Democratic Voting and the Common Good

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A Prospectus Presented to the Department of Philosophy, Carnegie Mellon University

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Introduction: Project Motivation

Democratic theories justify democratic political institutions. These theories justify the procedures followed by members of a political community when they come together to make decisions for the community as a whole. Deliberative democratic theories contend that collective decision-making should proceed via public deliberation. In deliberation, participants consider proposals and present arguments to the group to promote the common good. Although the goal of deliberation is consensus, deliberative democrats agree that when consensus is unattainable, a majority vote may determine a political outcome.

In the deliberative forum, deliberators have an obligation to explain and justify the policies that they support. They must consider others’ ideas, and treat one another as persons of equal standing. These rules refer to a participant’s duties as a deliberator, and not to a participant’s duties as a voter. Thus the following question remains to be answered: what duties does a deliberator have when deliberation ends, and a vote is taken? Deliberative democrats argue that if participants do their deliberative duties, then the outcomes of deliberation will meet desirable criteria, such as legitimacy, justification, or as I will discuss in this project, the promotion of the common good. But absent a duty to vote a particular way, and an assumption that voters will follow that duty, we may not have a reason to accept that deliberation followed by voting will necessarily produce better outcomes than mere majority voting. This reveals a tension in the deliberative democratic view, and the goal of this dissertation is to explore that tension using both empirical social science and normative political theory.

I will focus on the broad class of deliberative democratic theories making the further claim that public deliberation followed by voting will select political outcomes that are better than those that result from voting alone. These theorists argue, in particular, that groups that
participate in public deliberation before voting are more likely to select alternatives that promote the common good than if no deliberation had been held. I will refer to this as the “Deliberative Voting Claim.” The Deliberative Voting Claim is an instrumental reason to prefer deliberation followed by voting to voting alone, on the grounds that the former procedure is more likely than the latter to produce outcomes that promote the common good. This is but one kind of argument that could be used to justify deliberative democracy, a point discussed further below.

The literature discussing deliberative democracy does not provide a thorough explanation or justification of the Deliberative Voting Claim. In my dissertation, I will consider four questions related to the justification of the Deliberative Voting Claim. First, I will ask what it means for outcomes to promote the common good. Second, I will examine if, as a matter of empirical fact, deliberation followed by voting is more likely produce an outcome that promotes the common good than voting alone. This second question asks whether one can justify, empirically, the Deliberative Voting Claim. Third, if deliberation is not, as a matter of empirical fact, more likely to produce outcomes that promote the common good than voting alone, I will ask how deliberation could be more likely to do so. This question asks what features of deliberation, in theory, could help improve the likelihood that deliberators select a good outcome. Finally, I will consider if deliberative democratic theories of interest are capable of grounding an obligation upon participants to vote to promote the common good in the ways identified under the third question, or if a duty to vote to promote the common good is inherent to the rules of deliberation, and if so, what that duty amounts to. This fourth question asks what normative duties deliberators have with respect to voting.

Proponents of the Deliberative Voting Claim believe that democratic procedures are not fully justified unless they are shown to produce better outcomes than alternative procedures.
These theories are called “instrumental” because they rely on the belief that deliberative procedures produce good outcomes. I will focus on the class of deliberative democratic theories that use the Democratic Voting Claim to justify deliberation and majority voting. By answering the four questions listed above, this project will determine whether this particular justification of deliberative democracy can be substantiated. If the Deliberative Voting Claim cannot be substantiated, the claim cannot be used as a defense of deliberative democratic procedures. In this case, deliberative democrats must abandon the Deliberative Voting Claim, and instead rely on alternative instrumental and non-instrumental (“intrinsic”) justifications of deliberative democracy. I discuss this upshot of my analysis further below.

The Deliberative Voting Claim is an integral component of instrumental deliberative democratic theory. It provides a reason to favor deliberation and voting over mere voting procedures. The belief that deliberation is focused on the common good, and is more likely than voting, alone, to promote the common good, supports the deliberative democrat’s rejection of non-deliberative voting. According to deliberative democrats, majority voting may not result in outcomes that promote the common good. Structured deliberation is required to achieve that end. I will focus on this integral component of deliberative democratic theories that claim that deliberation will lead to better (or more common good-oriented) outcomes.

Before considering justifications for the Deliberative Voting Claim, I must clarify the claim itself. In particular, I must determine how a political outcome could “promote the common good.” I will begin by examining three interpretations of the common good. First, the aggregative common good refers to the aggregation of individuals’ goods. Second, the procedural common good is the outcome of a particular procedure. Third, the substantive common good is a good that is greater than or different from the goods of individuals. Although
the common good has been discussed widely in the deliberative democratic literature, these three definitions fail to fully distinguish the three interpretations. I provide examples of how the three definitions may overlap below. It is important to distinguish these three conceptions of the common good because what one means by “common good” will influence the reasons one can give to support the claim that deliberation will promote it.

Following the discussion of the common good, I will consider whether the Deliberative Democratic claim can be substantiated. To do this, I will propose and analyze three arguments related to the Deliberative Voting Claim. Recall that the claim states that deliberation, followed by majority voting, will lead to better outcomes than majority voting alone. In order for the same majority voting procedure, with the same set of alternatives,\(^1\) to produce two different outcomes, it must be the case that voters behave differently (and in particular, vote differently) in the deliberative and non-deliberative voting contexts. Thus my second goal is to propose and analyze arguments that could support the claim that voters in deliberative contexts will select different outcomes than if no deliberation were held.

The first two arguments that will be considered are empirical. The first empirical argument is present in a subset of the instrumental democratic theories discussed above. It states that deliberative voting will select better outcomes than non-deliberative voting because (a) voters vote based on their preferences, (b) deliberation will cause voters to change their preferences before they vote, and that (c) preferences change in the “right way,” such that voting on those preferences will produce outcomes that better promote the common good than voting on voters’ original, unaltered preferences.

\(^{1}\) I address this assumption in greater detail below.
The second argument does not rest on the claim that deliberation will change individuals’ personal preferences over the outcomes, but rather states that during deliberation, voters alter their perception of how they ought to behave when they vote, leading to a change in voting behavior. For example, suppose that prior to deliberation, voters are self-interested, and would vote to promote their self-interest. Following deliberation, voters’ self-interested preferences may remain the same, but voters come to believe that they should not vote so as to satisfy their self-interest. They choose to set aside those interests and vote for the alternative they believe best promotes the common good. This empirical argument is less common than the first, but has received some support in the deliberative democratic literature.2

I will survey empirical literature on voter behavior to determine whether these arguments are sound. While some deliberative democrats have appealed to empirical evidence to support their views, the literature provides no systematic treatment of this topic. This portion of the dissertation will serve to summarize the effects of deliberation on voters’ preferences and motivations, and determine whether this literature can provide support for the Deliberative Voting Claim. I plan to address this question to the greatest extent possible using the current body of literature on the empirical effects of deliberation. Because this literature is rather limited, however, I do not expect to be able to address all of the relevant components of the question in full. I note the specific limitations that I anticipate in the synopses of chapters three and four below.

Although it is important to consider whether these empirical arguments can justify the deliberative democrat’s claim, neither of these arguments will determine what normative duties deliberative democratic voters have. Even if deliberators currently do not vote so as to promote

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2 For example, see Cohen’s discussion of the effects of deliberation in “Deliberation and Democratic Legitimacy,” p. 75. I discuss this point further in the outline of chapter four below.
the common good in real life deliberative voting, deliberators may nonetheless have a duty to vote that way. This is a different, but related, proposal that has yet to be explored in the deliberative democratic theory literature, which I will explore in the final chapter of the dissertation. It is a stronger normative claim than either of the empirical arguments cited above, as it claims that voters are morally required to vote a particular way, rather than claim that they are likely to vote a particular way. There is one central reason, however, to believe that such a duty may be an essential component of the deliberative democratic theories of interest. This reason motivates the exploration of the normative claim.

The reason is that deliberative democratic theories of interest may not be able to ensure that voters will select good political outcomes unless a duty to vote to promote the common good is imposed upon those voters. While deliberative democrats explain the obligations that individuals have as participants in public deliberation, they do not explain or justify the obligations that participants have when deliberation ends, and a vote is taken. This leaves a normative gap in the deliberative democratic theory literature that must be explored. Thus, the final portion of the dissertation will serve to explore (a) how deliberators might deliberate and vote so as to produce better outcomes than voting alone and (b) whether deliberators have a duty to vote in the ways identified in (a).

This prospectus serves as an outline for the dissertation project. I list the five chapters that will comprise the dissertation below, and motivate the questions that will be addressed in each chapter. I also describe the methodology that will be used to answer each of the questions in the dissertation.
Chapter One: Literature Review

Chapter one of the dissertation will review the deliberative democratic theory literature in order to identify and explain the specific claims that will be the focus of the remaining four chapters.

Deliberative democratic theorists argue that political decisions should be reached through public deliberation followed by voting, rather than voting alone. They believe that the goal of any political decision-making process is for all affected by the decision to reach an agreement. To this end, citizens must make proposals, and present reasons for and against those proposals, that are accessible and acceptable\(^3\) to others in the deliberative forum. Deliberative democrats outline rules for deliberation they think ought to shape the kinds of reasons and arguments that are permitted in deliberation. When deliberation fails to achieve consensus, deliberative democrats recognize that voting may be used to make a final decision.

Deliberative democratic theory frequently is contrasted with democratic theories that focus primarily on voting. Under these “vote-centric” theories, political outcomes should be decided by voting. Deliberative democrats reject vote-centric theories for several reasons. One reason is because majority voting, conceived as the aggregation of voters’ self-interested preferences,\(^4\) does not have the normative resources to justify or legitimate political outcomes (Young 120). Although vote-centric democratic theories will not be the focus of this project, it is important to note that deliberative democratic theory is presented as an alternative and superior

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3 It should be noted that what counts as an “accessible” or “acceptable” reason on these views differs dramatically from theory to theory.

4 While this is a common characterization of “mere” majority voting in the deliberative democratic theory literature, it is erroneous. Those who fall into the “vote-centric” camp can accept that voters are not self-interested. While this project is focused on the Deliberative Voting Claim as an argument within deliberative democratic theory, this comparison of deliberative to non-deliberative procedures will be relevant in my analysis of the Deliberative Voting Claim in chapters three and four.
view to vote-centric democratic theory. The Deliberative Voting Claim is one reason to prefer
deliberation to majority voting. However, the Deliberative Voting Claim is but one kind of
reason that can be given in favor of deliberative democratic procedures.

In general, deliberative democratic theories provide two kinds of justification for public
deliberation. The first is an “intrinsic” or “procedural” justification. An intrinsic justification for
deliberative democracy states that public deliberation is valuable or good because of features
inherent to the deliberative procedure itself. For example, some have argued that deliberation is
good because it treats individuals equally, and equality is a good or desirable feature of a
democratic decision-making procedure. The second kind of justification is “instrumental.” An
instrumental justification for deliberative democracy states that deliberation is valuable or good
because of the outcomes it produces. For example, one might argue that deliberation is good
because it produces better-educated citizens, or outcomes that are reflective of the views of the
people, or, as I will discuss below, outcomes that promote common good.

Many deliberative democrats use both intrinsic and instrumental arguments to defend
deliberative democracy. Deliberative democratic theories can be organized on a spectrum with
theories that provide only instrumental arguments on one end, and theories that rely solely on
intrinsic arguments on the other. Between these extremes are theories that provide some
combination of intrinsic and instrumental arguments. I will focus on theories that provide a
particular instrumental justification for deliberation. In particular, I will focus on the claim that
deliberation is good or valuable because it leads to outcomes that promote the common good.

Two components of this justification must be distinguished. First, the deliberative democrats on
whom I focus argue that the goal of political decision-making ought to produce decisions that
promote the common good. The “classic” account of deliberative democracy “aims at consensus
and the common good” (Mansbridge et al. 66). This is a normative statement about what the goal of public decision-making should be. Second, these deliberative democrats argue that deliberation is a good procedure because it will produce good outcomes, and in particular, it will produce better outcomes than voting alone. Deliberation with voting produces “better” outcomes because, in their view, deliberation will produce outcomes that promote the common good, while voting alone will result in a “mere” aggregation of self-interested preferences. This view claims that a change in outcomes can be brought about by “orienting” deliberators towards the common good by asking that they justify their views to one another in public discourse.

The claim that deliberation followed by voting will produce better outcomes than voting alone is rather vague, and has not been clarified in the deliberative democratic theory literature. In this case, “better” is the standard of the common good. The underlying claim seems to be that deliberation is more likely than voting to select outcomes that promote the common good. To substantiate this claim, deliberative democrats must explain why deliberation is more likely than voting to produce outcomes that promote the common good. An important part of chapter one will distinguish and clarify this claim. The remaining chapters of the project will explore three arguments related to the claim, referred to as the “Deliberative Voting Claim” throughout the dissertation:

**The Deliberative Voting Claim**: Deliberation followed by voting is more likely to produce outcomes that promote the common good than voting alone.

The Deliberative Voting Claim appears in democratic theories across the intrinsic/instrumental spectrum. Deliberative democrats disagree about the significance of the Deliberative Voting Claim for democratic legitimacy and justification. For example, Joshua
Cohen finds democracy’s legitimacy in features intrinsic to the deliberation procedure, and, in particular, in the fact that democratic deliberation treats its participants as free and equal. Cohen believes, nevertheless, that outcomes resulting from deliberation will promote the common good to a greater extent than those resulting from voting alone. This fact, however, is not central to his argument for the legitimacy of deliberative democratic political systems (Cohen, “Democratic Legitimacy” 75). On the other hand, Amy Gutmann, Dennis Thompson, Jon Elster, and David Estlund argue that the fact that deliberation will produce better outcomes than voting alone is a reason to prefer democratic deliberation to voting. Unlike theorists focusing solely on the intrinsic value of deliberative decision-making, this latter group of philosophers uses the Deliberative Voting Claim as an instrumental argument in favor of deliberation. James Bohman summarizes this instrumental stance as follows:

Such justifications require that citizens go beyond the self-interests typical of preference aggregation and orient themselves toward the common good… such a public orientation must be shown to improve political decision making over aggregation, by making it possible to work out common ends and a fair system of social cooperation without presupposing an already existing consensus.  

(Bohman 402)

Chapter one of the dissertation will introduce the Deliberative Voting Claim, and explain how the claim has been used in the deliberative democratic theory literature. Although many deliberative democrats state the Deliberative Voting Claim, the current literature does not explain or justify it sufficiently. The goal of the remaining chapters of the dissertation is to analyze three arguments related to the Deliberative Voting Claim. The claim must be justified if

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5 The discussion of the instrumental value of democracy first appears in Gutmann & Thompson’s Why Deliberative Democracy?, p. 10-11.
7 See Estlund’s article “Beyond Fairness and Deliberation,” p. 181-204.
we are to accept it as an instrumental reason to prefer deliberation followed by voting to voting alone.

It is important to ask whether the Deliberative Voting Claim can be substantiated, not only because it currently lacks justification in the deliberative democratic theory literature, but also because there are countervailing reasons why deliberation may do nothing to improve political outcomes. For example, the field of voting theory presents several “impossibility results,” or theorems that demonstrate that majority voting systems, by necessity, violate one or several democratic and fairness criteria because those criteria are mutually inconsistent. All majority voting procedures are potentially subject to these results, even if deliberation is held beforehand. Further, simply “orienting” voters toward the common good may do nothing to ensure that the results are avoided; the results are applicable to scenarios in which voters aim to select outcomes that promote some notion of the common good. One would need to explain why deliberation will necessarily lead to the violation of one or several of the theorems’ assumptions, and thus avoids the impossibility results. While some authors have argued that deliberation may lead to such violations, no one has been able to establish that the violations are “necessary.” While this is but one example of a potential problem for deliberation, it underscores the need for further exploration into the justification of the Deliberative Voting Claim.

The body of deliberative democratic theory literature with which I will engage is large and diverse. Following the introduction of the Deliberative Voting Claim, the second task of chapter one of the dissertation will be to develop a taxonomy that permits the organization of the deliberative democratic theories committed to the Deliberative Voting Claim. Theories will not be addressed individually, but rather, discussed in general classes. Theories will be organized according to the significance of the Deliberative Voting Claim for democratic legitimacy and
justification. In other words, this taxonomy will clarify the extent to which classes of theorists are committed to the Deliberative Voting Claim. The taxonomy will be explained with examples from the literature. The taxonomy itself is an important tool because it permits a more general analysis, rather than a focus on one or two handpicked theorists.

While the Deliberative Voting Claim compares deliberative voting procedures to mere majority voting, this project is not a comparison of deliberative democracy and vote-centric democracy. Instead, this project will try to determine whether the Deliberative Voting Claim can be substantiated, and if not, what the implications of that result are for deliberative democratic theory. Importantly, to demonstrate that the Claim cannot be justified would not be detrimental to all of deliberative democratic theory, but only to those theories that invoke the Deliberative Voting Claim. If the Deliberative Voting Claim cannot be substantiated, then the claim cannot be used as a defense of deliberative democratic procedures. Deliberative democrats would need to rely instead on alternative instrumental and intrinsic reasons to support their view. But they need not reject deliberative democracy altogether.

The analysis in the dissertation is most directly relevant to the instrumental end of the deliberative democratic theory spectrum. In particular, if the Deliberative Voting Claim (an instrumental claim) is a necessary component of a deliberative democratic theory, and if that claim can be shown to lack empirical grounding, then we do not have reason to believe that deliberation followed by voting is more likely to produce outcomes that promote the common good than voting alone. This would constitute a serious failure of the theory in question. Further,

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8 For an example of this kind of taxonomy, see Peter, Fabienne. "Democratic Legitimacy and Proceduralist Social Epistemology." Politics, Philosophy & Economics 6.3 (2007): 329-353.
9 I discuss the methodology for this empirical analysis in the synopses of chapters three and four below.
if the Claim is unsubstantiated by empirical evidence, deliberative democrats cannot invoke the Claim as a reason to favor deliberative democratic procedures. Instead, deliberative democrats would have to rely on different instrumental or intrinsic arguments to support their view. Therefore, the analysis to be conducted in chapters two through four is most directly aimed at theories that use the Deliberative Voting Claim in their normative defense of deliberative democratic decision-making. However, while intrinsic deliberative democratic theories do not use the Deliberative Voting Claim as an argument in favor of deliberative democracy, I believe that my analysis in chapter five will have something to say about those theories as well. I address this point at greater length in the outline of chapter five, below.

To summarize, chapter one of the dissertation will:

1. Organize the deliberative democratic theories of interest, and note their commitment to the following:
   a. The normative claim that political decision making ought to be aimed at the common good.
   b. The claim (to be analyzed) that deliberation followed by voting is more likely than voting alone to produce outcomes that are in the common good.
Chapter Two: The Common Good

The Deliberative Voting Claim states that deliberation followed by voting is more likely, than voting alone, to produce outcomes that promote the common good. The goal of chapter two is to provide an explanation and analysis of the term “the common good.” In the democratic theory literature, there are three notions of the common good: the aggregative common good, the procedural common good, and the substantive common good. Under the aggregative interpretation, the common good is that which is good for the most individuals. The procedural common good is the output of some chosen political procedure. So long as the chosen procedure is followed, the procedure’s result is the common good. Finally, a decision promotes the substantive common good of a political community if that decision is best for the political group as a whole, over and above what is best for individuals (Mansbridge, “Contested Nature” 9-10).

After introducing the three varieties of the common good, I will consider the ways in which they are distinct. For example, one can question the relationship between the aggregative common good and the substantive common good. What would it mean if a policy promotes the common good of the community (the substantive common good), but not necessarily the interests of the most individuals (the aggregative common good)? If the preferences of individuals take the wellbeing of others into account, rather than being entirely self-interested, would aggregating those interests produce a substantive common good? These questions ask about the relationship among voters’ interests, preferences, and the pursuit of political outcomes that promote the common good. If the goal of deliberation and voting is to promote one variety of the common good over another, the preferred version of the common good must be clear to deliberators so that available alternatives may be evaluated in light of that standard. When we
conflate two varieties of the common good, we may make errors in our evaluation and selection of alternatives.

For example, suppose that a political community believes that it ought to promote the substantive common good, but believes, erroneously, that the substantive common good is the aggregation of individual goods (thus conflating the substantive and aggregative common goods). The community may select an alternative that is in conflict with the substantive common good, on the grounds that many people prefer that alternative. Therefore, it is important to determine why the three varieties of the common good are distinct, and understand how the differences among those common goods are relevant to the broader theories of which they are a part. Each of these points will be addressed in chapter two.

The theorists cited in chapter one above claim that voting and deliberation are important because those procedures can help citizens determine what is the common good, and select outcomes that promote it. However, these theorists do not always identify clearly what is the common good, or the relationship, if any, that exists between democratic legitimacy and the pursuit of the common good. In addition, no theorist has considered systematically the relationship between the three types of the common good and deliberative democratic theory. For that reason, chapter two will consider whether the deliberative democratic theories of interest are compatible with each variety of the common good. This systematic approach is important because it will examine all possible connections that might exist between a deliberative democratic theory that employs the Deliberative Voting Claim and the three types of the common good, which has not been done before in the democratic theory literature. It will also explore how the pursuit of the common good is related to the theory’s justification of public deliberation.
Developing an understanding of the common good is a necessary first step in the analysis of the Deliberative Voting Claim. The reason is this: what the common good is may help determine the kinds of information or motivations that voters would need to consult (or not consult) in order to promote the common good by voting. For example, if a deliberative democrat were to argue that deliberation followed by voting promotes the substantive common good, then, in this view, voting must aggregate something other than the interests of each individual. Otherwise, the outcome of a majority vote would be the aggregative common good, not the substantive common good. Thus what the common good is will play a role in determining the behaviors that voters must exhibit in order to promote that good.

In conclusion, chapters one and two will serve as a literature review and describe the philosophical motivation for the dissertation project. In particular, they will introduce and explain the deliberative democratic theories that incorporate the Deliberative Voting Claim, and the three varieties of the common good.

To summarize, chapter two of the dissertation will:

1. Survey three interpretations of the “common good,” and distinguish them.
2. Determine which varieties of the common good are compatible with the deliberative democratic theories in question.
3. Note the kinds of voting behaviors required to achieve each viable variety of the common good (i.e., each variety that remains after step (2)).
Chapter Three: Deliberation and Preference Transformation

Chapters three and four of the dissertation will consider two empirical arguments that could be used to defend the Deliberative Voting Claim. The goal of these chapters is to examine the empirical literature’s discussion of the effects of deliberation to determine the soundness of these arguments. In particular, these chapters will attempt to answer the question of whether deliberation followed by voting does, in fact, lead to better political outcomes than voting alone.

The first goal of chapter three will be to explore in greater detail what I called the Deliberative Voting Claim. Recall that this is the claim that deliberation followed by voting is more likely to produce outcomes that are in the common good than voting alone. For the sake of simplicity, I will assume in the dissertation that the two competing methods of democratic decision making employ the same voting procedure. In particular, I will compare deliberation followed by majority voting to majority voting without prior deliberation. If deliberative and non-deliberative voting procedures are to produce different outcomes, a difference in voters’ choices must occur following deliberation that does not occur when no deliberation is held.

First, suppose that voters in deliberative and non-deliberative voting schemes were to decide about the same set of alternatives. What could produce a different decision? In this case, because the set of alternatives and the voting mechanism are the same in the two procedures, it must be the case that a change in voting outcomes is produced by a change in voting “inputs”, namely, votes. Thus, for the Deliberative Voting Claim to hold for decisions using the same set of alternatives, voters must vote differently following deliberation than if no deliberation were held.

Chapters three and four will consider two arguments that identify a change in voting behavior that would prompt a change in voting outcomes in deliberative versus non-deliberative
voting. The first argument, which will be addressed in chapter three, states the following. Voters vote according to their preferences. Deliberation transforms preferences. Votes based on transformed preferences are more likely to produce an outcome that promotes the common good than votes based on original, untransformed preferences. The second argument, which will be addressed in chapter four, states that deliberation may do nothing to change voters’ preferences over the outcomes, but will transform voters’ perceptions of how they ought to vote. This, in turn, will lead to a change in voting behavior. The remainder of this section of the prospectus will outline the first argument in greater detail.

Several deliberative democrats have invoked the empirical claim that deliberation transforms preferences. These theorists fall into two general classes. First, some have argued that deliberation will transform individual preferences, and that this is a virtue of deliberation. For example, Jon Elster states that preference transformation is the goal of argumentation in the deliberative forum (Elster, Deliberative Democracy 2). Some have claimed that deliberation is the transformation of preferences. Susan Stokes defines deliberation as “the endogenous change of preferences resulting from communication” (Stokes 123), and thus shifts the empirical question to whether deliberation (preference transformation) actually takes place. For these theorists, the fact that deliberation will result in (or is) the transformation preferences is an instrumental normative reason to favor deliberation.10

Second, some deliberative democrats argue that deliberation will transform individual preferences, but that this fact is not, in itself, a reason to prefer deliberation plus voting to voting alone. For example, while Joshua Cohen agrees that deliberation may transform preferences, he

10 Jon Elster’s book Deliberative Democracy is focused on theories that are united in this regard. Of particular note in this collection are the articles "Pathologies of Deliberation" by Susan Stokes and "Deliberation and Ideological Domination" by Adam Przeworski.
argues that preference transformation is not the goal of deliberation (Cohen, “Procedure and Substance” 413). Instead, Cohen defends the intrinsic virtues of deliberation, rather than deliberation’s instrumental role in changing preferences. Chapter three of the dissertation will focus on the former set of theorists who believe that preference transformation is relevant to the normative status of democratic deliberation.

In order to evaluate the empirical claim that deliberation transforms preferences and promotes the common good, I will refer to literature from philosophy and political science on the effects of deliberation on individual preferences. The empirical literature on preference change in deliberation includes a series of deliberative polls and interviews that are, in general, conducted as follows. A representative group of citizens is selected to participate in a given study. All participants are asked to state their preferences on a particular set of policy issues (either in a survey or interview). The treatment group in these experiments is then asked to deliberate on the chosen policy issue, and these experiments vary from study to study according to their structure and duration (just as deliberative democratic theories differ on the rules that ought to govern deliberation). Following deliberation, participants are asked for their preferences again, and the pre and post-deliberation results are compared between treatment and control groups.

Voters’ statements of opinions in interviews and surveys, in these studies, are accepted as their preferences. This is an important point, and will be addressed further in the outline of chapter four, below. Questions asked in pre- and post-deliberation surveys attempt to isolate how and why voters’ preferences change over the course of deliberation. In some cases, concern for the community, or concern for the common good, are reasons that voters give to justify the change in opinion. This additional information about voters’ reasoning will help in the analysis of the stated empirical claim. There are three possible conclusions that one could draw from the
analysis in chapters three and four. The first is that deliberation is, in fact, more likely to select political outcomes that promote the common good than voting alone. The second is that deliberation and (mere) majority voting are equally likely to select outcomes that promote the common good. The third is that deliberation is less likely than voting to select outcomes that promote the common good. This final conclusion would be significant for two reasons. First, it would demonstrate that the Deliberative Voting Claim is false, in that deliberation is not more likely than voting alone to select outcomes that promote the common good. Second, it would go further and show that deliberation is detrimental to a political community’s pursuit of policies that promote the common good, which would constitute a serious concern about deliberative democratic procedures. The goal of this chapter and the next is to determine which of these three conclusions the existing empirical evidence supports.

To determine whether the Deliberative Voting Claim has empirical grounding, I will survey studies that construct deliberative forums according to deliberative democrats’ guidelines. It is common for those who study the effects of deliberation to approximate the ideal deliberative setting outlined in deliberative democratic theory. For example, James Fishkin and Robert Luskin recognize that the democratic ideal of equal consideration for each participant’s views is unrealistic in real-world settings, but nevertheless try to approximate the ideal to the greatest extent possible (Fishkin & Luskin 285). My dissertation will be careful to note how empirical studies cohere with the deliberative democrats’ rules for deliberation. It is necessary to focus on studies that approximate the deliberative ideal to evaluate deliberative democratic theories committed to the Deliberative Voting Claim. In particular, if my analysis showed that deliberation fails to generate outcomes that promote the common good better than voting alone, but that analysis was founded on studies that do not approximate the ideal deliberative forum,
deliberative democrats could easily reject my analysis on the grounds that the studies of interest were poorly constructed, and therefore do not constitute a critique of their theory.

The literature on deliberative preference change does not include a synthesis that addresses the specific components of the empirical claim outlined above. Several philosophers and political scientists\(^{11}\) have tested whether preferences change during public deliberation, and have tried to synthesize the literature on the effects of deliberation on preferences and outcomes.\(^{12}\) It remains to be determined if the preference changes observed are the kinds of changes that deliberative democrats support (or would support, once one determines exactly the kind of changes that would be necessary to promote the common good). In particular, current political science literature provides no systematic treatment of preference change as it compares to the normative claims of the deliberative democrats outlined here.

This kind of systematic treatment is necessary to determine the truth or falsity of the claim that deliberation will transform preferences, and that this change in preferences will lead to changes in political outcomes. For example, suppose that one were to argue that one of the important roles of deliberation is to transform individual preferences from being self-interested to community-interested. According to this view, deliberation is good because it causes people to adopt a concern for others, and this concern causes a change in deliberators’ personal preferences. Simply to demonstrate, via empirical evidence, that preferences change during deliberation would not be sufficient to show that preferences change in the way the deliberative democratic theory says they should. Thus, this chapter must first determine what preference

\(^{11}\) Most notably, philosophers Gerry Mackie, John Dryzek, Jane Mansbridge, and political scientists James Fishkin, Susan Stokes, Jon Elster, and Stephen Elstub.

\(^{12}\) For example, see Karpowitz and Mendelberg, “An Experimental Approach to Citizen Deliberation.”
changes are required under deliberative democratic theory, and then determine whether those changes have been observed in empirical studies of deliberation. To this end, chapter three will organize and examine the contemporary empirical literature on preference change in deliberation to evaluate the claim that deliberation transforms preferences.

Two main questions must be answered in my evaluation of the empirical claim that deliberation changes preferences to produce better outcomes. First, how, according to deliberative democratic theorists, should voters’ preferences or opinions change so as to promote the common good via voting? While few theorists argue that deliberation will, necessarily, change preferences, many argue that it is a virtue of deliberation to “enable” the transformation of preferences (Dryzek, “Theory, Evidence” 242).

This first question must be answered by addressing, specifically, what preference or opinion changes are necessary in order to produce good political outcomes. The answer will depend on the variety of the common good that is used, and the extent to which voters’ initial preferences are consistent or inconsistent with that common good. Specifically, if voters must provide a certain kind of “input” to achieve a particular variety of the common good via voting, that gives us some indication of how voters’ initial preferences or opinions must change to select the common good in aggregate. While the claim that deliberation enables preference change is central to some deliberative democratic theories, no theorist has shown exactly how preferences must change in order to achieve each conception of the common good.

Absent a very specific interpretation of the common good, the conclusions that I will be able to draw in this section of the chapter may be quite general. For example, suppose, as some deliberative democrats argue, voters, in the absence of deliberation, are self-interested actors, and among the available alternatives, make their vote choices based on their personal preferences. If
the common good is substantive, then one could argue that voters ought to vote for the alternative they believe promotes the substantive common good, however defined, rather than vote according to their own self-interest. If this were the case, the empirical argument would state that deliberation transforms the self-interested preferences of voters into preferences for the alternatives that promote the substantive common good. This, however, may be the most specific conclusion that I am able to draw in this case. The next question that must be addressed is empirical: is it the case that deliberation (1) changes voters’ preferences, and (2) will this lead to a change in voting behavior that (3) produces outcomes that better promote the common good? To prove that deliberation transforms preferences in the “right way”, the answer to this question must be “yes.”

I will not be able to address each of the three components of this question in full, because the literature on the effects of deliberation on preference change is limited in scope. For example, how can one determine whether the outcomes of deliberative voting better promote the common good than non-deliberative voting? In order to reach a conclusion, one would need a clear standard of the common good against which one could compare the outcomes of deliberative and non-deliberative voting. However, as was discussed above, the varieties of the common good are general and vague. Thus, I will use the empirical results as a guide, and look to the specific kinds of alternatives that are selected in empirical studies of deliberation, and determine whether they cohere with one or several varieties of the common good, as compared to those alternatives selected by non-deliberating parties. In this sense, I will use the voting trends revealed by empirical experimentation, and discuss whether those trends indicate that deliberative voters are

13 Here, I will not assume, as some deliberative democrats do, that voters who do not deliberate are self-interested. I will refer to the empirical literature on this topic to characterize the outcomes of non-deliberative voting.
more likely to select outcomes that are consistent or inconsistent with each variety of the common good. In the end, it may be that empirical results are consistent with one or more varieties of the common good.

In addition, in order to reach specific conclusions about the effects of deliberation on preference change, one must have a clear understanding of the preferences that underlie voters’ choices. In the example above, I noted that a proponent of the substantive common good could argue that voters ought to vote based on their beliefs about the substantive common good, rather than their personal, self-interested preferences. In order to determine whether voters do vote based on their judgments about the substantive common good rather than vote based on self-interest, one would have to understand why voters selected the alternatives they did. This additional information may not available in many of the empirical studies on preference change.

For these reasons, I do not expect to be able to make sweeping conclusions about the outcomes of deliberative voting with respect to the three varieties of the common good. What may be possible, however, is to identify changes in voters’ preferences that reflect a concern for particular moral or political principles. This is the same kind of approach I noted above in my discussion of political outcomes and their comparison to the common good. For example, it might be that voters who participate in deliberation are more likely than voters who do not deliberate to change their preferences and vote for egalitarian policies. If one believes that egalitarian policies promote the common good, then this empirical fact could be an argument in favor of deliberative decision making procedures. I will have to extract whatever the conclusions can be drawn from the literature, and relate those conclusions to the three notions of the common good. The preceding work assumes that the deliberative and non-deliberative voting procedures to be compared require voters to make decisions among the same set of alternatives. However, it
might be the case that deliberation of a given set of alternative proposals leads to a change in the set of alternatives about which voters decide. For example, perhaps deliberation reveals new or different alternatives that would not have been identified if deliberation did not occur. The idea that deliberation can lead to innovative proposals has been used in the political theory literature to defend deliberative democratic procedures.\textsuperscript{14} This argument would provide a further empirical claim about the ability of deliberation to lead to new or innovative proposals.

This argument is a possible defense of the Deliberative Voting Claim. The defense would say something like the following: deliberation followed by voting is more likely to produce outcomes that promote the common good than voting alone because deliberation (a) generates new proposals, and those proposals (b) better promote the common good than proposals not generated during deliberation and (c) are more likely to be selected during voting than proposals not generated during deliberation. Each of claims (a) through (c) would require empirical proof in order to substantiate this particular defense of the Deliberative Voting Claim. However, there is virtually no evidence to support or reject each of these claims in the empirical literature on the effects of deliberation,\textsuperscript{15} whereas there is some evidence about the effects of deliberation for preference and motivation change. This is because much of the pertinent empirical literature focuses on the effects of deliberation on voters’ choices among a given, unchanging set of alternatives. Thus, there is very little evidence against which I could evaluate this “new alternatives” defense of the deliberative voting claim, and therefore I do not have a basis to

\textsuperscript{14} For example, Helene Landemore and Scott Page argue that “deliberative problem solving can also produce synergies, that is, create new solutions out of the arguments, information, and solutions brought to the table” (Landemore & Page 235).

\textsuperscript{15} Importantly, a significant number of empirical studies note the ability of deliberation to reveal new information, such as preferences or opinions previously unknown to the group, but do not address the creation of new alternatives that the group can choose.
complete this kind of analysis. Because empirical work in this area is lacking, the ability of deliberation to generate new alternatives will not be analyzed in the dissertation.

To summarize, chapter three of the dissertation will:

1. Provide a brief survey of the deliberative democratic literature that claims deliberation is valuable because it enables preference change, and, explain how preference change is related to the pursuit of the common good.
2. Determine, explicitly, how preferences ought to change under deliberative democratic theories identified in (1).
3. Reevaluate existing studies of the effects of deliberation on preference change to answer the following questions:
   a. Will deliberation cause preference change, and will voters vote on the basis of those preferences?
   b. Will voting based on “changed” preferences produce outcomes that better promote the common good than voting alone?
Chapter Four: Deliberation and Subjective Assessments of Voters’ Choices

Chapter four will consider a different empirical argument that could be used to support the Deliberative Voting Claim. In contrast to the empirical argument discussed in chapter three, the argument addressed in this chapter does not rely on the claim that deliberation transforms preferences over outcomes.

Chapter four will consider the claim that deliberation may have no transformative effect on individuals’ personal preferences over the alternatives. However, deliberation can transform the perceptions of individuals about how they ought to vote, and this change will cause them to vote differently from the way they would if no deliberation were held. In particular, deliberation can prompt voters to vote so as to select outcomes that promote the common good.

This behavioral change can be demonstrated with an example. Suppose that the substantive common good is the goal of political decision making. Suppose further that prior to deliberation, if presented with a vote, participants would (empirically) vote on the basis of their self-interested preferences. The argument considered in chapter four states that deliberation can change voting behavior by altering voters’ perceptions about how they ought to make their vote choice. In the case of this example, it could be argued that in deliberation voters decide that they should not vote on the basis of self-interested preferences. Instead, deliberation may prompt voters to decide that they ought to vote based on the alternative they judge to constitute the substantive common good.

As in the case of the empirical argument outlined in chapter three, this example shows that the specific empirical argument required to establish the Deliberative voting Claim will vary, depending on the conception of the common good. The substance of the common good will dictate, at least in part, the kinds of motivations or information required as inputs to the voting
procedure to output decisions that are in the common good. Thus, as was the case in chapter three, this chapter must consider the kind of change in perception that would be necessary to select outcomes that promote each variety of the common good.

In the first part of chapter four, I will show that the empirical argument is consistent with some comments within the deliberative democratic theory about the influence of deliberation on outcomes, in order to show that there is support of this view in the deliberative democratic theory literature. For example, Joshua Cohen argues that deliberation may, or may not, change voters’ preferences. Nevertheless, Cohen anticipates that deliberation followed by voting is more likely to produce outcomes that are in the common good, even if voters’ personal preferences remain unchanged (Cohen, “Democratic Legitimacy” 75). These comments seem to indicate that following deliberation, Cohen believes voters will not necessarily vote on the basis of their personal preferences. The empirical argument outlined above is consistent with this view.

In addition, the empirical argument addressed in chapter four is consistent with the common distinction between self-interested preferences, community-interested preferences, and judgments that is found in deliberative democratic literature. As was noted in chapter one, above, deliberative democratic theories are frequently contrasted with vote-centric theories of democratic decision-making, which classify voting as an aggregation of self-interested preferences. Rather than making decisions by voting on the basis of self-interested preferences, deliberative democrats believe that political decision-making should proceed by deliberations about the common good. The empirical argument outlined in this chapter is consistent with the belief that there are important normative implications for voting based on one kind of motivation (such as a personal preference) rather than another (such as a judgment about the common good), but it does not rely on a change in preferences to achieve a change in outcomes.
This chapter will determine whether deliberation causes a shift in voters’ perceptions about what information or motivations they ought to consult when they vote, without changing their personal preference, and whether that perceptual change translates to a change in voting outcomes. It will be important to distinguish this argument from the empirical argument outlined in chapter three. How is a change in voter perception about how one ought to vote different from a change in voter preference? Can we expect a real change in outcomes if voters’ preferences remain unaltered? These are important questions because they ask whether (1) the two empirical arguments are distinct (even though they are distinguished in the literature on deliberative democracy), and (2) whether one should expect a change in perception without a change in preference.

At the outset, I am skeptical that this particular argument can be supported empirically. There are two reasons for my skepticism, which I address briefly here.

The first reason for skepticism concerns the vote-centric/deliberative democratic theory distinction, and the dialogue that exists between the two theories. In chapter one, above, I noted that deliberative democratic theory is, in part, a rejection of vote-centric theories. Vote-centric theories focus on aggregation, and largely cast voters as rational actors who vote according to their preferences, whatever they may be. Whether one is voting for an alternative because the voter believes it is in the common good, and because she believes she ought to vote to promote the common good, or because that alternative is her self-interested preference, those actions are indistinguishable on the vote-centric account. This is because, in both cases, the theory states that the voter would not vote for the given alternative unless she preferred to do so. The voter’s action reveals her preference, even if the underlying reasons for doing so in each case are different. In this sense, the competing political theory cannot make sense of the
preference/perception distinction that is at the core of the empirical account considered in this chapter.

The fact that vote-centric democratic theory cannot make sense of the distinction between preferences and a subjective perception of one’s choice is not a problem for deliberative democratic theories per se, but it does bright to light a need to analyze this distinction carefully, and in in greater detail. It raises the question of why preferences and motivation are different, and why we are able to make sense of that distinction in deliberative democratic theories. A significant part of chapter four will take up this distinction between preferences and motivations in the deliberative democratic theory literature by first looking at each conception of the common good. The chapter will discuss what it would mean for a voter to change her perception of how she ought to vote to be successful in selecting outcomes that promote the common good, without necessarily changing her preferences. This analysis will be a significant contribution to this chapter, as the distinction between judgment voting and preference voting is frequently discussed in the deliberative democratic theory literature.

My second reason for skepticism concerns the “testability” of the empirical argument that will be addressed in chapter four. In order to determine that voters have changed their perception, during deliberation, of how they ought to vote, without changing their preferences over the alternatives, one would have to distinguish those two features of voters’ choices in the course of an empirical study. It is important to note one cannot determine whether one’s perception of how she ought to vote has changed (as opposed to a change in preferences) simply by observing a vote. One has to understand why a voter chose to vote for a particular alternative in order to determine if that choice was a matter of preference, or a matter of perception. While testing the empirical argument in chapter three involves determining whether voters’ preferences
change over time, the present argument involves determining whether voters come to believe that they should change their vote, while holding constant their preferences over the alternatives. Therefore, testing this particular claim will require information about the reasons behind voters’ choices that follow deliberation, and in particular, more nuanced information than is required to support the argument presented in chapter three.

The empirical claim outlined here has received less attention in the empirical literature on deliberation than the argument addressed in chapter three. However, there are some studies from the literature on political and jury deliberations that can provide insight into the notion of a change in perception. These studies ask jurors and voters to describe what change they saw in their own decision-making (i.e. in their decision on how to vote) as a result of deliberation. In the studies on which I will focus, voters are asked if the deliberation caused voters to make their decisions differently than they would have prior to deliberation. For example, in a political deliberation about matters of policy for an Australian town’s local infrastructure, political scientists Robert Goodin and Simon Niemeyer asked deliberation participants about their experiences during deliberation and voting, and in particular, if and why voters changed their mind as a result of deliberation. Further, these theorists asked about the shift in voter’s perceptions about why and how they ought to decide how to vote. In this particular study, participants were asked if framing the discussion in terms of the common good had an effect on their perceptions of how they ought to decide how to vote. I will use this and related studies to determine whether a change in perception in deliberation is a sound argument for the deliberative democrat to employ, and, at a more basic level, if this type of change can be distinguished from the kind of preference change identified in chapter three.
The purpose of chapters three and four is to use existing literature on the effects of public deliberation to determine if the two empirical claims of interest have any basis, and if they are legitimate bases for the Deliberative Voting Claim. It is possible that the existing literature will allow me to answer some, but not all, aspects of the questions I have identified. I expect that chapters three and four will face two main limitations. First, there will be limitations in the experimental design of the studies available. As I noted above, in order to substantiate either of the two empirical arguments, one must identify not only changes in voting outcomes, but also identify voters’ reasons for changing their stated opinions. Second, while there are a growing number of studies on deliberative voting, this is still a relatively new field of empirical research. Thus, the number of studies available may limit the kinds of conclusions that one can draw about the empirical effects of deliberation with respect to the common good.

At the very least, these two chapters will identify gaps in the empirical literature that must be filled in order to justify, empirically, the deliberative democrat’s claims. The discussion will consider (a) how deliberation can influence voter decision making to promote each variety of the common good and (b) if the existing literature demonstrates that deliberation can prompt voters to behave in the ways identified in (a). As noted, I expect the empirical literature will provide evidence for some of these changes, but not all. In light of these results, I hope to be able to suggest future empirical studies that would help to answer the remaining questions. While I will not provide full experiment proposals in chapters three and four, I hope to identify (at least some of) the remaining hypotheses that would need to be tested in order to complete the analysis started in these chapters.

It is important to determine what empirical grounding, if any, can be found for the given empirical claims as they are used in the deliberative democratic theory literature, as this should
indicate whether deliberation is likely to improve outcomes over voting alone. Importantly, though, even if one were able to show that these empirical claims are true, neither of these arguments establishes the distinct normative argument that voters *ought* to change their behavior following deliberation. That argument will be taken up in the final chapter of the dissertation.

To summarize, chapter four of the dissertation will:

1. Provide an overview of the deliberative democratic literature that is consistent with the claim that deliberation is valuable because it changes voters’ beliefs about how they ought to vote.
2. Determine, explicitly, what kinds of changes in belief would be necessary to achieve outcomes that cohere with each variety of the common good.
   a. Address the following question: how is a change in voter perception different from a change in voter preference?
3. Evaluate existing studies of the effects of deliberation on changes in voter “perception” to answer the following questions:
   a. Will deliberation change voters’ beliefs about how they ought to vote, and will voters vote on the basis of their new beliefs?
   b. Will voting based on “changed” perception produce outcomes that are in the common good?
4. Identify remaining hypotheses that would need to be tested in order to complete the analysis started in chapters three and four.
Chapter Five: The Duty to Promote the Common Good

Neither of the empirical arguments addressed in chapters three and four can address a deeper normative question posed by the Deliberative Voting Claim. That is, whether or not votes are cast as to promote the common good, there may, nevertheless, be a duty to do so. The goal of chapter five is to determine if such a duty exists within the deliberative democratic theories of interest, and if so, what that duty demands of voters. It is important to ask this question, because a moral obligation to vote in a particular way may exist, even if deliberation, as outlined in chapters three and four, is unlikely to cause voters to behave in that way.

There are two main reasons to believe that deliberative democrats believe there is a duty to promote the common good in voting. First, a duty to vote according to one’s judgment about the common good has been recognized in the deliberative democratic theory literature. However, that duty lacks justification. This section of the dissertation will show that there is a perception that a duty exists to vote a particular way, but that the perception has not been justified.

More critically, a duty to promote the common good may be required to bring about the kinds of political outcomes that deliberative democrats desire. As noted above, deliberative democratic theories provide rules that ought to govern deliberation. For example, deliberation must involve an equal and fair exchange of arguments and ideas, and be focused on the common good. When consensus cannot be reached, a majority vote is taken. Although deliberation is focused on the common good, deliberative democrats have not defended a duty on the part of the individual to vote to promote the common good. Absent such an duty, and an assumption that voters will follow that duty, we do not have a reason to accept that deliberation followed by voting will produce outcomes that promote the common good.
The first part of chapter five will provide textual evidence from the literature of a belief in a duty to vote to promote the common good. The second part of chapter five will explore whether those theories impose a duty to promote the common good, and, if so, what that duty requires. This latter part of the chapter will explore the duty to vote to promote the common using two distinct approaches, both of which I outline below.

The first approach that I will take follows directly from the arguments outlined in chapters three and four. In those chapters, I asked whether deliberation followed by voting is, as a matter of empirical fact, more likely to produce outcomes that promote the common good than voting. As I noted above, I expect that these chapters will produce limited and mixed results. In response, I will ask the following more general question: how could deliberation produce better outcomes than voting? There are several answers that one might give to this question, and I provide two examples here.

First, one might argue that deliberation about the common good is more likely to produce outcomes that promote the common good than voting alone because deliberation allows for the sharing of information that is critical to the selection of good outcomes. This argument states that following deliberation, individual preferences and opinions are likely to have better content, which in turn will lead to better voting outcomes. For example, suppose that a political community aims to select policies that promote the aggregative common good. In this case, one could argue that deliberation prior to voting is beneficial because it provides a forum in which participants can share information and ask questions about the various policy options they face, and thus craft their preferences in an informed manner. A proponent of this view could argue that deliberation followed by voting is more likely to lead to outcomes that promote the aggregative
common good than voting alone because deliberation causes voters to become better informed about the options they face.

Second, one could argue that deliberation is more likely to produce better outcomes than promote the common good than voting alone because deliberation focused on the common good will provide a structure to the group’s decision that is absent from mere majority voting. For example, suppose a political community aims to select a policy that promotes the substantive common good, and the substantive common good is a particular interpretation of “justice.” Making that standard known, and discussing the policies in light of that standard, may cause deliberators to believe that some policies are consistent with the standard while others are not. This will limit the available positions that deliberators can take with respect to the alternatives, thus ruling out particular orderings one can have over the alternatives. For example, every group member may come to believe that policy \( x \) is unequivocally worse at promoting the common good than policy \( y \), and thus believes that policy \( x \) is better than policy \( y \). In this example, the group would have effectively “ruled out” orderings of the alternatives in which \( y \) is preferred to \( x \). Thus deliberation may lead the group to converge on a limited range of positions on how the alternatives ought to be preferred, thereby diminishing disagreement.

This second example important because it highlights a remaining concern about what counts as a “good” outcome, and why deliberation followed by voting might be better equipped to achieve good outcomes than voting alone. It was noted above that majority voting procedures are prone to several impossibility results. In general, these results state that several desirable criteria regarding the democratic character and fairness of majority voting procedures are mutually inconsistent, and may result in the selection of an alternative that is neither fair nor democratic. One way that deliberation might improve outcomes is by ensuring that at least one of
an impossibility theorem’s assumptions is violated, thus avoiding the impossibility result. For example, in the example above, I noted that deliberation could cause voters to support a limited set of orderings of the available alternatives. This kind of restriction is sufficient to avoid the Arrovian assumption of “unlimited domain,” in which voters are assumed to be able to adopt any possible ordering of the alternatives. This restriction would be sufficient to avoid the Arrovian impossibility result (Arrow 340). More generally, an instrumental value of deliberation may be that it imposes a structure on the particular choice that deliberators face, such that they are forced to violate one impossibility criterion or another, and thus select an alternative that is fair and democratically chosen. This point will be addressed in further detail in chapter five, and considered alongside additional instrumental virtues of deliberation.

While these are merely examples, the goal of this portion of the dissertation is to outline arguments that one could use to support the Deliberative Voting Claim, even if the empirical evidence in this area is lacking. This section is important, because it asks what instrumental virtues deliberation might have, apart from what has been tested empirically.

Following this discussion of the (potential) instrumental virtues of deliberation, I will address the question of whether voters have a duty to vote so as to bring about good political outcomes. While deliberative democrats outline rules for deliberation, they do not tell us whether deliberators have any duties when deliberation ends, and a vote is taken. In light of the work outlined above, I will ask the following question: do deliberators have a duty to vote in ways that could promote the common good?

This line of argument is motivated by the instrumental arguments presented in favor of deliberative democracy discussed above. As was noted in the outline of chapter one, instrumental arguments state that deliberative democratic systems are preferable to vote-centric systems
because deliberation followed by voting is more likely than voting alone to produce outcomes that promote the common good. This argument states that outcomes that promote the common good are a goal of deliberation. If the common good is the goal, and one has developed an understanding of how deliberation could select policies that promote the common good, one can then consider particular voter duties that would assist in achieving each variety of the common good. That is, what additional rules could be added to a deliberative democrat’s theory to prompt voters to select outcomes that promote the common good? This approach moves beyond the rules for deliberation, but maintains the goal of identifying a moral duty that would support the Deliberative Voting Claim. Identifying such a duty, or explaining why such a duty does not exist, would be a positive contribution of the dissertation to deliberative democratic theory.

There is also a second, distinct method that I will use to determine whether voters have a duty to vote a particular way following deliberation. This method focuses not on the potential ways in which deliberation might improve outcomes, but focuses instead on the rules of deliberation itself. In order to determine whether a duty to vote to promote the common good is present in deliberative democratic theory, I will look to the other rules that the theories impose on the individual. I will examine the rules of deliberation to determine if, and how, those rules ought to guide individual decision-making. I noted above that deliberative democratic theorists present and justify the rules that they believe deliberators ought to follow in making collective decisions. Some of these rules guide how participants communicate with one another, such as the requirement that deliberations be conducted in public, giving equal speaking time to those involved. The rules for deliberation also dictate how deliberators ought to consider the arguments and proposals of others. Deliberators must be “open” to the positions of others, and be “responsive” to their reasons, while being “oriented toward” the common good. These terms are
interpreted in different ways by deliberative democrats, but in general, are meant to shape the way that deliberators discuss (aloud) and consider (through personal reflection) one another’s views. These rules, and the moral justifications for these rules, may indicate how deliberators ought to think about their vote choice, and importantly, decide how to vote when the deliberation phase ends. Specifically, if the rules of deliberation impose moral constraints on how an individual, while deliberating, should think about the group’s collective choice among the alternatives, these constraints may also apply in the voting stage.

While much of the dissertation will focus on theories that employ instrumental arguments in favor of deliberative democracy, the outcome of the analysis of the rules for discourse may have something to say about intrinsic theories, as well. In particular, if a duty to vote to promote the common good falls out of the rules of deliberation, and intrinsic accounts of deliberative democratic legitimacy support those rules (albeit on intrinsic moral grounds), the duty should exist within those intrinsic theories. Thus, an examination of instrumental concerns may produce results that apply to the remaining sectors of the deliberative democratic theory literature.

It is possible that both of these lines of argument will come up “empty.” That is, it might be the case that there is no discernable duty to vote to promote the common good under the deliberative democratic theories of interest. Or, it might be the case that one approach shows that a duty exists, while the other does not. Finally, it might be the case that there exists a duty to vote to promote the common good that is both (a) inherent to the rules of deliberation and (b) necessary to ensure that deliberation produces good political outcomes. If that is the case, it will be my job to determine whether the duties are consistent, and if not, what the implications are for deliberative democrats committed to the Deliberative Voting Claim.
The final task of chapter five will be to combine its results with those from chapters three and four. In particular, I will address any inconsistencies in the chapters’ results. The results may be inconsistent in two ways.

First, suppose that voters fail to vote to promote the common good (chapters three and four), but they have a duty to do so (chapter five). One could ask why, in practice, voters fail to do their duty. Future work would explore the barriers voters face in performing their duty to vote to promote the common good, and what institutional changes might be made to prompt them to do their duty.

Second, suppose that voters vote to promote the common good, but have no moral duty to vote this way. In this instance, the truth of the Deliberative Voting Claim is contingent upon happenstance. This contingency could lead the deliberative democrat committed to the Deliberative Voting Claim to ask what features of deliberation, such as its setting and structure, are likely to prompt voters to vote to promote the common good, and to advocate for those features on the grounds that they will produce good political outcomes.

In summary, this project is motivated by a commitment in the deliberative democratic literature to the Deliberative Voting Claim, which states that deliberation followed by voting is more likely than voting alone to produce outcomes that promote the common good, and a lack of empirical or normative support for that commitment. Chapters three and four will test two empirical claims that explain why voters are likely to vote differently in deliberative and non-deliberative voting contexts. The upshot of these chapters is to determine whether the Deliberative Voting Claim can be employed legitimately as a defense of deliberative democracy, or whether deliberative democrats must fall back on alternative defenses of deliberative democratic decision making. Chapter five moves beyond the empirical literature to consider a
normative question that stems from this analysis: do deliberators have a duty to vote for outcomes that promote the common good? This analysis will assess of the strength of the Deliberative Voting Claim. If the deliberative democrat can provide a strong argument in favor of this central claim, then that claim is justified, and can be used as a reason to prefer deliberative democratic systems. If the deliberative democrat cannot provide such an argument, that gives us reason to question the instrumental value of deliberative democratic decision making as it concerns the common good.

To summarize, chapter five will:

1. Demonstrate that there is reason to believe that deliberative democrats are committed to a duty to vote to promote the common good.
2. Determine how deliberation followed by voting could be more likely to produce outcomes that promote the common good than voting alone.
3. Determine whether voters have a duty to vote in the ways identified in (2).
4. Look to the moral foundations of deliberative democratic theory and the rules for deliberation to determine if a duty to vote a certain way exists, and, if so, what it is.
5. If there are distinct duties identified by steps (3) and (4), determine whether those duties are consistent.
6. If the outcomes of chapters three and four and chapter five are inconsistent, consider the implications of the inconsistency for deliberative democrats that invoke the Deliberative Voting Claim.
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