became the third largest bloc in the Knesset; the Turkish Welfare Party, which gained 21 percent of the votes in the December 1995 elections; and the Justice and Development Party, which had a more stunning success in the November 2002 elections, capturing more than 34 percent of the total votes. At the outset, Tepe tries to spare not only the sacred-secular dichotomy as an analytical tool for the social-scientific understanding of the phenomenon but also the secular evolutionary, convergence, and confrontation explanations offered by political scientists. These models are wanting, she says, because they "do not allow us to capture how the state and religion often engage in mutually transformative and dependent relationships" (p. 98). To bear evidence in support of her thesis, she points out that the founders of the state of Israel and modern Turkey were not as secular as they are known—historically both groups drew on religion to legitimize their policies and were conscious of its role as a unifying force in their respective countries. Nor were the leaders of religious parties so committed to the sacred values of their religions as to forgo the secular dictations of political exigencies. Tepe's quantitative analysis of the social bases of religious parties confirms the view that supporters of these parties were not literally committed to the religious teachings either.