

# POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AS MUTUAL ADVANTAGE

## Abstract

In political science, the concept of political participation has been attracting significant interest. Many theorists have discussed political participation in the context of elections, political parties, and, more generally institutions, while others have focused more on participation among citizens, including citizen assemblies and deliberative democracy, online activism, and so forth (Pateman 1970, Dryzek 2012, Dahl 1998, Verba 1967, Verba et al. 1995, Goodin & Dryzek 1980). To provide a simplification, we categorize political participation into two main areas: i) institutional and ii) non-institutional. Building on this distinction, scholars in recent decades have further explored political participation, with particular attention on non-institutional forms, which involve the expression of citizens' opinions.

Political participation has been examined in the context of deliberative assemblies by John Dryzek (2012), who argued that such assemblies can enhance political engagement. This perspective primarily relates to non-institutional participation. Nonetheless, lower attention has been given to the *quality* of participation. Due to the fact that there are multiple ways to conceptualize participation, its effectiveness may vary significantly in accordance to how it is defined.

The aim of this study is to demonstrate that only one specific form of participation is 'efficient'. In economic literature, the concept of mutual advantage is widely recognized and used to explain how the market works (see, for example, Sugden 2018, 2011, Hargreaves Heap 2021). We apply this concept to the present study, as it provides a useful framework for understanding the mechanisms that drive efficiency in political participation. Firstly, a brief introduction to the theme of political participation will be carried out. Then, the principle of mutual advantage, which is typical of the market, will be adapted to the political sphere and specifically to political participation. In such analysis, particular attention will be given to the applicability of mutual advantage to non-institutional forms of political participation. Therefore, we will argue that it is possible to apply the logic of mutual advantage to functional active participation. The conclusion ends our work.

## References

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