THE DELIBERATIVE CITIZEN: THEORY AND EVIDENCE

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ABSTRACT

Should citizens be encouraged to deliberate about matters of politics? A review of several literatures about group discussion yields a mixed prognosis for citizen deliberation. Group discussion sometimes meets the expectations of deliberative theorists, other times falls short. Deliberators can, as theorists wish, conduct themselves with empathy for others, equality, and open-mindedness. But attempts to deliberate can also back-fire. Social dynamics can often account for both discussions that appear deliberative and for those that clearly fail to meet deliberative criteria.

In the beginning was the group. This is the fundamental truth about human nature and politics, and neither modern nor contemporary political theory has yet come to terms with it (Alford, 1994, p. 1).

INTRODUCTION

Increasingly, scholars and practitioners of politics in modern industrial societies are advocating more opportunities for citizens to deliberate about matters of politics. A variety of recent developments, political and academic, have sparked this interest in democratic deliberation. There are growing calls for remedies to the high level of citizen alienation (Fishkin, 1997; Putnam, 2000). There is

a resurgent interest in the study of political participation broadly conceived (Barber, 1984; Rosenstone & Hansen, 1993; Sapiro, 1999; Verba et al., 1995). There are more opportunities for citizens to participate in bureaucratic governance (Rossi, 1997). There are increasing calls for more civility in American political discourse (Sapiro, 1999). Finally, there is a shift in U.S. politics from what government does for citizens, to what citizens do for themselves. These developments have come hand in hand with a growing sense that democracies should build significant opportunities for citizen deliberation about politics.

Not everyone is taken with deliberative prescriptions to the ills of democracy. The more one fears that discussion enhances the influence of the powerful at the expense of the disadvantaged, the more inclined one is to turn a skeptical eye on deliberative solutions. And the more doubtful one is that citizens are competent to handle matters of politics, the less enthusiastic one tends to be about citizen deliberation.

Empirical research can help to adjudicate between the advocates and skeptics. Further, a review of relevant social science findings about deliberation can point out aspects of deliberation that advocates and skeptics each may be missing, or mishandling. It can point out new ways of thinking about an old and now resurgent approach to politics. And it can lead to a more hardheaded confrontation with the problems of deliberation, and generate ideas for their solution.

Even for those uninterested in the effects of deliberation in particular, the study of deliberation is valuable because it sheds light in a more general way on how language matters for politics. Without understanding how people communicate about politics we are left with an incomplete picture of how politics works. As Fischer and Forester note, "language does not simply mirror or picture the world but instead profoundly shapes our view of it in the first place" (1993, p. 1). In no case is this truer than in deliberation.

In this essay I examine the current state of knowledge about citizen deliberation.[1] My point of departure is the fact that many real-world deliberations take place in small groups. There is little systematic research on the nature and consequences of deliberation in real settings (but see Lindeman in this volume). However, when we recognize that these real-world settings are often small group discussions, we can glean useful evidence from social science research about how people communicate in small group situations.

Deliberation is not merely a utopian ideal; it is practiced already, and may become so more and more widely. It is time we understood what it is expected to do, what it is in reality, and what it could become. Doing so can help us better understand how citizens should, do, and could practice politics in a democracy.

THEORIES OF DELIBERATION

What is deliberation? There is no single definition on which all theorists of deliberation agree (Macedo, 1999).[2] Still, it is possible to distill a working definition. Many theorists emphasize that during true deliberation, people rely on reasons that speak to the needs or principles of everyone affected by the matter at hand (Gutmann & Thompson, 1996; Habermas, 1989; Rawls, 1996). The promise of deliberation is its ability to foster the egalitarian, reciprocal, reasonable and open-minded exchange of language. The consequences, according to these theories, are a more empathic view of the other – even others considered beneath oneself; a better-informed perspective on public problems; and a broader understanding of one's interests. In this way, deliberative democracy can serve the common good where models of democracy based on narrow self-interest and negotiation may fail (Mansbridge, 1991).

If it is appropriately empathic, egalitarian, open-minded, and reason-centered, deliberation is expected to produce a variety of positive democratic outcomes (Barber, 1984; Benhabib, 1996; Bickford, 1996; Bohman, 1996; Chambers, 1996; Cohen, 1989; Fishkin, 1997; Gutmann & Thompson, 1996; Mansbridge, 1983, 1996; Sunstein, 1993; Warren, 1992, 1996). Citizens will become more engaged and active in civic affairs (Barber, 1984). Tolerance for opposing points of view will increase (Gutmann & Thompson, 1996). Citizens will improve their understanding of their own preferences and be able to justify those preferences with better arguments (Chambers, 1996; Gutmann & Thompson, 1996). People in conflict will set aside their adversarial, win-lose approach and understand that their fate is linked with the fate of the other, that although their social identities conflict they "are tied to each other in a common recognition of their interdependence" (Chambers, 1996; Pearce & Littlejohn, 1997; Yankelovich, 1991). Faith in the democratic process will be enhanced as people who deliberate become empowered and feel that their government truly is "of the people" (Fishkin, 1997).[3] Political decisions will become more considered and informed by relevant reasons and evidence (Chambers, 1996). The community's social capital will increase as people bring deliberation to their civic activities (Fishkin, 1997; Putnam, 2000). The legitimacy of the constitutional order will grow because people have a say in and an understanding of that order (Chambers, 1996; Gutmann & Thompson, 1996).

To summarize, deliberation is expected to lead to empathy with the other and a broadened sense of people's own interests through an egalitarian, open-minded and reciprocal process of reasoned argumentation. Following from this result are other benefits: citizens are more enlightened about their own and others' needs and experiences, can better resolve deep conflict, are more engaged

in politics, place their faith in the basic tenets of democracy, perceive their political system as legitimate, and lead a healthier civic life.

These expectations are not mere descriptions of an ideal. They are meant to encourage more people to deliberate more on more matters of politics (Bohman, 1996; Gutmann & Thompson, 1996; Habermas, 1996; Nino, 1996, p. 152). Despite thin or non-existent empirical evidence for the benefits that deliberative theorists expect, many theorists argue forcefully for more citizen deliberation even in situations of entrenched conflict, in part on the argument that the only alternative may be separation or violence (Chambers, 1996; Gutmann & Thompson, 1996).

But separation or violence is not the only alternative to more deliberation. A more pessimistic approach to deliberation reminds us that there are forms of discourse that are not deliberative and that could help people avoid violence or separation. Theorists concerned about the inequalities of power in deliberative situations argue that deliberation is inferior to other, viable alternatives that are more egalitarian (Sanders, 1997; Young, 1996).[4] For example, Jane Mansbridge, perhaps the most thorough observer of deliberation, tempers her enthusiasm for deliberation with important cautions. In situations of deep conflict, argues Mansbridge, consensual deliberation is not the method of choice. Rather, people in conflict should settle the question according to the principle of proportional representation (1983). People can find creative ways to live with each other that are not oriented toward reaching common understandings but are inspired by a bargaining model of interest accommodation. They may want to consider these alternatives to deliberation in light of the possible ill effects of deliberation. Not only is deliberation sometimes inegalitarian, but it may also lead to greater conflict (Larmore 1994). Thus, when we evaluate deliberation in reality, we should remember that it is not the only way for people to settle their differences peacefully, and that it may not always work to the good.

Despite the cautions of more pessimistic theorists and the thinness of evidence showing that deliberation in fact works as expected, a wide array of efforts has been launched to implement more opportunities for more people to deliberate. "At least in the course of time," John Rawls wrote in *A Theory of Justice*, "the effects of common deliberation seem bound to improve matters" (1971, p. 359). Rawls' view seems to dominate today, as a plethora of deliberative efforts are underway. Citizens have increasing opportunities to deliberate in a wide variety of settings: in juries, town meetings of various kinds, local, state and regional boards and commissions, hearings that solicit citizen testimonials, workplaces, civic groups, and activist groups (Crosby, 1995; Dienel & Renn, 1995; Eliasoph, 1998; Fishkin, 1997; Gastil, 1993; Gastil & Dillard, 1999; Hastie et al., 1983; Jennings, 1993; Luskin & Fishkin, 1998; Lynn & Kartez, 1995, 88; MacRae,

1993, pp. 310–311; Mansbridge, 1983; Merkle, 1996; Rossi, 1997; Shapiro, 1999; Vari, 1995; Williams & Matheny, 1995; Witte, 1980; Wright, 1992).[5]

WHAT WE CAN LEARN ABOUT DELIBERATION FROM SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH ON SMALL GROUPS

These more formal efforts to promote citizen deliberation are the focus of my review. Because they have generated little systematic research, however, I turn to the social science literatures about small group discussion as a close simulation of what goes on in these public deliberations. I begin with social dilemmas, proceed to intergroup relations, and end with group polarization and minority influence.

Social Dilemmas

A thoroughly neglected area of research of great relevance for deliberation is the social dilemma. In a social dilemma, the pursuit of narrow self-interest, while rational for individuals, is irrational and harmful for the group. The group is better off if everyone cooperates for the greater good, but individuals are tempted to pursue their individual self-interest instead. An intriguing finding from the perspective of deliberation is that no circumstance increases cooperation in social dilemma experiments more dramatically than face-to-face communication (Ostrom, 1998, p. 7; see also Bornstein, 1992; Dawes et al., 1990). A meta-analysis of over 100 experiments found that face-to-face communication in social dilemma games raises cooperation by 40 to 45 percentage points (Sally, 1995).

For these results to inform deliberative theory, however, we need to know what goes on during communication. Perhaps some people use it to mislead other players. They may use cooperative communication as a "cheap signal," fooling others into cooperating while they defect in private. Reassuringly for deliberative theory, such is not the case. Talk in social dilemmas can serve several good deliberative purposes. First, members use talk to reveal their genuine commitment to cooperation and their trustworthiness and to discover others' (Bornstein & Rapoport, 1988; Kerr & Kaufman-Gilliland, 1994; Orbell et al., 1988). When talk leads individuals to perceive a consensus to cooperate, it becomes a powerful predictor of actual cooperation (Bouas & Komorita, 1996).[6] Second, talk can create a norm of group-interest in which individuals come to see their own self-interest as consonant with the self-interest of every other member of the group. This norm in turn causes

individuals to act with the goal of maximizing the group's interest. Through discussion people change their identity to include the group in their self-concept. The group's interest comes to serve as a heuristic to self-interest (Dawes et al., 1990; Orbell et al., 1988). Each of these functions might give deliberative theory some hope.

A still more encouraging finding is that the more deliberative the discussion, the more cooperation it produces. Bouas and Komorita randomly assigned groups of women either to a discussion of their common dilemma (in order to create a consensus to cooperate on the dilemma) or to a discussion about an irrelevant but salient matter (in order to create a general group identity unrelated to the dilemma).[7] They found that only discussion about the dilemma enhanced cooperation. These results may offer some support to deliberative theory. If creating a group identity had been sufficient to create cooperation, then reason-based deliberation about the dilemma is not necessary to create cooperation. Reason-based deliberation would then lose its distinctive promise to help resolve conflict in a meaningful way. But if group identity is insufficient, and what is required is a discussion among people exchanging good reasons about the course of action optimal for the good of all, then we can conclude that deliberative theory is grounded in empirical reality.[8]

Making trouble for the empathy component of deliberative expectations is that even these seemingly deliberative functions of group discussion can ultimately be distilled into a self-interested motive. We do not know for sure whether discussion in social dilemmas serves to transform individuals from largely self-regarding to more other-regarding.[9] Future studies seeking specifically to understand the deliberative functions of communication should isolate the self-regarding and other-regarding facets of communication.

A more complex picture emerges when social dilemmas pit subgroups rather than individuals against each other. Here, communication can improve or worsen competition. Some studies reach pessimistic conclusions. One research team has found that while communication consistently enhances cooperation among individuals, it undermines cooperation among groups (Insko et al., 1993). Bornstein and colleagues reach a more sanguine conclusion. They examined an intergroup version of the prisoner's dilemma,[10] in which individual interest clashes with ingroup interest, which in turn clashes with superordinate group interest. They found that communication between the two competing groups enhances cooperation between them, at the expense of ingroup interest but consonant with individual interest, as deliberative theory would wish. But communication within each ingroup enhances cooperation among individuals within the ingroup and against the outgroup (Bornstein, 1992). These results call on deliberative theory to account for the complex reality of group conflict:

cooperation among individuals can be anti-cooperative – and thus undermine empathy – in situations of group conflict.

The argument that deliberation helps to resolve conflict over resources or power thus receives considerable support, but also disconfirmation. Deliberation among individuals seems to produce empathy to an extent beyond what theorists could have hoped. Further work is required to verify that the effect of discussion is in fact based on empathetic deliberation and not some other, non-empathetic form of communication. More work too is needed to understand what deliberation may do in the more complex situation of intergroup dilemmas.

Inter-Group Cooperation

Deliberative theory can also draw lessons from research on intergroup co-operation. According to classic studies in social psychology, under specific conditions, groups in conflict can make progress toward resolving their conflict and eliminating bias and discrimination against the other group (the "outgroup") (Allport, 1954; Brewer & Miller, 1984, 1996; Gaertner et al., 1990; Sherif et al., 1961). Discussion between antagonistic groups can play an important role in reducing intergroup conflict and bias. But the discussion may take on one of two very different natures: interdependence and deliberation. If beneficial discussion is driven primarily by interdependence and common fate – members' sense that the well being of their group depends on the well being of the other group – then there may not be much of a role for deliberation. On the other hand, if a common fate does not alone explain intergroup cooperation, perhaps deliberative interaction between groups can matter.

One ambitious effort to answer this question comes in a recent study by Samuel Gaertner et al. (1999) that varied common fate and discussion independently. They assembled students into small groups (homogenous in gender), each composed of three Republicans or three Democrats. First, the groups were assembled separately and taken through a series of steps designed to foster a subgroup identity as Democrats or Republicans. Then the opposing groups were brought together in pairs in a way that maintained the groups' separate partisan identities. The groups were asked to deliberate about how to most effectively reduce the federal budget deficit and required to specify which programs to cut and which taxes to increase. They were told that there was an objective, bipartisan best solution to the budget problem, and that the two out of five randomly selected solutions that best approximated it would win a cash prize (two rather than one winner to avoid a sense of competition). Then they were informed either that the two groups shared a chance of winning by working together

(common fate), or that their chances of winning were independent of the other group (independent fate). Each group was also instructed to interact fully, interact partially, or not interact. Groups that interacted fully were instructed to engage in free discussion and to reach consensus. Groups instructed not to interact sat in the same room but discussed the task only within each group. In partial interaction, groups discussed separately but then their members took turns reporting their group's solution to the other group. In the partial and no interaction conditions with common fate the experimenter informed the groups that their respective solutions would be combined through averaging.

Gaertner et al. found that interaction is somewhat more important than common fate in reducing intergroup bias. Furthermore, the more interaction the more intergroup bias declined, with full interaction causing the greatest decline and no interaction the least. However, partial interaction had almost as big an effect as full interaction. Disappointingly for deliberative expectations, discussion among individual group members with the goal of reaching a consensus is nearly as effective as the simple exchange of information about the group's fixed preferences.

Still more troubling for deliberative expectations are findings from situations when the groups are not equal in the number of members, as is often the case in reality. Recent evidence from laboratory and field studies suggests that when groups are highly mismatched in members, bringing them together for a joint interaction may actually exacerbate conflict and bias (Bettencourt & Dorr, 1998; Miller & Davidson-Podgorny, 1987). When a group finds itself in a numerical minority, its distinctive group identity tends to become more salient, making intergroup cooperation more difficult (Bettencourt & Dorr, 1998).

The intergroup relations literature has only recently turned its attention to the question of intergroup deliberation. But already it appears that while deliberation can work for the good, it is not alone, and it may be highly contingent. Groups engaged in consensual discussion do show markedly less conflict and bias toward each other. But this result obtains nearly as well with non-deliberative interaction. If groups achieve the same reduction in bias by signaling preferences as by exchanging reasons, we have reason to doubt the distinctive desirability of deliberative communication. Moreover, while the evidence on this point is meager, there is reason to believe that the good effects of communication among equally matched groups may backfire in the more common case of unequal groups.

Group Polarization

A body of research that both challenges and supports deliberative theory is *group polarization*. Put simply, group polarization is the finding that discus-

sion tends to amplify the strength of a majority opinion (Moscovici & Zavalloni, 1969; Myers & Lamm, 1976). If the group starts out inclined toward one alternative, it emerges from the discussion with a strengthened commitment to that alternative. For example, simulated juries' punitive awards in personal injury cases show a dramatic polarization effect in which juries' inclination to punish severely or leniently increases considerably with deliberation (Schkade et al., 2000). Many other examples outside the jury situation show a pattern of polarization.

This robust finding has been explained most often by two very different mechanisms, one social, the other informational. One offers pessimistic implications for deliberative theory, the other hope. The pessimistic social mechanism is normative influence. Group polarization may be driven by *social comparison*, the attempt to present oneself to others in a positive light. Group members strive to be perceived as at least as good as, if not better than, average on some desirable dimension. The desirable dimension is associated with the task at hand. During discussion most people find out that in fact they do not exceed the average, and many shift in an attempt to catch up to the average.

A more general formulation of this hypothesis states that normative pressure shifts individuals in the direction of the group's norm, whatever that may be. The majority preference or perspective has more weight simply because it is the more popular (Noelle-Neumann, 1984). All it takes to change minds is to expose people to the central tendency of the group's opinion (the "mere-exposure" effect) (Baron & Roper, 1976; Blascovich et al., 1975; Isenberg, 1986; Myers, 1978; Myers et al., 1980). Even if individuals disagree with the central tendency, they comply, going along with it at least in public. For example, in simulated jury deliberation in which a small numerical minority disagrees with the majority, the minority often capitulates to the majority even when it continues to disagree with it in private (Davis et al., 1977, 1988, 1989; Penrod & Hastie, 1980).

This normative influence explanation implies that the most influential side in a conflict may not be the side with the best arguments, contrary to deliberative expectations. Rather, it is the side that is most influential socially (Turner, 1991, Chap. 4). In other words, discussion affects people's decision making not through the exchange of reasons but by setting the social norms of the overall group. Social muscle, not persuasive argumentation, carries the day.

A much more deliberative hypothesis exists, however. According to Burnstein, Vinokur and colleagues, groups polarize not because of social motivations but because deliberators in the majority can offer more novel and valid arguments for their side (Burnstein et al., 1973; Burnstein & Vinokur, 1977; Vinokur & Burnstein, 1978). Groups move in the direction suggested by

the most novel and valid arguments, whatever that direction may be. It is only an artifact that groups polarize in the direction favored by the initial majority. The majority is simply more likely to offer novel arguments. If the balance of novel and valid arguments were skewed toward the minority, the group would move in its direction instead. In its emphasis on rational argumentation and its attempt to rule out any social motivation, this theory of persuasive arguments harmonizes quite well with deliberative theory. Certainly it comes much closer than do explanations that emphasize social pressures.

The evidence suggests that each model – the social and the informational – captures an important part of the reality.[11] When the situation affords no opportunity for argumentation, only social forces can explain group polarization. By the same token, group polarization in situations with little opportunity for social comparison can only be the result of argumentation (Isenberg, 1986). More often than not, both processes seem to go on simultaneously. It may be that persuasive arguments generate bigger effects, although meta-analytic comparisons of effect size have been rather fragile (Isenberg, 1986, e.g. note 15). In what may be the best head-to-head test of the two explanations, Vinokur and Burnstein (1978) explored what happens to opinions on various public issues when two conflicting groups of equal size are assembled into one over-arching collective and exposed to arguments from the other side's perspective. In accordance with their persuasive arguments theory, they predicted that each group would be persuaded by the novel arguments offered by the other, and depolarize away from its own average and toward the other. Social comparison theory by contrast predicts a polarization of the groups away from each other and in the direction of each group's mean, as each member compares herself to others in her original group and attempts to show her credentials as a good member of that group. The results largely (though not thoroughly) vindicated persuasive arguments theory, as the groups depolarized to a considerable extent.

However, as Isenberg points out (1986), persuasive arguments theory did poorly on the most value-laden of the opinion items: those on capital punishment. Persuasive arguments theory appears to be least accurate on matters that center on values, and most accurate on matters that depend on facts (Laughlin & Earley, 1982). Kaplan and Miller's experimental results underscore this conclusion. In their study's mock jury awards, the more objective, factual, and intellective task of setting uncontroversial compensation damages was driven largely by information exchange, while the much less objective and more value-laden task of setting punitive damages was driven largely by normative influence (Kaplan & Miller, 1987).

The lessons for deliberation about politics are several, but I highlight two here. Most clearly, the more the discussion takes up questions of truth and fact,

and the less it deals with values, the more isolated it becomes from the social pressures that deliberative theory would regard with alarm, and the more rational and argument-driven it becomes, as deliberative theory would like. On matters of value, opportunities for deliberation are likely to turn anti-deliberative. And even if they manage to turn argument-centered, they are unlikely to change minds. Advocates of deliberation would do well to promote deliberation on issues of fact but to advance alternatives to deliberation on issues of value.

Less obvious but equally important is the implication for severe conflict. When deliberation deals with an issue that has long generated deep conflict, it is unlikely that many novel arguments will be aired. And if novel and valid arguments are aired, they are not likely to persuade many people. Under circumstances of severe conflict, an argument-centered discussion is unlikely to change any minds.

THE INFLUENCE OF THE MINORITY VS. THE POWER OF THE MAJORITY

One of the hopes of deliberation advocates is that with good deliberation, sheer advantage of power will not overwhelm the ability of people to communicate their perspectives effectively. Deliberativists would worry a great deal if it turned out that the majority always wins, and that none of its minds had changed. Persuasive arguments theory provides some hope in this regard, as the last section showed. But there is a more general question here: do powerful groups ever listen to relatively disadvantaged groups? This question is of some urgency since deliberative theory rests not only on empathy and reason but also on equality. Reassuring on this score is the work on minority influence. While early studies suggested that conformity pressures guaranteed that minorities almost never have an effective say, over the past several decades, Serge Moscovici and his colleagues have argued to the contrary. Not only do minorities have a chance to influence; they can influence people in a way that majorities cannot (Moscovici, 1976, 1980).

If theories of minority influence are correct, when a minority succeeds in voicing its view, it may set in motion the kind of productive conflict for which deliberative advocates hope. The group's norms are a crucial mediating factor here. When the norm accents the need to reduce or control conflict and disagreement, communication becomes a conduit for social pressures to conform to the majority. In these circumstances, people often go along, at least in public, for the sake of the majority's approval (the familiar process of *social comparison*), often without any change in understanding (*compliance*) (Moscovici, 1980, 1985). But when the group's norm highlights the value of originality, the

innovative are the influential (Moscovici, 1985). In these situations, those who offer the new, unique view of reality and succeed in challenging the majority's accepted perspective are those who are most valued. They succeed through a process of *validation* in which the majority critically evaluates the new arguments against the evidence. Because this change is driven by arguments and evidence, it tends to be long lasting and private rather than temporary and public (*conversion*).

This theory of minority influence has a basis in evidence. Several studies suggest that a numerical minority arguing against a majority may not succeed in changing the vote of the majority, but it can prompt the majority to think about new alternatives and from different perspectives, something the majority fails to do to the minority (Nemeth, 1986; Nemeth & Kwan, 1985; Nemeth & Wachtler, 1983; Turner, 1991). Minorities in fact seem to enhance a majority's information search and processing (Nemeth & Mayseless, 1987; Nemeth & Rogers, 1996), although perhaps only when the minority offers a view unusual for that minority (Wood et al., 1994, p. 337). The minority can prod members of the majority to ask themselves why the minority thinks as it does – in other words, through its arguments it can force the majority to become more empathetic. In a phrase that could easily have been authored by deliberative theorists, Moscovici argues that the majority then tries "to see what the minority saw, to understand what it understood" (Moscovici, 1980, p. 215). The minority in effect presents a "conflict of perceptions" and prompts the other side to try to reconcile its perception of reality with the minority's perception. This kind of thinking eventually leads people to understand a perspective different from their own, prompting private conversion.

Minority influence scholars argue that minority influence tends to be not only private but indirect, often affecting opinions related to the main issue rather than views about the main issue itself (Moscovici, 1980, 1985; Mugny et al., 1991). Although minorities are believed to influence majorities when norms emphasize original thought, minorities are nevertheless often stigmatized socially, which explains why members of the majority who are persuaded attempt to hide their conversion from public view. The simultaneous ability of minorities to influence and their continued stigmatization seems to be a paradox in the theory, and more recent treatments of minority influence demonstrate the need for separate estimates of the impact of stigmatization and conflict of opinion, which are too often confounded (Wood et al., 1994). Still, meta-analytic findings support the hypothesis that minorities are better at influencing indirect than direct opinions on the issue at hand (Wood et al., 1994).[12] In fact, minorities do seem to influence private indirect opinion more than majorities (Wood et al., 1994).

Of further relevance to deliberation is that a minority can only have an effective say if its members are consistent with each other (Moscovici, 1980, 1985; Wood et al., 1994, p. 334). That may be because consistency indicates certainty (Maass & Clark, 1984). While the minority must project certainty, some scholars find that it must also avoid the perception of dogmatism (Maass & Clark, 1984). Perhaps because it avoids the perception of dogmatism, consistency with a late moderate compromise may increase minority influence (Turner, 1991, Chap. 4). However, some scholars emphasize that the more rigid and less compromising the minority, the more it succeeds at indirect influence even as it loses direct influence (Moscovici, 1980). Perhaps these conflicting findings might revolve around the group's task; groups that must reach a decision may tend to steamroll over inflexible minorities, while groups charged only with discussion for its own sake may be much more amenable to giving an inflexible minority a full hearing (Smith et al., 1996, p. 147).

Also crucial to the minority's success is that its view appears to be grounded in objective fact and a more accurate rendition of the truth (Moscovici, 1985). Perhaps that explains why minorities are much more influential on perceptions of reality than on matters of subjective opinion (Wood et al., 1994, p. 333).

These findings all seem to support the view that minorities can engage the majority in a genuine deliberative enterprise that entails a real exchange of information-rich arguments and an open-minded process of persuasion. But there is also room for an interpretation that emphasizes a more socially driven, less deliberatively desirable process. These results can be interpreted to mean that a unanimous minority succeeds when it can set the overall group's norm about what is right (Turner, 1991, Chap. 4).[13] The late-compromising minority effect may mean that a minority only succeeds when it avoids the perception that it is socially divisive. Several findings support this interpretation. First, minorities that act consistently with fundamental majority norms are more effective than those that seem to violate the basic norms of the overall group (Bray et al., 1982; Nemeth et al., 1974; Nemeth & Brilmayer, 1987; Moscovici & Mugny, 1983, p. 59; Turner, 1991, pp. 93–94). Second, consistency may work best for a minority when the group norms are unclear (Moscovici, 1985). Third, minorities are more influential in groups whose members share a strong and widespread identification with the overarching group (Turner, 1991; Turner et al., 1987). Fourth, a numerical minority whose members belong to a salient social outgroup loses all influence on the majority (David & Turner, 1996). Fifth, a minority belonging to the ingroup succeeds better than either an outgroup minority or an ingroup majority in getting the audience to approve, process and recall the message, and to approve the source (Alvaro & Crano, 1996). Sixth, minorities have more influence (always on private views) when they deliver their views in absentia

rather than in small face-to-face groups (Moscovici, 1980; Wood et al., 1994, p. 333). All these findings make it likely that the minority's credibility rests at least in part on its social appeal.[14]

Even if a minority uses arguments to influence the majority, the arguments may do their work in a non-deliberative way. The work of Kameda and colleagues suggests that just because a discussion is centered on arguments, this does not mean it is solid on deliberative grounds. The trait of "cognitive centrality" influences discussion in a way that makes trouble for deliberative theory (Kameda et al., 1997). Cognitively central people are individuals who hold a larger-than-average number of arguments in common with other members. Kameda and colleagues assembled three-person groups and instructed them to discuss a criminal case and decide by consensus whether the defendant should receive the death penalty. They found that people who were the most cognitively central had the largest influence over the group's decision – regardless of their competence or the quality of their arguments. In a second experiment, the investigators simulated a citizens' advisory board charged with making parole decisions, and manipulated participants' cognitive centrality, assigning every "treated" participant to be in a numerical minority in the group. They found that decisions were much more driven by the people randomly assigned to be cognitively central to their group than by people assigned to be cognitively peripheral. In fact, unlike their peripheral counterparts, cognitively central members single-handedly converted the initially quite skeptical majority in their group two-thirds of the time (Kameda et al., 1997, pp. 304–305). The people they converted were quite confident in their changed opinion.

These findings indicate clearly that people whose arguments overlap considerably with those of other deliberators have a disproportionate influence over the deliberation and its outcome. This may pose trouble for deliberative expectations to the extent that, as Kameda and colleagues argue, people rely on a "cognitive centrality heuristic." This heuristic leads people to assume that individuals who know more well known arguments are expert, while people who know many arguments unknown by others are incompetent. In that case, social influence, and not the deliberative quality of the information and arguments, is the driving mechanism. Numerical minorities who are cognitively peripheral and who may have a great deal to contribute stand little chance of being heard precisely because they are offering unfamiliar arguments.

The literature on minority influence provides some hope to deliberative advocates. Perspectives lacking in social advantages such as the power of numbers can nevertheless be effectively voiced in reason-based discussion. In fact, the lack of social advantage may even serve as an asset in deliberation, prodding people to consider the matter from a novel perspective and leading to more indirect, private

persuasion. Questions remain, however, about the extent to which these encouraging findings are driven by deliberatively undesirable social pressures and motives. Particularly troubling are the findings on cognitive centrality.[15]

ANALYTICAL LEVERS

The previous section attempted to provide an overview of several literatures relevant to group deliberation. I now take a more analytical pass at the research on group discussion. In this section I tackle relevant social science literatures not in their own terms, but with questions and concepts that are rooted in deliberative theory.

Who Deliberates? The Pros and Cons of Inequality

One of the central themes in the criticism of deliberation is that inequality pervades it. Critics worry in particular about the damage that long-term inequalities based on class or status, gender and race cause during deliberation (Mansbridge, 1983; Sanders, 1997; Young, 1996). Does the relevant research reinforce or quiet these worries?

As with any mode of participation, people do in fact deliberate at highly unequal rates. Typically, in a jury of twelve, three members contribute over half of the statements (Strodtbeck et al., 1957), and over 20% of jurors are virtually silent (Hastie et al., 1983, pp. 28, 92). Studies of juries find that higher-status jury members (those with more prestigious occupations, more income, more education, etc.) tend to speak more, to offer more suggestions, and to be perceived as more accurate in their judgments (Hastie et al., 1983; Strodtbeck et al., 1957). The impact of status cannot be accounted for by accuracy. Status does not make people more accurate, simply more talkative (Hastie et al., 1983, 153). At least until the 1980s, women participated less frequently in jury deliberations, and their statements tended to convey agreement and solidarity more often than men's (James, 1959; Nemeth et al., 1976; Strodtbeck & Mann, 1956; Strodtbeck et al., 1957). Women tend to have less influence than men do in group interactions (Ridgeway, 1981). When a capital jury trial involves an African American defendant and a white plaintiff, African American jurors are more alienated from the decision making than white jurors: they report less participation in deliberation, less influence over other jurors, and less satisfaction with the process (Bowers et al., 2001).

Education in particular is likely to cause inequalities in deliberation, as it does in other forms of political participation (Verba et al., 1995). In one sense, that is a good kind of inequality for deliberative democracy to have. According

to Nie, Junn and Stehlik-Barry, education makes people "democratically enlight-ened", that is, gives them cognitive tools to recognize that the interests of the community should sometimes override their own narrower self-interest, and that those with different views should be tolerated (1996). The well educated also have more sophisticated reasoning skills. Overall, then, education probably makes for more empathic deliberators (at least in the minimal sense of toler-ance) and for more cognitively competent deliberators.

But educational inequalities are also troubling for the egalitarian requirement of deliberative theorists. People with little education are not only more likely to lack access to occupations where reasoning and public speaking skills develop. They also lack access to the pool of cultural arguments about public issues available to people in these occupations and in institutions of higher education (Nie et al., 1996). Class thus advantages the well educated not only by smoothing the path to participation, but also by giving them the means to influence deliberation. The well educated are more likely to show up to deliberate, and once there, can present both deliberatively good and socially legitimate arguments. The structural inequalities in society can thus undermine deliberation both through the ability to deliberate well and the ability to influence through social mechanisms not sanctioned by deliberativists.

This inequality is particularly troubling when we consider the possibility that the perspectives of the well educated differ from those of others. Education is strongly associated with a more prosperous class position. Class comes with a set of perspectives and interests of its own. Since the highly educated participate more, their particular class interests and perspectives are likely to be better represented during discussion (James, 1959; Mansbridge, 1983; Strodtbeck et al., 1957).[16]

There are also cognitive differences associated with – but not equivalent to – education that make some people better deliberators than others. People vary in their "need for cognition", defined as the motivation to think in depth about the essential merits of a message (Cacioppo & Petty, 1982). Need for cognition is correlated with intelligence and education, but has effects independent of them. It is more specific to people's tendency to think hard and at length about a challenging message or task (Cacioppo et al., 1996). Shestowsky, Wegener and Fabrigar (1998) conducted mock-jury discussions among dyads and found that people high in need for cognition had more influence over a discussion partner, in part because they were able to generate more arguments to support their pre-existing views. Not only did they generate more arguments, but they specifically generated more valid arguments, as deliberative theorists would like. On the down side, however, people high in need for cognition have stronger attitudes (Petty et al., 1995), and are therefore more resistant than others to arguments that

contradict their views. So while they may be effective speakers, and listen for appropriate types of evidence and logic (Cacioppo et al., 1996) – all attributes reassuring to deliberative theorists – they may fail on the criterion of being too resistant to change even when confronted with meritorious arguments (Shestowsky et al., 1998).

One possible reform that might address this deficiency is to prompt the majority who are low in need for cognition to adopt the practices of people high in cognition. When people with low need for cognition feel the pressure of time, they behave more like good deliberators – they seek out more relevant information about the arguments they hear, and make better use of it (Verplanken, 1993). If people can be prompted to adopt the positive aspects of need for cognition without the negative resistance to arguments, there is hope that by structuring the situation (for example, introducing more time pressures), many people can become better deliberators overall.[17]

Inequalities matter in a different way too. When citizens deliberate with elites, as they do in hearings and advisory committees, inequalities of information and expertise come into play in a pronounced fashion. Elites almost always have vastly more access to information, to the concrete resources needed to gather and make effective use of information, and to expertise in how to use and present information. Research in psychology has documented that among the most important determinants of individuals' influence over the group's decision-making process is others' perception of the person as more expert or competent in the task at hand (Bottger, 1984; Kirchler & Davis, 1986; Ridgeway, 1981, 1987). Anecdotal accounts from real-world deliberations echo the worry about citizens' information disadvantage (Eliasoph, 1998, p. 166; Lynn & Kartez 1995, p. 87; MacRae, 1993, pp. 310–311). The vast gap between elite and citizen expertise is likely to make elites far more influential than citi-zens in any deliberative exercise that involves both. For deliberation to avoid the pitfalls of the knowledge gap, the gap must be narrowed considerably before any deliberation takes place. An obvious remedy would be for citizens to gain access, resources, and training in the use of relevant information.

Reason vs. Emotion

Deliberative theorists tend to emphasize the requirement that deliberation be based on reasons and principles. Some critics, however, have offered a far more expansive view of deliberation. Democratic discussion, they note, should be a mixture of reason and emotion. Furthermore, there may be no good way of distinguishing among them in any case (Mansbridge, 1999). As Eliasoph notes, some deliberative theorists seem to view deliberators as "brains engaged in

calm, rational debate" instead of people with "tastes, passions, manners" (1998, p. 12). The problem with reason is that, as one communications scholar put it,

> Persuasive use of language does not so much appeal to reason but to the recipient's expectations and emotions. As its purpose is not so much to inform as to make people believe, and in the end to act upon their beliefs, he/she who sounds like one of us is the one we most easily trust (Sornig, 1989, p. 109).

Not only may emotion be at least as effective as reason in a discussion, reason can serve as an excuse for emotion. Reasonable discourse can serve as a means of justifying pre-existing, emotionally charged preferences. In general, people who feel strongly about a position offer more arguments for it and against the opposite view than people who don't much care (Howard-Pitney et al., 1986). In a literature known as *motivated reasoning*, social and cognitive psychologists have documented the variety of innovative ways that people who are strongly committed to a predetermined view find to interpret evidence to support their view. This bias occurs at every step of information processing, from setting goals, to gathering and evaluating evidence from the outside or from memory, to constructing inferences and judgments (Taber et al., 2001). People not only fail to attend to evidence that disconfirms their view, but they readily accept evidence as valid if it agrees with their view while questioning and ultimately rejecting the validity of information that challenges it (Ditto & Lopez, 1992; Wyer & Frey, 1983).

For example, perceptions of what is fair, of particular interest to deliberative theory, are highly susceptible to prior beliefs (Vallone et al., 1985). A series of behavioral economics studies conducted by Camerer and Loewenstein (1993) found that people agree in their perceptions of fairness only when they do not yet know what their interests are. Giving bargainers more information (about each other's costs, benefits and preferences) tends to interfere with their ability to reach a mutually satisfactory agreement because it enhances each bargainer's perception that the agreement is unfair to him or her.

Similar findings come from a very different research tradition on political information. In an influential study by Lord, Ross and Lepper (1979), people with strong positions about capital punishment were provided with two scientific pieces of research on the deterrent impact of capital punishment. The investigators found that the research did not challenge prior beliefs but rather provided a means by which subjects could reinforce their priors. It was the prior sentiment that drove the final opinion, but people worked hard to couch their views in the language of rationality and reason provided to them in the research reports. In addition, after using these scientific arguments to bolster their pre-existing views, participants became even more strongly committed to their prior positions.[18]

According to Bodenhausen and Macrae (1998, p. 23), people are susceptible to motivated reasoning both because of self-presentation concerns – the desire to appear good and reasonable to others – and through genuine self-deception, in which they fool themselves into thinking that they have been fair and even-handed. The latter motivation may be particularly insidious and makes considerable trouble for the deliberative expectation that people are rational enough to correct their biases when confronted with appropriate evidence.

These biases of individuals tend to be amplified by groups. Groups, especially if they are homogenous, are much more prone than individuals to search for information that confirms their preliminary preference (Schulz-Hardt et al., 2000). One group mechanism that exacerbates the individual tendency to search for confirming evidence is the group's ability to heighten individuals' "defense motivation" – the feeling that once one has made a decision, one should commit to it. Homogenous groups also work by increasing members' confidence; when a group agrees on what to do, the members are much more confident in that decision than they would be if making the same decision individually or when the group fails to agree (Schulz-Hardt et al., 2000). Heterogeneous groups are much less susceptible to these group biases.[19]

The use of reasoned argument to reinforce prior sentiment is a widespread phenomenon that poses a significant challenge to deliberative expectations. Motivated reasoning has considerable power to interfere with the motivation that deliberative theory cherishes – the motivation to be open-minded, even-handed and fair. Deliberators can hardly pursue truth and justice if they view everything in favor of their priors through rose-tinted glasses and everything against it through dark ones.

Still, the foregoing discussion in some ways rests on a questionable assumption behind much deliberative theorizing: that emotion is a negative force, to be supplanted by reason as much as possible (Mansbridge, 1999). A great deal of contemporary research in psychology cautions us not to view affect with such suspicion. When people's feelings and reasons diverge, often the feelings, not the reasons, "give a truer indication of our inclinations" (Marcus et al., 1995, p. 63). Emotional states such as anxiety alert people to the need to attend – and give more weight – to new information (Marcus et al., 2000; Marcus & Mackuen, 2001). Without these emotions, Marcus and his colleagues have argued, people would learn too little and rely on unthinking habit too much. True, people easily misattribute their affective states (Clore & Isbell, 2001; Schwarz & Clore, 1983). For example, citizens are likely to misattribute the enthusiasm they feel for a speaker to the content of the speech rather than the speaker's happy facial expressions even when it is actually the latter that affects them more (Masters, 2001). Nevertheless, affect is not merely a source of biased

interference. Rather, it is an irreplaceable element of authentic self-expression. It prompts people to re-evaluate the status quo and plan new courses of action. Emotions provide a way to learn and grow.

Moreover, emotion not only helps people with their self-management tasks, but may be necessary for the full empathy that deliberativists wish to see. Bell distinguishes between the cognitive empathy on which many deliberative theorists focus and affective empathy. A person with cognitive empathy takes "the perspective of another person, and in so doing strives to see the world from the other's point of view." A person with affective empathy "experiences the emotions of another; he or she feels the other's experiences" (Bell, 1987, p. 204). Deliberative theory places the learning, growth and empathy that can come from group discussion at a premium. It must thus make a place for a more complex view of what emotions can do, not just against but for good deliberation (Marcus forthcoming).

The Nature of Language

The problem of motivated reasoning raises questions not only about the role of emotion in a process meant to highlight reason, but also about the role of language in a process meant to revolve around argument. On the whole, deliberative theory takes the nature of language to be unproblematic (Mendelberg & Oleske, 2000). But critics have argued that disadvantaged groups are also disadvantaged when it comes to language (Mendelberg & Oleske, 2000; Sanders, 1997; Young, 1996). Social psychologists have recently shed light on the ways people use language in group situations. Much of these findings reinforce the worries of critics of deliberation.

In a series of thought-provoking articles, Anne Maass and her colleagues have documented a consistent bias in the way people use language in group situations. The bias is not so much in the content of what people say as in the way they say it. The *linguistic intergroup bias* (LIB) is people's tendency: (1) to use *abstract* terms to describe their in-group's *positive* actions and their out-group's *negative* behaviors, and (2) to use *concrete* terms to describe the in-group's *negative* and the out-group's *positive* behaviors (Maass et al., 1989; Maass & Arcuri, 1996). The LIB rests on a set of categories that can be ranked from concrete to abstract. The most concrete category has "descriptive action verbs" ("A kicks B"). A somewhat more abstract category is "interpretive action verbs" ("A hurts B"). Still more abstract are state verbs ("A hates B"). The most abstract are adjectives ("A is aggressive"). The more abstract the speech, the more information the speaker provides about the subject of the sentence

("A") rather than its object ("B"). In addition, the more abstract the talks, the stronger the speaker's suggestion that the action is likely to recur in another time or place. As Maass, Ceccarelli and Rudin note, "abstract descriptions imply that the behavior represents a stable and enduring property of the actor" (1996, p. 513). As they deliberate, people can thus convey a great deal of meaning about their own group or others' simply by emphasizing abstract or concrete terms in their speech.

In a variety of situations and in several languages, LIB researchers found that people do seem prone to call attention, in this subtle and indirect way, to their own group at the expense of the other. They use the LIB to imply that their group's positive and the outgroup's negative qualities are inherent while their group's negative and the outgroup's positive characteristics are accidental or temporary and caused by circumstance. The LIB tends to spike up when the group feels threatened or enters a situation of conflict with another. For example, the LIB in Italian media coverage of the conflict with Iraq was much more pronounced during the Persian Gulf War than just afterward (Maass et al., 1994). The LIB appears to elevate both personal and group self-esteem, which suggests that people use linguistic forms and patterns to make themselves feel superior (Maass et al., 1996). The LIB may also undermine feelings of attraction and closeness that can develop during discussion, and thus may undermine affective empathy (Rubini & Kruglanski, 1996).

It seems, then, that in situations of conflict, deliberators may use the forms of language as a linguistic weapon. Rather than bringing people to common understandings and allowing them to express mutual respect, language can heighten estrangement and the sense that one's identity is being derogated. In fact, we have seen already how this happens with the content of language. The phenomenon of motivated reasoning suggests that people find a wide variety of seemingly justified words to convey negative impressions of people with whom they disagree. But the LIB suggests that language can be used to heighten conflict in still more subtle and indirect ways. Deliberators can use the format and not just the content of speech to undermine good deliberation.

Whether or not people do so consciously and with full intent is an open question. Webster, Kruglanski and Pattison suggest that speakers change levels of abstraction without knowing it (1997, p. 1130). If so, deliberative expectations are in for a very rough ride. Deliberators may not only transform discussion from a process of reason and empathy into a weapon of superiority; they may not be aware of doing so. People are unlikely to abandon their biased language forms if they are unaware of them. Or, more sanguinely, people may be able to move from language as a weapon to language as a bridge, but only if they are taught to do so. Who would do this teaching and how is unclear.

On the positive side of the equation are findings that people *can* use language to create a sense of common identity and facilitate cooperation. Speech acts that may contribute to an atmosphere of common identity include using the other's first name to convey solidarity, and using the first person plural ("we") to create a sense of shared identity (Sornig, 1989; see also Dawes et al., 1990). These forms of address are "very likely to create [an] atmosphere and feeling of shared situational assessment, natural understanding, and common destiny" (Sornig, 1989, p. 104). But to put these findings in perspective, creating a sense of group identity and cohesiveness does not necessarily serve the basic egalitarianism that deliberative theorists require in a democratic society. In fact, in Sornig's study the feelings of affinity and closeness were put to the service of greater ethno-centrism toward excluded outgroups (see also Mendelberg & Oleske, 2000).

The work of Giles and colleagues on "*speech accommodation theory*" sharpens the point that language may serve either deliberative or anti-deliberative aims. Giles and colleagues suggest that people have stereotypical notions of how social groups use language and that these notions are activated when people of different social identities come together for a discussion (Giles et al., 1987). The result is often a shift in the subtle ways that people use language – the length of pauses, the rate of speech, accent, dialect, and more. People either speak less like the other group than they usually do ("divergence"), or more like the other group than they usually do ("convergence"). People *converge* toward the outgroup's pattern most often when the outgroup has a higher status. For example, low-class speakers adopt high-class patterns of speech in order to project a competent image (Thakerar et al., 1982).[20] Speakers *diverge* from the outgroup's speech patterns when they seek to reinforce the distinctiveness of their own group's identity, often under conditions that highlight differences between groups or create competition between them (Hogg, 1985; Thakerar et al., 1982). When deliberators' social identity is threatened by an outgroup, they are likely to react by using language in a purposeful – if not always conscious – attempt to reinforce the social boundaries between themselves and others. When social identity is not under threat and there is little motivation to maintain group boundaries, the patterns of language can actively bring people together across lines of difference. In these circumstances, people often converge, and the result is that speakers are perceived as more friendly, cooperative, effective, and warm (Giles et al., 1987, p. 19).

The lesson for deliberation is that language can become a tool either for establishing common ground or for reinforcing conflict. If people's interests or social identity are threatened by the deliberation, conflict becomes more likely and deliberation may do more harm than good. If the deliberation is structured to minimize threats to interests and identities, then deliberation may create

common ground in part by affording the opportunity for people's language patterns to converge on each other. Even in this case, however, the danger is that convergence comes disproportionately from disadvantaged groups' attempt to show that they are deserving of the benefits they seek, rather than a more mutual and egalitarian process in which each party decides to meet the other on the linguistic dimension.

Are Citizens Competent Enough to Deliberate?

It seems from the foregoing that many people are not cognitively skilled, justification easily replaces deliberation, reason is not easy to come by during deliberation, and people do not always use language in ways that are fully intentional and cooperative. The question becomes, are citizens capable of meeting the requirements of deliberation? The findings on deliberation jibe with the core finding of the public opinion literature of the past fifty years: the public has woefully inadequate levels of political information, its thinking about politics is incoherent, and it pays little attention to politics. Perhaps, then, citizens cannot deliberate adequately, and should not be expected to do so.

On the other hand, deliberation may go some ways toward remedying these deficits; at least, that is one important reason for introducing more deliberation (Fishkin, 1997). The eminent deliberative theorist Jürgen Habermas has detailed the potential for participatory democracy to transform individuals into better democratic citizens. According to Habermas, citizens may not start out with a clear and consistent set of political ideas; but deliberation facilitates their development by requiring that they provide reasons for their interests that others can accept (1996). Deliberation can thus motivate citizens to clarify their own interests and needs.

Do citizens become more competent after deliberating? Barabas's sophisticated study of a deliberative issues forum (2000), and Gastil and Dillard's analysis of such a forum (1999), suggest that certain types of people, in particular people who are less certain of their opinion going into the deliberation and people who know a great deal about the issue at hand, do change the way they consider the issues under discussion, and in deliberatively good ways. Somewhat unclear is whether these effects are caused specifically by deliberation itself rather than the associated information and attention that accompany it in these forums. And while useful, this research has not told us about empathy, reciprocity, or the use of arguments.

Another favorable answer comes from experimental research by Tetlock (1983, 1985) and Kruglanski and Freund (1983). These studies found that when people are told in advance that their judgments will become public, they are

more likely to treat evidence objectively, and less likely to allow their reasoning to be biased. The mere anticipation of public deliberation may serve the function of democratic education. Accountability, believes Tetlock – as do the deliberative theorists Gutmann and Thompson (1996) – is at the heart of the matter. If people know that they will be held accountable for their judgments, they will expend more cognitive effort and give priority to the goal of accuracy over the goal of buttressing their prior beliefs (Tetlock & Kim, 1987).

However, deliberative motivation, which appears to be crucial for competence, seems to vary with an individual's status in the deliberating group. Levine and colleagues find that people's level of bias, and their motivation to acquire and process information, depend greatly on the number of supporters and opponents they expect to meet. If they expect to be in a small minority, they search for information that will support their view, and overlook information that contradicts it (Levine & Russo, 1995). But they also generate more thoughts against their position (Zdaniuk & Levine, 1996). In a situation of conflict, before they deliberate, people come prepared either to ignore opposing views (if they are in a large majority) or to listen to them in an active way (if they are in a small minority). Anticipating a public discussion by itself will not advance the educative function of deliberation.

Even if people are competent enough for deliberation, they may not want to deliberate – a problem not much anticipated by deliberativists. In part that is simply because many people may continue to show a distinct lack of interest in politics even with opportunities to deliberate. Many seem to dislike the conflict that comes with full-fledged deliberation in situations of disagreement (Hibbing & Theiss-Morse, 2001). In part too many people may have ideological and principled reasons for treating deliberation with suspicion (Eliasoph, 1998). In all, it seems that motivation to deliberate may be a key factor in fostering or retarding deliberative competence.

Are Several Heads Better Than One?

As does any demanding form of democratic participation, deliberation may prove a challenge to citizens. But don't deliberating groups at least offer an information advantage over individuals?[21] Deliberative theorists often take a "two heads are better than one" approach:

> The benefits from discussion lie in the fact that even representative legislators are limited in knowledge and the ability to reason. No one of them knows everything the others know, or can make all the same inferences that they can draw in concert. Discussion is a way of combining information and enlarging the range of arguments (Rawls, 1971, p. 359).

It turns out, however, that groups have predictable deficits when it comes to sharing information. "Groups," writes Stasser, "tend to talk about what all the members already know" (1992, p. 49). More than a dozen studies have documented the tendency of group members to discuss information they all know ("shared") more than information only one knows ("unshared") (Gigone & Hastie, 1993, 1997; Larson, Foster-Fishman & Franz, 1998; Larson et al., 1998; Stasser, 1992; Stasser & Titus, 1985; Stasser et al., 1989; Winquist and Larson, 1998; Wittenbaum et al., 1999). Not only is commonly held information discussed more often, it is discussed earlier, and repeated more often by leaders (Larson, Foster-Fishman & Franz 1998; Larson et al., 1998). Consequently, group decisions tend to be biased toward shared information at the expense of the information that each member is uniquely positioned to bring to the decision, even when the unshared information points to a much better alternative (what Stasser called the "hidden profile;" Larson et al., 1998; Stasser & Titus, 1985). Discussion mediates this bias (Kelly & Karau, 1999). When the discussion focuses on unshared information, the quality of the group decision increases significantly (Winquist & Larson, 1998).

This bias for shared information may be due to the simple reality of probability: the more people know a piece of information, the more chances it has to be mentioned by someone (Stasser & Titus, 1985). But more troubling for deliberative democracy, there is reason to suspect that the social processes of group dynamics are at work too.

In a well-known article, Stasser and Titus (1985) mimicked an election caucus by assembling undergraduates into groups of four. The groups were charged to decide on the best candidate for student president from a field of three fictional candidates. In each condition, the investigators arranged for Candidate A to be the best (based on a previous study). But each condition set up a different distribution of information to the participants. In the "shared" condition, all four members received identical information showing A to be best. In two "unshared" conditions, the same overall information was provided (showing that A was best), but it was divided up so that each member got only a fourth of the information favoring candidate A. The information that each member received thus contained more negative than positive information about A. The positive information differed across members so each member had unique information about A.[22] Thus, if the four members pooled their distinctive information during discussion, they would see that there was more net positive information about A than about the other candidates, and reach the correct conclusion that A was best (roughly with the same probability as the groups in the "shared" condition). But if they failed to share their distinctive information with each other, the balance of information during group discussion would reflect badly on A and the group would choose the wrong candidate.

And that is in fact what happened, despite the fact that the investigators warned the participants in advance that the information each received may be incomplete and that they may need to rely on information received by their fellows. In the shared condition, Candidate A was preferred by two-thirds of the people before discussion and by a huge 85% afterward. But in the unshared conditions, A was preferred by only a quarter of the people, and that percentage dropped slightly after discussion. Measures of information recall showed that discussion failed to prod people to recall the information that others lacked (that is, unshared information). Thus, discussion failed to bring out the unique perspective of each person and to promote better exchange of information of crucial importance to the group's decision. Stasser and Titus argued in part that motivated reasoning was at play here. Individuals erroneously conclude from their partial information profiles that the best is inferior, forget any information inconsistent with that conclusion, and allow their prior conclusion to bias the information they present during group discussion.

Wittenbaum, Hubbell and Zuckerman also underscore the notion that groups' information bias is caused in part by something more socially-driven than statistical chance: a cycle of "mutual enhancement" (1999). They argue that shared information appears more relevant and accurate to everyone, so that when a member mentions it, she is viewed as competent, and gets a positive response from the others. Not only that, but the listeners feel competent because someone has just articulated information they believe to be true. Providing shared information makes everyone feel more competent, which is why what everyone knows is reiterated over and over again at the expense of what only one person knows.

Regardless of what exactly goes on when individuals interact in groups, it is clear that the nature of the discussion matters. The extent to which the group focuses on correct information predicts with great accuracy the group's correct decision, which suggests that the discussion itself can create or attenuate the group's bias (Kelly & Karau, 1999). Some discussions can neutralize the bias of individuals (Gigone & Hastie, 1997; Kameda et al., 1997, p. 302). But when there is no objective standard of truth, as in most deliberations about public matters, the general rule is: when individuals begin the discussion with some sort of bias, the group tends to amplify that bias, not neutralize it (Kerr et al., 1996, pp. 699, 713–714).

This proposition holds not only when people bring different packages of information to the discussion. It holds too for a variety of other situations. For example, the work of Davis, MacCoun, Kerr, Stasser and others shows, with few exceptions, that juries are "more sensitive to proscribed information" than

jurors. In general, jury deliberation tends to "amplify juror sins of commission" – the tendency to attend to misleading information (Kerr et al., 1996, p. 713).

Encouragingly, leadership may be a crucial moderating variable of groups' bias against pooling relevant information during discussion. Leaders of teams of physicians discussing medical cases are more likely to repeat relevant information than are other members, and they increase the rate at which they repeat "unshared" information (Larson et al., 1996). When leaders repeat information in this way, they focus members' attention and enhance their short-term memory for relevant unshared information, increasing the likelihood that it will be used in the group's decision.

The type of leadership style matters a great deal, however, and in a way that may trouble deliberativists. Larson, Foster-Fishman and Franz studied two leadership styles, "participative" and "directive." Participative leaders share power with subordinates, actively including as many views as possible, and muting one's own preferences until all views have been considered. Directive leaders place less emphasis on thorough and equal member participation, emphasize consensus, and seek agreement with their own preference. The study found that confederates trained as participative leaders generated more discussion of all types of information. But confederates trained to be directive leaders were more likely to repeat information, and especially the unshared information crucial to reaching an accurate decision. Directive leaders repeated their own unshared information, consonant with their leadership style, and perhaps because of their focus on consensus, they also repeated other members' unshared information once it was revealed (1998, p. 493). Not surprisingly, groups did best with a directive leader whose distinctive information was accurate. Overall, then, participative leadership styles, which may be more consonant with the ideals of egalitarian deliberation, tend to yield inferior decisions.

Overall, on the issues that matter in deliberative democracy, two heads are not better than one. Two heads can become better than one, but deliberative success requires a detailed understanding of the many and serious social pitfalls of groups' attempts to solve problems.

Formal Procedures: Unanimity vs. Majority Rule[23]

Deliberative theory often assumes that the group comes to a collective decision. But how should that decision be structured? Theorists do not provide strong expectations on this question. One perspective is exemplified by Dryzek, who argues that unanimity is best able to bring people to a

common understanding of each other's perspective even when they disagree on basic assumptions (1990, p. 42). A second, opposing perspective is exemplified by Manin, who argues that majority rule is better than unanimity because it allows deliberation to fulfill its function in a more practical way (1987). Most people would agree with Manin: they tend to opt for majority rule, and may use it even when explicitly told to decide with unanimity (Davis et al., 1975).[24]

A third perspective comes from Mansbridge, who bases it on her extensive empirical observations (1983). She argues that in virtually all circumstances, a unanimous decision rule produces stronger social forces within a group. But in friendship groups, these forces need not mean that the minority is silenced, co-opted or brought to obedient conformity. By contrast, in groups lacking genuine ties of friendship, conformity often can mean silence, cooptation or alienation. Where inequalities are small, unanimous rule probably works well; where they are large, unanimous rule may exacerbate them. Thus according to Mansbridge, the effects of unanimous rule are complex and depend on other aspects of the situation.

The evidence we have from social psychology tends to confirm Mansbridge's conclusion. The impact of decision rules on outcomes is highly contingent.[25] Evidence on what decision rules do to people's satisfaction with the process is sparse, but the few studies that examined this matter found that people assigned to a unanimous rule mock jury were more satisfied than their majority rule counterparts that the deliberation was fair and complete (Kameda, 1991; Kaplan & Miller, 1987; Nemeth, 1977). Evidence is also sparse on the impact of decision rule on equal participation. In groups assigned an objective problem-solving task, majority rule may be better at neutralizing inequalities of influence within the group, though we do not know how robust this finding is (Falk, 1982; Falk & Falk, 1981).[26] Most studies agree that the stricter the rule (the more people have to agree), the longer the deliberation will last (Davis et al., 1997), and in some cases, the higher the chance of deadlock (Hastie et al., 1983, pp. 32, 60). The general consensus among researchers is that by itself, assigning majority vs. unanimous rule makes little consistent difference to the outcome (Hastie et al., 1983; Kameda, 1991; Miller, 1989; Nemeth, 1977; Davis et al., 1997 also found no impact on monetary awards in a civil liability mock trial).

But in interaction with other features of the situation, the decision rule can make a big difference both to the outcome and the process of deliberation. In a well-designed study, Kameda found that unanimous rule seems to create better conditions for deliberation than does majority rule (1991). In Kameda's study, some juries were instructed to deliberate in a closed-minded way by first staking out positions and then reviewing evidence in order to defend those positions

(analogous to "verdict-driven" juries). Other juries were instructed to be open-minded by first sifting through evidence and then settling on a verdict (analogous to "evidence-driven" juries). In addition, some juries were instructed to decide unanimously and others by majority rule. Under majority rule, closed-minded juries produced numerous minorities who were less satisfied and discussions that were briefer than in open-minded juries. Unanimous rule, by contrast, neutralized the negative consequences of closed-mindedness. In other words, closed-mindedness can be overcome by unanimous rule but not by majority rule. Unanimous rule structures deliberation in such a way as to invite a more thorough hearing of minority views. Requiring unanimity is much like requiring people to make decisions with an open mind. It makes people more satisfied, and for good deliberative reasons. At least, this seems to be the case with a discrete choice (such as guilty or not guilty).

A study of continuous choice supports the notion that a unanimous decision rule matters a great deal but only in combination with other features of deliberation (Mendelberg & Karpowitz, 2000). When small face-to-face groups were asked to deliberate about how much of their earnings should be distributed to the worst off in the group (without knowing who would be the worst off), groups told to use unanimous rule – but not those told to decide by majority rule – polarized by gender. Only among unanimous groups, those composed of many women engaged in the most deliberative process and decided on the most egalitarian outcome, while groups composed mostly of men operated with a more conflictual, less cooperative style and generated inegalitarian outcomes. Majority rule groups did not polarize. Supporting these findings is a decision-rule study of women by Kaplan and Miller (1987). In this study, mock juries polarized from their pre-discussion preference (always for the plaintiff) in their punitive award decisions, but only under unanimous rule. Reassuring to deliberativists is that people not only shifted in their public decisions but in their private opinions too – the change was full and genuine, not merely for the purpose of public conformity (Kaplan & Miller, 1987, p. 309).

As Mansbridge might expect, under the right conditions, a unanimous decision rule appears to advantage the kind of discussion that deliberative theorists wish to promote. With favorable circumstances, unanimous rule creates deliberation that makes people more open-minded and willing to listen to minority views, resolving conflict properly and leaving deliberators feeling that everyone received a fair hearing.[27] While this finding may not hold in groups where pressures to conform are strong, nevertheless it provides reason for optimism about deliberation. Decision rules are easy to adopt or impose, and can make for much improved deliberation.

CONCLUSION: JUST WORDS?

Deliberation is more than mere words. Words do not only reflect underlying individual opinion. They shape power and strategy, conceptions of the possible and the impossible, of who should do what and why (Forester, 1993, p. 201). As Mansbridge puts it: "even the language people use as they reason together usually favors one way of seeing things and discourages others" (Mansbridge, 1991). One of the things that makes deliberation powerful is language.

Not only is deliberation about talk, it is about groups. An implicit but important theme in the research reviewed here is that because deliberation often takes place in groups, group forces matter a great deal. The dynamics of groups are often significantly social. Often, those forces work against the kind of conversation that deliberative advocates wish to see. Still, group forces can also be harnessed for more deliberative ends. In any case, deliberation must contend with the social model, whether to deepen its negative effects or harness its positive consequences.

Scholars in many areas of political science are putting their faith in the ability of the process of deliberation to produce valued ends, such as truth and fairness. But not everyone is sanguine about deliberation. In cases of deep conflict and other situations, people seeking to resolve conflict may be better off negotiating instead. Of course, it is better to get common understandings than not. But Mansbridge's point (1983) is that under some circumstances, the *attempt* to deliberate is likely to backfire, especially in cases of deep conflict. In these cases, rather than attempt to deliberate, fail, and exacerbate the conflict, people should negotiate a proportional division of resources or means to power (Mansbridge, 1990).[28]

Regardless of the merits of Mansbridge's specific proposal for negotiation, the point remains that deliberation should not be attempted under all circumstances as a cost-free solution to costly problems, nor should it be rejected wholesale. Deliberation is a policy intervention. As is true for any policy intervention, deliberation should be attempted only after careful analysis, design, and testing.

The research reviewed here sounds a cautionary note about deliberation. When groups engage in discussion, we cannot count on them to generate empathy and diminish narrow self-interest, to afford equal opportunities for participation and influence even to the powerless, to approach the discussion with a mind open to change, and to be influenced not by social pressures, unthinking commitments to social identities, or power, but by the exchange of relevant and sound reasons.

But more than anything, the point to emerge from existing research is that the conditions of deliberation can matter a great deal to its success. Sometimes deliberation succeeds and might encourage people to deliberate more, more of

the time. Deliberation seems to work particularly well on matters of objective truth, especially when unanimous rule is imposed or with an authoritative leader who can overcome group biases.[29] Other times, deliberation is likely to fail. This outcome is especially likely when strong social pressures or identities exist, conflict is deep, and the matter at hand centers on values rather than facts.

But still a third implication comes out of the very contingency of deliberation. This alternative is for Advocates and skeptics alike should become more aware of the problems of deliberation. Then we can hope to create the conditions that allow deliberation to succeed. The role of empirical evidence in theories of deliberation should not be limited to arguments over whether a few successful deliberative exercises count as evidence for or against deliberation. Systematic empirical research can show the various dimensions of success and the means of achieving them.

NOTES.

1. By necessity my focus is on the United States. Negotiation, international relations, foreign policy, representative assemblies, and other forms of elite behavior are beyond the scope of this article.

2. An operational definition of an argument can be found in Sornig (1989): an assertion followed by justification and/or evidence.

3. "Deliberation that accords respect to all participants and rests outcomes on reasons and points of view that stand up under questioning generates outcomes that even opponents can respect," argues Mansbridge (1991).

4. Sapiro's historical review of the concept of civility comes to a similar conclusion (Sapiro, 1999).

5. Exactly how many people participate in deliberative discussions is unknown, but the number is certainly non-trivial. During the course of a year roughly 2,700,000 citizens deliberate in juries alone (Hastie et al., 1983). While no one knows how much discussion of public matters goes on at meetings of voluntary organizations, 53% of the adult population reports attending meetings of voluntary organizations from time to time during the course of a year (Verba et al., 1995, pp. 62–63).

6. It can also be used by the players to clarify for themselves what is the optimal strategy for each individual, which is why experimenters should test understanding before discussion begins. Talk can also be used to ensure commitment to the cooperative strategy, but when there is no enforcement mechanism this function becomes purely normative, with no concrete instrumental value.

7. Or to a common fate condition without interaction but with interdependence, or to a control condition with neither interaction nor interdependence. The latter two conditions yielded the same result as the discussion of irrelevant issue.

8. These results, however, are qualified by gender – men's cooperation (not studied by Bouas & Komorita) does appear to fluctuate with group identity (Kramer & Brewer, 1984). The good news for deliberation, in this regard, may be limited to women (see also Mendelberg & Karpowitz, 2000).

9. Further compounding the problem is the possibility that people who choose to engage in deliberation are more other-regarding to begin with.

10. In a prisoner's dilemma players are better off defecting if the others will defect, but cooperating if the others cooperate.

11. Note, however, that little work has been done to analyze the content of discussion. Zuber, Crott and Werner (1992) provide an exception, albeit based only on German males, and they find no evidence at all for persuasive arguments theory. In addition, they point out that little work has been done to distinguish between discussion-induced change in individual attitudes vs. in group choice.

12. In addition, Turner points out that the theory contains a paradox. It predicts that people are less influenced by those they think are correct, and the greater the perceived correctness the less thinking goes on and the less influence (1991, p. 103).

13. Some scholars argue that this outcome is only likely if the majority is internally divided and its ingroup norms are weak (Turner, 1991, Chap. 4).

14. Not only social or normative processes are at work. Group interests, likely to undermine empathetic perspectives on the common good, are too. The minority whose voice is heard is the one that persuades the majority that it and the majority share interests in common. Numerical minorities perceived as arguing in their own self-interest have lower credibility (in Turner, 1991, p. 97; citing Maass & Clark, 1982; Maass & Clark, 1984; Maass et al., 1982; Turner, 1985; Turner et al., 1987, Chaps 3 & 6). Even when a numerical minority avoids self-interested language, if it argues for a position that is likely to benefit itself it will be perceived as self-interested.

15. Perhaps cognitive centrality can serve as a non-deliberative counter-balance to other, still more deleterious forms of social influence such as the tendency of majorities to dominate group discussions and outcomes.

16. Intelligence itself may have significant effects on inequality during deliberation. In one study that set up ongoing discussion groups of university students, those who by the last round of discussion tended to speak least were also those judged by their peers to be less intelligent and who in fact had the lowest IQ scores (Paulhaus & Morgan, 1997). Lower intelligence may thus lead people to speak less and to carry less weight with others when they do speak. This may not trouble deliberative theorists much, unless intelligence is correlated with longterm inequalities in society.

17. Ironically, time pressure is, in the view of some deliberative theorists, a strong negative force against a considered exchange of views (e.g. Chambers, 1996). A separate line of research reinforces doubts about the positive utility of time pressure. Webster, Kruglanski and Pattison found that people high in need for *closure* – "a desire to possess a definite answer on some topic, any definite answer as opposed to confusion and uncertainty" (1997, p. 1122) – tend to discuss matters in a more efficient, more task-oriented, less egalitarian, and more conformity-oriented way (De Grada et al., 1999). They tend to speak in terms that create feelings of distance that may undermine the ability of groups to achieve their goals (Webster et al., 1997; see also Rubini & Kruglanski, 1996). Groups exacerbate these individual tendencies. By contrast with low-closure groups, the discussions of high-closure groups tend to have more conformity pressures and inegalitarian participation (De Grada et al., 1999). If need for closure rises with time pressures, the result may be a less deliberative discussion.

18. These findings are not an artifact of the experimental method. Using large sample surveys and soliciting reports from people with whom survey respondents discussed important matters, Huckfeldt, Sprague and colleagues have found that the more respon-

dents' candidate preferences diverged from their discussants' the more respondents distorted their perception of the discussant's preference to resemble their own (Huckfeldt et al., 2000). See also Mendelberg & Oleske, 2000 for a non-experimental studies of motivated reasoning in a deliberative setting.

19. A group situation also heightens motivated reasoning through people's social identities. Pool et al. found that people are more likely to engage in motivated reasoning when an argument comes from a group highly relevant to their identity (either in a negative or a positive way) than a group irrelevant to their identity (Pool et al., 1998; Wood et al., 1994). The motivated reasoning took the more subtle form of re-interpreting the meaning of a claim to bring it closer to participants' own views (Pool et al., 1998, p. 973).

20. High-status speakers also converge, but primarily from the assumption that the outgroup is incapable of understanding "normal" speech (e.g. native speakers raise the volume when talking to new immigrants) (Giles et al., 1987).

21. Scholars writing about citizen participation in bureaucratic decision-making, for example, often assume that "participation enhances the likelihood that the agency will reach a correct decision and minimizes the probability of decision-making errors" (Rossi, 1997, pp. 186–187; see also Mashaw, 1985, pp. 102–103).

22. This is a simplified rendition of the two "unshared" conditions.

23. Another structural variable that matters is size, but it is beyond the scope of this review.

24. And especially women.

25. Complicating the conclusions are the different thresholds of majority rule in various studies.

26. Jury studies tentatively find that with unanimous rule the minority participates more actively (Hastie et al., 1983, p. 32).

27. In addition to rules of decision, deliberation may be governed by rules of discussion, *Robert's Rules of Order* being the classic example. However, field research suggests that formal rules may backfire in some situations (Susskind & Cruikshank, 1987).

28. Note, though, a strand of work by Susskind and Cruikshank (1987) arguing that negotiation need not be limited to an adversarial model and should be re-conceptualized as a deliberative enterprise.

29. Of course, resting a great deal on the shoulders of an authoritative leader carries its own set of difficult problems for deliberative democracy.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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