

The London School of Economics and Political Science

Politics As A Craft: The Equal Advancement and Consideration of Interests

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Declaration

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This work took most of my adult life to complete. There were several starts and stops in working on this thesis, and I had to request a couple of extensions on completing this dissertation.

So in some sense, the fact that this work stands completed and that I was awarded a PhD for it is a testament to the patience and understanding that I received over the past seven years.

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Abstract

This thesis aims to provide a frame work by which citizens in a democracy can become empowered and take ownership of their democratic institutions and the public sphere in which they discuss solving the problems that they face as a society. In short, this work will argue that politics is a craft, and that political actions are skills. If citizens learn to better practice this skill, then democracy will be better off. It will become better off since more citizens will feel more empowered to participate in the political process if they have their political skills well developed. As will be argued in the second chapter of this thesis, disempowerment can come about even in the face of an equal distribution of formal power and the absence of what Iris Marion Young has called internal exclusions, when citizens have a general feeling of inadequacy while participating. Another term for this psychological malaise that some participants feel is political mortification. Instituting politics as a craft entails creating school curriculums and adult education programs that have students develop their political skills, and that this can help create empowered citizens that want to engage in the political process.

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INTRODUCTION

The noted Canadian political theorist C. B. Macpherson began the inaugural Massey Lecture with these words; “there is a good deal of muddle about democracy. I mean not that democracy itself consists of muddling through (though this could be argued), but that our thinking about democracy is muddled” (Macpherson 1965, 1). When Macpherson had uttered those words, liberal democracy was facing a serious institutional challenge from Soviet-style communism – a challenge that it eventually overcame. Indeed, in the 1930s, democracy was in very serious trouble. The major democracies in the world at the time were under tremendous strain thanks to the Great Depression. In those days, it seemed that no matter where one looked, one could find pamphleteers, protestors, and even revolutionaries calling for drastic institutional change in those democracies. There was an abundance of anarchists, communists, and fascists around – especially in the early part of the twentieth century, working to convince others that democracy was not working (Marshall 1992; Netlau 1996; Laqueur 1997; Lewy 1997; Moritz 2001).

Now things have changed. It seems that everyone wants to, at the very least, give the impression that they are democratic, and just about everyone agrees that democracy is the most preferred form of government, save for the rare examples out there such as some Middle East states, Al-Qaeda and various Neo-Nazi groups. China at times will pay lip service to democracy, and talk about increasing accountability, which is a vital part of democracy. Generally after a state becomes democratic, the citizens of that state recognize democracy as superior. After the demise of the Iron Curtain at the end of the Cold War, liberal democracy stands alone as the only viable form of government, at least normatively. After 1989, there was a proliferation of democracies, known as the “Third Wave” of democracy, and now the majority of the countries of the world

could be considered democratic in some way or another. According to Freedom House's *Freedom in the World 2006*, the amount of electoral democracies has almost doubled since the fall of the Berlin Wall, from 69 in 1989 to 122 in 2006 (Puddington 2006, 5). As of 2006, 147 of 192 countries around the world were deemed to be at least "Partly Free" or better by Freedom House (Puddington 2006, 3).

The march of democratization has caused for democracy to enter into the pantheon of sacred terms in politics. As stated earlier, politicians around the world want their systems of government to be considered democratic, and to take things one step further, even the various industries have been looking at democratizing their workplace by giving workers and unions more of a say, even experimenting with deliberative democratic practices allowing internal stakeholders to make decisions.

Any cursory glance at the history of democracy will reveal an evolution in terms of democratic institutions and practices. However, one principle that has remained constant in liberal democracies is that the citizens of a democracy must have some sort of decision-making power. Traditionally, this has meant giving the vote to all citizens in free, fair, and periodic elections. If democracy is only meant to mean that, then we are left with what the literature has called aggregative democracy, where the individual preferences of voters are then aggregated to determine which candidate or option the electorate prefers. Democracy does not have much meaning beyond the selection of candidates, proponents of this model argue. William Riker argued that the results of aggregative democracy, or the "liberal interpretation of voting" to use his terms, could not be interpreted as an expression of a popular will, but only yields the expression that Candidate A defeated all others in the election (Riker 1982). Before him,

Schumpeter (1947) defined democracy as merely a system in which rulers are selected by competitive elections, and Popper perhaps gives the less spirited defense of aggregative democracy, saying that it alone can allow citizens to get rid of bloodshed (1962, 142, see also Przeworski 1999).

However, democracy is generally meant to mean a lot more than periodic elections, so much so that most theorists that work in democratic theory argue that democracy ought to mean a lot more than this. All the theorists cited above except for Przeworski are not contemporary theorists, and we have seen different models of democracy that have built and dramatically expanded on the aggregative model, such as the participatory democratic model espoused by C.B. Macpherson, Carole Pateman, and Benjamin Barber, to the deliberative democrats such as Jurgen Habermas, Joshua Cohen, and John Dryzek, to name a few.

So we know that democracy can evolve in theory and institutionally. Also, while democracy is – to borrow Linz and Stepan’s famous phrase – the only game in town, this does not mean to say it is perfect. We know that voter turnout is much lower on nearly all democracies in the world, even though they will go up occasionally – depending on the election, and that there is a great decline in respect and appreciation for politicians and the democratic process in general (Nevitte 1996, Hibbing and Theiss-Morse 2002). Thus if democracy is continually evolving, then it makes sense for any of those concerned about democracy to try to steer that growth in a positive way that would be beneficial to all of its citizens.

This is what this thesis is about. It aims to provide a frame work by which citizens in a democracy can become empowered and take ownership of their democratic institutions and the public sphere in which they discuss solving the problems that they face as a society. In short, this work will argue that politics is a craft, and that political actions are skills. If citizens learn to better practice this skill, then democracy will be better off. It will become better off since more citizens will feel more empowered to participate in the political process if they have their political skills well developed. As will be argued in the second chapter of this thesis, disempowerment can come about even in the face of an equal distribution of formal power and the absence of what Iris Marion Young has called internal exclusions, when citizens have a general feeling of inadequacy while participating. Another term for this psychological malaise that some participants feel is political mortification. Instituting politics as a craft entails creating school curriculums and adult education programs that have students develop their political skills, and that this can help create empowered citizens that want to engage in the political process. This is important given the nature of deliberative theory, as will be explained in the third chapter.

As Joseph Schumpeter famously argued, the citizenry in a democracy is not capable of anything beyond a stampede. That is to say, he thought that citizens did not have the knowledge or the skill to make democracy work. If we look at deliberative theory, we will find that while deliberative democrats believe that deliberative practices can empower participants and develop their skills, they would prefer to have participants sufficiently empowered before entering into deliberation in order to ensure that the reasons generated by deliberative proceedings are not polluted by any communicative distortions or presence of hegemonic discourses and/or internal exclusions created by those who have more skills than others. This thesis will support the

institutionalisation of deliberative forums, and that instituting politics as a craft will allow for the improvement in the quality of political participation in both aggregative and deliberative forms of democracy.

This thesis will take the following path. The first chapter will examine the basis of liberal democracy and look at the kinds of arguments that are used to justify it. Thomas Christiano goes through the most common ones in his book *The Rule of the Many* before coming up with his own. The reason why this work begins on this path is because the guiding principles of liberal democracy will spell out the normative principles that liberal democratic institutions ought to aspire to. Moreover, it also helps to answer the question whether there is anything that makes liberal democracy unique, at least in the sense that democracy can offer citizens something that no other system of government can answer. Liberal democracy is here equated with Robert Dahl's seven conditions of polyarchy; 1) Control over governmental decisions about policy is constitutionally vested in elected officials, 2) elected officials are chosen and peacefully removed in relatively frequent, fair and free elections in which coercion is quite limited, 3) practically all adults have the right to vote in these elections, 4) most adults also have the right to run for the public offices for which candidates run in these elections, 5) citizens have an effectively enforced right to freedom of expression, particularly political expression, including criticism of the officials, the conduct of the government, the prevailing political, economic, and social system, and the dominant ideology, 6) they also have access to alternative sources of information that are not monopolized by the government or any other single group, 7) citizens have an effectively enforced right to form and join autonomous associations, including political associations, such as political parties and interest groups, that attempt to influence the government by competing in elections and by other peaceful means (Dahl 1989, 233). Dahl's

definition of polyarchy is far more robust than just aggregative democracy, since it guarantees more rights to citizens than a strict aggregative democracy as described by Schumpeter and Popper.

After rejecting self-government and the epistemic capabilities of democracy as acceptable justifications for democracy, Christiano argues that what makes liberal democracy unique and justifiable is that it alone allows for interests to be advanced and considered equally in the public sphere. This means that advancing the interests of one person is as important as advancing the interests of any other person, and it is a question of justice which requires that all individuals ought to have the right to lead their lives as they see fit as constrained by the harm principle. Moreover, while individuals may be at times mistaken about their interests, it is undoubtedly true that each person is ultimately the best judge with regard to certain features of their interests.

Christiano argues that this principle requires that a democracy have both aggregative and deliberative forms of democracy. Deliberation is necessary because citizens need to come to a better understanding of their interests, and this understanding is in constant need of improvement. Deliberation provides an arena for citizens to defend and explain their interests to others and learn about the interests of others. Aggregative elements are needed to equitably resolve differences of opinion when consensus cannot be found. The second chapter moves from this point to discuss what I consider to be a key challenge to the principle of equal advancement and consideration of interest – the disempowerment of citizens. Disempowerment leads to the exclusion of large segments of the citizenry in the democratic decision-making process, and this is why disempowerment works directly against the principle of the equal advancement and consideration of interests. This thesis borrows from Helena Catt's definition of empowerment,

which states that a participant should be considered empowered if she feels she knows enough about an issue to feel comfortable asking a question, is able to interrupt and put the question and feels comfortable in expressing disagreement with what is happening (Catt 1999, 50). Because of several interests not being heard due to disempowerment, the quality of political participation is negatively affected.

This chapter will argue that political mortification is a type of disempowerment that is brought about by a lack of political skill. Looking to create a more equitable distribution of political skill among the citizens will not only mitigate the effects of political mortification, but also equip citizens the skills to identify, challenge, and critique any hegemonic discourses and internal exclusions that could come about in democratic forums where formal power is more or less equally distributed.

At this point, the thesis begins to look at various proposals that can solve disempowerment by developing the skills of participants. The third chapter will look at how deliberation might empower citizens and improve the quality of political participation. As we will see, participating in deliberative forums offer opportunities for participants to develop their skills. Moreover, Christiano argues that deliberation must be institutionalized if a democracy aspires to meet the principle of the equal advancement and consideration of interests. However, by looking at some studies, deliberation's actual performance at developing political skills is mixed. This chapter will argue that deliberative forums will function better, according to its own stated goals, when participants already have their skills developed before entering deliberative proceedings. This will leave participants in deliberative forums more capable of identifying public reasons and allow each individual and group to speak freely and according to their own voices and

interpretations. Thus in order for deliberative forums to better meet their function as defined by deliberative democrats and Christiano's schema, then a program of political skill development should be incorporated, so that participants feel empowered before they enter into deliberation.

The fourth chapter focuses on providing the theoretical groundwork for such skill development. This chapter will argue that political participation requires a set of skills, and that political participation is a craft, where political skills are learned primarily experientially through trial and error. The learning of political skills entails employing different strategies and techniques in different situations, evaluating them in light of their successes or failures, and altering in light of those successes and failures. As such, this chapter will borrow heavily from the work of John Dewey, who first elaborated that skills are best learned experientially in the classroom. Firstly, this chapter will aim to establish that political participation requires a skill set, and the effective practice of these skills is necessary in both aggregative and deliberative spheres of democracy. Secondly, this chapter will look at defining active political participation. It is here defined as a genuine attempt to help advance an interest in the public sphere. It differs from passive forms of political participation, which involve mostly information gathering and reflective consideration of interests and preferences. While they are different, both types of actions are defined here as types of political participation, since these actions are a constitutive part of the principle of equal consideration of interests.

The fifth chapter will look at the impact that politics as a craft will make on democratizing the public sphere and examine some further questions that come out from implementing politics as a craft. Firstly, the question of measuring successfully the learning of political skills will be looked

at. This chapter will argue that the presence of a democratic public sphere, as Dewey understood it, with empowered citizens should serve as the goal of politics as a craft and ought to improve the quality of political participation. Part of this is seeing if more people are participating, but it also entails ensuring that the public sphere does not become polluted with things that could disempower its participants.

Moreover, Christiano in later works argues that social and political institutions require a publicity condition for justice, specifically that citizens need to see justice being done as a product of its decision-making process. Part of making that commitment to justice would be to require that all political decisions that produce inequalities be publically justified. Doing so can serve a pedagogical value for the future decision-makers. Publically justified inequalities can help identify the cause, the nature, or the locus of what causes the inequality, and this can help frame the future discussions, and it causes decision-makers to acknowledge and protect each individual's capacity for forging and creating their conception of the good. Despite this, the chapter concludes by outlining some success stories where the development of experiential skills did create more empowered participants, successfully developed skills, and in some examples gave students a strong enough sense of social justice to motivate them to participate in the political arena in the future.

The thesis concludes by looking at how politics as a craft might look in the real world by summarizing and explicating various education programs and curriculums, mostly from the United States in the early twentieth century, but also looks at contemporary examples from around the world. The first reform is a revival of the Federal Forum Project, which was an

ambitious adult education program initiated in the United States during the 1930s. It was a nation-wide program that funded discussion forums where people attended and discussed various political issues of the day under the guidance of a discussion leader. The Forum Project resembled the deliberative forums of today. However, their purpose was slightly different. While deliberation will try to reach a decision on an issue, the purpose of the forums of the 1930s were educative. The forums were there simply to have participants learn and grapple with the issues being discussed. The second reform proposed is developing courses in deliberative democracy. In these courses, students learn about democratic values, how to deliberate and communicate about various political issues, and how to behave and interact with others. These deliberative democracy courses would draw from the previous discussion and speech courses that were taught in American universities in the early part of the 20th century. This chapter will examine some of the textbooks used by these discussion courses. Thirdly, there are service learning exercises and programs, which have students at the primary school and secondary school levels help out in a volunteer organization in a co-operative education format.

This thesis hopes to make a contribution to both democratic theory and practice by outlining some ways to help empower citizens and improve the quality of political discourse in liberal democracies today. By developing their political skills in a free and open way, citizens can develop a public space that can be open and allows each individual or group to speak accordingly to their views and interpretations, without being inhibited by any internal exclusions or hegemonic discourses.

CHAPTER 1: LIBERAL DEMOCRACY: WHAT IS IT?

To pick up from the theme that was laid on the introduction, the beginning of the twenty-first century looks a lot different than the beginning of the twentieth. There are no real external challenges out there to democracy in the same way that there were in the early decades of the twentieth century. Soviet-style communism is gone, as is fascism. It seems that everyone wants to be democratic in some way. To be called “undemocratic” in political discourse is considered a serious charge. Mind you, even though there are more democracies now than ever, not every democracy looks the same. They can differ tremendously along institutional lines, and they can have very different political cultures. Some, most notably Birku Parekh (1993), have argued that democracy itself can be a culturally insensitive term.

The point here is twofold. Firstly, democracy is a very fluid term. What is considered democratic in one place of the world may not be considered democratic in another – even though democracy has a very strong normative currency today – perhaps stronger now more than ever. Secondly, the definition of democracy has evolved over time as democracies have proliferated all over the world. Let me use the often-cited example of universal suffrage. Today, any state that denies the franchise to its citizens would not be considered democratic, and yet any armchair historian of liberal democracies will know that this was not always the case. Most of today’s liberal democracies – as has often been said – were liberal first before they were democratic (Katz 1997, 46; Macpherson 1965, 6). Liberal regimes originally, at least on a theoretical level, were primarily geared to protect property rights – the entrenchment of democratic rights came along much later.

Democracies have evolved over time, and as so many democratic theorists passionately argue, they should continue to evolve (Ackerman and Fishkin 2004, 9). It would be foolish to say that we have reached an endpoint in the development of democracy – either in terms of democratic culture or in terms of institutions. This begs the question: why should democracy evolve? Why can we not accept democracy just the way it is? Are not things fine the way they are? Several scholars out there say that things are not fine the way they are (see Nevitte 1996). Some will argue that democracies are not doing enough to ensure that each citizen has the adequate resources to live their lives well, and this is frustrated by the lack of a fair distribution of resources. Since so many (Miller 1976; Rawls 1993; Barry 2005) – most notably John Rawls – have made the link between a fair distribution of resources and social justice, this would mean that democracies could do more to fulfill some standard of social justice.

Another reason why not everything is fine in some democracies – which is a key concern in this thesis - is the substantial lack of empowerment among wide segments of the citizenry. The evidence of citizen disempowerment is the low quality of political participation that exists in democracies. The next chapter will make the case that disempowerment is linked to the low quality of political participation seen in liberal democracies these days. The concern of this thesis is mostly the quality of political participation. I am interested in developing a theoretical framework to improve the culture of democracy, which entails primarily improving the quality of political participation. However, in this chapter, I will define democracy a bit further by explaining some of its main principles, tenets, and elements. I will also explicate what I believe to be the most suitable justification of liberal democracy as presented by Thomas Christiano in

The Rule of the Many. Doing so will allow us not only to better understand liberal democracy itself, but also allow us to better understand its various normative underpinnings.

Defining Liberal Democracy

These days, democracy is linked with the principles of liberalism. Scholars such as Macpherson and Lipset argued years ago that liberal democratic states were liberal first and then became democratic. Lipset's and Macpherson's arguments were rather straightforward: states such as the United Kingdom and the United States excluded several segments of the population from enjoying key democratic rights such as the right to vote (Macpherson 1962, 262; Lipset 1981). For Macpherson at least, states were either democratic or not – they could not be democratic in degrees. Macpherson thought that democracy meant a degree of economic equality, and that liberalism was inherently undemocratic and exclusionary, even though on the surface it did guarantee individual freedoms. The last lines of *Possessive Individualism* (p. 262) put it best; “The greatness of seventeenth-century liberalism was its assertion of the free rational individual as the criterion of the good society; its tragedy was that its very assertion was necessarily a denial of individualism to half the nation”. States faced a choice in being democratic or being liberal, argued Macpherson, since he thought that there was a tension between the two concepts.

However, if one accepts that states can be democratic in degrees, or that some states could be more democratic than others as the Freedom House index suggests, then it is almost theoretically inconceivable that a liberal state can somehow be wholly undemocratic. John Locke, one of the earliest liberal theorists, certainly included elements of democratic rule. One of Locke's most important innovations to political theory is an argument for a social contract between consenting individuals and the sovereign that is based strictly on consent of the governed (Locke 1980, 52;

Plattner 1999, 123). The very basis of popular sovereignty for liberals has traditionally been based on majority consent, where citizens agree that their government and their ruling institutions are legitimate. This invokes the principle of majority rule, which is a key component of democracy. Locke argues that legitimate political power is derived from consent from the people. There is some debate about the extent of which Locke wished to extend the franchise. There are those that argue that Locke favoured a limited franchise (Wood 1992), while others have suggested that Locke favoured a wide extension of the vote (Tully 1980; Ashcraft 1986).

However, liberal regimes initially did not extend the vote to all citizens, but eventually did so over the course of time. The idea of liberal citizenship was linked to the capacity to effectively exercise self-government. John Stuart Mill makes the point in *Considerations of Representative Government* in favour of plural voting, where all citizens were given a vote but some citizens were given extra votes according to their level of education. This is certainly consistent with the “developmental democracy” label that Macpherson has placed on Mill’s understanding of democracy. Yet this view ought to be considered a development from previous theorists such as Jeremy Bentham and James Millm, who argued in favour of extending the vote to the middle class in the First Reform Bill of 1832 (Horowitz and Horowitz 1988, 260-261). The elder Mill argued, along Hobbesean lines, that an individual put a halt to another’s insatiable thirst for power by exercising the vote. “That one human being will desire to render the person and property of another subservient to his pleasures...is the foundation for government (...) The desire, therefore, of that power which is necessary to render the persons and properties of human beings subservient to our pleasures is a grand governing law of human nature” (Mill 1955, 56).

However most would agree a liberal regime cannot be an unlimited democracy where every citizen makes decisions in every aspect of political governance (Gray 1986, 74). Liberal theorists such as Locke and John Stuart Mill (Mill 1993, 261-277) argued against pure democracy since it could promote – in Mill’s words – “sinister interests” which could undermine the basic system of liberal rights which include the right to property, the right to free speech, the right to liberty which entails guaranteeing a degree of individual non-interference, among other things. Traditionally, democratic rule has been caged in liberal states either by a written constitution or by a constitutional convention. Liberal theorists feared that democratic rights could be a threat to basic liberties and political freedom, while “it is equally true that the development of democracy has over time become the principal tool for the defence of the rights to liberty” (Bobbio 1990, 39). However, over time, democracy and liberalism eventually became interwoven.

Intuitively we understand the basic elements of liberal democracy. Liberal democracy is always understood to entail representative democracy. That is to say, any model¹ of liberal democracy usually involves citizens voting for representatives who engage in the major aspects of governing. Even participatory democrats such as Macpherson argue that elected representatives are needed, whereas Benjamin Barber (1984, 145-147) argues that elected representatives have no place within participatory democracy and sets his model of democracy apart from liberalism (Barber 1984, 261). Nonetheless, something that is common to all theoretical models of liberal democracy is that there are representatives that do some share of the governing on behalf of the citizens. Stephen Darwall (1983) argues that a liberal democracy that is grounded on the autonomy of the person will include a principle of equally accountable representation. As he

¹ I borrow the term “model” from C.B. Macpherson, *Life and Times of Liberal Democracy* and David Held, *Models of Democracy*, 2nd edition.

explains; “when decisions are made by representatives, then not only should representatives be accountable to every person, they should equally be accountable. Or, to be more precise, the represented should have an equal opportunity to hold representatives to account” (Darwall 1983, 55). Also, the division of political labour is more or less clearly demarcated between representatives and citizens, and there is a way by which citizens can hold these representatives to account.

Liberal democracies can be democratic in scale, some being more democratic than others. In the literature we encounter theorists making the case for more citizen control over governing, such as Macpherson, John Dewey, and C. Wright Mills, and others arguing for less, such as Bernard Berelson and Joseph Schumpeter. But all of these scholars in general accept that democracy should have representatives that legitimately should exercise some degree of political authority. Even noted advocates of deliberative democracy such as Jurgen Habermas advocate a “two-track” democracy that involves elected representatives (Habermas 1996, 486-488). Simply put, liberal democracy by definition means representative democracy. But they cannot be completely democratic or undemocratic. The direct democracy advocated by Barber, Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1987), Robert Michels (1915, 33-34), and G.D.H. Cole (1913, 1920), has no place within the halls of liberalism, as has been traditionally argued by liberal theorists in the past. Conversely, the advocates of what critics have called minimalist democracy (Macpherson 1977, 77-93; Gutmann 1993; Cunningham 2002, 101-123) argue that citizens should not be allowed to participate beyond the confines of voting, and most of the political decisions should be left up to political elites (Schumpeter 1947; Berelson, Lazarsfeld and McPhee 1954). Both had their reasons. Schumpeter felt that under the current socio-economic situation, citizens were incapable

of any meaningful political participation beyond a stampede (Schumpeter 1947, 283). Berelson *et al.* on the other hand felt that it was better to have some citizens not participate because they had extreme views, and democratic institutions could be destabilised if their views were expressed in the public sphere (Berelson, Lazarsfeld and McPhee 1954, 314). But nonetheless they acknowledge that the election of the representatives should be left up to citizens. So liberal democracy at the very least must have some democratic elements to it, but it can never be a liberal dictatorship or a pure democracy. It cannot function without citizen participation nor can it function with universal citizen participation in every aspect of governing. Some medium must be found.

The concept of liberal democracy, much like any other guise of democracy such as Athenian democracy or direct democracy, relies on the premise of popular sovereignty. Ultimately, it is the people who are sovereign in a liberal democracy. Liberal democracy should be – to borrow from Lincoln’s famous line from the Gettysburg Address – government of the people, from the people, and by the people. So the people are sovereign. But what are they sovereign over? Major political issues must be determined by the population at large. What constitutes a major political issue will differ from state to state. Some countries such as Switzerland will have a substantial amount of policy decisions decided by referendum. Many states in the United States will have referendums on issues that are proposed by petition of citizens’ initiative (Cronin 1989; Smith and Tolbert 2001). Just about all liberal democracies though, grant that the citizens must choose their representatives. In a liberal democracy, no person can legitimately claim to be a representative of a community or of the “people” (however it might be defined) if they have not been elected by the people.

Also, liberal democracy does not allow for representatives to be elected for life. Periodic elections are always present in liberal democracies. The arguments for why this is the case are well known. Elections not only allow the citizens to choose their representatives, but allows citizens to evaluate the performance of their elected representatives. William Riker has called this use of the vote the “liberal interpretation of voting” (Riker 1982). Elections serve as an instrument to not only choose representatives, but also to pass judgement on their past performances. Voting at times can be just as much as keeping the rascals as it is throwing the rascals out, to borrow from an old phrase. However, there should be some important caveats that need to be placed here about the representative claims of electoral democracy. Several scholars have argued that the electoral institutions themselves for their lack of representativeness is grounded in systemic exclusion, both occurring in the past and the present (see Philips 1995; Williams 1998; Mansbridge 1999; Young 2000). However, Saward (2009) has argued because of electoral democracy’s limitations, it could legitimately allow for non-elected representatives to work along side of elected representatives by offering to represent individual’s partial desires or wants, be temporary representatives, or represent a continually evolving sense of self, among others. While these scholars persuasively deliniate between groups that can engage in democratic representation on the one hand and the democratic representation of electoral democracy on the other, they do acknowledge the necessity and legitimacy of electoral representative claims, that even they might need reform.

Liberal democracies generally accept that the wisdom of the many outweighs the wisdom of the few, at least over issues of social and economic justice. Liberal democracy accepts that each

person has the sufficient capabilities and understanding of justice where they alone are the best judge of what is just or unjust, or what is fair and not fair (Christiano 1996, 191). In other words, liberal democracy should not make any claims about the veracity of the claims from competing conceptions of justice, all the while accepting that there is great disagreement about the norms of justice (Gutmann 1987, 48-71; Christiano 1996, 61; Shapiro 1996, 1999). Liberal democracy does not accept paternalism in the issue of justice, and does not accept that there are experts on the issue of economic, social, and political justice. Liberal democracy should grant that each person is ultimately the best suited to understand his or her interests. Aristotle (even though he was no advocate of liberal democracy) sums it up well.

“There are some arts whose products are not judged of solely, or best, by the artists themselves, namely those arts whose products are recognised even by those who do not possess the art; for example, the knowledge of the house is not limited to the builder only; ... the master of the house will even be a better judge than the builder... and the guest will judge better of a feast than the cook” (Aristotle 1980, 1282a).

Issues of justice are not considered to be so technical that they require specialized training to have a reasonable understanding of them. As Christiano explains; “though citizens may not be the best judges of their interests in an unqualified way because they have little knowledge of how to satisfy them or the conditions under which they can be preserved, they are the best judges with regard to certain essential features of their interests” (Christiano 1996, 75). As nearly all advocates of liberalism believe that the individual generally is the best judge of what he thinks is fair or just, advocates of liberal democracy similarly believe that the citizenry is the best judge of what collectively is fair and just for the population.

Once again, liberal democracy requires popular sovereignty and also requires that the citizenry exercise that sovereignty occasionally. Thus liberal democracy must function with some degree

of citizen participation. If that is the case, it follows that each and every citizen must be given political equality. That is to say, each person's voice should have equal weight in the democratic decision-making process, and ensuring that all the necessary political rights are extended to all citizens. This means, as we have seen earlier, that each adult should be able to vote in periodic elections. Furthermore, it also means that all adults have the right to seek any political office without any restriction whatsoever. The guarantee of political equality also entails the democratic justification of traditional liberal rights, such as the freedom of association, freedom of speech,² the right to petition the government, and freedom of the press. By extension of that, it also requires that citizens be given the right to seek alternative sources of information (Dahl 1982; 1989), as well as the right to seditious libel (Kalven 1966, 16; Rawls 1993, 342; Dombrowski 2001: 107). Moreover, political equality means also guaranteeing that all citizens have the right to participate in other forms of political participation that are outside the standard democratic process, such as types of political activism (Inglehart 1977; Barnes and Kaase 1979; Inglehart and Catterberg 2002; Norris 2002).

Political equality ensures that all individuals have the right to engage in political participation. The reasons why citizens require this are twofold. Firstly, as we saw earlier with James Mill's argument in *An Essay on Government*, political participation gives citizens the ability to halt potential abuses from government. They can express discontent with the performance of public officials and even throw them out of public office. The notion of using institutionalised legal recourse, such as voting in this case, as a protective measure against tyranny can be traced all the

² For a good discussion about the relationship between free speech and democracy, see Frederick Schauer, 1983, "Free Speech and the Argument for Democracy, *Nomos XXV: Liberal Democracy*."

way back to John Locke (1980, 101-107). It stands to reason that other forms of political participation can also serve the same function.

The other purpose of political participation, which was first elaborated by John Stuart Mill, is to allow for each individual to freely and openly develop their skills and capacities as they see fit. Macpherson (1977) offers the useful distinction of the protective democracy of Locke and James Mill and the developmental democracy of John Stuart Mill and John Dewey. John Stuart Mill explains in *On Liberty* that participation in the democratic process was key for individuals to develop the necessary understanding of liberal democratic institutions and processes. (Mill, *On Liberty* 1993, 85-86). John Dewey, who will be discussed more in depth in Chapter IV, argued that education occurred experientially, and that the best way for individuals to learn is to “learn by doing”. Political participation for Dewey was key not only for the political development of the individual, but also for his or her moral development as well. For both Mill and Dewey, this development could only occur if there was a public sphere that allowed for the free expression of all ideas, preferences, and interests so that they could be discussed freely and openly. This idea of an unrestricted public sphere as a necessary requirement for liberal democracy remains a key element in the theories of several scholars, from Mill and Dewey to C. Wright Mills (1951) and including participatory democrats such as Carole Pateman (1970), Barber (1984), and Macpherson (1977), to Jurgen Habermas and deliberative democrats today such as Seyla Benhabib (1996).

Liberal democrats believe that political participation can be used as both a protective measure and a developmental measure. However, democratic participation is understood by liberal

democrats to be a method by which liberal rights – usually enshrined in a written constitution and/or constitutional convention – are protected and enshrined. Political participation, to reiterate, can never be used to supplant or undermine liberal rights. Liberal democracy is simply democracy tempered by liberalism. Some of the people cited above, most notably Barber, Mills, Macpherson, and some deliberative democrats (Tallisse 2005) would not agree that democracy should be tempered by liberalism at all, since they feel that liberalism's attachment to free market capitalism as well as a robust conception of the good, at least according to Talisse, undermines the prospect for democratic success. Liberal democrats however would not agree with that statement, arguing that liberalism and democracy go hand in hand, notwithstanding any concerns about the market.

So far I have explained the normative underpinnings of some of the key components of liberal democracy. Robert Dahl (1982, 10-11, parantheses mine) offers an often cited list of seven institutional conditions for liberal democracy³, which serves as a nice summary of this section.

They are;

1. Control over government decisions about policy is constitutionally vested in elected officials.
2. Elected officials are chosen in frequently and fairly conducted elections in which coercion is comparatively uncommon.
3. Practically all adults have the right to vote in the election of officials.
4. Practically all adults have the right to run for elective offices in the government, though age limits may be higher for holding offices than for the suffrage.
5. Citizens have the right to express themselves without the danger of severe punishment on political matters broadly defined, including criticism of officials, the government, the regime, the socio-economic order, and the prevailing ideology.

³ Dahl uses the term polyarchy for liberal democracy. Dahl argues that democracy properly defined only existed in ancient Athens, where the population was relatively small and all offices (save for the generals which were directly elected) were decided by lot. See Dahl, *Introduction to Democratic Theory*.

6. Citizens have a right to seek out alternative sources of information (to government-run and sponsored media outlets). Moreover, alternative sources of information exist and are protected by law.
7. To achieve their various rights, including those listed above, citizens also have a right to form relatively independent associations or organizations, including independent political parties and interest groups.

Dahl's conditions, along with the work of Seymour Lipset (1981), has led to a whole field of political study that measures democracy (see Bollen 1991; Coppedge and Reinicke 1991). The work by Freedom House that is cited earlier in this chapter is an example of this. Diamond and Morlino (2005, ix-xxxix) further add that a liberal democracy must have a competitive party system. They further elaborate that a high-quality democracy not only has the procedural and institutional elements of liberal democracy such as the rule of law, citizen participation, electoral competition, and both vertical and horizontal accountability, but also substantial dimensions such as legal freedom and equality.

The Essence of Democracy: Equal Consideration of Interests

Having just given the normative underpinnings of the various components of liberal democracy, I will now discuss the global justification for liberal democracy itself. What justifies liberal democracy? Why is democracy the most desirable system of government? What can democracy deliver to its citizens that no other system of government can? As stated earlier, liberal democracy has overcome its ideological competitors and is, to borrow Linz and Stepan's turn of phrase, the only game in town (Linz and Stepan 1996, 5). As I have implied in the previous section, a liberal regime will end up being democratic, and it would be very difficult to conceive of a liberal dictatorship, given liberalism's global fear of abuse of power (Dahl 1998, 60).

So what justifies liberal democracy? What is its essence? Thomas Christiano in *The Rule of the Many* offers a very good justification. Christiano argues that there are three main justifications for democracy, however only two are of concern here⁴. First, democracy is justified because liberty is the preeminent political value in a political society, and democracy is the only form of government that guarantees liberty to its citizens. In this view, democracy is based on the principle of self-government (Christiano 1996, 15). The basic schema of this argument is rather straightforward and draws from some of the liberal premises of John Stuart Mill and John Dewey outlined above. Freedom is a preeminent value in politics, and is key to self-development. Each person has an equal right to the conditions of self-development, so determining common activities is a necessary condition of self-development. Therefore, each person has an equal right to participate in determining the course of outcomes of the common activities of which he or she is involved (Christiano 1996, 17; Gould 1988).

There are a few variations of this argument, such as what Christiano calls the epistemic argument and the constructivist argument. They will be explained in turn. But Christiano rejects the self-government argument for two main reasons. Firstly, self-government advocates cannot give a coherent explanation for why the liberty to participate in political activities is more important than the liberty to participate in non-political activities, even though all the while individuals are being completely free while doing these non-political activities. This is an assertion which goes all the way back to Jean-Jacques Rousseau in *The Social Contract* and *Emile* (1993). But,

⁴ The other justification is what Christiano calls instrumental, which states that democracy is not good because of some intrinsic value, but rather is the most reliable political method at producing good decisions. Other decision-making procedures such as a friendly dictatorship could theoretically produce these goods, but it is highly unlikely that they can. Some of these goods include as the greatest good for the greatest number, as advocated by Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill in the *Considerations on Representative Government*, or the protection of civil liberties, as argued by William Riker in *Liberalism Against Populism*.

according to Christiano, the advocates of “democracy as self-government” have yet to produce a coherent explanation for the paramount importance of political liberty (Christiano 1996, 19). As he explains; “even if democracy represents a kind of freedom, it is not clear why democracy is essential to a free person. Why can’t a person conceivably get a greater liberty overall by giving up political liberty altogether? This is the trade-off problem” (Ibid.).

There is a further problem with the issue of the intrinsic primacy of political liberty. If political liberty trumps all, Christiano argues, then the task of participating in the decision-making of every minutae of policy becomes a monumental task – one that is beyond the reach of any individual that must, at least in the modern age, complete other non-political tasks in order to survive, such as work to earn wages to purchase shelter, food, and clothing. Christiano here borrows from Aristotle somewhat, who famously argued that political participation should be left in the hands of those who have sufficient leisure time. This is impossible in this modern age, where individuals spend much of their time ensuring their livelihood and where the full activities of politics require individuals who devote most of their time looking at policy detail. Christiano argues that a division of labour between elected representatives and the civil service on the one hand and the citizens on the other hand is necessary (Christiano 1996, 40).

Christiano is arguing against the intrinsic primacy of political liberty, not its instrumental value. One can argue that political liberty is important because it maximizes the ability for citizens to protect themselves against the abuses of government. Without political freedoms, one cannot stop a government from harming its citizens, and moreover, one can use political freedoms to keep other rights from being taken away. As we will see later in the argument, Christiano does

believe that political liberty is important, and later insists that all citizens in democracy must have the same political liberties. But he justifies it under the rubric of political equality, saying that democracy requires an equal distribution of political resources – he counts political rights among them – in order to function. This can be an answer to Christiano’s trade-off problem, since it questions the “specialness” of political liberty. But this answer explains political liberty’s instrumental value, but not its intrinsic value. For Christiano, political equality has an intrinsic value for democracy, not political liberty. This issue will be looked up later.

The second problem for Christiano is that there is a fundamental tension between liberty and democracy. A key part of liberty, according to Christiano, is that the claim that I should get my way in the world. My will is not necessarily my desires⁵, which can be based strictly on emotional impulses, or I can follow my will that is based on rational deliberation (J. Cohen 1986a, 286). Yet in a democracy, I have to get a majority of others to agree with me. Because of this, I am dependent on others for the fulfillment of my wishes, desires, or preferences. In this sense, democracy is incompatible with liberty (Christiano 1996, 19). To be completely free in the political sphere, I would have to be an absolute monarch, and not a citizen in a democracy.

At this point Christiano conflates freedom with right. In general, I might be free generally to drive my car wherever I want in Canada, but I certainly do not have a right to drive my car wherever I like since laws prohibit unrestrained driving. Likewise, my friend in the United States is generally free to go to Blockbuster, rent DVDs, and make copies of them for his own personal collection, since there is really nothing stopping him from doing so. However, he does not have a

⁵ Thomas Hobbes in *Leviathan* famously argued that the will is nothing but appetites and aversions, even though generally political theorists accept the distinction between will and desire.

right to do so, since he cannot make the claim that he had his right to copy DVDs infringed against by legal authorities who would stop that action. Saying that someone is free to do x means that there is no barrier to stop him from doing x (Steiner 1994), whereas saying that someone has the right to do x means that others have a duty to not stop him from doing x . The latter is a much stronger claim. Charles Taylor argued that Albania under Communist leader Enver Hoxha had less traffic lights than the United Kingdom, which means that you will be stopped more often in the United Kingdom than in Albania. Because of this, one was less free to drive wherever one wanted in the United Kingdom (Taylor 1991: 149-151). However, both countries might grant citizens the same right to drive their cars within the bounds of certain laws. When Christiano says that for me to be completely free in the world, I would have to be some sort of absolute monarch, he is talking about an individual with unlimited rights, not unlimited freedom. Both unlimited rights and unlimited freedom are impossible in a democracy. However, this argument is a tautology and sets up a straw man. Unlimited right is impossible in any form of government, be it a democracy, dictatorship, or otherwise. I say this because Christiano says that social cooperation limits freedom. However, social cooperation is just as necessary in a dictatorship as it is in a democracy in some cases.

Nonetheless, Christiano aims these objections straight at the advocates of a direct conception of self-government, who argue that a great deal of democracy will maximize freedom (Graham 1986). The trouble as Christiano sees it – and at this point his argument is a lot stronger - is that this does not make for an argument for the uniqueness of the intrinsic value of democracy. One can be perfectly free in several key areas (leaving aside for a moment that many of our actions are constrained by socially determined options) and not come anywhere near political activity. I

am free outside of politics to choose my wife, friends, religion, etc., without asking anyone's consent (Christiano 1996, 26). Worse still for the self-government argument, these freedoms can be permissible under a dictatorship. Advocates of "democracy as self-government" (save perhaps for Rousseau) admit that freedom has a private non-component to it (Ibid.). Since there is no argument stating that political activity is necessary for freedom, one can easily make the case that a lot of political freedom in democracy can be swapped for a lot of non-political and private freedom in a dictatorship. At this point, using self-government and liberty as a founding principle for democracy fails, because one can easily have more freedom overall in a dictatorship than in a democracy. A self-government advocate would need to argue convincingly that democratic participation and only democratic participation can maximize positive liberty or negative liberty, assuming one is superior over the other. However, as pointed out earlier, one can say that the political liberty has a lot of instrumental value because it can be used to defend the infringement of other rights. Christiano would not disagree, even though he justifies political liberty's instrumental value under the rubric of political equality, as we will see later.

According to Christiano, the epistemic view and the constructivist view aims to rectify some of the problems with the self-government account mentioned above. The epistemic view holds that democratic participation is a process which increases the probability that the correct answer would be found by the community. Joshua Cohen first defined epistemic democracy as having three aspects. "(1) an *independent standard* of correct decisions — that is, an account of justice or of the common good that is independent of current consensus and the outcome of votes; (2) a *cognitive* account of voting — that is, the view that voting expresses beliefs about what the correct policies are according to the independent standard, not personal preferences for policies;

and (3) an account of *decision making* as a process of the adjustment of beliefs, adjustments that are undertaken in part in light of the evidence about the correct answer that is provided by the beliefs of others” (J. Cohen, 1986b, 34)

The epistemic view is usually linked with the Condorcet jury theorem. The Condorcet jury theorem states the following; if there is a group of individuals charged with making a decision, a jury for example, and if each member of that jury has a slightly more than 50% chance of making a correct decision, then the decision of the jury is more likely to be right than wrong. The more jurors there are, the chances increase even further and approach one, or unity. The epistemic view further holds that individuals are committed to discovering the correct answer, and democratic procedures are committed to discovering the truth, insofar as there is a correct answer to discover (List and Goodin 2001, 6). What standard of truth is sought after is another question. Some deliberative democrats have argued that the standard of reasonableness should be used (Cohen 1986a; Estlund 2000), while some would argue that whatever the people agree on is the truth, so long as all individuals are committed to finding the truth (Feld and Grofman 1988)⁶.

Christiano dismisses the epistemic view on three counts, even though only one reason is valid. The first two reasons are criticisms that are usually levelled at the Condorcet jury theorem. First, it is incorrect to assume that even if there are only two possible answers, individuals have over a fifty-fifty chance at finding the correct answer to a question (Christiano 1996, 34). Secondly, unlike juries, political decisions do not come neatly packaged into two options (Christiano 1996,

⁶ As Jeremy Waldron points out in his critique of Grofman and Feld, Rousseau believed that small groups were more likely to reproduce a general will than larger ones, which runs contrary to the Condorcet jury theorem which holds that increasing the size of the jury will increase the probability of reaching the right decision. See David M. Estlund, Jeremy Waldron, Bernard Grofman, and Scott Feld, “Democratic Theory and the Public Interest: Rousseau and Condorcet Revisited”, *American Political Science Review*, 83:4, p. 1323

34). However, List and Goodin have shown that the conclusions of the Condorcet jury theorem still hold up even if there are more than two options to choose from and that each juror has a better than random chance of finding the correct answer, even though it will not work with any number of options or any probability (List and Goodin 2001, Table 2). Hence these two criticisms by Christiano do not hold merit. Christiano's third objection is much stronger. The epistemic view he argues falls under the "democracy as self-development rubric" and still believes that political development and activity – in this case committed to discovering the truth - is more vital to freedom to participate in other activities. And, for Christiano, there is not a strong enough argument from epistemic democrats that makes the case for only liberty being able to be maximized by political activity. Christiano's criticisms about the intrinsic value of liberty remain unanswered.

The epistemic view says that the democratic decision-making procedures discover answers that adhere to an independent standard of truth, insofar as there are independent truths to discover. Advocates of epistemic democracy (Dryzek and List 2001) readily recognize that not all political questions, such moral and ethical questions, have "correct answers" to discover. The constructivist view on the other hand holds that the results of democratic procedures such as voting or deliberation are legitimate. Results are legitimate by being the results of democratic procedures (Rawls 1993, Ch. 3). The common good is not discovered like a jury trial, but rather the common good emerges out of fair democratic procedures or the rules of the game. Christiano explains this position well; "The rules of the game do not help us discover the winner of the game as if that were an independent fact; the rules of the game define who the winner is. The winner of the game logically cannot be determined by any other method" (Christiano 1996, 36).

Constructivists say that consensus is the principle in which democratic participation makes legitimate outcomes (J. Cohen 1989, 22; Young 1991, 34). Discussion and deliberation are the tools that permit free and reasoned consensus, and all participants fundamentally aim to generate consensus when they deliberate. When there is no consensus, then participants should seek recourse to majoritarian measures such as voting (Christiano 1996, 37). This resolves the incompatibility between liberty and democracy because the “fact of reasoned consensus ensures that each person adopts those terms in accordance with his or her own will” (Ibid.) and that participation is necessary to reach a consensus. However Christiano rejects the constructivist view on pluralist grounds. Disagreement, he says, is ubiquitous in a democracy. Discussion rarely brings about consensus in a democracy, and at times, it seems to bring about more disagreement (Ibid). If only agreement can confer legitimacy, then non-consensus outcomes are not going to be legitimate. Moreover, there are instances when consensus can be a sign of inequality, as will be discussed in the second chapter.

While democracy certainly entails self-government, it cannot serve as a founding principle of democracy. Moreover, the self-government account cannot give a strong account for why political activity in a democracy, and no other activity, can maximize liberty. The principle of consensus somewhat gets around this issue, but consensus does not occur often in a democracy.

Instead, Christiano argues that equality should be the founding principle of democracy. Instead of assuming that democracy is a compromise between different judgments, as Peter Singer argues (1974, Ch. 5), Christiano assumes that there are deep seated disagreement about what is to

be done – so much disagreement that we may not even agree to the procedure by which to seek compromise. Christiano instead turns to an egalitarian justification to democracy that “requires that each person’s interests ought to be given equal consideration in choosing the laws and policies of a society” (Christiano 1996, 53). Because there is deep disagreement in a democratic society, we cannot assume that a consensus will be found. Instead, some interests will be chosen over others. Therefore, to ensure fairness, each interest must be advanced and considered on an equal basis (Dahl 1956, 64-67; Dahl 1976, 99-101; Jones 1983, 166).

It is critical to explain at this point how Christiano defines “interests”. For Christiano, an interest is not the same as a judgement, desire, or a preference. “An interest is something that is a component of a person’s overall well-being. I have interests in pleasure, friendship, knowledge, health, and so on. I am better off when my interests are satisfied and worse off when they are not” (Christiano 1996, 53-54). An interest is not a desire, Christiano says, because I can desire everlasting peace, but I will not be better off if it is fulfilled thousands of years after I am dead. Similarly, an interest is not a judgement or a preference because I can judge or prefer things that are not in my interest. It is in the university undergraduate’s interest to write her essays and hand them in on time. She might prefer or judge to spend her days watching DVDs and not do her work, but doing so is not in her interest. As Christiano explains; “an interest is something that can be attributed to me whether I believe it or not” (Christiano 1996, 54). That is the case with the university undergraduate. She might not believe that doing her work is in her interest, but we can attribute it to be in her interest regardless. Christiano goes on to explain that interests must be verifiable, while judgements and preferences do not have to be. Often preferences and judgements are based in belief about a fact, principle of justice, or one’s interests (Ibid.). We

make judgements or base our preferences on interests – and they can be correct or incorrect, “whereas interests are not correct or incorrect; they are simply attributes of a person” (Ibid.).

Christiano argues that equal consideration of interests “means that advancing the interests of one person is as important as advancing the interests of any other person” (Christiano 1996, 54). Since each person has their life to lead, there is no reason why anyone should have a fundamentally better life to lead (Rainsborough 1986, 286). Justice requires that all individuals ought to have the right to lead their lives as they see fit as constrained by the harm principle. If social and political institutions are arranged in such a way that some individuals or groups will have their lives go better than others from the outset, then these institutions should be judged as unjust (Christiano 1996, 54).

Democracy, Christiano argues, is the only form of government that allows for the equal consideration of interests. It does so by giving “individuals equal abilities to advance their concerns where decisions concerning the terms of associations are made” (Christiano 1996, 55). Democracy ensures this by giving each person an equally weighted vote in elections and/or referendums, and requires that no one is disenfranchised whatsoever. Democracy employs majority rule, which is egalitarian since “it gives each person the same chance as every other to affect the outcome” (Ibid.). It also requires that all elected offices be available to contestation by any person who holds the franchise. This is one of Dahl’s requirements for polyarchy as outlined above. Preventing individuals from having the franchise or running for public office is not only undemocratic, it also prevents individuals from living their lives as they see fit, which runs contrary to the principle of the equal consideration of interests.

If the principle of equal consideration of interests should be an important part of social and political justice, then the democratic decision-making procedures are required. His argument involves four steps, and I have already outlined the first, which is that justice “requires that individuals be treated equally with regard to their interests” (Christiano 1996, 59). The second stage of the argument is that there is a special category of interests that are interdependent. That is to say, there are interests that affect what Christiano calls the collective properties of society, where meeting these interests have an effect on a substantial segment of the population. According to Christiano, a “collective property of society” has the following four conditions. First, the property must be *nonexclusive*, where it is not possible to affect one person’s life without affecting the lives of others. Second, the property must be *public*. Thirdly, it is *inevitable* that individuals share a common world. We have no choice, Christiano points out, that we share some properties about the world, air and water for instance. And fourthly, the properties of the common world are *alterable*, and that collective human action is required to alter these common properties (Christiano 1996, 60-61).

These four properties establish that there are interests that are interdependent and have an effect on the collective lives of citizens. Moreover, citizens’ interests on the collective properties of society are generally opposed. There is great difference of opinion among the citizenry of a democracy about what should be done about not only the distribution of resources, but also about issues of social and economic justice as well. Generally there are few points of common

agreement that could be found among these interests. Put more simply, there is often a genuine and irreconcilable conflict of interests where it will be impossible to find consensus⁷.

The third stage of the argument states that “these interests can generally be served through a collectively binding procedure” (Christiano 1996, 59). This stage of the argument naturally proceeds from the idea that an irresolvable conflict of interests exists in society. Due to different moral, cultural, and religious traditions, individuals disagree about the norms of justice, the nature of public goods, and how they are to be distributed. To use Rawlsian terms, there are different competing conceptions of the good, and the state should not make a judgement about the validity of these conceptions of the good nor can it know how to make an adequate judgement about their validity (Rawls 1993, 190-201). Since it is extremely unlikely that consensus will arise on these issues, some form of decision-making procedure is needed in order to decide which interest will be met or not.

But this does not take us to democracy just yet. A king can arbitrarily make these choices as well so long as he knows all the interests of the citizens. He can retain all political freedoms for himself and grant all other freedoms to his citizens. Thus we would have a dictatorship that allows for the equal consideration of interests. To get to democracy, Christiano links the equal advancement of interests with an equal distribution of political resources, such as the right to an equally weighted vote, etc. There are three facts about people’s interests that make this link, and make a dictatorship impossible. Firstly, our knowledge of interests – ours and those of others – is

⁷ At this point in the argument, Christiano clearly shows himself not to be a communitarian. Christiano here is clearly insisting about the political relevance of the cultural, moral, religious, and political differences between individuals. He does admit the importance of the community in the formation of individuals, but does not admit, as theorists such as Michael Sandel and Charles Taylor do, that the community can serve as a tool to bring about political consensus.

incomplete and imperfect (Christiano 1996, 64). We can be mistaken about what is in our interest, and what we believe is in our interest can evolve over time. Because of this, knowledge of preferences will also be incomplete and flawed, since our preferences are based on our interests. The impossibility of perfectly knowing the interests of citizens rules out the possibility of a dictatorship that guarantees the equal consideration of interests.

But why must the equal consideration of interests be linked with the equality of political resources? Can it be linked with equality of well-being? In the well documented debate in political theory between advocates of the equality of well-being and the equality of resources (Dworkin 1981a; 1981b; G. A. Cohen 1989), Christiano comes down on the side of the latter. He rejects the notion of equal well-being as a political principle on epistemological grounds, saying that “there is too little information about the alternatives [of well-being] and their comparisons, and there is a great deal of disagreement as to how they should be compared” (Christiano 1996, 64). Moreover, a standard of well-being cannot be known because several individuals will not have a complete understanding of most of their particular interests, and will base and alter their preferences and judgements on this incomplete understanding (Ibid.). The standard of equal well-being cannot be used because we can never know what the ideal is or increasing approximations of it would look like (Christiano 1996, 67). A standard of equality must be observable and publicly intelligible. This is stating an obvious fact. When individuals are complaining about being discriminated against because of an unequal balance of power, it stands to reason that the inequality deals with something that is observable. However, comparisons in terms of political well-being are unintelligible due to epistemological constraints.

Because of this, the standard of equal well-being is incompatible with the principle of equal consideration of interests. The standard of equality that should be used is that of equality of political resources, which will give each citizen the means of discovering and pursuing his or her interests (Christiano 1996, 69). This is exactly what is behind the principle of political equality which was discussed in the previous section. As Christiano explains; “political equality implies that each and every person ought to have a say in the choice of collective features of society in a common decision procedure. Thus the principle implies a version of the idea of popular sovereignty” (Christiano 1996, 70). This principle yields a rather comprehensive list of democratic rights, such as the equal right to the franchise, the right to an equally weighted vote, the right to seek out alternative sources of information other than that of the state, the right to run and seek election for public offices, as well as the right to form social and political associations independent from the state, and right to free speech.

The principle of equal consideration of interests gets us where we need to be at this point in the argument. It gives us a justification for liberal democracy that establishes its uniqueness. While other forms of government might be able to guarantee a large degree of freedom, only democracy can guarantee political equality and the equal consideration of interests. Moreover, this interest-based justification of liberal democracy ties in by and large with the definition of liberal democracy that has been outlined above. Christiano’s justification gives us not only a solid normative framework for most if not all the standard democratic rights, but it also provides a link with democracy and some liberal rights, such as free speech and the freedom of association.

Unlike participatory democrats, Christiano believes that democracy requires a division of labour between elected representatives and citizens. He argues that citizens in a democracy can be expected to do three things; 1) to act on the basis of the considerations of justice; 2) to contribute to choosing the aims of the society, and 3) to make these choices with a view of society as a whole (Christiano 1996, 178). He argues that citizens should be responsible only for the choice of aims for a democratic society. The nitty-gritty of policy detail should be left up to political experts, who always follow the general principles set out by the citizenry. “They [citizens] are to choose what is fair and what is unfair, they are not the choosers of the policies that bring about fairness in economic conditions” (Christiano 1996, 171). Christiano comes up with a useful analogy to explain this further. Citizens are like passengers on a ship. They choose between competing captains that suggest different destinations and ways of getting there (Christiano 1996, 170; see also Barry 1973, 145).

Citizens can choose their aims, as well as identify and learn about interests in two ways; 1) pressure activities (voting, petitions, etc.), and 2) deliberative activities. Pressure activities are needed because there is a deep seated conflict of interests and consensus will not be possible and some mechanism is needed to break the deadlock. Deliberation is needed, says Christiano, because a perfect understanding of our interests and conceptions of justice does not exist, and our current understanding is always in need of improvement (Christiano 1996, 179). “Deliberation and discussion are essential to individuals’ acquiring an understanding of their society and to determining what will advance their interests as well as the common good and justice” (Ibid.). Equal access to the conditions that will improve this understanding is critical for political equality. And if this understanding is more developed, then voting will advance political equality

because citizens will be better informed about the aims of society. Christiano is clear: democracy requires *both* aggregative functions of democracy and deliberation. Thus democratic institutions for Christiano serves three purposes. First, the electoral system transmits the citizens' conceptions of aims to government officials, who then translate them into public policy. Second, deliberation can ensure that citizens are able to discuss the basic aims of society. This is what deliberation can do. Thirdly, institutions must ensure effective monitoring of the performance of public officials in terms of their effectiveness at implementing citizens' choice of aims (Christiano 1996, 200-201).

Christiano's justification provides a useful normative framework for understanding the various elements of liberal democracy. Christiano bases his justification on political equality, and not self-government, which immediately sets him apart from several participatory democrats. The useful aspect about Christiano's justification is that it not only yields a justification for an equal distribution of political resources but also establishes the instrumental value of political liberty. Political liberty is justified under the rubric of an equal distribution of political resources, which is needed if interests are to be advanced and considered equally. Interests must be considered equally, since their fulfillment is necessary for our well-being, and everyone should at least have the opportunity to have their well-being met. An equal distribution of political resources necessarily leads us to a democracy, and this leads Christiano to conclude that democracy alone can offer political equality to all and ensure that the principle of equal advancement and consideration of interests is met.

CHAPTER 2: THE QUALITY OF POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

The previous chapter explained what is meant when we talk about liberal democracy. Liberal democracy is based on popular sovereignty which dictates that the citizenry gets to have a say over their own affairs through open decision-making procedures. Even though traditionally liberal democracy has not included deliberative forums, it usually includes the legal protection of a public sphere where discussion and debate about issues of common interest occurs. Habermas (1989) and Brookfield (2005) have argued that such a public sphere, while not institutionalised but at least guaranteed by law, has certain deliberative qualities since it gives individuals the opportunity to learn about their interests and the interests of others⁸. The kind of popular sovereignty that is borne out of Christiano's justification does not ensure that everyone will have their interests met, due to the deep underlying conflict of interest, but it does aim to have all interests heard and considered during the decision-making process.

Political participation plays a major role under this justification of liberal democracy. Interests need to be advanced in order to be considered, and political participation is how these interests are advanced. Christiano argues that citizens are to decide the overall aims of society and not get into the details of policy minutiae. However, even with this division of labour, Christiano gives a lot of room for robust political participation. Citizens will need to participate politically in some way - whether in deliberation or voting - in order to debate and understand, and then choose which aims they want implemented by their elected representatives. To state a truism, liberal democracy requires some citizens participating in order to function, but Christiano's justification

⁸ Joseph Schumpeter implies wrongly that democracy can function without the existence of the public sphere. As Held (1996, 199) explains; "the citizen is portrayed as isolated and vulnerable in a world marked by the competitive clash of elites. In (Schumpeter's) account, scarcely any account is paid to 'intermediary' groups such as community associations, religious bodies, trade unions and business organizations which cut across people's lives and connect them in complex ways to variety of types of institution".

provides a solid reason why this participation is necessary, and justifies both deliberative and aggregative forms of political participation.

In this chapter I will argue that one key challenge (though not its only one) that liberal democracy is facing today has to do with a lack of power attributed to a lack of political skill, which is reflected in the low quality of political participation. This chapter will argue that by focusing on developing the quality of political participation first, the quantity of political participation will go up in a way that is superior to other ways that have been proposed in the past, such as mandatory voting, since it tackles the issue of disempowerment. This chapter will then establish that disempowerment negatively affects democratic politics by excluding large segments of the population, leading to policies and laws that do not take into account the interests of large segments of the population. This contradicts the principle of the equal consideration of interests. Finally, this chapter will provide a schematic of disempowerment and delineate between three types of disempowerment. The first is due to an imbalance of power, which is remedied by distributing power more equitably. The second form of disempowerment has been identified by scholars such as Iris Young and Anne Philips where unequal resources in wealth can create privileged access and internal exclusions even where formal power is distributed equally (Young 1999, 33-34). The third form of disempowerment is called political mortification, which is caused by a lack of political skill. Political mortification is taken from De Luca's work, and is defined as the general feeling of inadequacy and insecurity among apathetic and disempowered citizens (1995, 133).

Political participation: A Necessity In Decline

A favourite target of commentators who complain about the health of liberal democracy is declining voter turnout. Several scholars have lamented the decline of political participation, especially in terms of voting, over the past few years. Fewer and fewer people are voting in elections in most Western liberal democracies (Johnston and Pattie 2000, 2; Dalton and Wattenberg 2001; Putnam 2003, 32, Figure 1; Elections Canada 2007). Voting is especially low among young voters, as there is a great deal of dissatisfaction and disengagement among them (Parkes, Taylor and Wilkinson 2003; Putnam 2003; Macedo, et al. 2005, 22-64). Moreover, there is a decline in trust in government and more cynicism and resentment towards the democratic process and politicians in general (Nevitte 1996; Nye, King, and Zelikow 1997; Norris 1999; Hibbing and Thiess-Moore 2002).

Clearly, low levels of political participation are problematic for a democracy that aims to meet the principle of the equal advancement and consideration of interests. After all, if large segments of the population are missing from the political process, then many interests will not be heard. On the surface, increasing participation seems rather straightforward. Perhaps the simplest and most effective way to increase political participation is to introduce compulsory voting. Several countries such as Australia and Belgium have compulsory voting. There are various ways in which to enforce compulsory voting. When they had compulsory voting, Argentina had renewable social security cards that were renewed when the cardholder voted, while Belgium will completely disenfranchise citizens if they do not vote for a period of fifteen years. This seems like a rather draconian measure to get people to vote. After all, non-voters will require employment insurance and need access to the public health care system. More importantly, they pay taxes that pay for the social security system. UK cabinet minister Geoff Hoon suggested a

less harsh measure in 2005. He suggested that voters be given a substantial discount on their council tax, which would encourage people to go to the polls (Wintour 2005).

Again, the methods on how one could impose compulsory voting are various, ranging from using carrots (council tax discounts) to heavy sticks (no access to social security, disenfranchisement). They would undoubtedly work to raise the levels of participation. Obviously, democracies with compulsory voting have a much higher voter turnout than those who do not have it. This would in effect solve the problem of the low quantity of political participation as it would yield universal turnout.

But does compulsory voting solve anything? In order to answer that question, we have to consider why people do not participate in the first place. After all, an adequate solution must speak to the cause of the problem. Explaining the reasons why people do not participate is an old endeavour in political science, and some studies have yielded some interesting results. Policy convergence has been cited as a reason, where the political parties are so similar to each other that voters cannot discern any difference between them. There is empirical evidence for policy convergence (Laver and Schofield 1990, Appendix B). In addition, some may vote or not simply out of habit and out of civic duty (Almond and Verba 1965, Franklin 2004).

Looking at strictly the costs and benefits of political participation does not seem to yield much in terms of explaining why people do not vote. In fact, this viewpoint paints such a stark picture of participation that it is a wonder why people even bother to participate. Take the example of voting. Voting takes “time to register, to discover what parties are running, to deliberate, to go to

the polls, and to mark the ballot. Since time is a scarce resource, voting is inherently costly” (Downs 1957, 265; Cunningham 2002, 105). Some have argued (Niemi 1976; Blais 2000, 8) that the costs of voting have gone down tremendously over the last fifty years, at least in terms of gathering information. Political information is very easy to obtain these days with the proliferation of the Internet, even though some argue that the volume of information obscures any relevant debate (Shenk 1997).

While the costs of voting might have gone down, the benefits of voting have not really changed. As anyone knows, a single vote is never going to change the result of an election or referendum. Voters must be aware of this, since voter turnout goes up in elections that are perceived to be close (Riker and Ordeshook 1968, 38; Filer, Kenny and Morton 1993; Aldrich 1993; Matsusaka and Palder 1993; Norris 2001, 6; Dowding 2005, 444; Newman 2005, 149-151). Given the moderately high costs of voting and extremely marginal benefits of voting, we should expect to see voting levels to be much lower than they are now (Blais 2000). Why would anyone bother to participate in something that has little effect on the result?

This chapter will unravel some of the causes for non-participation. There are some interesting reasons for the low quantity of political participation that empirical research has yielded. As referred to earlier, citizens have a lot less trust and respect for political institutions. As Orren (1997, 79) notes; “Today’s cynicism, however, is not just the latest manifestation of traditional scepticism toward government, nor is it simply a response to the unpopularity of particular incumbents or parties. Today’s cynicism is fuelled by a deeper set of accumulated grievances with political authority, institutions, and processes in general”. Hibbing and Thiess-Morse (2002)

observed that their respondents had far more respect for the Supreme Court than the state legislatures and Congress. Their explanation for why this is the case is because the respondents in their survey do not like to see disagreements out in the open. While the Supreme Court has its disagreements behind closed doors or in scholarly prose, legislatures have their disagreements out in the open and with far more rancour. They also note that when Congress is seen to be more partisan and raucous, public support for it tends to go down (also see Durr, Gilmour, and Wolbrecht 1997, 101). It has little to do with outputs, as the Supreme Court has produced decisions that are as controversial as those of the legislatures.

However, there has to be more than just seeing disagreement as a bad thing, given the fact that disagreement is a key part of democratic politics, and always has been. There has been political debate and argument in legislatures well before the massive decline of deference that we saw at the end of the 20th century. We should look at how the disagreement is occurring on the political scene. Orren notes that “citizens are frustrated by the obstructionism and bickering they perceive in Washington, and they sense that governance is weighted down by ‘procedural injustice’ and special interests with excessive influence and undeserved privileges” (1997, 93).

As Orren indicates, how disagreement takes place has an effect on how people view politics. If it is far too negative in tone, or if politicians are always seen to be bickering at each other, people tend to turn away and stop paying attention to politics (Ansolabehere and Iyengar 1995). Orren’s findings still correspond to the present day. In their article examining the effects of direct mail campaigns, Gerber *et al.* noted that direct mail campaigns that are negative in tone can work to reduce turnout, although in a very small way (2003, 574). Lau *et al.* (2007) found that while negative campaigning did not depress turnout, it did have other troubling effects such as “lower

trust in government, a lessened sense of political efficacy, and possibly a darker public mood” (1186).

It is reasonable to assume that negative advertising in political campaigns that focuses on personal attacks instead of debating the issues at hand lowers the quality of political participation. The quality of political participation is high when as many interests are advanced and considered fairly, and it drops when political discussion turns away from using interests as its currency. The negative campaign messages that we have seen in recent years certainly drift away from that ideal.

Following this line of argument, another way that the quality of political participation can drop is through the feeling of disempowerment among the citizens, which leads to citizens turning away from the political process. This in turn leads to less interests being heard and considered in political discussion. This feeling of disempowerment has been well-reported in the literature. To cite Hibbing and Thiess-Morse as an example, their respondents felt that “ordinary people have too little power in the current system and only a handful believe they have too much power” (2000, 102) and that government is not doing a good job of representing the interests of all Americans, “rich or poor, white or black, male or female” (103-104).

The creation of deliberative forums can allow more voices to be heard in the political arena. The purpose of deliberation, at least according to Christiano’s schema, is to provide citizens with an

arena where they can learn about the interests of others. Moreover, participants explaining and defending their preferences and their interests helps them learn about their own interests.

Through dialogue and deliberating with others, participants should learn about what options and/or values are in conflict and which are compatible with each other, and which options are not feasible and for what reasons. This will be dealt in more detail in the third chapter. Nonetheless, it should be clear at this point that deliberation, even though it aims to be as inclusive as possible, aims to improve the quality of political participation. A democracy that aims to meet the principle of equal advancement and consideration of interests cannot simply work to increase the quantity of political participation without improving the quality of political participation. As will be discussed in the next section, a very important threat to the equal advancement and consideration of interests is disempowerment, where individuals do not feel that they are capable of contributing effectively in the political arena due to a perceived lack of skill. In the next section, it will be argued that improving the quality of political participation will mitigate against disempowerment.

Improving the Quality of Political Participation

Defining disempowerment

Ideally, solutions to raise the quantity of political participation should be in line with the principle of the equal advancement and consideration of interests. This means that any attempt to raise participation rates must attempt to tackle disempowerment and improving the quality of political participation. If democracies want to realise the ideal of the equal advancement and consideration of interests, they must not only ensure that these interests are heard, they must also work to help citizens understand their own interests and those of others. Only increasing the

quantity of political participation, according to this understanding, does little to solve this problem. It might get more interests heard, but it does not improve the understanding of interests. Disempowerment must be tackled.

If the quality of political participation is improved, then participation ought to go up. The task of the work is find ways in which to improve the quality of political participation, which at the same time will work to reduce citizen disempowerment. In subsequent chapters, I will argue that this is done by reinventing democratic culture in a way that understands political participation as a craft, where the skill of political participation is learned experientially. This understanding must accompany the necessary institutional changes, such as the introduction of deliberative forums.

As I will argue at the end of this chapter, a lack of political skill causes disempowerment. For now, it is important to understand the nature and cause of disempowerment. Richard Keiser offers a useful definition of empowerment. According to him, “empowerment is the process by which a minority group, or representatives of that group, gains a greater ability to influence political outcomes in its favour” (Keiser 1997, 5). Empowerment involves a reallocation of power in favour of a minority group, and their representatives are not co-opted by the established power holders to simply represent the power holders’ views to the minority (Ibid., Selnick 1949, 14-15, 261). The reallocation of political power occurs along two dimensions⁹. First, a group becomes empowered if it 1) wins a favourable distribution of public offices and 2) if members of

⁹ Keisel’s notes that his identification of two dimensions of the reallocation of power builds on the previous work on indicators of minority political power. See Rufus P. Browning, Dale Rogers Marshall, and David H. Tabb, *Protest Is Not Enough: The Struggle of Blacks and Hispanics for Equality in Urban Politics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984).

the minority wins a favourable distribution of public sector jobs, and this results in the interests of that group being advanced more than before (Keiser 1997, 5-6). The second dimension entails the ability of exercise control over public policy agenda-setting and decision-making (Ibid., 6). This happens either by the group being able to block actions that are against the interests of that group, or being able to advance and implement policies that would favour the group.

From Keiser's definition we are able to construct a definition of disempowerment. Disempowerment occurs when a group has lost the power to influence political outcomes in its favour. A disempowered group has lost political power when it has been allocated or reallocated, whatever the case may be. A good example of disempowerment caused by reallocation of political power are blacks in South Africa in the pre-apartheid era. Blacks always had to deal with restricted mobility rights in South Africa, even though various governments differed in how strictly they enforced the pass laws. Before the beginning of institutionalisation of apartheid in 1948, blacks in South Africa had a modicum of political power, including voting rights in the Cape Province. However, this power was stripped away after the 1948 elections, where mixed marriages were formally banned, racial classification was introduced, and blacks in the Cape Province were disenfranchised. Disempowered groups are also those who never had power in the first place and may gain power as time progresses. An example of such a group would be blacks in the United States before the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863. As time progressed, blacks slowly became empowered through various measures, such as the *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling in 1954 and the Civil Rights Act in 1968, to name just a few.

There are three types of disempowerment. The first instance of unempowerment is easy to identify. Any group in a democratic society that has fewer political rights than others should be considered unempowered. An example of this is when women and racial minorities did not have the right to vote in several Western democracies. To solve this problem would be to extend the same political rights to every citizen in a democracy.

The second has been identified by scholars such as Iris Young and Anne Phillips. In essence, this form of disempowerment works outside of the exclusion created by formal power structures. As Young discusses in *Inclusion and Democracy*, these forms of exclusion involve ignoring, shaming, and even ridiculing other points of view that do not fit with the dominant discourse. As she explains; “The dominant mood may find their ideas or modes of expression silly or simple, and not worthy of consideration. They may find that their experiences as relevant to the issues under discussion are so different from others' in the public that their views are discounted” (55). These internal forms of exclusion as Young calls them involve participants being formally included in decision-making processes but their viewpoints are negatively labeled because their views do not fit within the dominant paradigm, and thus are not taken seriously. Young offers one explanation for why this can happen. “Too often in such situations the assumptions, experiences, and values of some members of the public dominate the discourse and that of others is misunderstood, devalued, or reconstructed to fit the dominant paradigms. In such situations arguments alone will do little to allow public voice for those excluded from the discourse” (71). Young’s solution is to employ different methods of communication beyond deliberation such as storytelling and invoking alternative narratives.

Phillips makes similar claims in terms of representation of women and blacks. In *The Politics of Presence*, she argues that a lone focus on “the politics of ideas” in the hope that the needs and concerns of underrepresented groups can be represented by agents that are not part of those groups that have these needs or concerns. So long as the ideas are represented, then it does not matter who represents the ideas (1998, 6). According to Phillips, this does not do enough to take on political exclusion or equality, since according to her, equality requires that differing groups come into closer contact with each other, and that full empowerment requires that the group or individuals in question actually exercise that power. There are certain experiences that do affect certain groups, and for the interests based on these experiences to be taken into account, there is need of representation from these groups. Policies worked out for one group will not be sufficient if there is no presence of this group during the deliberation of the policies. She implies that the politics of idea paradigm is the status quo in modern politics, and that it should make more accommodation for a politics of presence that actually gives representation to missing groups, even though they might have the same formal power that over-represented groups do. The point of both Young and Phillips is that even in the face of an equitable distribution of formal power there can still be exclusions that citizens concerned about empowerment need to be vigilant about.

The third type of unempowerment will be the focus of the remainder of this chapter, and is similar to the political apathy that several commentators deride. De Luca calls this type of apathy “political mortification” (1995, 200). This strong term describes the general feeling of inadequacy and insecurity among apathetic and disempowered citizens. He argues that apathy has an element where it is deliberate and calculated and a psychological element that is caused

by political institutions. This psychological element causes severe group psychological damage to the citizens of a democracy, and as a result has led to “the indefinite suspension of the consciousness to form political intentions and act in their terms” (De Luca 1995, 133).

C. Wright Mills (1948; 1951; 1956; 1967) and Herbert Marcuse (1964; 1969) first elaborated the notion of political mortification. Mills’ explanation for disempowerment is particularly interesting. He, much like John Stuart Mill and John Dewey before him, saw the public arena as the crucible where new ideas and opinions were born. However the concentration of power in the hands of elites such as the mass media, elected representatives, and multinational companies has constrained public debate and failed “to enlarge and animate the discussions of primary publics”, thus producing a mass society that is undifferentiated in its opinions (Mills 1956, 311; De Luca 1995, 135). A concentration of power in the hands of a few subordinates the viewpoints of the powerless. When this subordination occurs, politics is “constrained by ideology, imperatives of political economy, gender roles, racial and ethnic expectations, and other sets of beliefs as they develop within the interpretations of the subordinated persons – in ways that disable their efforts to make political sense in their lives” (De Luca 1995, 194-195).

Mills’ explanation for disempowerment illustrates why it endangers the principle of the equal consideration of interests. This principle requires that citizens feel that they are capable of effectively advancing their interests. As we saw in the summary of Christiano’s justification of democracy, this requires a free and open public deliberative space. Political mortification frustrates the principle of the equal consideration of interests by making participants feel that they cannot effectively participate politically, which in turn prevents several interests from being

heard. If fewer interests are heard, then deliberation will be less effective. A similar dynamic can occur with aggregative aspects of liberal democracy. How inclusive and representative can referendums and elections be if several minorities do not want to participate because they believe that they cannot make an effective contribution? Put simply, if large segments of the population feel that they have nothing to contribute and do not participate, then one cannot say that the outcomes of democratic decision-making procedures took into consideration as many interests as possible, which Christiano says should be the goal for liberal democracies.

How can we tell if an individual or a group is disempowered? The fact that they are not participating in politics might be a good indicator, but not all non-participants are disempowered. Some have suggested that a lack of political knowledge is a good indicator of problem signs with democracy (Milner 2002). This claim is backed up by several studies that show that citizens who have more education are more likely to vote (Sanders 1980; Schwartz 1987: 116; Schram 1991). Indeed, if individuals have trouble identifying basic concepts in politics, then we cannot expect much in terms of their quality of political participation. But this assumption is challenged by Daniel Yankelovich. He argues that while political information and civic literacy is important, it is not sufficient or even necessary to form well-reasoned judgments. He cites surveys and research group work done during the time of the Vietnam War, where some participants could not find Vietnam on a map, but they could argue for their opinions effectively and could understand and accept the implications of their arguments against American intervention, which is a key component of having a well-reasoned opinion (Yankelovich 1991, 29-30). So one can be empowered and yet be relatively uninformed, even though such examples will probably be rare.

Helena Catt offers a useful standard for empowerment. She links it to her definition of equality in the democratic process, be it in aggregative or deliberative arenas. “The acid test for equality would be to ask a member at random if, upon hearing a report at a meeting that ‘x’ has happened, they know enough about the issue to feel comfortable asking a question, were able to interrupt and put the question and felt comfortable in expressing disagreement with what had happened, regardless of who had made the initial report” (Catt 1999, 50). A disempowered person would feel unable to participate effectively because they feel intimidated by the process or by the person that they might have to disagree with. This standard of empowerment has been used in the past as a predictor of future political participation. As Crotty states, “more than likely, feelings of political distance and impotency encourage a withdrawal from the electorate, and such beliefs in turn are fed by continued nonparticipation” (1991, 5). Moreover, this definition of empowerment fits in nicely with Young’s work on exclusion, as the dominant discourse can also intimidate potential participants who have viewpoints that cannot be expressed in the language of that discourse. This notion ties back to Keiser’s definition of empowerment and the allocation of political power. Those who have the allocation of political power working against them are more likely to feel that they cannot enter into a political debate than those who are benefitting from it.

Thus if a person feels uncomfortable in contradicting the participants in a political discussion (such as a debate, town hall, deliberative forum, etc.), then we can say that that person is disempowered. The reasons why they might feel uncomfortable in contradicting someone’s statements are various. They might not feel that they have enough information to participate, or might feel so intimidated that they might feel too embarrassed to speak. We can think of other

reasons why people might not participate that would fall under Catt's standard. Conversely, there are instances of non-participation that are not cases of disempowerment. If I choose not to speak up at a deliberative forum because I agree with the general points that are being made and do not want to drag down the meeting by repeating them, then I should not be considered disempowered, so long as I feel that I am able to speak up and disagree if the need arises.

One must be comfortable with expressing disagreement in order to feel empowered. It must be much easier to agree with someone than to disagree. Disagreement can cause conflict and ruffle feathers, and often social groups will tend to prefer keeping the peace and consensus. Examples of this dynamic are New England town politics (Zuckerman 1970, 125) and feminist groups where disagreeing can be labelled as anti-feminist and running against the "unity of sisterhood" (Riger 1994, 291; Catt 1999, 51). This is not the reasoned consensus that so many deliberative democrats crave. This could lead to consensus merely for its own sake, which would be considered problematic for the aims of deliberation that Christiano elaborates. Mansbridge calls this "false consensus" (1980, 33-34). One can agree with those who have more power than you out of fear as well – that is not empowered political action. On the other hand, one cannot disagree out of fear or out of the desire to appease those around you, given that there is an unequal distribution of political power. Moreover, to return to Young's schema, challenging the dominant discourse and internal exclusions by disagreeing with the terms and frame of the discussion certainly shows that one wishes to be included in the discussion on one's own terms. To disagree with someone openly¹⁰ in any situation shows that you do not think that the person or the situation holds any power over you whatsoever. You see the person that you disagree with

¹⁰ As James Scott suggests, disagreeing with someone covertly can also be a sign of empowerment. See *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992).

as at least your equal, but never as your superior. The same cannot be said for all expressions of agreement.

So far we established what disempowerment is and how can we identify instances of both, even when all participants have the right to participate. Borrowing from Helena Catt, we know people are disempowered when they feel uncomfortable in contradicting the statements of others. This situation would indicate an imbalance of power, in whatever form that power might manifest itself. As Lukes famously argued, power can manifest itself through influencing actual behaviour, through the shaping of the agenda, or through the prevention of conflict via manipulation of ideology and the creation of false consciousness (Lukes 2004). We also know that it is directly problematic for the principle of the equal advancement and consideration of interests. Since this principle is essential to democracy, disempowerment threatens the health of democracy itself. If individuals feel that they cannot participate effectively, then they obviously will stop participating. Specifically, I am here referring to instances of internal exclusion and psychological feelings of inadequacy that can build up over time and lead to people leaving the political process. This is the political mortification that De Luca discusses, and over time citizens will cease to see themselves as stakeholders in the political process, and democratic institutions start to look like a foreign entity to them. Democracy will hardly look like government for the people, of the people, and by the people.

The problems of disempowerment are widespread in modern democracies because of political mortification due to deep-seated feelings of political inadequacy among the citizenry. Ultimately, through various means, disempowerment excludes groups and individuals from the political

process, which in turn ensures that fewer and fewer interests are heard and/or deliberated upon in the public sphere. This in turn lowers the quality of political participation – along with affecting its quantity – since fewer interests are heard in a political decision-making process. This in turn will produce policy decisions that the public will not accept because it does not take into account the public's interests. Moreover, a lack of formal power through the lack of institutionalized deliberative forums only leaves a democracy with adversarial democratic institutions, where political actors compete against each other for political offices, which has a negative effect on the political discourse, as discussed earlier.

Moreover, without deliberation, democratic politics will still be plagued by low quality public opinion, where citizens will go vote or support things that they would not otherwise support if they were given the time and space to reflect on these views and discuss them with others. Ackerman and Fishkin elaborate on this and state that even though ill-informed preferences are not really what the public want, they will often become public policy. They argue that this happens paradoxically enough because of political parties trying to be responsive to public demands. But they do it by relying heavily on polls and focus groups. The trouble with these tools is that they capture both unrefined and refined preferences, and if the unrefined preferences outnumber the refined ones, then these preferences eventually become public policy. But what these pollsters have in reality is a myopic view of public opinion that does not capture the full complexities of true public opinion (Ackerman and Fishkin 2004, 10). Deliberation provides precisely this opportunity to reflect, discuss, and learn about the preferences and interests of others. Without it, citizens choose platforms that they would not otherwise choose if they had the

opportunity to properly consider them¹¹. If citizens were to have deliberative forums available to them, then they would be empowered in the sense that their interests are given more attention, and that they have more points of access to elected politicians. Moreover, the quality of political participation would increase because its rhetoric would improve. Political discourse will focus less on being a discursive battle to defeat one's opponents for political opponents and ideally treat citizens as more than just customers buying political platforms.

Tackling political mortification through development of political skill

But the task of empowerment does not end there. When political disempowerment is due to a disproportionate distribution of power, then the solution is rather straightforward – power has to be redistributed in favour of the disadvantaged. This is especially the case when a minority group has less political resources than others. While Young identifies internal forms of exclusion built into situations where formal power is distributed equally, she recommends incorporating communicative tools such as greeting and public acknowledge of participants, the affirmative use of rhetoric, and sharing of narrative and perspectives that fall outside of the hegemonic discourse. She also argues that facilitating local publics and encouraging the use of storytelling in the discursive process can remove internal exclusions (2000, ch 3, see also Young 2001). Lynn Sanders (1997) has blamed deliberative settings themselves for this problem, arguing that the standards of deliberation can constrain the discussion in such a way as to shut out certain viewpoints that are expressed in a conventional, “reasonable” way. The concept of testimony,

¹¹ Noted pollster Daniel Yankelovich has written extensively about this problem. Often public opinion researchers fail to distinguish what public opinion is because they fail to understand the nature of public disagreement about certain issues. Yankelovich convincingly argues that public opinion polls that show the public constantly changing its mind about a certain issue is a certain sign that that public is struggling to reach a stable opinion. On other hand, a certain indicator that the public has reached a firm opinion, or what Yankelovich calls public judgment on an issue is if the polls show that the level of support for an issue has remained constant for a very long time, such as abortion and capital punishment. See Yankelovich, *Coming to Public Judgement*.

which she offers as an alternative to deliberation, can well be incorporated, and so can statements that challenge the hegemonic discourse - to borrow from Young, and we can still see how individuals might still feel disempowered.

Some of these solutions will not work when political mortification has already set in amongst participants. The same can be true with internal exclusions. Even though participants will work hard to create as inclusive an environment as possible, disempowered participants may have been so jaded from their past experiences that they are not interested in participating ever again. In situations such as these, individuals do not participate – at least in a meaningful way – because they feel that they are not able to. This is an example of political mortification. De Luca talks about the feeling of inferiority and inadequacy that political mortification instills in individuals. This inferiority cannot come about because others have more political resources, because in situations as these, everyone has the same right to participate. Everyone has the right to vote, and in a deliberative setting, everyone has the right to contribute to the discussion. It could even be the case that none of the internal exclusions that Young talks about are present. Yet disempowered individuals can still feel inferior and unable to participate in these settings.

De Luca suggests that disempowerment is linked to a feeling of incapacity. If that is the case, then political mortification and systematic exclusion occurs due to a perceived difference in political skill. I say “perceived” because in situations like these, disempowered individuals believe that they do not have the adequate skills to participate effectively. Coming up with an absolute standard of measuring political skill is extremely difficult, especially as this feeling of disempowerment is grounded in psychological factors. Thus measuring one’s political skill

against another is a fruitless endeavour, as it would be very difficult to devise a method that can make any meaningful observations on this front.

However, while this difference in political skill is too difficult to measure, this difference nonetheless exists. It exists inasmuch that disempowered individuals and groups feel that this difference exists. This perception is significant because it is linked to the psychological feelings of inadequacy and inferiority that disempowered citizens feel. These feelings might be deeply felt or not, but even the slightest feeling of inferiority is enough to cause a person not to participate.

Moreover, improving the political skills of participants is necessary in the face of both imbalances of power and internal exclusions. Participants with better developed political skills will have an easier time identifying, challenging and creating solutions to the imbalances of power and internal exclusions. Well developed political skills are necessary in order to successfully counteract these problems. To turn to the issue of narratives, it would require a great deal of skill to successfully bring in alternative narratives into a discussion that has participants that are excluding them, whether it is intentional or not. Each instance of exclusion is predicated by the nature and tone of the discussion and the behaviour and character of the participants, which will be different in every single example of discussion. This means that there cannot be one carbon-copy solution that will apply to every situation of exclusion. Participants who wish to solve these problems require the skill to understand the nature of the nuances of the situation to implement a solution to effectively have these alternative narratives heard in the discussion.

Not only will participants with better developed skills have an easier time with creating a more inclusive participatory forums, they can also more successfully identify and challenge forms of exclusion than those with less developed political skills. This is especially important because some forms of internal exclusions might be very hard to detect. Moreover, the identification of internal exclusions might be summarily dismissed by participants. For example, some participants might genuinely think that participants who present alternative narratives are presenting ideas that are ignorant, off the wall, etc. Challenging these forms of exclusion can be a challenge and it would require a high degree of skill to counteract this exclusion and work with participants to come to a solution. With more empowerment, the quality of political participation improves within participatory forums. Participants with well developed political skills are better able to identify, challenge, and resolve problems of imbalances of power and internal exclusions, and thus ought to be encouraged since it can be key in improving the quality of political participation.

However, an important caveat must be inserted here. It is conceivable that even if a student of political skill devotes a lot of time practicing and developing her political skills, it remains possible that the participants still perceive a difference of skills. This perception can come about if the participant is not recognized as making an effective contribution, or not taken seriously, or outright ignored. Once again, this does not mean that one has to agree with the views or opinions of the participant in order for her to be recognized, nor does the recognition have to come from persons in formal social and political institutions. This recognition can come in the form of a person who disagrees with the claims made by the participant critiquing and giving his account for why he disagrees with the participant's claim, for example. This kind of recognition is

mentioned by McBride (2005) as being positive for deliberation because it recognizes viewpoints and identities without requiring deference to them from non-group members. As he explains;

“deliberative politics will be more effective to the extent that this politics sustains a variety of dissenting, critical voices that can be brought to bear on policy formation. This view of the relationship between a politics of recognition and deliberative politics does however, calls for a more radical conception of political inclusion than that proposed in the name of the politics of authentic recognition (Charles Taylor is a proponent of this), one that spills out over the bounds of formal parliamentary politics and into the wider society (507, brackets mine).

This form of “critical” recognition - which encourages debate and examination of various viewpoints while still recognizing their value and input - ought to be given if exclusions are to be overcome and dominant narratives are to be challenged.

I will later argue that in order to empower citizens who feel this way, it is necessary to conceive political participation as a craft, where it is possible to practice political activities in order to improve one's skills. Politics often gets compared to games of chess by press pundits, so I will use that analogy to illustrate my point. Adam, an average chess player, will be much more willing to play repeatedly with his friend Barry who is at the same skill level that he is than he would be playing Gary Kasparov. The reason being is that he can play Barry and get more out of the experience than he would out of repeatedly playing Kasparov. If Adam plays Kasparov, then the result of the game is beyond doubt. After the initial thrill of playing a former world champion wears off, Adam will almost certainly feel that playing chess is a waste of time, because he is getting nothing out of the experience except getting beaten by Kasparov repeatedly. Getting beaten by a superior chess player over and over, unless that superior player is helping the inferior player to learn from his mistakes, will not lead Adam to having a positive experience from playing chess. Over time, Adam will come to see that the difference in skill between him and

Kasparov as insurmountable, and decide that playing chess is an unrewarding experience and not play again.

It is no different in the political arena. If someone is trying to advance one's interests and is constantly not being taken seriously by other participants, then over time that person will feel that participating in politics is a waste of time, and that their participation cannot make an impact on the proceedings. This sentiment can set in and develop into political mortification, because eventually that participant will feel uncomfortable in participating politically, much less contradict the views of others in the political arena.

In order to feel empowered in the political arena, one does not necessarily have to have one's way in the political arena. One needs only to be taken seriously and respected by other participants in the debate, or deliberative process, etc. To go back to Catt's standard of equality, the person who feels comfortable in contradicting the views of others feels that way because she knows if she speaks, she and her opinions will be respected and taken seriously. She knows that she will be treated as an equal in the sense that she can advance her interests and debate the issues effectively. This does not mean that other participants agree with her, or even that they think that she is a better debater than they are. They simply think that she is capable enough to be treated seriously. Likewise, the participant will still feel that she has something useful to contribute to the debate, even though her view point might not be adapted, because those who disagree with her will have taken her opinions seriously and not have ignored her. Ignoring other participants in a debate, as Marcuse suggests, can also be a means of disempowerment (Marcuse 1969). But to debate other participants is to take them seriously, and thus recognising them as

playing an important part in the discussion, even though one might not agree with them, and even though that person might not get her way.

To return to my chess analogy, there is a possibility where Adam may not feel completely disempowered when playing Gary Kasparov. Let us imagine that Kasparov decides to no longer treat Adam as a mere opponent. Kasparov can look at Adam and decide to use the experience of playing chess with him as an opportunity to help Adam develop his chess playing skills. While he does not necessarily recognise Adam as his equal in terms of chess playing, he does recognise him as someone that is capable of learning from the experience. Instead of treating Adam as a lesser chess player, he treats Adam as an apprentice. In doing so, getting beat by Kasparov is no longer the useless and frustrating experience that it once was. It now becomes an educative experience for Adam, where he is an apprentice of Kasparov's of sorts. Thus Adam gets a more positive experience from the process, and it came about because the chess champion decide to treat Adam with more respect than he would a lesser opponent. The result will be that Adam will no longer see playing chess as a futile exercise.

A similar dynamic can occur in politics. I will argue in the fourth chapter that in order for this perceived difference in political skill to be overcome, and thus overcome political mortification, politics must be understood as a craft. A craft is any action that is learned primarily by experience, where one learns how to practice the craft effectively by engaging in the craft itself. One can learn from others if they were to enter into a master-apprenticeship relationship with them. This relationship would be similar to that of Kasparov and Adam described in the preceding paragraph. Conceiving politics as a craft both empowers individuals and improves the

quality of political participation. This will allow liberal democracy to more closely approximate the principle of equal consideration and advancement of interests.

The next chapter will look at deliberative democratic processes. Deliberation offers some solutions to the problems outlined here simply by allowing more institutional avenues that allow for individuals to learn more about society's interests. Thus for the sake of democracy to more closely fulfill the principle of equal advancement of interests, deliberative institutions should be put in place in liberal democracies. However, even though deliberative democratic institutions will empower citizens in the sense that it will allow for citizens to better understand their interests, it is still possible that people can become disempowered while participating in deliberative institutions. The same is possible with adversarial democratic institutions such as voting. These issues will be examined next chapter.

CHAPTER 3: DELIBERATIVE DEMOCRACY: A SOLUTION TO DISEMPOWERMENT?

The previous chapter discussed types of disempowerment that challenge to the health of liberal democracy. The form of disempowerment that is of most interest is the perceived difference of skill between participants. Following Helena Catt, we can identify disempowered individuals and groups by seeing if anyone is afraid to disagree with the points of discussion. Only an expression of disagreement is an indicator of empowerment, because there can be instances when individuals can agree with others out of fear or other reasons that would indicate an imbalance of power or skill. The same cannot be said for instances of disagreement.

Solving various instances of disempowerment will improve the quality of political participation as well as increase the quantity of political participation. As was discussed in the second chapter, the quality of political participation should be a key concern for those who are interested in strengthening democratic institutions. As was explained in the first chapter, the guiding principle of democracy should be the principle of the equal advancement and consideration of interests.. Part and parcel of this principle is the notion that citizens have the appropriate and necessary capabilities to advance, consider, and understand and learn about the interests of others. As was asserted in the second chapter, if participants have their skills sufficiently developed then not only will they feel empowered as Catt defines it, but they are also empowered enough to identify, criticize, and create solutions to the types of internal exclusions that Young has identified. Reducing internal exclusions would help improve the quality of political participation by allowing more interests to be heard as well as the authors of those interests to express themselves according to their own voices and interpretations. While skill development is only one aspect of

a larger task of empowering citizens, it can help prevent the onset of political mortification due to feelings of political inadequacy.

As Christiano explains, the principle of equal advancement and consideration and interests functions against a backdrop of deep irresolvable disagreement among citizens about moral, ethical, and other issues that affect political discussion and decision-making. Because of this, consensus will not always be possible and participants will have to resort to majority rule. Therefore an equal distribution of political resources is necessary for all citizens in order for them to express their interests, and ensure that both instances of consensus and majority rule closely meet the principle of the equal consideration of interests.

To reiterate, democratic institutions for Christiano serve three purposes. First, they transmit the citizens' conceptions of aims to government officials, who then translate them into public policy. This is what the electoral system does. Second, they must ensure that citizens are able to discuss the basic aims of society. Thirdly, institutions must ensure effective monitoring of the performance of public officials in terms of their effectiveness at implementing citizens' choice of aims (Christiano 1996, 200-201).

Continuing from Christiano's schema, deliberation plays a necessary role in a liberal democracy since deliberative forums can meet all three purposes outlined above. Deliberation is also necessary because our understanding of the interests of others and ourselves are imperfect and can always be improved. Moreover, improving the understanding of our interests has a salutary effect on both democratic proceedings and outcomes. If this understanding is more developed,

then voting will advance political equality because citizens will be better informed about the aims of society. Christiano is clear: democracy requires *both* aggregative functions of democracy and deliberation.

This chapter will do three things. Firstly, it look at the basic premises and assumptions of deliberative democracy and explain its basic elements. Secondly, it will consider whether Christiano is correct in arguing that democratic deliberation can be compatible with liberal democracy as a necessary compliment to aggregative forms of democracy. Moreover, a purely aggregative democracy cannot and does not exist, as liberal democracy has always included at the very least an independent public sphere where preferences and interests are considered and refined. This entails some deliberation, even though it may not be institutionalised.

Thirdly, this chapter will look at how deliberation might empower citizens and improve the quality of political participation. This chapter will agree with most advocates of deliberation and argue that the institutionalisation of deliberative forums will help empower citizens and stop the onset of political mortification by providing opportunities for participants to develop their skills. As will be argued in the subsequent chapter, the best way to develop skills is to conceive political skills as crafts that are developed experientially. Deliberative forums offer participants an opportunity to do exactly that. However, deliberation can be dominated by those with more skill and shut out voices that could provide interests that ought to be considered. This is a situation that can easily plague other participatory forums as well.. This chapter will argue that deliberative forums will function better, according to its own stated goals, when participants already have their skills sufficiently developed before entering deliberative proceedings. If those

who participate in deliberation already have their skills developed and are empowered enough to meet Catt's standard, then deliberative forums will be better able to identify public reasons and allow each individual and group to speak freely and according to their own voices and interpretations. Thus in order for deliberative forums to better meet their function as defined by deliberative democrats and Christiano's schema, then a program of political skill development should be incorporated so that participants feel empowered before they enter into deliberation.

Deliberative Democracy Defined

Deliberative democracy was first introduced into the lexicon of political theory by Joseph Besette in 1980. Besette argued that the debates and the discussion that occurred in the Congress of the United States functioned as a deliberative democracy. Besette and Uhr (1998) argued that deliberative democracy was strictly a function of legislatures and judiciaries. However, it has come to mean much more than that. Deliberative democracy has now come to mean a model of democracy where citizens come together to discuss and debate a political question by giving reasons for their preferences, opinions, and interests to the other participants to consider. "Deliberative democracy is a way of thinking about politics which emphasizes the give and take of public reasoning between citizens rather than the counting of the votes of the authority of representatives" (Parkinson 2006, 1). Through discussion and debate, the various reasons that are given are considered, and then accepted and rejected based on the reasons that are put forward for those preferences.

What principles guide deliberation?

Deliberation ideally should occur in public. As Joshua Cohen (1989) explains; “under such conditions, people’s arguments for and against certain views must be made in public if they are to persuade others, and so can be examined and challenged by those others; preferences which may be more or less vague, unreflective, ill-informed, and private, and transformed into more firm, reflective, informed, and other-regarding ones through the deliberative encounter (3-4). Publicity is a critical norm for deliberative democrats (Gutmann and Thompson 1996, 54; Luban 2002, 296). Deliberative democrats hold that revealing one’s preferences and the reasons for having these preferences, along with discussing them with others, has a positive effect on institutionalised democratic decision-making processes (Goodin 1992, 124-146; Benhabib 1996, 72; Gutmann and Thompson 1996, 100-101; Cohen 1997, 76-77; Chambers 2004: 390).

Deliberation should also be guided by the principles of accountability and reciprocity. As Gutmann and Thompson explain; “the foundation of reciprocity is the capacity to seek fair terms of social cooperation for their own sake” (1996, 52-53, see also Scanlon 1982, 103-128; Rawls 1993, 48-54). Deliberative democrats hope that deliberation can serve as the political conditions which foster “the willingness to accept reasonable objections to a proposal regardless of the quarter from which they come” (Barry 1995, 99-111)¹². Reciprocity does not always produce consensus. Sometimes consensus will be impossible, however reciprocity calls on citizens to continually seek fair terms of cooperation among equals. Reciprocity requires that when “citizens make moral claims in a deliberative democracy, they appeal to reasons or principles

¹² One should not think that Barry is an advocate of deliberative democracy. However, Barry’s definition of impartiality as elaborated in *Justice as Impartiality*, according to Gutmann and Thompson, is close to their own definition of reciprocity. See Gutmann and Thompson, p. 373-374.

that can be shared by fellow citizens who are similarly motivated” (Gutmann and Thompson 1996, 55). While consensus will not always be possible, reciprocity can still yield deliberative disagreement, where “citizens continue to differ about basic moral principles even though they seek a resolution that is mutually justifiable” (Ibid., 73). This means that deliberation will not always be able to produce a definitive answer to some questions such as moral issues. All reciprocity can do is ask all participants to consider all factors and choose the best action according to their own judgement and defend that choice to the best of one’s ability.

Here Gutmann and Thompson extend the principle of reciprocity and develop a set of standards which help citizens deal with deliberative disagreement. Gutmann and Thompson call these standards the principles of accommodation, which entails mutual respect for and constructive interaction with all participants in the face of deep disagreement, along with being open to the possibility of modifying positions in the face of a better argument (Wong 1992; Gutmann and Thompson 1996, 79-80).

The third principle that drives deliberation is accountability. “In a deliberative forum, each is accountable to all. Citizens and officials try to justify their decisions to all those who are bound by them and some of those who are affected by them. This is the implication of the reason-giving process of deliberative democracy” (Gutmann and Thompson 1996, 128). Who should do the justifying, and to whom? Gutmann and Thompson, like Christiano and other deliberative democrats, do not advocate the abolition of the division of labour between citizens and representatives. “From a deliberative perspective representation is not only necessary but also desirable. The number of people who at the same time can have even a simple conversation, let

alone an extended moral argument, is limited” (Gutmann and Thompson 1996, 131). This is part of what Parkinson has referred to the “scale problem” (2006, see also Dahl and Tufte 1973, 66-88). As we saw in the first chapter, Christiano also maintains this division of labour. Ideally, representation should be subsumed under this principle of accountability where there is an ongoing and free-flowing give and take of reasons between elected representatives and the citizenry.

The three principles of publicity, accountability, and reciprocity are consistent with Christiano’s understanding of the importance of deliberation. Deliberation helps citizens gain a better understanding of the interests of others as well as their own, which is always in need of improvement. Deliberation, according to Christiano, aspires to help citizens understand the basic aims of society, while the electoral system translates those aims into public policy.

In a perfect world, participants in deliberation should try to replicate what Habermas calls the ideal speech situation. Members of the public sphere participating in a discourse should adhere to a set of rules in order for the situation to be an ideal speech situation. They are;

- 1) Every subject with the competence to speak and act is allowed to take part in a discourse.
- 2a) Everyone is allowed to question any assertion whatsoever.
- 2b) Everyone is allowed to introduce any assertion whatever into the discourse.
- 2c) Everyone is allowed to express his attitudes, desires, and needs.
- 3) No speaker may be prevented, by internal or external coercion, from exercising his rights as laid down in 1) and 2) (Habermas 1980, 86).

For Habermas, the ideal speech situation represents a moral system which participants adhere to while in a discussion. The purpose of deliberation in the ideal speech situation is to provide participants with dissimilar views with the relevant information about the political issue at hand. This in turn will encourage greater deliberation and reflection (Mutz 2006, 7). For Habermas, “in

large internally diverse societies, no one's immediate (life/world) experience prepares them adequately for political participation" (Calhoun 1988). This is why exposure to the viewpoints and experiences of others is necessary.

However, the ideal speech situation does not yield any meaningful statements about political institutions but rather serves as an ideal to be aspired to deliberative forums. Decisions are made by relying upon the force of the better argument (Dryzek 2000, 24) and are made by consensus and accepted freely. This is something that is very unlikely in the real world. Habermas recognises this in *Between Facts and Norms* (Habermas 1996, 486-487). Since deliberation occurs in a much more pluralist climate than the ideal speech situation, some scholars such as David Estlund have speculated that this practical deliberation described in *Between Facts and Norms* is the ideal situation that Habermas is really aiming to achieve, and not the ideal speech situation, which Estlund believes should not be replicated in modern society because of its high demands for consensus (Estlund 2006, 75). However, it should be noted that usually the ideal speech situation is used as a performative ideal that deliberative forums aspire to.

Deliberative forums as mini-publics

Notable deliberative democrats such as James Fishkin believe that deliberative forums that rely on random selection should only have the force of recommendation (1995, 162; Lenaghan 1999). In fact, few deliberative democrats believe that the decisions made by deliberative processes should be enacted into law. Far from it, they generally believe that deliberation can help inform public debates and allow for legislators to have a clearer and more complete view of public

opinion. This is certainly Gutmann and Thompson's view (1996), along with Ackerman and Fishkin (2004).

Robert Goodin and John Dryzek (2006; Goodin 2008) see deliberative processes working as mini-publics. Goodin and Dryzek acknowledge that a mini-public does not represent the public in the same way that a legislative body does and cannot claim statistical representativeness (Goodin 2008, 12; see also Dahl 1989, 342; Budge 1996, ch. 7). But deliberation among mini-publics can in some sense replicate the discussions and deliberation that ideally should be occurring in the public at large but cannot because of scale problems. While Goodin and Dryzek readily grant that deliberative mini-publics are not as legitimate as elected legislatures are, they can have influence in other significant ways outside of policy and law-making.

Often, a mini-public will deliberate and "have no guarantee that the recommendations will be taken up any further in the macro-political process" (Goodin 2008, 20). Nonetheless, Goodin outlines some of the ways that mini-publics can have influence. Firstly, deliberation can have an influence by providing new information and insights to public debates. Secondly, they can shape policy by market testing (Ibid., 25). Thirdly, deliberation by mini-publics can "help legitimate public policies in whose process of production they play a part, however symbolic that part may be" (Ibid., 28). Even when this role is symbolic, it is nonetheless an important one in establishing legitimacy in the policy-making process. To state the obvious, a process that gives only a token role to public input will have a much easier time becoming legitimate than one that gives no input whatsoever. The fourth method that deliberation can have influence is to perform a monitoring role. "Participatory, consultative mechanisms also sometimes serve as a means of

public oversight forcing official accountability” (Ibid., 33; see also Weatherford and McDonnell 2007). Fifth, deliberation can resist co-option and express dissent (Ibid., 34). This final method is consistent with Dryzek’s version of deliberation that aims to serve as a critical voice of liberal democratic institutions (Dryzek 1990; 2000, 27).

The final way is especially important. “Participatory processes may promote ‘empowerment’ in the psychological or sociological rather than the strictly legal-political sense” (Goodin 2008, p. 30; see also Fung 2005). The psychological variable is important to this thesis because it links to the feelings of inadequacy that political participants may feel and lead to disempowerment. If Goodin is correct, then participation in deliberative forums, as long as the participants have a positive experience, can make citizens feel empowered. Also, following Dryzek’s claims that deliberative processes can serve as tools to criticize institutions and policies, they can also provide a good opportunity for participants to express dissent against any perceived injustices that might be caused by social and political institutions along with policies that might make participants worse off. Deliberation can thus provide forums for participants to be empowered to meet Catt’s standard.

Since deliberative forums aim to function as mini-publics, they try to replicate the discussions that the public in general should be discussing but cannot because of scale issues. Even though they do not enjoy the same kind of legitimacy that legislatures or judiciaries do, deliberative bodies can have significant influence in several ways, as outlined by Goodin and Dryzek, which are summarised above. What is important to understand for this is that deliberative forums aim to empower by serving as a forum for dissent. To summarize from the previous chapter, the

psychological feeling that one can disagree and dissent from popular beliefs and conventional wisdom is the standard of empowerment that should be aimed for

The act of deliberating

Empowerment is a concern for deliberative democrats because it allows all individuals and groups to speak according to their own voice (Alway 1995). Disempowered individuals and groups that feel that they are unable to effectively contribute will not contribute to the process, and as a result, their interests will not be heard. This results in a democratic forum that does not meet the principle of the equal advancement and consideration of interests. As we will see in this section, empowerment and allowing each group and/or individual to speak freely and according to their own voice is so important to deliberative democrats that they will alter other deliberative principles to ensure that these two ideas are developed.

Deliberation should function as a calm discussion where participants contribute various reasons to support their opinions. Ideally, their preferences should not be firmly set, but they should not enter with no pre-determined opinions either. Goodin explains it well; “Ideals of deliberative democracy may require that we go into public discussions with an ‘open mind’, in the sense of a willingness to change our opinions in light of subsequent evidence and argument. But if everyone came to the process with a completely open mind, to the extent that no one was prepared to take any position to start with, the deliberations would have nowhere to begin” (Goodin 2008, 41, see also Goodin and Niemeyer 2003). Participants must put forward their reasons and couch their arguments in a manner that is accessible for others to comprehend.

As we have seen earlier, Lynn Sanders (1997) and Iris Marion Young (2001) have taken issue with the method that deliberative democrats ask participants to deliberate. They claim that deliberation's call for reasonable, calm, respectful, and tempered discussion can exclude several voices, and that deliberation can occur in boardrooms and legislatures, where elites exercise their power over disempowered groups. As Young explains; "entrance into such deliberative settings is usually rather tightly controlled, and the interests of many affected by the decisions made in them often receive no voice or representation" (Young 2001, 677). According to Young, deliberation is subject to a hegemonic discourse that works to exclude voices from the debate. Sanders submits that because deliberation focuses on controlled and carefully thought out exchanges of arguments, it rules out unruly or excessive behaviour. Moreover, sometimes disempowered groups must engage in unruly behaviour- or communicate in a way that might not seem reasonable - in order to communicate their grievances effectively (Sanders 1997, 6). Sanders calls for alternatives to deliberation that "avoid stated or implicit requirements that talk be only rational and moderate, or that perspectives worth attending to are perspectives that illuminate what is common" (Sanders 1997, 14).

Deliberative democrats are sensitive to these critiques. Dryzek argues that deliberation should function to criticise unequal distributions of power. He also recognises the values that oppositional forces have in civil society, which Young acknowledges (Young 2001, 689). On the surface, it appears that deliberation faces a contradiction between the goals of reasoned and calm discussion and allowing everyone to speak as they see fit. However, when replying to Sanders and Young's charges, deliberative democrats clearly place priority on the latter goal. Gerald Gaus argues that deliberative responsibility should be dispersed throughout the citizenry. Only a

citizenry that is constantly engaged in deliberation can guarantee impartiality (Gaus 1997: 234; McBride 2005: 499). Similar sentiments have been expressed by Bernard Manin (1987, 354) and Cass Sunstein (1988, 1546). Because of this, deliberative democrats have been willing to adopt forms of communication that do not fit into the “calm and reasoned” deliberation that Young and Sanders describe. As Goodin (2008, 65) explains, “In a non-ideal world with power inequalities overlaying social differences, talk (and other modes of communication) of a more rambunctious and less disciplined form might be more appropriate.” (see also Goodin 2006). Parkinson notes in his observations of deliberative forums about health care in Leicester that participants swapped stories during deliberation, much like the method of testimony that Sanders favours (2006, 139). Mansbridge states that everyday talk also plays a necessary role in deliberation, despite it not always being deliberative, since it provides authenticity to deliberation (1999, 211). As she explains; “These uncivil forms of talk are also often necessary as means to the end of approaching both liberty and equality in deliberation. Sometimes only intensity in opposition can break down the barriers of the status quo” (Mansbridge 1999, 223).

As we can see, while originally deliberation did aim to have reasonable and calm discussion as the main method of deliberation, we can see that in order to adhere more closely to the principle of equal advancement and consideration and interests, deliberative democrats have broadened the definition of what counts as deliberation. In order to ensure that as many voices are heard in the deliberative process, calm and reasoned discussion will be replaced by other non-traditional methods of communication. Mind you, relaxing these conditions is predicated by the fact that these non-traditional forms of communication have to be intelligible to others. Even though we live in an age where cultural and other backgrounds that inform our thoughts and viewpoints are

more accessible than ever before, it does require some skill to present interests in a way that can be accessible to others. Nonetheless, the goal behind the principle of allowing participants to speak freely is to allow all participants to be understood on their own terms and to help others understand these terms.

Deliberation as Skill Building

As we know, participating in deliberative forums requires several skills. Some of these skills involve the ability to critically assess, understand and deliberate about shared and personal interests, the ability to communicate and critique these interests, and the ability to make reasonable judgements about the options available, among others that we can think of. On top of this, Hicks provides a good list of communicative skills used in deliberation in the following quote;

“If we translate these skills into a set of argumentative and communicative competencies, we come up with a list that includes: the ability for stakeholders to effectively analyze problematic situations, evaluate complex and competing evidence, marshal the reasons necessary to formulate one's needs and desires into a cogent and persuasive argument, listen critically to others' points of view, anticipate and refute objections, and possess the proficiency of political judgment required to synthesize one's position with those offered by other stakeholders in a manner that addresses the root of the problem or dispute without requiring an undue sacrifice of either party's convictions.(2002, 232)”.

As will be more fully developed in the next chapter, the continuing practice of an activity should lead to development and improvement of the skills required by that activity. What this means for deliberation is that the more often that a participant engages in deliberative forums, the more developed their deliberative skills become. Moreover, all of these political skills should be considered crafts that are primarily learned experientially. The same is true for other forms of political participation as well. However, deliberative forums are supposed to be held more

frequently than elections and referendums, and thus give citizens more opportunities to develop their skills.

These claims will be more fully developed in the next chapter, but for now let us accept them for the sake of argument. If they are correct, political participation is a key aspect of democratic education, a Deweyan concept that entails experiential learning. What makes deliberation particularly compatible with the notions of politics as a craft, is that its very aims entail both empowered participants speaking freely and learning and clarifying individual and collective interests. Thus deliberative forums, following from Christiano's schema alone, have an educative component to them.

As Hicks stated above, participants can expect to develop their communicative and cognitive skills when they deliberate. However, the work of Archon Fung (2003, 2005) and Mark Warren (2001) shows that deliberative forums can also be effective when they are used to specifically develop participants' skills and improve their knowledge. Some deliberative democrats recognize the importance of these skills for empowerment. In short, in order for citizens to be properly empowered, they require having these skills well-developed. Moreover, deliberative democrats believe, following the lines of John Stuart Mill, that deliberative forums provide a good arena for individuals to exercise their skills. Moreover, as Fung and Olin Wright claim, these skills will atrophy if they are not used, and that deliberation offers a far more intense and rigorous method of improving political skill than other forms of political participation. As they explain; "Individuals' capacities to deliberate and make public decisions atrophy when left

unused, and participation in these experiments exercises those capacities more intensely than conventional democratic channels (Fung and Olin Wright 2001, 28).

This claim is one that is worth examining. How specifically can participation in a deliberative forum provide more intense political skill development than other forms of political participation? Let us draw comparisons between deliberation and political participation in aggregative forms of democracy, such as political campaigning and voting on the other hand to see some differences.

As stated earlier, publicity is an important value for deliberation, as elaborated by Gutmann and Thompson in their seminal work. To reiterate, publicity entails deliberation occurring in front of others. This involves participants have to defend their views and opinions in front of others. Although it should be noted that Simone Chambers (2004) argues that publicity can steer public reason (that is, the kind of reason that aspires to be universalisable and generalizable) to a form of plebiscitory reason that is shallow and makes appeal but still has general appeal (393, see also Elster 1995, 250-252). This plebiscitory reason that Chambers discusses resembles closely Yankelovich's public opinion (as opposed to public judgement) and the state of public opinion that Ackerman and Fishkin decry (2004). In short, this kind of public opinion is based on knee-jerk reactions and public intuition and would change, so assert deliberative democrats, if they were put under the scrutiny of deliberative forums. The trouble with this kind of reason, states Chambers, is that it forces participants to please as many people as possible and be firm and decisive in the public eye. Moreover, Chambers believes that publicity can put undue pressure on

participants, and that deliberative secrecy can allow participants to speak freely and accept compromises more easily (Chambers 1994, 394).

Chambers argues that the small, private, “Socratic” elements of deliberation and the wider public element should be brought into one conversation. This proposal works to retain Gutmann and Thompson’s principle of publicity while aiming to protect public reason from plebiscitory pressures. This means that even when deliberation occurs in camera, participants still face the pressure of having to frame their arguments according to public reason, that is, in some way that the public might accept (even though Bohman and Richardson 2009 take exception with this). This means that participants have to place great care in how they frame their arguments so that they might be accepted by other participants and ultimately, the public as a whole. To do this successfully obviously calls upon a variety of skills that not only involve communication and presentation, but also to reflect upon, critically analyze and assess, and possibly revise arguments to present them to other participants (see Goodin 2003). In this sense, the norm of publicity works to create an atmosphere where participants can develop their political skills freely.

In this sense, deliberation offers more opportunities than modes of political participation within aggregative democracy. The reason being is that publicity is not a guiding norm for aggregative democracy as it is for deliberation. It is certainly possible that aggregative democracy can focus itself on trying to produce discourse that mirrors public reason, through debate and campaign discourse for example. However, as the history of political campaigns points out, the discourse in aggregative democracy often degenerates into plebiscitory reason. The reasons why are many. Unlike deliberative functions, elections are proverbial horseraces that decide the winners and

losers of a finite set of political offices. Given the prizes of elections, it is no wonder that the tone and the nature of elections are different than that of deliberation. Given the competitive nature of elections, the skill sets necessary often focus on marketing (Lees-Marchment's 2001a, 2001b), strategizing, and even political manipulation. These are not the same skills that are deployed in deliberative forums, and as such participation in aggregative democracy develops different skills than participating in deliberation.

However, the fact that deliberation and aggregative democracy develops different skill sets does not necessarily mean that the former offers more intense skill development. As it stands, deliberation and elections develop different skills, and one can easily argue that political participants require both skill sets to be well-developed in order to be effective in the political arena. What makes deliberation a more intense way of developing political skill is that deliberative forums, if they were institutionalised, happen more frequently than elections, referendums, or any other function of aggregative democracy. Ideally, deliberative forums are to occur on a relatively frequent basis. Exactly how often they will occur is up to conjecture, but it is clear by looking at the writings of deliberative democrats that there ought to be more deliberative forums than elections and referendums. One possible exception might be Ackerman and Fishkin's Deliberation Day, a proposal which is supposed to occur two weeks before an election. If this is the only institutional deliberative forum that is to occur, then we only have a deliberative forum for every election. However, several deliberative forums have been held in other areas besides elections, candidates, and the issues.

John Stuart Mill and John Dewey posit that the repetition and frequent practice of a skill causes a participant to improve his or her capability in that skill. This claim will be explored in depth in the next chapter, but if this is the case, then deliberation does in fact offer a more intense program for developing political skills than participation in elections and other forms of aggregative democracy. The reason is because deliberation, once institutionalised, ought to occur more frequently than elections.

Moreover, there are deliberative projects that, along with working to identify and clarify interests, also focus on developing political skills among its participants. One of the most well-known examples are the National Issues Forums, which are deliberative forums that also wishes to increase the civic skills of participants. Other examples are the Pew Charitable Trusts and the Kaiser Family Foundation (Warren 2001). But as Ryfe points out, these forums have some limitations. “Each of these foundations dedicates itself to improving the critical skills of citizens. In so doing, however, they also work against the basic cognitive logic that motivates people to deliberate in the first place. Without feeling that the stakes are high, or that they are accountable for an outcome, individuals will be less willing to engage their critical faculties” (Ryfe 2005, 61).

This is an interesting point here. This means that in order for citizens to truly engage and develop their deliberative skills, they cannot merely participate in simulations, they have to participate in forums that have a real impact on political issues. Although, as Cammarano and Fowler (1997) show, simulations can be very effective in developing political skills among secondary school students. However, there are deliberative forums that are not simulations and also aim to empower political participants. Archon Fung chronicles a few examples of community projects

that not only has deliberative qualities but also empower participants to become more engaged in their community.

What is interesting about these projects is that these are reforms geared towards democratizing previously closed institutions that included both a deliberative element and a training aspect. Some of the examples of Fung and Olin Wright's study are functionally specific neighbourhood councils in Chicago, Illinois that used deliberation to have public officials engage with neighbourhood residents to identify problems in the community along with developing community-built solutions. These deliberative forums – focusing on police enforcement and public education – were intended to democratize formerly hierarchical and relatively closed bureaucracies. However, Fung and Olin Wright note that these bureaucratic reforms did not become truly successful until a training component was added in order to have participants develop their knowledge and skills. The public school reforms did not originally have the training component but had to be added because some school boards were not performing to their potential (Fung and Olin Wright 2001, 9). The Chicago Alternative Policing Strategy from its inception hired community organizers and trainers to go into the field and teach problem-solving skills to neighbourhood participants (Ibid., 10).

Another community project that Fung and Olin Wright examine is the Wisconsin Regional Training Project (WRTP). The WRTP focused on bringing workers and managers together to mutually solve industrial relations markets. Its aim was to create Worker Education Centres to provide ongoing skills training to employers. The interesting aspect of the WRTP is that it was designed primarily to be a training programme that was democratized to allow for all affected

parties to control how the training occurred. In other words, the WRTP is a democratically directed training programme. As Fung and Olin Wright explain;

“These centers are miniature schools located within firms that train workers in the most urgently needed basic or advanced skills. (...) These education centers embody the deliberative-democratic principles by shifting the power of design and implementation of incumbent-worker training from a state centered technical college system to decentralized, firm-based learning centers. Finally, many of these centers brought together managers and workers accustomed to operating on opposite sides of a bargaining table in a deliberative effort to solve training problems” (2001, 11).

So in short, these are training centres of schools that were designed to allow participants to exert democratic control over the design and implementation of its training through deliberative methods. While the WRTP is not precisely an example of a deliberative forum that has the added goal of improving the political skills of its participants, it is a good institutional example where deliberative practices and the development of skills are combined effectively.

The last of Fung and Olin Wright’s examples that is highlighted here is the strengthening of local governance in West Bengal and Kerala, India between 1988 and 1996. These measures were done to curb local corruption by empowering local citizens in order to increase accountability and enhance administrative effectiveness. Like the municipal reforms in Chicago, the reforms in these Indian provinces included an education component focusing on developing skills along with implementing deliberative forums. As Fung and Olin Wright explain; “in 1997-98, some 300,000 participants attended these training “development seminars” where they learned basic self-governance skills. Actual planning processes involve more than 100,000 volunteers to develop village projects and more than 25,000 to combine these projects into village level plans” (2001, 16). Fung and Olin Wright report that not only were these reforms successful in fostering accountability and developing political skills, but the “sheer increase in village planning and

project formulation far outstripped the central state government's ability to assess the quality of the plans or reject poor ones, much less provide feedback to improve them" (Ibid.).

When they include a "training component" to develop the skills of participants, deliberative forums can be very successful in developing political skills in an open and accessible way. The examples from Fung and Olin Wright's study are good examples of this point. Moreover, if deliberative forums make even a simple commitment to integrate skill development into the flow of deliberation (as opposed to a separate skill development component to deliberation), we ought to see the further development of political skills among participants. To reiterate, developing political skills is key to mitigate against political mortification, which will improve the quality of political participation, empower participants, and allow democracies to move closer to meeting the principle of the equal advancement and consideration of interests.

Christiano argues that deliberative forums are a key reform that needs to be implemented in order to come closer to the principle of the equal advancement and consideration of interests. However, since we have concrete examples of deliberative forums that are effective in developing political skills, we can also surmise that deliberation, fitting with the argument advanced in this work so far, has the capacity to empower participants. In that sense, institutionalizing deliberative forums would go a long way to solving disempowerment.

This is consistent with the argument that will be developed next chapter. In short, the next chapter will argue that political skills are learned experientially through repeated practice. Naturally, opportunities such as deliberation and even participating in political campaigns offer

political participants the chance to participate and develop their political skills. As stated earlier, deliberative forums ought to function even better than participating in adversarial forms of democracy since deliberation is supposed to happen more frequently than elections. As Fung and Olin Wright's research indicates, deliberative forums can develop the political skills of political participants very well when they are accompanied with learning modules.

Can deliberative institutions fail to empower citizens or disempower?

What is left to consider is whether the project of empowerment can stop at institutionalizing deliberation or whether further work is needed outside of deliberative institutions to develop the political skills of democratic citizens. In order for this question to be answered, it is necessary to find instances where political mortification has come about in deliberative forums. In other words, if there are instances where deliberative forums have exacerbated the differences in political skills between participants, or have allowed those with better developed skills to unfairly dominate the discussion, then deliberative forums alone are not sufficient for successful empowerment of citizens.

Establishing such a claim does not negate the arguments presented above. Finding evidence where deliberative forums improve political skills shows that they can be successes when a focus is placed on developing political skills along with the other goals of deliberation. However, there are times when deliberative forums do not have the time or cannot include a skill development phase or aspect since it falls outside of their purpose or mandate. Moreover, it is certainly possible that there will be instances when skill development, since it is never a primary purpose of deliberation, can be put to the side in deliberative proceedings. Moreover, deliberative forums

require that participants put their skills to work in order to identify public reasons along with their interests, and as such, some participants will be better able to accomplish these tasks than others. A difference in skill among participants in deliberation is not necessarily a bad thing. As with any skill set, one can expect there to be people better at political participation than others. The difference in political skill only becomes a problem when it leads to political mortification. If there are instances when participation in deliberative forums can disempower participants, then deliberative forums are not enough to prevent political mortification. This means that further measures are required. This section will demonstrate that despite deliberative forums' successes in improving political skills, they function far better when participants already have well developed skills before entering into deliberation, since deliberative forums can at times reveal instead of mitigate against inequalities of skills.

Several scholars make this above point. As Gimmler states, deliberation is a communicative act, and that "each communicative act serves to reveal inequalities in knowledge, education, access to information, social status, language skills, and the like" (2001, 26). In and of itself, this might be not a problem, however, if this inequality does not lead to political mortification and leaves participants meeting Catt's standard of empowerment, then there is no problem. The same might be said for adversarial forms of participation as well. However, if the inequality of political skills revealed in deliberative forums has the potential to disempower its participants, then more reforms outside of deliberation are needed.

This view is compatible with that of several deliberative democrats. The difference in political skill is an inequality that concerns scholars of deliberative theory. As Hicks explains;

“Deliberators, if they are to enjoy equal rights of participation, must not only be granted access to important information and possess relative equality of resources; they must also be relatively equal in the capabilities needed to have their claims acknowledged and taken seriously (for example, possessing a disposition conducive to group discussion). Equality of political influence, thus, depends on the equal distribution of the capability to reason effectively and to speak eloquently.” (2005, 231).

James Bohman goes even further and states that possession of these skills is a prerequisite for social freedom. Without these skills, he argues, participants are unable to advance their interests and live below the “political poverty line” (James Bohman 1997). Equality of political skill, or at least a smaller degree of inequality, is desirable in political deliberation. Knight and Johnson (1997, 281) argue that deliberation requires “equal capacity to advance persuasive claims” and mention the ability to reason and articulate ideas as part of that capacity. These are part of the deliberative skills mentioned earlier in this chapter.

As we have seen above, deliberative forums can improve the political skills of participants if a commitment is made by these forums to do so, usually by including a skill development phase or aspect. However, there are times when deliberative forums fail to improve the skills of participants, or have disempowered citizens by reinforcing it to the point where it discourages people from participating. One early objection to deliberative democracy (not necessarily the narrower definition of deliberation) was that it has the potential to reinforce inequalities developed in the educational sphere (political and communicative skills being part of that) and transferring them to deliberative arenas (Hooghe 1999, 7). Even if deliberative forums are as open and inclusive as possible, there is research that suggests that open procedures (as deliberative forums often aim to be) do not lead to equal access to decision-making (Verba, Scholzman, and Brady 1995). Hooghe also cites Young and Philips’ work on discourse dominated by cultural hegemony as examples of how groups and individuals may not have their

voices heard in deliberation, even though more recent work has shown how deliberative forums can be adjusted to allow for non-traditional methods of speech.

Mendelberg (2002) further argues that even though highly skilled participants are desirable in deliberative forums, they pose a problem for what he calls the “egalitarian requirement of deliberation” (166). This requirement is that, as stated earlier, deliberative participants should enjoy near equality of political influence. Since well-educated participants are skilled and have an easier time identifying interests beyond their narrow self-interest (see Nie, Junn, and Stehlik-Barry 1996), they perform better in a deliberative setting than those with less skill. Mendelberg further argues that since higher education is strongly associated with a prosperous class position, people with higher education will often bring their own perspectives and interests, and since these participants have better developed skills, these interests will have a better airing than other interests (166, see also James 1959; Mansbridge 1980; Strodtbeck *et al.* 1957).

Even Fung’s study of Chicago’s local school councils (2003), which reported some positive work by deliberative forums to empower its participants, also reported that participation within the councils was tilted in favour of the well-off (111-116). Another worrisome finding was that within integrated schools, white parents and community members were overrepresented on the councils, taking up 85% of the seats while only taking up 50% of the population (Newman 2009, 71). Weatherford and McDonnell (2000, 2007) looked at participation in local school boards that employed deliberative forums in South Carolina, and found that discussion was dominated by well-educated and middle class participants once deliberation moved from the neighbourhood to the community level. This dominance, they noted, led to the failure to discuss racial disparities in

the education system, an issue that Weatherford and McDonald believe was a very salient issue at the time (2000, 20-22). Rosenberg's study of how Laguna Beach, California residents deliberated about the quality of K-12 education in their town revealed that their deliberations fell well short of deliberative ideals, specifically the deliberators' unwillingness to challenge social hierarchies and question existing norms (2007). This last point is particularly alarming given Dryzek's claims that deliberation ought to be used as a tool to challenge social norms and hierarchies. These examples lead Newman to conclude that, at least with education policy, "deliberation in practice is far less egalitarian than theory would have it – which necessitates greater caution in celebrating existing public fora (and in recommending more deliberative policy-making) than is typically exercised" (2009, 72-73).

Nonetheless, there are success stories where deliberative forums were able to empower participants and develop their political skills. Fung and Wright's work cited above are good examples. Other good examples are summarized by Karpowitz, Raphael, and Hammond (2009), where disempowered groups and individuals deliberate in their own enclaves away from empowered participants. The goal of this move, as Mansbridge states, is to allow the disempowered to "oscillate between protected enclaves, in which they can explore their ideas in an environment of mutual encouragement, and more hostile but also broader surroundings in which they can test those ideas against the reigning reality" (1996, 57, also see Dryzek 2000). Karpowitz, Raphael, and Hammond cite a consensus conference held by the Broadband Institute of California at Santa Clara University and the Center for Science, Technology and Society on municipal broadband and digital inclusion. As they explain; "instead of recruiting a community panel reflective of Silicon Valley as a whole, the organizers formed an enclave, each member of

which was a member of at least one of the groups that had the lowest rates of home access to commercial broadband at the United States at the time: low-income people, African Americans, Hispanics, seniors, the disabled, and rural residents” (2009, 585). They found that this deliberative enclave of traditionally disempowered groups has been successful in increasing participants’ knowledge of the issues and experienced modest increases in feelings of empowerment and felt less alienated about civic engagement (Karpowitz, Raphael, and Hammond 2009, 602). These findings show that enclave deliberation can help empower traditionally disempowered individuals, fitting Catt’s standard of empowerment provided earlier in this work, where participants feel empowered if they feel able to disagree with viewpoints being expressed (Karpowitz, Raphael, and Hammond 2009, 600, Table 3).

However, all of these instances were deliberative forums that made skill development one of its goals. The deliberative forums that failed to empower citizens might be said to have functioned more like typical deliberative forums that are geared towards advancing and considering interests, and identifying or forging public reasons for decisions. More often than not, deliberative forums tend to only focus on these goals alone. These deliberative forums did not focus on generally empowering their citizens, as in the Santa Clara broadband deliberative enclave, or developing skills as in Fung’s examples.

Thus we have a mixed record for deliberative forums when it comes to empowering citizens. As

Fung and Olin Wright note;

“even if both strong and weak are well represented, the strong may nevertheless use tools at their disposal—material resources, information asymmetries, rhetorical capacities—to advance collective decisions that unreasonably favor their interests. While many other models of public decision making such as electoral and interest group politics expect such behavior, empowered deliberation is more normatively demanding, and so perhaps more empirically suspect” (35).

When they incorporate the goal citizen empowerment and developing the skills of its participants, deliberative forums have a good track record when it comes to empowerment, not only through the development of political skills but also through directly seeking out and including groups and individuals that have traditionally not been a part of the discursive process. However, when no commitment is made, then their record is not as good. There are times when deliberative forums do not have the time or cannot include a skill development phase or aspect since it falls outside of their purpose or mandate. In the examples that Karpowitz, Raphael, and Hammond cite above, we find examples of such forums, and they failed to empower citizens, and in some cases, they made the situation worse.

As Ryfe states, deliberative democrats generally speaking, argue that “deliberation requires equality, and once achieved, equality will produce legitimacy. Any difficulty in realizing this equation is an empirical matter having to do with society, not deliberative theory” (53). We can see how Ryfe might make such a statement given Bohman’s statements above. Although, it should be noted that there are theorists in deliberation that state that deliberative forums ought to work to create equality and empower its citizens (Fung and Olin Wight 2001, 32; see also Fung 2005).

Nonetheless, as Fung notes, deliberative forums would function better if unfavourable conditions were not present (2005, 401), and mentions the inequality of skills as something that can be improved on in deliberation under these unfavourable conditions (2005, 403). This egalitarian

demand is a high standard for deliberation to meet, something that is recognized by deliberative democrats. As Hicks states;

It takes immense skill to know when to initiate dialogue or when to engage in argument, and it takes considerable insight to know what should count as an authoritative reason to act. But I remain convinced that ordinary political actors possess both the skill and insight to construct and ratify the laws that bind them together. And, if some don't, then we, especially those of us that teach and write about communicative action, are mutually obligated to construct the spaces where those skills can be acquired and to design deliberative forums conducive to the communicative and reasoning styles of all. (2002, 256).

Further to Hicks' point, it also takes skill to identify and challenge problems that arise when deliberation occurs in the unfavourable conditions that Fung mentions, along with devising and applying remedies within the forums themselves. Hayward (2004) is more pessimistic and states that the challenge of ensuring that all citizens are equally recognized in deliberative forums may be an intractable problem that is impossible to solve with the parameters of deliberative theory. This work takes the view that is closer to Hicks'. There is little doubt that a great deal of skills is needed to deliberate effectively, and that these skills are needed by participants if deliberation is to function well.

I disagree with Hayward in that empowerment – at least as has been defined in this work – is not an intractable problem. To reiterate, a participant is said to be empowered when he or she feels able to contradict the views, statements, and opinions of a group or individual that is speaking. Whereas some deliberative democrats along with Hayward argue that equality along several dimensions – skills being one of them – is necessary in deliberation, the goal of empowerment as outlined in this thesis is not that lofty of a goal. The goal of empowering citizens does not require creating an equitable distribution of skills. It is possible to have some participants more skilled than others and still have all participants meet the standard of empowerment defined above.

Instead, skills should be developed so that each participant feels empowered to the point to challenge even the most skilled participant. Perhaps by relaxing the high demands of equality along several variables to focus more on empowerment as this work defines it, deliberation might function better as advocates hope.

Where Ryfe and Hayward are somewhat correct is that empowering citizens might be easier to accomplish outside of the confines of deliberation. Put another way, deliberative forums might function better if participants felt empowered before entering into deliberation, instead of hoping that deliberation will empower citizens through participation. Even though deliberative forums are necessary for the equal advancement and consideration of interests and they have the capability of aiding participants to develop their skills, we have seen instances where deliberation has failed to do this. Certainly work can be done to improve things so that deliberative forums occur in non-ideal settings, but they would function better if the forums began under much more ideal conditions. This means that the development of political skill might be best achieved by programmes that function outside of political participatory functions such as deliberative forums, and are dedicated strictly to developing political skills. How this can be done is the focus of the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4: POLITICS AS A CRAFT: IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

As we have seen so far, disempowerment frustrates the principle of equal advancement and consideration of interests, which in turn affects the quality of political participation. The higher quality of political participation there is in a democracy, then it is more likely that citizens will be better able to advance, learn about, and consider their interests. But when there are large segments of the citizenry that are disempowered, then the quality of political participation suffers, and as a result, a democracy will be less able to meet the principle of equal advancement and consideration of interests.

To reiterate, disempowerment can occur in two different ways. Firstly, it can occur when there is an unequal distribution of power. Solving this is straightforward: power must be distributed more equitably. However, the other form of disempowerment which has been defined as political mortification, can occur when all participants have some degree of equality in terms of formal power. This type of disempowerment occurs when individuals and groups' political skills are not sufficient to meet Catt's standard of empowerment, where an individual or group does not feel comfortable contradicting the views that are being stated in discussion.

This standard does not require that all participants have the same level of skill. Such a situation is impossible to achieve. The goal is simply to have individuals empowered to the point where they criticize the statements and opinions of others. As suggested in the previous chapter, in order to meet this standard of empowerment, it is necessary to develop the political skills for the citizens in a democracy. As we saw in the previous chapter, participating in deliberative forums can help

develop these skills in situations where skills development is a stated goal of the deliberative forum. Archon Fung's research has yielded several examples where deliberative forums have succeeded in developing political skills.

Even though some deliberative democrats are concerned with developing participants' skills, this is not a primary goal of deliberation. Within the schema of this work, deliberative forums are to provide citizens an opportunity to gain a better understanding of individual and group interests which is in constant need of improvement. From that better understanding, the public decides whether to support or reject various opinions. As the previous chapter showed, there are instances where participants felt more disempowered after they left the deliberative forum, and that this disempowerment came about because of the difference of skill between political participants. Moreover, because of the strong demands that deliberative theory makes in terms of political equality, deliberative forums would function better if participants were sufficiently empowered before entering into deliberation instead of hoping that they become empowered through deliberative participation.

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a theoretical framework to empower citizens through the development of skills. The purpose of which is to have citizens empowered before entering into deliberative forums, or any other form of political participation for that matter. However, particular attention ought to be given to deliberative forums which require a high standard of citizen empowerment. To reiterate, deliberative forums ought to function better with previously empowered citizens participating, given that deliberation may not always be successful at empowering citizens through skills development. With participants already sufficiently

empowered to meet Catt's standard of empowerment - where they feel that they can disagree with statements made by the majority of participants, the quality of political participation will increase, thus allowing participatory forums to more closely approximate the principle of the equal advancement and consideration of interests.

This chapter will argue that political participation requires a set of skills, and that political participation is a craft, where political skills are learned primarily experientially through trial and error. The learning of political skills entails employing different strategies and techniques in different situations, evaluating them in light of their successes or failures, and altering in light of those successes and failures. Firstly, I will argue that political participation requires a skill set, and the effective practice of these skills is necessary in the political arena. Certain political skills are needed in order to be successful in both adversarial and deliberative spheres of democracy.

Moreover, this will argue that these political skills are crafts. A craft is learned experientially through trial and error. This section will borrow heavily from John Dewey, and like him, I will argue that the development of politics as a craft occurs within the locus of what Dewey called democratic education. Political craft is learned by the individual trying various methods and strategies in the public sphere, learning from whatever mistakes they make, and trying again. In short, one learns from experience and by experimenting. However, the experiential learning of political craft should not occur entirely without any form of constraint whatsoever. The norms of appropriate conduct within the political sphere as well as previous experience in similar situations can serve as useful boundaries for the student of political craft. Also, the student in political craft can benefit from learning from those who are more politically skilled as well.

However, this learning can occur within the rubric of a master-apprentice relationship, where the student learns experientially under the guidance of a more politically experienced teacher.

Secondly, this chapter will look at defining active political participation. It is here defined as a genuine attempt to help advance an interest¹³ in the public sphere. It differs from passive forms of political participation, which involve mostly information gathering and reflective consideration of interests and preferences. While they are different, both types of actions are defined here as types of political participation, since these actions are a constitutive part of the principle of equal consideration of interests. From that point, I will provide a taxonomy of different types of active political participation. Also, it will be explained how each of these types of active political participation constitute a skill and how these skills are learned experientially.

Defining Political Participation As A Craft

The Skill of Political Participation
 People participate in politics in order to achieve certain social goods. Political participants believe that achieving these social goods will improve their well-being. Not only do political participants want to achieve these goods, they are willing to invest their own resources in order to achieve them.

In a democracy, however, attaining these social goods requires the consent of others. There are different ways in which this consent is achieved. This is done by convincing undecided people

¹³ An important caveat has to be placed here. Christiano argues that our individual and collective knowledge is imperfect and is in constant need of improvement. This means that a political participant can be wrong about their interests, and can advance preferences for something that is not in their interest. Even though they might be wrong, they might genuinely think that that what they are arguing for is in their interest. This is the case despite the fact that evidence or debate might convince them otherwise. While they are wrong about their interests, they are nonetheless participating in the public sphere. This is why I say that that anyone who genuinely attempts or helps to advance an interest should be considered an active political participant.

about the benefits of these goods, or by talking about the drawbacks of not achieving them, or both. Moreover, this debate occurs against a backdrop of deep political disagreement. In this case, it means that not everyone will get their way with what they want to achieve. Because of this, invariably there will be winners and losers, since some will be successful in attaining their desired goods and others will not.

Christiano used this line of argument to justify the principle of equal advancement and consideration of interests, fair decision-making procedures in both adversarial and deliberative spheres of democracy, and an equal distribution of political resources. However, a key element of democratic decision-making is how the argument is made; what methods and strategies are used in order to convince people, and that there are some participants who are better able to devise these strategies than others, just as there are those who are better able to argue, persuade, and call upon relevant information in the public sphere in order to convince others of their views. In short, the differing levels of ability among political participants can be a key factor in deciding which side wins.

Moreover, all of these activities; devising strategies, debating and arguing with others, and convincing people of one's views are skills. The better a participant practices these skills, then they are more likely to be successful in convincing others of their views, all things being equal. Not only are these skills employed in aggregative forms of democracy such as elections and referendum campaigns, but they are also used in deliberative forums. The purpose of deliberation, as defended in this work, is to provide a space where individuals can advance and learn about their own interests and those of others. If participants do not want one's preferences

to be rejected, they have to convince others of their desirability. If they do not have the adequate skills in rhetoric and argumentation, then they will not be able to convince others of their views, and their arguments will be rejected.

Political skills are not strictly limited to communicative skills such as argument, debate, and rhetoric, or the devising and implementing of political strategies. As Goodin (2003) explains, political deliberation has an inward, reflective component along with a public, discursive dimension. It entails making judgements, weighing of different arguments and evidence, understanding how different choices and values can or cannot be reconciled, and re-evaluating one's choices in light of social and political realities. These reflective or cognitive/rational faculties should be considered skills as well. Some participants will be better able to make these connections in their minds than others, and the history of political campaigns is rife with examples of mistakes made both in assumption and in judgment. As we can imagine, these cognitive skills, just like the communicative and organizational skills described above, are needed in both adversarial democracy and deliberative democracy.

Political Craft

Defining political activities as skills entails two things. Firstly, it means accepting that political participants have varying levels of ability in employing these skills, and secondly, it means that a participant can improve their level of proficiency in these activities. Two questions need to be considered at this point. First, how do citizens in a democracy learn and improve these skills, and why do we want them to do so?

The second question will be answered first. If more citizens develop their political skills, then they will be better able to identify and understand what they want in terms of policy. This in turn will make them more capable in achieving their objectives because they have a clearer sense of what those objectives are and which candidates or groups more closely can present those objectives to them. This should improve the quality of political participation, and in turn empower the citizenry. To reiterate, an empowered person is someone who feels that they can enter into a debate, disagree and interrupt the proceedings and disagree with what is being said. The empowered person not only feels that her interests are worthy of consideration by others, she also thinks that she is capable of convincing others of her views. Moreover, a person with well developed political skills can more easily flesh out their interests than someone with less developed skills. Often individuals will have a faint or undeveloped idea of their interests. They might know what they want, but will not have considered some of the consequences or implications of those interests, or are not entirely sure which arguments and reasons they could give to convince others of their views. A participant with well developed argumentative and deliberative skills can come up with these arguments much more easily, quickly recognize which arguments do not work, and revise those arguments and come up with new ones when necessary. A person with well developed political skills can also identify how their interests are compatible or conflict with other interests, either through discussion with others or with internal reflection.

Anyone would want this kind of citizen in a democracy. Deliberative forums provide the arena in which the learning of interests happens, but as we saw earlier, deliberative forums would function much better if citizens already are empowered and have well-developed skills. This kind of citizen may not be interested in every single political issue that may come up for discussion.

In fact, it is highly unlikely that democracies will have citizens that are interested in every political debate. Helping citizens to develop their skills is not necessarily to drive up the amount of political participation in a democracy, even though some increases should happen. The aim of politics as a craft is simply to help citizens in a democracy develop their argumentative and deliberative skills in order to empower them, so that citizens feel capable of entering into any facet of the democratic process and making a positive contribution.

On the surface, helping citizens develop their political skills will have a salutary effect on a democracy that aims to meet the principle of equal advancement and consideration of interests. Along with being better able to advance their interests, citizens will be better able to identify, critique, and challenge any forms of internal exclusions and the hegemonic discourse if and when they stand to disempower citizens. How can skills be developed? I will make the case that this development occurs via political participation, and also through education in schools. But at this point, we will look at how these skills are learned experientially.

John Stuart Mill, John Dewey, and democratic education

We get the term “experiential learning” from John Dewey, the noted 20th century American philosopher. Dewey famously coined the phrase “learning by doing”, and his work has had a great influence in political theory and education theory, and he was also a close adviser to Kemal Ataturk in helping devise education curriculums for Turkey (Büyükdüvenc 1994). Dewey borrowed heavily from John Stuart Mill, who in many ways had a profound influence on the theory of deliberative democracy as well, which will be evident in the analysis in this section.

As we have seen in previous chapters, there is a tradition in liberalism, originating with John Stuart Mill, that stresses the educative possibilities of democratic participation. As Macpherson (1977) argues, Mill was the originator of “developmental democracy”. Mill’s understanding of liberal democracy signified a fundamental shift in liberalism away from seeing democratic institutions as primarily protective devices for rights and property to a means to help newly enfranchised individuals and groups develop their understanding of democratic institutions, along with the issues that are being discussed (Macpherson 1977, 57-58). Mill hoped that using democratic participation as educative tools would improve the quality of political participation, however his reasons were very different than what has been presented in this work. In essence, Mill feared that newly enfranchised citizens would make policy demands that would threaten liberal democratic institutions, especially property rights (Ibid., 57)¹⁴. Participation in the political arena, Mill hoped, would teach newly enfranchised citizens that the liberal democratic system of rights and political institutions had value.

Mill believed that political participation was necessary for moral and mental self-development, which includes the development of argumentative and deliberative skills. “Having said that individuality is that same thing with development, and that it is only the cultivation of individuality which produces or can produce, well developed human beings” (Mill *On Liberty* 1993, 131-132)¹⁵. In order for development to occur, individuals needed to question thoroughly

¹⁴ Mill’s fear of class legislation is why he advocated plural voting in *Considerations on Representative Government*, Ch. 8, where those with the most education would have more votes, but everyone, no matter what their education level, would be given at least one vote.

¹⁵ As Garforth explains, the free exchange of ideas and debate according to Mill places society and the individual in a symbiotic relationship vis-à-vis their own development. “There is thus a circular (or perhaps spiral) process of mutual influence and response: values are injected into society by the activities of its individual members; society in its turn, by the formative influence it inevitably exerts on those who live in it, moulds other individuals, notably children, into the same patterns of commitment”, F. W. Garforth, *Educative Democracy*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 15.

all conventions in society in order to generate debate, and from this individuals would not only develop themselves morally, but also better understand their own values and interests. As Mill explains; “(T)o conform to custom, merely as custom, does not educate or develop man any of the qualities which are the distinctive endowment of a human being. The human faculties of perception, judgment, discriminative feelings, mental activity, or even moral preference are exercised only in making a choice. He who does anything because it is a custom makes no choice” (*On Liberty* 126; McPherson 1982, 255). According to Mill, the educative process of political debate and discussion continues throughout one’s life and occurs within the framework of political institutions. As Geraint Perry explains, “institutions should offer the opportunity to learn about political possibilities, about the legitimate claims of others and come to reassess their own positions. Government acts as a school. There is (...) a continuing process of reformation of character, starting in youth and encouraged through life” (1999, 32).

Mill, much like Christiano after him, believes that this debate occurs against a backdrop of deep disagreement. He believes that hearing someone express wrong opinions is beneficial not only to the person who is expressing wrong opinions, but also for those doing the correcting, since they get to exercise their argumentative and deliberative skills. For Mill, the “open clash between earnestly-held ideals and opinions about the nature and the good life” was necessary for individual and social progress (Waldron 1987, 414; Zivi 2006, 58). Not only must democratic politics function with disagreement and debate, it is also necessary for self-development. Moreover, the perennial debate that Mill wishes to occur in the public sphere must entail mutual respect for others (or what he called temperance) and be as inclusive as possible. Temperance should serve “as a tool to safeguard the space for different voices and perspectives, to allow

outrage and divergent opinions a place in politics, and to make space for that one voice, that one person with a contrary opinion at risk of being muted” (Zivi 2006, 58). The other benefit of constant debate is that it gives participants the opportunity to practice their skills in judgement. As Zivi explains; “Like any other muscle, it [judgement] must be exercised in order for it to remain strong, and it can be exercised through lively discussion that forces us to examine our deeply held beliefs. Thus it is through acting on our opinions and challenging presumed truths that we exercise and improve the very faculties which makes us human” (2006, 58).

From Mill we get the notion that the public sphere is the crucible where new ideas and interests are discussed, allows individuals to accept and/or reject interests and understand why they might be rejected or accepted, and gives participants the chance to learn about their interests and those of others. However, Mill also stressed the educative functions that participation in public discussions provides. Not only does debate and discussion allow individuals to develop their argumentative, discursive, and reflective skills, but according to Mill it also helps individuals develop their characters. Moreover, Mill does not believe that this development is ever complete; it should continue throughout one’s life.

John Dewey took this idea of the educative capacities of political participation and further developed it. Dewey, along with C. Wright Mills, took Mill’s theory of the public sphere and further fleshed out the idea of the public sphere as a crucible for the refinement of ideas. For Dewey, this process occurred under a free play or interaction of ideas, where individuals are constantly engaging the real world and working to solve problems. “Dewey’s central concern is reflective thinking and action, in order to solve problematic situations through inquiry and to

achieve an adaptation between the subject in action and his or her environment” (Bauer 2003, 219).

For Dewey, problem solving was part of the human condition. Dewey saw that the human experience involved making a set of choices and it is ultimately up to the individual to decide what set of choices were best. For Dewey, education provides the individual with the skills necessary to make these decisions, and imparts direction and internal control through the identity of interest and understanding (Dewey 1944, 39-40). As he explains; “The school is primarily a social institution. Education being a social process, the school is simply that form of community life in which all those agencies are concentrated that will be most effective in bringing the child to share in the inherited resources of the race, and to use his own powers for social ends.... education, therefore, is a process of living and not a preparation for future living” (Dewey 2004, 19).

Dewey identified two different approaches to education – the democratic approach and the conservative approach. The conservative view of education builds the mind from the outside (Dewey 1944, 69). It takes a rigorous and systematic approach to education, aiming to impose various sets of rules, principles, and instructions on the students to help them make their decisions. Dewey is highly critical of the conservative model of education, and blames it for causing what he believed to be restrictive social enquiry (Dewey 1927, 208). His reasons follow Millian lines. If individuals never question social values and interests, then these values eventually gain control over individuals and society. While Dewey is not as individualist as Mill was, he nonetheless believes that individuals – even though he conceives them as social beings –

ought to be in control of society rather than tradition and ossified dogmas. Values and interests must be individually constructed within a social setting (Dewey 1944, 76), whether in schools or the public sphere (or deliberative forums today). However, the challenging of these values has pedagogical value. Not only would students learn why these values are important, which is what Mill emphasised, but they would also learn to challenge and reconstruct them so to keep these values fluid and under the student's control. On the other hand, the conservative values control the decisions of students. As Perry explains; "pupils are invited repeatedly to reinterpret their experiences in the light of their transactions with the environment. They are not to understand themselves as spectators but as involved in an exchange with their surroundings in which they offer hypotheses which are to be tested by acting upon the world, but which are treated as fallible" (1999, 32, see also Tiles 1988; Ryan 1995, 128-130).

Dewey believed that education should teach students to treat the public sphere as an arena of perennial social inquiry, and give them the tools to question actively society's values, if for nothing else than to retain control of their own values, norms, and interests. Dewey argues that democratic education, which stresses experiential learning, best equips these students with these skills. In a democratic system of education, the student learns primarily from her own experience. In short, a democratic education involves four steps; 1) the student undertakes her own path in solving whatever problems she might face, and develop her own rules or strategies to solve these problems; 2) the student applies these self-created rules or strategies to solve these problems; 3) the student re-examines his self-developed strategies from the experiences of attempting to solve these problems; and 4) the student alters and develops new strategies in light of her experiences, and tries again.

Put another way, democratic education happens through trial and error. Moreover, the goal of democratic education is to have the student develop intelligence more easily. I use “intelligence” in the strict medical sense of the word, which means the ability to learn from one’s mistakes (Arvey et al. 1994; Neisser et al. 1996). In order for intelligence to develop, the student must make her own mistakes, which means that the student must embark on her own experiences in order to learn. Democratic education is not a straightforward and smooth path. Conservative education takes that kind of path and entails memorisation and habitualisation, but democratic education entails almost dialectical learning, where lessons are learned from experiences and counter-experiences. Students are to learn from not only good experiences but also bad ones, and alter their strategies when it is necessary.

As Bauer describes it (2003, 215), the difference between a democratic education and a conservative one is where under the latter instruction occurs under rigid instruction, the former allows for a dynamic free play of individual experience. “Generally this dynamic can be found where the interactions with the environment lead to a unified and self-sufficient experience (in the sense of ‘having an experience’). This experience is based on a dynamic organisation of its different facets by giving form or expression. (...) Dewey describes the artist’s work like any other genuine process of expression: it puts into motion an experience ‘that one does not know where it is going’”. As Dewey himself puts it; “education must be interactive rather than passive because the elements of the method of inquiry can be internalised only when they are practiced. When they are practiced, they become habitual” (Dewey *Middle Works*, “Thinking in Education”, 9: 12, see also Savage 2002, 100).

Given that democratic education is driven by experiential learning, one might wonder what role a teacher might have in this process. The purpose of the educator is not to indoctrinate the student, but help the student learn on her own. In a democratic system of education, the instructor plays the role of the more experienced learner. The instructor must not rely on “simple formulas or cookie-cutter routines” in order to teach, but rather he should draw from his experiences to both help his students and re-adapt his teaching strategies. Relying on dogmas and formulas will leave the teacher unable to deal with complex or new problems that might arise, and in turn will produce students that are unable to adapt to new situations. This in turn will produce a conservative society where tradition and dogma are never questioned (Savage 2002, 110; Sleeper 1988, 124). The teacher is not there to impart the truth but rather create the conditions by which the student comes to learn the truth through the messy and nonlinear method of dialectical learning¹⁶. Therefore, the relationship between the teacher and the student in democratic education should be similar to that of a master and apprentice. In this kind of pedagogical relationship, the apprentice tries to solve problems and challenges on his own, and the master provides guidance and instruction whenever necessary. The teacher corrects the student whenever the student is having trouble solving a problem that the teacher has already seen before. The teacher instructs his apprentice drawing primarily from experience, and the teacher must be willing to revise his strategies and instructions whenever it is needed¹⁷.

¹⁶ Dewey is not only borrowing from Mill but also from Plato. In the *Gorgias*, Socrates suggests that continued practice of the dialectic would improve one’s capacity to exercise it. Socrates, echoing Dewey and Mill centuries later, submits that true education cannot occur with the teacher simply imparting the answers to the students, but must come about only through what we call today the Socratic method, which involves answering questions and revising one’s answers whenever they are shown to be false. See J. Peter Euben, *Corrupting Youth*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

¹⁷ A good discussion about the appropriate role of an instructor and apprentice in an atmosphere of learning by doing is John Heron, “The Politics of Facilitation: Balancing Facilitator Authority and Learner Autonomy” in John Mulligan and Colin Griffin, ed., *Empowerment Through Experiential Learning: Explorations of Good Practice*.

In some sense, democratic education not only involves experiential learning, but also experimental learning. The student has to experiment with his self-developed strategies in the controlled atmosphere provided by the classroom. In this way, democratic education resembles a laboratory in some ways (Tanner 1997), where students perform experiments that the teachers will know the results beforehand, and are done strictly so that students learn on their own what the results of the experiments will be. At other times, the results of the experiments will be unknown to both teacher and student, and are done to advance the body of knowledge. When previously successful strategies do not work, both student and instructor must be willing to revise past strategies in light of new experiences.

Dewey's theory of democratic education completes Mill's argument for the necessity for citizens to continuously practice their political judgement in the public sphere. Democratic education gives the citizens the chance to develop their skills at an early age, and has them ready to participate in the public sphere effectively when (or if) they wish to participate in politics. If these argumentative, communicative, and deliberative skills are developed at an early age, then a citizen will show more aptitude in political participation. With more developed political skills, citizens will be better able to defend their own interests in the political arena. Moreover, they will be better able to understand when and how interests are compatible with each other, and when they are not. Because of this, they will be better able to know what they want in terms of policy and/or candidates, and learn when and how to compromise when what they want is no longer feasible. By having more developed political skills, citizens can better be able to achieve

what they want, or at the very least, they can have a greater impact in the decision-making process, thus creating more empowered citizens.

Moreover, I argued in earlier chapters that improving the skill of political participants will improve the quality of political participation, and doing so will empower citizens. If citizens feel that they have the adequate skills to make an effective contribution, then they will feel comfortable with contradicting the opinions of others in any given discussion. A political discussion that has more empowered citizens will be better able to meet the principle of the equal advancement and consideration of interests. If empowering citizens and improving the quality of political participation are goals that we should take seriously, then improving the skills of citizens is something that democracies should do. This much should be obvious. From Dewey, however, we get a theory of how individuals learn these skills. They are learned experientially through trial and error. Through Dewey's theory of learning by doing, we get a decentred approach to improving political skills, where the only things that are necessary for the improvement of political skills in a democratic society is the creation of arenas where citizens can improve their skills, and school curriculums that help students develop their skills. As we will see in the sixth chapter, there were school programs, university courses, and adult education programs at the beginning of the 20th century that focused on developing political skills. The exercises used in these textbooks very closely resembled mock deliberative forums. Moreover, there have been several exercises in more recent times in civics classes that focused on political experiential learning. The results of these exercises saw students gain a new appreciation for the democratic process and feel empowered about their ability to influence a political decision.

Political participation must be treated as a craft if a democracy is to empower its citizens and improve the quality of political participation. Whenever citizens participate in political arenas, education and development of political skills must be stressed along with the other purposes of political participation. However, if participants already have well developed political skills before entering into the political arena, then political forums will come closer to realizing the principle of the equal advancement and consideration of interests. This means that stressing the educative elements of various forms of political participation, along with developing of political skills at an early age, is necessary if citizens are to be empowered.

Dewey, like Mill, saw political education as a lifelong process and is inexorably linked with political participation. Democracy, like education, was a way of life that did not find its expression in institutions alone (Dewey 1939, 125). There is a parallel of course between Dewey's understanding of political education and Christiano's theory of democracy allowing the equal advancement and consideration of interests, since Christiano understands that an important part of the democratic process is the constant updating and revising of the interests. However understanding politics as a craft conceives democracy as more than just the learning of the interests, it is also the means by which individuals develop their argumentative and deliberative skills.

Developing Skills Through Political Participation

Defining Political Participation

This section will spell out how political participation functions as a craft, and how political skills are learned experientially through participation. Active political participation is here defined as a genuine attempt to assist advancing the interests of a group or individual. Moreover, an act of active political participation should present the participant the opportunity to learn about the interests and preferences of others, or develop their deliberative and argumentative skills, or both. Political participation, at least according to the arguments presented so far in this work, aims to not only provide opportunities to learn about and advance one's interests, but also develop the skills that allow for a participant to better and more effectively advance interests and learn about them.

At this point, the difference between active and passive forms of political participation will be delineated. Passive forms of political participation only meet the second condition in the definition of political participation listed above, whereas forms of active political participation meets both conditions. The example of a town hall will illustrate my point. In a town hall meeting, as we know, citizens of a town are invited to gather and discuss an important and pressing issue facing the town at the moment. Some town halls will have guest speakers and experts make submissions, or some citizens themselves will make presentations or speeches. Some will disagree and others will agree with what is being said. Moreover, some participants will ask questions of the participants, usually because they want their point of view clarified, or because they want to explore the implications of their arguments. And of course, there will be

others who sit, watch, and listen to the proceedings, and do not say a word throughout the entire town hall meeting.

Everyone attending the town hall is participating, albeit in different ways. The non-speakers participated passively, and while they did not even assist others in advancing their interests, they nonetheless showed up at the meeting. Even though they did not say anything, this is certainly more activity than anyone who is disinterested and disempowered in the political process. Moreover, we could surmise that these non-speakers are empowered, as long as they feel that they can jump in the debate and disagree with what is being said.

There are many reasons why someone at a town hall might remain silent. One might agree with what is being said and does not want to drag out the proceedings by adding to the chorus of consensus. Another reason why a person might not speak is because they want to know more about the topic being discussed. The town hall is not only an arena where people of conflicting interests have it out in a debate, it is also where others learn about these interests and make judgements about them. Judgement, as Mill argued earlier, is a skill that requires development and practice, much like the ability to reason and determine how different interests are in conflict and can be reconciled. In a town hall, citizens are given the opportunity to practice and develop their reflective skills. They are passively participating because they are exercising their internal reflective skills in making political judgements. With more developed reflective skills, these passive participants are developing a better understanding of what they want. Thus when it comes time to register their preferences, they can do so with a clearer sense of their own

expectations and the nature of the disagreement that exists over an issue. Moreover, if and when they decide to actively participate in the future, they can put what they learned into practice and become more effective political participants in subsequent opportunities to participate. Zukin *et al.* explain it well. “Cognitive engagement is necessary – though not sufficient – for effective citizenship. Moreover, participation stimulates cognitive engagement, and in turn, stirs people to further action, whether civic or political” (2006, 54).

Other activities that fall into the category of passive participation are 1) gathering information from newspapers, television, radio, and the Internet, 2) joining and/or paying membership fees for NGOs and political parties, 3) attending political meetings and discussions, and 4) listening to the proceedings. Some might call these forms of participation cheap (Jordan and Maloney 1998), but they play a valuable role in a liberal democracy in two ways. Firstly, passive forms of political participation provide the groundwork for active participation. Without it, active participation is impossible, or at best, highly ineffective. To state the obvious, passive participants are more likely to actively participate than apathetic citizens. As stated earlier, passive participation entails cognitive engagement, which in turn can provide the impetus for future participation as well as spur interest for continued political participation. Secondly, even those citizens who are only slightly engaged in the process are much more likely not to feel resentful against democratic processes and institutions, which in turn would lead to a healthier liberal democracy that promotes meaningful citizen participation.

A Taxonomy of Political Participation

From this definition provided above, we can construct a taxonomy of political participation. This allows us to observe which forms of political participation have increases or decreases of participation, and thus make empirical observations about how citizens as a whole feel about political participation and what it can achieve. Using this taxonomy and applying it to the drops and rises of political participation might give us a more accurate picture of the state of political participation, especially if we were to investigate the reasons why participation in each form is up or down. This allows for a more nuanced picture of political participation to arise, and allows us to make more meaningful observations about the decline or increase of political participation than merely saying it is going up or down. This taxonomy is important for this work because it will make it easier to explain how three different types of political participation function as crafts, instead of trying to explain how hundreds of different forms of participation function as crafts.

Besides using this taxonomy as a type of argumentative shorthand, it is an improvement on the current taxonomies of political participation currently in the literature. The most prevalent taxonomy in the literature is the dichotomy of “traditional” and “non-traditional” forms of political participation. Barnes and Kaase (1979) labels acts of civil disobedience and civic activism, such as participating in demonstrations, signing petitions, and engaging in boycotts as “non-conventional” forms of political participation, in contrast with traditional forms of political participation such as voting, joining a political party, and writing letters to elected representatives. Inglehart and Catterberg (2002) come up with a different terminology, demarcating between elite-directed forms of political participation and elite-challenging forms of

participation (301). Elite-directed forms of political participation, they claim, are bureaucratized and are controlled and dominated by elites, while elite-challenging forms of political participation are individually motivated (Ibid.).

There are a few reasons why the dichotomy between conventional and non-conventional forms of political participation is not useful. Firstly, it is not entirely clear how these scholars use the term “conventional”. They could be using it in a historical sense. That is to say, “conventional” could be understood as meaning that forms of political participation such as voting and writing letters to elected representatives are the more traditional and common forms of political participation, while non-conventional forms have come along later and are less likely to be engaged in by groups and individuals.

However, voting and writing to elected representatives are not conventional in the historical sense. Forms of civic activism and civil disobedience such as protests and strikes have been occurring in the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom for over a century. Some minorities, most notably women, were engaging in forms of civic activism and civil disobedience long before they received the right to vote. In the cases of the suffragette movement and other similar women’s rights movements, the *satyagraha* movement in India, and the civil rights movement in the United States, various groups and individuals have used so-called non-conventional forms of political participation to lobby for the right to participate in conventional forms of participation. In a historical sense, it would be wrong to say that various forms of civic activism and civil disobedience are non-conventional.

Inglehart and Catterberg use the dichotomy of elite-controlled forms of political participation and elite-challenging forms of political participation. This dichotomy is more plausible than Barnes and Kaase's dichotomy. However, conventional forms of political participation are not necessarily elite controlled. Elites do not generally control the voting process, and voting also can be used to challenge elites just as much as civic activism can. All forms of political participation, including ones that Inglehart and Catterberg call elite-controlled, can be a means to express discontent with the status quo. For example, constituents will not write their elected representatives to express their satisfaction. Rather they will write to express some form of discontent. The same can also be said for voting. While there are voters who vote to keep the incumbents in office, it is also true that several voters use the vote as a form of protest against the incumbents.

Both elite-controlled and elite-challenging forms of political participation can often be used to achieve similar goals. Voters will vote either as a form of protest and use their vote against the status quo, or at times will vote to support it because they do not prefer the alternatives. While it is often the case that forms of civic activism are used to challenge the status quo, they can also be used to maintain it. Various abortion rights groups in the United States are good examples of this. Neither Inglehart and Catterberg's or Barnes and Kaase's distinctions are useful because any given type of political participation can have different aims, and that the same type of political participation can be used to challenge elite control as well as reinforce it. Because of this, the conclusion that Inglehart and Catterberg make about the purpose of political participation shifting to challenging elites from reinforcing elite consensus is on shaky ground.

Simply because there is more civic activism than ever does not necessarily mean liberal democratic institutions are being challenged. This cannot be the case, since one of the hallmarks of a liberal democracy is the institutionalisation of the right to dissent. Moreover, as has been spelled out so far in this thesis, political participants with well-developed skills can apply these skills to critiquing imbalances of former power, internal exclusions and the dominance of a hegemonic discourse. Developing this kind of critique may at times mean critiquing democratic institutions for moving away from the principle of the equal advancement and consideration of interests by allowing informal imbalances of power to continue. In this case, the demand would be to bring democratic institutions closer to this ideal instead of seeing them replaced altogether. This is a poor argument and it stems from this faulty dichotomy between traditional and non-traditional forms of political participation. It would be more useful to look at the different aims that the forms of political participation embark upon, and categorise them that way.

The taxonomy provided here focuses instead on the aims of political participation. I have already distinguished between passive forms of political participation and active forms. Passive forms include gathering information from various sources such as newspapers, radio, television, and the Internet. They also include attending political meetings and discussions and listening to the proceedings, and being a member of an NGO or political party. As explained earlier, these activities should count as acts of political participation. However, these are different from active forms of political participation, which not only provide the opportunity to learn about the interests and preferences of others, but involve at least directly assisting in advancing an interest in the public sphere.

Situating the Aims-Based Approach within the Literature on Political Participation

The literature on political participation differs on how to treat the very concept of participation. Some like Arnstein (1969) and Rowe and Frewer (2005) take a narrower definition of the term. Arnstein bases his ladder of forms of political participation on the statement that “citizen participation is citizen power” (1969, 216). That is to say, if a participant does not have the power to affect the final outcome of a decision-making process, then she is not engaging in what Arnstein calls genuine participation. Instances of what he calls manipulation, where participants are given a nominal voice but are in essence there to rubber stamp a decision made by elites, or therapy, where participants are made to engage in a process where they are co-opted in the elite discourse and essentially are made to accept it as their own.

Arnstein is incorrect to say that the lower rungs of his ladder of political participation are not genuine participation. They do offer a chance for participants to practice their political skills, and thus develop, and attempt to advance their interests. Moreover, citizens’ political skills – as Arnstein himself recognizes – were developed to the point that they were able to expose and subvert the pseudo-forum for the sham for what it is. “One hopeful note is that, having been so grossly affronted, some citizens have learned the Mickey Mouse game, and now they too know how to play. As a result of this knowledge, they are demanding genuine levels of participation to assure them that public programs are relevant to their needs and responsive to their priorities” (1969, 218). The manipulators paid a price for their chicanery, and this is a good example of what was discussed in Chapter 2, how political skills can be used to identify, critique, and challenge internal exclusions, hegemonic discourse, as well as formal and informal balances of

power. However, it required participating in the sham process to begin to expose it, and thus had some value.

However, Arnstein does embrace an aims-based model of participation in his ladder (1969, Figure 2, 217). Each rung of his ladder has participation serving a purpose, whether it is to manipulate the public or to give the public direct control over their affairs. She does not make a distinction - as Inglehart, Catterberg, Barnes, and Kaase do – between conventional/non-conventional forms of participation or elite-challenging/elite-controlled forms. Rather, Arnstein distinguishes between the forms of political participation based on their aims, even though he looks at them from their design by elites and not the goals that citizens wish to achieve.

Rowe and Frewer eschew the term “political participation” for “public engagement” and place political participation as one of three subsets of public engagement (2005, Figure 1, 255). Public participation in their understanding constitutes interaction between members of the public and elected representatives. As they explain; “Rather than simple, raw opinions being conveyed to the sponsors, the act of dialogue and negotiation serves to transform opinions in the members of both parties (sponsors and public participants)” (2005, 255-256). Types of political participation are deliberative polls, town hall meetings, task forces, citizen juries, and citizen action workshops (2005, 281-282). The other two subsets described by Rowe and Frewer are “public communication” where elected representatives talk to citizens, and “public consultation”, where public representatives listen to citizens. Examples of public communication are public broadcasts, public hearings, and telephone hot lines. Rowe and Fowler cite opinion polls,

referendums, focus groups, study circles, and citizen-base group panels (2005, 278-281). However, Rowe and Fowler's definition is very narrow – so narrow that voting is not mentioned, nor are any forms of political activism. Public engagement is defined here as interaction (not using the term as Rowe and Fowler do) between elected representatives, or those in power and citizens. Because of this, several deliberative citizen's forums that are empowered to create policy (like the ones mention in Fung and Olin Wright's work) are not included. It seems counter intuitive to exclude these types of political participation, especially given how these types of political participation can be effective in not only advancing interests but also help individuals develop their skills by doing them.

Although earlier I criticized previous taxonomies of political participation, Inglehart and Catterberg along with Barnes and Kaase correctly attempt to integrate forms of civic activism as vital forms of political participation. Interaction with the state is not a necessity for an activity to be considered a type of active political participation. Often citizen-to-citizen interaction, such as community action groups, will have not have any elected representatives or government officials present, but should be considered forms of political participation because they provide participants the opportunity to better understanding their interests through deliberation, with a mind to later present them for consideration to citizens outside of the organization. Civic activism is a form of political participation (Norris 2002, 4) that attempts to advance an interest to elected officials and the public at large for consideration. Although this chapter has argued that civic activism can be conventional in a historical sense (*contra* Barnes and Kaase) and can support elite action (*contra* Inglehart and Catterberg), it should be nonetheless considered a form of political participation.

Therefore a taxonomy of political participation ought to take on a wider definition of political participation in the same way that the taxonomies above that were critiqued do, but to come up with more useful divisions than what has been previously proposed. Although they talk about political participation as public expression (which differs slightly from the definition presented here), Zukin *et al.* explain nicely the overlap between the civic activism and other forms of “traditional” political participation. “*Public voice*, the ways citizens give expression to their views on public issues. Included here are activities such as signing petitions, engaging in email campaigns, the starting of contributing to political blogs, or writing letters to the editor. Contacting public officials – a quintessential political act in Verba and Nie’s schema – is usually done for the purpose of affecting government’s behaviour and may be the most direct type of expression of all. These activities tend to ‘go together’ conceptually and empirically – that is, people who express their votes in one way (e.g., signing petitions) are likely to do so in other ways as well (e.g., contacting the media). Notably, the expression of public voice is characteristic of both political and civic activists” (Zukin *et al.* 2006, 54).

However, the problem with the taxonomies provided above primarily is that they drew a line between civic activism, or civic activities, and decidedly “political” activities such as voting and talking to an elected official. Although Zukin *et al.* base their arguments on Barnes and Kaase’s taxonomy, they argue that there is a strong political element to civic activities (differing from what they call political activities). As they found in their surveys, 49% of those who engaged in volunteer activities thought that they were solving a social or political problem, and 68% of those who participated in community problem solving activities felt the same (Zukin *et al.* 2006, 196).

Even though there are a large number of respondents in their surveys that do not see a political connection in their civic activities, these numbers do show a strong overlap between activities that directly engage the state and those that do not, at least in the goal that these activities are trying to accomplish. As Zukin *et al.* explain; “a substantial portion of what we have labeled ‘civic’ involvement is explicitly or implicitly viewed by those who do it as politically relevant, either substituting for or supplementing something that government should be doing as well” (2006, 197). Moreover, they found that many civically engaged respondents engaged in both types of activities (Zukin *et al.* 2006, Figure 7-4, 198). These findings lead Zukin *et al.* to conclude that their line between civic and political engagement is porous and fuzzy (199).

Thus the taxonomy provided in the next section will take on a wide definition of participation but will not make a distinction between political activities that engage the state directly and those that do not. Instead, the taxonomy will make distinctions between the different goals that political participants might have, following Arnstein. However, Arnstein is not the only person who has placed aims and goals as the main focus of political participation. Krampen (1991, 21) shows through empirical tests that political activists’ participation is better explained to action-specific factors (such as a desire to express discontent or to make political change) or changes in the political landscape, such as a change in government, than factors such as psychological or mental disposition towards participation. However, psychological disposition – Krampen mentions lack of information and feeling of political inadequacy – can be a factor for why people do not participate (1991, 26). In other words, these findings show that citizens will participate to achieve certain goals – a statement made at the beginning of this chapter. Moreover, these findings are also consistent with literature that states that political participation is shifting away

from a duty-based citizenship to an engaged citizenship (see Dalton 2008). Thus the taxonomy that will be presented will make differentiations between the aims of political participation, not make distinctions between forms of political participation that engage the state and those that do not, because just about every form of citizen action attempts to solve a social and/or political problem, as Zukin *et al.* acknowledge. That being said, because these forms of participation do attempt to advance an interest in the public sphere, they ought to be considered political participation. Because of this, the taxonomy below incorporates a wide definition of participation.

Supportive Forms of Political Participation

The taxonomy provided here sets out three different types of active political participation; 1) expressive forms, 2) policy forms, and 3) supportive forms. Expressive forms of political participation deal with engaging the public to publicise interests and/or convince others of one's interests. Policy forms of political participation entail engaging with elected representatives and public officials in order for one's interests to be reflected in policy and/or law. This taxonomy will treat expressive forms and policy forms as two ends of a continuum, since it is possible (as well as it being historically verifiable) that some types of political participation contain both expressive and policy components to it. Moreover, political campaigns will use both forms of participation in order to be successful. Although there is an overlap between the two, we can identify purely expressive or purely policy forms of political participation. On the other hand, civic participation just about always involves tackling a social or political problem, which Zukin *et al.* readily acknowledge. Therefore more of a differentiation can be made between policy and expressive forms of political participation.

Let us first look at the supportive forms of political participation. Types of supportive forms of political participation are volunteer work for a political party or NGO, canvassing, answering phones, agreeing to have campaign signs placed on one's lawn, photocopying and distributing flyers, and other administrative work that is necessary in a political campaign. Other kinds of supportive participants include website designers, brochure and pamphlet designers, and creators of print, radio, and television advertising. This type of political participation is becoming increasingly important as political organisations have become more complex and need to reach large segments of the population. While there are some participants who are directly involved in the public debate, other participants are needed to provide support for the advancement of any given interest and play a necessary administrative or organisational role for the cause.

This is the case even though these tasks may often seem to be mundane and are similar to other administrative functions performed for other groups, such as answering phones, taking messages, typing letters, etc., as well as performing some IT jobs such as designing web pages. However only the administrative work that directly assists in advancing interests should be considered as political participation. For example, while a secretary working for an MP who types a letter to be sent out to the constituents is participating, the IT person who troubleshoots the candidate's PC is not. This clerical and administrative work, along with other activities such as putting up a campaign sign on one's lawn, and distributing flyers should be seen as supportive forms of political participation.

The creative communications team of a political campaign, such as website designers, and the creators of print, radio, and television ads are here listed as supportive political participants. It

might seem strange that these people are put together with the people that perform administrative work in a political campaign. After all, their work receives a lot more publicity than the people who hand out flyers and take phone calls. However, these political participants are not formulating the arguments that are used to convince the public of a group's interests. They are only determining exactly how these arguments are phrased and put forward. The candidate, party leader, etc., determine *what* is being put forward. The creative communications team determine *how* it is put forward. This work is very important for a political campaign, but the people involved in this aspect of a political campaign are not playing the same role as those engaged in expressive and policy forms of political participation, as we will see.

Even though it might not seem so on the surface, these supportive activities count as active forms of political participation as I have defined them. Firstly, these activities are necessary if an organisation or a political party is going to inform large segments of the population and convince them of their interests. In that sense, these activities assist in advancing interests in the public sphere, and meet the first condition of active political participation. What is left to consider is the educative capacity in supportive forms of political participation. This issue will be considered in the next section, along with explaining how all types of political participation function as crafts. Explaining how they function as crafts involves explaining how participants develop their skills through experiential learning. Establishing this, along with establishing that there is a skill set involved in these political activities, will show that supportive forms of political participation possesses opportunities for participants to develop their political skills, even though there is no question that expressive and policy forms of political participation offer more intensive and rigorous experiential learning.

Expressive and Policy Forms of Political Participation

The other two forms of political participation – expressive forms and policy forms – ought to be thought of as two ends of a continuum. Before explaining how this is the case, let us define both terms. The purpose of expressive forms of political participation is twofold. Firstly, someone might use expressive forms to simply express her views in the public sphere. To put it colloquially, expressive forms allows one to “blow off steam” on an issue or “get things off one’s chest”. Secondly, one might also use expressive forms to engage in dialogue and/or debate with others to convince them of their views. On the other hand, policy forms of political participation aim to go beyond discussion and debate and aspires to affect public policy, legislation, or change the government itself.

There is an overlap between the two forms of political participation, and often a form of political participation will have both expressive and policy elements to them in equal measure. Deliberative forums fit into this category. Good examples of these are Citizens’ Assemblies in Canada. (Warren 2001). Participants in the Ontario and British Columbia Citizens’ Assemblies deliberated on and developed an alternative electoral system to the first past the post system, which was then put to a province-wide referendum. Town halls in the United States are another example, where participants deliberate on the pros and cons of an issue and then vote on a resolution on the issue at the end. Unlike Citizen’s Assemblies, the result of a town hall is a policy that all participants agree to follow. In this case, the output of a deliberative forum is public policy or law. Moreover, if we return to Fung and Olin Wright’s examples of deliberative forums, we find citizens’ forums that have been tasked by government officials to develop their

own policies and strategies more or less independently from the government. The Chicago Alternative Policing Strategy cited in Fung and Olin Wright's work is a good example of this.

Social movements, at least as Tilly defines them (2004) use both expressive and policy forms of political participation in equal measure. As he explains, a social movement is a complex measure that combines three elements; "1) campaigns of collective claims on target authorities; 2) an array of claim-making performances including special-purpose associations, public meetings, media statements, and demonstrations; 3) public representations of the cause's worthiness, unity, numbers, and commitment" (7). Public displays of worthiness, unity, numbers, and commitment (or WUNC as Tilly abbreviates it) are expressive forms of political participation in the sense that they ask or demand public recognition of the group's interests, or identity in some cases, and confront public understanding of the group's identity, their standing in relation to other groups, as well as opposition (or perhaps even support) to certain actions done by elected officials in the hopes of at least convincing larger segments of the public of their views (Tilly 2004, 12).

Yet at the same time, along with engaging the public with their actions, social movements also wish to engage the government as well. This is the case where social movements are campaigns that are sustained, organized public effort making collective claims on targeted political authorities, and that governments always figure in the claim that social movements often make (Ibid., 3). This is how social movements' campaigns entail a policy dimension as well, because their actions intend to have an effect – either direct or indirect – on public policy and/or legislation. Such types of political participation ought to be placed in the centre of the continuum.

Slightly to the left and right of centre of this continuum would be forms of political participation that are primarily one form of participation but indirectly entail elements of the other form in it as well. For example, a policy form of participation that has some expressive element to it, and vice versa, would fall into this category. Gathering and submitting petitions is an example of this. On its own, the gathering of signatures and presenting them to a government official ought to be seen as a policy form of participation. The petition is meant to convince the government to reconsider one of its actions. However, part of getting the signatures is engaging with others in a conversation to convince them to sign the petition. This entails convincing others that the government's position is wrong and that they ought to consider revising it. This is an example of an expressive element that is necessary for this particular policy form of participation to have success (that is, have a decent number of signatures).

Likewise, there are many expressive forms of participation that ultimately aspire to having an effect on policy or seek some political change (McAdam, Tarrow, Tilly 2001), even though the effect might be very indirect and that effect may come about much later. The indirectness of the effect and the longer it takes for policy to be affected are both factors that would push an expressive form of participation further away from the centre of the continuum. As Dryzek (2000) explains, expressive forms have an indirect but a valuable effect on policy by altering the political discourse and thus changing public policy. "The communicative power that the public sphere can exert over the state is diffuse and pervasive, felt in the way terms are defined and issues are framed, not in the direct leverage of one actor over another. The relative weight of competing discourses in civil society can have major implications for the content of public

society” (2000, 101). Moreover, deliberative forums that are constituted outside of the state (and sometimes created to criticize its actions) can present policy alternatives that are eventually taken and instituted as public policy (Dryzek 2000, 102; see also Berger 1985 and Fischer 1993).

This is slightly different from other deliberative forums, since most forums do not have this kind of effect on law or policy. Nonetheless, there are policy forms of participation that only aim to influence the government. These forms of participation include mostly voting in an election or a referendum. In these forms of participation, there is no discussion and examination of preferences and interests. Instead, voting involves a strict revealing of preferences in order to determine which option is held by the majority. However, the implications of voting are always the same – the majority view will end up determining which candidate will become an elected representative, which policy option will become law, etc.

If there is such an overlap between expressive and policy forms of participation, then this begs the question of why this distinction should be made in the first place. After all, Zukin *et al.* make a distinction between political and civic participation in their work and then later admit that the line between the two is blurry, leaving one to wonder whether this distinction has any value. However, this distinction is worth making because we can identify forms of political participation that are purely expressive and purely policy forms. In terms of uniquely policy forms of participation, we have the example of voting and participating in Royal Commissions or in Senate hearings (representatives from various NGOs and various other social movements participate in these, along with elected representatives). Types of political participation such as these are not intended to engage the public but rather exist primarily to alter or maintain public policy and/or legislation. These forms of political participation directly influence policy and

legislation, and in the case of voting, they have an influence in changing the government itself. While it may be true that policy forms can have some effect on public opinion in an indirect way. For example, the contents of the reports of the Canadian Royal Commission on Aboriginal Affairs and the Status of Women did play a role in shaping public opinion in Canada, but the purpose of the reports was not to shape public opinion necessarily, and the effect on public opinion was not felt until some years had passed.

The same applies for purely expressive forms. Newer forms of expressive political participation are the use of blogs and internet chatrooms, which has proliferated rapidly over recent years. Even though there are hardly any instances that blogs or chatrooms will make a significant effect on policy development or politics in general¹⁸, they allow citizens to express their views easily and at a low cost. Through participation in the blogging community, citizens can put forward their views for the consideration of others, and in some sense, the blogging community can function like a mini-public, in the same way newspapers once did (Habermas 1989; see also Brookfield 2005). While their opinions and arguments might have an indirect effect on public policy as time goes on, it would seem counter-intuitive to argue that these forms of political participation intend to immediately shape public policy. At the roots of it, a political blogger writes to put his or her views in the public sphere for consideration and debate. These opinions may not even be intended to become the basis of public policy – certainly political bloggers are not so naïve enough to think that their blog will necessarily change politicians' minds – but

¹⁸ There are of course exceptions to this. The most famous example of internet commentary and journalism having an effect on politics was when the then-mail news alert group *The Drudge Report*, broke the Monica Lewinsky scandal, despite the fact that *Newsweek* had decided a week earlier not to run the story. The incident is fully described in Warren Kinsella, *The War Room*, p. 253-255.

expressing these opinions at least registers dissent and hopes to create public discussion about the issue.

As Dryzek notes, actions of social movements can over time create changes in both the political culture affecting power relations and in the political rhetoric, and thus create political change (see also Tesh 1993). As he explains;

“A final and somewhat different way in which power can be exercised through civil society is in terms of cultural change affecting power relations. Think, for example, of the extent to which feminism has changed power relationships both within the family and outside (and not just as a consequence of changes in family law). So even if civil society actions leave public policy untouched, they can have real social effects” (2000, 102-103).

The last sentence in the quote is particularly telling and illustrates well how forms of political participation can be purely expressive, and not have a policy dimension to it. The purpose of such an expressive form is to advance a group’s interests in the public sphere with the hope of having an effect on public discourse. Thus purely expressive forms, just like policy forms, of political participation exist, and therefore a distinction between the two can be made.

This taxonomy is an improvement over the traditional/non-traditional participation dichotomy since it separates various forms of political participation along the lines of aims. This categorisation does not distinguish between forms of participation that fall within the purview of the state and others that do not, but instead looks at what each form of political participation aims to achieve.

Because political participation is multi-faceted, it also allows different individuals with different skill sets to be involved in the advancing of any given interest. However the common thread

running through all of these forms is that the participants involved are engaged in the political process and are advancing interests in the public sphere. They might be doing so in markedly different ways, but nonetheless there is a commitment to a process that debates and shares interests, and with a further aim to have their interests become law. Political participation has an educative dimension that develops communicative and deliberative skills. This means explaining how these forms of political participation are crafts, where an individual learns the practice as a craft that entails primarily but not exclusively, experiential learning. In essence, politics is primarily learned by practice until one feels that their actions in the public sphere have some influence on the debate at hand.

The Three Forms of Political Participation As Crafts

The previous section outlined a taxonomy of different forms of political participation and outlined three different forms of active political participation, viz., supportive forms, expressive forms, and policy forms of political participation. As stated earlier, to be considered a form of political participation, an activity must both allow individuals and/or groups to at least assist in advancing interests in the public sphere and develop their skills. In this section I will examine how experiential learning occurs in these three forms of active political participation. Because the skills needed in order to succeed in these activities are learned through experience, these forms of political participation should be considered crafts as defined above. This experiential learning occurs along two dimensions, the reasonable/cognitive dimension and the public dimension.

The reasonable/cognitive dimension involves the individual thinking about his preferences and re-evaluating them in light of new information and arguments. Generally, the skills developed in this dimension are internal and reflective skills. In different areas of political participation, especially in deliberative forums, new information, arguments, and reasons will come about. New information, arguments, and reasons are key in forming an individual's opinion on a given issue, as an individual is forced to rethink her opinions when she receives new and critical information (Converse 1965).

However, the skills developed in the reasonable/cognitive dimension do not only entail the ability to revise one's preferences when the understanding of one's interests change. They also include the ability to recognize different styles of argument and persuasion and judge whether these styles are effective in making the case for any given viewpoint. This dimension of learning also involves practicing judgment. A participant will hear different arguments for different viewpoints, and they have to judge whether they are convincing enough to earn their support. Time and experience might cause the participant to realise that he made an error in judgment. Since individuals will try to avoid making errors in judgment, the participant in the future will be more careful when listening to the arguments in a debate and will try to be a little more prudential next time¹⁹. There are other reasonable/cognitive skills learned in political participation as well. In being confronted with new information and arguments, the individual learns how to distinguish between relevant and irrelevant information, and reconsiders his own

¹⁹ The notion that judgment can be developed through practice can be traced to Hannah Arendt in the incomplete *The Life of The Mind*. Even though her understanding of judgment has been pieced together from earlier parts of the work, and she is primarily focused on moral judgment, Arendt implies that an individual learns judgment not from being taught in a classroom, but in everyday dealings with the outside world. See Stacy Smith, "Education for Judgment: An Arendtian Oxymoron?", in Mordechai Gordon, *Hannah Arendt and Education: Renewing Our Common World*, p. 75-90.

opinions in light of others. This is an activity, and to learn these skills is something that a person generally learns on one's own. This happens not only in receiving information but also in disseminating it as well. This learning usually happens when the individual or group fails to convince others of their interests. This failure makes individuals rethink the content of their interests, their supportive reasons, as well as the quality and veracity of their information.

The public dimension represents the other side of the coin vis-à-vis the reasonable/cognitive dimension. While the reasonable/cognitive dimension involves internal and reflective skills, the public dimension captures all the skills used to engage the public. These skills involve debate, discussion, and the presenting of arguments to others in the hope of convincing them of one's views. Not only does presenting these arguments involve skills in speech, rhetoric, and basic presentation skills, but they also involve writing effectively for an audience, and also designing public relations material that can effectively capture public attention. Learning in the public dimension is also experiential, where individuals have to reconsider the method of advancement in the public sphere. Learning here involves attempting methods, styles, and strategies to advance interests in the public sphere, observing their effectiveness, and then evaluating them and trying again.

There are various methods and styles that a group or individual can use to advance their interests in the public sphere, and some of them will be effective and others will not be. A political participant faces a learning curve in learning different styles, approaches, and strategies. In order to learn which strategies and methods are effective or not, a participant must try these styles in the public sphere and evaluate them in terms of their success or failure. After that, they try again

in light of what they learned from past experiences. In experiential learning, there is a prudential knowledge that one must acquire in order to know what method works in a given situation.

The argument here is not that these political activities are skills. All activities are skills – there is no question about that. With any activity that a person does, one practices it until one is adept at it. How skills differ from each other is how much time and effort is required to learn how to do them reasonably well. Moreover, it is possible that one person can perform any given activity better than someone else can. These are defining aspects of a skill. The argument made here is that these skills are experientially learned crafts. Either individuals develop their skills through direct instruction from a teacher, or a person develops them through their own experimentation and learning from their experiences. I believe that the latter is the most effective and accurate way of describing how individuals develop their political skills. In short, there is no “textbook” way of learning how to be an effective political participant. The individual or group must figure it out on her own, but can also occur under the guidance of more experienced political participants.

Now I will explain how various supportive forms of political participation are crafts. Generally speaking, supportive political participation falls within the purview of adversarial forms of democracy, such as elections and referendums. The range of experiential learning in supportive forms is narrower than it is with the expressive and policy forms of political participation. This is because often one who participates in supporting forms is usually receiving instruction from others, as in the case of administrative and clerical work, or are assisting and observing others engaging in debate. Nonetheless, there are other forms of supportive political participation –

such as the design of a media campaign – where there is far less instruction and a lot of creativity is demanded. However, the opportunities for error are much greater in these types of supportive political participation and can have disastrous effects for political campaigns, as we will see later.

As in other forms of political participation, an individual is distributing information when doing administrative and clerical work, and there are different methods and styles of writing letters and designing pamphlets and brochures that are better able to capture the attention of undecided citizens. Moreover, as anyone who has worked in the political communications team of a political campaign can attest to, the media campaign is just as much about getting the opposing side to go “off-message”, or to defend themselves about their perceived weaknesses instead of their strengths as it is aimed to convince undecided citizens.

Some supportive forms of political participation require a degree of skill that is developed through trial and error. Some of these include writing effective letters, designing clear pamphlets and websites, or coming up with successful political media campaigns. As we know, there is a whole industry devoted to political marketing that has only recently come under scrutiny by political scientists (Lees-Marshment 2001a, 2001b). Moreover, there is a great learning curve in this field, as even experts in this industry are constantly making mistakes that prove costly for their political campaigns. For every Daisy commercial in the Lyndon Johnson presidential campaign in 1964 there is a commercial from the Canadian Progressive Conservatives making fun of Jean Chretien’s facial paralysis in 1993, and both advertisements came from so-called “campaign experts”. In this field, there is a substantial amount of experiential learning through

trial and error. Expertise in this field does not amount to a closer approximation to an absolute correct way of engaging in supportive forms of political participation. Instead, there is a bounded area where a diverse range of styles and methods lead to successful media campaigns

The experiential learning that occurs in policy and expressive forms of political participation is much more intense and rigorous than it is with supportive forms. This is because expressive and policy participants are directly involved in advancing interests in the public sphere, whereas supportive participants are only assisting in their advancement. Expressive and policy participants are on the front lines in the public sphere, working to convince undecided citizens and engaging in debate with others who disagree. With expressive forms of political participation such as writing letters to the editor or blogging, political participants create the arguments for or against an interest and debate them with others in the public sphere. The same is true for policy participants that are engaging with policy makers and elected representatives in order to change law and/or policy.

In both forms of political participation, these participants are speaking, working to create awareness, and engaging in debate in the public sphere. In terms of experiential learning along the rational/cognitive dimension, expressive and policy forms of political participation provide the arenas where individuals and groups are confronted with new information and new arguments that bolster or challenge their viewpoints. If this information challenges their arguments, then participants must deal with and answer to this new information, re-think their arguments, and perhaps alter them in order to take this new information into consideration. When confronted with opposing sides, policy and expressive participants must be able to come up with

the relevant arguments or information to counter the argument of opposing sides. And when it looks like their preferred option will not win, policy and expressive participants must know the rules of the decision-making procedure in order to effectively use strategic manipulation. To sum up, all of these actions require decision-making skills, and skills in strategy and reasoning in order to be successful.

This is what learning along the rational/cognitive dimension entails. These skills are learned experientially, since there are various ways that one can successfully argue for or against a viewpoint. Ultimately, the successful policy or expressive participant has to develop their own style and method of crafting arguments that is going to be successful. This learning occurs much more intensely than it would for supportive or passive participants, since expressive and policy participants are involved directly in the day-to-day advancement of these interests in the public sphere.

Learning along the public dimension in the expressive and policy forms of political participation, as it is in the cognitive/rational dimension, is more intense than with the supportive forms. However, the dynamic of experiential learning along the public dimension is similar to what is described above. As with the rational/cognitive dimension, the learning curve and pressure to be effective is much greater on these participants. If an interest has ineffective expressive or policy advocates – ones who are ineffective communicators – then the interest will not gain any public support. These expressive and policy arenas (and we can include the mass media as well, which would include the political communications team that engage in supportive work) are where participants put their deliberative and communicative skills to their test. They must come up with

the right arguments, provide the relevant information, and phrase their arguments in the right way if they are going to convince others of their views. If expressive and policy participants fail, then their views will not be accepted by the public. Because of these reasons, the pressure is much greater on these participants to perform well, and this creates an environment that encourages faster and more intense learning. The expressive and policy arenas are where the more skilled political participants come to practice their craft. If a novice participant is observing and working alongside a group of very skilled participants practicing their craft, it is more likely that she will learn more than another novice who is working with a group of less skilled participants.

Conclusion

This chapter elaborated the idea of politics as a craft. Stating that these activities are skills is stating the obvious, but with the previous section I have tried to establish that the skills involved in the practice of these forms of political participation are learned experientially. This is how politics is a craft. Political skills, including deliberative and communicative skills, are learned through trial and error, experimenting with different styles and methods, trying again in light of previous experiences, and aiming to come up with a unique way of advancing interests in the public sphere that might be effective. Dewey argued that experiential learning continues throughout one's life. Individuals are facing new problems and new realities, which means that the solutions of the past may not work as well in the future. The same is true in the political world as its landscape can change in the blink of an eye. As such, both life-long political participants and novices have to constantly re-examine their political skill and alter how they use them when necessary.

This chapter defined active political participation as a genuine attempt to help advance an interest in the public sphere. Active forms differ from passive forms of political participation, which involve mostly information gathering and reflective consideration of interests and preferences. While they are different, both types of actions are defined here as types of political participation, since these actions make up a constitutive part of the principle of equal consideration of interests. From there, I provided a taxonomy of different types of active political participation. Three different forms of political participation are defined; 1) expressive forms of participation; 2) policy forms; and 3) supportive forms.

Despite this difference between passive and active political participation, they both allow participants to develop their political skills through experiential learning, and because of this, all political activities should be considered as crafts. Understanding political activities as crafts can help reduce the inequality of skill that exists between citizens, which can 1) reduce political mortification and empower citizens, and 2) improve the quality of political participation. This must accompany other proposed democratic reforms, such as the institutionalisation of deliberation, which empowers citizens by allowing them to learn about their own interests as well as the interests of others. This improves the quality of political participation because through the deliberative process, participants can better understand what they want and expect from the democratic process, both in terms of elected representatives and policy.

Earlier in the work, I argued that unempowerment threatens the principle of equal advancement and consideration of interests. Given that citizens these days more or less have equal political

resources, at least in terms of political rights, the lack of political power in modern democracies can be attributed to an inequality of skill. Conceiving political participation as a craft works to remedy this problem, and thus helps modern democracies come closer to meeting the principle of equal advancement and consideration of interests. Politics as a craft also allow us to step away from any top-down approach in developing the political skills of the citizenry, by offering educators the creative space in which to allow students of political activity to learn their own political strategies and techniques within a framework of previously tried and acceptable strategies.

Politics as a craft helps complete the picture for a democracy that wishes to fulfill the principle of equal advancement and consideration of interests. This principle demands that democracies strike a balance between adversarial and deliberative democracy, and that citizens be sufficiently empowered. Politics as a craft works to remedy the inequality of skills that can cause political mortification in an open and democratic way. There are two issues left to consider. Firstly, how does politics as a craft alter democratic culture? In order to answer this, a theory of citizenship that is consistent with politics as a craft has to be elaborated. The next chapter will provide this. Secondly, how can individuals develop their political skills through experiential learning? I suggest above that more political participation can develop political skills, but at this point, the argument is circular. A lack of skill among citizens negatively affects the quality of political participation, and causes people to feel unempowered and not participate. Saying simply that these people should participate more in order to develop their skills is not good enough. The final chapter will look at how individuals can learn these skills in primary and secondary school (adult education will also be looked at), through a program of experiential learning. A school

curriculum that allows students to develop their political skills through experiential learning will create citizens that feel that they have the adequate skills to make an effective contribution in the political arena. Moreover, it creates another avenue other than political participation that allows for the experiential learning of political craft.

CHAPTER 5: EMPOWERED CITIZENS IN THE PUBLIC SPHERE

Politics as a craft shows how citizens can learn and develop their political skills freely and openly. Citizens with well developed political, communicative, and deliberative skills will be more empowered than citizens with less developed skills. Also, a more skilled and empowered citizenry will improve the quality of political participation. This will happen because more interests will be heard, thus giving citizens the opportunity to learn more about their own interests and the interests of others through discussion and deliberation. Also, citizens will understand better what they want from the political process and vote or act with this better understanding in mind. Citizens might get the results they want insofar that they more closely correspond with a more refined understanding of their interests. In some sense, politics as a craft completes Christiano's theory of democracy. The principle of equal advancement and consideration of interests, as Christiano elaborates it, gives us a framework of democratic rights, and a solid justification for the institutionalisation of deliberative democracy. However, politics as a craft, especially with its requirement of a curriculum of political experiential learning in schools, completes his theory since it improves the political skills of all citizens in an open and democratic way and on a mass scale. This will empower citizens and prevent political mortification, which is caused by an inequality of skill.

This chapter will look at the impact that politics as a craft will make on democratizing the public sphere and examine some further questions that come out from implementing politics as a craft. Firstly, the question of measuring the successful learning of political skills will be examined. This chapter will argue that the presence of a democratic public sphere with empowered citizens, as Dewey understood it, should serve as the goal of politics as a craft. This means working to improve the quality of political participation. Part of this is seeing if more people are

participating, but it is not only that. Participants in the public sphere should not only be working to solve problems, ensure that interests are equally advanced and considered, and ensure that the public sphere does not become polluted with things that could disempower its participants. This means using one's skills, as was posited in Chapter 2, to identify any instances of informal power imbalances and critique them and overcome them.

Secondly, this chapter will look at whether politics as a craft and the resulting product of a democratic sphere completely advance political equality. Even though we ought to see dramatic improvements to status quo in terms of political equality, the goals that Dewey lays out, set very high standards in terms of equality, and it is possible that unequal results can come out of a process that considered interests equally. Christiano in later works argues that social and political institutions require a publicity condition for justice, specifically that citizens need to see justice being done as a product of its decision-making process. Part of making that commitment to justice would be to require that all political decisions that produce inequalities be publically justified. Doing so can serve a pedagogical value as well for the future decision-makers. Publically justified inequalities can help identify the cause, the nature, or the locus of what causes the inequality, and this can help frame the future discussions, and it causes decision-makers to acknowledge and protect each individual's capacity for forging and creating their conception of the good, which is a necessary requirement for an individual to consider and advance interests in the public sphere.

Thirdly, this chapter will outline some success stories where the development of experiential skills did create more empowered participants, successfully developed skills, and in some

examples gave students a strong enough sense of social justice to motivate them to participate in the political arena in the future. Ideally, politics as a craft can teach political skills and impart democratic values to students in a free, open, and democratic way and on a mass scale. If politics as a craft is successful, a new generation of students will arise who are more politically skilled and more willing to participate. Experiential learning can both develop skills and empower students, and thus create skilled citizens who are motivated to participate in the democratic process.

With regards to the standards that we should expect from citizens, a theory of citizenship that is compatible with politics as a craft will follow Helena Catt's standard of empowerment provided above. To reiterate, Catt's standard of empowerment holds that citizens are empowered when they feel they can enter into any discussion and contradict the opinions of anyone, no matter what their social or political position might be. While the capacity for political participation should increase among citizens, the rubric of politics as a craft should not expect to have everyone capable of practicing politics at the same skill level as professional politicians, strategists, or policy makers. Politics as a craft is aimed at empowering citizens by helping them develop their political skills. Catt's standard of empowerment answers the question of what participatory standards we should expect from citizens that is compatible with politics as a craft, and at the same time avoids the unrealistic goal of placing all citizens at the same level of political skill.

Measuring Successful Experiential Learning: An Engaged Public Sphere

The previous chapter talked about how political skills are crafts and how they are learned, drawing heavily from the work of John Dewey. From there, a taxonomy of active political participation was developed, delineating between supportive forms of political participation, expressive forms, and policy forms. Moreover, it was argued that several forms of political participation have both expressive and policy elements, since they want to convince both the public at large of their views along with having an effect on public policy and/or legislation. To successfully convince members of the public and elected officials of one's views, the necessary skill sets, approaches, and discourses are needed.

How do we know that these skills are being successfully learned? How do we know that experiments in experiential learning are successful? The easy answer would be to say that an experiment is successful if it has successfully convinced someone of its views. However, there are problems with this kind of answer. Firstly, as was explained earlier in the work, consensus, even if it is between only two individuals, does not always come about through discussion through empowered participants. Agreement could come about due to imbalances of formal power, economic power, or imbalances of skills, where those who are more skilled will dominate the discussion over those who are not. This might be mitigated if those who are dominant are presenting all interests available for consideration. However, since there is no way of determining such a situation for certain, and no one can claim absolute knowledge in terms of knowing every interest, along with the public reasons for supporting them, all potential political participants should be sufficiently empowered – meeting Catt's standards that were elaborated earlier – to enter into any discussion and participate, or present dissenting opinions in other forums. As Christiano explains, “political equality will not be possible if some are not able to

come up with reasonably articulate views. The standard of articulation requires that citizens provide reasonably detailed schedules of trade-offs of aims” (Christiano 1997, 188).

Secondly, and even more simply, it seems counter-intuitive to hinge successfully convincing others on successful political participation. Often losing campaigns or social movements that are not part of the mainstream continue to try to engage the public even after they might suffer setbacks. If they were engaged in a public campaign, their opponents (if any exist) and the general public might have taken their arguments seriously into consideration when considering their opinions. Even while participating in the debate, their “losing argument” made a contribution to the political discourse, and the debate produced could serve as an educative tool for future participants later on as to why a certain position might be wrong.

Thus saying that only participants who have successfully convinced others seems too narrow of a definition of successful political participation. Moreover, using such a standard would not be consistent with the very goals of experiential learning, at least as explained by education theorists that came after Dewey. They focused instead on the meeting of subjective and personal goals and whether the tools are present or not. “Experiential learning...is not simply acquiring more information in a first-hand way. It involves expanding the ability to produce a result you truly want in life, recognizing that there are huge gaps between what we want and where things are now. It gives us...the tools for action” (Tate 1992, 135). Evans elaborates on the subjective quality of assessing effective experiential learning. “There may have been some help in acquiring it, but essentially experiential learning is a personal achievement. Hence the assessment of experiential learning can produce a personal inner recognition which is priceless and of great

psychological significance” (1992, 86). Moreover, Evans argues that the actual recognition of a person’s contribution can help empower those that were previously disempowered. “When people who believe themselves to be hopeless as learners prove to themselves that they are rather good at learning, something of the deepest significance has taken place. That is the public recognition connected with the personal experiential learning which is so richly significant” (1992, 86).

With this, we get another layer to the schema of empowerment that is summarized above. We know that participants are empowered when they feel that they can enter into a discussion and contradict what is being said. This follows from Helena Catt, as stated earlier. However, becoming empowered and overcoming political mortification seems to go beyond the mere development of skills, but also requires recognition from an individual or group as offering something worthwhile, even if that recognition is a statement of disagreement. This recognition can come from any segment of the public sphere (not necessarily from “official” agents from formalized social and political institutions).

Ultimately, the measure of successful political participation ought to be linked to the principle of the equal advancement and consideration of interests. In other words, political participation should be considered successful if it improves the quality of political participation. How is this to be done? Returning to Dewey might provide an answer. He argued that the very nature of the discussions that occurred in the public sphere determined its very health. However, implicit in this claim is the notion that people participating in this discussion at all is preferred to no discussion whatsoever. People must participate if they are to develop intellectually and morally,

Dewey states, and if more people do participate, then we ought to expect society to develop in the same manner as a whole. “Without the chance to participate, individuals cannot grow: ‘human nature is developed only when its elements take part in directing things which are common, things for the sake of which men and women form groups – families, industrial companies, governments, churches, scientific associations, and so on’” (Campbell 1999, 4; Dewey, Middle Works 12: 199-200). As explained in Chapter 4, the conversations that Dewey wanted to see in the public sphere entail a constant re-examination of social and political norms and institutions. “Because of our ongoing social evolution, our conception of democracy must be continually explored” (Dewey, Middle Works 11, 182). As we saw above from educators who work with experiential learning, the very existence of an engaged public sphere and the fact that these conversations are occurring are far more important than the results achieved. The fact that nothing in society is accepted as convention or dogma and that people are willing to challenge them is the barometer for determining the quality of political participation. “Democracy is the faith that the process of experience is more important than any special result attained, so that special results achieved are of ultimate value only as they are used to enrich and order the ongoing process (Later Works 14: 228-229).

Therefore, part of knowing if the quality of political participation is improving is seeing if more people are participating. The reasons that Dewey gives, follow from John Stuart Mill rather closely, as was explained in the previous chapter. Political participation is necessary for individual self-development since it happens in concert with others, which Dewey believes is the only legitimate way for society to confront its problems. “Human nature is developed only when its elements take part in directing things which are common, things for the sake of which men

and women form groups – families, industrial companies, governments, churches, scientific associations, and so on” (Dewey, Middle Works 12: 199-200). The more people engage in “directing things in common” through various organizations, Dewey believed, then the richer the public discourse would be. More viewpoints would be brought to the discussion, thus letting them to be put under critical examination. Moreover, political institutions must foster this kind of discussion if they are to allow individuals to develop their skills to the fullest, which is the main purpose for democratic institutions according to Dewey (Middle Works 12: 186). So the ongoing participation of individuals is a partial indication of empowerment, and should be considered when determining whether a democracy is approximating the improvement on the equal consideration and advancement of interests.

However, seeing more people participate is not the only indicator of an improvement of the quality of political participation. Simply having more people participate does not meet Catt’s standard of empowerment. If more people are participating but blindly accepting everything that is being presented to them without critically analysing anything that is being said, then it cannot be considered a consensus created by empowered individuals. The existence of deep disagreement about what should be done is evidence that some discussion should be occurring. We saw how more contemporary theorists such as Iris Marion Young placed great emphasis on identifying and challenging internal barriers and hegemonic discourses so to allow more voices to be heard. Although he never identified the same internal exclusions or imbalances of power that Young and other difference democrats have, Dewey nonetheless believed that part of the discussions that a liberal democratic public sphere must have is identifying any imbalances of power and equality that may exist and work to lessen them. As he explains, the discussion in a

liberal democratic society must seek “the causes of which inequalities and oppressions are but also the symptoms” (Dewey, *Later Works* 11: 287). As Crick further adds; “Democracy, as a process, aligns itself primarily with the means by which a public and public opinion comes into existence and maintains itself. This means is the sharing of discourse within an egalitarian public sphere” (2010. 63).

So not only does a healthy public sphere require more people participating, it also needs to discuss the problems that society is facing in an open way that includes all interests, examine where they might be in tension and discuss possible trade-offs, and consider them equally. As Dewey explains; “the method of democracy – insofar as it is that of organized intelligence – is to bring these conflicts out into the open where their special claims can be seen and appraised, where they can be discussed and judged in the light of more inclusive interests” (*Later Works* 11: 56). Thus the quality of political participation should be considered high when not only more people are participating, but when they are discussing the sorts of questions that empowered participants with developed skills participating in an egalitarian and inclusive public sphere should have. Thus the quality of political participation seems to hinge on what causes knowledge to be discovered through the Socratic method – asking the right questions in order to gain new insights. While Plato argued that the only conversation worth having is asking what is good, for Dewey the conversations that a democratic society should have ought to focus on identifying problems in society, as well as identifying the challenges to solving these problems and finding ways to overcome them.

Furthermore, empowered citizens with well-developed skills help create a public space that also fosters the continued development of skills of participants and also give some form of recognition to the contributions of those who participate, as was explained earlier. This means using one's skills, as was posited in Chapter 2, to identify any instances of informal power imbalances and critique them and overcome them. For Dewey at least, the problem of democratic publics is a problem of communication, of "improving the methods and conditions of debate, discussion and persuasion" (Crick 2010, 65). Commentators on Dewey such as Crick posit that the goal of improving the methods and conditions of the democratic public sphere is a goal unto itself, and this means removing any distortions from the public sphere, or what Habermas calls the "refeudalisation" of the public sphere where critical publicity is replaced by the manipulative publicity of public relations, advertising, and propaganda" (Habermas 1989, 195). However, in order for politics as a craft to have any chance of real success, it must go beyond simply solving communicative distortions but also challenging internal balances of power as well.

From Dewey, we get a sense of what successful experiments in political craft should look like. Successful participation ought to create a free and democratic public sphere that has more people participating. To put things simply, seeing an increase in participation, especially in deliberative forums where in-depth discussion occurs, given the nature of the discussions that Dewey had envisioned occurring in the public sphere, is some indication. However, increases in political participation should not be the lone barometer in determining the health of the public sphere. The nature of the discussion that is occurring in the public sphere is also important in determining whether political participation is assisting in bringing democracy close to fulfilling the principle

of the equal advancement and consideration of interests. The public sphere, as Dewey posits, should also include discussions about identifying problems in society, as well as identifying the challenges to solving these problems and finding ways to overcome them without any communicative distortions. Also, since Dewey and Mill before him placed such a great emphasis on the public sphere itself being an educative tool, political craft can also improve the quality of political participation by facilitating the opportunities for learning within participatory forums, and by recognising the contributions of other participants as well. This will help empower participants and move them closer to meeting Catt's standard of empowerment. When participatory forums fail to meet these standards listed above, due to either imbalances of power, internal exclusions, or communicative distortions, then participants in the public sphere ought to then identify and critique them with a mind to subverting them, and move the public sphere closer to fulfilling the principle of the equal advancement and consideration of interests.

The Conceptual Issue of Political Equality

The Difference of Skill in a Democratic World with Politics As a Craft

One question that needs to be answered is how much politics as a craft can advance political equality. As we saw from Christiano's schema, political equality is linked to the notion of the equal consideration and advancement of interests. The standard that Christiano wishes to see every citizen to be able to reach is being able to "effectively advance their interest" in the public sphere. So far in this work, it has been argued that meeting this goal requires that citizens be sufficiently empowered to meet Catt's standard of empowerment.

Thus the aim is to ensure that citizens meet this minimum standard, and a program of political skill development should at the very least equip citizens to be able to advance their interests in

the public sphere. However, as has been stated earlier, people with well-developed political skills should also be able to identify if and when hegemonic discourses are disempowering people and preventing them from participating, or if internal exclusions are arising, and then work to challenge them in the public sphere. Thus, a program of skill development should also teach students to be aware of hegemonic discourses and internal exclusions that could come about, along with how they can disempower citizens if left unchallenged.

One issue that needs to be considered is the difference in skill between participants that necessarily will come about. Since the actions required to participate in politics are skills, it stands to reason that some people will be more adept than others at practicing these political skills. Even though politics as a craft would aim to have all students be able to practice their skills at a certain minimal standard of aptitude, the inevitable difference in skill that will exist between participants may indeed lead to structural exclusions that Young and others wrote about when talking about democratic politics as it stands now.

Can a democratic society that embraces politics as a craft, be subject to the kind of structural exclusions that can come about due to participants who have more skills dominating the discussion? Does politics as a craft make any kind of advancement on this front? The answer should be yes, if we were to make the argument from strictly a Deweyan perspective. In the Deweyan schema, the more skilled participants are, and if they learned and practice their skills within democratic spaces (in both the classroom and in the public sphere at large), then the more likely that all individuals and groups will be able to advance their claims equally and fairly in the public sphere, according to their own views and interpretations (Alway 1995). To put in more

Deweyan language, the further away education and discussion in the public sphere moves from conservative education (where everything is treated as unquestioned dogma) to democratic education (where critical examination of social norms and problems are paramount), then the more inclusive and equitable the public sphere will be, no matter what success participants will have in deploying those skills in convincing others of their views.

In the Dewey's schema of democratic education, students are to learn that nothing in society- be it political institutions, social norms, or whatever – ought to be safe from individual and even public scrutiny. To put it more simply, there should be no “sacred cows” in public discourse. This spirit of perennial critique that Dewey believes ought to be a constitutive element of the public sphere should in theory apply to the products and the content of the discourse in the democratic public sphere. This comes back to a conclusion that was made earlier, and is compatible with Dewey's statement cited earlier that a democratic discourse must always target the causes and symptoms of inequalities and oppressions (Later Works 11: 287), viz., that political skills must also be used to criticize and subvert hegemonic discourses and internal exclusions in order to make the public sphere more democratic and inclusive. This is especially true, as it would be fairly reasonable to surmise that Dewey's “inequalities and oppressions” can lead to feelings of political inadequacy among some citizens, which is the cause of political mortification as stated in Chapter 2.

If curriculum developers of democratic education make it a priority to teach the ability to identify and challenge structural exclusions, internal exclusions and imbalances of power, and hegemonic discourses to students, then it follows that these things will plague the public sphere

less often. If political participants turn their skills to these matters, then we ought to see less political mortification, thus making the difference of skills between citizens less of a factor. In other words, knowing how to criticize participants that are unfairly dominating the discussion ought to lead to some successful challenges, and thus making the public sphere more democratic. Certainly, it would be unreasonable to think that participants will never try to distort the communicative process through manipulation or use of resources not available to other participants. However, participants with better political skills and who have been taught to identify and challenge such behaviour will have more success in stopping this than those who do not. If the goal of achieving the equal advancement and consideration of interests is something that is worthwhile, then it would be better to have more citizens who make these commitments than less, because it will lead to more successful challenges of exclusions, and thus a more democratic sphere.

In this sense, politics as a craft does advance political equality, even if some participants are not successful in advancing their claims or challenging the dominance of others at times. Politics as a craft is a necessary part of advancing political equality, but it alone is not sufficient for remedying political inequality.

Attaching a Commitment to Justice

Both Christiano and Dewey seem to believe that equality of procedures will lead to some sort of political equality. This is certainly Dewey's view, however it would be unfair to pin that claim on Christiano's work. As summarized in Chapter 1, Christiano is rightly concerned about the contentiousness of equality of outcomes, and thus does not use it as a basis for equality. Instead he favours guaranteeing equality of procedures. However, in more recent works, Christiano has

called for democratic institutions to realize social justice as public equality, where social justice is not just being done, but also seen to be done (Christiano 2008, 46). What he might mean by this statement is that public equality is a performative ideal that democratic procedures aspire to. This must be the case given that equality of outcomes has to play some role in the publicity of equality, despite how difficult it is to come up with a standard to define equality of outcomes adequately.

A similar statement might be made about Dewey's statements about using the discussions in the public sphere to challenge both inequalities and oppressions along with their respective sources. Dewey may well acknowledge that while all inequalities may never be completely removed, as long as a democratic public sphere exists, and so long as access to that sphere exists, then the basis by which to undermine inequality exists. It seems that Dewey believed that mere participation in the public sphere would eventually lead to citizens solving the problems of what he calls social inequality and oppression. However, we have identified earlier the role that internal exclusions might play in seemingly egalitarian forms of citizen participation.

The solution thus far presented in this work is to require that citizens be empowered sufficiently through the development of political skills. While political participation in both deliberative and aggregative forms of democracy can also help political skills, as was pointed out in Chapter 3, it would be preferable that these skills were developed as much as possible in the education system, before individuals participate politically. As has been argued previously, promoting skill development can even help challenge internal exclusions as well, since those with better skills

will be able to better challenge, critique, and subvert any internal exclusions and hegemonic discourses that might come about.

But none of this solves the potential problem of outcomes that could disempower groups or individuals. More specifically, even people with better developed political skills participating in democratic institutions that aim to meet the principle of equal advancement and consideration of interests may yield some rather unequal results. This is a point that is made by David Estlund (2009). Case in point, though politics as a craft may produce better skilled political participants that are better able to challenge and provide solutions to structural inequalities, internal exclusions, or hegemonic discourses, it does not necessarily mean that they will do so. The only thing that has been established so far is that those with more developed skills will simply challenge these things more effectively than those with less developed skills.

Dealing with this issue means establishing a link between social justice and democratic practices. This seems necessary given Christiano's own statement about social justice needing to be seen to be done in democratic institutions. This means that along with attempting to achieve the principle of equal advancement and consideration of interests, participants ought to make some commitment to achieving social justice in a publically ascertainable way as well. Without resorting to putting a standard on equality of outcomes, inserting a proviso to democratic outcomes stating that any inequalities that are produced by democratic procedures ought to be publically justified is needed.

If decisions produced in the public sphere lead to inequalities, requiring them to be publicly justifiable is, by definition, meant to render the decisions subject to critical analysis by those affected by their decisions, and entails an acknowledgement by those producing said decisions that they have come up short and why they came up short. Endo (2012) takes issue with Christiano's link between justice and democracy is the principle of the equal advancement and consideration of interests (this claim is made more explicit in his 2008 book *The Constitution of Equality*). Instead he argues that autonomy is the principle that makes a stronger link between the two. However, he defines autonomy much differently than Christiano does, as summarised at the beginning of this thesis. "By autonomy, I refer to an ideal of individual self-government, whereby persons may form, pursue and revise their conceptions of the good in light of their experiences and evolving judgements in reference to them" (41). For Christiano, autonomy and self-government do not simply mean the ability for an individual to revise their conceptions of the good, but rather his or her ability to impose his will or desire on the world. The ability to change one's conception of the good, Christiano would say, is a basic necessity for a citizen to participate effectively in the public sphere. If political decisions render the citizens somehow unable to do this, then the quality of political participation would drop. Moreover, citizens somehow losing this capacity to reconsider and alter their conceptions of the good would leave them severely disempowered, and that is how the quality of political participation would suffer, and would impact on their ability to consider their interests.

Even Endo wishes to separate the concepts of the advancement and consideration of interests from citizens' ability to revise their conceptions of the good, it seems more reasonable to treat the latter as part of the former. Endo himself explains it well; "One might argue that even if

autonomous choices do not always advance one's interests, *not* getting one's autonomy respected always violates one's interests" (2012, 43). As Christiano himself notes, each participant in the public sphere requires honouring the distinctive authority of persons as being the authorities in the realm of value (Christiano 2008, 18-19). Part of honouring individuals in this way requires that any inequalities produced by the public sphere be publicly justified. If democratic decisions somehow take steps backwards in terms of political equality, a public justification for such decisions can help serve as a guide to future participants that hope to make improvements on these decisions and bring about more equality in the future.

Requiring that any inequalities produced by the public sphere be justified publically can even serve a pedagogical value as well to the future decision-makers. Publically justified inequalities can help identify the cause, the nature, or the locus of what causes the inequality, and this can help frame the future discussions. As Dewey acknowledges several times in his works, the democratic process in the solving process can be a rough and dialectical one. This means that democratizing the public sphere will at times not create equitable results. Dewey was not so foolish as to think that a democratized public sphere would solve all the factors that could cause empowerment. What such a public sphere with empowered and skilled participants can ensure is that disempowerment is far less likely to happen through political participation, and leaves the participants in the public sphere more capable of achieving equality.

Political Experiential Learning: Some Success Stories

What politics as a craft can do is equip future generations of citizens with the skills to build more equitable and democratic institutions and public spaces, and in turn will move us closer to the

principle of the equal advancement and consideration of interests. Coupled with a commitment to social justice, this hopefully will move democracies closer to political equality. However, there are examples from the real world that we can point to where experiential learning of political skills has successfully developed students' political skills and taught them political values that can make them function like critical actors in a democratic public sphere as Dewey had envisioned.

The issue of teaching political values to students might seem controversial on the surface, but decisions like these are made all the time when educators, school trustees, school boards, and parent-teacher associations are developing. A fair bit of thought is given to the kinds of social values that they want their students to learn in school, so that these values are practiced in adulthood. We can go back and remember how in our childhood we learned about cooperation, fair play, and mutual respect, and other values in the schoolyard as well as in the family home. Amy Gutmann writes that the primary purpose of education in a democracy is to instill the democratic values that we wish to replicate in our society, while at the same time giving children the necessary freedom to critically re-evaluate these values and their practice in order to improve democratic society (1987, 49). Thus education systems, whether they are private or public, reflect and teach social values and practical skills to its students.

The previous section highlighted some important caveats about what we should expect from a democratic society that implements politics as a craft. Interests will be considered and advanced more equally, and political equality ought to be advanced more than what is happening currently. This section will outline some examples where the experiential learning of political skills has

been successful in helping students feel more empowered and have a more positive view of the democratic process – at least in the sense that students learn that democracy is about allowing everyone to present proposals that they think will make them better off, and having these proposals considered, debated, and decided upon through a fair decision-making process. Moreover, while some elements of democracy help us learn about the interests of others and ourselves, other elements settle differences when our interests conflict.

While educators, policy makers, and developers of school curriculums must decide that the development of political skills is important enough that such a program has to be implemented, the result will certainly be a generation of students that has a lot more political aptitude than their parents, and in turn, will be much empowered and more motivated to participate in politics. As Colby, Beaumont, and Corngold (2008, 122) explain; “political skills cannot be easily separated from political understanding and motivation. These three categories of goals interact dynamically, often in mutually reinforcing ways. Students’ mastery of political skills supports their motivation to participate, and reciprocally, political participation often results in greater political skill.”

This is what was meant partially when it was stated earlier that improving the quality of political participation and empowering citizens ought to increase the quantity of political participation. Motivated participants are far more likely to participate than those who are unmotivated, and a good education program that not only teaches students how to master political skills but also gets them excited about the political process. Recognition of a participant’s efforts in the public sphere is to help them feel empowered, and this must always be kept in mind when discussing

empowerment (hence the qualifier at the beginning of this paragraph). But having students already motivated about political participation will help future citizens hit the ground running in terms of political participation.

Thus there are two claims that need to be examined. The first is whether experiential learning is more effective in teaching political skill to students than more didactic approaches, and the second is whether experiential learning can motivate students enough to make them feel empowered about participating in the democratic process. Let us examine these claims in turn.

By way of reminder, experiential learning of political skill occurs when students are to learn how to participate politically by doing it. They are not to receive dogmatic instruction from instructors, nor are they supposed to learn by rote or mimic the actions of someone else. Students must learn by trying their own methods and strategies to solve these problems. Experiential civic learning programs such as the work done by the group Democracy Matters (www.democracymatters.org) involve self-evaluation and feedback from multiple sources along with experiential learning exercises. As it turns out, this method of evaluation is very rigorous and students learn quickly what they did right and/or wrong (Colby et al. 2008, 129).

The experience of students participating in Democracy Matters is part of the empirical evidence that shows that learning political skill through experiential means is much more effective than strict textbook learning. Moreover, as Levine (2000, 231) explains; “the data show that methods of teaching matter. The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) is a survey that asks students how they had been taught civics, and many described a scene from a nineteenth-

century schoolhouse, complete with textbooks, frequent quizzes, and short-answer exercises. (...) The more frequently they had to memorize facts from the textbook, the worse they performed on the NAEP. Quizzes also seemed to lower their performance on this national standardized test. On the other hand, participation in mock trials and elections seemed to be effective. Covering a variety of topics also helped, as did discussion of current events” (see also Niemi and Junn 1998, 97 and Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996, 117-121).

This means that experiential learning is more effective than the conservative, dogmatic approach that Dewey decried over a century ago. Under the rubric of experiential learning, tradition, dogmas, or creeds do not bind students. They learn from their self-forged experiences, and sharing their experiences with others. There is a role for instructors in this rubric, but it is not to indoctrinate students or facilitate the memorization of strategies and techniques that have worked in the past. In this sense, the teacher and the student are in a sort of a master-apprentice relationship, where the teacher provides the student with the space in order to try to learn on his own. At the same time, the teacher uses his previous experiences (since he might already know what will work or will not work in a given situation) to provide guidance to the student when he might be failing. Ultimately, the student is the master of her own course, since she has to figure out her own solutions to the problems that she has to face. The teacher and the student’s peers can judge the effectiveness of her attempts to solve problems, but the teacher should not pass on directly his own knowledge in a doctrinaire way. In this environment of experiential learning, there is a greater climate of equality than there is with conservative education, and because of this, students learn more about democratic values since they are practicing democratic values when they learn political skills through experiential learning.

The second claim that needs to be examined is whether students can become empowered politically through the learning process. Again, there is some empirical evidence from some school programs to show that this is the case. The first is a learning experiment by Joseph Cammarano and Linda Fowler (1997), used in the United States where the students participated in a simulation pretending to be American Congressmen trying to balance a budget. The second is the Students Experiencing Government program in Iowa. The program includes Capitol Youth Day and the Capitol Project, where students visit the State Capitol and see politicians at work first hand, and the Iowa Student Political Awareness Club, which serves as a gateway of information for students about the political process and political issues (Culver 2005, 70-72). In both learning environments, students engaged in the political process first hand. With Cammarano and Fowler's policy simulation, the students had to do exactly what legislators have to do all the time. In the Iowa learning project, students got to meet legislators, see them work, and talk to them about their work, and then had to engage in "a mock legislative process where they draft legislation, meet in committees, and conduct a session of debate" (Culver 2005, 72).

In both examples, students learned about the nitty-gritty of democratic politics first hand. In the case of the Iowa students, Culver reports that the Students Experiencing Government program was the first political exposure that the students received, and that the efforts of the Iowa education program improved the access to candidates, access to information, and removed the confusion and intimidation surrounding the mechanics of democracy (2005, 71). Students generally had a positive experience in the Iowa initiatives, and came to see that the political process is something that matters in their lives and that they can make a difference if they so

desire. The following is a quote from one of the students that participated in the Students Experiencing Government program; “It was a learning experience I will never forget. I plan to register to vote as soon as I am eligible so I can get involved. I hope to use this as a building block in the future for my career” (Culver 2005, 72).

Cammarano and Fowler observed similar sentiments with the students that participated in simulated legislative debates and Congress committee meetings. Cammarano and Fowler had noted that Americans had far more negative views about Congress than the presidency or the Supreme Court, and hoped that a simulation of Congress would help students learn more about how Congress works (1997, 105, see also Hibbing and Theiss-Morse 1995, 147). However, as the students reflected on their experiences from the simulation in reflective essays, they all gained a greater appreciation of the political process. "These essays (based on the student's experience in the simulation) often expressed an impressive depth of understanding of contemporary legislative politics. Although it is difficult to generalize from all students, the essays displayed a considerable understanding of the complexities of our pluralistic political system and the challenges presented by modern democracy. Most students commented that they gained a greater understanding of the policy process and a greater appreciation for members of Congress" (Cammarano and Fowler 1997, 116). Ultimately, the students in the simulation understood that even with the difficulties of bringing conflicting views together to try to form a coherent policy, they themselves had an effect on the democratic process. "The end result is that students learn that political processes are as much a product of the interests involved as the process by which policy is made, and that their own activity or inactivity could have significant consequences on the output of the policy process" (Cammarano and Fowler 1997, 106).

In engaging in real world problems – the very same that elected officials deal with every day – Cammarano and Fowler noted that students became more sympathetic to the democratic process. As they state; "in the effort to find solutions to real issues that are amenable to a majority of individuals in the exercise, students learn to appreciate the inherent difficulties, not only with the exercise at hand, but also with the legislative process employed by Congress. This in turn leads them to be more understanding and empathetic towards political elites. By requiring active participation and encouraging students to take an interest in the project, simulations also promote a shift from teacher-based instruction to student self-instruction" (1997, 106). Cammarano and Fowler describe two groups of students in their simulation: one group that was very interested in politics from the outset and the other that did not have a very strong interest in politics. After the simulation, all students – no matter what their previous interest level in politics was – gained both a greater appreciation for democratic politics and felt empowered by the process (1997, 116).

The sense of empowerment that the students drew from the simulations can serve as a basis of public trust, since they learned that the democratic process can be made to work and serve the interests of its citizens. These students, once they become old enough to participate in politics, will have confidence in democratic institutions. This confidence will cause these future citizens to respect and trust the democratic process to be able to allow individuals and groups to fairly and clearly advance their interests and have them considered, even though the results of the democratic process may not necessarily make them better off. There is a strong link between public trust in social and political institutions and procedural fairness, in the sense that

individuals will have trust in these institutions if they believe that they have at least a modicum of procedural fairness, as some studies show (Pillai, Schriesheim, Williams 1999; Sunshine and Tyler 2003; Grimes 2006).

A third example looks at a study done by Nagda, Gurin, and Lopez (2010) that looked how students learned democratic values and social justice through experiential learning. They used curriculums based on previous experiential learning modules developed by David Kolb (1984) and Paolo Freire (1970). Specifically, the authors wanted to examine the effects of experiential learning modules on students' ability to deal with intergroup relations and group conflict. Students learned about inequality in society in the classroom, but the curriculum moved beyond simple classroom teaching into the outside world and included experiential activities, simulation games akin to Cammarano and Fowler's work, discussion groups focusing on current events, participating in cultural events, and participating in collective action projects (Nagda, Gurin, and Lopez 2010, 172-173).

The aim of these learning sessions was not only to teach students about how to deal with group conflict, but also for students to gain a "democratic apprenticeship" (Nieto 1995). Not only is the goal for students to learn about how democracy ought to function, but also the terrain in which democratic decision-making occurs, which is that of deep disagreement. The backdrop of disagreement is mentioned by Christiano as something that is always present in modern politics and that participants ought to face up to. When participants accept that moral disagreement is a part of politics, they are able to deal with it in a more realistic way. But at the learning stage, however, students can learn about the reality of democratic politics so that they can deal with it

later on in life as political participants. This, the authors note, is what is missing in civic education currently. Nieto (1995, 207) explains it well; “Not only is the *process* of democracy missing, so is the critical *content* of democracy that would expose all its contradictory dimensions. If schools are to provide students with an apprenticeship for the possibility of participation in democracy, both need to be included.”

The authors’ analysis of the students’ attitudes demonstrate a change that came about through active, experiential learning (Nagda, Gurin, and Lopez 2010, 183). Specifically, students developed a greater sense of social and institutional injustice, along with wanting to increase intergroup understanding, using dialogue to resolve conflict resolution, and that inequality is something that needs to be tackled (Ibid.). This is consistent with previous work from one of the authors (see Lopez *et al.* 1998). These findings might simply be dismissed by saying that it is not surprising that students gained a greater sense of inequality given the content of the curriculum. However, these findings go further than that and suggest that how the students learn matters just as much, and that the active form of experiential learning is superior to more didactic forms in teaching students about social injustices. As they explain; “The results indicate that active forms of learning in which students actually practice what they are learning are especially influential in fostering understanding of action in solving intergroup conflicts. Both active learning in the classroom and engaged learning outside enhances students’ learning. While content is important, it has to be actively processed by the students” (Nagda, Gurin, and Lopez 2010, 187).

With this final study we see Dewey’s vision in practice. This last study shows how democratic education – which entails experiential learning - has led to students developing the ability to

ascertain inequalities along with empowering them to challenge these inequalities. This is consistent with Dewey's goal of having democratic procedures not only expose what he called oppressions but also its causes. As stated earlier, experiential learning of political skills can not only give students the skills to advance and consider their interests in the public sphere, it should also give them the ability to identify and challenge any internal or external exclusions, or any causes of political mortification that might come about. However, beyond this claim, we have seen some cases where experiential learning goes beyond this and empowers students to make them feel that they can make a difference in democratic politics, and what are the obstacles that can prevent democratic procedures from functioning the way that they should.

Ideally, politics as a craft can teach political skills and impart democratic values to students in a free, open, and democratic way and on a mass scale. If politics as a craft is successful, a new generation of students will arise who are more politically skilled and more willing to participate. Experiential learning can both develop skills and empower students, and thus create skilled citizens who are motivated to participate in the democratic process. This is yet another advantage of politics as a craft. It aims to improve primarily the quality of political participation, but since it can motivate students to participate politically by equipping them with political skills, it can also increase the amount of political participation in a democracy.

As we will see in the next chapter, there have been several projects used by state governments, primary and secondary schools, and universities to teach students about politics. Some of them have begun in the last decade, while others date back to the beginning of the 20th century. What they all have in common is that they take the experiential approach in teaching students. The

focus is shifted away from learning from textbooks and studying for exams. Instead, students are asked to deal with real world political problems. This turns out to be the most effective way for students to develop their political skills. As we will see below, students have a very positive experience in this kind of learning atmosphere, and they tend to learn more than by learning by rote.

CHAPTER 6: POLITICS AS A CRAFT IN THE WORLD: FROM HIGH SCHOOLS TO ADULT EDUCATION

So far this work has made the case for incorporating politics as a craft into our democratic culture, in order to allow for the equal advancement and consideration of interests. Implementing politics as a craft entails understanding that political skills are learned through trial and error. In terms of legislation and policy, politics as a craft requires that the public education system incorporate a curriculum of civics learning and development of political skills, which will give individuals the necessary skills to construct, maintain, and participate in a democratic public sphere that allows for the equal consideration and advancement of interests, but also identifies and challenges any obstacles to the above mentioned principle. In short, education curriculums ought to be oriented to helping students develop the necessary skills to empower them to participate effectively in the public sphere. This in turn will reduce political mortification, improve the quality of political participation, and in doing so, help remove some of the barriers that some would-be participants would face in terms of internal exclusions and dominant discourses,

This final chapter will answer the question; “So what will this all look like in the real world? How do we implement politics as a craft?”. As explained earlier, learning simulations like the ones done by Cammarano and Fowler, where students engaged in mock Congress debates and committee meetings, are good exercises in experiential development of political skills, since the students have to engage with the same problems that politicians have to deal with every day. The students are by and large left to their devices to work on these problems with some moderation

provided by their teachers. These exercises also have students write reflective essays about their experiences and the challenges that they faced, along with other methods of self-evaluation.

These learning simulations are good examples of experiential learning exercises that can be incorporated into secondary school curriculums. However this chapter will look at other education methods that entail the experiential learning of political skills. Firstly, there are service learning exercises, which have students at the primary school and secondary school levels help out a volunteer organization in a co-operative education format.

Another reform is developing courses in deliberative democracy. In these courses, students learn about democratic values, how to deliberate and communicate about various political issues, and how to behave and interact with others. These deliberative democracy courses would draw from the previous discussion and speech courses that were taught in American universities in the early part of the 20th century. This chapter will examine some of the textbooks used by these discussion courses. These textbooks and courses were designed to teach students how to communicate effectively in a group setting, but looking at them through a modern lens, these textbooks look very much like courses in deliberative democracy, where students participate in group discussions and are evaluated on their performance. Moreover, these discussion textbooks also taught students about the attitudes that a participant should have in discussion as well as the importance of discussion in a democracy.

Another measure that can bring politics as a craft into the area of adult education is a revival of the Federal Forum Project, which was an ambitious adult education program initiated in the

United States during the 1930s. The Federal Forum Project was a nation-wide program that funded discussion forums where people attended and discussed various political issues of the day under the guidance of a discussion leader. The forum movement emerged out of small discussion groups in union halls and church basements, as well as the lyceum and Chatauqua movements. The Forum Project, much like the discussion courses taught in universities in the 1930s, look very much like deliberative forums to modern eyes. However, their purpose was slightly different to that of the deliberative forum today. While deliberation will try to reach a decision on an issue, the purpose of the forums of the 1930s were educative. The forums were there to simply have participants learn and grapple with the issues being discussed.

All three of these measures would entrench politics as a craft into the education system. This chapter will summarise and analyse these measures and explain how they involve the experiential learning of political skills. These initiatives can work at all levels of education, from primary school to even adult education. What is interesting about the discussion courses and the Federal Forum Project is that they first began over one hundred years ago but fell into disuse once the Second World War began. Service learning is much newer (emerging in the early 1990s) and is still very much on the ascendancy. While this chapter is making recommendations for the future, it is also an exercise in retrieval. We will be looking back to the early part of the twentieth century, when Dewey's work was most influential. As we will see, the discussion courses and the Federal Forum Project were very much influenced by Dewey's works. Much like the beginning of the twenty-first century saw several scholars interested in improving public discourse and empowering citizens through deliberative democracy, the beginning of the twentieth century had scholars with very similar concerns, although they were concerned more

with developing the discussion skills of citizens. Once these skills were developed, they believed, then public discourse would improve. So far this work has tried to argue that both are needed if the quality of political participation is to improve.

Politics As A Craft and Democratic Values

As stated earlier, the primary purpose of education in a democracy is to instill in our children the democratic values that we wish to replicate in our society, while at the same time giving children the necessary freedom to re-evaluate critically these values and their practice in order to improve democratic society²⁰. Democratic education must equip students with the capacity of critical analysis to challenge long-established norms, even if it turns out that those norms can stand up to scrutiny. Nonetheless, if a society makes a commitment about the desirability of democracy, it has to teach future generations that democracy is desirable. Callan (1997, 9) sums it up well; “The need to perpetuate fidelity to liberal democratic institutions and values from one generation to another, suggests that there are some inescapably shared educational aims.”

As explained earlier, a key role of democratic education is to empower future generations by equipping them with the necessary skills to be effective participants in the political arena. This is more than just saying that education is key in determining future political participation, a claim that several empirical studies support (Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980; Sniderman, Brody, and Kuklinski 1984; Nie, Junn, and Stehlik-Barry 1996). As Levinson (1999, 60) explains, the result

²⁰ It should be noted that there are liberals who object to mandating civic education or implementing service learning. Scorza (2008, 163-171) sums them up. They are; 1) liberal democracy functions perfectly well without the cultivation of moral or civic virtue, but on a separation of powers and other constitutional devices. See Stephen Holmes, *Passions and Constraints: On the Theory of Liberal Democracy*, p. 175; 2) civic education violates the moral freedom of individuals. See Judith Shklar, “An Education for America: Tocqueville, Hawthorne, Emerson” in *Redeeming American Political Thought*, Dennis Thompson and Stanley Hoffman, p. 78; 3) it is wrong to impose a program of civic education that is inherently liberal on traditional communities, even though they live in a liberal state. See L.T. Hobhouse, *Liberalism*, p. 25; 4) Liberal democracy can never develop a single standard of civic education that is acceptable to large segments of the population.

from democratic education is that "...children should: gain sufficient self-esteem and confidence to feel comfortable articulating their views in public and laying themselves and their views open to challenge – but also possess enough humility to take challenges to their positions seriously; learn to express themselves in terms others will understand, and to listen to others' responses; be imaginative, possessing the ability to step into other people's shoes and to see perspectives other than their own; be creative, observant, and sensitive to subtlety; learn to think critically and to use reason effectively and judiciously".

From this we get another purpose of democratic education, which is to instil in students the necessary values that can perpetuate liberal democratic institutions. Scholars who have written on this subject (Callan 1997, 3; Levinson 1999, 102) have gone so far to suggest that liberal politics is a politics of virtue, and that democratic education must teach these virtues in order for liberal democracy to thrive. Both Callan and Levinson, along with Gutmann (1995), argue that autonomy should be the primary virtue that democratic education should teach students, and as such should teach students the necessary skills in order to function as autonomous agents in the political arena. "Children must also learn to evaluate the arguments made in a democratic and political world, as well as to put forth such arguments themselves. In practice, this means that children need to develop many of the same skills as those listed in section 2.4 in relation to their development of autonomy, to wit: to learn to read and write, to understanding at least basic history, economics, civics, political science, mathematics, and natural science; to separate style from substance; and overall to think critically and carefully" (Levinson 1999, 102-103).

Levinson's list provided in section 2.4 is even longer, as if the one cited here is not daunting enough. If citizens must have a basic knowledge of history, economics, mathematics, and natural science to name just a few in order to be truly autonomous in the political arena, then few citizens will ever meet that standard of political participation. If this is the case, then Anthony Downs' criticisms of voting (perhaps the most basic form of political participation) are correct – the vast majority of citizens will never be able to meet the cost of gathering information to have a reasoned and informed opinion in such a diverse array of fields of knowledge.

In this thesis, the standard of citizenship is much easier to fulfill than making each citizen an autonomous agent. We are not asking citizens to have some knowledge in a wide range of fields, as those who claim that liberal education should aim to make all citizens autonomous agents would have us believe. The principle of equal consideration and advancement of interests only requires that citizens choose between aims and provide an articulate, reasonable, and discriminating list of aims to elected representatives to translate into policy and law. Since citizen empowerment is something that needs to be fought against, it is also necessary to help students develop the skills necessary to maintain a democratic public sphere that gives recognition to those who attempt to participate effectively (thereby working to empower these participants), but also develop the skills to identify and challenge any internal exclusions or hegemonic discourses that could create political mortification among participants. Some might argue that these skills are also needed in other aspects of life as well (see Gutmann 1995, 557-579). That might be true, but this list of skills provided here are necessary for citizens to create a democratic public sphere as Dewey had envisioned. If more students better developed political skills, and learn that political inequality is a goal that needs to be confronted, then a democratic

society can move closer to realizing the principle of the equal consideration and advancement of interests – far closer than democracies have been able to attain so far. Thus politics as a craft holds that the education process must teach the required skills in order for them to perform the activities of citizenship in later life. By doing so, the education system should teach students about the vital role that citizenship plays in a democracy, and that democracy’s primary principle is that it allows for the equal advancement and consideration of interests.

The Current State of Affairs of Teaching Citizenship

Even though the goals of liberal education as spelled out by politics as a craft differs from the goals of education as argued by Callann, Levinson, and Gutmann, there is agreement on two points. The first point is that democracy is something worthwhile and that the education system should teach students about its inherent value. This means that along with equipping students with the necessary skills that they will need to function well as citizens in later life, students should also learn about democratic values. One key value that must be learned is the challenge that political inequality poses for the equal advancement and consideration of interests and a well-functioning democratic public sphere. It also means that students should learn that democratic politics requires reciprocity and a modicum of mutual respect towards others if it is to work.

The second point of similarity leads from the first, which is that citizenship is a vital part of democracy, and that the inherent value of what I have been calling the craft of citizenship is something that needs to be taught and cultivated. The first part of this assertion is obvious, or at least it should be. Democracy requires some input from its citizens in order to function. However

the second part holds that individuals are not born citizens and they have to learn both civic values and democratic skills if they are to become well-functioning citizens in a democracy. Waring (2008, 163) puts it well; “There is a broad consensus that democratic citizens are developed and cultivated through education, as humans are not born with an innate understanding of or predisposition toward any one form of government” (see also Parker 1996, xi-xiii).

The point here is simple: citizenship is an important aspect of an individual’s life and that the skills of citizenship need to be developed if students are to engage in meaningful and worthwhile political participation. Empirical evidence shows that adults who learn these skills at a young age are much more likely to participate than those who do not (Verba, Scholzman, and Brady 1995; see also Yates and Younis 1988; Glanville 1999). As cited earlier, the NAEP surveys indicate that students have a much easier time learning political skills experientially than in the traditional textbook manner (Levine 2000, 231; Niemi and Junn 1998, Tables 4-10, 4-11, 6-1). These findings are consistent with students’ experience from the learning simulations which are summarized in the previous chapter (see also Hurtado, Engberg, Ponjuan, Landreman 2000; Colby, Beaumont, Corngold 2008).

Furthermore, there is also evidence that suggests that students who engage in letter-writing campaigns to elected officials – which is a far more modest form of experiential learning than the learning simulations we saw in the previous chapters – show a greater aptitude for political participation (Zukin 2006; Colby, Beaumont, Corngold 2008). Finally, and not surprisingly, research in social psychology shows that like any other skills, the amount of time spent

practicing political skills has a positive effect on how well the student practices that skill (Ericsson, Krampe, Tesch-Romer 1993; Ericsson and Charness 1994; Ericsson and Lehmann 1996).

All of this empirical research would make a strong case for having a robust civic education program based on experiential learning and focused on developing democratic skills. However, the reality is most liberal democracies – especially the older ones – show that the opposite is the case. The civics education in the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, and Australia is almost negligent. Civics courses spend very little time on developing these skills, and there is next to no focus or guiding direction when these skills are taught (Kaltsounis 1994, 180). Furthermore, instead of focusing on developing political skills through experiential means, these courses teach civics through memorizing facts out of a textbook. Put simply, teaching citizenship skills is not taken seriously in these countries, even though the interesting experiments outlined in the previous chapters are excellent exceptions to the rule. Osborne (2001, 13) submits that the various Canadian education systems²¹ have completely abandoned teaching citizenship and turned schools into “training grounds for the new global economy”. In Australia, things appear to be a bit better. The only statement of curriculum intent for civic education, found in the Common and Agreed National Goals for Schooling in Australia, aims to “develop knowledge, skills, attitudes and values which will enable students to participate as active and informed citizens in our democratic Australian society within an international context” (Print, Kennedy, and Hughes 1999, 39). While teaching of civics is highly interactive and does not rely on

²¹ In Canada, education is a provincial jurisdiction and does not have a national education system unlike the majority of countries around the world.

textbooks (Ibid., 49), there is not enough time devoted to civic education vis-à-vis other subjects (Ibid., 49; see also Phillips 1995; Print 1995).

Braungart and Braungart (1998, 117-118) complain that the United States “has no national citizenship goals, curriculum, standards, examinations, or ways to evaluate citizen education” (see also Saxe 1992; Niemi and Junn 1998, 142). Despite the evidence that the textbook approach is not effective in teaching political skills, it seems that American educators by and large insist on using this method, even though it is clear that students do not like it. Waring (2008, 161) reports that “...most elementary school children did not like social studies because they find it boring and useless, that it does not apply to their life, and that there is far too much dependence upon textbook use” (see also Zhao and Hoge 2005, 216-221). Also, along with the lack of focus and unengaging method of instruction, there is also very little time spent on teaching political skills (Coggins 2007).

All of these factors work to create generations of students that lack the necessary skills in order to participate effectively in politics. This means that fewer participants have well-developed political skills and will tend to dominate democratic decision-making processes. If more citizens were empowered to participate and had the necessary skills, then this situation will be less likely to happen. Neimi and Junn explain the problem well. “When we say that students have a ‘textbook’ knowledge of how government operates, what we mean is that they have a naïve view of it that glosses over the fact that democratic politics is all about disagreement and the attempt to settle quarrels peacefully, satisfactorily, and in an orderly manner. (...) The cynicism that adults develop about politics may stem, in part, from the Pollyannaish view of politics that is

fostered by the avoidance of references to partisan politics and other differences of opinion and to the rough and tumble ways in which those differences are resolved in political life” (1998, 150). This leaves only those students with an interest in politics developing these skills, and they become the ones who participate in politics, get their voices heard, and ultimately, have a role in shaping policy. Those who never have that interest have a “propensity to take democracy for granted or have misunderstandings about what it means to be a democratic citizen” (Waring 2008, 164). This is the basis of political mortification discussed earlier.

The next three reforms that will be discussed can give civics education a true purpose by equipping students with the necessary skills to fulfill the activities of citizenship when they become adults. They are a radical departure from the status quo in teaching citizenship, even though they go back to the early years of the twentieth century. The interesting thing about that period of time and now is that the concern about public engagement was the same as it is now, the difference being that then the focus was on equipping citizens with the necessary skills to participate, and now, thanks to the dominance of deliberative democracy, the focus is on improving citizens’ understanding of their interests. I have tried to argue in this work that the two are interdependent. These three measures, which involve experiential learning, will go far to invigorate democracy.

Courses in Deliberative Democracy and Political Participation

A good way we can develop the political skills of students in schools is to treat the practice of deliberation and other forms of political participation as subjects in schools where students learn skills through trial and error and are evaluated on their progress. The learning simulations

discussed in the previous chapter aim to do exactly this, and others have made the call to teach deliberative democracy in schools (Parker 2003; see Morrell 2005 and McDevitt and Kiousis 2006 for empirical observations of the salutary effect of deliberative education on democratic skills and attitudes). At the beginning of the twentieth century, much like now, there was a great concern among political commentators and educators about the problem of both a lack of political skills and knowledge. As Keith explains; “Participants’ lack of knowledge was a well-known problem [in the 1900s]. In fact, one of the functions of the lecture-type forum (an informative speech followed by questions) was to bring groups not ready for discussion, usually due to lack of information, or ‘data’, to a point where they had the knowledge with which to discuss an issue that concerned them” (2007, 135). On the other side of the coin, John Dewey, along with other noted speech scholars at the time, such as A. Craig Baird and Alfred Sheffield, were by the 1920s and 1930s concerned with developing and improving methods of instruction for discussion precisely because they knew that these skills were important for future political use. All of these instructors believed that discussion education had political implications (Keith 2007, 140; see also Sheffield 1920; Baird 1924).

The discussion courses and textbooks that were taught in American universities in the 1920s emerged from here. As we will see, these courses resemble courses in deliberative democracy, at least to the contemporary reader. However, these courses did not emerge because educators all of a sudden decided that teaching skills in discussion would be a good idea. Teaching speech, rhetoric, and debate goes back to the days of Cicero and Aristotle. At the end of the 19th century and in the early 20th century, debate clubs and forensics teams were very popular in U.S. universities, and Speech Departments taught debating and speaking skills to students. Debate –

as it is now – was a competition between universities, but their popularity then far exceeded that of today. As Keith explains; “Debates could be wildly popular with student audiences; they sometimes involved pep rallies and large audiences. In fact, admission might be charged” (2007, 64). This popularity is reminiscent of the attendance levels of college games of football and basketball in the United States.

However, these debating classes had its critics, including Teddy Roosevelt (Keith 2007, 67). They said that debating was purely cutthroat and competitive, and contributed nothing to improving the nature of civic debate. This is one example of one of these criticisms. “Thus was proved the value of collegiate debating, which enables the student to espouse all sides of every question with equal conviction. It reminds one of perpetual motion, but no less of the two-party system, which makes it incumbent on our legislators not to consider the facts and accomplish the desired result, but justify a platform before an electorate of loyal partisans” (*The New Republic*, 13 April 1915). Debating bred the worst kind of politician, they argued, the one who takes the more convenient and profitable argument and does not argue from their convictions or principles (Keith 2007, 69).

By the 1920s and 1930s, educators agreed that debate was not effective in teaching democratic values and skills, and that it was more a competitive sport than an educative experience for both participant and spectator (Elliott 1928, 18). Here is where Dewey’s writings about group learning had particular resonance. As we know, Dewey favoured experiential learning as a method of problem-solving, as for him learning involved problem solving in a non-competitive environment (Dewey 1910). Learning should occur among a group of individuals that were

working together to find a solution to a common problem. This means that learning democratic skills and values was not going to happen in a debate, which is a conflict that can be strictly manufactured for the sake of entertainment. Instead, democratic education occurs in discussion.

This is why the focus of speech pedagogy switched from the debate to discussion in the 1920s. Those who worked the field thought that more discussion was needed to offset the amount of debate in the public sphere, especially in the universities. “Debate is about winning (whether in contest or parliamentary contexts) and discussion isn’t. Debaters are competitive and conflictive, often alienating their opponents, while discussion is cooperative, drawing out conflicts and valuing different points of views” (Keith 2007, 132-33, see Thonssen 1939). While they recognized that discussion was important in bringing about consensus in finding solutions to common problems, they also understood that disagreement is a part of human life and discussion could help participants better grasp the nature of the disagreement. This is a quote from one of the textbooks; “Social progress is very largely a product of social conflict. This position will sound less paradoxical if we say that personal and institutional growth are determined very largely by the methods employed in resolving personal and social problems. Every problem we meet presents the possibilities of a constructive, even a creative, solution. Problems should be regarded as opportunities for clearer insight, better understanding, and sounder policy” (McBurney and Hance 1939a, 17). This quote is almost Hegelian in spirit, in the sense that McBurney and Hance are ultimately claiming that social disagreement would lead to progress, at least in the hope that a solution beneficial to all would be found²². However, other educators took a more realistic view that would sound more familiar to contemporary readers. Baird stated that

²² Some have suggested that Dewey was heavily influenced by the Hegelian dialectic. See Daniel M. Savage, *John Dewey's Liberalism: Individual, Community, and Self-Development*

even though discussion aimed at consensus, there had to be a point where “democracy must get on” and a decision has to be made, which usually took the form of a vote (Baird 1924, 260; Keith 2007, 134).

These textbooks showed a great sensitivity to the deep disagreement about politics, and the authors believed that it was important to teach this to students. Nearly all of the opening chapters in these textbooks begin with a discussion of democracy and the role that debate and discussion plays in it. McBurney and Hance (1939a, 28) quote directly from Dewey’s *The Public and Its Problems*; “the essential need is the improvement of the methods and conditions of debate, discussion, and persuasion. That is the need of the public” (Dewey 1927, 208). They further state, “democratic values are best conserved by a cooperative, reflective approach to personal and social problems. Perhaps it is not too ambitious to say that the principles and methods of discussion attempt to bring these personal and social problems under the surveillance of an approach comparable in most respects to the scientific method” (1939a, 37). Here is another quote from McBurney and Hance’s other textbook *The Principles and Method of Discussion*; “Communication plays an important role in any society. If democracy is to exist in a society as complex as ours, it is imperative that there be abundant opportunity for free and open communication” (1939b, 21).

Auer and Ewbank (1941) make an even stronger case for the link between democracy and discussion. “Discussion and debate are not simply courses in a college curriculum. They are the essential tools of a democratic society. To train students in the intelligent and effective use of these tools is the aim of this book” (3). In an article in the *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, Auer

states that one of the purposes of these discussion courses is to “recognize the importance and need of intelligent public discussion in a democratic society” (Auer 1939, 536). Elliott (1928, 6) also talks about the necessity of well-developed spheres of communication along with communication skills in a democracy, but his pessimistic view foreshadows C. Wright Mills’ writings. “(T)here can be little question that a democratic process is the best way to grow men and women. It is he who does the thinking, faces the problems, makes the plans, who alone achieves both the growth and happiness. Our present ideal and practice of leadership reserve these supreme values to the leaders. Life has become, for a large number of people, pure drudgery. Men become ‘robots’, machines for executing other people’s desires”. This describes the political mortification that politics as a craft is supposed to prevent.

As we can see from these quotes, the developers of these textbooks were not only concerned with developing communication skills, but they also wanted to ingrain a deep respect for democracy, as they believed that the fundamental democratic act was discussing and solving common problems. As a side note, this teaching of democratic values was never intended to be a program of civic republicanism. As Keith explains; “The republican view was that people of virtue and character would automatically know what to do – it was built into the liberal arts education that made them people of character. The discussionist view was that anybody and everybody is a rational problem-solver whose skills can easily be harnessed to democratic practice. The ‘equality’ democracy presupposes was relocated to a skill basic to humans but improved through education” (2007, 152). The goal for solving these problems was not to bring the right people of good character together, but to bring everyone together the right way (Ibid.). It is interesting to see how much these goals expressed in these textbooks are similar to

deliberative democracy. Gutmann and Thompson argued that the problem with political discourse in the 1990s was that there was not enough deliberation. Fishkin makes a similar claim when he says that his Deliberation Day proposal can help discover what they really want from their elected officials. These educators in the 1920s and 1930s make a very similar claim, viz., that perennial discussion of common problems is necessary not only for improvement of public policy, but also for the development of communicative and civic skills. However, the development of discussion courses goes beyond this basic Millian claim. The initial development of these skills occurs within the classroom, and the purpose of these courses is to develop their skills to the point where they can make effective contributions to public discourse immediately when they begin participating politically.

Along with teaching students about the value of democracy, these courses also had lessons in how they should treat each other in a discussion setting. They often make mention of the proper “discussion attitude” that a participant should have when discussing with others. “The best way to understand how these books taught the ‘discussion attitude’ requires the more contemporary vocabulary of relationship. According to these books, discussants, in the ideal case, enacted a particular relationship with each other. The relationship was basically one of cooperative, mutual interests in solving a problem” (Keith 2007, 173). Developing this attitude was important, because successful problem-solving requires the complete cooperation of every participant (Pellegrini and Stirling 1936, iv). Elliott explains this necessity thusly; “the fellowship out of which creative results emerge is that between persons concerned in the same areas of life, but who have varying attitudes, convictions, and experiences. Such a fellowship is an achievement worthwhile because it demands, first; mutual respect; second, an attempt to understand the other

person's point of view; and third, an effort to find a way out in which all can join whole heartedly" (1928, 138). McBurney and Bance's (1939a) book is more of a manual for participants and discussion leaders alike, unlike Elliott's, but it too places importance on "the understanding of people and the ability to create relationships among them conducive to the kind of enterprise we know discussion to be" (259). Ch. XVII of this book gives instruction on how to recognize and deal with people of various personalities, such as introverts and extroverts, optimists and pessimists, flatterers and rude people, the smug and the easily offended (1939a, 260-265). General principles that they ask participants to follow in order to encourage the "discussion attitude" are; 1) to assume good motives from everyone, 2) reward constructive behaviour, 3) provide explanations of the behaviour of others that other participants may not understand, 4) restate disruptive contributions for the sake of clarity, and 5) ask substantive questions that find out the reason why the disruptive behaviour happens (Ibid., 267-268). Developing a good attitude in discussion does not entail creating a fraternity, but rather an atmosphere of openness and mutual respect so the mutual learning of interests can happen more easily. Once again, we can see the influence of Dewey here, and this explains why speech professors began to favour discussion over debate. "What annoyed Dewey, and the textbook writers, was that unscrupulous and self-interested discussants, demagogues actually, could convince others that unworkable solutions were the best ones" (Keith 2007, 179).

As alluded to earlier, these textbooks aimed to develop the communication skills of discussion leaders as well as those of participants. These textbook writers believed that the discussion leader was extremely important in these discussions. Not only did he have to moderate the discussion, he also had to be a model for the rest of participants in terms of communication skills and

behavior. “The chairman will grow accustomed to sensing the attitudes of the group. A group or assembly, working earnestly on any question, shows approvals, disapprovals, or differences of opinion quite manifestly. The chairman’s success depends upon his learning how to listen and how to watch the facial and other bodily expressions of the members of the group” (Elliott 1928, 71). In short, the moderator had to be the model for the rest of the participants in a number of ways, such as understanding the issues, discussing and communicating clearly and effectively, treating others with respect, and behaving well in the discussion.

The role of the discussion leader greatly concerned these scholars, so much so that there was a whole subset of textbooks and manuals devoted to the subject of how to lead a discussion. Two of these books included J. V. Garland’s *Discussion Methods, Explained and Illustrated* and William Utterback’s *Group Thinking and Conference Leadership*. Garland provides a long list of hints that forum leaders (forums will be discussed in the next section) should follow if the discussion is to be successful. Some of these tips include; “No forum leader should talk longer than forty minutes, (...), The leader can and should avoid answering questions directly, by turning the question back to the persons asking them or by referring them to other persons, (...), Leaders should be adept in changing tactics of discussion (if the discussion begins to drag on), (...), he should not take sides on the question, (...), he should not allow anyone to monopolize the talking”, among others (Garland 1938, 341-343). Furthermore, Utterback (1946) outlined three roles of the chairman in the discussion; 1) to regulate the discussion, 2) to keep discussion focused on the matter under consideration, and 3) interpreting individual contributions for the benefit of the group as a whole (12-14, 17). Elliott (1928, 90-91) also gives tips to the chairman for what to do when the group has trouble dealing with a baffling and confused situation, such as

working to determine the central problem and discover the factors in relation to the problem, and recognizing and summarizing underlying agreements and disagreements.

These scholars understood that a highly skilled discussion leader might make it difficult for others to participate (Judson and Judson 1937, 72), but they thought that a disproportionate level of skill between the moderator and participant could be overcome by the moderator's scrupulous adherence to democratic principles. These textbook writers, much like some defenders of deliberative democracy today, believed that the public discussion is where the heart of true democracy lies. For example, Utterback defined democracy "as government by talk" (1951, 10). Discussion is where citizens saw how democracy truly should function and the place where they refined their techniques in practicing democracy. Moderators had to be neutral and be a democratic model for the discussion group. If they did not, as we will see with the federal forums, the participants were more than willing to complain and point it out.

This view of the moderator as a neutral, highly learned, and impartial model of democratic skill for the participants has its parallels with modern scholars' view of the moderator in a discussion (see Barber 1984, 271-272). One useful way to understand the role of moderator in discussion is to compare him to the instructor in models of experiential learning. This method of learning allows the student to learn by observing someone with more experience. She could learn how to be an effective political participant on her own, but she can learn faster if she had some help. The experienced political practitioner can provide a model of effective political participation to the student while at the same time giving her the opportunity to develop her own skills. This form of

instruction primarily allows students to develop their skills via experience and figure out their own styles and methods through trial and error.

Finally, these courses aimed to teach students the necessary skills to participate effectively in discussions as well as how to structure the discussion. Once again, they borrowed heavily from Dewey. Elliott quotes Dewey's *How We Think* extensively and says the book should be a guideline for how group discussions should operate. Group thinking involves "1) a felt difficulty; 2) its location and definition; 3) suggestion of possible solutions, 4) development by reasoning of the bearings of the suggestions; 5) further observation and experiment leading to its acceptance or rejection" (Elliott 1928, 36; Dewey 1910, 72). Keith points out that the early textbooks such as Pellegrini and Stirling's *Argumentation and Public Discussion* had to rely heavily on using examples to illustrate their points, simply because there was no common pedagogical vocabulary to teach discussion skills. "Fully two-thirds of (Pellegrini and Stirling's) book was readings and transcript-style examples of public discussions, so students actually had a fair-chance of finding out how discussion worked, while having little chance to understanding it completely" (2007, 158). Even though it made conceptual learning of discussion difficult, it did provide a large space for experimentation in developing these skills, since discussion skills were left strictly to imitation and trial and error.

McBurney and Bance's *Discussion in Human Affairs* (1939a), one of the later textbooks in discussion learning, represents the finest example of an attempt to develop a common language for discussion skills development. It is a significant advancement on previous textbooks since it discusses which skills should be developed and how they should be developed. This goes beyond

developing the right attitude towards the process and other participants. *Discussion in Human Affairs* teaches students how to speak clearly and effectively, and how to couch one's submissions in language that others might understand, along with teaching students about mutual respect and being reasonable in the discussion. If a similar textbook were around today, it could be considered a textbook on deliberative democracy. Some of the tips that they provide deal with the actual mechanics of speech, reflecting on the tradition of speech development that these discussion textbooks emerged from. Much like previous speech textbooks, they discuss effective methods of communication, and ask students to look at animation and sincerity, directness, vocal discrimination, bodily action, and audibility (195-197).

However, McBurney and Bance also discuss how to contribute in a way that is both effective and accessible to all. They ask participants to consider the common good when defending a position and to cooperate with others. "Try to discover what should be the group purpose in the situation at hand. Work honestly and faithfully to get this purpose understood and achieved. Be tolerant of all points of view" (1939a, 200). In addition, participants should assume their share of group responsibility and treat the discussion as important, in order to keep the discussion from becoming a dull and boring affair (Ibid.). They also encourage participants to throw their ideas out for discussion, even if they are not sure of their opinions. "Do not be afraid to express your ideas in discussion even if you are not perfectly sure of your ground. Throw the idea into the discussion for what it is worth. If it proves to be wrong or of little value, be perfectly willing to recognize and acknowledge that fact. Let the group know what you are thinking about. It is only in this way that real group thinking can take place" (Ibid., 201).

They also ask participants to be objective and not personalise the discussion. As they recommend, “by all means defend a position in which you honestly and seriously believe, but be certain that this belief has its basis in the merits of the position and not in the fact that you happened to be the one to introduce the idea” (McBurney and Bance 1939a, 202). Moreover, students are asked to “listen to understand” and pay careful attention to understand all the positions being presented. This attitude is consistent with the purpose of deliberation as Christiano understands it, which is to give individuals the chance to learn their own interests and those of others. Finally, they ask participants to present their opinions and judgments in an empirical, almost scientific way. “The good scientific report presents no more and no less than the legitimate truth-claim of the conclusions it sets forth. The contributor in discussion, we believe, will do well to emulate this kind of reporting in most respects” (Ibid., 205). This again borrows from Dewey, since he believed that social discussion should almost take the form of a scientific enquiry, where everyone has the desire to solve a common problem, and emotion and prejudice has no place in these discussions. No doubt that some scholars such as Young and Sanders would have raised their eyebrows at this statement. However, it should be noted that some scholars, such as Elliott (1928, 80), believed that some emotional statements, or what Sanders today would call testimony, had a role to play in these discussions. Nonetheless, they do provide a schema for how statements should be made in discussion. “The speaker gives others an account of the reflective processes which he went through in reaching his conclusion. In so far as it is necessary for understanding, he presents the facts and expert opinions, the definitions, analysis (including his purposes and values), hypotheses considered, and what his reasoning has been on these hypotheses” (McBurney and Bance 1939a, 206).

On one level, it might seem strange to advocate the use of textbooks in these courses. However, once we look at the exercises in these textbooks, it is clear that they are experiential and experimental in nature. Once again, *Discussion in Human Affairs* is a good example of this. While the other textbooks from this time period tended to provide advice to the reader about how to create a good atmosphere for discussion, McBurney and Hance's book provides concrete exercises for the students, most of which involve students discussing amongst themselves what they read about in the textbook, and even asking them to challenge what the textbook says. Here is an example of one of the exercises. "Discuss the following statements in class. Do you agree or disagree? Why? A. Conflict is inherent in human experience as in all nature. B. Freedom of choice within the limits of our responsibilities to others is the essence of democracy. C. The principal limitations on freedom are those imposed by license, authority, and ignorance and incompetence (1939a, 26). McBurney and Hance do not merely assert that conflict is inherent in human nature, they ask the students to discuss it amongst themselves and grapple with whether this statement is true or not. Here is another example of an exercise where McBurney and Hance are directly asking the student to challenge their assertions. "Read and discuss the techniques for problem-evasion below. Can you add to the list? How would you cope with them?" (237).

This textbook is not simply a manual for good discussion, even though it provides several helpful hints and things to avoid to the student. It is designed to provide a framework for students to try out discussion on their own, and ask them to reflect on the successes and failure and try again. The following exercise is a good example of this; "Divide the class into groups of two and conduct dialogues before the class, Let each pair choose its own subject. Criticize pattern, continuity, spontaneity, the form and method of contributing, attitudes and manner of speaking,

and general conversational ability. Continue this drill with people who have difficulty in contributing” (McBurney and Hance 1939a, 211). Other exercises have the students setting up their own discussion forums. “Prepare a five-minute talk on some problem of your own choice. Plan this as a contribution in discussion in terms of the suggestions given in this chapter. Organize the talk on the basis of the five steps in reflective thinking. Consider questions such as these in criticizing the contributions: Was the speech clear and understandable? Was the contribution satisfactorily organized? (...) Following each talk, ask some member of the class to state in one minute what he has understood the position to be. If the speaker has not been understood, let the class ask questions until such an understanding has been reached” (Ibid., 210).

We can see another factor of experiential learning at play, which is that of mutual evaluation. Having the students evaluate themselves creates a situation where all the students can develop their skills, learn about how they did, and not feel discouraged by their progress - which can often happen when a student is evaluated. Of course, these exercises also involve evaluation from the teacher as well (these are university courses after all), but they also ask students to comment on each other’s work as well. This not only helps them recognize effective and good discussion practices, but also helps them develop their own reflective and cognitive skills by asking them to think about what constitutes good discussion techniques. The practice of using multiple sources of evaluation has continued with experiential learning exercises to this day, and empirical evidence suggests that students retain more information when evaluated this way (Colby, Beaumont, and Corngold 2008, 128-129). At the end of the book, the exercises predominantly ask students to organise their own discussions about a variety of topics using

various discussion formats, including mock legislative debates and forums (McBurney and Bance 1939a, 295). Very few of these exercises involve any writing at all, only 28 of the 150 exercises in *Discussion in Human Affairs* directly asks students to prepare essays. Nowhere in the book do we find any mention of tests or quizzes, nor are students asked to memorize facts. Instead, the goal of these textbooks is to have students develop their skills of discussion by actually practicing and trying out these skills amongst themselves under the guidance of an instructor.

There are some similarities between the discussion that these instructors taught and deliberative democracy. Both sides would agree that discussion of the issues is necessary for the improvement of public discourse. Also, they would agree that the essence of democracy is deliberating about our choices. The claim in this thesis is different, since it borrows from Christiano's claim that both adversarial forms of democracy such as voting and deliberative democracy is needed if democracy is to meet the principle of the equal advancement and consideration of interests. Moreover, even though they were surprisingly accepting of pluralism, they still believed that all discussion should aim at consensus. As we saw earlier in this thesis, Dryzek and Niemeyer have argued that deliberation has a useful role to play even when consensus is not possible.

These textbooks offer an effective method to teach political skills that meets the Dewey's criteria of democratic education. In the exercises in these textbooks, students learn about democratic values, the good attitudes that one should have in a discussion, as well as how to debate, communicate, and deliberate effectively. It would be relatively easy to adopt these exercises,

update them for the 21st century, and turn them into courses in deliberative democracy and adversarial democracy (since the development of these skills in both these fields are required). As Niemi and Junn explain, the main problems with civics courses today are twofold. First, “civics classes, to judge from what students were examined on, deal sparsely with contemporary events, problems, or controversies” (1998, 50). This is a startling observation, given that democratic political action precisely asks citizens to make judgments about current problems and controversies. These discussion courses aimed to give students the skills to provide these judgments, and that civic education today is failing woefully in this respect. Secondly, “students seem to have retained knowledge on aspects of civic information that were already familiar to them from other contexts or that they were meaningful to them in some direct way” (Niemi and Junn 1998, 50-51). This is why they recommend that new civics courses must be “based on the recognition that American government and politics is a controversial and contested territory. Indeed, the practice of democracy is often characterized by strong differences and contentious debate, and its teaching should reflect this reality” (Ibid., 150). The discussion courses of the 1930s confronted the differences head-on, even though they asked students to discuss these differences and not necessarily debate them. A great deal of these exercises asked students to discuss contemporary issues with the goal that these discussions would not only develop the students’ discussion skills, but also reveal new information about the arguments and improve our understanding of the debate.

The result of this, even though the authors of these textbooks never said as much, is that the students get a better sense of how democratic politics truly works, which in turn can cause them to develop a better appreciation of it. These discussion courses certainly did not shy away from

contentious issues, but instead used them as course material. With a more realistic expectation and understanding of the nature of democratic politics, we ought to expect students to be ready to deal with the actual challenges of participating in the public sphere instead of entering into politics with a false view of how politics should function.

Adult Education: The Federal Forum Project

Any reform of the education system must look at adult education. At times, adult education gets ignored, especially by policy makers, but it usually plays a strong role in modern societies, and the United States is no exception. Knowles argues that adult education refers to three things. Firstly, it refers to a process that develops adults' knowledge and skills. Secondly, adult education is a set of organized activities for adults, such as classes and courses, etc. Thirdly, it can refer to a movement, or a network of individuals and associations working toward common goals. Generally, adult education will have all three of these aspects working together at the same time and in concert with each other (Knowles 1962, iv; Keith 2007, 242). Debatin in the 1930s noted that adult education often has two goals – practical education that develops skills and liberal education that teaches liberal and democratic values. We have seen both goals in the discussion textbooks described above. Moreover, both goals of education feed into each other, “as contributing in different ways to democratic life: better and smarter workers have more time to become fluent in public affairs and so participate” (Keith 2007, 242; Debatin 1938, 13ff).

The Federal Forum Project, which remains to this day the only effort by an American government to educate adults on a mass scale, certainly captured all of these aspects. The Project

was a system of public forums that focused on a single topic, with an expert on the topic speaking for less than an hour, and the rest of the time was devoted to audience members asking questions. The audience were allowed to ask any type of question that they liked, even challenging the assertions of the expert. The forum's purpose was to inform citizens about the pressing issues of the day, develop their understanding of the society that they lived in, and also give them the opportunity to develop their communicative skills. Moreover, the goal of these forums was to have citizens take ownership of the problems that their society faced. John Studebaker, the Commissioner of the Office of Education in the 1930s who created the Federal Forum Project, had outlined the goals of the forum thusly. "First, they would provide an opportunity for citizens to learn about our 'complicated social order' outside organised schooling; second, they would allow citizens to learn more than was possible with self-study, primarily because in forums they were exposed to the views of other citizens, and third, forums would defeat the powers of demagogues, since forums brought ideas into the light for the critical examination, which was fatal to propaganda and demagoguery" (Keith 2007, 278, see Studebaker 1935, 43-44). As we can see, the forums were intended to teach citizens about how democracy should work along with informing, educating, developing their discussion skills, and encouraging them to critically analyse ideas that were brought up for discussion.

Programs and networks of adult education always come about because there is a skill that is not sufficiently developed in the population. They usually spring up organically because political and/or economic demands require them. As Keith (2002, 242) explains; "certainly one of the earliest reasons for adult education would have been religious instruction. Before mandatory schooling ensured a high literacy rate, learning the Bible would have happened not only in

church but in study groups formed through church and community associations (...) Economic interests frequently motivated adult education in the 19th century; the explosive growth in scientific and practical knowledge went hand in hand with advances in manufacturing and agriculture”.

Much like the discussion courses in universities emerged from speech courses in the early 20th century, public forums, which were institutionalised publicly with the Federal Forum Project also emerged from previous arenas of adult education. These arenas were responding to economic needs, but they also entailed discussion about social and political problems. In the United States in the 1830s, the lyceums were popular in urban areas. They brought citizens together to share knowledge about their trades, but also brought people of different classes and viewpoints to foster a better common understanding of their community. While the lyceums were aimed at developing strong moral characters in participants (this sounds much more like civic republicanism than the intention of the forums), they did embrace a strong element of Deweyan democracy, viz., that citizens ought to take control of the common problems of society and work together to try and solve them (Ray 2005, 15; also see Bode 1956 for a detailed history on lyceums). The lyceums came to a crashing end once the American Civil War broke out, even though the accompanying lecture series survived until the 1880s (Ray 2005, 44).

On the other hand, the Chautauquas (named after Lake Chautauqua in New York, where the first of these meetings were held) emerged in rural areas in the 1870s as a summer camp that included basic religious instruction along with literacy education (Gould 1961). Over time, however, they grew much larger. Their religious tone was severely muted by the 1920s, and became touring

festivals that included entertainers and musicians, public speakers, and teachers. They taught students and had reading lists and assignments that students could complete to earn diplomas after a four-year program of correspondence study. The Chautauquas were the main vehicle for the creation of the University of Chicago (Keith 2007, 219; Gould 1961), which aimed to bring the Chautauquas' program of study into the university setting, but this goal changed after one of the main figures of the founding of the University, William Rainey Harper, died in 1906. While the Chautauquas were giant summer fairs for Americans living outside of rural areas, Rollo Hyman argued at the time "that the most valuable part of the Chautauqua was not the entertainments, but the educational part, the forum" (1915, 11). In the 1920s, the Chautauquas tried to become training grounds for citizenship (Reiser 2003, 12), much like the discussion courses aimed to be, but in doing so, they divorced themselves from their religious heritage and fell in popularity (Ibid., 274-285).

The forums did not emerge from the lyceums and the Chautauquas exactly, but they can derive some of their heritage from them. In the case of the lyceums and the Chautauquas, the development of communicative and deliberative skills was a byproduct of their main goals. The forums on the other hand were developed strictly to serve the political purpose of informing citizens and developing their communicative skills, as well as to serve as an arena for public discussion. As stated earlier, a forum had "a group of people attended in the evening, listened to a speaker for less than an hour, and then had some time to ask questions. Speakers were often college professors or journalists, and spoke about matters of public interest" (Keith 2007, 213). There was no such thing as a "one night only" forum. The forums were held in a series and were connected thematically, and participants were expected to subscribe for the entire series.

Moreover, the topics in the forum were always social and/or political. This was not the case with the lyceums or Chauatauquas, since they were aimed at primarily developing trades and literacy skills, respectively.

The first forum was the Cooper Union Forum, which was founded in 1859 to educate the working class about politics and social theory, followed by the Ford Hall Forum in Boston in 1908 (Keith 2007, 225; Lurie 1930,26-48). These forums grew in popularity tremendously – the Ford Hall Forum received congratulatory notes from Calvin Coolidge, Clarence Darrow, and John Dewey himself. Forums were also held on the airwaves, as nearly every major radio station at the time had a forum series. NBC aired *America's Town Meeting of the Air*, while CBS had *The Columbia Public Affairs Institute*, *The Columbia Workshop*, and *An Invitation for Learning* (Knowles 1962, 123)ⁱ. The forums on the radio were done with a studio audience providing questions, as the technology to take phone calls on the air did not yet exist. Also, several forums sprang up around the United States that were funded by the Carnegie Corporation of New York (CCNY) and the American Association of Adult Education (AAAE), which was the funding arm of the CCNY (Keith 2007, 257-259). The CCNY's goal was "to promote the advancement and diffusion of knowledge and understanding among the people of the United States by aiding technical schools, institutes of higher learning, libraries, (and) scientific research" (Cartwright 1935, 11). The AAAE funded several projects that promoted adult education, and the lion's share of them were forums. Since the format of these forums was not standardised yet, most of the forums were experiments to see if they could find the right formula for successful adult education. "The AAAE funded an enormous range of projects. In its first ten years, it spent just under three million dollars on adult education projects, about two million of which went to

‘experiments’, i.e. programs that might become self-sustaining, or models for others, if they succeeded” (Keith 2007, 261).

John Studebaker, the superintendent for Des Moines during the 1920s, received several CCNY grants to set up a forum series in the city. These forums proved successful throughout the 1920s and 1930s, and President Roosevelt appointed Studebaker as the Commissioner for the Office of Education in 1934, on the recommendation of Harry Wallace, a friend of Studebaker who was working for him as a discussion leader in the Iowa forums. Once appointed as Commissioner, Studebaker took his template for organizing forums in Des Moines to a national level with the Federal Forum Project, which was funded by the Federal Emergency Recovery Act (one of Roosevelt’s several infrastructure programs to help the U.S. pull itself out of the Depression). Keith explains how these forums were organised; “so the elementary schools would be the basic forum location, for the ‘neighbourhood forums’, and in the high schools ‘city-wide’ forums; there were 18 of these. In the middle schools were ‘central forums’; and in the high schools ‘city-wide’ forums; there were eight of these altogether. (...) In fact, most participants lived pretty close to the forums they attended” (2007, 279; Studebaker 1935, 61).

When the Federal Forum Project started, Studebaker created “demonstration centres” of forums all across the country, in order to generate interest. Even though the Federal Forum Project aimed at educating adults, the demonstration centres were linked to high schools with an eye to generating interest among the youth, where the discussions held in the demonstration centres integrated with existing high school curricula. Studebaker generally allowed any community to create forums and demonstration centres if they wanted them, but they had to meet the following

criteria; “1) forums would have to guarantee freedom of speech; 2) boards of education had to be the policy makers; 3) the superintendent would act as the administrator; 4) the space for forum meetings would have to be free of charge; 5) forums would have to be open to the public at no cost” (Keith 2007, 296). Studebaker hired forum leaders on a full-time basis, since he believed that full-time public employees would be neutral. These leaders were usually academics who were well versed in topics about the economy and international affairs – the two most popular areas of discussion in the forums.

Studebaker’s contribution to adult civic education is significant for two reasons. Firstly, he created the only nation-wide adult civic education system using federal funds in United States history. The forums, since they were designed to encourage critical thinking as well as discussion, enabling participants to develop political skills. This makes Studebaker’s forums an attractive reform for implementing politics as a craft in the field of political education today. Secondly, he was an extremely articulate defender of the civic forums, their purpose and aims, and how they contributed to the health of democracy. From Studebaker’s statements, we get an understanding of why the forums existed and how they made its participants, society, and American democracy itself better off. Not surprisingly, the structure and spirit of the Federal Forums were heavily influenced by Dewey. They stressed that experiential learning of these skills was necessary for citizens to collectively come up with solutions to solve the problems that society faced. The aim of politics as a craft has a much simpler and more humble goal in line with Christiano. Political and communicative skills are to be developed in order for individuals and groups to better articulate, deliberate, and understand each other’s interests. Also, these skills are required in order to provide a clear, reasonable, and articulate list of prioritised aims to

elected officials in order to be translated into policy and/or law. If all of this leads to the solving of society's problems through collective input, then so much the better, but politics as a craft does not have such a lofty goal.

The Project was a relative success in attracting people with different education levels in large numbers. "For the year 1937-38, the total attendance at 33 forums spread across 30 states was 1,109,235 people" (Keith 2007, 303). Even though they were relatively successful, Studebaker was concerned about getting more people to attend the forums, especially as attendance dropped off in 1938 and 1939. Studebaker had reported in 1937 that the advertising of the forums was an issue, as several people had never heard about them (Studebaker and Williams 1937, 69). However, as with the lyceums, war put an end to the Federal Forum Project. In 1940, as the Roosevelt administration focused more and more on World War II, the Office of Education was shifted into the new Federal Security Agency, and interests in adult civic education evaporated (Keith 2007, 264).

Studebaker turned to the forums, as stated earlier, because he saw them as an opportunity for citizens to develop their communicative and critical analysis skills in order to better understand and tackle the issues of the day. When he first started the forums in Des Moines, he hoped that they would both educate citizens about the complexities of society's problems and also help them come to terms with the difficulties of having to navigate through different and contradictory opinions and beliefs in order to find solutions to societal problems. Studebaker thought that the forums would mitigate against "propaganda" and "demagoguery" (1935, 45). He was developing the forums during the Great Depression when, unlike now, democracy was most

certainly not the only game in town. Events on the European continent at the time certainly showed that. He feared that the Depression would cause people to believe that efficiency and massive intrusion in the economy were what was needed, which meant a turn to socialism and/or dictatorship. Studebaker believed that the rise of fascism and communism was due to a failure of adult education. “In Europe, nation after nation has turned to dictatorship – Fascist or Communistic. Why? Because their people, like ours, are faced with complex problems....bewilderingly difficult to the voter” (Studebaker 1935, 9; Keith 2007, 266). Without developing political and communicative skills to the point where citizens could face society’s challenges on their own, they could well turn over control over their lives to a demagogue. Experiential democratic education was the only way to develop and maintain a democracy. There was no authoritarian education system that could produce democratic citizens (Keith 2007, 266).

The only way to do that was to have a truly democratic education system. For adults, the forums represented the best way to develop the necessary skills to become a well-functioning and effective democratic participant. The forums involve members of the community listening to an expert on a given issue, asking questions, getting informed, and then discussing amongst themselves how to tackle these issues. Citizens had to talk to each other, because the issues are so complex that they require collective input to solve them, and free and unhindered discussion further entrenched democracy in society. For Studebaker, democracy was truly government by talk (Keith 2007, 268).

Studebaker believed that the forums had to be both educative and deliberative. They provided participants with information and new arguments to consider when thinking about what to do

about the issues being discussed. Moreover, by having a series of discussions with an expert in the field, a forum participant can learn effectively how to communicate, question, and criticise statements made by others. The forums occurred in a series, and participants were asked to attend all of the forums in a season. By having participants interact with experts and each other on a continued basis, participants would develop their deliberative and communicative skills by constantly practicing them. Through the development of communication and critical analysis, the forums would help entrench democracy by developing citizens who are capable and willing to try to solve the problems that they were facing instead of handing over the responsibility to dictators *carte blanche*.

Also, Studebaker wanted to ensure that the forums functioned in a democratic way along with developing democratic skills. For him, the forums were supposed to be an impartial “search for the truth” (Keith 2007, 300). As he explains; the forums represent “no better training in tolerance, in open-mindedness and in critical thinking, frequently under considerable tension, can be provided for the mass of busy citizens than in the city-wide forums where they witness the cold objective logic with which partisan positions can be proved” (Studebaker 1935, 59). The forums would have no place for debate simply for the sake of disagreement, nor would forum leaders tolerate partisan posturing or rhetoric. The forums, Studebaker believed, had great epistemic capacity for making insights about what should be done, so long as every participant, including the forum leader, remained committed to impartiality and *thinking about* finding solutions to problems that are in the public interest. I say “thinking about” because the forums did not aim to reach consensus about what to do about job losses or the rise of fascism in Europe for example (two issues that were discussed in Studebaker’s Des Moines forums). As stated in

one of the prefaces read out by the forum leaders before the forum started; “These forums are not action groups; there will be no attempt to pass resolutions nor to organize for social action. This you will do in the various organizations, groups and parties to which you belong. If we all take our respective actions in these groups with more intelligence and greater understanding, these forums will have served their great purpose in Democracy” (Keith 2007, 300). The forums were not meant to generate consensus on these issues, but to provide participants the opportunity to learn more, think and talk about these issues, and thus improve the quality of public opinion. From this we can see how deliberative democrats, especially those that believe that deliberation serves a purpose in the absence of consensus, will find forums attractive as potential deliberative arenas.

Studebaker wanted to ensure neutrality and impartiality in the forums. This became an issue once the Federal Forum Project was launched and public funds were being used. Critics charged that forum leaders, paid from the public purse, could never be neutral, since they could become apologists for government policy. Studebaker answered the charge thusly. “forum leaders recognize that they are public educators, that they are supported in their positions by citizens and taxpayers of all shades of opinion, and that they should therefore fairly represent the claims of their various constituencies” (Studebaker 1935, 71). This should resonate with deliberative democrats today, since Studebaker is echoing Habermas’ statement that public reason should be accountable to the diversity of claims and interpretations in the public sphere (Keith 2007, 285), even though Studebaker was more likely to use the term “public discussion” instead of “public reason”. At the beginning of each forum, leaders told participants that their “purpose is to open the subject to discussion; to outline as fairly and impartially as possible the major issues involved

in our problem” and that “I am not an oracle, that I do not pose as a final authority. I am not here to tell you what to think, rather to join with you in an organized process of cooperative thinking” (Keith 2007, 300).

Participants were told early on that the forum was an arena for discussion, while the experts were there to provide information and to moderate. He would at times give his opinion, but would clearly state that his opinion is not definitive. “These conclusions I hold are subject to change in the light of new evidence. If from time to time I express my personal views it will be in the spirit of the phrase ‘as I see it’” (Keith 2007, 300). This statement foreshadows what deliberative democrats have said should be the ideal attitude for participants in a deliberative arena. Both deliberation and the forums stress openness to change one’s opinions in the light of a better argument. The forum leader was an expert, but he was also an experienced learner. He, like all the participants, was working to learn more about the problems being discussed, but he differed from them only in that he had more information and more experience in discussing and reflecting about these issues. Judging from these quotes from the forum’s preface, it is clear that Studebaker intended the forum leader to be a model for the other participants to follow in terms of how to behave and speak at these forums and to model impartiality, neutrality, and civility. Since this statement was read aloud in every forum, participants were to expect this behaviour from the forum leader, and that this would create a culture of impartiality, neutrality, and civility in the forums. Studebaker thought that this would be enough to keep leaders from stepping out of line during discussions. “As citizens, they quickly recognize and protest against any biased and partisan attitude of the leader, whether consciously or unconsciously used by him to bend opinion in the direction of his own personal belief or prejudices” (Studebaker 1935, 67-68).

Even though the war effort spelled the end of the Federal Forum Project, it still represents the most ambitious attempt in American history to educate adults in political skills and political issues. Forums sprung up all over the United States, from major urban centres such as Atlanta and Milwaukee to less populated rural areas. This is important to note, since the lyceums and the Chautauquas were urban and rural phenomena, respectively. The forums were nominally inter-racial, even though full integration was not possible in the Southern states due to segregation laws at the time. To counter this, parallel black forums sprang up in Georgia, following Studebaker's methods (Keith 2007, 307; Tillman 1939, 33). The forums are very compatible with deliberative democracy as defended in this thesis. Deliberation, among other things, is supposed to provide individuals and groups with the opportunity to understand better their own interests as well as those of others. This is necessary, because our individual and collective understanding of interests is incomplete and imperfect, and thus in constant need of revision. The forums provided participants with this opportunity. If they wanted to know more about an issue, the forum leader could provide more information about it. Moreover, the forum let participants know what others were thinking, and would cause them to evaluate and analyse their own opinions vis-à-vis others. This give and take could reveal what preferences were not feasible or not acceptable to a majority of people.

While the forums had a lot of deliberative value, they were designed primarily to educate. The forums would teach adults about various issues through open and free discussion. This discussion would encourage the repeated use of critical analysis and reflection, which would cause participants to develop these skills further. As argued throughout this thesis, improving the

quality of political participation entails citizens developing a better understanding of what they want, and this requires strongly developed deliberative and reflective skills. Moreover, the forums had participants discuss issues with each other and with the forum leader, and once again, the repeated practice of speaking skills, this time under the moderation of forum leader, also helps to develop these skills. The forum is clearly a place for the experiential learning of skills necessary for the improvement of the quality of political participation. Moreover, the forum is also a model of the democratic values that should be cultivated in order to entrench politics as a craft into our democratic culture.

On top of this, the Federal Forum Project aimed to develop a strong ethic about how democratic discussions should function. While it is almost certainly the case that there are participants in these forums that have highly developed political skills and a good knowledge of the issue, it is clear that the atmosphere in these forums is meant to allow everyone to participate and have a positive experience. The discussion is not allowed to get to a point where one person or group dominates the conversation, thus ensuring that the discussion is free of internal exclusions.

Service Learning

Service learning has become more entrenched in secondary schools in Canada, the United States (Niemi, Hepburn, and Chapman 2000; Perry and Katula 2001; Morgan and Streb 2001), and the United Kingdom, and is also seen in some universities in the United States and the United Kingdom (Annette 1999; 2003). Moreover, most Canadian high school students have to complete a set number of volunteer hours in order to graduate. As Hepburn (1997, 136) explains, service learning is “a combination of in-school learning and out-of-school work designed to enhance democratic education and assist the community”. Service learning is a component of

school curricula that has students go out into the community, volunteer for community organizations, and to report back on their experiences in class.

Service learning is designed to teach students about the values of civic volunteerism and asks them to confront real-world problems by assisting volunteer groups. The main values that service learning stress are civic volunteerism and community-building. Ideally, students should learn that the volunteering and civic participation are important and necessary actions for an adult to engage in. This in turn helps the student develop a sense of community and helps them to think about what the common good is. As Lisman (1998, 26) explains; “promoting a spirit of volunteerism is often the pathway or route for drawing young people into community involvement. Community service is often the age appropriate way for young people to become involved in their communities” (see also Wuthnow 1991; Coles 1993). He cites statements in the Crick Report and statements by then-Home Secretary David Blunkett as evidence of this (Blunkett 2001, 19; Crick 2002, 113-115). “The Crick Report saw citizenship education as comprising three separate but interrelated strands: social and moral responsibility, political literacy and community involvement” (Annette 2005, 329). The goal for service learning here is for students to develop a strong sense of community and civic duty, and help them see that active civic participation is important.

The American version of service learning aims to help develop students’ moral development. As Giles and Eyler (1998, 66) note; “students [who participate in service learning] are more likely to see themselves as connected to their community, to value service, to endorse systemic approaches to social problems, to believe that communities can solve their problems, and to have

greater racial tolerance when involved in service learning (Giles and Eyler, 1994; Markus, Howard, and King, 1993; Kendrick, 1996; Myers-Lipton 1996). The goal on both sides of the Atlantic is to improve civic engagement, and to mold students into the citizens that take civic action seriously and believe that it is necessary for building their community. Thus service learning will make students more socially responsible and more willing to take ownership of the challenges that their community faces (Exley 1996).

Service learning stresses moral development and civic volunteerism, which in turn will increase the quantity of not only political participation but also in non-profit sectors. Politics as a craft focuses on empowering citizens by improving the quality of political participation through the development of political, communicative, and deliberative skills. The goal of politics as a craft is not necessarily to produce citizens of strong civic virtue that will participate in order to strengthen and make their community better. Dewey saw the purpose of political participation in a slightly different way. Citizens participate in order to solve common problems, and doing so develops their skills. In terms of politics as a craft, participation develops these skills, but the purpose of participation is to advance and better understand our interests along with ensuring that

Service learning is already a function of experiential learning. As Lisman (1998, 28) explains, service learning programs have students “seek out service experiences that bear some relationship to the subjects being studied in the classroom”. As mentioned earlier, students have to work with volunteer organizations and learn about the issues and problems that these

organizations deal with by working for these organizations on a day-to-day basis. This is a form of experiential learning, since it involves practical learning experience. Lisman further elaborates that “through the service experience, students often can discover early in the program whether this vocation meets their ends” (1998, 28).

But service learning is not without its critics. Kirlin argues that the effectiveness of service learning is hampered by not focusing more on developing civic skills (2002, 571). She points to the several studies that show participants in extracurricular clubs, which involve experiential learning, better develop their political skills than they would in service learning programs and were more likely to be engaged in politics in later life (Conrad and Hedin 1989; Glanville 1999; Hepburn 2000). Service learning, even though it constitutes a form of experiential learning, focuses on students learning civic volunteerism. But this is a mistake according to Kirlin. As she explains; “democratic society inherently demands collective decision making. Thus, young adults must practice the skills necessary for civic engagement; cognitive understanding of democracy is not sufficient. Adolescent participation in organisations provides the opportunity for hands-on development of foundational civic skills such as working in groups, organising others to accomplish tasks, communicating, and working out differences of substance or process on the way to accomplishing a goal” (2002, 573).

In her mind, service learning falls short of this goal. “The most significant step is rethinking the front end of service and volunteer programs so that students have as much latitude as possible to learn and practice civic skills through the process of designing and organizing their activities

themselves. This does not mean disengaging the service experience from the classroom content. Rather, it means facilitating students' discovery of what problems exist, whom they need to contact to address the issues, and what types of projects they will undertake" (Ibid.).

However, there are other experiential learning curriculums that focus on developing skills and more specifically, aim to teach students about social inequality, disempowerment, and social justice. Some of them have been elaborated above in the previous chapter, but there are several examples that can be culled from all over the world. Below is just a summary of a few.

In Australia, the ruMAD? (Are You Making A Difference) program began in 2001, empowers students to "enact social change and make a difference within their schools and communities. Predicated on the belief that everyone is able to improve and help change the communities in which they live, the program provides participants with opportunities for experiential civic engagement" (Zyngier 2009, 234). Immediately we can see from the very mandate of ruMAD? that it is designed to empower students to make a positive change in the world that they live in. However, this is a rather bald statement that could mean anything. One person's positive change is another's negative one. Yet if we look further in ruMAD?'s mandate, we see objectives that are rather close to the goals of politics as a craft. "ruMAD? is underpinned by four main educational objectives; 1) to engage young people in issues of social justice; 2) to engage young people with a high level of authenticity; 3) to promote student-led classrooms, thereby challenging teacher practice, and 4) to create real community change" (Westheimer and Kahne, 2004).

RuMAD?'s goal is not only to promote social justice, but also to provide students with “opportunities for transformative citizenship or thick democracy going beyond responsible citizenship or thin democracy” (Carr 2008, Gandin & Apple, 2005). While this statement would be very compatible with the participatory democracy elaborated by C.B. Macpherson decades ago, there is still a lot of overlap with the notion of politics as a craft. RuMAD? aims to teach students about social justice (the previous chapter talked about how some commitment to social justice is necessary), and works to teach them not only how to make a positive change through political action and community action but also empowers them to think that they can do something positive.

One ruMAD? project that was a particular success was undertaken by primary school students in the Australian township of Whitfield. Their goal was to clean up Jessie's Creek, which runs behind the school. They quickly realized that hand weeding was not going to work, so they began to look at how they could “influence other people and organisations to partner with them in making a difference to Jessie's Creek” (Zyngier 2008, 235), specifically by planting trees and hedges to prevent flooding and assistance to clean the creek up. Ultimately, they created a public awareness campaign and through presentations and letters, the students were able to attract funding from various sources, including the Victorian Government (Ibid.) RuMAD? is a good example of an experiential learning program both empowering students and allowing them to develop their own political skills to the point that they created a successful political campaign that attracted funding for the environmental project.

Finally, we have a series of programs and dialogues that are pushing higher education institutes to align them closer to civil society and away from the recent marketization tendencies found in universities. These curricular and pedagogical features are aimed to enable higher education institutes to become “co-creators of social change by working side-by-side with communities and civil society organizations” (Bivens and Taylor 2010, 21). These programs are designed specifically to give students a better appreciation of the problems that certain groups within civil society are facing as well as encouraging more participation both in the political and social spheres.

Embedded in these programs is the aim to help students develop their skills to a point that they can participate effectively, along with teaching the values of social change and social justice to the students so that they can make positive change. The first example is the LTT (Learning and Teaching for Transformation) Program and the Institute for Development Studies in Brighton, UK. The LTT Program’s goal is to create “more participatory and democratically empowering forms of education” (Bivens and Taylor 2010, 24). Their goal is to develop programs and curriculums that will turn the classroom into a forum where students can develop their skills to create social change. As Bivens and Taylor explain; “many participants (in the LTT) root their work in participatory methodologies, perceiving participation to have the potential to reduce poverty and social injustice by strengthening citizen rights and voice, influencing policy making, enhancing local governance, and improving the accountability and responsiveness of institutions” (Ibid.). The authors talk about democratic educational spaces, meaning that the techniques that they favour are similar to the ones proposed by John Dewey, and that their programs and curriculums are designed to develop the skills of their students to the point that

they can participate effectively. “Rather than lectures, there is space for active learning and collaboration in which curricular knowledge is intentionally tested against or combined with the lived knowledge and experience of the class” (Bivens and Taylor 2010, 30). On top of this, another stated goal of LTT is empowering students to “shape the (learning) environment to suit their needs and those of their classmates. In a sense, the classroom becomes a microcosm of ideal democratic practice” (Ibid.).

Conclusion

This chapter has looked at three reforms that can entrench politics as a craft into the education system. Courses in deliberative democracy at both the secondary and university levels can revive the discussion courses that were taught in American universities in the 1920s and 1930s. Given that deliberation plays such an important role in a democracy that aims to fulfill the principle of the equal advancement and consideration of interests, it is critical that individuals learn early on how to deliberate. Courses in deliberative democracy that focus on the experiential learning of the skills that are used in deliberation can help students participate effectively once they enter the public sphere. Also, a large scale adult education project such as the Federal Forum Project in the 1920s, if it were to be implemented again, can help develop these skills among the adult population. Moreover forums, by giving participants the opportunity to be informed about the issues and ask questions of the moderators, help participants develop their rational, cognitive, and reflective skills. Even though the forums certainly have qualities that resemble deliberative forums, they were primarily designed to teach people how to think about the solutions they want to the issues of the day. Finally, the various service learning programs that are already implemented in various school boards can be amended so that they focus on the development of political skills and promote the values that are consistent with a democracy that aims to allow for

the equal advancement and consideration of interests. These three measures can help the students of today become the citizens of tomorrow – empowered citizens who can take their rightful place in the democratic process and make an effective and dynamic contribution.

CONCLUSION

Most of the world today accepts that democracy is the best form of government. The task of this work is to find ways to make democracy work better. As stated above, democratic institutions are always evolving, as are all social and political institutions, but as a society we should do what we can to make democracy function in the best way possible. This work borrowed heavily from both Thomas Christiano and John Dewey, and in some sense this work brings the work of the two together, and can be seen as an extension of Christiano's theory of democracy that is expounded in *The Rule of Many*. The guiding principle of democracy, he argues, is the equal advancement and consideration of interests. In order for democracy to function better, it should aim to further develop this principle as much as possible. Christiano argues that this principle requires that a democracy have both aggregative forms of democracy. Deliberation is necessary because citizens need to come to a better understanding of their interests, and this understanding is in constant need of improvement. Deliberation provides an arena for citizens to defend and explain their interests to others and learn about the interests of others. Adversarial forms of democracy are needed to equitably resolve differences of opinion when consensus cannot be found.

If a democracy can fulfill the principle of the equal advancement and consideration of interests, then the political participation in that democracy will be high. The quality of political participation can be frustrated by a lack of empowerment among the citizens. The type of disempowerment that is of greatest concern in this thesis is political mortification, which is caused by a lack of political skill. Having more citizens with better developed political skills can not only facilitate the equal advancement and consideration of interests, it can also be put to use

to identify, challenge, and critique any internal exclusions and hegemonic discourses that could also cause disempowerment.

This work then turns around and looks at deliberative democracy and what solutions it can offer to problem of political mortification. Deliberation can empower citizens by providing them with arenas and forums to learn about each other's interests and can perform well at times at developing the political skills of participants, when a focus is placed on such a goal. However, this does not always happen, as some evidence shows. Moreover, deliberative theory holds that deliberation functions better when participants are sufficiently empowered before entering into proceedings rather than expecting that the participation in the forums will do enough to empower them.

If this is the case, then a democracy has to work to develop the political skills of its citizens in a free and democratic manner and on a mass scale. Conceiving political participation as a craft can do that. Acts of political participation are a craft. It is a craft because it is learned experientially, where an individual learns political skill through trial and error, and is evaluated in light of their successes or failures, and altered in light of those successes and failures. Students cannot learn political skill through what Dewey called conservative education, because such a method is doomed to failure as empirical studies show.

Politics as a craft can make three positive changes to our democratic culture. First, it can develop political skills in a free and open way, and on a mass scale. This can help resolve the difference of skill and empower the future generation of citizens, which means that the quality of political participation can be improved in a generation. Second, it can help students in seeing themselves as stakeholders in the policy or legislative status quo. By seeing themselves as stakeholders in the democratic process, students will come to understand that it affects their lives in some way, and will feel empowered enough to participate. Third, politics as a craft can help students develop an appreciation for politicians and democratic politics alike, and also learn to exercise democratic values. If citizens have a much less negative view of democratic politics than what citizens hold today, then the democratic process will not be seen as such an alien force to citizens. The democratic process will instead be something that belongs to the citizenry and is there to work for them – which most would agree is how democracy is supposed to function.

Furthermore, while politics as a craft will empower citizens by developing their skills, and by extension the public sphere will have high quality political participation and allow for the equal advancement and consideration of interest, it does remain possible that it could produce unequal results. This might be the case even though the expectation is that it will happen less often, at least as how Dewey sees it. This requires that participants in this public sphere make some sort of commitment to social justice, and imposing the condition that any inequalities that are producing by democratic decision-making processes ought to be justified publicly. Publically justified inequalities can help identify the cause, the nature, or the locus of what causes the inequality, and this can help frame the future discussions, and it causes decision-makers to

acknowledge and protect each individual's capacity for forging and creating their conception of the good. This could allow future participants to resolve the inequality.

Finally, this work concludes by looking at some reforms that can be made to the education system that are compatible with politics as a craft. There are several experiential learning simulations, which include the Iowa civic education initiatives, Kids Voting, and Cammarano and Fowler's simulation, along with several others that can be incorporated at the secondary level of education. Then, there are service learning exercises, which have students at the primary school and secondary school levels help out in a volunteer organization in a co-operative education format. Service learning exercises are aimed at developing civic duty, civic volunteerism, and strengthening the community. Politics as a craft is not aimed at developing these things, but only works to develop students' political skills. Nonetheless, service learning involves experiential learning, which makes it an attractive reform, but it needs to be recalibrated to be consistent with the aims of politics as a craft.

Another reform is developing courses in deliberative democracy. In these courses, students learn about democratic values, how to deliberate and communicate about various political issues, and how to behave and interact with others. These deliberative democracy courses would draw from the previous discussion and speech courses that were taught in American universities in the early part of the 20th century. These textbooks and courses were designed to teach students how to communicate effectively in a group setting. Moreover, these discussion textbooks also taught students about the attitudes that a participant should have in discussion as well as the importance

of discussion in a democracy. These textbooks can easily be updated to teach students how to deliberate and prepare them for political participation in their adulthood.

Another measure that can bring politics as a craft into the area of adult education is a revival of the Federal Forum Project, which was an ambitious adult education project initiated in the United States during the 1930s. The Federal Forum Project was a nation-wide program that funded discussion forums where people attended and discussed various political issues of the day under the guidance of a discussion leader. The Forum Project, much like the discussion courses taught in universities in the 1930s, looks very much like deliberative forums to modern eyes. However, their purpose was slightly different to that of the deliberative forum today. While deliberation will try to reach a decision on an issue, the purpose of the forums of the 1930s were educative. The forums were there simply to have participants learn and grapple with the issues being discussed. The forums are exercises in experiential learning because they give participants the opportunity to practice their communicative and reflective skills. All three of these measures would implement politics as a craft in our democracy, and invigorate it by developing the political skills of its citizens on a mass scale.

The basic argument of this thesis is that if democracy is going to work the way it should, then citizens must have the skills in order to participate effectively in politics. These skills cannot be imparted to citizens in a top-down way. It must be developed through a free and open process that is fundamentally democratic. When more citizens develop their political skills to the point where they feel that they can make an effective contribution to political participation, then we

will see democracy function more closely as it was intended to function; a government of the people, for the people, and by the people.

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