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11.007 Day 22 Notes: **Deliberation**

## **THE CRITIQUE OF ADVERSARIAL DECISION MAKING**

Up until now, whatever the venue in which public disputes get resolved, there has been one common theme: the struggle among contestants to prevail by persuading decision makers to adopt their view of the problem, and hence their preferred solution.

This is the context in which people have increasingly advocated deliberation and collaborative or consensus-based decision making.

--The idea behind deliberation and consensus building is that the conventional ways of making decisions in the US are adversarial.

What are the problems with adversarial decisionmaking, according to its critics?

## **THE THEORY OF DELIBERATIVE DEMOCRACY**

So let's look more closely first at deliberation, what it's supposed to accomplish (why it's supposed to be better than the alternative), and what are its potential drawbacks.

What are the theoretical benefits of discussion or deliberation (list and explain)?

What are some real-world examples of deliberative democracy in action?

Jane Manbridge tempers the discussion by pointing out that no democracy could hope to rely on deliberation alone, that coercion is an essential part of democracy: "coercion must play a large, valuable, and relatively legitimate role in almost any democracy that functions well" (46). Why, according to Mansbridge, do democracies need coercion?

--Given that coercion is necessary in a democracy, how can we make that coercion relatively legitimate?