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An Empirical Study of Types of Democratic Deliberation: The Limits and Potential of Citizen Participation

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<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/16q2r23k>

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Publication Date

2006-11-02

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In the last two decades, academics and political commentators have increasingly voiced concerns about the decline of democracy in western democracies.¹ They point to evidence of declining citizen interest in politics, diminishing rates of political participation and increasing suspicion of politicians and governmental institutions. Partly in response to this state of affairs, a number of political theorists have advocated a more deliberative form of democratic practice to supplement more conventional electoral democracy.² Following Rawls (1993) and Habermas (1996), most deliberative theorists emphasize procedural fairness and the critical role it plays in expressing and fostering the core democratic values of autonomy, equality and a concern for the public good. They claim that citizens brought together to deliberate public policy in a setting that emphasizes equal participation, mutual respect and reasoned argument will be more likely to bridge their differences of perspective and forge a common point of view. In addition, they will be more likely to produce policy decisions that are both perceived as more legitimate and are in reality more consensual, rational, and fair.

This turn to deliberation is also evident in political practice. Reliance on deliberative fora of different types has become an increasing reality in political life. Public policy analysts have reported numerous exemplary cases of deliberation in Europe, the United States and South America to illustrate the nature, difficulties and potential of citizen deliberation (Forester, 1999; Fung and Wright, 2001, Fung, forthcoming, Weatherford and McDonnell, forthcoming). My own investigation of deliberative efforts in the US suggests that citizen deliberations have been central in major city, school board, county and regional decision-making in over 1000 localities over the last fifteen years.

Despite this theoretical and practical interest in citizen deliberation, empirically oriented political scientists only recently have begun to go beyond the informal observation of particular cases to the conduct of more systematic studies of citizen's tendencies to engage in political talk, their views of deliberation and the impact of deliberation on participants' attitudes.³ However, little research has focused on the quality of the exchange that occurs between participants in deliberative settings. This is the case despite the fact that assumptions regarding the nature of that exchange are critical both to political theorists and practitioners.⁴ Political discourse is regarded as deliberative only insofar as it involves a collective judgment that is reached through the reasoned consideration of participants' beliefs and preferences. It is regarded as democratic only insofar as this deliberation is conducted in a way that preserves the autonomy and equality of the participants. A critical concern for empirical research is to examine whether the discursive exchanges in actual deliberations conform to theoretical expectation.

My aim here is to lay the groundwork for research of this kind. In so doing, I begin by offering a theoretically grounded description of how individuals actually engage one another when they are asked to deliberate. The intent is not to offer a more elaborated definition of liberal democratic deliberative discourse, but rather to characterize the different forms of discursive practices that may emerge in deliberative settings. I then use this typology to guide the analysis of the discursive practices of two different citizen deliberations. I then conclude by considering the implications of different forms of deliberative discourse for explicitly

democratic practice. The analysis here focuses on how a discourse shapes what individual participants can do and thus the kind of political actor they can be in that setting.

Types of Deliberative Discourse

When considering deliberative practices, most deliberative democratic theory focuses on the institutional context or social setting of the deliberation. At issue here are the circumstances that affect whether relevant parties are included in the participation and, once included, whether they are allowed to participate in a free and equal fashion. The characterization of deliberations consequently focuses on the obvious and more subtle ways in which power operates to distort a discussion both by highlighting the concerns of the more powerful participants and by silencing the less powerful participants or forcing their conformity. The assumption here is that insofar as power can be neutralized and constraints on participation can be removed, individuals will engage one another in a more truly democratic deliberative fashion. Allowing for some variation among theorists, most argue that this involves a collaborative consideration of a problem or issue through the presentation of claims of fact or value that are actually or potentially backed by reasons or clarified by elaborations which may then be subject to challenge, defense and revision. The assumption is that this presentation and interrogation of claims involves not only the free and equal expression of personal views, but also a respectful consideration of others' perspectives and the common good.

While instructive, this way of characterizing deliberative discourses is limited in two related ways. On the one hand, little reference is made to evidence on how people actually deliberate. This is justified insofar as it is assumed that ideal deliberation is realized or at least closely approximated in real deliberations. However if it is not, a separate analysis of how people actually engage one another in deliberative settings becomes necessary. On the other hand the characterization of deliberative discourse focuses on a single kind of exchange, the kind that is both assumed and prescribed by deliberative democratic theory. If people engage one another in a different, non-normative fashion, the theory can therefore only offer a framework for negative description; it can only provide a way of describing what people are *not* doing. Consequently deliberative democratic theory currently offers little direction for describing the different ways in which people may deliberate or for considering the implications of these different forms of deliberation for democratic practice.⁵

Here I adopt a structural pragmatic view of cognition and communication. In this view, a pragmatic conception of meaning-making as a purposive, constructive activity that has both subjective and inter-subjective dimensions is supplemented by a structuralist conception of the underlying quality of that meaning-making activity and the formal structure of the conceptual relationships and elements it produces. This view yields a distinctive understanding of communication, one that suggests that communication may take qualitatively different forms thereby producing structurally different ways of coordinating the exchange between participants and structurally different possibilities for the kinds of meanings they can inter-subjectively construct.⁶ Four types of communication or discourse are described below: (1) proto-discourse or egocentric interaction, (2) concretely anchored, conventional discourse, (3) co-operative discourse and (4) collaborative, reconstructive discourse. Each type is characterized in terms of the distinctive aims or goals toward which the discourse is oriented, the formal qualities which define the units of discourse and how they are related to one another, the dynamic of how the discourse unfolds and the nature of the meaning that is thereby constructed. Following a presentation of empirical research, the deliberative democratic potential of each form of discourse is discussed.

While each type of discourse constitutes a qualitatively distinctive way of deliberating, the four types are related to one another. In a formal sense, they constitute a hierarchy, each successive type of discourse constituting an advance on the preceding one, offering greater possibilities for broader, deeper and more flexible communication. In social psychological terms, each successive type constitutes a developmental

advance. This development is motored by the essentially dialectical interaction between (a) individuals who are attempting to engage one another in personally meaningful terms but must do so in socially appropriate ways and (b) cultures that shape the inter-subjective meanings and interaction patterns that structure particular discursive encounters, but do so in a way that reflects the capacities and needs of the individuals participating.

Table 1 - Forms of Deliberative Discourse

	TYPE I Proto-discourse	TYPE II Conventional	TYPE III Cooperative	TYPE IV Collaborative
Aim of discourse	Pursuit of various personal goals	1. Choose correct course of action. 2. Maintain conventional social relationships	Reach agreement on the meaning and value of first order (conventional) claims in order to make effective and desirable decisions.	Construct a basis for the cooperative construction of meaning, selves and community
Mode of coordination	1) Ritualized interaction based on commonly learned sequences of behaviors. 2) Personal force.	Authoritative social conventions of behavior. When these are ambiguous, the power of individuals of greater status.	Co-operative exchange of perspectives through reasoned argument involving reference to shared foundational assumptions.	Complementary, caring engagement of forms of subjectivity & inter-subjectivity
Rules of social interaction	No rules but rather subjective anticipation of unfolding sequence of behaviors and utterances.	Specific rules of polite and civil behavior.	Specific rules negotiated with reference to general principles of fair and effective participation	Self-reflective, negotiated management of the discourse to meet complementary needs of creating and sustaining (a) collaboration and the social reality of the group and (b) subjectivity and the personal reality of the self.
Rules of conversational relevance		Address specific topic of conversation. (Need not address remarks of prior speakers.)	Complementary, other oriented contribution to the definition/explanation of the subject matter being addressed.	
Quality of meaning constructed	Personal purposes. Overlap depends on common specific experience	Shared representation based on common cultural definitions or exposure to similar objective experience.	Common meaning based on agreement regarding place of propositional claims in their systemic context (objective, social and personal).	A collaborative interaction between different ways of constructing meaning without reducing their difference.
Criteria of successful communication	Personal sense that action progresses as anticipated	1. Leads to effective and/or normatively appropriate action. 2. Speech acts follow one another according to social convention & participants follow role prescriptions.	There is reasoned agreement – both sides accept a set of interrelated claims as reflecting their shared understanding of what is true, right and authentic.	1) Community sustained while fostering fragmentation. 2) Integrity of self is expressed and its limits engaged.

In this dialectical relationship, the potential for transformation resides in the efforts of initially incompetent individuals to develop the communicative skills demanded by the discourses in which they are called upon to participate. When successful, individuals' socio-cognitive capacities are transformed and their abilities to participate in a discourse are fundamentally changed. This opens up the possibility and the need for more integrative modes of discourse. The locus of transformative potential then shifts to the level of communities

and cultures. Change at this level will in turn create new opportunities and demands for personal development.⁷

While focusing on the different forms which discourse may take, it is important to note that I am not suggesting that a given deliberation will take a single form. To the contrary, I assume that at different moments in the deliberation, different types of discourses are likely to emerge. The form of discourse may change over time with a shift in the subject matter or in the orientation of the participants. Additionally, different forms of discourse may be operative simultaneously when subsets of participants address the same topic in qualitatively different ways.

I. Proto-Discourse or Egocentric Interaction

The aims of discourse. This type of verbal exchange is referred to as proto-discursive and egocentric because it is not oriented by a single, coherent goal that reflects collective demands or conventional imperatives. Instead, it is shaped by the various goals of the individual participants. In this sense, the exchange is not so much a discourse with some common ground of understanding and purpose, but is more an interaction among individuals with private understandings pursuing personal goals. The goals of the different individuals are unlikely to be the same. At most they may be complementary.

Formal qualities of the discourse. The verbal discourse is a largely undifferentiated aspect of an ongoing interaction among the individuals involved. This interaction has an essentially temporal quality. It consists of actions that unfold as a moments in a sequence of events. The elements of this sequence are initiatives and responses. The initiatives consist either of the specific concrete act an individual performs or the particular utterance he emits. In this context, both actions and utterances have a comparable quality. They are specific performances that are defined by their subjectively understood place in a trajectory of an intended sequence of which they are a part. In this regard, the meaning of a verbal statement or a physical act is subjectively, not inter-subjectively constituted.

Constituted in this way, the structure of any given interpersonal exchange will depend on the fit between the prior experiences of the different individuals involved. To the degree to which these individuals share a common prior experience of the situation in which they are currently involved, they are likely to understand their situation in a similar or complementary way. More accurately, they are likely to have similar or complementary anticipations of the sequence of events which will follow. In this case, each individual will act and react to each other in the way expected and their social interaction will unfold according to a previously experienced pattern. The result is the reproduction of a routinized exchange. However insofar as the individuals have differing experiences of the situation, their action trajectories and expectations will diverge and they will engage one another in uncoordinated way. The result will be a fluid and unpredictable exchange. A combination of routines and uncoordinated exchanges, egocentric interactions tend to consist of short, discontinuous episodes.

The dynamics of the discourse. Typically this kind of interaction begins when one or more individuals demand a response from other people as part of a sequence of actions they are pursuing. This sets up an interaction situation. That situation contains a set of objective cues that include aspects of the physical setting, the specific people present, and what each of them is currently doing. These cues may then evoke memories of valued sequences in the mind of each of the individuals involved. One of them may then react with a physical act or an utterance. This first move may then cue a reaction in another participant. This cues further reaction and the interaction unfolds.

The interactions may unfold in one of two ways. It may consist of the reenactment of a social ritual or routine. In a well rehearsed situation where the participants have a common experience of the steps to be followed (e.g. a greeting ritual), the first person's move and the reaction of the second are commonly

anticipated and the subsequent steps of the ritual will be enacted by the various participants in the anticipated fashion. As the ritual unfolds, if an individual makes a move that is inconsistent with the ritual and thus frustrates the anticipations of the other participants, they are likely to push the individual in the right direction or simply ignore the deviation and continue with the other participants acting in the anticipated fashion. The expectation here is that the deviant person's action will be brought back into the expected flow of events (or that person's contribution will simply be marginalized or ignored). The interaction ends when the ritual has run its course. At the point, a new episode begins. This may or may not be routinized. Alternatively the situation of social interaction then dissolves with individuals actually going their own ways or simply ignoring one another.

Where the interaction is not ritualized, it progresses in a very different fashion. In this case, each participant is cued to follow a privately apprehended sequence, one that may not complement the trajectories of action being pursued by the other parties. In such a situation, the first person's move will be unanticipated by the others. The result will be some confusion. Typically a second person will simply ignore the first person's move and attempt to continue the sequence of events he is currently pursuing. This approach may be adopted by others. At some point, generally quite early on, the unexpected nature of other people's actions must be addressed. One possibility is that the confusion and frustration which ensues simply leads to the dissolution of the interaction. Alternatively a participant may try to force others to follow his lead through the threat or use of physical action. This may produce compliance or frustration followed by either withdrawal or combat. A third possibility is that the situation may just shift. Because the situation is constituted in part by what each individual is doing, unexpected behavior may lead to a change in the individuals' perception of the situation thus cueing new memories and leading to the pursuit of new goal oriented sequences. In this latter case, the interaction will appear very fluid, having no apparent sustained structure.

In all cases, the dynamic of egocentric interaction is regulated by the past experiences of the individuals involved. It is a venue for their pursuit of their purposeful knowledge of how to go on in that situation in a way that they find rewarding or pleasurable. This may entail making specific moves that involve others either as actors in sequence of unfolding events or as audience for the reliving of a past sequence through the telling of its story. This interactive venue is a shifting one, reflecting how its circumstances may change from moment to moment, and a fragmented one, reflecting how it is differently viewed by the individuals involved. The shifting and fragmented nature of this social reality is occasionally stabilized and integrated when social rituals cue common, patterned sequences of response. More often, its nature is simply obscured by the frequency with which people that are in physical proximity to one another do not interact at all, but rather pursue their own independent trajectories of action.

The construction of meaning. Proto-discourse has only a limited capacity for the construction or sustaining of social or inter-subjective meaning. This is found in social rituals and routines. However the meaning of such a ritual is less a matter of a shared, unitary social understanding as it is a point of convergence of distinct personal understandings. Participants in the ritual typically have different but complementary personal understandings of the sequence of actions to be performed. The resulting social meaning is thus structured as a temporal series in which each step cues the next. The significance of each step is defined by its place in the sequence. Constituted in this way, social meaning is concrete and situation specific.

Apart from the reproduction of rituals of interaction and discourse, the meanings constructed in the course of egocentric interaction are basically private ones. They reflect individuals' personal histories, their private experience of how specific events unfold and the personal feelings those events evoke. In this regard, egocentric interaction involves no truly inter-subjective meaning. At most, the exposure to the same objective course of events may produce similar privately constructed meanings in different individuals. In the case of a social ritual, the private meanings of different individuals are objectively coordinated so that they come to act in unison or in a complementary fashion. Individuals do not self-consciously attempt to construct a common

meaning of the circumstances they share nor do they regard each other as subjects, that as individuals who each have a point of view and are pursuing personally understood and valued ends.

II. Conventional, Concretely Anchored Discourse

The aims of discourse. Conventional discourse is oriented simultaneously by two somewhat distinct goals, one relating to the problem at hand, the object of the discourse, and the other to the conduct of the discourse itself. The first goal is to determine the nature of the problem and then how to respond to it effectively. This involves identifying the defining attributes of the problem, establishing the operative causes and their concrete effects, and determining the relative value of different outcomes. The second goal is to regulate the social interaction between the participants according to prevailing social conventions of civility and politeness. The aim here is to insure that the discourse follows rather specific, concrete prescriptions regarding who speaks in what way when.

The formal qualities of the discourse. The basic unit of conventional discourse is a speech act. In this context, a speech act consists of a commonly recognized use of an utterance for a commonly understood specific purpose. Purposes may include the goal of representing a particular objective experience to others or evoking a particular response from them. The relationship between speech acts is regulated by conventional rules of concrete association. These rules of association link particular speech acts causally, categorically or normatively in specific and concrete ways. Causal and categorical linkages connect the specific action or actor referred to in the current speech act to the specific actions or actors referred to in prior speech acts. Normative linkages dictate how specific speech acts (regardless of their referential content) should follow on one another and who should be making them. In conventional discourse, these rules of association are understood by all participants in the same way. This common understanding is based on a shared experience of the same objective environment and on shared exposure to the same culture. Both types of experience prescribe the specific ways in which actions should be related to one another and how they should be valued.

As an exchange of speech acts regulated by rules of a concrete association, conventional discourse is structured in two ways. On the one hand it is anchored by a specific concrete topic. This may consist of a particular focal actor, action or series of actions. To be relevant, a speech act must be linked to the concrete topic by making a causal link to it (e.g. referring to a prior cause or consequent effect of the topic) or categorical one (e.g. referring to other concrete aspects of the topic). Once made, this linkage must be accepted, if only tacitly, by the other participants in the discourse. This acceptance will depend on the conformity of the links made to shared experience or accepted social conventions or definitions. Organized in this way, conversational relevance is dictated less by the specific speech act of the prior speaker than by the concrete focus of the discourse itself. This enables an atemporal integration of the conversation that also enables reference to claims made at different moments in the discussion. On the other hand and at the same time, the discourse is organized normatively, that is by concrete rules of politeness and civility. These rules regulate the relationship between a particular speech act and the action that must follow from it. The concern here is who can make a particular speech act when and who must say or do what in response. Conventional discourse thus implicates the particulars of participants' normative values, their personal identities and their social connection to one another. As a result, a violation of the rules of discourse may readily evoke the feelings, fears, commitments and consequently the hostility of those involved.

The dynamic of the discourse. A conventional discourse may begin in one of two ways. It may be initiated when the participants attend to a specific problem. Something has gone wrong; undesirable effects have been produced, or a common experience or social convention has been violated. Alternatively a discourse may be a response to the demands of civility. Social convention may require that individuals initiate conversation as part of sustaining conventionally defined relations among them, for example the way friends

create opportunities to talk simply for the purpose of sustaining the friendship. When the conversation begins, routinized or privately directed behavior is typically suspended.

At the outset of the conversation, a topic is introduced by one of the participants. Constrained by rules of relevance, the conversation then consists of a succession of contributions that are intended, in part, to describe, to explain or to evaluate the topic at hand. Often succeeding claims bear only indirectly on one another. Thus one speaker may offer a narrative regarding a personal experience revolving around the anchoring topic and the next speaker may offer another narrative that remains on topic but bears no direct concrete relationship to the prior narrative. Similarly one speaker may make a particular claim of causal linkage (e.g. students are bored because teachers teach badly) and the following speaker may make a different claim about the topic (e.g. students are bored because the textbooks are boring). Anchored in a common topic, but not addressing the linkages among different individuals' speech acts, the discourse produces a depiction of the topic that consists of a list of loosely associated claims and narratives.

In the context of these various contributions to a common topic, one speaker may directly address a prior speaker's claim. Such a move may be a supportive one. This may consist of a simple affirmation of the validity of the first speaker's claim such as, "Yes, you are right." Alternatively the supportive move may involve making complementary assertions of concrete association. This may consist of providing a specific example of a general behavioral rule that has been asserted. Thus one speaker may follow another's claim that dull textbooks cause students to be bored by describing how her child had a bad textbook and subsequently became disinterested in the topic. Instead the second speaker can support the first by extending the causal chain the first asserted. Thus the second speaker may assert that textbooks bore students who then become disrespectful to their teachers. In either case, the second speaker makes a speech act that extends and thereby reinforces the claim made in the speech act of the first. In a conventional discourse, such supportive moves not only to contribute to the analysis of the topic at hand, but they also reinforce shared beliefs and maintain a positive social connection between the participants.

A second speaker may also respond to the claims of the first competitively. Here the causal or categorical link between actions and/or objects established by the first speaker's claim is denied. This may involve a simple statement of rejection without an accompanying reason. Here there is simply a flat, "No." Alternatively, there may be a rejection of the first speaker's claim of causal, categorical or evaluative relationship by suggesting a different relationship. For example, the second speaker may assert that textbooks are not boring or that students remain interested even if the textbook is boring. This competitive exchange may be extended with more assertions that bolster the claim of one side or another. These bolsters consist of offering supportive examples, citing supportive authoritative dictates or emphasizing the authority of the supported speaker. In complementary fashion, one or the other side may be diminished by offering contradictory examples of specific experience, citing contrary authoritative dictates or by pointing to the de-authorizing or de-legitimizing qualities of the opposed speaker. Except where such competitive conversation is a matter of established social convention, the discussion becomes a social conflict in which the belief, values or identity of one side is contested by the other. The competitive discourse also serves to maintain or create a social distance or distinction between the competing participants.

The resulting quarrel may readily lead the participants off the topic of discourse as the focus oscillates between illuminating a specific topic to working through the ensuing social conflict. The quarrel may be resolved in one of several ways. One possibility is one side wins. The claims of that side dominate as the opposing side acquiesces. Here there is a simple assertion of truth/power by one side over another. In a group discussion, this result may reflect the weight of numbers as participants not directly involved choose one side either because they share the same view or because they wish to reinforce their relationship to the person advocating the view. A second possibility is that a relevant civility rule is asserted and the claims of the two sides are peremptorily reconciled. This may be done by simply combining the two positions (without regard to

existing incompatibilities). For example, there may be a joint recognition that both parties are right, or at least partially right. Alternatively the parties may agree to simply set their argument aside. In either case, conversation continues by turning to another aspect of the topic or to a different topic altogether. The third possibility is that the discourse is discontinued. Here the participants may choose to resolve the dispute by other means (e.g., a flip of the coin, recourse to an authoritative judge or physical combat) or by simply withdrawing.

The construction of meaning. Meaning in conventional discourse is constructed on two bases. On the one hand, it depends on a shared experience of specific actors, actions and objects, and how they operate on one another. On the other hand it depends on a common set of cultural definitions and prescriptions for action. It is important to note that direct experience and cultural dictate constitute the medium of meaning-making, not its object. Consequently, they are not themselves subject to discursive consideration. At most, where personal differences in experience and culture exist, they may be recognized. At best this leads to an acknowledgement that meaningful conversation is impossible. More typically, it leads to a denigration of those who see and believe differently.

Within a shared experiential and cultural frame of reference, meaning is discursively constructed through a process of concrete identification and elaboration. This involves a listing of the specific attributes of a topic, its typical actions and reactions and the objects typically linked to it. This may also include a drawing on the attributes of the topics to link it categorically to other topics. Both the identification of the topic and the enumeration of its attributes depend (typically only implicitly) on a shared perception of the relevant objective reality and the shared acceptance of the relevant cultural definitions and prescriptions. The social meaning thus constructed is concrete, fragmentary (not internally coherent or coordinated), somewhat rigid and culturally specific.

III. Co-operative Discourse

The aims of the discourse. Co-operative discourse, like conventional discourse, has the practical goal of correctly responding to a problem and the social goal of properly organizing the conversational exchange. However in a co-operative discourse, these goals do not simply orient talk, they also become an object of discussion. This second order discussion is oriented by two aims. One is to construct a correct understanding of both the problem and the manner in which it will be discussed. A critical approach is adopted toward participants' initial perceptions and specific culturally accepted definitions. The assumption is that initial perceptions are likely to reflect a narrow and superficial focus. Consequently in the discourse, an attempt is made to consider the apparent problem in its larger context in order to better understand its nature. This same approach is also taken to the discursive consideration of specific cultural dictates. Here the concern is to insure that the invocation of any particular cultural definition or prescription is consistent with a broader understanding of the practical or social problem in question and with other related cultural claims that might be made.

In addition to constructing a correct understanding, co-operative discourse also attempts to construct a shared understanding of the problem and how it is being addressed. Here a tentative approach is adopted to the apparent meaning of the particular claims made by the individual participants. The presumption is that although they live in the same society, different individuals are exposed to different experiences and different aspects of the broader culture and therefore may have different frames of reference or different perspectives. As a result the same assertion of truth or value may have different meaning (it may be embedded in a different system of related claims) for different people. Consequently different participants may not understand or judge a particular claim made in the discourse in the same way. The result will not be so much disagreement as

misunderstanding. Recognizing this, a co-operative discourse involves a good deal of mutual interpretation in an effort to generate a shared understanding of the matter at hand.

The formal qualities of the discourse. Co-operative discourse consists of an attempt to coordinate the perspectives of the participants in order to come to agreement as to what is the best understanding of the nature and value of the problem being addressed. The basic element of such a discourse is the presentation of a perspective. This involves making a propositional claim of the relationship between concrete actions and then relating that claim to other propositional claims that constitute that system of meaning in which all the related claims are embedded. In this sense, co-operative discourse differs from conventional discourse in that it typically requires a more elaborated statement of the speaker's subjective sense of the claims s/he is making.⁸

The co-operative discursive exchange of perspectives is coordinated on three bases: (1) rules of argumentation, (2) assumptions regarding the fundamental qualities of objective reality, society and human nature, and (3) considerations of the social conditions that co-operative discourse requires. The first basis, rules of argumentation, regulate how claims may be related to each other and how they may be related to an objective reality (physical, social or personal) they are intended to represent. Included here is demand that claims be elaborated, explained, justified and challenged by presenting related claims (reasons) and evidence in a manner that follows the rules of logic and reliable observation. The second basis of coordination is the shared worldview to which individuals can refer when making arguments based on their different perspectives. This consists of commonly accepted assumptions regarding the basic organizational structure and dynamic qualities of the natural world of objects, the social world of human beings in groups and the subjective world of the self. The third basis for the coordination of discourse is the shared understanding of the social conditions necessary for co-operative discourse itself. At issue here is what is required to maintain a co-operative exchange among individuals with differing perspectives. Depending on the prevailing assumptions regarding how different perspectives are constituted, this reflection will suggest general guidelines for regulating the opportunities individuals have to express their point of view and have it recognized by others.

Structured in this way, co-operative discourse is organized around a subject matter rather than a particular concretely anchored topic. The subject of the discourse is the systemic context in which the problem is understood to be embedded. Propositional claims are thus potentially related to the objective, social or subjective context to which they refer. As a result, the claim must be made, at least implicitly, with reference to all three at once. At any point in the discourse, only one of these contexts is likely to be emphasized while the other two may be bracketed out. In this way dimensions of the discourse subject may be differentiated from one another and the discourse organized accordingly. For example, discussion may be structured so that the objective nature of the problem and the feasibility of different solutions may be considered first and a consideration of the social value of different solutions be considered second. In addition any given dimension of the problem may be internally organized by differentiating its constitutive aspects and then ordering them relative to one another. For example, the discussion of the objective dimension of the problem of education may include an attempt to differentiate different aspects of education according to administrative, teaching or student management functions and then to organize the discourse to address each of these functions in turn by bracketing out the others. Within this organizational framework, the different turns in the discourse are related to one another as co-operative efforts to inform, to critique and to revise different perspectives with the aim of establishing a better and shared understanding of the problem at hand. This requires attention both to the subject of the conversation and to the views of individual speakers.

The dynamics of the discourse. In a conventional discussion, irresolvable disagreement or misunderstanding may emerge when addressing a practical problem or when regulating exchange between the participants. This will occur when the participants do not refer to the same experiences, authorities or conventions of social practice. At this point, conventional discourse may be suspended and a co-operative discourse may be initiated. In this case, the discourse may begin with an initial attempt to sketch the basic

contours of the subject matter to be considered. This may involve an explicit discussion of the boundaries and the dimensions or aspects of the problem being addressed. At the same time there may be a consideration of how the discussion should proceed and who should be involved. The result, an initial (and potentially revisable) concept of the discourse, may then be used to organize the ensuing discussion. With the parts and dimensions of the subject identified, related to one another and prioritized, a rational (rationalized) agenda may be established. At any point in the conversation that follows, the focus will be on the specific aspect of the subject specified in the agenda and all others will be bracketed out. This bracketing out does not mean the consideration of other aspects is totally eliminated. They remain a background set of concerns that may be brought to the fore when they bear directly on the current focal issue.

Throughout the discussion, there is an attempt to come to a correct and common understanding of the problem and how to properly address it, practically and pragmatically. In the process, any speaker may begin to present her perspective on the subject by making a propositional claim. In so doing, the speaker is required to recognize that the meaning and value of her claim is relative to her own subjective perspective. She must also recognize that the meaning and value of the claim is also dependent on the understanding of listeners whose own perspective may differ from her own. In so doing, the speaker will anticipate possible misunderstanding and the objections that will follow from it. This attitude will be reflected in her attempt (1) to clarify the meaning of her claim by elaborating her perspective (placing the claim relative to other claims she makes regarding what is true, right or authentic), (2) to explore possible specific differences of experience, knowledge and preference that exist between her and the listeners, (3) to inquire about both the meaning of the others' claims and the meaning those others attribute to the speaker's own claims, and (4) to justify her claims with reference to the listener's perspective.

When disagreement arises, discussion will focus on underlying justifications and elaborations and the bases upon which relevant linkages are made. This may involve critical commentary that suggests that a justifying connection offered is in violation of common accepted rules of logic, coherence and reliable observation. Alternatively the argument may be made that a claim or its justification is incompatible with commonly accepted fundamental beliefs about the organization or dynamic of objective reality, society or personality. In this vein, an attempt is made to argue the incorrectness of another's claim in terms that she is likely to accept as binding. Alternatively, a disagreement may be resolved by the incorporation of differing positions under a common umbrella. Here too recourse is made to common rules and assumptions to demonstrate that the two positions are either complementary (perhaps illuminating two different aspects of the same general phenomena) or equally valid. In the latter instance, the two positions are seen as different particular results of applying the same rules of logic, coherence and reliable observation and of referring to the same common basic assumptions. The result is acceptable disagreement in which the both the validity and distinctiveness of each other's positions are acknowledged.⁹

As suggested here, even disagreements are pursued in a co-operative manner. There are three kinds of circumstances in which rational co-operation will break down. All three involve a fundamental undermining of the bases of co-operative discourse. In one case, one or more of the participants does not recognize or is incapable of using the basic rules of argument. In this case their contributions to the discourse will be devalued as substandard. In the best case, communication toward them will have a pedagogical and care-taking character. In the worst case, they will be actively excluded from the discourse or their expressed beliefs and preferences will simply be ignored. In the second case, one or more of the participants do not share the basic underlying assumptions of the others. This is likely to be the result when participants come from very different cultural backgrounds. In this instance, any underlying common ground for discourse is lost and discourse reverts to a more conventional form. This may in turn lead to physical struggle to determine both the action to be taken and the conditions of future discourse. Alternatively, the discourse may become transformational.

The construction of meaning. Co-operatively interpreted meaning is quite different than its conventional counterpart. The latter is mediated by a concrete objective reality that is commonly perceived and specific cultural prescriptions for action that are commonly accepted. Co-operative discourse takes these means of conventional meaning-making as its object. The medium for the co-operative construction of meaning is inter-subjective agreement on the correctness and meaningfulness of particular claims. While it may focus on the truth, rightness or authenticity of particular claims, this specific agreement is based on a more general agreement regarding the systemic context of the particular claims being made. Shared understandings of the rules and social conditions of co-operative discourse and of the physical, social and psychological contexts of action are drawn upon in order to validate specific claims about particular objects, social relationships and persons. If there is agreement on the validity of the claim in these terms, a shared understanding of the problem at hand and how to discuss it is reached.

Co-operative meaning-making is thus an inter-subjectively directed and actively interpretative process. That said it is constrained by the commonly accepted rules and assumptions that frame the discourse and are external to it. While focusing on how claims are interrelated and thus on their meaning, co-operative discourse does not focus on how the process of meaning-making is itself constructed. The rules of argumentation, the foundational assumptions regarding reality, society and human nature and the social requirements of discourse are not themselves subject to critical reflection. The basis rather than the object of discursive consideration, they are understood to be the means for producing meaning rather than a product of social, psychological and political forces which may themselves vary. Consequently there is a tendency to regard these rules, foundations and required conditions as universal attributes of discourse rather than as socio-historical and variable.

IV. Collaborative Discourse

The aims of the discourse. The goal of collaborative discourse is to develop the psychological resources of individual participants and the cultural resources available to them in the particular socio-cultural context of their deliberation. It is predicated on a shared recognition that the cognitive capacities and shared cultural presuppositions upon which a co-operative discourse depends may not exist or be readily established. Consequently the orienting goal of a collaborative discourse is to construct the individual capacities and the form of social engagement needed for a collaborative discourse. This involves a reflexive drawing on the discourse itself as a resource. In this vein, the focus of the discourse shifts to the processes whereby rules of argumentation are formulated, basic assumptions regarding nature, society and individuals are defined, and the social conditions of the discourse are institutionalized. Most important, it does so in way that considers both (a) the current capacity and the developmental potential of the particular individuals who are presently engaging one another in a particular socially structured way and (b) the current quality and developmental potential of the socio-cultural context in which they are operating. The aim here is to foster modes of communication that not only enhance the subjective capacities and the integrity of the individuals involved, but also contribute to the flexibility and sustainability of the larger social groups to which they belong. The goal is emancipation, both personal and collective. At all times, this goal is pursued in relation to the particulars of the individuals involved and the socio-historical context of their discursive exchange.¹⁰

The formal qualities of the discourse. The basic communicative move in a collaborative discourse consists of an attempt to engage the other in a collaborative effort to reconstruct who each participant is (as a reflective subject and affective person) and how the participants interact with one another. This does not consist of a single contribution to a conversation, but rather a related series of individual contributions that combine to create a communicative effect. Such a communicative move has an explicitly constructive cognitive component. It is an attempt to create a mutual appreciation of (1) the differing ways in which

individuals are constructing a perspective on an issue, (2) what effect this has on the current fact and future potential of their communicative interaction, and (3) what effect that interaction has or could have on who those individuals are and how they think and feel. Addressing the subjective and inter-subjective forces structuring the discourse, a move in collaborative discourse is complex. First, it requires offering an interpretative reconstruction of the logic or form of the process whereby claims that constitute a given perspective are defined and related to one another. This involves clarifying the formal qualities of the foundational claims regarding the nature of the real, the self and the social upon which the perspective builds. Second, a move in a collaborative discourse must then place the process generating the perspective under consideration in a pragmatic relationship to two structuring forces, that of the subjective capacities and personality of the speaker and that of the socio-culturally mediated relationship between speakers. Third, this move necessarily also includes an attempt to engage other participants in the attempt to explore and interpret one's own perspective and interpretations. A communicative move in a collaborative discourse also has an explicitly emotional component. It addresses the identities, reasoning and feelings of the individual participants in a way that not only affirms those identities but may also seek to transform them. As such a communicative move must be made in a way that creates a positive affective bond between participants, one that fosters both the mutual caring and the personal security such a discourse requires.

As the exchange of such conversational moves, a collaborative discourse consists of a collaborative negotiation regarding the meaning, value and reality of things. Typically this is an ongoing effort and thus extends across a number of discussions. This negotiation has two intertwined dimensions. On the one hand, it consists of an attempt to negotiate alternative constructions, both personal and cultural, of the issue being addressed. On the other hand, it entails an attempt to negotiate the rules of the collaborative discourse itself. As an exchange of alternative constructions of meaning which define not only the specific subject matter, but also the nature of the self, the real and the social, this negotiation of meanings necessarily extends to the a consideration of the qualities of the participants, their social relationship and the quality of the discourse in which they are participating. In this latter sense, discourse of this kind is necessarily self-reflective and potentially transformative. It always involves an attempt to address individual differences in the subjective construction of meaning and the relationship of those different subjective constructions to the variegated inter-subjective context which both regulates their exchange and can be self-consciously created by them. In the process, the rules that regulate or constitute the discourse are always open to negotiation and reconstruction. The same applies to the attendant definition of the social relationships and the individual selves involved in the discourse. In this sense, the rules of collaborative discourse are recursively constituted, but in a way which is rich in the potential for critique and consequently for structural as well as substantive change.

Constituted in this way, a collaborative discourse is not structured, at least not in any static or universal sense. It does not constitute one particular of way of organizing how individuals communicate and therefore does not have specific formal properties. Instead it is characterized by a structuring dynamic, one that reflects the constructive dialectic of the discursive relationship between particular subject-participants and their culturally structured communicative settings. In this light, the static formal qualities of a given discourse are understood as the particular product of the nature of the individuals involved and the socio-historical setting of their interaction. At the same time, this particular formal result is understood to be unstable. The capacity for individuals to reflect their own subjectivity as its engaged in communication with others and the ability of discourses to take the terms of their inter-subjective engagement as object gives discourse a developmental potential, one that may lead to a reconstruction of individuals, their community and the discourse itself. Here lies the transformative possibility of discursive exchange.

The dynamics of the discourse. The structure of co-operative discourse is predicated on certain felicitous assumptions regarding the capacities of individual participants and the qualities of their social and cultural environment. These include individual capacities for logical inference and reliable observation

(enabling participants to follow rules of argumentation), the homogeneity of a given culture or the similarity of different cultures at the level of foundational claims (creating a common ground for participants with different perspectives), and the capacity of institutional arrangements to shape social interaction (insuring that that the requisite autonomous, free and equal participation). When one or more of these assumptions do not obtain, a co-operative discourse is not possible. It is precisely at this point that a collaborative discourse may begin.

A collaborative discourse is necessarily a demanding one. It requires individuals to elaborate and possibly reconsider the nature and bases of their own understandings and judgments for the benefit of both themselves and their audience. At the same time, it requires the constructive critique of socially structured practices and culturally definitions and values. As such, a collaborative discourse draws heavily both on the intellectual and emotional energies of its participants and on the social and cultural resources of the larger social groups to which they belong. It therefore requires a special commitment. As a result, a collaborative discourse typically begins by establishing its own necessity and by explicit calling for the participants to initiate a discourse of this kind. This may involve highlighting evidence in the prior discussion of the contested nature of its rules of argument, foundational assumptions or conditions of discourse. This will be include a preliminary consideration of the apparent incommensurability of the ways in which different individuals are reasoning about or affectively responding to each other's contributions. This may be understood to reflect a difference in the capacities of the individuals involved. Alternatively, in a multicultural setting, it may be understood to reflect the various culturally specific ways of thinking/feeling about things. In either case, it may be concluded the current deliberation is being conducted in such a way that the individuality of the participants or the integrity of the group is being inadequately expressed or actively undermined. This may be confirmed by appealing to the sense of confusion, dissatisfaction or alienation of the individual participants.

With this groundwork done, discussion may then turn to the problem at hand. Initially this may focus on two or more of the participants and how they differ in their understanding of how to arrive at a correct and shared understanding of the problem discussed earlier. This will include both a consideration of how each is defining and explaining the problem and how they are responding to each other's attempt to communicate their point of view. This may include a consideration of both the cognitive and emotional dimensions of the interaction. Participants will not only attempt to illuminate the understandings and feelings of others, but will also actively discuss their own understandings and feelings thereby opening their views and selves to others. Following any one contribution, the interpretations offered and the emotions expressed may be addressed by other participants. This may include attempts to probe the meaning of what is being said by asking for clarifications, further elaborations or extensions of the argument in new directions. Explanations and justifications may be probed by a request to justify the account given. This attempt to assess the meaning of the views presented will eventually lead to assertions regarding the formal quality of the inferential associations and foundational claims being made regarding what the world is like, how individuals think and feel, and how communication and societies can and should work. Finally, the structure of the meanings expressed may be pragmatically linked to the speakers and the cultural context of the discourse in order to show how it is shaped by and sustains these structuring forces. This may provide the basis for personal and/or cultural critique.

In the course of this discussion, differences in meaning-making will emerge more clearly. The result will be a certain mutual intelligibility. To address this disjuncture, participants must first recognize the relativity of their own way of understanding and the limits of their ability to properly understand or be understood by each other. This may lead to an attempt either (1) to construct an overarching frame of reference to facilitate mutual recognition and understanding of the different views being constructed or (2) when no such overarching frame can be established, to establish a means of co-operative exchange. In the first case, participants attempt to create a common ground for their discourse where none is otherwise available. Collaboration here depends on people recognizing each other to be sentient, thinking, feeling beings that have a comparable ability to act on the world and connect to one another. It also requires that the participants

recognize that their goal is to reconstruct their own ways of thinking/feeling in order to construct a common framework for each of their own subjective attempts to think about issues and for their collective, inter-subjective attempt to meaningfully discuss them. Achievement of this goal will depend on recurring attempts to recognize, understand and then overcome differences in how each of them is thinking, feeling and talking about the issues being discussed. In the second case, the goal is to place the varying ways in which different individuals are thinking in a complementary relationship with one another. One possibility is a pedagogical discourse predicated on a shared assumption that the individuals who recognize that they may share comparable potential, but that they differ in their current cognitive and emotional capacities to act and connect to one another. Another possibility is collaborative discourse predicated on a shared assumption that individuals reason and feel differently and yet are interdependent. The discourse here is oriented to creating mutually satisfying exchange while recognizing and valuing basic differences.

Collaborative discourses are realized in different ways depending on the capacities of the particular participants involved and the particular socio-cultural context in which they are interacting. Thus issues of the meaning or value of things, the nature of persons and cultural contexts and how these factors affect one another may be addressed at different levels of reflection, with different levels of inter-subjective collaboration and with differing degrees of comfort or safety. Any kind of collaborative discourse ends when new understandings of the problem, oneself, others and the group emerge that resonate with the ways in which the individuals are thinking and how they are talking to one another. This may involve personal and social development or it may involve the construction of a complementarity that allows individuals to recognize their fundamental differences and communicate, even if only partially, across them. Alternatively, and perhaps more typically, a collaborative discourse will fail to achieve to such a social integration. Instead the result is a dissensus in which the parties only achieve a clearer sense of the particularity of their own way of judging matters and a greater appreciation of the extent to which they do not understand and are not understood by others. But rather than being regarded as an anomalous or threatening state of affairs, this result is recognized to be normal and even desirable. In the latter case, the incommensurability of ways of understanding is understood as affirmation of the integrity of individuals and a resource for creative engagement in the future.

The construction of meaning. The medium for the construction of meaning in a collaborative discourse consists of the collaborative engagement that occurs between self-reflective, other oriented and socio-culturally aware individuals. The result is a meaning-making activity that is essentially social psychological. It is determined both by the inter-subjectively negotiated ways that the discourse is structured and by the personal understandings of that discourse that the individual participants construct. The meanings produced are complexly constituted. This reflects an inherent tension in the meaning-making process, a process that is shaped by two sources, personal and cultural, that are not identical or reducible to one another. This tension is recognized in the discourse itself. Taking its own processes as objects of consideration, the meanings constructed in a collaborative discourse are recognized to be dually structured, by the individual subjects seeking to understand and express those understandings and by the culturally defined terms of the deliberation that provide the underlying structure and substantive foundations of their communication with one another. Consequently, an awareness of the complexity of meaning-making is actively incorporated into and helps orient collaborative discourse. The typical result is some kind of mutually productive complementarity of different, but interpenetrating meaning-making activities. This is very different than the assumption underlying co-operative discourse that all individuals think and evaluate in fundamentally the same way and that this structures and is thus evident in how they talk to one another.

The Empirical Research and Preliminary Results

The aim of the empirical research was to discover the nature of the discourse that takes place in actual citizen deliberations. To this end, two citizen groups were convened to deliberate about the quality of K-12 education in their neighborhood. Their deliberations were transcribed and analyzed using the typology of types of discourses presented in the preceding sections. The particulars of this study and its results are presented below. It should be noted that this study is part of a larger one that is examining two interrelated sets of concerns: (1) the effect of individual differences in deliberative competence on the quality of the discourse that emerges between them, and (2) the effect of different facilitation strategies on the quality of the discourse in a group deliberation. To provide the context of the research reported here, a brief description of the larger study is presented.

Subject Population.

The subject population includes 24 adults from Laguna Beach, California. (This is a subset of the 72 adults who volunteered to participate in the various stages of the study.) With a population of about 30,000, Laguna Beach is an upper middle class, 85% Caucasian town with a substantial 16% foreign-born population (largely West European). Laguna Beach was selected as the site of the present study because it was believed to afford an environment that was unusually congenial to effective deliberation. Because of their relative wealth and education and their history of high levels of participation in community politics, it was assumed that residents of Laguna Beach would be unusually interested in and capable of participating in democratic deliberations.

Participants in the study were recruited by a mailing sent to the parents of children in the grammar and middle schools. The parents were invited to participate in the Education and Democracy Project as described below. Approximately one in ten of the households receiving letters responded with an intention to participate. The subject population reflected the demographics of the larger community except for gender, 2/3 of the participants were female. Approximately eighty percent of the subjects were college educated (over three times the US national average).

Methods and Procedures

The study was designed in a way that combined an academic interest in analyzing the nature of citizen deliberation with a political interest in promoting citizen empowerment and practical action. Thus it was designed both to explore the nature of citizen deliberation and to encourage deliberative democracy practice in the local community of Laguna Beach. One result is that there are few issues of external validity – the deliberations included concerned citizens who deliberated and then made recommendations to relevant governmental institutions and the local community.

Recognizing the potential mobilizing power of education as a political issue, a decision was made to initiate deliberations on the goals and conduct of K-12 education in the public schools of the City of Laguna Beach. Following preliminary discussions with school administrators, teachers and some parents, the Education and Democracy Project was initiated as an attempt to involve parents in the substantive decision-making regarding policy-making about public education in their community. (Laguna Beach constitutes its own school district and thus is self-governing in this respect.) A mailer was sent to the parents of 700 children in the grammar and middle schools. The mailer included a flyer designed to attract initial attention to the project, a letter describing the twin goals of improving education and empowering parents and a stamped envelope for responses from those parents who chose to participate.

Phase One – Pre-testing. Although it is not immediately relevant to that aspect of the research being presented here, it should be noted that participants were contacted prior to the commencement of the deliberations and were interviewed individually. The interview consisted of several parts. In the first part of the interview, the subject was asked a number of short answer questions. The first two were open-ended and asked the subject to list those three aspects of his or her child's education that they liked most and those that they liked least. The subject was then given several standard surveys. These were made up of close-ended items intended to measure: (1) their sense of political efficacy, (2) political alienation and sense of community and (3) political tolerance. The second part of the interview focused on the subject's understanding of democracy. To begin, the participant was presented with a Q-sort task intended to assess their understanding of the concept of democracy. The Q-sort was then supplemented by an open-ended interview intended to probe the quality of the subject's reasoning regarding the nature of democracy.

Phase two – the deliberations. Subjects were assigned to one of two groups, each of which consisted of twelve members. Assignment was largely random, but also reflected the need to convene groups that reflected subjects' individual time constraints. Each group met seven times, for the most part on a weekly basis. Each meeting lasted two hours. Each group was led by two facilitators, one who took primary responsibility and one who served largely in a support role. The facilitators were members of the team conducting the research (three advanced Ph.D. candidates in political psychology and myself). All deliberations were both audio taped and videotaped.

At the first meeting of both deliberative groups, the goals of the deliberation were reiterated. They were to set objectives and recommend policy for the public school system in Laguna Beach, and to encourage parents to participate in the governance of the schools that serve them and their children. The next four and half meetings were devoted largely to a discussion of current practices and a consideration of improvements or alternatives. During this period, the facilitators made a number of attempts to encourage the participants to consider specific concerns in broader contexts. This included raising issues of justice and fairness (for example, when participants raised the possibility of greater support for either gifted or disadvantaged children) and of asking subjects to consider the broader values underlying their views of education. This broader consideration was facilitated by asking participants to postpone the consideration of specific policy recommendations until after they had addressed two questions: (1) what kind of people did they want their children to be when they reached the age of eighteen? (2) what role might school play in reaching that goal? The last half of the sixth meeting and all of the seventh meeting were devoted to summarizing the vision and policy recommendations the groups wished to communicate to the School Board and the principals in the school system.

Post-deliberation analysis. The seven meetings of the two citizen groups were transcribed. Experience showed that the meetings typically began slowly as some members tended to arrive a little late and initial exchanges tended to be more social and less issue focused. Similarly the quality of the deliberation seemed to decline as members tired in the last half hour of the interview. In the desire to explore the deliberations at their best, the analysis here focused on the middle hour of each deliberative session. Two coders analyzed each deliberative session. When they did the coding they were unaware both of the analysis of the other coder and the identity of the group whose deliberations they were analyzing. Their task was to determine was to divide each one-hour session into its successive segments and determine the structure of each segment (proto-discourse, conventional discourse, co-operative discourse and collaborative discourse). A segment was defined as a portion of the deliberation that was structured in the same way (e.g. conventionally) and distinguished from the next segment by a shift in structure (e.g. from conventional to co-operative).

Results

While there was variation in the definition of ending and starting points of segments, coders did agree on the identification of core segments 84 % of the time. Where there was disagreement, coders met and common lines of demarcation were adopted. With regard to the analysis of the structure of each segment, inter-coder reliability was 92%.

From the perspective of deliberative democratic theory, the most important result of the study was the relative prominence of different forms of discourse in the deliberations. There was no evidence of any collaborative discourse in either deliberative group at any point in their deliberations. This may come as no surprise given that cultural expectations regarding a policymaking discussion would leave little room for open discussion such matters as how individual participants were constructing their understandings and evaluations or how their discourse was being regulated by practices and foundational assumptions that might be inappropriate or inadequate. While not unexpected, this result does suggest that deliberation may not perform the critical or emancipatory role that some theorists might attribute to it.

While there was some cooperative discourse, it was rare. In one deliberative group there were only in two instances of a co-operative exchange and in the other there was none. The two instances mentioned combined for a total of approximately 14 minutes of discourse in the 12 hours of discourse that were coded (for the two groups). This was surprising for two reasons. First the participants, by the standards of the American populations as a whole, had unusually high levels of formal education and income. Second, the group facilitators did on occasion pose questions that raised broader issues of justice and basic values that might be expected to elevate the discussion from a more conventional discourse to a more cooperative one.

It should be noted that certain participants did, on occasion, respond to the facilitator's initiatives or spontaneously try to steer the deliberations toward a more cooperative discourse. However this typically met with resistance of two kinds. Some of it was active resistance. Other participants explicitly rejected the cooperative initiative suggesting that the conversation avoid abstract or hypothetical issues in favor of a focus on the specific concrete concerns currently being addressed. More often the resistance was more subtle. In this case, participants responded to the attempt to move to a more cooperative discourse by ignoring it and simply continuing as they had been doing previously.

The vast majority of the discourse was clearly conventional. This was true when deciding on topics to address, discussing the nature of the problem or addressing differences in opinion. At times, discussion would shift to a more proto-discourse. This was often the case when the group meeting was first beginning or ending. However pressure to move in this direction was on infrequent occasion appeared to be introduced by one or two of the participants. Although the inappropriateness of this move (when placed in the context of a conventional discourse) was not addressed directly, the other participants simply ignored the initiative and continued the discourse at the conventional level.

Forms of Discourse, Deliberative Democratic Practice and Constituting Citizenship

In the preceding section, the fourfold typology of proto-discourse, conventional discourse, co-operative, cooperative discourse and collaborative discourse was used to describe the nature of the discourse that emerged in two deliberative settings. The deliberations included middle aged, highly educated, wealthy individuals who showed sufficient interest to volunteer to meet for seven two-hour meetings. The topic they met to discuss, the education offered in the local schools that their children attended, was rich with the potential for critical consideration of social dynamics and orienting cultural values. As such, the deliberations of these two citizen groups might be considered to constitute a relatively ideal context for the conduct of a truly democratic deliberation. As highlighted in the results, the group deliberations generally did not rise either to the

level of cooperative discourse expected in more liberal democratic conceptions of deliberation or to the level of collaborative discourse expected by more critical and emancipatory democratic conceptions.

The fact that deliberations are not fully democratic raises the question of what kind of political interaction each kind of discourse enables. This demands a closer consideration of the specifically democratic and deliberative qualities of the interaction fostered by each form of discourse.

Table 2. Forms of Discourse: Implications for Politics¹

	TYPE I Proto-discourse	TYPE II Conventional	TYPE III Cooperative	TYPE IV Collaborative
Construction of self as actor	Pursuit of personal preference.	Selfish pursuit of externally dictated interests and/or selfless conformity to social conventions.	Self as author of belief and preference. Is a self-regulating system, a personality and a thinker.	Self as active, socially embedded actor who constructs meaning and value in collaboration with others.
Socio-political definition of individual	Minimal. Rather people regarded as instrumental to pursuit of personal goals.	Individual defined by specific behavior and by social role, status or group membership.	Abstract concept of the individual as self-directing system that has inherent integrity.	Self as a construction produced both by the individual and through his active relationship with others.
Political relationship fostered	Fluid, changing with circumstance. Is simply how each person fits into others pursuits.	Rigid set of role and situation specific relationships based on social convention and cultural definition.	General relationship of equals that may be variously realized in specific relationships.	A productive relationship of complementarity among individuals that may be manifestly unequal.
Form of citizen deliberation enabled	Non-deliberative. Talk removed from action makes no sense and is not initiated.	Proto-deliberation. Assertion of personal preference justified by recourse to social authority or normal experience.	Reciprocal effort to come to common understanding and judgment by appeal to common values or by providing evidence.	Reflective, collaborative attempt to construct meaning and value that recognizes basic individual differences in capacity and inclination.
Impact of deliberation	Accompanies the active pursuit of personal goals. Little independent impact.	Coordinates behavior in a way that reinforces existing conventional practices and cultural prescriptions	Overcomes or allows differences in belief and preference. Operates to sustain dominant ways of thinking and foundational assumptions.	Creates complementary, rather than shared understandings and values. Facilitates personal and community development.
Limits of deliberation	Cannot coordinate action when individuals do not have complementary expectations	Cannot address differences in belief or behavior produced by differing personal experience or cultural exposure.	Cannot address different ways in which meaning is constructed. Cannot address differences in foundational assumptions and values.	

The analysis of the democratic qualities of the discourse focuses on the nature of the autonomy and the equality that are fostered. At issue here is the quality of individuality and the nature of the social relationships produced in a given type of discourse. The analysis of the deliberative quality of the discourses focuses on the

¹The first two rows, “construction of the self” and “socio-political definition of the individual,” address the kind of autonomy different discourse enable. The third row, “political relationship fostered” addresses the kind of political relationship between participants that is created by different discourses. The last two rows speak to the kinds of political outcomes the different courses allow.

perspective-taking, critical considerations and normative concerns characteristic of each type of discourse. The focus here is on the quality of the meanings and values that a given discourse can generate. Adopting this approach, discourse is viewed as a constructive activity that enables certain forms of meaning, personhood and interpersonal relationship to be realized in a given social interaction. Moreover, these constructions are understood to have significant political consequences.

I. The Deliberative Democratic Potential of Proto-Discourse

Democratic potential. Participants in a proto-discourse interact with one another in a way that severely limits the extent to which the basic democratic values of autonomy and equality may be realized in that context. With regard to personal autonomy, it is clear that such a discourse does not foster any meaningful autonomy. In proto-discourse, a person is constituted as an actor-doing-something-particular-at-the-current-moment. The focus is on the action and the actor is regarded as an attribute of that action. Lacking this focus on an actor as a person, there is no recognition of her integrity as an independent being or her generalized status as an initiator of a range of actions. At best, proto-discourse provides a venue for the expression of personal preferences. However the limited autonomy this confers is highly restricted. Because proto-discourse is not regulated by a shared meanings, the personal preferences expressed by one person are likely to be understood by others in their own egocentric terms, terms that may bear only oblique relation to the understanding of the person speaking. In a ritualized exchange, the expression of a personal preference may at least produce the expected reaction from a listener, even if it is not understood from the subjective perspective of the speaker. However when the exchange is not part of a familiar ritual, the expression of preferences is unlikely to produce the desired response and may instead lead to a Hobbesian exchange wherein each party simply attempts to force its agenda on the others.

The consideration of equality raises the issue of the relationship between participants in a proto-discourse. To begin, this issue is not addressed directly. The discourse revolves around the narrow pursuit of personally understood desired sequences of action. The relationship between participants is not itself an object of discursive consideration. A relationship is established, but it is exogenously determined by the immediate circumstances in which the individuals find themselves. If that situation cues a social ritual, the performances of all the individuals (and their preferences) will be socially orchestrated. In this sense, all the individual participants in the ritual are simply re-enacting socially determined performances. The participants are thus all rendered equal, but only in their powerless. In a more manifest way, a social ritual typically operates to give some individuals more privileged roles than are allocated to others, thereby fostering inequality. When discursive exchange is not ritualized, the distribution of power will reflect the relevant strengths (e.g. raw physical power) of the particular individuals involved. This too will result in inequalities.

Deliberative potential. Apart from the realization of basic democratic values, there is the question of the quality and possible productivity of proto-discourse as a form of deliberation. What is immediately apparent is such an interaction is not properly deliberative. It is not a reasoned discourse that involves making claims that are then justified in terms that are crafted with the understandings and purposes of others in mind. Instead, proto-discourse is oriented by the pursuit of personal goals and verbal statements are learned steps in the production of a desired sequence of events. In this regard, the discourse does not involve taking the perspective of another. Other people are not regarded as subjects who have their own understandings and values. Instead they are constituted as objects that are significant only insofar as they have proven to be instrumental in sustaining the progress of a desired sequence of events.¹¹ Similarly the discourse consists of each participant taking steps in the pursuit of private purposes. As such, a verbal statement is a personal move. It is not the assertion of a claim that carries with it a warrant for justification in terms that another might

understand. In this regard, the discourse is not a reasonable one nor does it provide a venue for reflective critique. In addition, the discourse is not oriented by common or shared values to which all participants might inhere. As a result, where participants initially are pursuing conflicting trajectories of action, proto-discourse cannot provide the means for harmonizing or coordinating action or for revealing or defining common goals.

II. The Deliberative Democratic Potential of Conventional Discourse

Democratic potential. The democratic potential of conventional discourse is limited. On the one hand, the participant in such a discourse is constituted in a way that she is autonomous, albeit in a very limited sense. In the discourse, the individual participant is constituted as having a set of preferences which reflect her personal wants and desires. She is recognized by herself and others to be a source of wants and preferences that she intentionally brings to the discourse. The individual is thus accorded a degree of self-determination. On the other hand, it is not the individual participants in a conventional discourse, but forces external to their interaction that regulate how individuals engage one another and therefore who each of them can be in the context of their exchange. Objective realities and cultural definitions determine how substantive claims may be related to one another and socio-cultural rules govern how individual participants may interact with one another. As result, speech acts (and consequently the speakers who make them) are judged relative to objective realities, conventional practices and social norms. Authority and value is located there and not in the individual speakers or listeners. In this context, there is little consideration of the personal integrity and contribution of the individual speaker. Speakers have socially defined roles to play and politeness rituals to enact. They must conform to these. Insofar as they do not, their value and place in the discourse will be diminished. In the parlance of democratic theory, personal autonomy or free expression has little place in conventional discourse.

There is also little room for equality in conventional discourse. Speakers enter the discourse with their social status defined and thus their possibilities to speak and with what effect determined. This prior allocation of communicative possibilities may extend to formal exclusion if the speakers belong to relevant out-groups. Even in democratic societies where there are abstract norms regarding freedom of speech and equality of participation, these norms enter into conventional discourse only as ritual prescriptions of specific ways in which people are allowed to act in particular circumstances. Moreover these prescriptions are typically readily overridden by conventions regarding social practice, status and power. Consequently, invitations to free expression typically lead to the rejection of unconventional claims and the diminution of those individuals who make them

Deliberative potential. Although autonomy and equality have little meaning in conventional discourse, there is room for deliberation, albeit of a relatively primitive kind. There is a recognition that the discourse may serve to coordinate the action of a group of individuals for the purpose of realizing a goal. This coordination is achieved by first recognizing that people may disagree and that this may be overcome by making claims that lead people to change their initially divergent beliefs or preferences. In this regard, conventional discourse provides a platform for deliberation by encouraging perspective-taking. In this context, perspective-taking involves recognizing that others have their own “point of view” and therefore may differ in their initial perception or evaluation of a particular action or object. This initial recognition of differences in perspective is however limited by the presumption that interlocutors share a common objective world against which representations may be readily checked and a common set of culture prescriptions against which evaluations may be readily judged. Insofar as individuals do not represent the objective world in the same way or they do not accept the same cultural prescriptions and definitions, they will be devalued and rejected as either competent or worthwhile interlocutors.

Although the construction of acceptable divergence in belief and preference is thus limited, conventional discourse provides a means for addressing differences of this kind. Claims can be made and

defended by relating them to the particulars of an objective state or to specific conventional practices or cultural imperatives. Because participants perceive the same reality and accept the cultural dictates, these kinds of justifications will compel agreement. However the capacity to forge agreement is limited even in this more congenial circumstance by the fact that associations between claims and justifying evidence and cultural norms may be made in different ways. When this occurs, the discourse cannot produce agreement because it does not provide a medium for addressing differences in how claims are associated with their substantive justifications. The only exception is where differences in social status command agreement based on deference. More difficult are those cases where the participants do not share similar objective circumstances or a common culture. Lacking alternative bases for justification, a conventional discourse can only lead participants to reject or withdraw from one another and, in so doing, reinforce the existing social cleavages among them.¹² In sum, as a means of addressing differences, conventional discourse operates to reaffirm, elaborate and perhaps refine the perception of shared experience and the use of accepted cultural definition. However, it has only very limited potential for critique or innovation. Instead it functions as a means for realizing existing social norms and organization and thereby constraining individuals to predefined roles and possibilities.

III. The Deliberative Democratic Potential of Co-Operative Discourse

Democratic potential. In many respects, cooperative discourse is well suited to democratic deliberation, particularly in its liberal conceptualization by theorists such as Rawls (1993), Cohen (1996) and Gutmann and Thompson (1996). Cooperative discourse constructs individual participants in a manner that is consistent with these theorists' assumptions of autonomy and equality. Constituted as people who observe, reason and reflect in a rational, integrative manner, individuals view themselves and others as subjects who construct their own beliefs and preferences and direct their action accordingly. The authors of their own understandings and personalities, they are regarded as fully self-determining and are in this sense autonomous. At the same time, individuals are constituted as equal by virtue of their common and comparable capacities to be constructive, self-directing subjects. In a cooperative discourse, this equal capacity for autonomous thought and action translates into a demand for equality of participation. Given their equal capacities and their varying experience, it is important to the rationality of their discursive interaction that they have equal opportunity, at least at the outset, to introduce their points of view freely into the discussion and have those points heard with respect. During the discourse, it will be the inter-subjectively agreed upon quality of arguments made (rather than the status or power of the individual who makes them) that will determine the relative impact different speakers have on the agreements finally reached. As a result, cooperative discourse will typically carry with it normative demands of freedom and equality and will operate accordingly to protect its individual participants.

Deliberative potential. Cooperative discourse offers a number of advantages for the adjudication of political conflict and disagreement. It consists of an attempt to use communication as means of integrating and thereby improving the different perspectives being voiced. The discourse presupposes that the experience of any particular participant is necessarily limited and their reflections on that experience may be inadequate. Consequently any personal point of view is, at the outset, likely to be partial and therefore potentially flawed. Through cooperative discourse, the insight and limits of each point of view are subject to collective consideration and personal reflection. Different views expressed are validated, corrected or integrated relative to one another through a process of coming to agreement. This entails elaborating and justifying claims and counterclaims according to commonly accepted rules of inference and observation and on the basis of commonly accepted foundational assumptions regarding the nature of objective, social and personal reality. In this way, differing claims regarding specific aspects (objective, social or personal) of the problem may be asserted, challenged and defended in a way that allows them to be included or excluded in an emerging common understanding. The perspectives of the individual participants are thus drawn upon in a way the

yields a collective result that builds upon and betters any of their initial individual efforts. As a result, the individual participants are likely to accept and comply with the agreements reached.¹³

In a way consistent with democratic norms, this cooperative deliberation opens up possibilities for social critique and personal emancipation. On the one hand, cultural claims or social conventions may be subject to reconsideration. In a cooperative discourse, specific cultural claims or action prescriptions are considered with reference either to a systematic observation of the facts or to in light of other related cultural definitions of fact or value. In the process, inter-subjective agreement may be reached on the falsehood or wrongness of the particular claim or convention and thereby produce effective critique of specific commonly accepted practices or beliefs. On the other hand, individuals may come to critically reflect on the adequacy of particular beliefs they hold or practices they engage in. Through reflection induced by a cooperative discourse with others, individuals may come to change some of their own particular beliefs and practices in a way that is not only more consistent with inter-subjectively agreed upon understandings, but also with their own subjective understandings and personality. Insofar as this involves reconsidering specific practices and beliefs that were learned or imposed by others, this frees the individual to uncover her own point of view and discover herself. This then enables her to direct her actions in a way that is more independent of particular circumstances or social influences.

Despite its advantages, there are significant limits to the reconciliation of differences and the social critique or personal emancipation that cooperative deliberation enables. The problem is that argument based on reasons oriented to establishing inter-subjective agreement is limited to the use of rules of justification and foundational assumptions that are already established and commonly accepted. From the perspective of democratic theory, this is constraining in several important ways. First, it suggests that cooperative discourse cannot be conducted when there is basic disagreement on the rules of justification or on foundational assumptions regarding objective, social and personal reality. In a largely homogeneous society, this is not a problem. There is an underlying consensus upon which participants can draw to meaningfully negotiate their specific differences of belief and preference. However, in a heterogeneous society where groups have different and incompatible foundational beliefs no ground for cooperative discourse exists. A second and related constraint is that social critique is ultimately limited to clarifying the existing core values of a society. In a cooperative discourse, critique involves elaborating how specific claims are linked to underlying social norms and how these norms relate to one another in a coherent fashion. The meaningfulness of social critique therefore depends upon commonly accepted foundational assumptions of truth and value. Consequently these foundational cultural assumptions can only be the basis and not the object of criticism.¹⁴ Finally, insofar as personal reflection and reasoning is tied to the demands of inter-subjective agreement, the individual's attempt to construct and orient herself is necessarily limited to elaborating who she is in a manner consistent with the social rules of self-expression and the social assumptions regarding the basic nature of thought and personality. This provides a framework for exploring the particularities of one's individuality, but it does not enable a consideration of general or overarching way one person may differ from another.

IV. The Deliberative Democratic Potential of Collaborative Discourse

Democratic potential. Collaborative discourse is predicated on a conception of individuals and social relationship that suggests an understanding of basic political principles and governance that differs from most liberal democratic thought. In collaborative discourse, individuals are defined in a way that emphasizes not only their ability to choose, but also their capacity to construct the meanings and values that guide their choices. In this context, autonomy consists of the capacity to construct meaning and to do so in a way that defines oneself as well as other individuals and the groups to which they belong. It is understood that this constructive activity and the kind of autonomy it enables may take a variety of forms. Therefore autonomy

does not depend on an individual's ability to reason in a particular way. At the same time, it is recognized that some individuals will think in a qualitatively more adequate way than others. As a result, some people will be more self-conscious and thus more self-directing in the meanings and definitions they construct. They will therefore be able to exercise a greater level of autonomy. However these differences are not considered to be absolute or immutable. To the contrary, they are viewed as the result of a dynamic process whereby individuals' socio-cognitive capacity develops in the course of their interaction with one another. In this light, differences in the capacity for autonomous thought and action are regarded as differences in actual development achieved by individuals who share the same potential. Thus significant differences among individuals are recognized, but at the same time all individuals are regarded as potentially equal in their capacity to autonomy and as essentially equal in their right to the respect and caring consideration of others.¹⁵

Complementing this view of individuals is a democratic, if not liberal democratic, conception of the political relationship between individuals. On the one hand, it recognizes that, in their autonomy, all individuals have a basic integrity, but at the same time they are fundamentally dependent on one another. The construction of meaning is not only an activity of a reflective subject, it is also the activity of a group coordinating the exchange among its members. Indeed the two activities are intertwined in such a way that each requires the other. As a result, individuals depend on one another for their own personal development. Thus not only does a collaborative discourse require mutual respect, but that it also requires mutual caring and support. On the other hand, a collaborative discourse recognizes that all individuals are not equally able to define their own meanings and purposes nor are they equally able to engage one another in discourse. This evident inequality does not, however, suggest disempowerment or the need for authority. Rather it creates a demand for complementarity – a coordination of perspectives and pursuits that both realizes the limits and enhances the capacities of the individuals involved. This complementarity is understood to depend on the cooperative, self-reflective efforts of individuals and the appropriate social structuring of the terms of their discursive engagement. The latter requires social regulation that facilitates interpersonal coordination, while recognizing the integrity and limits of individuals' autonomy.

Deliberative potential. In its presumption of a constructed autonomy and relationships of complementarity, collaborative discourse places deliberation at the very core of democratic governance and engagement. It constitutes the medium both for the expression and the construction of personal autonomy and cooperative social exchange. It is here that citizens can express the quality as well as the substance of their point of view and who they are. It is also in the play of the differences between individuals that citizens can also develop and reconstruct how they think and therefore who they can be. It is a vehicle for deepening autonomy and thus for emancipation. At the same time, a collaborative discourse allows for the expression and transformation of the conditions of communicative exchange. In the discourse, there is an exploration of the fragmentation of cultural meanings and the social divisions among the participants. At the same time, there is an attempt to establish a means for communicating these distinctions and thus creating at least thin communitarian bonds among otherwise different groups. As a venue for the realization and construction of both a developing individuality and a changing community, collaborative deliberative discourse is particularly well-suited to the demands of democratic exchange in the hyper-modern or postmodern conditions of multi-cultural societies located in a globalizing world.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have attempted to offer a more differentiated understanding of the nature of discourse and democratic deliberation. The result is a view that does not affirm either the deliberative democratic view that discourse is or readily can be rational and reasonable (reasoned, logical and other-regarding) or the view of its rational choice critics that political discourse is dominated by personal interest and is a matter of strategic

maneuvering rather than reasonable argument. From the perspective adopted here, these opposed views, while making different assumptions, are seen to take the same, essentially psychological approach to the analysis of deliberation. In this regard, both views presume that the qualities of a discourse will reflect the innate capacities of the individuals involved. Their conception of discourse differs because the two views are based on different assumptions regarding those capacities. The deliberative democrats assume that individuals have the capacities to make argument with reasons, think logically and consider the perspectives of others and of the group as a whole. This is reflected in the reasoned, argumentative, cooperative exchange that can take place between them. The critics of deliberation typically make one or more of the following assumptions about individuals: that they do not think logically, they cannot argue in a reasoned way and that their understandings are egocentric and their motives are essentially selfish. Consequently their discourses will be fraught with strategic maneuvering, misunderstanding and conflict.

In my view, the foregoing views of deliberation are inadequate in two respects. First in asserting that discourse will typically take one form or another, they fail to recognize the multiple forms that discourse may take. In the process they do not consider the different ways in which the self may be asserted, the other may be recognized and reasons and arguments may be crafted in a discourse. Instead, deliberative democrats and their critics are limited to suggesting that discourses have an “either or” quality, they are rational or irrational, selfish or other-oriented, reasoned or not. The mistake is empirical and conceptual. The empirical problem is that neither view corresponds to what deliberative discourses can empirically be demonstrated to be. In the deliberations studied here, most discourse was neither fully rational nor exactly irrational. Reasons were provided some of the time and were rarely elaborated by the speaker or subsequently engaged directly by others. The common good was very infrequently addressed, but overtly selfish interests were also rarely advanced. The conceptual problem is that neither view offers a sufficiently nuanced or differentiated view of such key notions of rationality, reasoned argument, perspective-taking or selfishness. Consequently neither view offers an adequate basis for describing the varieties of discourse that actually or may potentially occur in deliberative settings.

Second, and perhaps more fundamental, both views reflect an overly psychological approach to the analysis of discourse, one that sees the qualities of a discourse as a reflection of the capacities of the individuals involved. In the view of deliberative democrats and their rational choice critics, individuals, through the ways in which they subjectively formulate their initiatives and responses, produce the basic qualities of the discourse in which they engage. As a corrective to this approach, I have emphasized, perhaps overemphasized, the structural properties and structuring force of discourses.¹⁶ In so doing, I have characterized a discourse as a somewhat self-constituting, inter-subjective entity that determines the formal qualities of what an individual can be in that setting and how individuals can be related to one another. These considerations are elaborated in a specifically political way in the discussion of the different forms of autonomy and political relationship fostered by each type of deliberative discourse. The result is a more socio-historically relative, constructivist conception of the forms of political and deliberative discourses and, by implication, of the kinds of citizen/participants individuals can be.

In an initial application of this theoretical understanding of deliberative discourses to the empirical study of actual citizen deliberations, several conclusions were drawn. First, the quality of the discourse varies in the course of a deliberation. A single deliberative session typically involves two or even three types of discursive exchanges. Second, even in what might be considered the favorable case of highly educated, empowered adults raised in a liberal democratic polity, the deliberation very rarely was rational or reasonable in the way assumed by deliberative democrats. I hasten to add it rarely had the manifestly egocentric or self-interested quality typically assumed by the rational choice or materialist critics of deliberative democracy.

In the terms of deliberative democratic theory, these empirical findings raise serious issues about the normative and practical value of deliberation as a form of democratic engagement. Even if deliberation is not

openly conflictual and dominated by narrow self-interest, the fact that deliberative discourse among educated, empowered adults is largely conventional is problematic insofar as such a discourse typically: (1) engenders a conformity to prevalent norms that enables only the most limited forms of self-reflection or social critique, (2) maintains existing social divisions and hierarchies, and (3) is unable to address differences in social norms and the ensuing value conflicts that are typical of multicultural societies. Consequently this kind of democratic deliberation cannot offer the normative or practical benefits claimed by its advocates.

The structural pragmatic perspective offered here suggests that the foregoing empirical result does not reflect the nature of democratic deliberation per se, but only the nature of deliberation as it is currently theorized and as it is currently manifest in a particular socio-political context. This suggests a redirection of theory and research on democratic deliberation. Rather than trying to develop a context-independent, ahistorical understanding of what deliberation is, the focus shifts to determining the conditions which foster different types of deliberative exchanges and how transitions from one type of deliberation to another might be most effectively facilitated. The present research suggests that creating a context that “frees” individuals to speak their mind under conditions of civility, openness and equality is not enough. Clearly substantial intervention will be necessary in order to create the conditions that are likely to foster deliberations that are more cooperative or possibly transformative. This sets the agenda for future theory and research. On the one hand, there is the social psychological problem of determining what are the conditions that foster more adequate forms of deliberation and how they may be established in particular deliberative settings. On the other hand, there is the theoretical problem of assessing the implications of the claim that individuals’ capacities are discursively constructed and consequently that their ability to engage one another in an autonomous and equal way depends on substantial intervention in order to foster the desired democratic practice.

Endnotes

¹Much of the inspiration for this project reported here came from two discussion groups to which I belonged and from which I greatly benefited. The first has continued intermittently for three years and included a number of doctoral students including Scott Winterstein, Mark Sellick and Ted Wrigley. The second was a very stimulating faculty discussion group that met weekly at UC Irvine in the winter of 2003. It included Janusz Reykowski (Warsaw School of Social Psychology, Poland), Molly Patterson (Aquinas College, Michigan) and Lisa Garcia Bedolla (UC Irvine).

² For examples, see (e.g. Guttman and Thompson 1996, 2004; Cohen, 1996, 1997; Bohman 1997; Dryzek, 2000; and Benhabib 1996, 2001)

³ Examples of recent research include studies of citizens' views on deliberation (e.g. Walsh, 2004), citizen reports of the frequency with which they engage in political talk (e.g. Cook, et al., forthcoming), the impact of participating in deliberation on the attitudes of participants (e.g. Luskin, et al., 2002) or on effect of citizen deliberation on the policies subsequently enacted by governments (e.g. Weatherford and McDonnell, forthcoming).

⁴ For an early observation on the discourse that occurs in a town meeting, See Mansbridge, 1980. For interesting examples of a more systematic attempt to evaluate actual discourse in a parliamentary setting that draws on the idea of communicative action advanced by Jurgen Habermas, see the work of Jurg Steiner and his colleagues (e.g. Bächtiger, et al., forthcoming, and Steiner, et al., 200.). For an alternative approach, see Mendelberg and Karpowitze, forthcoming).

⁵ Unfortunately, three other obvious source of guidance, ethnomethodology, sociolinguistics and discourse analysis, also are not very helpful to the task at hand. In all three cases, the empirical research tends to offer close descriptions of particular conversations that occur in a specific setting. The problem here is such close context-dependent analyses are not very useful for the purposes of developing a general framework for describing the various exchanges that may take in across a variety of deliberative settings. Indeed much of this work might question the validity of such a methodological goal. In a related fashion, much of the work does not incorporate the kind of political understanding that animates most democratic theory. Consequently, the characterizations of discourses typically do not address the kinds of issues (e.g. autonomy, equality, reasonableness, justification, etc.) that are critical to evaluating the democratic significance and value of communicative exchanges.

⁶ For my discussion of this structural pragmatic approach, see Rosenberg, 2002, Chapter 2; 2003). The presentation of the approach focuses on epistemological and social theoretical issues pertaining to the social psychology of development. The 2002 book explores the implications of this approach for the analysis of political reasoning and subjectivity. The present chapter complements this discussion with the analysis of forms of political discourse or intersubjective engagement.

⁷ For more on the nature of this dynamic relationship between the subjective and the intersubjective construction of meaning, see Rosenberg, 2002, 2003.

⁸ The perspective in which propositional claims are embedded (and hence in terms of which they are meaningful) may be viewed as having different dimensions or aspects. Habermas (1984/7) suggests three such dimensions of a perspective: a view of what is true, a view of what is right (or normatively appropriate) and a view of what is authentic (or personally correct). As an assertion of truth, the proposed relationship must be explicated relative to the objective context in which it occurs. Thus a truth claim in a rational discourse carries with it claims about its relationship to other truth claims made about the objective context of a problem being examined. For example, the claim that teachers fail to pay attention to the individual needs of their students carries with it a warrant to explain how the relationship stipulated is produced or sustained by the conditions and dynamics of the personal motivation of teachers (e.g. poor pay undermines morale) or the circumstances of the classroom (the size of classrooms makes giving individual attention more difficult). As an assertion of rightness, the proposed relationship must be judged relative to the social context of the discourse. In this vein, any claims regarding the moral or ethical value of a proposed policy or an observed behavior carries with it an implicit claim about the relationship of the judgment made relative to other norms and values shared by the participants. For example, the claim that

all students must be treated equally carries with it a warrant to justify this claim relative to other commonly accepted cultural definitions and norms such as the definition that all persons are essentially the same (that is with regard to basic capacities and values) or the norm that all people should be treated equally before the law. As an assertion of authenticity, a propositional claim of truth or value may be considered relative to other expressions of the speaker's self. Thus, one propositional claim may be judged relative to other propositional claims or purposive acts of the speaker. Regardless of how a perspective is organized or its dimensions distinguished, the key point here is that making a claim in a rational discourse carries with it the need to elaborate, explain or justify that claim by presenting the larger subjective perspective, which it expresses.

⁹ As the foregoing comments suggest, the bases of rational discourse (unlike the rules of conventional discourse) are constituted in general and abstract terms. One consequence of this is that rational discourse tends to be less affectively charged than proto-discourse or conventional discourse. There are several reasons for this. First, individual participants are defined abstractly and proscriptions of how they relate to one another are quite general. This tends to have the effect of distancing the discussion from the particulars of an individual's personal identity or preferences and the specifics of her socio-emotional connection to particular other people. Second, differences and disagreements that emerge are considered with reference to shared rules of argumentation, common beliefs and a shared understanding of the discourse. Thus while specific and immediate differences are acknowledged, this is done with reference to shared general assumptions of truth and right and a shared understanding of appropriate conversational behavior. Divisions between those who disagree are thus not reciprocally denying or mutually alienating as they are in conventional or proto-discourse.

¹⁰ Transformative discourse entails a rejection of the simple universalizing tendencies that ground rational discourse and characterize the understandings of persons and communities that rational discourse generates.

¹¹ This is not to say that there are no empathic elements to a proto-discursive exchange. Individual participants may value others feeling-states or others' feelings may cue similar feelings in oneself. In either case, an empathic response emerges such that the personal desirability of a sequence of events is shaped by observations of the other's desires.

¹² That said, there are ways in which a conventional discourse may operate to bring people of different cultural or ethnic backgrounds together by essentially rendering those background differences irrelevant in the immediate social situation of the discourse. This may be directly accomplished by focusing on particular ways in which these otherwise different people are identical (e.g., they are all human, they all love their children, or they all suffer comparably from physical pain.) As these commonalities are highlighted, the cultural differences are set aside. But it is important to recognize these differences are not themselves addressed or directly bridged. Consequently, a turn in the discourse can readily return them to center stage thereby recreating the irreconcilable divisions among the participants.

¹³ It is here, at the level of the compelling qualities of a rational discourse that theorists as diverse as Rawls and Habermas share some common ground. The limits of this ground become apparent insofar as transformative discourse does not even enter into a Rawlsian analysis, but can be quite central to a Habermasian one.

¹⁴ In *Political Liberalism*, Rawls clearly recognizes the ways in which rational discourse depends on a particular culture and cannot overcome fundamental cultural differences. In the book, he therefore limits the applicability of his claims regarding autonomy, equality and public reason to existing democratic cultures. Similarly, he stipulates that rational discourse cannot draw on claims anchored in comprehensive doctrines. In this latter regard, Rawls recognizes only that rational discourse cannot address cultural or religious differences in basic substantive claims regarding what is real and valuable. Interestingly, Rawls is limited by the rational discursive quality of his own theoretical argument and thus cannot address variation in the logic of reflection or in the form of argumentation that may exist across persons or cultures.

¹⁵ For an interesting theoretical argument that takes a more developmental approach to democratic citizenship, see Warren, 1992.

¹⁶ For a more balanced statement of the psychological as well as sociological dimensions of social interaction and discourse, see Rosenberg 2002, Chapters 1 & 2.

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