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## **Special Issue**

Deliberative Democracy

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Family Disputes: Diversity in Defining and  
Measuring Deliberation



# Family Disputes: Diversity in Defining and Measuring Deliberation

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*Interdisciplinary deliberative research has grown tremendously over the last decade. Theorists are attending more carefully to the findings of empirical research. And empiricists are framing their research in ways that are tailored to track normative-theoretical concerns. The recent surge in empirical work on deliberation, however, has led to a huge proliferation of research designs, general measurement strategies, operational criteria, and even definitions of the phenomenon. The diversity in these approaches has become sufficiently great that it seems worthwhile to step back and take stock lest the expanding deliberative research community dissipate its energies in an ironic lack of effective communication across theoretical and methodological approaches. I survey the main sources of theoretical diversity among normative theories of deliberation, along with the diversity of basic strategies for measuring deliberation that follow from them.*

KEYWORDS: Deliberation • Democracy • Measurement • Consensus • Proceduralism • Sincerity

## Introduction

“Normative theories are open to the suspicion that they take insufficient notice of the hard facts [...] The tension between normative approaches, which are constantly in danger of losing contact with social reality, and objectivistic approaches, which screen out all normative aspects, can be taken as a caveat against fixating on one disciplinary point of view” (Habermas 1996: 6).

Interdisciplinary deliberative research of the kind that Habermas calls for has grown tremendously over the last decade. Theorists are attending more carefully to the findings of empirical research. And empiricists are framing their research in ways that are tailored to track normative-theoretical concerns. The recent surge in empirical work on deliberation, however, has

led to a huge proliferation of research designs (e.g., experimental versus naturalistic-observational), general measurement strategies (e.g., surveys versus discourse analysis), operational criteria (e.g., the Discourse Quality Index versus outcome based measures), and even definitions of the phenomenon (e.g., descriptive versus evaluative). Some of this diversity reflects corresponding diversity in the theoretical roots of the deliberative project. Some of it reflects natural diversity in the object domain, and some of it stems from the motivations and training of the various researchers. Whatever the sources and merits of such diversity, its magnitude has become sufficiently great that it seems worthwhile to step back and take stock lest the expanding deliberative research community dissipate its energies in an ironic lack of effective communication across theoretical and methodological approaches. In some cases, below, I will be less concerned to settle implicit (and sometimes explicit) disputes than I am to organize their sources and implications in such a way that facilitates productive dialogue. In other cases, I will try to argue in favour of a particular position.

In part one, I begin by describing what I see as a fundamental conceptual ambiguity in the ordinary language use of “deliberation” that has caused largely unnecessary miscommunication between researchers. In part two, I briefly lay out what I see as the three main sources of theoretical diversity among normative theories of deliberation, along with their pros and cons, and their implications for measurement. I also mention some alleged differences that I do not believe truly run deep, but that nevertheless have implications for measuring deliberation. With the main point of theoretical diversity mapped out, in part three, I briefly describe the diversity of basic strategies for measuring deliberation that follow from them.

### **Is There Such a Thing as Really Bad Deliberation?**

By trying to measure deliberation and its effects we implicitly assume that there are better and worse examples of the phenomenon. Without meaningful variation, there is no point to measurement. However, many, perhaps most, scholars use the term in a way that precludes there being any such thing as really bad deliberation in an absolute sense. If some communicative exchange were utterly perverse on key deliberative criteria we would be tempted to say that it is not a case of deliberation at all, rather than a case of really bad deliberation. For example, if a single member of a jury were to completely dominate the discussion, aggressively manipulating the

relevant information as well as the fears and prejudices of the other jurors, there is a sense in which we are in the realm of strategic domination, rather than deliberation. Deliberation, in other words, is typically deployed as an intrinsically “evaluative-descriptive” concept, to use Quentin Skinner’s (Skinner 1974) term.

Deliberation is thus akin to a concept like “courage”, that describes a range of phenomena, but does so in a way that is intrinsically approbative. There may be degrees of courage, but we need a different phrase, “utter cowardice”, to describe a complete lack of courage. Similarly, putative deliberation that falls below a certain threshold is no longer deliberation. Both political theorists and empirical researchers have been eager to maintain this distinction. Thus, Thompson (2008: 6) notes that “a discussion does not count as deliberation at all if one person completely dominates”. Though he counsels separating conceptual and evaluative criteria, the former are mainly lower bounds of the latter: “As more stringent versions of the conceptual criteria, the evaluative standards may demand more of, or a more robust form of, what the criteria require” (2008: 11). Similarly, Steiner (2007 forthcoming) criticizes Austen-Smith and Feddersen’s (2006) description of a purely strategic model of deliberation, calling it an example of “concept stretching”. Both authors are surely correct that there is a danger in extending a concept to the point of vacuity. If deliberation and deliberative theory are to have any cutting power they must be contrasted with other forms of political interaction.

Thus, such linguistic division of labour is important for normative theory, and works fine in ordinary language contexts. However, the danger of “concept stretching” has a twin that imperils scientific work on deliberation at least as gravely. If it is reasonable to limit the concept of deliberation to those phenomena that meet its minimal criteria, it might also seem reasonable to limit empirical research on deliberation to deliberative phenomena. Indeed, it might seem tautological. However, upon reflection, such limits would be a serious and obvious mistake. If I were interested in studying the causes and consequences of courageous behaviour, I would be ill served by analysing only instances varying from moderately courageous behaviour to very courageous behaviour. Much more interesting and important would be the causes and consequences distinguishing courageous behaviour from cowardly behaviour. Similarly, in our effort to protect the conceptual integrity of deliberation we might easily fall into selecting on (indeed, censoring) the key variables of interest. Though there is nothing intrinsically wrong with them, evaluative-descriptive concepts can serve

science poorly unless we are especially careful in attending to how we frame our research questions.

Thus there are two terminological strategies that we might pursue. The first is to preserve deliberation as an evaluative-descriptive concept. In a sense, then, the larger phenomenon that we are interested in might be called “political communication” and “deliberation” proper would be the subset meeting various minimal normative criteria. For the second strategy, the term “deliberation” would cover the full range of cases, and we would use approbative adjectives such as “good” or “high quality” to distinguish their relative status according to normative theory. In some ways, this latter strategy comports just as well with ordinary language uses of the term. In one sense, the purely strategic jury deliberations that Austen-Smith and Feddersen (2006) describe are still properly called deliberations, even if it would be a mistake to equivocate by applying their findings to deliberative theory in the normative sense without regard to the relevant conceptual distinctions.

From one perspective, it is a matter of indifference as to which strategy we pursue. As long as we avoid the twin dangers of concept stretching and unconsciously selecting on the dependent variable, it really is merely a terminological matter. However, depending on one’s substantive theory of deliberation, one or the other terminological strategy might be more convenient. Warren (2007 forthcoming), for example, suggests conceptualizing deliberation in an expansive, outcome driven way that fits more naturally with the approach that starts with a more capacious noun, and allows the adjective to do the normative work. In contrast, Habermas’s (1996) procedural conception, which distinguishes sharply between communicative and strategic orientations, would comport more comfortably with the more restrictive conceptual strategy advocated by Steiner (2007 forthcoming). While my own inclinations are to treat deliberation as an evaluative-descriptive concept, the more important issue is to coordinate. Steiner is surely right that using the term differently across research traditions invites confusion.

### **Unity and Diversity in Deliberative Theory**

As deliberative theory has developed and matured, it has also become more internally differentiated. Such differentiation has important consequences for measuring deliberation. It can be quite misleading, now, to

speak of “deliberative theory” in monolithic terms, as if all of the major questions in the theory were settled. That being said, some alleged distinctions are more apparent than real. Much (though not all) of the process of internal differentiation has occurred either explicitly or implicitly in terms of theorists contrasting themselves with Habermas who, “[m]ore than any other theorist [...] is responsible for reviving the idea of deliberation in our time” (Gutmann and Thompson 2004: 9). In this section, I begin by explaining why I think that some of the differences do not run particularly deep, and thus do not pose particularly complicated problems for measuring deliberation. In each case, theorists deserve important credit for developing something that was absent or underdeveloped in Habermas’s early conception; but underdevelopment does not entail incompatibility. I then move on to explicate three criteria on which there really is deep theoretical disagreement, with differential implications for how we go about measuring deliberation.

### *Manageable Disagreements*

(1) *Emotion*.—Habermas’s version of deliberative democratic theory has been repeatedly attacked for its alleged hyper-rationalism. Habermas’s pre-occupation with reason, so the criticism goes, makes no room for emotion, requiring us to be affectless Vulcans in our approach to politics. Even if such an anti-emotion view were not objectionable on its face, recent research is uncovering just how deeply human emotion is implicated in human cognition. Thus, any theory that relies so exclusively on rationalist premises must be fundamentally flawed.

In a sense, this misperception about Habermas’s theory having no role for emotion is understandable. He does frame it in highly rationalist terms, and fails to develop the affective component of his theory adequately. However, the perception is nevertheless demonstrably a misperception. The confusion comes in because people use ordinary language categories to contrast reason with emotion. However, for Habermas, the opposite of reason, in his technical sense, is not emotion, but rather unlegitimated power. Thus there is nothing incoherent about having a theory of rationality that gives emotion an important role. Though he does not develop it much, at several points Habermas makes clear that emotion is not only compatible with, but indispensable for, his theory of practical reason. For example, he writes: “Feelings seem to have a similar function for the moral justification of action as sense perceptions have for the theoretical justification of facts”

(Habermas 1990: 50). If we have any doubt about whether emotions have a role to play in Habermas's deliberative theory we need only contemplate how far science could get without recourse to sense perception.<sup>1</sup> Thus, though there may be disagreements on the margin about what role, and how large a role, emotions are to play in deliberation, they do not constitute a fundamental point of cleavage among deliberative theorists.

However, such reflections should alert us to the fact that emotions have had a relatively neglected role in early efforts to measure deliberation adequately given their importance in the theory properly understood. Steiner et. al. (2004) do subtitle their measure of "Respect Toward Group to Be Helped" as "(Empathy)". However, there is a general dearth of understanding as to how various discrete emotions affect deliberative quality. Neblo (2003) elucidates twelve distinct roles that the emotions play in deliberative theory, and outlines an empirical research agenda for investigating those roles.

(2) *Rhetoric*.—It is also alleged that Habermas has no place for rhetoric in deliberative argumentation (Young 1996; O'Neill 2002; Remer 1999; Triadafilopoulos 1999).<sup>2</sup> Just as we are supposed to be affectless inferential machines, so too, we should avoid artful locution and vivid appeals to the sensibility of our interlocutors in presenting our arguments. Unadorned clarity, ideally approaching formalization, is our goal.

Again, much of the truth in this accusation trades on a subtle equivocation. If by rhetoric we mean the sophistic tradition of winning an argument by any means, without regard for the content of the justification, then Habermas's theory is surely wary of rhetoric. If, however, we mean rhetoric as presenting arguments in their most compelling, artful, vivid,

<sup>1</sup> For a more extended argument on this point, see Neblo (2003).

<sup>2</sup> The last three critics envision a more classical notion of deliberation, either Aristotelian or Ciceronian. O'Neill eschews what he calls "strong rhetorical" criticisms which efface the strategic/communicative distinction entirely. His complaints hinge on Kantian aversions to appeals to emotion and to credibility, which are taken to undermine autonomy. The arguments are quite interesting and persuasive against Kant. But Habermas is not stuck with these particular aspects of Kantianism, as I show above with the emotions, and is clear with respect to credibility in mass politics from his notion of "yes/no" position taking in his later political theory (1996). Remer's and Triadafilopoulos's criticisms are similar, though the former is oriented around Cicero's theory of rhetoric. Thus, for the reasons that I develop in this section, and the emotion section above, it is not clear to me that the classical conception of deliberation represents such a distinctive alternative to an expansively interpreted Habermasian conception. Indeed, Benhabib (1996) and Bohman (1996) both argue for a role for rhetoric within a broadly Habermasian framework.



and powerful forms, then there is no contradiction at all. The key test is whether we are willing to cooperate in presenting all relevant arguments in compelling, artful, vivid, and powerful forms, whether or not they are associated with our pre-deliberative, individually construed preferences. That is, except provisionally or as an institutional device, neither arguments nor positions are attached to any specific person or group, but are, in a sense, the joint property of the deliberative community, whose goal it is to test them against each other in their strongest form. In this sense, then, rhetoric has an important, if morally delimited, role to play in deliberation. So, again, it will be important to assess, as an empirical matter, the way that rhetorical tropes get deployed in deliberation, and under what conditions they enhance deliberative goals. But the role of rhetoric does not necessarily represent a deep cleavage among theories.

(3) *Greeting, Testimony, Story-Telling, Etc.*—This case is a bit more complicated than the other two, but follows a similar path. The accusation is that Habermas's hyper-rationalism implies that communicative forms that do not basically follow the argumentative norms of a graduate seminar are inadmissible to deliberation – useless noise, at best. Moreover, the argument goes, people's ability or inclination to conform to such norms tracks social power relations in a way that reinforces patterns of social domination, rather than promoting emancipatory and egalitarian outcomes (Young 1996).

The way that Habermas sets up his regulative ideal for deliberation often does sound like graduate school on a global scale. All else equal, and as a theoretical matter, he does privilege canonical argumentative norms. However, most arguments for admitting testimony, story-telling and the like begin from concrete questions of institutionalization in which "all else" is expressly unequal. And here, Habermas explicitly countenances moving away from the abstract ideal to accommodate the realities of human psychology, institutional design, and patterns of social inequality. The point is that the way that we incorporate alternate communicative forms into deliberation should reference the goals of deliberation and/or its pre-conditions, which, in fact, most (but not all) such arguments for alternative forms do. Thus, for example, story-telling would be in the purview of deliberation to the extent that it served at least one of the following: (1) it provided relevant information, perspectives, or implicit arguments that would otherwise be lost to the deliberative community; (2) it serves to level the playing field by providing a forum for contributions from people who might be otherwise disadvantaged in communicating their needs,

wants, interests, or perspectives; or (3) it furthers trust, inclusion, respect, or in other ways helps to meet the preconditions of effective deliberative participation.

As with emotion and rhetoric, Habermas does not adequately develop how or why he would incorporate alternate communicative forms into his theory. Thus theorists who have pushed such points deserve enormous credit for making deliberation a more workable and fully developed ideal. But, such alternate communicative forms do not necessarily constitute a fundamental division in deliberative theory. Indeed, this question of alternative forms might be the most fruitful yet for empirical research. While it is apparent that deliberators do vary widely in their ability (and perhaps inclination) to hew to canonical argumentative forms, it is not clear how effective and under what conditions incorporating alternate forms into actual deliberative practices serves the goals of doing so. For example, it is not at all obvious that rhetorical gifts or the ability to tell compelling stories are any better distributed throughout the population than argumentative skills (Dryzek 2007 forthcoming).

(4) *Struggles for Recognition*.—Finally, Habermas’s version of deliberative theory has been accused of being disciplinary in the sense of excluding angry, disruptive, and agonistic forms of argument and action. Again, in this case, there is a substantial dimension of truth to the accusation. In deliberation proper, such forms are considered contrary to the ideal. However, Habermas recognizes that not all political conflicts are the proper object of deliberative resolution. If the powerful and the privileged are unwilling or unable to engage those pressing a claim for deliberative contestation on minimally egalitarian and respectful terms, then insisting on deliberative resolution of the problem would be perverse by its own standards. In such cases Habermas explicitly deploys the idea of a “struggle for recognition” that countenances angry, disruptive practices that would normally count against deliberative quality. Such provisions may not satisfy agonistic democrats, but within the broad class of deliberative theorists, including struggles for recognition would seem to create a legitimate space for such actions. The key empirical questions, then, would be: (1) how to distinguish deliberation from a struggle for recognition; (2) if, and if so how, deleterious such content is within deliberation (i.e., is a hybrid workable); and (3) if, and if so how, effective is it outside of deliberation? Given the scope and importance of such unresolved questions, we might regard the role for agonistic forms of discourse as a *potentially* deep disagreement within the broad class of deliberative theories.

*Deeper Disagreements*

Despite the under appreciated room for mutual accommodation among deliberative theorists on questions of emotion, rhetoric, and alternate communicative forms, there are at least three points on which there are serious theoretical divisions that create deeper diversity in the various formulations, which, in turn, has implications for measuring deliberation. Deliberative democrats do disagree importantly about: (1) the role of consensus in the theory; (2) whether sincerity is a necessary or important deliberative criterion; and (3) the extent to which the theory should be purely procedural versus substantive.

(1) *Consensus*.—In the classic Habermasian formulation deliberation is communication oriented toward reaching understanding, or consensus. Cohen (1989) shares a consensus based formulation. Clearly strict consensus is a rather demanding notion, and an impressive list of latter deliberative theorists have variously weakened or discarded the consensus criterion (Benhabib 1990; Bohman 1995; Dryzek 2000; Gutmann and Thompson 1996; Sunstein 1997; Young 1996). Such revisions have taken three basic forms. The first claims that consensus is wildly unrealistic, and moreover, that it is gratuitous – i.e., that we can get all of the good things that we want out of deliberation without requiring consensus. The second emendation argues that the consensus criterion creates powerful pressures toward consensus for the wrong reasons – i.e., that consensus as an ideal might be nice, but in practice it will lead to pressures for social conformity and will ironically hinder deliberative goals. Finally, agonistic democrats and some internal critics argue that, even as an ideal, consensus is inappropriate. It is naïve and disciplining to think that there is one right answer to political questions, and that deliberation should be about a frank contest among rival claims on a plurality of goods.

On first blush, the first group of critics appears to have a rather powerful point. It seems almost preposterous to think that we could achieve anything even approaching consensus on the most interesting and important questions of politics. Moreover, we don't need to. Many good things can and do flow from deliberation without achieving consensus. Citizens make more informed decisions, preferences tend toward single-peakedness (enhancing the stability of social choice results) (List et. al. 2006), and groups tend toward various kinds of "meta-consensus" (e.g., a stronger mapping between factual disagreement and policy disagreement) (Dryzek and Niemeyer 2006).

However, it is possible that such points, though true, implicitly rely on an orientation toward consensus broadly understood. In Habermas's formulation consensus is a regulative ideal. That is, he is not so naïve as to think that we can, as an empirical matter, routinely achieve complete consensus on controversial political issues. Our ideals are not something to literally be achieved,<sup>3</sup> so much as a standard by which we can judge good, adequate, or better. Thus, realism, *per se*, is hardly a virtue in a regulative ideal. A too realistic ideal is merely an apology for the status quo. The real question, then, is whether an ideal is perverse on its own terms – i.e., whether working operationally with another ideal would conduce toward realizing the original ideal better than a straight-forward translation into practice.

One of the ways that regulative ideals regulate is via our self-understanding. So, in the case of deliberation, we need not literally believe that we are going to achieve consensus on some controversial matter. But, in a sense, we have to act as if we could achieve consensus in order to make sense of rational deliberation as rational. That is, if we did not think that there were better and worse reasons in support of various policy choices, then it is hard to understand much of what we are doing in deliberation as anything with a particularly strong normative claim on us. If we are really just trafficking in our personal prejudices with no hope of reasonable persuasion, then deliberation hardly has a strong claim on us over standard models of aggregative democracy.

Habermas argues for the “one-right-answer” thesis on the grounds that we have to, as a procedural matter, assume that there is one right answer to a particular question in order to make sense of what we are doing when we debate about the proper disposition of the question. The one right answer thesis has come under quite a bit of criticism, but I think that a slightly weaker version of it, properly understood, is defensible, and indeed, necessary to underwrite deliberative democracy. I defend a version of the one right answer thesis, but only as a regulative ideal, and only interpreted in the sense of one right “set” of answers (e.g., the equation  $x^2 = 1$  has one right answer: a single set with two elements in it). Thus, there may or may not be a uniquely best policy, but there are plenty of bad policies, and deliberation must at least rule those out. That is, we have to think of

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<sup>3</sup> One should also note that when we look over longer time stretches we often do, in fact, achieve something approaching consensus on once highly controversial issues. One of the most obvious examples, of course, is slavery.

deliberation as epistemic at least to a point. However, there may well be a point past which we do not think that further deliberation has an epistemic warrant. In such cases we may continue to deliberate for non-epistemic reasons (e.g., building trust based on respectful listening in our disagreements), but past this point, our self-understanding about what the process is supposed to accomplish and why it binds us changes.

Critics of the Habermasian model may think that the line between the epistemic and non-epistemic phases of deliberation fall very early in the process. However, it is important to stress the first, epistemic, part, because without it, many (though not all) of deliberation's supposed benefits would have no warrant. For example, it is not clear why we should value deliberation producing things like single-peakedness unless the first (epistemic) phase of deliberation is *properly* getting people to focus on the relevant dimension of conflict and filtering others out as irrelevant. If not, single-peakedness is not buying us anything intrinsically valuable (or perhaps extrinsically valuable either). If a choice situation really has two legitimate dimensions of normative conflict, then deliberation might merely distract participants away from one dimension via some powerful form of framing. If so, more "stable" decisions based upon such a mechanism would be normatively suspect. It would be mere stability, or worse, stability for the wrong reasons. The same argument would apply to various conceptions of "meta-consensus". Deliberation that reduces the kinds of mappings between belief and value constellations, on the one hand, and deliberative choices, on the other hand, would have to do so because such mappings are in some sense less rational, or less generalisable, or less defensible. Otherwise, the result would be a normatively inert, or even perverse, structuration of the conflict.

Similarly, deliberation that merely referenced improving the information base of individual decisions without regard for the epistemic dimension of an orientation toward consensus (e.g., Fishkin 1995) would not necessarily yield normative gains. Such conceptions threaten to become theories of highly informed aggregative democracy, rather than deliberative democracy *per se*. If one were an aggregative democrat, then better information for individual deciders would lead, at least *ceteris paribus*, to better decisions. But one can easily imagine a situation wherein more "efficient" aggregative democracy merely magnified the power of the already privileged.

It is precisely such concerns over application that lead the second group of critics to reject consensus as a measure or goal of deliberation. For

such critics consensus strictly as a regulative ideal might make sense, and deliberation might properly have epistemic aspirations, but the practical dangers of implementing deliberation are such that as soon as we move away from the ideal, the potential for consensus to be perverse in practice makes it suspect at best. Clumsy attempts to reason directly from increased agreement to better deliberation gloss over the myriad of ways that groups can induce greater consensus via mechanisms other than (and less defensible than) rational persuasion (Sanders 1997; Sunstein 1999; Mendelberg 2002). Group-think (information cascades) and social conformity pressures (even if unintentional) are just two of the most obvious ways in which increased consensus can serve as an unreliable indicator of high quality deliberation. Moreover, it is possible that merely having consensus as the group's goal can (ironically) increase the likelihood of such distortions actually obtaining.

All of this strikes me as more than plausible, but also as a largely empirical matter. The circumstances under which, and the extent to which, explicitly setting consensus as the goal of a group leads to group-think and social conformity are all measurable. Similarly, empirical studies of deliberation that carefully control for information cascades and social conformity pressures as the sources of deliberative opinion change may be in a position to claim increased consensus as an indicator (or result) of deliberative quality if they can rule such alternative mechanisms out (see my discussion of the "Negative Strategy" below). So this form of the critique of consensus may not run as philosophically deep as the others. Habermas could easily (and in fact does) accept hedges on the use of consensus as an applied criterion as opposed to a regulative ideal. Or perhaps more precisely, such differences do not run philosophically deep if the critique of consensus is based upon observed consensus' potentially non-monotonic empirical relationship to other procedural criteria of deliberative quality. If the critique is that deliberation, though perhaps conducive to epistemic gains, is not internally linked to criteria of epistemic warrant, then the critique of consensus, though deep, reduces to a disagreement about a substantive versus proceduralist conception of deliberation (a point to which I return below).

The third, and most fundamental, rejection of consensus comes from those who consider consensus, even as a regulative ideal, to be objectionable. If the good is radically plural, then we should not expect deliberation, even on average, to produce more consensus. Even deliberation's more modest role of trying to rule out bad policy, rather than trying to affirm a

unique solution, is likely to do more harm than good. Increased consensus from deliberation is *prima facie* suspect as a likely case of disciplinary social power. Obviously in such cases we are more or less out of the realm of deliberative politics and into the realm of agonistic politics.

However, if respect is to emerge out of the nobility of the struggle it can only do so if we have some, at least partially, common notion of what the struggle is for and how the rules for success track something that it worthy of respect. To use agonistic theories' nominative analogy, one cannot win the respect of a worthy adversary in athletic agon unless both contestants measure excellence and "winning" by similar standards. Moreover, they must agree that the goal or standard of the struggle marks something that is respect generating. A contest over who can touch their tongue higher up their nose, or in which the criterion for winning involves a closer guess to a random number generator's output will not do. Thus, one can see the outlines for the basis of a rapprochement between such theories and a form of deliberative theory that: (1) weakens the one right answer thesis to its "set" interpretation; (2) remains vigorously cognizant of consensus as a regulative ideal rather than a first order goal; and (3) develops and fosters the values of post-epistemic deliberation.

One final note on consensus: we can imagine two refinements to a standard notion of consensus in the thick sense of the term (i.e., agreeing on the same policy for more or less the same reasons which are substantially and internally related to the merits of the policy). First, we might agree on what to do without achieving agreement on why to do it. Sunstein has called such instances "incompletely theorized agreements" (Sunstein 1997). However, whether we have achieved philosophically "authentic" consensus depends on the question that we think has been posed. In Habermas's (1996) formulation of deliberative politics in *Between Facts and Norms*, most citizens take a "yes/no" position with respect to various proposals. Under this reading, relative consensus that was incompletely theorized would still count as consensual as long as the citizens were oriented toward legitimate agreement on what to do as a matter of social cooperation. Such situations would be analogous to Rawls's notion of an overlapping consensus (but with respect to a smaller and newer set of issues than Rawls's basic structure). Like Rawls, though, such a consensus would be a genuinely moral accomplishment rather than a mere *modus vivendi* because part of the motivation would be rooted in an orientation toward fair cooperation rooted in mutual respect. In this sense it would be normatively epistemic, at least at a second order level.

Moreover, there is a special case of incompletely theorized agreements wherein there is not first order assent on the substantive details of persuasion, but participants substantially “agree” on an outcome on procedural grounds *as a kind of epistemic warrant*. The reasoning is not merely giving in to the legitimacy of majoritarianism (though that may also be a genuine kind of consensus depending on the orientation of the individual), but rather acknowledging that collective judgment in the context of a good procedure has epistemic force that the participant internalizes as a substantially persuasive reason in itself. It is a kind of epistemic humility in the face of continuing disagreement. Such phenomena are routine on the part of lay people with experts, who, after attempting to explain something to a lay audience, may have to simply say “trust me”. And the lay audience is often willing to believe that they have good reason to go along in such cases, even if they cannot get internal access to the rationale, so to speak. Nor would we consider such phenomena as cases of mere social conformity. The idea of consensus based on epistemic humility is similar though it extends to normative questions and involves the deliberating group playing the role of the expert, and the quality of the procedures playing the role of the expert’s credentials. Consensus, or near consensus, in these more capacious senses do not seem as hopelessly utopian, and are less prone to fail on the grounds of being perverse even as a regulative ideal. But such phenomena depend on social trust in a way that leads naturally to our next topic, sincerity.

(2) *Sincerity*.—In his formulations of deliberative theory Habermas includes sincerity or truthfulness (*Wahrhaftigkeit*) as a key criterion of deliberative politics. Deliberators must engage each other honestly and in good faith. To use the old folk formulation, they must mean what they say and say what they mean. The sincerity criterion has run into two objections. The first is a practical measurement issue. Sincerity is a notoriously difficult concept to get a handle on empirically. The fear is that there is simply no scientifically serviceable way to operationalise the concept for most purposes of deliberative research. I will return to the measurement issues below. However, some theorists have added that sincerity is not even properly a criterion for deliberative quality as a theoretical matter. The general argument tracks a familiar one against *ad hominem* arguments: the quality of an argument on its own terms is what matters. Just as it is irrelevant who is making an argument, so the motives of the person making the argument are neither here nor there if the argument is intrinsically strong or weak.



To a certain extent this objection against the relevance of sincerity is true, and obviously so. In the abstract, it is certainly valid. Ironically, the problem emerges when we consider that, as a practical matter, the obvious merits of the case will not typically be enough to induce complete consensus on the matter. So our democratic procedures will have to try to accommodate reasonable disagreement, and rely on the epistemic value of the deliberative process for making probabilistic inferences about the best warranted choices. However, for the vast majority of issues, there is some plausible basis for reasonable disagreement whether or not there are many people who actually disagree for those reasons. Since, by hypothesis, reasonable people can disagree about the issue at hand, there are publicly acceptable arguments with which to do so, whether or not a particular person is being consistent or sincere in appealing to them. Thus, precisely to the extent that we are committed to accommodating reasonable disagreement, the overt requirements of public reason need not constrain *decisions* in any meaningful way.<sup>4</sup> (Thus, anyone suspicious of the one-right answer thesis should certainly also worry about jettisoning a sincerity criterion.) The link warranting epistemic trust in the outcomes of deliberative procedures is broken because we have introduced an unknown and potentially enormous amount of noise into the signalling function. Moreover, it is difficult to see how being coerced on the basis of polite lies shows any deep kind of respect to those who come out in the minority. Thus, without a sincerity constraint deliberation may lose much of both its epistemic value, and its respect expressing functions.

One caveat and one clarification: the caveat is that a sincerity constraint should not be understood to preclude trying out new ideas or playing the devil's advocate for purposes of the discussion phase of deliberation. The point is that actors who offer up their public arguments in this way should do so transparently – that is, they should make clear what they are doing with such arguments and why. Moreover, the primary function of the sincerity constraint comes in the decision phase of a deliberative process. Citizens must vote<sup>5</sup> or express their judgment based upon their sincere and

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<sup>4</sup> Note that I do not deny that even a weak criterion of public reason would rule out many reasons currently offered up in public fora (e.g., overtly exclusionary religious appeals). Moreover, I acknowledge that the people who offer up such reasons are often quite sincere. However, the logic of my argument implies that even if such people were to refrain from such reasoning, they could easily substitute reasons that conform to the standards of public reason, while rarely, if ever, having to alter their conclusions about outcomes.

<sup>5</sup> The point here is not to say that citizens must (necessarily) vote “sincerely” in the techni-

publicly available reasons. This is the key point for preserving the link to deliberation's epistemic warrant.

The clarification is only to emphasize that a sincerity constraint does not conflate the reasonableness of a *reason* with the reasonableness of the *action* of offering that reason in the public sphere. We have already assumed that the reasons at issue in assessing a sincerity constraint are reasonable in themselves, and deserve respect. However, the performative act of offering up a reason insincerely (with the caveats just mentioned) do not deserve our respect. Thus, a theory of public discourse has to have the resources to criticize them if it is to preserve fully both the practical and principled advantages of a deliberative conception of democracy.

(3) *Proceduralism*.—The debate over proceduralism in deliberative theory is complicated, and perhaps the most consequential outstanding issue for purposes of bridging theory, practice, and measurement. On the one hand, some authors (e.g., Warren 2007 forthcoming) argue for such a thoroughgoing move to substantive evaluative criteria that proceduralism as presently understood falls away almost completely. On the other hand, some of the disagreements about procedure versus substance may seem like matters of subtle (which is not to say unimportant) philosophical distinctions. For example, Gutmann and Thompson are very careful to defend against obvious objections to their argument for including substantive principles in deliberative theory by arguing that: “Deliberation explicitly deals with the likelihood of mistaken views about principles and their implications, by considering the principles of a theory to be provisional, and therefore subject to ongoing deliberation” (Gutmann and Thompson 2004: 106). By making such substantive principles subject to second order deliberative procedures it becomes ambiguous as to whether it is more useful to conceive of deliberative theory as involving a mix of substantive and procedural principles, or whether to think of the theory as fully procedural, while acknowledging heterogeneity with respect to the objects of deliberative inquiry – e.g., general policy decisions, applications to particular circumstances, debate over the meaning of abstract principles, and even reflexive refinement of our most basic understandings of deliberative processes of justification themselves. One might interpret the latter option as an important refinement of Habermas's distinction between discourses of

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cal sense. For example, one can imagine situations where it *might* be deliberatively permissible for a citizen to cast her vote for a second choice candidate in a single vote plurality system, on standard “wasted” vote grounds. For now, I remain agnostic on this question, and only want to differentiate it from sincere argument in the public sphere.

justification, discourses of application, constitutional discourses, and philosophical discourse about the nature of justification. On this second interpretation what is settled for purposes of one deliberation may be regarded as a substantive check on the output of that deliberation. The same would be true vice versa, which is only to say that we cannot thematise the entire life world at once, not that any matters escape procedural testing entirely.

However, a fairly momentous and relatively neglected distinction comes into view when we note that first order deliberative outcomes might be subject to 'substantive' critique, however we are to regard the ultimate status of the principles used in the critique. Consider the distinction between legitimacy and perceived legitimacy. Certainly there is both an important conceptual and empirical distinction. But what is the nature of the distinction? Most theorists, I think, would admit (contra Weber) that perceived legitimacy is not *sufficient* for actual legitimacy. False consciousness, though a tricky concept both empirically and normatively, is a real possibility.

More difficult is the question of whether perceived legitimacy is *necessary* for actual legitimacy. For example, even if nobody thinks that a given law is legitimate, might it yet be so? Answering yes would seem to involve a fairly strong form of moral realism. Moreover, we would still be left with the epistemic question of how such legitimacy could be known, and by whom. Presumably the social critic or political theorist would play the role of outside arbiter of substantive validity when procedural questions seem to be giving us the wrong answer. Part of the work of the theorist is to serve just such a critical function. But obviously that function must be rendered endogenous to a more capacious theory of deliberative democracy lest we make the deliberating public superfluous to the implicitly superior judgment of the critic. If broad, procedurally sound agreement can be easily overthrown on the grounds of an external critique of its validity on substantive grounds, then why not appeal directly to the substantive principles, rather than seeking the inefficient ratification of a deliberating public?

Habermas captures the difficulty in integrating these competing tensions when he writes: "The vindicating superiority of those who do the enlightening over those who are enlightened is theoretically unavoidable, but at the same time it is fictive and requires self-correction: in a process of enlightenment there can only be participants" (1973: 40). Clearly he is arguing that perceived legitimacy, over the long run, is necessary for actual legitimacy. Indeed, understood very broadly, it is sufficient as well, insofar as those pressing a claim of false consciousness in the face of procedural quality would have to vindicate that claim by getting the participants, over

time, to acknowledge the false consciousness. The role of the critic may be indispensable, but it serves a particular operational role, and cannot stand independently. On this view, then, the temptation to see substantive principles deployed by the social critic as an independent source of validity vis-a-vis procedural outputs is a result of alienating and hypostasizing a methodological element of proceduralism.<sup>6</sup>

In addition to its philosophical implications, the preceding argument has potentially large and overlooked consequences for how we go about measuring deliberation, and doing deliberative research more generally. Early empirical work on deliberation (my own included) has proceeded in a largely objectivating attitude – i.e., a more or less normal science mode wherein the subjects of deliberative research have no more say about our scientific interpretations of them than do molecules or organ systems. My point here is not quite the standard one about the doubly hermeneutic nature of the social sciences. Rather, a distinctive layer of irony is added when we purport to assess procedural social reflexivity from a purely objectivating point of view. To many practising scientists, bringing subjects reflexively into the research process might seem like trendy academic politics at best, and an invitation to scientific chaos at worst. However, if “in a process of enlightenment there can only be participants” (Habermas 1973: 40), then it is hard to see how one could forgo, at the very least, assessing and incorporating subjects’ own perceptions of the deliberative process and the standards for deliberative quality.<sup>7</sup> To stretch an old distinction,

<sup>6</sup> This is the sense in which I think that it is fair to say that Habermas’s theory is, more or less, purely proceduralist. One might note that in other contexts he claims to reconcile liberalism and republicanism, or rights and popular sovereignty in a way that admits that substantive principles (rights, at least) are “equiprimordial”. However, his justification of a basic system of rights proceeds from the presuppositions one must make if we are to make sense of the project of popular sovereignty. So there is a sense in which even rights are conceptually subordinate, even if there is another sense in which they are equally basic.

<sup>7</sup> Dryzek deserves credit for taking this problem more seriously than anyone else to date, primarily through the use of Q-methodology. I have done my own Q-studies (Neblo 2008), and agree that they are a useful and under utilized tool. However, I am less sanguine that Q-methodology represents a fundamentally different research paradigm that can truly overcome this issue of reflexive participation on its own. Though I cannot develop these brief points of friendly critique here, I note that: (1) Q is touted as revealing subjectivity, whereas deliberative concerns are over intersubjectivity; (2) the researcher’s selection of the items to be sorted/rated pushes back her role in framing the issue one step, but hardly eliminates it; (3) similarly, the Q-factors and their interpretation are not typically subjected to participatory interpretation by subjects; (4) items for sorting/rating are typically selected from pre-deliberative discourse, often elite discourse; (5) any reforms to redress problems (1)-(4)

we might say that without validation from participants, the social scientist studying deliberation can have, at best, true opinions, rather than genuine knowledge.

With the topography of these larger, general issues sketched, I now turn to developing a brief description of the various strategies for measuring deliberation and their implications.

## Diversity in Deliberative Measurement Strategies

### *Procedural*

The procedural approach to measuring deliberative quality is perhaps the most obvious and well-known. Steenbergen et. al. (2003), Neblo (2000), Dahlberg (2002), Jensen (2003) among others all begin from a basically Habermasian proceduralism and attempt to map the theory's key concepts into operational form. Most of the variables here will be familiar from terms used in any normative discussion of deliberation: e.g., participation, equality, justification, respect, reciprocity, sincerity, and role-taking. Two of these terms (sincerity and justification) deserve brief comment because of particular problems associated with their measurement.

First, sincerity or truthfulness (*Wahrhaftigkeit*), as noted above, is notoriously difficult to get a handle on for measurement purposes. Steiner et. al. (2004) forgo measuring it altogether on the grounds that reliability would be so low as to make it effectively useless. McGraw (1998) shows why it is so difficult to assess sincerity in the context of elite discourse at a distance, but her analysis also suggests ways that we might be able to more effectively evaluate sincerity in the context of other deliberative fora. I suspect that many social scientists, in addition to concerns over reliability, avoid trying to measure sincerity because to do so seems intrinsically moralistic in a way that would (or would be seen to) compromise scientific objectiv-

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might also be applied to R style analyses; (6) cognitive psychology suggests that subjects cannot hold the requisite number of items in their heads for comparison, which calls into question whether sorting is really practically different than rating; (7) if sorting and rating are not functionally different, then R and Q data matrices contain *exactly* the same information, even if one or another way of looking at that information may be more perspicuous; and (8) common Q analyses sometimes induce statistical practices that are potentially problematic (e.g., underestimating data dependency and standard errors).

ity. However it need not, and to date, I am not aware of any attempts to do so. It may be the case that inter-rater reliability is no more difficult to achieve than with other difficult and complex social concepts (MacGilvray 2004: 198). And for the reasons noted above, there are serious costs associated with eliminating the criterion from notions of deliberative quality altogether.

Second, “justification” is a complex and multi-faceted concept. Most coding schemes for deliberative quality attempt to measure relatively formal aspects of justification. Steiner et. al. for example, note that they “do not judge how good an argument for a demand is or whether we agree with it. We only judge to what extent a speech gives complete justification for demands” (2004: 171). Assessing the formal properties of such arguments is important and valuable. And refraining from assessing the substantive force of arguments is understandable for many of the same reasons as for sincerity.

However, again, doing so comes at significant cost in that the theory does not stipulate that the force of the better argument is a purely formal property. Far from it. What are we to make of our coding schemes when they cannot differentiate between formally equal arguments for allocating disaster prevention monies on global warming versus protecting against space aliens? Lest this example seem fanciful, consider debates in the United States Senate about the infamous “bridge to nowhere”. The Alaskan Congressional delegation constructed formally sound arguments, framed them in public terms, and did so without them being even remotely compelling on substantive grounds. Obviously this issue interacts with the question of sincerity, which only complicates the measurement issue. However, it is entirely possible that one could get quite high inter-rater reliability with respect to whether various arguments have much substantive force (Neblo 2005). So, though difficult and politically fraught, it seems important to explore ways to introduce such evaluations into our measurement strategies.

### *Negative Strategies*

One of the standard strategies in testing theories is ruling out alternative hypotheses. Deliberation is such a complex social process, and the threat of unlegitimated power systematically distorting communication is so ubiquitous, that the extent to which one can rule out well-known patterns of social power relations is almost constitutive of deliberative quality.

So, for example, if any of the standard procedural quality indicators noted above were to co-vary powerfully with known patterns of social domination, we would have *prima facie* grounds to bracket that indicator for purposes of deliberative quality. For example, “content of justification” refers to whether a claim is framed in terms of a group interest or in terms of the general interest or common good. However, we can imagine discourse during the civil rights era in the United States for which African-American legislators pressed claims framed in explicitly group oriented terms. If the common good seems to be empirically co-extensive with a status quo in which the interests of privileged whites dominates, then we have a case wherein the most straight-forward interpretation of our procedural categories might not do.

Neblo (2005) investigates whether procedural deliberative quality indicators can account for outcomes controlling for the possibility of polarization due to information cascades or group conformity, demographic categories (e.g., race and gender), negative affect toward relevant group beneficiaries, and social network effects in persuasion dynamics. Such a negative measurement strategy helps ensure that more traditional indicators of deliberative quality are not merely proxies for more problematic forms of social influence.

### *Substantive*

In many ways Gutmann and Thompson’s (2004) proposal for deliberation “beyond process” is in the spirit of the negative measurement strategy. However, it proposes non-procedural criteria internal to deliberation, rather than appealing to indirect indicators that imperfections in the procedural measures are tracking known sources of communicative distortion. Gutmann and Thompson are concerned to demonstrate: “An obvious but no less important virtue of a theory that does not limit itself to procedural principles is that, where necessary, it has no problem with asserting that what the majority decides, even after full deliberation, is wrong” (2004: 105). As discussed above, I think that such criteria should be understood as procedural in a larger sense. But as a matter of measurement, they clearly go beyond our so-far modest operational ability to capture the full normative force of proceduralism.

What I have in mind here from a measurement perspective is a hopefully not too *ad hoc* approach to correcting the kinds of gaps that open up in the more narrowly procedural measures as currently operationalised.

So, for example, one could assess the extent to which a given case of deliberation was operating in the shadow of what theorists have called the “third” face of power. That is, we might observe deliberation between mine workers and mine owners in Appalachia (Gaventa, 1980) that looks to be a case of procedurally impeccable consensual agreement to an arrangement that appears wildly unequal and unfair from the perspective of third parties. Substantive critiques based upon what Gutmann and Thompson call “reciprocity” might invoke a kind of false consciousness or acquiescence based on power inequalities that are not observable in the present deliberative context, and thus cannot be easily captured in standard procedural measures. Similarly, we might want to categorize the kind of substantive evaluation of argument quality that I alluded to above under this category.

### *Progressive Vanguardism*

One particularly strong variant of a substantive measurement strategy might be called “progressive vanguardism”. On this understanding deliberative democracy is intrinsically and primarily an emancipatory project with strong substantive content, more or less tracking leftist political concerns. On this conception, outcomes that result in progressive goals sought by such theorists become at least indirect indicators of deliberative quality, and perhaps necessary conditions. Similarly, deliberative outcomes that frustrate such goals indicate poor deliberative quality. Now cases of progressive vanguardism range from vulgar instances wherein deliberation appears as a mere pretext for justifying the authors prejudices, to the subtle intertwining of abstract theory and concrete analyses of emancipatory politics. Indeed, though I am not partial to this approach to measuring deliberative quality (largely on methodological grounds), neither do I intend it as a term of abuse. Habermas’s fascinating analysis of the feminist politics of equality in *Between Facts and Norms* strikes me as a strong example, even if it does not have an explicit ‘measurement’ orientation. Nevertheless, one could easily imagine developing measurement criteria that captured the way that some versions of deliberative democracy rest on radically democratic, emancipatory, and even Marxist foundations.

### *Elite Ratification*

Elite ratification differs from progressive vanguardism in that the results that high quality deliberation are presumed to track do not correspond with



any specific normative agenda, but rather function to ratify the putatively superior technical judgment of elites. The idea here is that the core problem of democracy is not epistemic, but rather one of legitimation. That is, there is little hope that mass opinion could ever prove superior to elite judgments about how to manage the increasingly complex and technical problems of modern societies. However, the demands of such complex management have opened up a legitimation gap in that the mass public cannot understand elite decision processes, and do not trust elites enough to ratify technocracy. So the main contribution of a deliberative democracy is to close the gap in judgment between elite and mass opinion, thereby relieving the corresponding legitimation gap. It thus follows that at least one relevant measure of deliberative quality is the extent to which non-elites can be brought to understand and appreciate policies and rationales favoured by elites.

#### *Reflexive/Participatory*

In diametric opposition to elite ratification criteria, reflexive/participatory measurement strategies emphasize the fact that political theorists and empirical researchers trying to operationalise their concepts may do so in a way that is biased, and does not track the reflexive and considered judgment of participants in deliberation. In that case, deliberative theory would be in the rather ironic position of claiming to be radically democratic, but insisting on elite and objectivating criteria of measurement. Following on the discussion of proceduralism in part two, above, a reflexive and participatory measurement strategy would try to incorporate subjects into the measurement process itself, and check measurement criteria against the considered and deliberative judgments of those who are not professionally invested in the theory or empirics of deliberation. At the very least, one would countenance perceived legitimacy and attitudes toward the deliberative process as relevant toward any full measure of deliberative quality.

#### *Structuralist-Rationalist*

Some deliberativists have pursued a middle way between pure proceduralism and frankly substantive measures by rejuvenating the structuralist paradigm. Kohlberg, following Piaget, sought to measure the structural sophistication of individual subject's arguments, rather than their substance directly. Semi-formal criteria are theorized as superior in some develop-

mental and/or hierarchical sense. Steiner et. al. (2004) include an element of this strategy in their “Content of Justification” measure. Though the coding would be intensive, one could imagine a much more comprehensive assessment of such structural criteria based on the neo-Kohlbergian measures developed in Rest, Varvaez, Bebeau and Thoma (1999). Neblo (2000) has shown that deliberating groups do improve over their individual level group means on such measures of reasoning sophistication, and that subjects maintain some of those gains when measured again as individuals. Rosenberg pursues a similar strategy, but characterizes entire deliberative exchanges in structuralist terms. His typology of deliberative styles might be especially useful for generating hypotheses about the differential function of various deliberative mechanisms in different kinds of deliberative environments.

The general problem with this measurement strategy is that it seems to leap too easily from “is” to “ought”. Kohlberg addressed this problem at length, and with some success. The argument goes through at lower levels of development, but once we get to a “post-conventional” form of rationality, it is difficult to see how superiority can be established theoretically. At this point one’s subjects have achieved the level of interlocutors, and must be treated as such. Perhaps one might consider this issue as a special case of the general problem of reflexive/participatory research discussed above.

### *Internal Rationalist*

In a similar move, one could imagine establishing deliberative criteria according to how well such procedures conducted to less controversial matters of rationality. For example, Druckman (2004) shows that under some conditions that deliberation reduces susceptibility to various kinds of framing effects. The behavioural decision-making literature has identified a whole host of deviations from canonical rationality. Some have interpreted these results as a challenge to canonical rational choice and decision theory as normative even for purposes of instrumental rationality. However, alternate normative theories have not been forthcoming, so it seems safe to assume that deliberation that lessens sensitivity to various defeating conditions for canonical rationality would count as rationality promoting, and thus an indicator of quality deliberation, *ceteris paribus*. Similarly, deliberation that reduces collective forms of irrationality, such as voting cycles or perverse

social choice functions would seem to offer evidence for the salutary effects of deliberation, again, at least *ceteris paribus*.

### *Causal-Constitutive*

In a bold and interesting move, Mark Warren (2007 forthcoming) proposes, in effect, to completely invert deliberation's standard measurement strategy away from proceduralism to a particular kind of substantivism. In effect he proposes to remove the *ceteris paribus* conditions from the previous section, and to generalize them to a whole host of substantive and formal criteria of "good outcomes", defining deliberative features that causally promote such outcomes as constitutive of good deliberation. He argues that "Deliberation should therefore be defined not only broadly, but even counter-intuitively to include *all activities that function as communicative influence under conditions of conflict*. Thus, deliberation may include rational argument, but also [...] strategic communications, lies and half-truths, demonstration, dialogue, and angry discussion, since each can advance deliberative outcomes under some conditions" (2007: 10). Thus, like the expansive strategy that Steiner (2007 forthcoming) criticizes, Warren's definition includes nearly any form of communication in principle. (Indeed, it is unclear why he rules out any given that the criterion is advancing deliberative outcomes, not modally, but under "some conditions".) However, unlike the expansive strategy, he maintains deliberation as an evaluative-descriptive concept insofar as it is intrinsically approbative.

This combination is genuinely innovative and attractive. However, we should pause to consider just how radical its implications are. First, it is resolutely substantive in that approbation is meted out according to criteria of "deliberative outcomes" that are independent of procedure, and thus presumably knowable by the social theorist ahead of time. Rather than testing scientific propositions *per se*, we merely backwards engineer the set of deliberative instances according to their mapping onto these substantive principles. Second, such an approach completely breaks deliberation's link to epistemic guidance going forward (except where it is redundant because we already know the right answer). Finally, it is difficult to see how lies and half-truths and other "accidental" forms of deliberation could be respect-expressive in any straightforward sense. Thus Warren's suggestion would seem maximally effective in linking his conception of deliberation to various deliberative desiderata such as increased knowledge, internal and external efficacy, equal outcomes judged by external standards, etc.

However, it buys all of this at the rather steep price of breaking deliberation's epistemic link, its internal standards of justification (e.g., for what counts as an equal and fair outcome), and because of these, its respect-expressive function.

### *Individualist/Auto-Normative*

Finally, we can conceive of a variation on the causal-constitutive strategy in which we do not require that "good deliberative outcomes" be judged at the group level, and indeed, that the criteria could vary from individual to individual. The most obvious version of this approach would conceive of deliberation as a mechanism for improving more traditional notions of aggregative democracy. On this view, deliberation is not judged by promoting some abstract and illusive notion of the public good or other dubious properties of groups. Rather deliberation is high quality if it helps individuals better understand how various policy proposals are likely to affect their interests, and to more effectively link such individuals to their elected representatives. On this view, the problems of aggregative democracy are not so much that it lacks respect generating properties, but rather that it functions as a relatively inefficient market, so to speak. Measurement strategies here might follow various proposals for measuring the extent to which deliberation helps citizens vote "correctly" according to their own lights under ideal conditions (Lau and Redlawsk 1997; Bartels 1996). Similarly, one could measure the effectiveness of the larger deliberative process by gauging the extent to which such individual level phenomena aggregate up to representation (voting) and policy that tracks the counter-factual of the full-information views of a given constituency, or a country as a whole.

### **Conclusion**

The recent surge in empirical research into deliberation has, on the whole, been greatly to the good. However, the very volume of the surge has led to so much diversity in the researchers' theoretical origins, methodological preferences, conceptual organization, and operational detail that it is useful to step back and assess how various efforts hang together. I have tried to balance caution against concept stretching with its twin danger of delimiting the field of deliberative research in such a way as to obscure fundamental causal processes. Similarly, I have tried to show how some putatively

large sources of division within the deliberative community can be bridged by a more capacious theoretical framework, while sketching out how some fundamental distinctions that remain map onto empirical research strategies. Hopefully the typology of basic research approaches can help to prompt points of connection between them, as well as to foster a sense of how our emerging picture of the empirical dynamics of deliberation should reflect back and alter how we structure and conceive deliberative theory.

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**Familienstreitigkeiten:  
Vielfältigkeit bei der Definition und Messung von Deliberation**

Interdisziplinäre Forschung zum Thema Deliberation wurde im letzten Jahrzehnt immer zahlreicher. Dies ging einher mit einer stärkeren Verzahnung von theoretischen und empirischen Aspekten. Theoretisch ausgerichtete Forscher berücksichtigen zusehends die Ergebnisse empirischer Forschung, während Empiriker sich enger an normativ-theoretischen Vorgaben orientieren. Die rasche Verbreitung in den letzten Jahren hat allerdings zu einer schier unüberblickbaren Menge an Forschungsdesigns, Messstrategien, Operationalisierungen und sogar Definitionen geführt. Ohne wirksame Kommunikation über theoretische und methodologische Grenzen hinweg droht die Deliberationsforschung an Fokus und Klarheit zu verlieren. Der vorliegende Artikel strebt deshalb eine Bestandsaufnahme an. Er stellt einerseits theoretische Unterschiede in den grundlegenden normativen Konzeptionen dar, geht aber auch auf daraus folgende verschiedenartige Messstrategien ein. Dies soll eine Bündelung der zukünftigen Forschungsanstrengungen erleichtern und unterstützen.

**Querelles de famille: la diversité des définitions et mesures de la délibération**

La recherche interdisciplinaire sur la délibération s'est considérablement développée au cours de la dernière décennie. Ce développement s'est accompagné d'un rapprochement marqué entre aspects théoriques et empiriques. Les chercheurs tenants de l'approche théorique tiennent visiblement plus compte des résultats de la recherche empirique, de même que les chercheurs privilégiant une approche empirique s'orientent de plus en plus aux avancées théorico-normatives. Cette rapide diffusion dans les dernières années a toutefois conduit à une quantité innombrable de designs de recherche, de stratégies de mesure, d'opérationnalisation et même de définitions. Sans une communication efficace au-delà des frontières théoriques et méthodologiques, la recherche sur la délibération est menacée de perdre de son focus et de sa clarté. Cet article s'efforce donc d'en faire un inventaire. Il présente d'un côté des différences théoriques dans les conceptions essentiellement normatives et considère aussi les différentes formes de stratégies de mesures qui en découlent. Cela devrait pouvoir soutenir et faciliter la mise en commun des efforts futurs en matière de recherche.



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