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CHAPTER

## 22 Political Deliberation

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### Abstract

Deliberation plays an important role in a number of political institutions and is also an increasingly common way that citizens participate in politics. This chapter divides political psychology research on small-group deliberation into three clusters of variables: the context in which deliberation takes place, the process by which deliberation proceeds, and the outcomes that deliberation produces. The existing literature shows that deliberation can have meaningful effects on important outcome variables like policy attitudes, citizen knowledge, and subsequent political engagement. However, research on how the context and process of deliberation produce these outcomes is still in its infancy. This chapter argues that as the political psychology literature on deliberation matures, it must pay more attention to process and context questions, in large part because the normative value of deliberation depends less on what the outcomes of deliberation are than on how those outcomes are produced.

**Keywords:** [deliberation](#), [deliberative democracy](#), [group processes](#), [political participation](#), [democratic theory](#)

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# 1. Introduction

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Deliberation is an increasingly common form of political participation (Jacobs, Cook, & Delli Carpini, 2009) and already plays a role, direct or indirect, in society and politics. Government bodies use deliberative forums to consult citizens in various policy decisions (Gastil, 2000; Karpowitz, 2006; Rosenberg, 2007). For example, citizen deliberations in Chicago provide input on school and police issues, a process that has deepened citizen engagement with both institutions (Fung, 2004). Juries make decisions that affect industry, commerce, rights, and a variety of life outcomes for people and organizations (Gastil, Deess, Weiser, & Simmons, 2010). Some deliberating groups issue official recommendations that can become the basis of constitutional change (e.g., the British Columbia constitutional assembly) (Warren & Pearse, 2008). Deliberation is increasingly featured in developing or postconflict societies as a way to repair breaches of trust and establish democratic procedures or institutions (Humphreys, Masters, & Sandbu, 2006), while many localities in the United States organize deliberating groups to encourage dialogue across racial lines (Walsh, 2007). Finally, deliberation is used to measure considered public opinion in environmental, health, and urban planning policy (De Vries et al. 2011; Forrester, 1999; Owens, 2000).

However, deliberation is more than just another form of political participation. Deliberation is a longstanding element of, and has played an increasingly important role in, democratic theory (Thompson, 2008). From Aristotle's vision of the polity (Wilson, 2011), to grass-roots visions of American democracy in the writings of Tocqueville, deliberation has been identified as significant to democratic societies. However, the last several decades have seen a "deliberative turn" in democratic theory (Dryzek, 2000) that has increased the emphasis on deliberation, in contrast to other features of democratic government such as free and fair elections. Much of the empirical research on deliberation in political science takes this recent scholarship as its inspiration and point of departure. We will discuss this literature in greater depth below.

p. 700 The explosion in interest in deliberation has created multiple definitions of "deliberation." This presents problems for research, causing scholars to talk past each other and making it difficult for new results to build on past research. But the diverse definitions also have advantages, by including a broader set of discursive phenomena and allowing researchers to study more variables, enriching our overall understanding. In this chapter we *define deliberation as small-group discussion intended to make a decision or to change the content or basis of public opinion that is either prompted by or speaks to a governmental unit or political actor*. The political actor need not be the government; it can be any person or organization with power or authority in society. For example, Mansbridge studied deliberative decision-making within a nongovernmental organization (Mansbridge, 1980). The decision need not be binding, and need not be directly on a policy matter. For example, in Deliberative Polls deliberators reach an agreement only on what questions to pose to policy experts or candidates running for elected office. In some deliberations citizens merely provide input to officials who eventually make a collective decision. All these count as deliberation by our definition.

Our definition still encompasses a wide variety of phenomena, but does narrow our focus in a few important ways. Most notably, it excludes deliberation that takes place in everyday talk between citizens (Conover, Searing, & Crewe, 2002; Mutz, 2006; Huddy, chapter 23, this volume; Green & Staerklé, chapter 26, this volume), "deliberation within," or internal reflection (Goodin & Niemeyer, 2003), and the question of what kinds of citizens tend to attend deliberative forums (Karpowitz, 2006; Jacobs et al., 2009, chap.3; Neblo, Esterling, Kennedy, Lazer, & Sokhey, 2010). We limit our discussion primarily to the literature within political psychology and, when appropriate, political communication. We do not attempt a comprehensive review of the large literature in social psychology on small-group process (see Mendelberg, 2002 for a review), but refer to these sources when helpful.

The chapter proceeds as follows. We briefly review the normative literature on deliberation and then discuss the contribution of political psychology to the study of deliberation. We structure our discussion in three sections: outcomes, processes, and context. We will discuss these in reverse order—outcomes, then processes, then context—because understanding research on the processes of deliberation generally requires understanding the outcomes that these processes might influence; similarly, research on the context of deliberation is generally interested in how these contextual variables affect the process of deliberation, the outcomes it produces, or both. We conclude with thoughts on the future of this burgeoning field.

## 1.1 Normative Theory and the Requirements of Deliberation

p. 701 In this section we review some of the central requirements of normative theories of deliberation. We focus on those aspects of deliberative theory that are most relevant for empirical investigators. Given that the focus on deliberation in the normative literature on democratic theory is a relatively recent phenomenon, it is not surprising that a variety of normative theories exist and central aspects of what constitutes deliberative democracy are still up for debate. Nevertheless, most contemporary theories agree on most of the following points.

At its core, deliberation is the free, equal, and open-minded dialogue about a matter of public concern among anyone affected by the issue (Cohen, 1989; Gutmann & Thompson, 1996; 2004; Benhabib, 1996; Habermas, 1975; 1996; Neble, 2005). The content of this exchange can take many forms, such as evidence, reasons, or questions, and more controversially, personal testimony, storytelling, or expressions of emotion (Sanders, 1997; Young, 1996), but they should all consist of communication that the interlocutor can understand. Deliberative democrats hold that deliberation is necessary to justify a decision and render it legitimate. Proponents of a policy should offer the people who would be affected by that policy reasons in support of that policy that they might be able to accept (Gutmann & Thompson, 2004). Further, all affected by a policy should have a chance to address these arguments and provide their own arguments or perspectives. The information exchanged should be considered with an open mind by everyone involved, and hence be uncontaminated by force or its close cousins, deception and manipulation (Habermas, 1975). Most deliberative democrats agree that conversation must at some point end with a vote (Cohen, 1989, p. 348), though some argue that the goal of deliberation can be more amorphous, such as greater understanding, enlightenment, or consensus (Gutmann & Thompson, 1996).

Democracy demands equal power and access to influence among its participants. Power in deliberative democracy lies in the ability to convince others through the discursive process, and the kind of equality required by deliberative democracy should reflect what Knight and Johnson term “equal opportunity to access political influence” (1997, p. 280). At minimum, this means equal access to the floor. In the words of Lynn Sanders, “If it’s demonstrable that some kinds of people routinely speak more than others in deliberative settings ... then participation isn’t equal, and one democratic standard has fallen” (1997, p. 365; see also Thompson, 2008, p. 501). In addition, deliberators should have an equal ability to voice their perspectives effectively and to be heard with full consideration. This is a particular concern for socially disadvantaged groups like women and minorities. If inequalities in resources such as education or wealth mean that some are more effective speakers, then equality has not been achieved even if all speakers have *de jure* equal access to the deliberative forum (Mansbridge, 1980). Equal resources to participate may still not be enough; factors such as prejudice may mean that perspectives associated with lower status and power in society may be less likely to get floor time, to be fully articulated, and to receive an open-minded hearing (Karpowitz, Mendelberg & Shaker, 2012; Thompson, 2008, p. 501).

In addition to equal chance to voice one’s distinctive views and to be heard, deliberation demands an absence of coercion. Deliberators should be free to speak as they choose and to adopt whatever position that

p. 702 the debate leads them toward. To use Habermas's felicitous phrase, the "forceless force of the better argument" should carry the day (Habermas, 1975, p. 108). However, this freedom from coercion does not extend to allowing listeners to ignore the speech of those they disagree with. Participants in deliberation should maintain an open mind to perspectives other than their own, an understanding and respect for differences. Finally, most deliberative theorists agree that this open-mindedness should be accompanied by a concern for the good of others, either from a deliberator's empathy for the other; from the deliberator's ability to conceive of her interests in an enlarged form that encompasses the collective; or from a principled commitment to fairness and justice (Cohen, 1989; Benhabib, 1996; Gutmann & Thompson, 1996). Such open-mindedness should include an element of self-reflectiveness. While deliberation should respect the deeply held views of deliberators (Gutmann & Thompson, 1996), these deliberators should be willing to reflect on their positions and change them if the course of deliberation leads them to do so (Dryzek, 2000). Deliberation may not change any minds, but it should still lead deliberators to better understand their own positions and which reasons are legitimate or illegitimate as a basis for them (Gutmann & Thompson, 1996).

## 1.2 Political Psychology and Deliberative Democracy

Political psychology, and empirical political science more broadly, can make two contributions in this area. The first is to help define what good deliberation is in practical terms. Any definition of good deliberation must start with standards identified by normative theory. However, political psychology can give empirical meaning to these standards and identify ways in which these standards might be successfully implemented, or violated, in the real world (Mutz, 2008). Political psychology can also help identify the conditions under which these standards are more or less likely to be met, such as the formal rules of deliberation or the degree of racial heterogeneity in a group. For example, Karpowitz et al. (2012) find that a group's gender composition and its decision rule can ameliorate or exacerbate the bias against women's participation and influence. Specifically, women are much less disadvantaged in groups that decide with majority rule and contain a large majority of women, as well as in groups that decide unanimously and contain a small proportion of women.

As Mutz (2008) argues, deliberation may be located on a point along a continuum from very close to very far from the ideal. The requirements of deliberation should also be operationalized sufficiently concretely that they can be measured, so that, using these measures, the quality of any particular deliberation can be judged. Consider the discussion of equality in the example above. Equality is a standard that might be measured in a number of ways, each with particular strengths and weaknesses. Karpowitz et al. (2012) operationalize the equality standard by a one-to-one ratio of the talk time taken by women relative to men.

p. 703 On the other hand, Myers (2012a) judges equality by asking whether an item of information has the same influence in discussion regardless of who introduces it into deliberation. Either of these measures may be appropriate, depending on the research question at hand; as we discuss below, developing a set of deliberative quality measures and understanding the situations where each is appropriate is an important task.

## 1.3 Studying the Political Psychology of Deliberation: Context, Process, and Outcomes

To examine the current state of work on the political psychology of deliberation we will break research into three areas or clusters of variables: The *context* in which deliberation takes place, the *process* by which deliberation proceeds, and the *outcomes* that deliberation produces.<sup>1</sup> The border between these categories is far from absolute; nevertheless, we believe that this division provides a useful framework.

Outcomes are the products of deliberation. Some of these outcomes are familiar to students of political psychology, like knowledge gain or changed attitudes. Other outcomes of interest are particular to deliberation. For example, deliberation is supposed to increase deliberators' familiarity with opposing views and the rationales underlying them as well as provide more legitimate, reasonable bases for deliberators' own views. Ideally, this familiarity creates greater tolerance for those who hold opposing views, in turn resulting in more expansive self-conceptions that include others and their needs (Walsh, 2007). A final set of outcome variables concerns perceptions of the deliberative process itself, such as its fairness or legitimacy.

Process variables describe what happens once a group has started deliberating. The importance of some process variables is anchored in the normative literature and is not necessarily connected to good outcomes that these processes may produce. For example, deliberative theorists argue that good deliberation requires deliberators to justify their positions to each other; thus deliberative processes that include more justifications are preferable, *ceteris paribus*, to deliberations that do not. Other process research is motivated by empirical literatures, particularly the literatures on racial and gender inequality and other literatures about psychological processes that may harm group deliberation. Finally, some process research, primarily qualitative in nature, aims at developing a better understanding of the inner workings of small-group conversation.

The context of deliberation includes those factors that exist before deliberation begins and influence its process or outcomes. Most research on contextual factors examines the effects of the institutional structure of a deliberative group such as the decision rule that a group uses, whether the deliberation takes place face-to-face or over the Internet. Others focus on the place deliberation occupies in the broader political system (e.g., Karpowitz, 2006). In many ways these variables are the most important for practical empirical research, as they are frequently the only variables that institutional designers can directly control.

## 2. Outcomes of Deliberation

p. 704

While deliberation presents interesting questions for normative theory, more empirically minded scholars study deliberation because they think it can enhance democracy and the quality of governance. In short, we start with the question "What can deliberation do?" This question is particularly important given the great amount of time and, frequently, money that must be expended to hold deliberative forums. If deliberation has little effect on subsequent behaviors and attitudes, or if it is actively harmful to civic culture, as hypothesized by Hibbing and Theiss-Morse (2002, chaps. 7 and 8), then it may not be worth these valuable resources. The variables that we group under the heading of "outcomes" attempt to address these concerns. In addition to establishing the value of deliberation, these variables can serve as dependent variables for analyses involving the process and context variables. In this section we focus on three outcome variables at the core of most research on deliberation: opinion change, knowledge gain, and post-deliberation behavior (e.g., subsequent political participation). We then discuss several other outcomes that may be important products of public deliberation.

## 2.1 Opinion Change

Perhaps the most basic outcome produced by deliberation is the effect it has on participants' opinions. As Cohen (1989) says, "ideal deliberation aims to arrive at a rationally motivated *consensus*," something that is obviously impossible if deliberation is incapable of changing deliberators' minds. And in fact, a variety of studies show that deliberation can cause opinion change. This research includes reports from a large number of Deliberative Polls showing that deliberation is capable of changing attitudes (e.g., Luskin, Fishkin, & Jowell, 2002; Andersen & Hansen, 2007; Fishkin, 2009), as well as evidence from other deliberative forums (e.g., Barabas, 2004; Gastil, Black, & Moscovitz, 2008; Esterling, Fung, & Lee, 2012). Opinion change is not universal. Gilens (2011) argues that the magnitude of opinion change in Deliberative Polls is not large, especially given the intensity of the experience. Wojcieszak and Price (2010) found minimal effects of deliberation on attitudes about gay rights, and Farrar et al. (2010) found little attitude change on a highly salient local political issue, suggesting that attitude change will not happen in all deliberations.

p. 705

More research on this question would be welcome, but research should more precisely link the quality of the deliberative process to the magnitude of attitude change, or focus on change in attitudes that can objectively be defined as undesirable by some established normative criteria. Simply demonstrating opinion change tells us little about the meaning of that opinion change, or of the quality of deliberation that produced it. Many processes that are not deliberative, such as manipulation by powerful actors, can cause opinion change and yet run against the salient interests of deliberators or their communities (Eliasoph, 1998); preference change may be produced predominantly by prejudice, xenophobia, or aggression toward out-groups (Mansbridge, 1980; Mendelberg & Oleske, 2000); or preferences may be shaped by discussion that focuses disproportionately on knowledge known by members of the majority group (Myers, 2012b). Further, a lack of opinion change should not be taken as a sign that deliberation has failed. Deliberators might engage in reasoned discussion, learn a great deal about the issue at hand, and end discovering that their original policy preferences were correct, albeit for reasons that they were not aware of. While a lack of opinion change should trigger some scrutiny given that it may be caused by any of several normatively suspect processes, it is the scrutiny of the process that matters. Normative theorists are understandably reluctant to set criteria for desirable outcomes from deliberation since it is not easy to link the standards for good outcomes, which tend to rest on less objective criteria and are often contested, with the standards for good processes, which are far less so (Gutmann & Thompson, 2004).

Several studies address this concern by examining the kind of opinion change caused by deliberative processes and comparing it to some standard for high-quality public opinion. This research takes a valuable step beyond simply measuring opinion change, though the importance of any finding depends a great deal on the standard that the study's authors use. For example, Gastil and Dillard (1999) examined changes in attitudes on seven issues among participants in National Issues Forums and found that participation increased attitude certainty and modestly increased schematic integration and differentiation—the degree to which participants consistently held liberal or conservative beliefs (see also Gastil, Deess, Weiser, & Meade, 2008). However, Sturgis et al. (2005) examined changes in attitude constraint across five Deliberative Polls conducted in the United Kingdom and found inconsistent evidence of increased constraint. Thus, if attitude coherence is our standard for "high-quality" opinion, following Converse's classic argument (1964), there is some evidence for a modest positive effect of deliberation. However, some critics might argue that attitude constraint is not necessarily a sign of "high-quality" public opinion if it is driven by ideological rigidity. Again, the key is to examine whether attitude change is rooted in each of the desirable processes of deliberation, which include open-mindedness.

Alternately, Farrar et al. (2010) examined the effect of deliberation on how "single-peaked" citizens' preferences are. When policies can be described along a single dimension, preferences are single-peaked when a person always prefers policies that are closer on this dimension to a single, most-preferred, policy

over those that are further from the most-preferred outcome. Single-peaked preferences are important in many social choice accounts of democracy because they avoid cycling, when a collective voting by majority rule prefers  $x$  to  $y$ ,  $y$  to  $z$ , and  $z$  to  $x$  (Arrow, 1953). In social choice accounts, cycling and related phenomena render the idea of a single public preference incoherent. Farrar et al. (2010) found that participation in a Deliberative Poll led deliberators to have more single-peaked preferences on individual issues. Again, those who do not think that single-peakedness is an important quality for democratic public opinion will not be impressed.

p. 706 A final standard for opinion quality is “argument repertoire” (Cappella, Price, & Nir, 2002). In these studies, researchers solicit a person’s opinion and then ask them to list reasons for holding that opinion as well as reasons why someone might hold the opposite opinion. A large number of reasons is taken as an indicator that the person has a well-thought-out opinion, though it might also be thought of as a measure of political knowledge. People with a high AR on an issue are more likely to engage in deliberation on that issue, and, further, deliberation increases the AR of one’s own and of the opposition position. Once again, the validity of this measure depends on whether one thinks that being able to recall the reasons for an opinion is a valid measure of the quality of that opinion; proponents of online models of political information processing may be skeptical (Chapter 17).

Finally, some studies look at deliberative situations where there is arguably an objectively correct or more just outcome. For example, Simon and Sulkin (2002) use a multiple-player “divide the dollar” game to test the effect of discussion on equitable outcomes. The more equal the division of the group’s resource, the more the outcome is deemed fair by the researchers. They found that deliberation produces more fair outcomes by this standard. Several experimental studies of rational choice models of deliberation use decisions where there is an objectively best choice for the group to make (Guarnaschelli, McKelvey, & Palfrey, 2000; Goeree & Yariv, 2011; Myers, 2012a). However, most of these studies use highly stylized forms of communication where players send signals (e.g., “red” or “blue”) over computers but do not actually talk face to face (for an exception see Myers, 2012a). Finally, Karpowitz, Mendelberg, and Shaker (2012) have subjects deliberate and decide between different rules for redistributing income that they will earn in a subsequent, unknown experimental task (see also Karpowitz et al., 2012, Mendelberg, Karpowitz, & Goedert, 2013). In this deliberation task, which loosely mirrors Rawls’s original position (1971), groups’ decisions can be judged as more or less just based on how generously they decide to redistribute income to the poor, though such judgment obviously requires a commitment to a particular substantive conception of justice (such as Rawls’s; see also Guttmann & Thompson, 1996).

Setting aside questions of opinion quality, Gastil, Bacci, and Dollinger (2010) look at the ideological direction of opinion change caused by Deliberative Polls. Critiques of deliberation have argued that deliberation is little more than a way for highly educated, liberal professors to harangue the masses into adopting their views (Posner, 2004). Gastil, Bacci, and Dollinger (2010) examined opinion change on 65 items from several Deliberative Polls and found no tendency for deliberators to change their attitudes in a more liberal direction. However, deliberators did tend to adopt attitudes that were more egalitarian, cosmopolitan, and collective-focused after participating in deliberation. Whether these tendencies represent an ideological bias in deliberation is open to debate. They do conform to some theorists’ normative standard for good deliberative outcomes, which include transforming deliberators’ self-concepts to be more inclusive of others (Guttmann & Thompson, 1996; Rosenberg, 2007).

p. 707 Another important question is determining whose attitudes change during deliberation. Gastil, Black, and Moscovitz (2008) find greater attitude change on the parts of ↪ liberals and moderates than conservatives. Fishkin (2009) shows that attitudes change the most among those with the highest level of knowledge at the end of Deliberative Polls, though there is no relationship between attitude change and change in knowledge between the start of the poll and the end of the poll. Fishkin and coauthors argue that measures of knowledge at the end of deliberation are more accurate measures of learning than the difference between

pre- and post-deliberation measures of knowledge (Luskin et al., 2002, pp.480–483; also Luskin, Helfer, & Sood, 2011), and thus that their findings tell us that attitude change is greatest among those who gain the most knowledge. However, if gaining knowledge is the best measure of learning, then we should conclude that opinion change is not produced by learning. As with much research on deliberation, the quality of the measures scholars use to assess successful deliberation is a key issue; not only do scholars need to calibrate variables to normative standards of good deliberation, but they also must develop instruments with adequate psychometric measurement properties.

## 2.2 Knowledge Gain

While the value of opinion change as a measure of quality deliberation is debatable, most would agree that good deliberation should increase relevant knowledge. Most studies of deliberation that measure knowledge gain find an increase, including studies in the Deliberative Polling tradition (e.g., Andersen & Hansen, 2007) and outside of it (e.g., Barabas, 2004). Participants retain knowledge gains for at least a little while after the deliberative experience (Jacobs et al., 2009, chap.6). Interestingly, a fair amount of learning appears to happen before discussion begins (Farrar et al., 2010) and continues after the deliberative exercise as deliberators pay increased attention to politics (Esterling, Neblo, & Lazer, forthcoming). Thus studies that measure only the knowledge gained during the deliberative exercise may miss much of its positive effect. On the other hand, much of the benefit of deliberation might not be caused by deliberation per se, but rather by anticipating or taking part in a novel and intensive form of political participation.

While an increase in average knowledge is good, the value of this knowledge gain may depend on who is learning from deliberation. Esterling et al. (forthcoming) found that knowledge gain is widely distributed and is not dependent on prior political knowledge. Similarly, Jacobs et al. (2009) found no significant interactions between any demographic characteristics and knowledge gain.

## 2.3 Post-deliberation Behavior

p. 708 The effect of deliberation on participants goes beyond their attitudes about and knowledge of the issue under discussion. Since Mill and Tocqueville, theorists have argued that participation in the democratic process improves the civic character of the participant ↪ (see Mansbridge, 1999 for a review). John Gastil and a team of collaborators test this theory by examining the effect of participation in jury deliberation on later political involvement. They found that service on criminal juries can increase jurors' subsequent rates of voting. Jurors in civil trials saw no boost to turnout. The authors argue that this is because of the public nature of the issues decided by criminal juries, where the state is prosecuting a violation of the law, as compared to civil juries who adjudicate disputes between private parties. They helpfully show that the effect holds only for jurors whose trial actually reaches the point of jury deliberation, and not for alternate jurors or those whose trial ended in a mistrial (Gastil, Deess, et al., 2008; Gastil, Deess, et al., 2010). Gastil, Deess et al. (2010) go on to demonstrate that jurors who felt engaged and satisfied as jurors subsequently paid more attention to civic affairs and became more active in their communities beyond the voting booth. They further found that jury service could boost jurors' efficacy and faith in the political system, though these effects depended on the characteristics of the juror and his or her subjective experience.

The effect of deliberation on subsequent political participation seems to extend beyond juries. Jacobs et al. (2009, chap.5) use US national survey data to show that participating in face-to-face deliberation, defined as attending a meeting that was organized to discuss a public issue, increases subsequent political participation, controlling for demographic characteristics and social capital factors like belonging to community organizations. Wantchekon (2011) randomly assigned candidates in Benin to campaign using either town hall meetings or traditional clientelist methods (distributing money to voters) and found that



the former produced greater turnout. Finally, Lazer, Sokhey, Neblo, and Esterling (2010) found that participation in a deliberative event increased the number of subsequent discussions held outside the event.

While Gastil and coauthors suggest that satisfaction with a deliberative experience can drive participation, Karpowitz's study (2006) of deliberations about town planning in the United States found that it was those who were *dissatisfied* with the decisions made by a deliberative forum who participated in subsequent town council meetings held to discuss the results of those forums. Thus the effects of deliberation on subsequent action depend on the larger context for the deliberation. The political context for deliberation may determine whether the deliberation is primarily a civic exercise (meant to promote learning or dialogue, or attracting citizens out of a sense of civic duty) or whether it feeds into a process of conflicting interests in a larger adversary system (Karpowitz and Mansbridge, 2005). If the former, then it is satisfaction that drives action; if the latter, then it is dissatisfaction that does so, though the ability of dissatisfaction to drive participation may depend on the availability of alternative venues where the deliberative decision can be contested.

p. 709 The effect of deliberation on subsequent participation may be heterogeneous across individuals. In a study of deliberation about the rights of sexual minorities in Poland, Wojcieszak (2011b) found that deliberation had a small, negative effect on intentions to participate—except for participants who held extreme opinions. These participants reported higher intentions to participate, but only when they reported encountering a lot of disagreement. Wojcieszak, Baek, and Delli Carpini (2010) report a similar finding based on survey data. In this data, subsequent participation among moderates was mediated by their affective responses to deliberation, while subsequent participation among weak ideologues was mediated by cognitive reactions to deliberation, and subsequent participation by strong ideologies was not mediated by any reaction to deliberation. These findings offer evidence that analyses that ignore differences among deliberators may miss important effects of deliberation, and that both negative and positive experiences and reactions can mediate these effects.

## 2.4 Other Outcomes

Three other outcome variables are of particular interest: tolerance for opposing views, feelings of political efficacy, and satisfaction with the deliberative procedure and the policy it produces. Many theorists believe that deliberation will increase tolerance for opposing views by increasing awareness of the reasons underlying these views as well as establishing common ground across differences (Gutmann & Thompson, 1996; Sanders, 1997). Indeed, Walsh (2007) found that interracial dialogue groups foster greater understanding of other racial groups. Participants in a discussion across racial lines “compel each other to face the reality of different realities” (p.8) by balancing the search for common ground with the attempt to listen to, acknowledge, and respect difference. By intertwining unity and difference, deliberations can render difference less threatening. However, Andersen and Hansen (2007) found participating in a Deliberative Poll had little effect on tolerance, though anticipation of a deliberative experience might actually reduce tolerance. The difference between these findings may lie in Walsh's (2007) groups' specific focus on learning and understanding others' views.

Evidence about whether deliberation increases general social tolerance is mixed. Weber (2001) found that deliberation about the degree of freedom that should be granted to a politically extreme group increased tolerance for that group. However, Wojcieszak and Price (2010) found that deliberation about same-sex marriage does not increase support for the rights of sexual minorities. Thus the tolerance that is promoted by deliberation may be limited to tolerance of the expression of opposing or extreme views.

Finally, we might expect that deliberation increases citizens' belief in their ability to participate in politics (internal efficacy) and their belief that government will respond to their demands (external efficacy).

Results on deliberation's effect on political efficacy are mixed, suggesting that deliberation increases external efficacy but does not affect internal efficacy. Walsh's early (2003) work on intergroup dialogue programs found this pattern, though she notes that participants began with high efficacy (Walsh, 2003). Morrell (2005) found that deliberation does not (increase general internal political efficacy, but that it does increase deliberator's sense of efficacy to participate in future deliberations—that is, deliberating makes citizens think they are more capable of deliberating. Nabatchi (2010) examines changes in efficacy among participants in an America *Speaks* town hall meeting and found increased external efficacy, but no change in internal efficacy; these results persisted after 24 months. Andersen and Hansen (2007) found a similar pattern of changes in political efficacy in a Deliberative Poll about whether Denmark should adopt the euro. However, Pierce, Neeley, and Budziak (2008) discovered that college students participating in a deliberation about university issues with administrators and faculty members felt more comfortable expressing their views (similar to internal efficacy), but not more confident that those in authority cared about their views (similar to external efficacy). The evidence, then, is mixed.

p. 710

Several studies treat measure how satisfied deliberators are with the deliberative process and its products as important outcome variables (Gastil et al., 2010; Simon & Sulkin, 2002; Stromer-Galley & Muhlberger, 2009; Esterling et al., 2012). It is tempting to use these as measures of the quality of the process. For example, after deliberation Esterling et al. (2012) asked deliberators for their level of agreement with such statements as "People at this meeting listened to one another respectfully and courteously" and used these to measure the quality of the deliberative.<sup>2</sup> Better is the approach of Stromer-Galley and Muhlberger (2009) who used these responses as outcomes of rather than indicators of the process, and directly measured the process (specifically, the number of statements where deliberators agreed or disagreed with each other). Satisfaction with the deliberative process (as well as the policies it produces) again raises the two questions we have encountered throughout this section: does the measure fit a normative standard of good deliberation, and are the measures adequate for the underlying standard? It is not clear that normative theories require satisfaction with the outcome under any circumstance; or that they require satisfaction with the process of deliberation after the fact, and especially when that satisfaction is divorced from more objective measures of process quality.

## 2.5 Conclusion

In sum, there is good and bad news. The bad news: opinions can change with deliberation, but the evidence is inconsistent, the magnitude is small, and the change does not satisfy any normative standard of deliberation (for example, it is not always produced by knowledge gain). Deliberation produces more constrained attitudes—sometimes. It can produce outcomes judged just or accurate by an objective standard, though more troubling is evidence that it can also produce opinions more in line with the organizers' political agenda, and all this depends greatly on process and context variables (to which we turn below). Alienation as much as satisfaction can produce the increases in later political participation and engagement. There is no effect on internal efficacy. On the plus side: Deliberation can help make preferences single-peaked, though more work on this result is needed; and it increases the argument repertoire for and against one's side. It increases knowledge, though perhaps not solely from deliberation but also from the hoopla surrounding it. It can elevate citizens' external efficacy and, especially, their political engagement well after it is over. Finally, deliberators generally like deliberating—no small matter for the generally apathetic and apolitical citizen. Deliberation is best at giving people more specific knowledge about the issues and positions at hand, and when the experience is meaningful, either negatively or positively, it can elevate political participation and engagement. So we can learn something useful from studies of outcomes.

p. 711

However, there is a danger in using outcomes as measures of processes and contexts. Many of these outcomes can be produced by a number of non-deliberative processes. The normative value of the *outcome*

may depend on the *process* that produced it.

A great deal of research remains to be done on the outcomes of deliberation. Findings on some important outcome variables, such as tolerance for the views of others, are still inconclusive. Other outcome variables could gain from greater detail in their specification. For example, we might be interested in learning if the informal political discussion spurred by participating in a deliberative experience is itself deliberative, and if subsequent knowledge-seeking is open-minded (Conover et al., 2002). Finally, deliberative theory suggests some outcome variables that have yet to be widely tested. For example, deliberation is supposed to produce opinions and decisions that are more “public-spirited” (Gutmann & Thompson 1996, p. 51). We need more empirical work to operationalize and measure the relevant variables.

### 3. Processes

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Establishing the normative value of deliberation requires looking at processes, not just outcomes. For example, a lecture by a well-informed individual may greatly increase knowledge. However, such a one-sided communication would hardly count as deliberation. This point is worth reinforcing; while some process variables are important because they lead to good outcomes, some have value in and of themselves. For example, deliberation that allows all participants to speak might produce less learning than deliberation where only the most knowledgeable members of the community speak. Despite the fact that learning is an important outcome variable, we may nevertheless favor the equal deliberation because equality is a process variable with value in its own right, and because the participatory aspect of deliberative theory means that speaking matters along with listening. In other words, process variables can be dependent variables as well as independent variables in the study of deliberation. Like Thompson (2008), we believe that some of the requirements of deliberation have value independent of any outcome they may produce; here, the goal of empirical research should be to determine whether deliberation can have these traits at all, and whether some structural factors (e.g., the presence of moderators) are more likely to produce these traits than others.

We organize this section around three kinds of process research. First, we describe measurements of deliberative processes that are motivated directly by the normative literature. This kind of research takes the procedural requirements described by theorists (e.g., the requirement to respect other deliberators) and seeks to judge whether a particular deliberation or deliberative institution meets these requirements. We then discuss process research that is motivated by literatures in political psychology such as the literatures on race and gender. This research identifies processes that take place in deliberation and then suggests why these processes might be good or bad for deliberation. Finally, we end with a discussion of the qualitative research on the kinds of speech used in deliberation. While this topic is not generally discussed under the rubric of political psychology, we believe that examining what is said in deliberation can offer valuable lessons to students of the psychology of small-group deliberation.

#### 3.1 Process Measurement Motivated by Normative Theory

A prime example of research motivated directly by normative theory is the Discourse Quality Index (DQI) (Steenbergen, Bächtiger, Spörndli, & Steiner, 2003, Steiner, Bächtiger, Spörndli, & Steenbergen, 2004). The DQI is intended as a measure of how well discourse in parliamentary debates approximates the ideal discourse described in Habermas’s discourse ethics. It codes each speech during a legislative debate along seven dimensions, listed in table 22.1, and grouped into broad areas for the purposes of comparison. The DQI is primarily a measure of parliamentary speeches, which differ in many important ways from the kind of small-group deliberation that we describe here. Nevertheless, it can be used in a variety of settings.

Stromer-Galley (2007) introduces a similar coding scheme for coding conversation among average citizens. While the DQI draws primarily on Habermas for its coding categories, Stromer-Galley (2007) draws on a number of definitions of deliberation, including Habermas but also communications scholars and sociologists. Stromer-Galley's method (2007) also uses a much smaller unit of analysis, analyzing each thought expressed by a speaker instead of entire parliamentary speeches. The coding categories reflect these differences. While Stromer-Galley (2007) includes measures of whether speech takes the form of reasoned opinions and whether it is supported by sources (as well as what those sources are), she codes specifically for a number of areas glossed over by the DQI such as equality in speech, whether speech is on topic, and whether speech engages with the prior speech of others.

We advocate measuring the process directly rather than relying on deliberators' reports post-deliberation. As we noted, several studies measure the quality of the deliberative process by asking participants about their perceptions of the deliberative process after discussion is over (e.g., Gastil, Black, & Moscovitz, 2008; Stromer-Galley & Muhlberger, 2009). In one study where post-deliberation self-reports of deliberative quality are compared to the observations of third-party coders, these two quantities have different relationships with outcome measures (Gastil, Black, & Moscovitz, 2008, p. 37). Self-ratings are generally problematic indicators of an objective reality, and from a psychometric perspective they are suspect until proven otherwise. For example, participants may report, or even actually come to believe, that the discussion was high quality because the organizers or fellow members expect it to be so or because of the need to

p. 713 ↵

p. 714 ↵

reduce the dissonance to that they would experience if they invested in the effortful activity of deliberation and then repudiated the worth of that activity. The variety of different measurements used also makes comparison across studies difficult.

**Table 22.1** Elements of the Deliberative Coding Schemes

General area	DQI coding dimension	Definion	Stromer-Galley coding diminion	Difinion
Equality	Participation	Can the speaker communicate freely in debate?	Equality	Do deliberators take advantage of formal equality in opportunities to speak?
Reasoning	Level of Justification	How sophisticated is the justification offered by the speaker	Reasoned opinion expression	Is speech a reasoned expression of a relevant opinion?
	Content of justification	Does the justification appeal to the common good	Sourcing	Do deliberators refer to a source to support their opinions?
			Topic	Does the speech deal with the topic at hands?
Respect	Respect for groups	Does the speaker show respect for groups affected by the policy?	Engagement	Do deliberators demonstrate that they are listening to and responding to the speech of others?
	Respect for demands	Does the speaker show respect for the demands of those who disagree with his/her view?		
	Respect for counterarguments	Does the speaker address and acknowledge the value of counterarguments?		
Consensus	Constructive politics	Does the speaker suggest alternative proposals that could be the basis for consensus?	None	

Source: Adapted from Steiner et al., 2004, chap. 3; Stromer-Galley, 2007.

### 3.2 Process Research Motivated by Psychological Theory

One element of group information processing commonly noted in the psychological literature is polarization. This is the well-known finding that the post-deliberation group average position on an issue tends to be a more extreme version of the pre-deliberation average. Polarization is the product of two distinct processes. The first, *social comparison*, describes the tendency of deliberators to adopt whatever position appears to be the norm within the group. (See also the discussion in Huddy, chapter 23, this volume) For example, in a group where the average position on an issue tilts liberal, all deliberators will feel pressure to adopt a position at least as liberal as the perceived norm; as those below the average move toward the group's mean, they push the new group mean higher, and those at the old mean may shift higher as well (for a review see Mendelberg, 2002, pp.158–161; see also the discussion of “groupthink” by Dyson & ‘t Hart, chapter 13, this volume). The second process, *persuasive arguments*, suggests that in a group with a starting majority, the pool of arguments that can be introduced in conversation consists mainly of arguments that support the majority view. For example, in a group of liberals, the pool of available arguments will be mostly liberal, and sharing these arguments will tend to push deliberators in an even more liberal direction. This explanation emphasizes a more rational process of persuasion through the balance of arguments for one side, in contrast to the first explanation, which emphasizes the desire for social acceptance. However, these explanations may interact; members of groups with a liberal median may feel uncomfortable expressing conservative arguments, further biasing the argument pool.

Schkade, Sunstein, and Hastie (2007) demonstrated polarization in an explicitly polarized environment by putting deliberators in ideologically homogeneous groups, but do not examine which if either of these processes produced the polarization that they observed. However, Price, Nir, and Cappella (2006) found evidence of both processes in online deliberation about candidates' tax policy plans.

Some work from social psychology suggests that the relative weight of these two forces may depend on whether the issue under discussion is a matter of facts or values. Vinokur and Burnstein (1978) look at discussions of several public issues for evidence of both processes. They find evidence supporting persuasive arguments theory on most issues except for capital punishment, the most value-laden issue under discussion. Similarly, Kaplan and Miller's examination (1987) of mock jury verdicts finds that argumentation can account for the value of compensation damages, but social comparison for the value of punitive damages.

p. 715 While the role of norms versus informational influence in driving polarization is unsettled, proponents of Deliberative Polling claim that polarization is not present in Deliberative Polls (Luskin, Fishkin, & Hahn, 2007; Fishkin, 2009). Sunstein (2002) offers a number of hypotheses related to the structure of Deliberative Polls that might account for why groups in Deliberative Polls do not polarize. Specifically, he argues that the lack of a collective decision on the issue, the availability of balanced briefing materials, the diversity of opinions within deliberative polling groups, and the presence of a neutral moderator might account for the observed lack of polarization. These Hypotheses regarding the effect of structural variables on polarization remain untested (see section 4).

A concept related to polarization is attitude convergence (or homogenization), which measures the degree to which the attitudes of a group move toward the prediscussion group mean, regardless of whether the group is ideologically homogeneous. While attitude polarization is generally seen as a normatively negative outcome (Sunstein, 2002), attitude convergence may not be a universal negative, particularly if it is the product of meaningful compromise and learning. Again, it helps to separate the outcome from the process.

Evidence for convergence is, at any rate, mixed. In addition to finding group polarization, Schkade et al. (2007) report that the variance of attitudes within groups drops as a result of deliberation. However, Farrar, Green, Green, Nickerson, and Shewfelt (2009) found that attitude convergence happens inconsistently in

Deliberative Polls and is generally of a small magnitude. Again, this finding may depend in part on the unique structure of the Deliberative Poll. Others find similarly mixed evidence for attitude convergence and suggest some conditions under which it might or might not happen. Gastil, Black, and Moscovitz (2008) found a relationship between the quality of deliberation, as measured by the post-deliberation perceptions of deliberators, and the amount that group members' attitudes converged. It is unclear if deliberators were more satisfied with deliberation that ended with more agreement or if better deliberation produced more satisfaction and more agreement. Additionally, there was no relationship between deliberative quality and attitude convergence when deliberative quality was measured by third-party observers. Barabas (2004) found that deliberators change their minds only when there is verbal consensus within the group at the end of group deliberation. Lacking a consensus, deliberators tend to retain their original opinion. This finding echoes the classic finding from Asch that pressure on a dissenter to conform was greatly reduced when at least one member agreed with the dissenter. Finally, Wojcieszak (2011a) found that deliberators discussing the rights of sexual minorities in politically heterogeneous groups tended to move further apart instead of converging; this was particularly true among deliberators who began with relatively extreme views. Taken together, this evidence suggests that deliberation often, but not always, causes convergence.

p. 716

Polarization has received a great deal of attention, but it is far from the only finding from the group processes literature that might affect political deliberation (see Mendelberg, 2002 for a review). Another is the Common Knowledge Effect (also known as the Hidden Profile finding), which predicts that groups will focus discussion on information that all members know before discussion begins, ignoring novel information that is known by only one or a few deliberators. While this is a well-established finding in psychology (Lu 2012), and one that has sparked concern among deliberative theorists (Sunstein 2006), Myers (2012b) finds no evidence that the Common Knowledge Effect affects political deliberation. He suggests that this is because, unlike other forms of group discussion, political deliberation it usually includes deliberators with conflicting interests, which motivates greater information search. Thus while the group processes literature can be a valuable source of hypotheses about political deliberation, deliberative democratic institutions are unique in ways that mean that these results must be replicated in the political arena.

Research on deliberation is not restricted to examinations of group processes such as polarization or convergence. Other research examines how deliberation affects individual information processing. For example, Druckman (2004) and Druckman and Nelson (2003) exposed experimental subjects to newspaper articles that frame an issue in one of two ways. Framing effects are problematic because they imply that public opinion shifts for arbitrary reasons and can be manipulated easily. Group discussion greatly reduced framing effects, but the composition of the discussion group mattered. (For more on framing see Chong, chapter 4, this volume) Mixed groups, where half had been exposed to one frame and half to another, saw framing effects disappear; in same-frame groups framing effects were only diminished if members of the group had high motivation and ability to think about the issue. Hopefully, future research will examine the effect of discussion on other processes known to affect political information processing (e.g., emotional arousal, see Morrell 2010).

### 3.3 Heterogeneity of Identities and the Process of Deliberation

Understanding the effect of group diversity is important for determining whether deliberation can meet the normative standard of equality in deliberation, and in particular whether it can offer an equal voice to marginalized groups in society. (See also the discussion by Kurzban & Sidanius, chapter 7, this volume) One of the most persistent critiques of deliberative democracy claims that deliberation privileges members of socially dominant groups because they have a greater ability to present their views in the language of rational discourse (Young, 1996; Sanders, 1997). In some cases this is the result of better access to education, skilled occupations, and other resources that make people rhetorically capable and self-confident and thus more likely to dominate deliberation. However, even in the absence of material privilege, minorities and other dominated groups may be at a disadvantage because they lack access to the cultural background of the dominant group and the set of assumed knowledge and perspectives that this background entails. Sanders (1997), drawing on research on juries, argues that “jurors who are privileged in terms of race, economic background, or gender tend to have perspectives quite different from those who are not, belying the expectation that deliberation might inspire, or help recall, a sense of community. The distance between jurors’ perspectives may be sufficient so that less privileged jurors feel that their views are discounted” (p.369). If this is true, then deliberation may accomplish little more than validate the perspectives of the dominant group. Protected “enclave” deliberation may be an alternative in these cases (Karpowitz, Raphael, & Hammond, 2009; see Harris-Perry, 2004 for an example of similar informal discussion).

p. 717

Some research, primarily qualitative in nature, validates these concerns. As part of her exploration of democracy at the radically egalitarian workplace Helpline, Mansbridge (1980) stresses that even in environments where white deliberators are committed to racial equality, deliberation often rests on unarticulated class- and racespecific assumptions that are alien to members of minority groups, making it harder for them to fully participate (pp. 195–198). One African American member of Helpline reported, “I needed help understanding Helpline. I didn’t know what people were talking about half the time.... It was an enormous culture shock” (p.196). Even egalitarian members of the majority group may be blind to the disadvantages that minority group members face; Mansbridge herself admits that she did not realize until late in her research that race was a salient dividing line at Helpline (p.195). Further, Mansbridge notes that such “color-blind” environments can make explicit discussions of race difficult, as white group members perceive suggestions that race is important as personal attacks, or marginalize the person bringing up race as someone outside the mainstream of the group (p.197).

Mendelberg and Oleske (2000) offer similar findings about racial discussion in a comparative study of two town meetings. The meetings discussed a proposal to combine two school districts, one of which was racially mixed and one almost entirely white. At the meeting in the white school district race was rarely brought up directly, and racial motivations were explicitly disavowed. However, the authors argue that several of the common arguments against integration contained racial undertones. At the racially mixed meeting, racial minorities attempted to point out the racial implications of arguments against integration; these attempts were seen by white attendees as unfair attacks, and deliberation shut down as the two sides refused to listen to each other. On the other hand, Walsh (2007) paints a brighter picture in her study of interracial dialogue groups, finding that deliberation can be used to build understanding across racial groups. Still, even in these settings racial minorities speak less and are asked to justify their remarks more frequently (p.188), echoing Mansbridge’s finding that even egalitarian settings can be difficult for minority deliberators because egalitarianism hides unshared cultural assumptions.

A final finding suggests that while racial minorities may be at a disadvantage relative to members of a racial majority, their presence may nevertheless improve the quality of deliberation in a group. Sommers (2006) finds that racially diverse juries “deliberated longer, discussed more trial evidence, and made fewer factually inaccurate statements in discussing evidence than did all-White juries” (p.182; for a review of



related studies see Sommers, 2007). The effects of racial diversity began before deliberation even started: whites on racially diverse juries were less likely to vote for guilt in a pre-deliberation poll than whites on all-white juries. Thus even if racial minorities have less direct influence in discussion, their very presence may give them indirect influence over deliberative outcomes. The results point both to the processes deliberative theorists would be glad to see—better information-processing—and to those they might treat with suspicion, such as socially motivated conformity.

p. 718

Combined, these studies suggest that deliberation about racial issues is difficult, though not impossible in the right context. However, minorities are likely to be at a disadvantage, as deliberation is likely to depend on cultural assumptions that are not shared across racial groups. Minorities tend to be the deliberators who bring these assumptions to light, a difficult task.

Research on gender and deliberation reaches similar conclusions about the subtle but important effects of unequal social identities. In the two sites she studied, Mansbridge finds that being female “limited one’s power and participation in ways that are subtle and difficult to measure” (Mansbridge, 1980 pp.105–107, 191–193). In Mansbridge’s study, women appeared to be less confident in their ability to communicate effectively, and more likely to be intimidated by others’ speech. This conclusion is seconded by a comprehensive study of Vermont town meetings (Bryan, 2004).

In a series of studies, Karpowitz, Mendelberg, and several coauthors build on these insights. They show a considerable effect of the gender composition of a group and of its decision rule on levels of gender inequality in deliberating groups. In situations characterizing most real-world deliberative settings, women are a numerical minority and decisions are reached by majority rule. In experimental simulation of these conditions, women speak far less during deliberation than men, are less likely to be judged as influential by other deliberators and in their own assessment, are less likely to mention issues typically of distinctive concern to women (children, families, the poor), and are less likely to articulate preferences for group decisions that favor generous redistribution. However, in groups assigned to have a majority of women and decide by majority rule, these inequalities disappear; women in these groups have equal participation, equal influence, a higher number of references to women’s issues, and the group chooses a more generous redistribution policy. In addition, unanimous rule protects the numerical minority of women and mutes the inequalities with men in their group (Mendelberg, Karpowitz, & Goedert 2013; Karpowitz et al., 2012). The findings are robust to various controls, such as the ideology of the participants. These findings reinforce earlier findings from social psychology that men wield more influence on juries by, for example, being more likely to volunteer to serve as foreperson (Strodtbeck & Lipinski, 1985). They are replicated in a study of local school boards (Karpowitz & Mendelberg, 2012). These studies further support concerns raised by feminist critics of deliberation that deliberation has the potential to marginalize the views and concerns of socially dominated groups (Young, 1996; Sanders, 1997), but locate settings and institutional procedures that can mitigate the problem.

Other forms of unequal status may also affect deliberation. Pierce et al. (2008) examined deliberation about campus issues between students, faculty and administrators, and found that deliberation, rather than being hindered by the status differences between these groups, can help overcome these status differences. However, they only examined deliberators’ perceptions of the fairness of discussion, not whether the lower-status members of groups, in this case students, actually influenced deliberation. Ban and Rao (2009) examined deliberation in Indian villages and found that when groups include village officials, those officials tend to dominate discussion. However, such officials were more likely to mention the preferences of others and more likely to make substantive contributions to deliberation. In general, unequal status may have a variety of sources beyond race and gender, and the normative and empirical role of deliberators with role expertise or authority on the topic under discussion requires further study (Estlund, 2000, Myers, 2011). Studies outside advanced industrial countries find severe problems of inequality and disadvantages for people who are illiterate, landless, or members of lower castes (Besley, Pande, & Rao, 2005).

p. 719

However, Fishkin (2009) argues that inequalities of influence based on social status do not appear in Deliberative Polls. He presents data showing that the post-deliberation attitudes of a group are not particularly correlated with the pre-deliberation attitudes of white, male, and highly educated deliberators. Based on this, he claims that deliberation does not disadvantage socially marginalized groups. These conflicting results may be the result of different measures of deliberator influence. Karpowitz et al. (2012) and Mendelberg et al. (2013) measure influence using the gender gap in volume of speech, in the topics discussed, in ratings of influence, and in influence over outcomes, while Fishkin (2009) uses the relationship between pre- and post-deliberation attitudes. If the issue under discussion is characterized by broad agreement to begin with, the pre-post correlation will not reveal unequal influence. A range of indicators of unequal voice and influence may be needed. Finally, inequalities in deliberation may not be constant and inevitable but rather created by the conditions of discussion. For example, the group composition and norms of the group may determine whether inequalities exist and how severe they are (Karpowitz et al., 2012). Enclave spaces play an important empowering role (Harris-Perry, 2004; Karpowitz et al., 2009). The issue under discussion may widen or close the gender gap (Hannagan & Larimer, 2010). Female officeholders or the presence of authoritative officials who actively bring marginalized perspectives into discussion may help (Ban & Rao, 2009; Karpowitz & Mendelberg, 2014).

### 3.4 Heterogeneity of Interests and Attitudes

A range of research examines the effect of heterogeneous interests and attitudes in deliberation. At stake is the normative criterion of rationality; if people only hear their own view, discussion fails to expose people to disagreement and they lose the opportunity to learn new information and arguments and to improve the quality of their reasoning (Mutz, 2006). The representation of diverse interests is also necessary for the transformational aspiration of deliberation, which seeks to enlarge people's capacity to think of the common good (Mansbridge, 1980).

p. 720 Esterling et al. (2012) found that groups with either high or low levels of preference heterogeneity produce lower-quality deliberation, as compared to groups with moderate levels of disagreement, though quality here is measured with self-reports. In addition, this study found that moderately heterogeneous groups display more preference convergence. As we noted, Wojcieszak and Price (2010) found that online deliberation in ideologically mixed groups about the rights of sexual minorities produced the opposite—a movement away from the group mean among conservatives but not among liberals. These findings are not necessarily in conflict; disagreement on issues like gay marriage may be particularly intractable, at least for conservatives, and Wojcieszak and Price (2010) do not report variation in the level of disagreement within groups. The effects of heterogeneity remain an open research topic.

A key question is whether minority preferences can find an adequate voice. That they do so is a fundamental requirement of all normative models of deliberation, and a large literature in psychology tackles this question (see Mendelberg, 2002 for a review). Myers (2012a) tests several conditions that could promote equal voice and representation for interest minorities in group decisions, using lab and field settings. He experimentally varies whether the identical piece of relevant information is given to a member who is in the majority in terms of interest in the decision being made or is in the minority. He finds that groups are more likely to ignore the information when it is given to the minority. A group needs diverse preferences to produce learning and eliminate priming effects, but when interests conflict, the learning process is directed by the majority to the disadvantage of the minority.

### 3.5 Kinds of Speech in Deliberation

Studies that examine the nature of language and the contents of speech are valuable for political psychology because they open a window on the process and mechanisms that drive the cause and effect we observe. Studies in this vein seek to classify aspects of speech in order to analyze concepts of interest to political psychology and deliberation. These studies tend to be qualitative; quantitative content analysis is a little-explored frontier of research on language (but see Myers, 2011; Mendelberg et al., 2013).

One focus of these studies is storytelling. Black (2009) argues that storytelling is the primary way that deliberators share information and manage disagreement, and that the use of these stories is closely connected to the identities available to the storyteller (See also Ryfe, 2006). Storytelling was also a key feature of deliberation's ability to prompt exchanges across lines of social difference in the interracial dialogue groups that Walsh studied (2007). Stories allow speakers to introduce controversial issues and train listeners' attention on differences between the speaker's experience and their own, but in a way that may create empathy. However, debate also plays an important role; by using debate, participants identify and delimit differences while still showing respect for others. Black develops a typology of stories; this typology and Walsh's distinction between dialogue and debate can prove useful lenses for understanding speech in deliberation. Future research may focus on how effective these different forms of dialogue are.

p. 721 Polletta (2008) took a different approach by examining the "mode" or model of conversation that deliberators employ. On the surface deliberation appears to follow the mode of sociable conversation: pleasant, but not leading to attitude change and avoiding conflict between different opinions. However, she found that deliberators make use of other conversation modes: "educational," "negotiation," and "advocacy" that differ from social conversation by allowing for disagreement. Rather than avoid conflict, as is usually done in sociable conversation (Eliasoph, 1998), deliberators were able to express disagreement respectfully and reach compromise using these alternative conversational modes.<sup>3</sup> Importantly, compromise was favored over avoidance because conversation in the advocacy mode led the groups to believe that they had a mandate to come to conclusions, even though the groups were not formally charged with reaching a consensus.

Another approach is to assess the level of discourse at which deliberators engage each other. Rosenberg (2007) classifies conversation into three types discourse. Each level has its own understanding of what discourse is intended to achieve and what rules govern social interaction. In the simplest level of *conventional discourse* deliberators try to find a solution to a well-defined problem while "maintaining conventional social roles." In *cooperative discourse* deliberators share perspectives on the problem in order to redefine the problem as well as the kinds of considerations that might be relevant to solving the problem. At the highest and most transformative level, *collaborative discourse*, deliberators reflect on "the process whereby rules of argumentation are formulated, basic assumptions regarding nature, society, and individuals are defined, and the social conditions of discourse are understood and institutionalized." That is, at the highest level, participants question the notion that they already share fundamental understandings of the issues and of the process of discussion, and explicitly examine their assumptions and perspectives. Rosenberg presents empirical results from group discussions of school reform that suggest that deliberators are rarely willing or able to engage in discourse beyond the conventional level (Rosenberg, 2007).

These studies are valuable because they offer categories of analysis for understanding speech, and suggest ways in which speech might reflect, implement, or alter individuals' motivations, reasoning, social identities, and other concepts of interest to political psychologists. Future studies could fruitfully seek a more explicit connection between outputs such as group polarization and processes such as storytelling, or outputs such as self-understanding and self-awareness and processes such as collaborative discourse.

### 3.6 Conclusion

As we elaborate in the [next section](#), the conditions of deliberation shape the process, and few processes can be regarded as a sure and fixed characteristic of deliberation. For example, deliberation may produce attitude polarization and convergence in some cases, but it is premature to declare a “law” of group polarization (Sunstein, 2002).

Still, tentative conclusions can be drawn in some areas, while in others the need for more research is clear. Deliberators do articulate relevant arguments and information, and these do shape their views at the end of the day. Deliberation can help correct ↪ some of the pathologies of individual information processing, for example, by eliminating framing effects, although it can lead to other information-based or socially based pathologies, such as group polarization or convergence. Whatever its normative value, storytelling appears to play a major role in how people deliberate about political issues. However, while deliberation is supposed to result in more inclusive decision-making, and racially heterogeneous groups may provide information-processing benefits just as full inclusion of women can alter the agenda and decisions of the group, the process of deliberation is rarely free of the inequalities of social status, race, and gender. These problems can be addressed, but specific conditions must be in place to do so. As Esterling et al. (2012) show, other forms of heterogeneity, such as preference heterogeneity, can have complicated effects on the quality and outcomes of deliberation. Process research can also identify biases that are not anticipated by normative scholars, such as Myers’s finding (2012a) that the influence of an argument depends on whether the argument is introduced by someone who shares the majority’s interests, not just on the informational value of the argument.

A number of factors that make research on deliberative processes particularly difficult are worth noting. Process variables can be difficult to operationalize, particularly when they are drawn from normative theory. Notice, for example, the different ways that the DQI and Stromer-Galley (2007) operationalize key normative concepts, and the fact that even their extensive and detailed typologies ignore storytelling, an element that Black (2009) and Polletta (2008) find to be crucial (see also Ryfe, 2006). Other key concepts, such as a speaker’s direct engagement of other speakers, are rarely operationalized (see Kathlene, 1994 and Karpowitz & Mendelberg, 2014 for an attempt that relies on interruptions). Self-report measures of process are highly problematic, and both psychological and normative theories require attention to the actual words that are spoken in deliberation, but coding conversation is difficult and time-consuming.

## 4. Context of Deliberation

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Small-group deliberation does not happen in a vacuum and rarely happens spontaneously (Ryfe, 2002). It is generally organized by some existing group<sup>4</sup> and is shaped by the broader political context in which it takes place. For example, the alternatives to deliberation in the broader political context shape the deliberation; Karpowitz (2006) suggests that the availability of adversarial political means for influencing the policy process can cause people who feel that they are disadvantaged in deliberation to disengage from it. Deliberation is also shaped by the decisions made by organizers about how to structure group discussion: procedural and decision rules and practices, settings, moderators, and so on. Organizers of a deliberation may have their own policy agenda (Cramer-Walsh, 2007), and there is a danger that they may use control over agendas, briefing materials or procedural rules to shape debate. Jacobs et al. (2009, chaps. 4 and 6) find much diversity ↪ in the topics and institutional structures of deliberation. We refer to these variables as the context of deliberation.<sup>5</sup>

## 4.1 The Medium of Deliberation: Face to Face versus Online

While deliberation is naturally conceived of as occurring face-to-face, holding deliberative forums online can reduce costs and make them more accessible to citizens (Price & Cappella, 2007). While proponents of online deliberation acknowledge that such deliberation is different in a number of ways, including “reduced social cues, [the] relative anonymity of participants, and a reliance on text-based exchanges lacking non-verbal, facial and vocal cues,” they argue that such differences are not fatal flaws. Indeed, they might prove advantageous by “facilitat[ing] open exchanges of controversial political ideas” (Price, 2009, p. 37). At the very least, these differences in the deliberative experience may create significant differences in the psychological processes involved in deliberation.

Several major research projects have examined the effects of online deliberation on opinion formation (Luskin, Fishkin, & Iyengar, 2004, Price & Cappella, 2007).<sup>6</sup> Like face-to-face deliberation, online deliberation appears to increase political sophistication, foster opinion change, and drive higher levels of social trust and political participation (Price & Cappella, 2007; 2009). These results suggest that online deliberation affects a range of outcome variables similar to those affected by face-to-face deliberation.

Only a few experimental studies explicitly compare online deliberation to offline deliberation, making it hard to tell whether the differences between the formats result in meaningful differences in the size of these effects. What research exists suggests that the context-poor condition of online deliberation means that effects of online deliberation are similar to offline, but smaller in magnitude. (Luskin et al., 2004; Min, 2007; Grönlund, 2009). Min (2007) found that online deliberation produced slightly less of an increase in efficacy than offline deliberation on the same topic, and unlike face-to-face deliberation produced no statistically significant increase in intentions to engage in political participation. Further, what evidence exists suggests that the lack of social context does not make online deliberation more conducive to the exchange of controversial ideas. Min (2007) found that participants in face-to-face deliberation were more likely to feel that deliberation had been characterized by a high level of respect than participants in online deliberation. Luskin et al. (2004) claim that the attitudes of groups engaged in online deliberation are somewhat more likely to polarize and converge within groups, paradoxically suggesting that the forces of social conformity discussed in the processes section are harder to resist in the online environment.

Baek, Wojcieszak, and Delli Carpini (2012) and Wojcieszak, Baek, and Delli Carpini (2009) used survey data of people who report participating in face-to-face or online deliberation to compare the two formats. They found that participants in online deliberation are more likely to be white and male, and not notably more diverse in other respects than face-to-face deliberators. Interestingly, participants in online deliberation perceive their fellow deliberators as more diverse than participants in face-to-face deliberation. Online deliberation does attract more moderates, perhaps because of its lower cost to participants. Participation in the two formats appears to be motivated differently; face-to-face deliberators report more community focused motivations, while online deliberators more individualistic motivations. Online deliberators were less likely to report that their discussion produced consensus, prodded participants to take further action, or taught factual knowledge than offline deliberators, and online deliberators reported experiencing more negative emotions during discussion.

## 4.2 Moderators

Designers of deliberative institutions believe that moderators can improve deliberation by keeping groups on task, managing conflict, and ensuring that everyone has a chance to speak (Mansbridge, Hartz-Karp, Amengual, & Gastil, 2006). Others argue that moderators have a negative effect by using their privileged position to exert influence over the outcome of deliberation (e.g., Humphreys et al., 2006). These concerns stem from research in the psychology on jury forepersons. While dormant recently, this literature suggests that forepersons tend to be of higher SES than the average juror and exert disproportionate influence, relative to other jurors, over jury decisions and the content of deliberation (Hastie, Penrod, & Pennington, 1983, Strodtbeck & Lipinski, 1985; see Devine, Clayton, Dunford, Seying, & Pryce, 2001 for a review). This evidence suggests to critics of deliberation that the presence of moderators will bias discussion toward those already privileged by the political system (Sanders, 1997).

Surprisingly little research has examined the possible positive and negative effects of moderation. Pierce et al. (2008) found that moderators increase low-status deliberators' perceptions that all participants had an opportunity to participate and make these deliberators feel more comfortable. A study of online discussions assigned some groups to trained, active facilitators and other groups to basic, bare-bones facilitation. It found that active facilitation limits the gap between men's and women's participation in the forum, though it did not include a "no facilitation" control condition (Trénel, 2009). On the negative side, Humphreys et al. (2006) used the random assignment of discussion leaders to groups in a national forum in São Tomé and Príncipe to show that the policy preferences of these leaders exert a great deal of influence over the decisions groups reached (though see Imai & Yamamoto, 2010 for a methodological critique of this finding). Spada and Vreeland (2011) found that moderators who made semiscripted, non-neutral interventions during the deliberation were successful at shifting group opinion toward the side favored by the minority, but less successful at reinforcing the view supported by a majority in the group. Thus the possible benefits of facilitators in increasing social equality and airing a variety of views may be offset by the possible disproportionate and perhaps unnoticed influence that they have on the direction of discussion and the group's ultimate decision. Still, no published study looking at possible negative influences of moderators compares moderated groups to unmoderated groups, and the theory of how moderators might have either positive or negative effects remains underdeveloped.

p. 725

## 4.3 Decision Rules

When group deliberation ends with a decision, the decision rule used may have a significant impact on the form discussion takes. Much of the evidence in this regard comes from the study of juries, which usually decide by unanimous rule but occasionally use majority rule. Such studies have found that unanimous rule can lead groups to spend more time talking (Davis, Hulbert, Au, Chen, & Zarnoth, 1997), to focus more on normative arguments (Kaplan & Miller, 1987), to believe more often that the deliberation was fair and comprehensive (Kameda, 1991; Kaplan & Miller, 1987), to accept the group decision more frequently (Kameda, 1991), and more frequent shifting of individual jurors' views (Hastie et al., 1983). Group consensus generated through talk can also lead to increased cooperative behavior (Bouas & Komorita, 1996). In sum, unanimous rule appears to create the expectation that the group will behave as one, while majority rule implies that individuals are expected to focus more on individual interests (Mansbridge, 1980). If consensus aids otherwise quiescent participants with distinct views, it will contribute to the exchange of diverse perspectives.

However, the literature also offers contradictory findings. Consensus pressures can silence participants and are not always conducive to airing deep conflicts (Mansbridge, 1980; Karpowitz & Mansbridge, 2005). Falk and Falk (1981) found that majority decision rule may counteract inequities of influence more effectively than unanimous rule. Miller, Jackson, Mueller, and Scherschling (1987) conclude that the unanimity

requirement sometimes increases rejection of minority views. When simulated juries are instructed to choose unanimously or with near unanimity, they frequently adopt an implicit norm that squashes the minority view (Davis, Kameda, Parks, Stasson, & Zimmerman, 1989; Davis, Stasson, Ono, & Zimmerman, 1988). Finally, a substantial game-theoretic literature claims that unanimous rule encourages jurors to strategically hide information that points toward innocence, as conviction requires unanimous assent (Guarnaschelli et al., 2000, Austen-Smith & Feddersen, 2006; Goeree & Yariv, 2011). Unanimous rule may thus exacerbate rather than remedy the quiescence of minority members. Finally, little is known about the effects of not having a group decision at all such as in Deliberative Polls. Removing the need to reach a decision may ameliorate some of the pressures that lead to group polarization or silence minority views (Luskin et al., 2007), but a sense that a decision is not required may remove the need to compromise (see Black, 2009).

#### p. 726 **4.4 Conclusion**

Small group deliberation is shaped by a large number of contextual factors. While these factors have received less attention than some process or outcome variables, existing research sheds light on some of their effects. Online deliberation is cheaper and easier, but the less intensive format results in fewer gains from deliberation. The familiarity of deliberators with the issue under discussion as well as the place of that issue and of the deliberation effort in the broader political context can affect the outcomes deliberation produces. Decision rules appear to have large effects on the process and outcome of deliberation. Finally, the effect of moderators on the process of deliberation is complex and deserves further research attention.

As this review should make clear, a wide range of contextual factors remain un- or under-investigated. While we know something about online forums and about moderators, much remains to be learned; the explosion of opportunities for discourse online, in particular, is underexplored. Two still more neglected variables are group size and meeting length and repetition. For example, Jacobs et al. (2009, chap.4) report substantial variance in the size of deliberative forums. Research on juries suggests that size matters (Devine et al., 2001); future research on deliberation should explore how and when. In addition, deliberations vary from a few minutes to days, and from one-time to a long series of iterations (e.g., Warren & Pearse, 2008). Longer deliberations may allow for more interpersonal connections between deliberators that change the process of discussion, and some studies argue that the nature of personal connections is crucial (Mansbridge, 1980). While certainly not exhaustive, this list suggests that like other areas of deliberation research, contextual research on deliberation remains an open field.

## **5. Conclusion**

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Empirical research on political deliberation is in its infancy. Despite this, the existing literature contains a wealth of studies that have begun to identify and illuminate the important questions in the field. In addition to reviewing this literature, we hope that we have provided a useful structure for thinking about deliberation in terms of three categories of variables: outcomes, process, and context. Research on outcomes has shown what outcomes deliberation *can* produce. As the literature develops, we hope that more research will examine *how* these outcomes are produced by the process and context of deliberation. Focusing on the *how* of deliberation has practical as well as normative benefits. As a practical matter, understanding how contexts and processes produce different outcomes will help policymakers with the complicated institutional design questions that come with planning deliberative forums. On the normative side, the same outcome may be more or less normatively preferable depending on the process that produces it. Indeed, simply knowing the outcome of deliberation may tell us little about the normative value of the process that produced it.

p. 727 Research on deliberation is shaped by its connection to contemporary democratic theory, a connection that sets it apart from much of the other research discussed in this handbook (Mutz, 2008; Thompson, 2008). The best research in the studies we have reviewed makes use of this connection by taking seriously the demands of normative theory and turning these demands into usable empirical measures. Echoing Mutz (2008), we agree that empirical political science cannot “test” deliberative democracy because deliberative democracy is an ideal. Instead, empirical research on deliberation can take the yardstick of that ideal and use it to create better, more legitimate deliberative institutions that come closer to the deliberative ideal, as well identifying those situations where deliberation is so difficult or detrimental that it is not worthwhile. Like any political process, deliberation can never reach the ideal. Nevertheless, finding ways to bring political institutions closer to the deliberative ideal is a useful and laudable project for political psychology.

As deliberation becomes a more important part of political process, the research discussed in this chapter will only grow in importance. Jacobs et al. (2009) show that deliberation, broadly defined, is a fairly common form of political participation—more common than frequently studied forms of participation such as volunteering or giving money to a campaign. While some fear that deliberation might be harmful to democracy (Hibbing & Theiss-Morse, 2002), or that deliberation is at odds with participatory democracy (Mutz, 2006), other research suggests that deliberation is uniquely well suited to increasing the participation of citizens who feel alienated from normal politics (Neblo et al., 2010). Further, research is beginning to point to structures and processes that can be used to actualize deliberation’s potential (Karpowitz & Mendelberg, 2012; Wantchekon, 2011). Deliberative methods are now used in policy fields as diverse as criminal justice, environmental policy, international development, and bioethics. Empirical guidance from political psychology can help ensure that these efforts achieve the goals of normative theory.

## Notes

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1. We are building on other overviews here: Neblo (2007), Mutz (2008) Ryfe (2005), and De Vries et. al. (2011).
  2. See also Gastil et. al. 2008a, Andersen and Hansen, 2007.
  3. For related experimental evidence see Stromer-Galley and Muhlberger(2009).
  4. For more on groups that organize deliberative forums, see Jacobs et al. (2009, ch. 7)and Ryfe (2002).
  5. One topic requiring more research is the effect of the issue. Existing research has shown that attitude change is greater on unfamiliar than on familiar issues (Farrar et al. 2010). Also, the issue can shape inequality; local boards dealing with topics that society constructs as more feminine tend to have much higher proportions of women (Hannagan and Larimer, 2010). More research is needed on issue type and its effects.
  6. There is, ofcourse considerable variation in the format of online deliberation. For example, Luskin et. al. (2004) conduct an online deliberation where deliberators speak into a microphone, allowing for voice communication, while most online deliberation uses text communication (Min, 2007). The effects of these specific variations are an interesting topic for future research.
- p. 728



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