

Constructing Democracy with Others: Deliberative Theory and Social Identity

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A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of
Philosophy (PhD) in philosophy

University of Lancaster, Department of Politics,
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April 2017

Abstract

This thesis provides a contribution to knowledge by demonstrating that deliberative theories of democracy have failed to take sufficient account of social difference and by arguing for a more complex and relational understanding of social identity to be considered in democratic theory. I argue that deliberative theories of democracy should not consider deliberators only as socially embedded actors but should consider social groups and social identity as a ground for political participation. I show how some of the main deliberative theories to date have failed to commit to a sufficient understanding of social identity, before demonstrating how identity should be conceived for the purposes of deliberative models. I further argue that, in view of the importance of social identity in political participation, we should understand our civic and political spheres as porous, rather than as distinct. Identity is not something we can ignore in political life, and attempts to minimise its workings are more likely to result in problems, than promote greater political harmony. I will demonstrate throughout the course of this thesis that attempts to efface, minimise or overcome identity in deliberative theory leads to that theory being unable to recognise some of the important workings of social identity in democracy.

Declaration

I confirm that this thesis is entirely my own work and has not been submitted for a higher degree elsewhere. I also confirm that the word count of the main text is under 80,000 words: 79,535.

Acknowledgements

It is an amazing privilege to spend years of your life studying a topic of your own choosing. I could not have enjoyed this privilege, and enjoyed it so fully, without the help, understanding, support and friendship of many people. I'd therefore like to thank, wholeheartedly, many wonderful and supportive people.

I'd first like to thank Allison Weir and Christopher McLeod for examining this thesis. I understand that time is extremely limited in the life of an academic, and appreciate that you have agreed to use some of your stock of this precious commodity to read and assess this work.

Some of the biggest and most heartfelt thanks are due to my supervisor Alison Stone. It's impossible for me to list every way in which you have helped me through these last few years, but I feel the need to say that I came to the PhD in something of a crisis. Your steady hand and encouragement has turned this around, so that these days self-doubt plagues me a lot more rarely and your faith in me has given me strength at many turns. On top of which you have continually pushed me to improve my work, but through an approach that often let me come to see my shortcomings on my own (or at least make me think I was doing so!). It has been a great privilege to work so closely with someone as sharp, knowledgeable and generous as you Alison, and I will miss our discussions and meetings terribly. We will just have to find other means of keeping in touch—I hope!

Great thanks are due for the very wise, constructive and good-natured feedback I was given throughout my time at Lancaster by Mark Garnett and Patrick Bishop, as part of my PhD panel. I can't remember who is good cop and who is bad cop, but I know that I have clarified many points as a result of your feedback. Further thanks, Patrick, for the additional support you have given me around teaching, applying for jobs and generally making my way in the department—all of this support was very much appreciated.

Careful, considerate and astute mentoring has been given to me over the last few years by Angela Breitenbach. I'm not sure I have ever properly conveyed, Angela, just how much this mentoring has helped me over the years in getting much of the PhD tasks outside of the thesis done. In some instances I found these projects more daunting than writing the PhD itself, and therefore your support has been invaluable for me getting to the finish-line—thank you so much!

A big thank you to all of my colleagues at the University of Leeds—working while studying is often an arduous task but was made much easier because of the great team of people I have worked with. A special thanks in this regard is due to Claire Eckert, for always taking the PhD into consideration and encouraging me to keep going. Po Houg Lai also helped me immensely by proofreading many pages of the thesis for me. Many thanks to you both!

I have many friends who encouraged me, picked me up when I was down, took me out, got me drunk and generally reminded me life is about more than a thesis throughout the last few years. However, three friends need thanked for the extra help and impact they had on me and the thesis: Anna Liddle—you sounded out ideas, asked pertinent questions and generally commiserated on PhD woes; Fumina Hamasaki—you listened to what by now must be many hours of rambling ideas with utmost patience and interest and helped me, through astute questioning, to make those ideas better, as well as sparking off many new avenues of thought in discussion too. Jane Hartley—you were ever online, letting me rant, asking the right questions, reading proposals and presentations, and generally being a continual sounding board, as well as picking me up innumerable times when I was down and wanted to give up. Sincere thanks to you all!

Thank you so much to my parents whose financial support let me embark upon (and continue) this whole endeavour. And deep thanks to them, my brother Paul and my entire family for all of the emotional support, encouragement and love that has been imperative in keeping me going.

Finally, thanks to Shaun—living with me through the agonies and ecstasies of PhD life has been your privilege and cross to bear. I know you have, like no one else, scraped me up when I've been low and championed me, as well as celebrating my successes, however small. I already wonder how we will look back on this period together in years to come. For now: onwards.

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Introduction

Democratic theory swings between the ideal and the real; like theories of ethics, rights or law, our democratic theories aim at explicating the most ideal rules, maxims and processes for democracy to function justly or legitimately. However, democratic theories also need to take account of how democracy can be realised intersubjectively through debate, shared political action and our institutions.¹ The problem then, as far as this thesis is concerned, is how far democratic theory can account for the fact that democratic subjects are not ideal, rational and homogenous subjects, but are intersubjectively realised and socially embedded subjects who are marked by different social identities. My thesis is that the existence of social categories and hierarchies affect how ideal theories of democracy should be conceived, on the basis that our social identity is operative when we participate politically. We are constantly shown that our approaches are partial and perspectival; the trick for democratic theory, therefore, is to keep us moving towards the ideal, while taking this reality into consideration. In this thesis, I argue that the deliberative democratic theories that I consider either don't sufficiently consider the role difference and social identity can play in democratic deliberation, or problematically employ inadequate theories of social identity. Of course, there are many other reasons why a democratic process might fail; however, I will argue that social identity is a particularly difficult case because difference can actively be masked by democratic theory's propensity to attempt to preserve universalism. Thus, the aim of this thesis is to interrogate both our notions of democracy and our theories of social identity, in order to consider how we

¹ For in-depth discussion of "ideal" versus "nonideal" political and ethical theory see (O'Neill 1987, Mills 2005, Jagger 2015). I will, in what follows, broadly argue for a nonideal approach in the service of preserving ideal democratic legitimacy.

might preserve democratic idealism, while dealing with the difficulties that social identity raises for democratic theory.

To this end, I will begin in chapter one by looking at Luce Irigaray's theory of difference, as a way into thinking about social identity and into uncovering some of the overarching reasons why social identity should be considered in political theory. This route into the problem is informed by my MPhil thesis, which focused on Irigaray's work on democracy and sexual difference. In that thesis I was more concerned to show the limits of Irigaray's theorising: I argued that Irigaray left the processes and basis of democracy under-theorised, and suggested that deliberative democracy could provide a model that Irigaray might endorse. However, while I used Seyla Benhabib's discourse ethics and democratic theory in my MPhil thesis as a possible conduit for an Irigarayan democracy—one that would hold open a space for deliberation across difference—I concluded that because deliberative theory has a universal basis, Irigaray's theory simultaneously raises questions about the norms of deliberation and how they might work against the representation of difference. The first chapter therefore draws out some of these debates, as well as disputes between deliberative theorists about the main tenets of deliberative theory, in order to frame the arguments that follow in the subsequent chapters.

I begin chapter one by considering how, according to Irigaray, femininity is represented as Other in western culture. For Irigaray, women are (re)presented only in their (negative) relation to men. How women relate to themselves, other people and the world is influenced by these representations, and by extension, these social categories affect women's political participation. In Irigaray's view, politics presents a double-bind for feminine subjects: such subjects do not fit into political life because the political sphere is characterised as an adversarial and active sphere; therefore, it

does not suit traditional feminine expectations, relational roles and values. When feminine subjects enter the field of politics they must do so by taking up a masculine position, which necessarily means suppressing their femininity in order to be recognised as citizens (Irigaray 1985a, b, 2000). Thus, I argue that democracy's claim to universalism is undermined by social difference because, as Irigaray's work shows, our participation is always potentially affected by our social identity.

I then go on to explain how deliberative theory holds open the logical possibility of being attentive to difference. Deliberative theory lays out norms for democratic practice that are usually aimed at securing universal inclusion, fair participation, and openness to others. Deliberative theories typically attest that a fair, inclusive process based upon such norms will result in democratic legitimacy. Furthermore, theorists normally hold that the content of deliberation should not include pre-agreed hierarchies of value. However, I simultaneously argue that Irigaray's work problematises deliberative theory by highlighting plurality and hierarchies of gender identity. Irigaray's work thus suggests that expressing and aiming for universality is not sufficient for deliberative theory to be truly democratic. Irigaray's work is therefore used to motivate the central concern of this thesis, namely exploring how deliberative democracy can address social identity and difference.

I move next, in the final sections of chapter one, to present some competing theories of deliberative democracy, with a view to explaining further its main tenets and highlighting a couple of important debates between deliberative theorists. I discuss arguments about the epistemic status of deliberative outcomes, namely whether we can say that a decision following from deliberation is somehow constitutively 'correct' (Martí 2006, Peter 2013). I also consider competing arguments about whether deliberative procedures can be said to inculcate fairness and justice, or

whether we need instead to agree to further substantive principles in order to ensure that deliberative decisions do not infringe basic rights (Cohen 1989, Gutmann and Thompson 2004). I side with Fabienne Peter that the epistemic gain in deliberation comes from our ability to share ideas, knowledge and perspectives, rather than the idea of coming to the ‘correct’ result. I also agree with Joshua Cohen that the norms of deliberative procedures ideally preserve fairness without us having to institute substantive rights-based principles alongside them. Thus, by the end of the chapter I will have considered deliberative theory broadly and forwarded Irigaray’s problem of difference as one that raises questions about the theory’s claim to universality.

In the second chapter I explore Jürgen Habermas’s discourse theory as a foundational deliberative theory, which puts emphasis on the relationships between our social and political lives and institutions. After reviewing Habermas’s theory, I briefly discuss Nancy Fraser’s argument that Habermas’s work doesn’t take sufficient account of gender differentials, because the subject assumed in his theory is masculine and is equal to all others who deliberate. Fraser also charges Habermas with being unable to accommodate divergent publics in his political sphere, as that sphere is guided by dominant narratives picked up from the civic sphere. I show that while in *Between Facts and Norms* (1996) Habermas partly meets Fraser’s criticisms, his rationalistic approach downplays the power relations at work in the political representation of dominant and marginalised groups and discourses. Ultimately, I argue that Habermas’s theory thereby fails to answer questions concerning the identification and treatment of injustice.

I then forward Benhabib’s procedural deliberative model as one that potentially meets Fraser’s criticisms (Benhabib 1992, 1994, 1996). Benhabib provides a relational model of ethics that requires us to actively listen to others and be open and

reflexive to difference. However, I argue that Benhabib fails to carry the advances of her ethical theory— which recognises differences between specific others— into her political theory, to that theory's detriment. I argue that far from preserving political legitimacy, Benhabib's theory undermines it by falling back onto the exclusionary limits of Habermas's theory. Thus, the conclusion of this chapter will be that Benhabib is correct to posit that we should understand deliberators as socially embedded subjects, but that this understanding needs to be extended to deliberative democratic theory.

In the third chapter I focus on Iris Marion Young's communicative democratic model as one that unequivocally deals with difference in deliberative theory (Young 2000). Young's work is important as it provides a sustained account of the problematic of identity for deliberative democratic theory, while also maintaining that deliberative theory can incorporate difference. Young argues convincingly that the theory's norms themselves can exacerbate the problems of difference explored in chapters one and two. Young goes on to argue that in order to guard against these potential exclusions, there should be additional norms and forms of communication in the deliberative process that focus on inclusion.

I next consider the idea that social difference can create inequities not only in our access to political participation, but in our access to discourses, such that we may not be able to represent ourselves cogently, even where we have equal access to political fora. Young highlights this problem with reference to Jean-François Lyotard's concept of the *différend*, which I supplement with a discussion of Miranda Fricker's concept of hermeneutical injustice (Fricker 2007). I forward Fricker's theory with a view to showing how a lack of narrative or framework for self-understanding can lead to experiences of injustice that are salient for deliberative theory. I then argue

that Young's theory holds some possible solutions to this problem of marginalisation, specifically in her discussions about the value of social groups as a political resource.

However, I conclude that there is a tension between Young's positive conception of difference and identity groups as a resource for democracy, and the fact that she pulls back from difference when she announces that group action can only be understood as political when it aims at greater equality of resources or parity of political participation. I argue that this problem arises in Young's theory because she is working with a positional, structural social identity model (Young 1994b). I forward Alison Stone's concept of gender as genealogy as a one that improves upon Young's gender theory and undermines Young's exclusive focus on equality (Stone 2004). I conclude that Young's deliberative model has much to offer and produces the most comprehensive account of deliberative theory that I have encountered. However, I also argue that there is a problematic limit to Young's understanding of social identity within her theory, which leads her to argue for the erroneous conclusion that the politicisation of social identity is only of concern when universal standards of equality are not met. I begin to argue, against this position, that the social and political boundaries of social identity are more complicated and interlinked than Young recognises. Our social identity is not something we merely seek to overcome in participating as a citizen; rather it's something that forms, and continues to be the basis of, our political participation. I therefore conclude that the social and political spheres cannot be starkly separated in political theory.

In chapter four I argue further for my conclusion in chapter three that social identity has a more complicated relationship with politics than Young's theory recognises. I frame my discussion by exploring the potentially positive and negative consequences of understanding and employing social identity as a political concept. I

start the chapter by examining Axel Honneth's account of social identity and politics in *The Struggle For Recognition* (1995), wherein identity is forwarded as a central and positive component of political agitation and progress. As we grow up, Honneth highlights, we are socialised by others reacting to our behaviour; social interaction is governed by a series of norms that allow us to recognise one another. This sense of being recognised by others is a basic necessity for us to have a sense of personal identity, social place and self-esteem. Because of the central role of social recognition in our lives, Honneth argues, politics is always concerned with intersubjective recognition; when we are engaged in negotiations about recognition of our rights, the negotiations act as proxies for recognition of our personal and social identities. When we agitate politically, according to Honneth, we are asking primarily for others to accord us recognition as subjects deserving of respect. Honneth's work brings together the individual self, social groups and politics in a way that can expand on baldly structural theories. However, I simultaneously argue that Honneth's emphasis on an authentic self, which seeks recognition through increasingly expanded rights, as well as his argument that this rights-expansion is inevitable, is problematic. It is not clear that our politics follows such a pattern of continual progress, nor is it clear that our sense of having an 'authentic self' is something that belies a real core of the self that is formed away from, or in opposition to, our culture or social group.

Honneth's excessively progressive view of identity and its role in politics leads next to a consideration of Judith Butler's critical theory of gender identity and identity politics. For Butler, gender is as an effect of power; gender is not, Butler insists, the expression of an essential sex, but is produced through our relationships, laws, discourses and norms (Butler 1990). Thus, Butler argues, trying to represent women politically is fraught with potential problems because the existence of women,

however defined, is always an effect of power relations. To employ the category 'woman', as a term that tracks a particular kind of natural entity, may result in exclusions for women who do not fit the categorisation employed, or may shore up unequal power relations by presenting women as subjugated because of their natural and essential capacities. I argue that Butler's work raises significant questions about how identity should be treated in democratic theory, given that uncritically accepting identity categories may have detrimental effects. I also draw out in more depth my doubts about Honneth's emphasis on an authentic core of self and the idea of political progress with reference to Butler's work, since Butler challenges the very existence of an authentic 'inner' subject. I also argue that Butler's theory forces us to be cautious about political recognition being linked, in a positive sense, to increasingly finely-categorised identities. My conclusion is that such recognition may not necessarily result in greater emancipation or increased possibilities for different ways of living and relating to others but may ask subjects to fit ever more restricted categories.

The ways in which identity politics can impede emancipation is also the focus of Wendy Brown's work in *States of Injury* (1995), which is the reason I turn to this work next. Brown argues that political identities that are created in reaction to adverse conditions or subordination have a propensity to lock subjects into cycles of subjection. Such identities reify these cycles, Brown attests, because the subordinated group gain (limited) power by blaming their oppressors and thus the group have a reason to replay them. Brown is concerned therefore that such identity politics risk ossifying the relations of subordination that have created those identities, rather than emancipating them. Drawing on Butler's and Brown's work I argue that social identity is not a straight-forwardly positive matter for political theory, and by extension, deliberative theory. How we emphasise social identity within politics can

have negative effects, and therefore identity must be treated with caution when we consider how to mobilise it in political practice and theory.

However, I simultaneously conclude that the existence of potential difficulties with the political mobilisation of social identity does not mean that we can ignore it in political theory. In order to expand on my reasons for this conclusion, I finish chapter four by considering Linda Martin Alcoff's approach to identity and politics. Like Honneth, Alcoff argues that social identity is an inevitable consequence of our social facticity; however, she also considers and responds to the critiques found in the works of Butler and Brown (Alcoff 2006). For Alcoff, our relationships with others, and the social categories and norms that underpin those relationships, inevitably form and frame our social reality, and are thereby always potentially positive. Without other people, Alcoff attests, we have no way of developing our social capacities or our autonomy. Therefore, social norms have productive outcomes in that they allow us to cooperate with one another in ways that are essential to our living and flourishing. Alcoff further argues that our social identity categories can be understood as creating our capacities to recognise one another as certain kinds of subjects. However, because these categories have such a great influence on our social interaction, Alcoff argues, they affect how we participate politically. Our group-membership is thus more profound to our political participation than being a resource for group perspectives, or uncovering inequalities. Identity politics, Alcoff concludes, is a means to participating without having to sacrifice our identity to dominant understandings of citizenship, and is thus often about overcoming participatory alienation.

I close the chapter by bringing these arguments to bear on Young's deliberative democratic theory, extending my argument from chapter three that Young's narrow focus on inequality is misguided. I argue that Alcoff's discussion of

social identity politics as a means to overcoming participatory alienation demonstrates that cultural pursuits and social organising always have potential effects on political participation, such that the two spheres cannot be disjointed easily. Overcoming exclusion requires that groups can present themselves in political life without having to efface their identity, which in turn requires a shift in the cultural understandings and representations of those groups. I therefore underline that my central criticism of Young is that her theory does not sufficiently consider the links between the civic and political processes of deliberation. Because our civic and political spheres are constantly informing one another, we cannot categorise cultural meanings and formations of identity categories as non-political. Therefore, although Young understands the importance of parity of participation, she doesn't consider the realities of the relational workings that are necessary to achieve this in our social and political lives.

In the fifth, and final, chapter I consider whether it would be preferable to reformulate deliberative democracy so that it does not directly incorporate identity. I focus on John Dryzek's argument that we can avoid the problems that attach to dealing with identity, particularly identities that are sectarian or otherwise problematic, if we re-conceive identity as discourse (Dryzek 2005). If Dryzek is correct, then the more complex and cautiously affirmative stance I have taken on social identity and its role in politics in the preceding chapter could be more easily configured if we understand identity as discourse for the purposes of deliberative theory. I begin by discussing Dryzek's arguments that a focus on discourse helps to work against the polarisation of identities or the entrenchment of schisms involving problematic identities (e.g. racist identities). I then employ Allison Weir's work on social identity and discourses in order to argue that Dryzek employs too-thin a

conception of social identity to be tenable. Weir contends that discourses pertaining to identities are not pre-existing frameworks that subjects can choose, but rather are created through social interaction (Weir 2013). I argue that Dryzek's substitution of discourse in place of identity problematically suggests that our identity is something that we can choose, amend, or deliberate in same way as we might change our stance on other topics of debate. Therefore, although I agree with Dryzek that, on a practical level, refocusing debate towards discourses may be fruitful in some circumstances, I conclude that reducing identity to discourse entirely in deliberative theory is unnecessary and counterproductive.

I then turn to two extended case studies of identity politics in order to underscore my argument that Dryzek's stance is untenable and further argue for my view that we need to incorporate a more complex theory of identity into deliberative theory. Jose Cruz's case study of Puerto Rican politics in the US provides an account of how social identity can form the basis of political participation. Cruz's study shows that the cultural and social bonds of Puerto Ricans in Hartford during the twentieth century acted as an important basis for their politics. I therefore argue that Cruz's case serves as an example of how identity can be mobilised through effective, and affective, social organising on the basis of ethnicity, which our political theory must therefore be in a position to recognise. By contrast, I consider racist activist Tommy Robinson as a case study of a problematic identity. I show how, in Robinson's case, time spent with the local Muslim community he sets himself against led to a reduction in his racist rhetoric. However, I argue that Robinson's subsequent return to racist activism suggests that his own identity construction as the victim of Muslim oppression has not been sufficiently challenged. I argue that these cases further demonstrate my central thesis that we cannot try to limit the impact social identity has

on politics and political theory. Both cases illustrate that turning from social identity in political theory does not result in us creating a political space closer to a universal ideal, but rather means we lose the tools to try to work against problematic constructions or bolster emancipatory instantiations of social identity in politics.

Thus, by the end of this thesis, the first three chapters will have explored how deliberative theory has the potential to be welcoming of social identity and difference, and I will have discussed in depth how problems of exclusion are likely to arise if we don't consider social identity. I will have examined some of the ways in which theorists have responded to social identity in deliberative theory in light of the fact that social difference can constitute a basis of exclusion. Yet, I will also have demonstrated that all of these theorists, in one way or another, pull back from fully accepting the role of identity in their theories. I will have argued that such formulations of deliberative democratic theory undermine those theories' commitment to inclusion and equality, and tend to draw unnecessary and counterproductive lines between the civic and political spheres. In chapters four and five, I will have considered some potential reasons for this pull back: politicised identities may tend towards exclusions, or may reify and naturalise problematic relationships between groups; identities can also be problematic where they are constructed on the basis of subjugating another group, as in the case of racist identities, or where they are in essential opposition to another group, as in the case of sectarian identities. However, I will have shown that this is not the entire story of identity in politics, because social identity is an inevitable part of our socialisation and thus our means to cooperation, recognition and political participation. As such, greater inclusion requires identity recognition in politics.

I will conclude that identity is often understood in deliberative theory as something that should be limited, or overcome, in order to move towards or maintain the inclusive democratic ideal of universal citizenship and participation. Even those theorists who wish to include and value social identity in their theories tend towards these kinds of restraints. However, it's my contention that identity forms a more complex and fundamental ground for political participation than these theories recognise, and that because political participation and deliberation is framed and driven by the identities and discourses of the civic-public sphere, deliberative democracy, and political theory more generally, must engage with social identity on a more fundamental level than I have found in the theories I consider here. Difference needs to be recognised in the political sphere, rather than overcome: identity must not be treated as something that merely informs political deliberation or that should be circumvented in order for universal deliberation to take place. Instead, social identity needs to be understood as both a basis and regulator for certain forms of political participation, which is not captured when we understand it as mere resource or political hindrance.

Chapter One: Irigaray on Identity, Difference and Otherness; Perspectives on Procedural Deliberative Democracy

In this chapter, my aim is to discuss the two lines of enquiry that form the starting point for this thesis: the first is feminist philosophy of difference; the second is deliberative political theory. I employ Irigaray's work as a jumping off point for the thesis, as a way into thinking about some key questions that arise for political theory when we consider plurality and difference. Although controversial, Irigaray's work is of interest because she formulates and criticises gender identity formation as being predicated upon the identification of women as Other; for Irigaray, masculine identity proliferates in opposition to feminine identity, the latter of which is both excluded and subjugated in western culture.² Irigaray therefore provides a way into thinking about the fact that some social identities are privileged within cultures, while others face discrimination in ways that are not always immediately apparent, but that have political implications.³ In using Irigaray's theory I hope to highlight why our understanding of social identities is crucial for political theory. However, the framework for the remainder of the thesis will not be specifically Irigarayan: I will supplement, extend and at times critique Irigaray's approach in much that will follow. Nevertheless, Irigaray's work is useful for thinking about these issues foundationally, and was my own way into this problematic when I wrote my MPhil thesis in 2012.

² The concept of women as Other is first found in Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* (Beauvoir 1972 [1949]).

³ For the purposes of this chapter, I don't define too sharply the terms politics and political: it will be used as a general term which encompasses any and all instances where a community or society form laws and make decisions about how to share resources and form institutions.

I open the chapter by taking a quick tour of some of Irigaray's foundational texts and concepts. I begin by clarifying her critiques of the works of Freud and Lacan in *Speculum of the Other Woman* (1985a) and *This Sex which is not One* (1985b). For Irigaray, both of these figures' writings are symptomatic of a foundational issue: the lack of a positive subject position for women. The fact that these thinkers elucidate feminine desire and subjectivity only in comparison with the masculine is, for Irigaray, indicative of the lack of sufficient representative modes of femininity in western culture. This lack, Irigaray argues, means that women are unable to inhabit their social position as women without reference to the masculine. In other words, Irigaray argues that women inhabit their bodies, language, and social and political milieus as outside of the masculine norm, but as comparatively structured by that norm. Irigaray attests that the masculine is constructed as primary in dialogue with the secondary feminine: by continually demarcating itself as the norm against sub-normal or extra-normal femininity, masculinity reinforces its primacy. This reinforcement of the masculine, Irigaray argues, is constantly played out through our relational lives and has detrimental effects on feminine subjects, as they play a pivotal but necessarily devalued role within this gendered economy.

Such differences, Irigaray argues, cannot but have an effect on our political lives: in the political realm, we are social subjects *and* political actors. Thus, Irigaray argues that theories that seek to install universalism into the heart of political practice will fail, because such theories don't attend to how we take up different social positions and how such positions are carried over into politics. Even where our laws and institutions are regulated by universal norms and policy, such as human rights, rights to healthcare or access to the legal system, the fact that the 'meat' of politics and political practice is done through real humans interpreting, negotiating and

practically instituting those norms means that any theory that is ignorant of difference is likely to falter. We thus have to attend to how difference works through our culture and into our politics (and back out again, in an ever-continuing feedback loop). I will argue that we should broadly endorse Irigaray's argument here, even where we might have doubts or criticisms about some of her underlying claims. Much work has been done in debating the terms of Irigaray's theses, from both a negative and positive perspective; however, for the purposes of this chapter, I will keep my argument limited to defending her overarching thesis that women occupy a different set of subject positions from men that are culturally conditioned and that affect both genders' modes of political participation.⁴

Yet, it would be remiss of me to discuss Irigaray's problematic without discussing something of her proposed positive project and solutions. I will therefore spend a little time discussing Irigaray's revaluation project, which aims to create change in the relationships between the sexes, with particular reference to her calls for sexual difference to be recognised at the level of legislature.⁵ Irigaray aims to highlight the limits of the current relations of sexual difference, thereby pointing to the possibility of a different set of relations being created. Irigaray's project thus aims to effect a positive inflection of the political by highlighting what it cannot (yet) incorporate, namely a positive acknowledgement of sexual difference. I am, in many ways, happy to endorse this project. Nonetheless, this does not, I find, answer the

⁴ Irigaray's philosophy has been criticised on many grounds, for example: that her return to the body is problematically essentialist (see e.g. Schor 1994); that her work privileges and reinscribes an exclusionary heteronormativity (see e.g. Bostic 2002); and that her work is trans-phobic (see e.g. Poe 2011). Although these criticisms and debates are important, since the focus of this chapter is to use Irigaray's work as a jumping-off point to discuss democracy and difference I will not be concerned with them here.

⁵ Throughout the chapter I will refer to Irigaray's understanding of 'sexual difference' but will not define this too-readily. The meaning of Irigaray's sexual, sexual or gender difference is much-debated, as is the status of the sexed body in her work (Whitford 1991, Schor 1994, Ziarek 1998, Stone 2006). For our purposes, Irigaray's explanation that gender difference exists in our culture and produces relational effects is sufficient.

question of how we move forward in political theory such that we can take account of social difference, which is the aim of this thesis.

I will therefore spend the latter part of this chapter discussing deliberative theories of democracy in light of Irigaray's problematic. I begin by considering how deliberative theories appear, at least at first flush, to provide some possible solutions to the problematic of difference found in Irigaray's work. I forward the foundational arguments for deliberative theories, and then begin to sketch a positive reading of deliberative theory from an Irigarayan perspective, with reference to deliberative theory's commitment to democratic inclusion and openness to different perspectives. These qualities, I suggest, are positive from an Irigarayan perspective because they hold open the possibility for different values, forms of representation and differences to come into political debate. I will then begin to explore some questions that Irigaray's thesis poses for deliberative democracy. I will argue, in anticipation of the rest of the thesis, that deliberative theorists have a tendency to rely on universal norms and ideals that obscure their purported attention to difference. I will briefly employ Mouffe's arguments against deliberative theory in order to give a stronger exposition of these criticisms, even though I will conclude, by the end of the chapter, that Mouffe's conclusion that we must opt for agonism, rather than deliberation, is too drastic.

In order to extend my analysis of deliberative theory, I end the chapter by highlighting a couple of key debates about the theory's terms, values and norms. I discuss, through the work of Martí and Peter, two competing understandings of the epistemic value of deliberation (Martí 2006, Peter 2013). While Martí defends the thesis that deliberation will result in better or more correct results, Peter argues, correctly in my opinion, that this view is based upon a logical inconsistency, as it

incorrectly presumes that results can be appraised independently of the democratic procedure. Peter posits instead that the epistemic value of deliberation rests in the way it increases our knowledge and perspectives on an issue through the procedure, rather than creating the knowledge that our final decision is right. I then consider whether substantive principles of the good need to be agreed prior to deliberation, by looking at the work of Cohen, and of Gutmann and Thompson (Cohen 1989, Gutmann and Thompson 2004). Cohen argues that understandings of the common good can only be validated through deliberation; for Cohen, notwithstanding the foundational norms of deliberation, all values should be up for debate. Gutmann and Thompson argue, meanwhile, that some additional substantive principles need to be set prior to deliberation. They argue for this on the basis that without these principles, basic rights may be infringed as a result of deliberative democratic decision-making. I argue that Gutmann and Thompson's position is both logically inconsistent, since they hold that deliberation is necessary given the fact of pluralism, and unnecessary, because the ideal conditions of their deliberative democracy should preserve basic rights as a minimum.

By the end of the chapter therefore, I will have drawn together these strands of theory to show how they form the overarching problematic for the thesis. Crucially, I will have argued broadly that theories of deliberative democracy must be tuned into potential problems arising from social difference. At this stage these arguments will be sketched in broad terms and with reference to Irigaray's theory; the following chapters will look at these issues in more depth, by using theories and arguments from further authors who engage with the issue of identity in deliberative theory directly.

1. Irigaray on gender identity

To open this chapter I review Irigaray's analysis of Freud and Lacan, as a way into discussing Irigaray's work and of introducing her concepts of social identity, difference and otherness. Although Irigaray's philosophy is certainly not the sole philosophy that deals with such concepts, which is part of the reason I will be re-examining these in more detail in chapter four, Irigaray's work provides a coherent and extensive body of work that considers social identity, particularly gender identity. Irigaray discusses directly how our social relationships are organised around our social identities, and how these relationships have a constitutive effect on our politics and political participation. Furthermore, Irigaray's work highlights how pervasive and all-encompassing our modes of gender differentiation are, as well as how the social and cultural mechanisms that partially form our gender identities are often not readily apparent to us. We are saturated by gender: it is one of the first things we learn as children about our own identity and that of others, and something we immediately notice upon meeting people. Due to this, our very reasoning is foreshadowed by our expectations about gender roles and we cannot simply step outside of these expectations, or wholly resist them through rational thought.

I begin this section by briefly discussing Irigaray's feminist philosophy's foundations as a critical examination of psychoanalysis. Irigaray argues that the works of psychoanalysts Freud and Lacan show how the social category 'woman' functions solely as other-to-man; we consider women, Irigaray argues, exclusively in their relation to and deviation from men, while we value men as the normative standard of humanity. Interestingly, although Irigaray criticises these thinkers for their position on women—specifically that women's position as the Other is a necessary one—she also

concedes that Freud and Lacan are describing truthfully the social relations between the genders. According to Irigaray, Freud and Lacan correctly highlight the fact that women lack a coherent, positive subject position that is independent of their relation to men and through which they are valued on their own terms. As a consequence, Irigaray argues, women are excluded from participating in public and political life as feminine subjects. Instead, women find that participating in public life necessitates taking up a position that is fraught with contradictions: they are expected to present as feminine, but, in order to be taken seriously, must adopt a masculine approach. This results in a tightrope walk where women must not veer too heavily into one or the other gender-spheres, and yet both genders must be in evidence.

Irigaray argues that in his elucidation of female penis envy, Freud problematically presents women's roles and social positions as consequence of their anatomy. Freud thinks that the traditional feminine role of carer, particularly to husbands and children, results from both the female Oedipal complex and penis envy, both of which he elucidates with reference to female anatomy (see, e.g. Freud 1991 [1933], p.158-9). Women, according to Freud, inevitably contrast their genitalia with men's and find their own lacking (hers is small and hidden, while his is large and visible). This anatomical difference, combined with her previous pleasures gained from the clitoris, leads a woman to desire a penis and to transfer her desire from her mother (the first object of love for both girls and boys, according to Freud) to her father, whom she imagines will be able to furnish her with the desired object. This desire continues throughout a woman's life and is the reason, Freud attests, that women primarily find fulfilment through others: women gain a 'penis' by proxy, either through their husbands or by having children. Freud even states that women unconsciously consider children to be phallic extensions of themselves: '[A] baby

takes the place of a penis in accordance with ancient symbolic equivalence.’ (Freud 1991 [1933], p.162) Thus the penis is allotted value for no reason other than that it is visible and masculine, and Freud theorises about women only in relation to men; how women differ from men anatomically, Freud surmises, explains the differences between men’s and women’s life-trajectories (Irigaray 1985b, p.24). This focus on women from the perspective of how they differ from men, Irigaray argues, is Freud’s first mistake: he fails to consider femininity in its own terms and assumes that women’s desires and sexual pleasure are similar to, or the same as, men’s. Furthermore, by focusing on anatomy, Freud suggests that social context is irrelevant to understanding how women’s desires come to be constituted: ‘The problem is that he fails to investigate the historical factors governing the data with which he is dealing... As a result, he generally ends up resubmitting women to the dominant discourse[.]’ (Irigaray 1985b, p.70) Freud does not consider, for example, that a lack of opportunity to pursue a public life might influence the constitution of women’s desires. Instead, he provides a natural, and thus unavoidable, penis envy as the ground for women’s desires and traditional roles, such that, ‘anatomy is destiny’ (Freud 1977 [1905], p.258).

Yet, as I indicated above, Irigaray simultaneously argues that Freud hits upon something truthful in his exposition: ‘Now Freud is describing an actual state of affairs. He does not invent female sexuality, nor male sexuality. As a “man of science,” he merely accounts for them.’ (Irigaray 1985b, p.70) Thus, in Irigaray’s view, Freud is wrong about the causes of women’s societal position, but he nevertheless correctly recognises that the position of women is different from men’s and that masculinity is valued above femininity. However, simultaneously, Freud is

unable to countenance the possibility of feminine subjects having desires that do not fit the rubric of masculine desire:

Woman, in this sexual imaginary, is only a more or less obliging prop for the enactment of man's fantasies. That she may find pleasure there in that role, by proxy, is possible, even certain... [Yet] she will not say what she herself wants; moreover, she does not know, or no longer knows, what she wants. (Irigaray 1985b, p.25)

Thus, for Irigaray, Freud doesn't articulate feminine desire because he presumes that masculine desire is the sole desire that is operative for both sexes, and women, being feminine, can satisfy that desire only vicariously.

Similarly, Irigaray identifies Lacan's work as holding some veracity in its delineation of masculinity and femininity: '[p]sychoanalytic discourse on female sexuality is the discourse of truth.' (Irigaray 1985b, p.86) Furthermore, although Irigaray critiques the restrictive nature of Lacan's conclusions, her work is informed by Lacan's. Lacan argues that masculinity is privileged and primary in western culture. According to Lacan, for subjects to gain an identity, they must posit themselves in opposition to an Other: most simply put, in order to have a notion of a 'me' I must be able to identify a 'not-me'. As we develop as infants, Lacan postulates, our first Other is our father. While our mother is close and therefore not identifiable as separate, as 'not-me', our father always presents to us as an Other by placing limits upon us.

However, on a broader cultural level, Lacan argues, the masculine subject position is represented positively in contrast or relation to the feminine. By subject position, Lacan is referring to how we understand ourselves and others through language and culture: we interpret ourselves and our relationships through employing different categories, discourses and cultural tropes. I can make no sense of myself as a woman, for example, without knowing what that term means, both in language and in culture more broadly. However, this sense of being a woman also influences how I act

and relate to others. Thus, I occupy a subject position that is marked by the norms of femininity. In western culture, Lacan argues, the masculine subject position, which he understands to be characterised by rationality and action, is distinguishable only in its relation to, and value above, the corresponding subject position of femininity, which is marked by passivity, and is understood as unformed, material and irrational.⁶ Thus, Lacan goes on to argue, femininity is defined as the Other, or the negation, of masculinity: while masculinity gains a positive cultural position by being compared to femininity, the feminine subject position is devalued in the comparison. In fact, Lacan famously concludes that: ‘There’s no such thing as Woman, Woman with a capital *W* indicating the universal.’ (Lacan 1999 [1973], p.72-3) For Lacan, femininity is defined negatively in relation to the positive masculine and as such, femininity can have no reality. Thus, in her analysis of Lacan’s position, Irigaray concludes that in Lacanian theory: ‘[women’s] exclusion is *internal* to an order from which nothing escapes: the order of (man’s) discourse.’ (Irigaray 1985b, p.88) In the cultural economy that Lacan theorises, Irigaray argues, women’s subjugation is an inevitable effect of the configuration of the masculine subject position.

For Irigaray, therefore, there is an all-encompassing character to Lacan’s theory of masculinity and femininity that is problematic for feminism: ‘What poses problems in reality turns out to be justified by a logic that has already ordered reality as such. Nothing escapes the circularity of this law.’ (Irigaray 1985b, p.88) If the nature of reality is inherently masculine, and this reality is formed only by objectifying and subsuming femininity, then there is no way to change the cultural or societal position of women. While under Lacan’s theory our cultural understanding of masculinity and femininity is a construction and thus contingent, the fact that this

⁶ It is the masculine subject and not the biologically ‘male’ subject Lacan discusses here. For Lacan, a male subject can have a feminine subject structure, just as the masculine subject may be female (Lacan 1997 [1960], 1999 [1973]).

culture maintains itself by allowing only the masculine to presence positively means that these cultural relations are cemented at a fundamental level. The feminine is a crutch of this cultural reality, 'the locus in which everything that can be articulated on the basis of the signifier comes to be inscribed' (Lacan 1999 [1973], p.81). The feminine is thus cast as a formless externality of phallogocentric masculine culture and acts as a limit point that reveals the form of the masculine position. The problem therefore, Irigaray argues, is that there is no way for feminine subjects to represent themselves either inside or outside of this culture; inside it representation is a wholly masculine pursuit, while outside of it there is no means of representation, thus there appears to be no way of overcoming or changing culture to include the feminine positively.⁷

We can now start to tease out the meanings of the gendered subject and social identity in Irigaray's work by looking at what she takes from Lacan, as well as the elements that she criticises. Firstly, Irigaray uses Lacan's model of the subject position in order to theorise gender identity. For Irigaray, a subject gains her subject position through language and culture; therefore, how we categorise different subjects has a constitutive effect on how those subjects relate to one another and to themselves. Thus, if the masculine subject is primary, while the feminine subject is cast as Other within culture, the subjectivity of masculine and feminine subjects—their ways of relating and modes of self-understanding, as well as their desires—are cast differently. Irigaray agrees with Lacan that women are designated to the position of the Other in western culture; this is seen clearly, Irigaray thinks, in the devaluation of women and femininity, which are seen as irrational, frivolous, and unserious. Masculine subjects, Irigaray argues, are valued for their rationality and public action: men are valued for

⁷ Other theorists have posited that Lacan's system is not as closed as Irigaray argues. See, for example, Bruce Fink on Lacan's structures as contingent and changeable (Fink 1995).

what they *do*; whereas feminine subjects tend to be valued not for their independent action but for how they care for others, or for their appearance. Such values, Irigaray thinks, have definite effects on how we understand ourselves and others and what we come to expect from men and women.

However, this secondary, devalued position that Irigaray argues women find themselves in is compounded by the fact that they experience themselves as the Other:

Women's social inferiority is reinforced and complicated by the fact that woman does not have access to language, except through recourse to "masculine" systems of representation which disappropriate her from her relation to herself and to other women. (Irigaray 1985b, p.85)

According to Irigaray, therefore, women cannot represent themselves adequately because their only tools for doing so are masculine. Furthermore, when they take up positions publicly, they must employ these masculine forms of representation. The necessity for women to enter into the masculine subject position while still being looked upon as feminine, Irigaray argues, creates a rift in their self-understanding: women are masculine insofar as they are publicly-active subjects, but simultaneously they are feminine objects. This means, Irigaray argues, that when they speak, women do so by taking up a masculine position and thus become their own Other. Women are thus simultaneously masculine subjects and feminine objects, and a masculine subject gazing upon the feminine (self-)object such that, "'She' is indefinitely other in herself.'" (Irigaray 1985b, p.28)

So, for Irigaray, we gain self-understanding through language, through our cultural value hierarchies and through the social relations that reflect these. Each subject has a unique place within society, and yet, the generality of our norms, values and languages can be said to impinge upon, effect and affect all subjects' subjectivities (the way they think, feel, act and desire) in ways that can be broadly characterised. Thus, how we understand ourselves through these categories can be infinitely different *and yet* being denoted as masculine or feminine can be said to have

overarching effects, which can be seen in the overlapping norms, relationships and self-understandings we express and possess. For Irigaray, gender is a culturally constructed phenomenon that is predicated upon a binary understanding of biological sex, in a hierarchy that problematically devalues and excludes femininity.

2. Irigaray on politics and democracy

In the preceding section, I discussed, in quite broad terms, Irigaray's understanding of gender identity and of how the binary gender split in our culture results in different expectations and relational experiences for men and women. According to Irigaray, women are not valued as women specifically— they are valued instead only in their supporting role to men— and this influences how they self-relate and relate to others. Politics, as a central part of our culture, cannot hope to be exempt from this gender structure, and according to Irigaray, because of the devaluation of women within culture, attempts to include women in traditionally masculine spheres such as politics are fraught with difficulties:

Men have been running society for centuries. They therefore defined the laws and conceptions —conscious or unconscious, clear or obscure— of the state. They have organised all human groups according to their needs or desires. (Irigaray 1994, p.71)

In other words, according to Irigaray, politics in the west is not based upon a neutral, universal human subject, but instead is based upon the masculine subject position. There are two main points to come out of this, which I will expand upon below: first, when women enter the political sphere, they must adhere to norms that have been formed prior to their participation— they are thus required to conform to standards that are based on the masculine subject position, and that don't cohere with their experience as feminine subjects. Second, because this masculine position has

informed the political sphere, politics tends to be dominated by masculine rather than feminine relationships and values.

Irigaray argues that although we conceive of the political subject position as a neutral position, which encompasses the masculine and the feminine (or rather is neither), the political subject position is masculine:

[T]he fundamental model of the human being remained unchanged: one, singular, solitary and historically masculine, that of the adult Western male, rational, competent. Diversity was therefore still conceived of and lived hierarchically, with the many always subordinate to the one. Others were nothing but copies of the idea of man, a potentially perfect idea which all the more or less imperfect copies had to try to equal. (Irigaray 2000, p.122)

The ideal political subject, Irigaray attests, aligns with the ideals of masculinity: a good political subject is independent, rational, fully accountable and self-transparent. Therefore, Irigaray's argument continues, feminine subjects will always be found lacking as political subjects, because the ideals that pertain to their subject position are different. Furthermore, when women participate politically they will be required to deny those parts of themselves that do not equate with the ideals of the masculine subject. Irigaray's point here is thus twofold: first, this notion of the universal subject is false, because it is not neutral but masculine. Second, this ideal political subject is damaging for women, because the ideal feminine subject conflicts with the political subject's masculine ideal. Irigaray argues that women are thus faced with a dichotomy: be women, and recognisable as such, or denounce femininity and become masculine subjects with access to the same rights as men.

Irigaray further argues that the centrality of masculinity in western politics affects what can be deliberated in the political sphere. Irigaray contends that appeals to universality obscure femininity, and feminine values, as politically viable. This is evidenced by the fact that traditional feminine roles and values have been designated customarily as private, and thus not politically salient, in western culture. Including

women in political life is thus not sufficient to tackle Irigaray's problem because, although such inclusion marks progress, femininity can remain ignored:

Many women have, in this way, taken on an economic, cultural and political conditioning that belongs to a masculine identity and History. They have sacrificed their own identity as women... to a socio-historical conditioning that is man's. (Irigaray 2000, p.34)

The political sphere thus remains closed to femininity, meaning that politically-engaged women must present as pseudo-men, embroiled in the relational norms and assumed hierarchies of value that have been instituted by masculine subjects in that sphere.⁸

Irigaray's proposed solution can seem deceptively simple: maintain the masculine and feminine subject positions, but change our cultural understanding of them such that neither is subordinated to the other:

I am asking to be recognised as really an other, irreducible to the masculine subject... [F]or me, it wasn't a question of admitting my sex and gender should remain 'second', but of wanting the sexes and the genders to become two, without there being a first and a second. (Irigaray 2000, p.125)

Irigaray's positive project is therefore ultimately a project of revaluation of femininity and masculinity. This revaluation project permeates Irigaray's work at a myriad of levels: it is at once phenomenological, linguistic, relational, cultural, and some have argued, inherently metaphysical, but there is also a determinate arm preserved for politics and democracy, which I will focus on here.⁹ There are two distinct facets to this political part of the revaluation project: the first involves a call for civil and political legislation that reflects gender difference. Such legislation would take account of the fact that there are different subject positions for masculine and feminine subjects, in recognition that there is no neutral or universal subject position. The second arm of the political project involves theorising the possibility of a new civil position for women that is not predicated upon the masculine ideal citizen.

⁸ For a greater delineation of this idea see (Goux 1994).

⁹ For more on the other aspects of Irigaray's revaluation project see, for example (Irigaray 1993a, b, 1994, Whitford 1991, Burke, Schor, and Whitford 1994, Stone 2006, Jones 2011).

In terms of the first of these aims, Irigaray calls for positive legislative recognition of sexual difference by producing: ‘a sexually-marked civil code’ that will provide, ‘the minimal guarantee needed to protect the singularity of man, that of woman, and the relation between them.’ (Irigaray 2000, p.9) In order for women to represent themselves both positively and equally within the political sphere, Irigaray posits, there needs to be some formal recognition of gender difference at the political level. As I have explained above, for Irigaray, it’s not sufficient to throw open the doors of our existing democracy to everyone, because the terms and conventions of the political sphere have been produced historically by masculine subjects. Irigaray argues that we require a civil code that refers to men and women, rather than ‘man’ or ‘humans’, because our laws and political institutions constitute places where our social identities find cultural representation. An active promotion of gender difference at an institutional level, Irigaray hopes, will open up a new perspective on our identities and will also ground the possibility of citizens embracing sexual difference in political discourse and deliberation.

Furthermore, Irigaray favours the creation of a new kind of citizenship, arguing that women must find modes of self-representation in politics that are reconciled with their subjectivities:

Democracy assumes the sovereignty of every citizen... The right which has to be established or re-established as first condition of a democratic regime, is the right to exist or to be oneself in sovereignty. Such a right is, as yet, non-existent for women who, at best are permitted to present themselves as neutral or assimilable to men... The necessary and right thing to do, before trying to establish oneself in institutions whose democratic character needs to be rethought, is to demand the right to civil maturity, the right to represent oneself before that of representing other women, while still lacking the juridical criteria which sanction one’s own identity. (Irigaray 2000, p.38)

Thus, citizenship that can allow women to take part in politics *as feminine subjects* is paramount for Irigaray. Yet, such citizenship can only be built upon a fundamental recognition of sexual difference in political institutions.

Broadly speaking, Irigaray's position on politics serves as both a critique and a positive project. Irigaray aims to subvert the status quo by asking why our politics can't recognise sexual difference, and she simultaneously gestures towards a culture that could recognise and respect difference. Irigaray argues that the reason we don't recognise difference in our democratic politics is that difference is obscured by our notion of the universal citizen, which precludes a feminine mode of citizenship. Irigaray's work on politics forms part of a wider cultural and ethical theoretical project aimed at highlighting the logical (im)possibilities of a positive mode of subject-representation for feminine subjects and for feminine values. Irigaray's project aims to do this, not by directly engaging with democratic theory, but by inflecting our political culture through highlighting the impossibility of those forms of representation.¹⁰

In contrast to Irigaray's focus on reflecting and inflecting the gendered bounds of our political citizenship, this thesis will focus on how we might understand and overcome the kinds of problems of representation and participation Irigaray highlights, within the bounds of existing democratic theory. Our political theories serve as the normative ideal for how we should practise political life together, and Irigaray posits substantial questions for our theories of democracy. Our theories are historically rooted in the tradition of political liberalism that has, under Irigaray's view, masculine commitments to individual sovereignty, autonomy, and universalism. Irigaray's work can therefore be employed to criticise these concepts, with the result that we may understand them to be at best partial, at worst dangerous, fictions that do not reflect social reality. In the next section, I therefore wish to consider whether we can maintain our commitment to democracy in light of Irigaray's theory of difference.

¹⁰ See (Deutscher 2002) for an in-depth account of Irigaray's political project.

3. Reading deliberative theory with Irigarayan theory

In the first half of this chapter I have been concerned with defining conceptions of otherness and social difference using Irigaray's feminist philosophy. As I have shown, Irigaray argues that the representation of women as other-to-men, affects both their relationships with others and their self-understanding, and precludes them from entering politics on an equal footing with men. I now want to shift focus in order to discuss Irigaray's problematic in view of our existing democratic theory. Irigaray does not directly explore this question, which is not surprising, given that, as I have discussed, her aim is to represent something (as yet) unrepresentable. In my view, however, Irigaray's work tasks us with thinking about how our current models of democracy can meet the challenges she uncovers: can our models accommodate social difference? Can we ensure that our democratic norms are attentive to the workings of social identity? Irigaray's work can, and I think should, make us focus on such questions.

In what follows I broadly review the theory of deliberative democracy with reference to how it relates to Irigaray's problematic. I've chosen to look at deliberative theory because I find it one of the most compelling, and most ideal, theories of democracy. As I shall show, deliberative theories endorse democratic ideals of participation and inclusion while recognising that democracy is an inherently communicative pursuit. A focus on justification is a key strength of deliberative theory, and I broadly agree with Fishkin, and with Gutmann and Thompson, that deliberation is an over-arching requirement for any democratic model to be considered legitimate. That is, I agree that a core function of democracy is to reach decisions by

considering evidence, reasons and possible outcomes (Fishkin 1991, Gutmann and Thompson 2004). Theories of deliberative democracy are broadly concerned with the process of democratic decision-making: how and why a decision is arrived at and how such processes contribute to the legitimacy of the decisions made. I will first briefly explain the main tenets of deliberative theory, before discussing it in light of Irigaray's work. I will then end the chapter by looking more closely at some of the differences between deliberative models, in order to consider which of them are the most robust, independently of the question of difference.

When most of us think about democracy, we probably think about voting; our sense of ourselves as democratic citizens, in the UK at least, is inextricably linked to our right to vote for representatives who will make decisions about shared political issues. When we consider who to vote for, we can reflect upon a variety of reasons: we might consider that one political party will look after us better; that we'll be financially better off if a particular representative is given legislative power; vote for what we think will be best for society generally; or there may be one particular political issue that we think is more pressing than any other, and we may therefore vote for the party or candidate that best represents our position on that issue. When we vote, we have an expectation of the type of representation that the candidate or political party we are voting for will provide. However, this is a rather thin conception of how democracy works: while we might expect certain outcomes, the realities and intricacies of government, law and representation mean that the eventual result of any election will not perfectly reflect the elected candidate's initial mandate. Also, when our chosen representative or party does not receive a majority of the vote, we don't expect them to defer to the majority. Rather, we expect them to continue to publicly air their ideas about how specific political issues should be resolved, and crucially, we

expect all representatives to give justifications for why they believe a particular course of action is best. Deliberative democrats argue that these acts of reason-giving are foundational for a working democracy. Our trust in our democratic representatives, and our voting for them, depends upon us believing that they will make reasonable decisions, in our best interest and according to the facts.

Thus, deliberative democracy takes as its foundation the notion of giving voice to a range of alternatives, and, crucially, forwarding reasons for those alternatives:

Most fundamentally, deliberative democracy affirms the need to justify decisions made by citizens and their representatives. Both are expected to justify the laws they would impose on one another. In a democracy, leaders should therefore give reasons for their decisions, and respond to the reasons that citizens give in return... The reasons that deliberative democracy asks citizens and their representatives to give should appeal to principles that individuals who are trying to find fair terms of cooperation cannot reasonably reject. (Gutmann and Thompson 2004, p.3)

For democracy to count as deliberative, democratic citizens and/or their representatives must consider and debate a range of solutions before making a decision. Other democratic actors can champion or reject solutions, but must give reasons for their standpoint. Crucially, those justifications should be reasonable, meaning that only justifications that other participants could not reject outright must be given: explanations must be capable of being agreed to by all, at least in principle (Gutmann and Thompson 2004, p.181). For example, it would not be reasonable to argue for an outcome where everyone with blue eyes is arbitrarily asked to live as slaves in the service of the rest of the population. The blue-eyed group would be justified in rejecting such a proposal as unreasonable from their point of view. The reasonability requirement aims to ensure that even where a person or group does not agree with a deliberative outcome, they can consider themselves justifiably bound by the decision. This doesn't mean that all actors will conclude that the same suggestions and justifications are best, only that all of the reasons put forward in debate must be capable of being logically accepted by all other actors. This means that everyone must

be able to comprehend the reasons given for a conclusion and that accepting a decision will not infringe upon their basic rights.

Furthermore, interlocutors are obliged to come to deliberation with an open mind and be open to the possibility of changing their position in the face of competing arguments. Thus, at its core, deliberation is about how democratic citizens make decisions they can consider legitimate: in order to be legitimately bound by a democratic outcome, the decision-making process must be reasonable and conducive to the democratic principles of equality and inclusion. This commitment to political equality and inclusion means that everyone who is potentially affected by a democratic decision must have the potential to deliberate, and must be accorded equal respect (Cohen 1989).

Given that Irigaray, as I have argued, is concerned with the logical (im)possibilities of feminine representation, her project, as I have indicated above, doesn't rely on an explicit theory of ideal democracy. Despite this, I want to argue that deliberative democracy has potential value in view of Irigaray's problematic. There are some *prima facie* reasons for an Irigarayan to be welcoming of deliberative theory: namely its commitment to inclusion, sharing and reasonableness. Deliberative inclusion not only welcomes all who will be potentially affected by a decision to take part in deliberation, but centres on their right to speak and be heard. This is therefore a potentially productive theory for an Irigarayan, because the inclusion norms hold open the possibility for women to come forward in their difference; there is a possibility for feminine subjects to voice their opinions such that their perceived femininity should not lead to exclusion. Furthermore, most theories of deliberative democracy do not forward a hierarchy of principles and values (something I shall explore in more depth, below), so the theory also holds open the logical possibility for different kinds of

relations and values to be shown to be salient to political debate, which, as we have seen, is significant given the problems of representation that Irigaray highlights. The fact that values are not pre-given further emphasises the norms of equality and inclusiveness, by stressing the equality of each person's interests and values within the deliberative fora. Undoubtedly, there are many ways in which this norm could result in outcomes that would not be amenable to Irigaray's project; however, the foundational norms of deliberative theory are arguably positive for Irigaray given her arguments that we should respect one another in our difference (see e.g. Irigaray 2000, p.59).

And yet, deliberative theories also try to limit plurality by appealing to a form of neutrality, held in the claim of reasonableness. As discussed above, reasonableness is a norm that requires all deliberators to justify their proposals by showing why others should accept them. This is necessary, deliberative theorists argue, because it allows us to work towards political solutions, and consensus; it limits our competing values by asking us to consider everyone while democratically engaged (Cohen 1989). By that measure, reasonableness is double-edged: it is positive because it asks citizens to listen to one another and try to understand competing perspectives; however, if deliberation is reduced to universal terms and statements, as suggested (at least at its most stringent) by the requirement to put forward justifications in terms that everyone can reasonably accept, then it may lead to a suppression of different perspectives. Given that Irigaray argues that the universal is in fact marked by the masculine subject position and masculine values, this requirement therefore holds the possibility of quelling values and viewpoints that do not fit the masculine norm.

This is a danger that Chantal Mouffe identifies in deliberative theory in her article 'Deliberative Democracy or Agonistic Pluralism?' (1999), where she employs

Wittgenstein to argue that deliberative norms that encourage consensus are exclusionary. Agreement, Mouffe argues, needs to be couched in agreement on forms of life: when we agree we can do so only because we hold the same values; whereas when our values are radically different, consensus is impossible. In deliberation, therefore, assumptions of certain forms of life and values are ever-present and, Mouffe attests, will always act as an exclusionary measure. Mouffe concludes that it is much better to conceive of democracy, not as the means to finding an objective rational consensus, but as a never-ending conflict between different values and identities, where the prevailing consensus is always understood as partial, exclusionary and changeable. In Mouffe's view we should therefore foreground the adversarial, agonistic nature of politics, rather than understand democracy as primarily about rational justification and consensus.

In my view, Mouffe overplays the idea that deliberative theory is tied to consensus, which I will demonstrate when I discuss the theory in more depth, below. I will also return to replies to Mouffe specifically in chapter five, when I discuss Dryzek's reply to her agonistic theory. For now, I want to conclude that if we accept, with Irigaray, that some subjects are denigrated in our culture as being less rational, less valuable and having secondary and supporting roles to other subjects, then we must also accept that democratic theory must be attentive to the workings of social identities and consider how these will be brought into a deliberative setting. To be clear: I'm not arguing here that this problem is simply about the empirical implications of the practice of deliberation, but that the theory itself needs to be attentive to these workings. If deliberative theory ignores social difference, it will fail on the grounds that it can deal solely with ideal, rational populations that contain no social difference. It would therefore be of little use to us in trying to theorise how we

might better practice democracy in our plural world. As Mouffe highlights, if the theory's focus on reasonableness ignores the fact that what interlocutors find acceptable will always be informed by their social and cultural perspectives and identities, and also suggests that consensus is always possible, it obscures our social reality in ways that may lead to exclusion.¹¹

To conclude this section, what we have gained from looking at Irigaray's theory is the beginning of a framework that understands subjects to be relational, socially differentiated, and affected by social categories. The categories of masculine and feminine in Irigaray's theory, while not without their own theoretical issues, nevertheless hit upon something that has both historical validity (as seen in the work of Freud and Lacan, for example), as well as present applications (for example, the reality that in our public discourses women are still often, implicitly or explicitly, undermined as less rational, bodily subjects who primarily have value as objects of the heterosexual male gaze or as caregivers). As I have started to argue here, this understanding of social difference leads us to highlight the ways in which our political theory should be attentive to its workings. Democratic theories that don't attend to social difference can easily cover over and entrench problems arising from it, even where those theories are committed to universal inclusion and plurality. The subject assumed in democratic theory is often an individual subject who may be recognised as coming to discussion with the 'baggage' of a specific set of personal and societal relations that they will nevertheless be able to leave at the debating-chamber door, in order to become a reasonable and neutral interlocutor. The rest of this thesis will therefore be concerned with elucidating and assessing deliberative models in relation to social identity in greater depth. Before turning to these debates, however, I will end

¹¹ See also (Baynes 1992) for further discussion of reasonability in deliberation; particularly the differences between neutrality, reasonability and tolerance in deliberative theory.

this chapter by discussing further some of the main tenets and debates in deliberative democratic theory.

4. Debates in deliberative theory

In the preceding section I examined some broad pros and cons of deliberative theory for an Irigarayan, and forwarded the main problematic that will be explored in this thesis: namely how we can reconcile a democratic commitment to universal equality and inclusion with the problems of social bias that influence our political participation and democratic debates. Before diving into these questions, I want to use the final sections of this chapter to consider a couple of internal debates in deliberative theory, in order to create a clearer picture of deliberative democracy. I will discuss two major debates within the literature: the first concerns the epistemic status of deliberative outcomes (can we know they are correct?); the second concerns whether we need to agree to extra principles that limit our deliberative outcomes independently of the deliberative procedural norms. In the first section I discuss Jose Luis Marti's argument that deliberation can uncover the correct, or the best, democratic outcomes. In contrast, Fabienne Peter argues that deliberative democracy gains its legitimacy and epistemic value from the deliberative procedure, rather than the outcomes of debate. I will agree with Peter that we are limited to declaring that the positive epistemic output from deliberation is an increased understanding of various positions and perspectives, rather than knowledge that the outcomes are the best. In the second section I will review Joshua Cohen's argument that his procedural model aligns naturally with Rawlsian principles of fairness and compare this view to that of Gutmann and Thompson, who argue that the deliberative process must be supplemented with fixed

substantive principles to ensure that harmful outcomes can be challenged effectively. I will conclude that although Gutmann and Thompson possibly have good pragmatic reasons for committing to substantive principles and goods in their theory, these need not form the basis of ideal deliberative theory. I will also conclude that although Peter's theory is strong, Cohen's model suggests that we must hold to the notion that we are trying to find common goods in deliberation, otherwise it is not clear why we should deliberate, rather than engaging in more direct forms of democracy. Many other internal debates exist in the literature—I have chosen to focus on these debates as they highlight important considerations about the status of ethics and justice in deliberative models.¹²

5. The epistemic status of deliberative outcomes

As I discussed above, deliberative theorists hold that we can consider ourselves legitimately bound by democratic decisions where those decisions follow from free and inclusive debate that has been tempered by the reasonability requirement. However, some theorists argue that as well as ensuring participation, deliberation is more likely to result in the best decisions. Such theorists hold that deliberation is not only the most democratic method for organising a polity, but is the procedure through which the most satisfactory results will be produced and they further argue that it is crucial for any democratic theory to show how:

[I]ndependently of the outcome of the democratic process, there is a sense in which a particular decision is correct—truly just or representing the common good. If this property

¹² See (Peter 2007) for a taxonomy of some different models of deliberative (as well as aggregative) democracy. I consider part of Peter's taxonomy here, namely the difference between what she terms epistemic and rational proceduralism. See also (Estlund 2002) for a further taxonomy of deliberative models.

applies, collective choices will qualify as either right or wrong and alternative institutionalizations of the democratic process will be seen as differing in their truth-tracking potential. (Peter 2007, p.337)

This is an old story that stretches back at least to Rousseau's invocation of the General Will on the basis that it will create the best outcomes (Rousseau 1968[1762]). This instrumental understanding of deliberation purports that the deliberative process necessarily creates the best outcomes and is thus the most legitimate exercise of political power.

What is often at stake for theorists who take this line is the notion that deliberation is the best way to ensure that bad decisions are weeded out: 'Political equality without deliberation is not of much use, for it amounts to nothing more than power without the opportunity to think about how that power ought to be exercised.' (Fishkin 1991, p.36) Here, Fishkin argues that if we hold only to the democratic ideals of equality and participation, we can hold direct, aggregative democracy to be legitimate, because under that system everyone has an equal vote, with the outcome determined by the highest number of votes. Deliberation is necessary, he argues, because without the opportunity to consider alternatives, democratic decision-making becomes the blind will of citizens who may not be availed of the facts. Thus, aggregative democracy without deliberation will likely result in a greater number of unjust outcomes, particularly as the majority ignore minority concerns (Fishkin 1991, p.21). Furthermore, having no deliberative requirement means that politics is more open to corruption by powers other than the democratic polis, for example: where political representatives bow to industry at the expense of their voters' needs, and fail to present crucial evidence; or where the media is uniformly biased towards a particular outcome such that voters do not consider a range of alternatives. Without deliberation at the centre of democracy, Fishkin argues, in both of these cases the outcome would still count as democratic, as long as citizens have a vote. Thus, for

Fishkin, we require deliberation because the democratic process is easily co-opted by external powers when there is a paucity of information and debate, resulting in an increased likelihood of outcomes of diminished quality. This is not to say that deliberative fora cannot be co-opted and influenced by interested parties, or that direct democracy will never result in favourable outcomes. However, Fishkin makes a fairly modest appeal to deliberation as central to ensuring that there are a higher number of good decisions made; while he makes no claim that those decisions will always be *the best or absolutely correct*.¹³

Similarly, Marti defends the thesis that deliberation is attractive because it will, under ideal conditions at least, more often result in the best outcomes:

The instrumental justification... consists mainly (though not exclusively) in attributing some value to the decisions made through the deliberative procedure. Since such value is the rightness of the decision, the procedure can be seen as a way of identifying right decisions and, hence, it is supposed to have epistemic value, and it may be called, as Estlund does, epistemic proceduralism[.] (Martí 2006, p.36)

Thus, even though he concedes that any deliberation will be imperfect and may not always result in the best decisions, Marti holds that decisions resulting from deliberation are more likely to be correct (Martí 2006, p.35). Since in deliberation we are defending and debating the decisions that we think are right, he argues, we can value the final decision as the right decision, as that which we considered *most right* from the range of available options:

As a discursive process based on reasons, deliberation assumes, as we will see, both *the existence of rightness* (or impartiality, or some other equivalent) in political decisions, and *the possibility to know which is the right* (or impartial) *decision*... To argue in favour of decision A means briefly to show that decision A is *the right* decision, or at least, that A is *better in terms of rightness* than other decisions being compared. To the extent that [deliberative democracy] involves the possibility of exchanging reasons and rational communication, participants in deliberation must assume the existence of some intersubjective criterion of validity of their claims, a criterion that should at least be partly independent from the participants' preferences and from the process itself[.] (Martí 2006, p.30)

¹³ One of Fishkin's aims in this book is to argue that there is a problem with representatives taking citizens' views on board too readily, as often citizens don't have sufficient information or time to engage with political questions. He forwards 'deliberative polling' as a way of representing how the electorate would decide on an issue if they had sufficient information and time (Fishkin 1991, 1995, 2009).

So, Marti argues that without the possibility of arguing for a conclusion in terms of how right or just it is in comparison to others, there wouldn't be any reason to deliberate at all. The fact that democratic deliberation actively requires interlocutors to give reasons for courses of action, means that the entire process is one of collectively considering what the most right decision will be, thus leading to a higher probability of the most right decisions being implemented. Moreover, when we argue over what is right, we appeal to reasons that are outside of the democratic procedure; thus, Marti argues, our standards of rightness do not depend wholly on the deliberative procedure itself. However, he simultaneously argues that we don't need to hold to a particular meta-ethical standard—we only have to accept that there is always a right decision to be found (Marti 2006, p.34-5).

By contrast, Peter rejects this line of reasoning on the grounds that we simply can't prove or know that the deliberative procedure will yield better results than other methods of decision-making because, Peter argues, we can't know what is right independent of the procedure. Even though we make appeals to rightness or correctness in a number of ways during deliberation, in a bid to come to a good decision, we can't know with any certainty that we will in fact choose the right decision. Furthermore, Peter argues that some problems can result from the belief that deliberation leads to the right decisions. One such problem is that we may stick with bad decisions for longer; another is that we may dismiss lingering dissent as mere folly: 'Because of the normative weight the standard account attaches to correctness, it will tend to cast persisting dissent in terms of an opposition between what counts as the correct view and what must be an expression of error.' (Peter 2008, p.34) Even where the deliberative conditions of inclusion and reasonability are met, it's not clear that we should defer to the majority decision where we think there are better

justifications for a different course of action. Thus, the task for Peter is to show why we should consider deliberative outcomes to be legitimate, without appealing to a procedure-independent standard of correctness, since a strength of the instrumental theories, such as Marti's, is that if outcomes are known to be correct, they are easily defended as legitimate.

Peter argues that the instrumental epistemic conception of deliberation, such as Marti's, is not supportive of plurality, which she argues should be central to our defence of democracy. Peter therefore defends a version of deliberative democracy from the basis of pluralism, arguing that once we see democratic actors as agents capable of creating constructive plural perspectives in deliberation, we can consider inclusive deliberation to be intrinsically valuable:

[T]o respect individual agency is to ensure that individuals have the possibility to participate in the evaluation of alternative social arrangements. If individuals are not just seen as passive carriers of wellbeing, but as causal forces in the forming of individual and collective goals, there is need for inclusive procedures which allow individuals with differing conceptions of the good to participate in the collective evaluation and choice of their social arrangements. We thus have an argument for why respect of reasonable value pluralism entails a demand for inclusive, fair procedures which enable individual agents to act together, or, in other words, for why respect of value pluralism entails that democratic procedures form an irreducible component of legitimacy. (Peter 2008, p.36)

In other words, pluralism itself gives us a justification for the legitimacy of equal and inclusive deliberation. It's not necessary to appeal to the truth-tracking ability of deliberation: we have sufficient reason to choose deliberation because we value political agency, as well as the different perspectives and constructions of outcomes that increased political participation provides. Because we can gain increased understanding and perspectives, and change and form opinions within the deliberative process, Peter attests, the process has intrinsic value: 'Epistemic practices... are best interpreted as irreducibly procedural—there is nothing beyond critically engaging with each other in transparent and non-authoritarian ways.' (Peter 2008, p.47) Thus, for Peter, the continual process of public democratic deliberation is a knowledge-

producing practise that can persist as legitimate and valuable ‘without referring to the idea that there exists, procedure-independently, a correct outcome of democratic decision-making[.]’ (Peter 2008, p.50) We still have to make decisions in deliberation, but according to Peter, it is a mistake to understand these as objectively correct; instead, all outcomes are, at least potentially, revisable and the epistemic gain made in deliberation results from the sharing of different perspectives and socially-located knowledge.

Peter therefore argues that we should abandon the notion of correct outcomes from deliberation altogether. Peter makes an analogy, using Longino’s work, with scientific enquiry: in science there are no absolutes that sit as presuppositions for knowledge, even though particular frameworks use specific premises in order to build theory; nor are there scientific outcomes that can be considered to be constitutively and timelessly correct (Longino 1990). The only principles that are more or less fixed in science, by contrast, are those that demand that scientific knowledge is constantly queried and revised. The fact that deliberative fora create similar conditions for political enquiry, Peter argues, shows the intrinsic value of the procedure itself. Thus, there is an epistemic upshot from the sharing of ideas and reasons, as shared knowledge and understanding increases, but not in the sense that the definitively correct outcome is arrived at. By extension, Peter does not think that absolute consensus is the aim of deliberation: if we really do value plurality, and consider democracy as an ongoing process of deliberation, then majority consensus at any one time is not indicative of correctness.

My own conclusion is that Peter’s pure epistemic proceduralism is a stronger conception of deliberative democracy than Marti’s instrumental account. Under Peter’s procedural model, we can affirm that the decision made is legitimate because it

was made under the most ideal conditions and with the best available knowledge; we can also value the fact that deliberation has increased or broadened our understanding of the issues at hand and has allowed political actors to participate as autonomous agents. Furthermore, we can do this without having to appeal to procedure-independent standards of correctness, which are difficult to agree upon. We can also avoid having to summarily dismiss our opponents as wrong for continuing to argue for outcomes that differ from a majority decision. Thus, Peter's model leaves room not only for dissent, but for an active plurality, with the theory geared towards greater participation of people from a range of perspectives. However, as I will show with Cohen's account, below, we can and should still hold to deliberation being in the service of creating good decisions, without going so far as to say that those decisions are correct.

6. Democratic procedures and substantive principles

Cohen defends his deliberative model, in contrast to Peter's, as aimed at instrumental outcomes. That is, Cohen thinks that by adhering to the norms of the deliberation we can reach more just outcomes. Cohen argues that this is not because we justify our positions rationally and pick the correct decision but because, under his theory, the aim of deliberation is to promote the common good:

[T]he relevant conceptions of the common good are not comprised simply of interests and preferences that are antecedent to deliberation. Instead, the interests, aims and ideals that comprise the common good are those that survive deliberation, interests that, on public reflection, we think it legitimate to appeal to in making claims on social resources. (Cohen 2003, p.349)

From this quote, I think we can align Cohen's position somewhat with Peter's, in that the validity of the outcome of deliberation is not tied to something external to the

process: the common good is rather *produced* through the process.¹⁴ Furthermore, for Cohen, we can create a common good out of deliberation only because of the norm of reasonableness at the heart of the process. This norm, he argues, requires all interlocutors to step beyond their personal desires, or at least to present solutions that align with their desires in terms that others can accept (as I discussed in greater detail, above). Bald self- or group- promotion at the expense of others, Cohen believes, would be hastily dismissed when this norm is observed, and thus ‘the likelihood of a sincere representation of preferences and convictions should increase.’ (Cohen 2003, p.349) With sincere justifications aimed at securing the common good, Cohen argues, our intersubjective realisation of what that common good is or should be, becomes apparent.

Thus, Cohen seeks to show how the procedure works to create and preserve a substantive principle, the common good, while simultaneously not prescribing the form of that good: no pre-existing correct common good exists independently of the procedure. If this was predetermined, Cohen argues, it would overwrite the reasonable pluralism that he wishes to preserve, following Rawls (Cohen 2003, p.343, Rawls 1973, 1993). In other words, if the form of the collective good is given up front, we preclude other goods from being considered in deliberation. According to Cohen, in order to test the legitimacy of our democracy, we can consider only how far the ideal procedural norms were adhered to in the decision-making process. As such, the procedure itself acts as a marker of democracy’s legitimacy, rather than the correctness of our democratic decision. In this sense, Cohen is a pure proceduralist: he does not invoke the notion of outcomes being independently correct in order to defend his theory; although he thinks that a strength of the procedure is that it has some

¹⁴ It is important to note, however, that Peter contends that Cohen endorses a instrumentalist view because the reasonability requirement will result in the outcome being one that people ‘can endorse, or at least that no one can reject with good reasons.’ (Peter 2007, p.335)

notion of the common good as its objective. Outcomes can always be challenged and possibly improved upon, but even this notion of ‘improvement’ sits with difficulty in Cohen’s ideal procedural model; it’s not clear that we get to increasingly better outcomes with more deliberation.

However, it is clear that Cohen differs from Peter in that he believes that defending deliberative legitimacy rests upon the fact that the deliberative procedures are employed in the service of finding a common good. Cohen considers that the constraints of deliberation and its aim towards an outcome that is satisfactory for all, means that outcomes should not lead to inequality or exclusions. In my view Cohen is correct to highlight that deliberation should aim at constructing a common good, because its aim is to find acceptable solutions to political conundrums—as long as we add the caveat that this good will not be final, unchangeable, or be something we can reach full consensus upon. It seems to me that without such an aim, deliberative democracy loses something of its power: we could ensure, for example, that subjects in a direct democracy must consider different perspectives before voting, which would meet Peter’s point that democracy should increase knowledge and understanding as well as promote citizens’ agency. Yet, under such a model, participants are under no obligation to try to promote the cause of their fellow citizen. The reciprocity held in the norm of reasonableness, and thus the notion that we want to aim for an outcome that is at least in principle acceptable for all, must therefore still be central to the workings of pure epistemic proceduralism. To go back to Peter’s example of the process of science: while science may not hold to determinate truths that cannot be challenged, the procedures of science are nevertheless aimed at uncovering truth. In the same way, I submit, democratic debate should be aimed at constructing common goods and finding acceptable solutions.

In contrast to Cohen's contention that the procedures of deliberative democracy can aim at constructing the common good, Gutmann and Thompson argue that other principles are required, in addition to the deliberative procedural norms, in order for deliberative models to guarantee justice. In *Why Deliberative Democracy* (2004) Gutmann and Thompson are sceptical about the probability of the norms of deliberation resulting in just outcomes and argue instead that substantive principles need to be instituted in order to ensure rights are not infringed. Gutmann and Thompson's argument is twofold: (i) reciprocity within the procedure requires substantive principles; and (ii) we should judge the outcomes of deliberation on how well they preserve or infringe upon certain regulatory, fixed principles. In terms of (i) they argue that:

The practice of deliberation is an ongoing activity of reciprocal reason-giving, punctuated by collectively binding decisions... The principle of reciprocity itself expresses neither purely procedural nor purely substantive values. A reciprocal perspective is both procedural and substantive because mutual justification cannot proceed without appealing to reasons that refer to both procedures of government and substance of laws, often at the same time. (Gutmann and Thompson 2004, p.102-3)

Here, Gutmann and Thompson consider that the norms of deliberation are always fleshed out by substantive principles during debate: in deliberation, substantive principles or existing laws are constantly invoked as reasons why we should or should not support a particular outcome; for example, we might justify a course of action as favourable because it upholds equality. This, I submit, is not a controversial argument.

In terms of (ii), however, Gutmann and Thompson argue that there are certain principles that everyone would agree we should not disregard:

At a minimum, no one would seriously dispute that justifications should recognize some of the values expressed by substantive principles, such as liberty and opportunity. It would hardly be sufficient for NICE to justify a decision to deny prescription drugs to West Indian immigrants on the ground that they are not white. (Gutmann and Thompson 2004, p.103)

Thus, Gutmann and Thompson are convinced that, even with a fair procedure, without a clear view of some additional substantive principles, there may be situations where a

person or group agrees to relinquish their basic rights. However, it's not clear why this is not a failure of the process, rather than a result of interlocutors not having pre-agreed substantive principles. In their example above, there is no way in which the West Indian immigrants *could reasonably accept* the decision to deny them prescription drugs on the grounds of their ethnicity. Gutmann and Thompson suggest that owing to power differentials there could be a situation where a group could accept this, where they 'had no better alternative in a bargaining situation.' (Gutmann and Thompson 2004, p.103) However, what the authors fail to countenance is that this is in fact a breakdown of the procedure itself, because the majority have failed to consider that this is an unreasonable request to make from this group, and have lapsed from deliberating to bargaining. So, let's consider another example: imagine a state in which most people believe in principles of individuality and personal choice as paramount to selfhood. Under such conditions, one might find that people who were morbidly obese, and who believed their obesity was entirely their personal choice, *could reasonably accept* a democratic proposal that they should pay for any medical expenses owing to complications attributed to their weight. This could result in some of them not being able to access life-saving medical attention, which would violate their equality and opportunities. In this case, the procedure has been fair, and yet the outcome seems wrong: because of their core values, the group who are overweight can accept some infringement of their basic liberties.

However, even an example such as this it's not the case that the procedure has failed to generate the 'right' outcome at all. Rather, those who disagree with the outcome would want to argue that the starting principles were not correct and that the relative weighting of the notion of choice and right to access healthcare was incorrect in this instance. As I have argued above, a pure procedural model always allows us to

argue such a case, even after a decision has been taken, as Gutmann and Thompson themselves claim (e.g. Gutmann and Thompson 2004, p.6). Furthermore, as I have argued, owing to the fact of irreducible pluralism we can't institute the 'correct' values outside of the procedure. Gutmann and Thompson are right that we will appeal to substantive principles, such as that of equality, in deliberation and that debate will result in us weighting such principles against one another in our bid to come to decisions. However, their arguments entail us establishing and imposing a value hierarchy *prior* to deliberation, which, although apparently from a compassionate position, is rather undemocratic. Furthermore, by instituting such principles, we are in danger of reducing the agency of the deliberators by pre-deciding what they can reasonably accept. On the other hand, it may be fair to argue that Gutmann and Thompson are being realistic about how deliberation might work in practice. It could be that they too think that under perfect conditions, with flawlessly rational subjects who all respect the same values, the procedure could have faultless outcomes, but that non-ideal conditions mean that we always have to re-inspect decisions and constantly challenge them according to some pre-agreed substantive principles.

In this sense Gutmann and Thompson work in the opposite direction to Cohen—they try to show how the procedures can't work effectively and maintain crucial reciprocity without substantive principles. Cohen, on the other hand, argues that the procedure itself is the best way of obtaining a fair democracy in order to aim towards a common good. I conclude that Cohen is correct that deliberation should aim at acquiring the common good, but have suggested that his work needs a simultaneous caveat that the good constructed in deliberation cannot be understood to be final, or a version of the good all will agree with. On the other hand, I think that Gutmann and Thompson are wrong to institute universal substantive principles that act as limit-

points for the procedure, as the relative weighting of these principles is already captured by a pure epistemic proceduralist account that holds that the aim of debate is to try to find a good outcome.

In the rest of the thesis I will look at these issues in more depth, with specific reference to social identity. I will, for example, consider whether the democratic principles that are assumed to preserve reasonable pluralism in fact obscure it, when considering Habermas's work in chapter two. For now, I have given an overview of the foundational concepts of deliberative theory, as well as some debates between deliberative theorists. Moreover, as an aside, I have shown, by looking at these debates, that Mouffe's argument that deliberative democracy's focus on consensus means it cannot deal with difference, is overdrawn: both Cohen and Peter, as well as Gutmann and Thompson, are attentive to the fact that consensus is potentially exclusionary, and are attempting to theorise from the viewpoint of plurality. However, as I will argue in the following chapters, deliberative theory does not always deal effectively with difference and often theorists do attempt to limit difference in favour of promoting neutrality or consensus.

7. Conclusion

In this chapter I have sketched the framework for the thesis, which is made up of, on one hand, theories of the socially-located subject, which I have started to explicate with reference to Irigaray's work; and on the other, ideal theories of democratic legitimacy, in the form of deliberative democracy. I have shown how Irigaray argues for a conception of the subject that is relational. Subjects, Irigaray argues, gain their identity in a nexus of relations with others, and understand themselves through

language and culture. Yet, in our culture, Irigaray argues, differences between our gendered subject positions contain an implicit hierarchy that has an effect on how different subjects understand themselves and take part in public and political life. Thus, the challenge for democracy, Irigaray argues, is not only to institute the right of inclusion for women: our political institutions must also foster a political space that actively promotes a respect for difference alongside formal inclusion. I have argued here that deliberative democracy potentially holds open this space, at least as a logical possibility. However, I have also shown how the theory relies on an ideal notion of neutrality that may actively work against this logical possibility, based as it is on promoting a universalism that is both impossible (due to plurality) and that potentially promotes masculine ideals. Social difference theory therefore challenges deliberative theory to engage with the idea of the political subject in more complex ways, rather than as a merely rational subject capable of taking part in debate.

In what follows, I will be concerned with extending my argument for why this engagement is necessary, as well as appraising some competing attempts to include difference in deliberative theory. I will turn, in the following chapter, to the communicative theories of Habermas and Benhabib in order to start to look at deliberative theories that take into account the differentiated communicative and relational situations of democratic subjects. Habermas starts his theory by situating the political subject in a communicative realm with others, and differentiates between competing spheres of life, with a particular emphasis on how communication allows us to intersubjectively validate knowledge and decisions. Benhabib's work, which takes Habermas's theory as its basis, attempts to theorise deliberation from the point of view of plural, relationally-embedded and embodied subjects. Thus, both of these thinkers provide productive theories that respond to identity; however, I will conclude

that neither of these thinkers provides a fully adequate solution to the issue of difference within deliberative theory.

Chapter Two: Habermas and Benhabib on Difference, Universalism and the Public Sphere

In chapter one I introduced deliberative theory as one that aims to secure democratic legitimacy by foregrounding norms for democratic deliberation. I argued that deliberative theory has the potential to respond to difference, particularly with its commitments to inclusion, creating knowledge of new perspectives, and including a range of values. The purpose of this chapter is to re-assess Habermas's theory, as a central deliberative theory, with reference to feminist criticism, specifically that of Fraser and Benhabib. In considering these theories I aim to expand my analysis of the broad problems that social difference presents for deliberative democratic theory. This chapter will therefore centre on issues of power and participation, as well as deliberative theory's notion of citizenship, which, Fraser argues, privileges public and rational discourse, and by extension, the traditionally masculine subject-position.

I begin the chapter by expounding Habermas's discourse theory and how it relates to his model of democracy. Habermas's theory develops in response to the question of how we can come to consider ourselves legitimately bound by laws. In a culture that does not recognise any constitutive fact that can lend legitimacy to government (e.g. divine right) the issue of how subjects can consider themselves legitimately bound by the rule of law becomes prevalent. In what follows, I demonstrate how Habermas's democratic theory is based upon his theory of communication, with particular focus on Habermas's different spheres of communication. I then move on to consider Fraser's feminist criticisms of Habermas's theory, particularly that his theory doesn't take sufficient account of gender

differentials, thus meaning that his model of legitimate democratic deliberation is potentially exclusionary. Fraser argues that Habermas's theory does not take into account sufficiently the public-private split, or power structures that impact both the public and political spheres. Fraser also attests that the subject assumed at the heart of Habermas's deliberative procedure is a masculine subject, with the result that women may not be able to gain equal authority or credibility in the deliberative process. I argue that Habermas goes some way to meeting these criticisms and show how he attempts to accommodate them specifically in *Between Facts and Norms* (1996). However, I simultaneously argue that Habermas's democratic theory doesn't quite answer Fraser's criticism regarding the problems of representation and participation that women can face when trying to take part in the public sphere. Rather, I argue, Habermas's rationalistic approach, which puts the giving of reasons at the forefront of the theory, as well as his principle of open participation for all, downplays the power relations at work in the representation of dominant and marginalised groups and discourses in deliberation. Furthermore, Habermas's theory fails to account for the fact that due to these differences, there may be imbalances in how, and how often, different publics' opinion-formation will be represented in the political sphere.

I then move on to discuss Benhabib's discourse theory. I am particularly interested in Benhabib's concept of the 'interactive universal', which she argues can incorporate universal rights and principles, while simultaneously taking account of subjects as connected, embodied persons, with a range of values, opportunities and responsibilities. Benhabib argues that taking a less rationalistic approach to deliberation and promoting the understanding of others as individuals strengthens her discourse ethics. By highlighting that our interlocutors are socially embedded subjects, she argues that discourse theory can accommodate difference more readily and go

some way towards overcoming the power differentials at work across groups and discourses. I discuss how Benhabib advances this argument in her book *Situating the Self* (1992) in which she focuses on how interlocutors must share narratives and ‘enlarge’ their mentality to include new perspectives. Benhabib forwards these ideas with particular reference to how Rawls’s veil of ignorance leaves moral actors without the possibility of considering specific situations and issues. I then compare Benhabib’s position in *Situating the Self* with her later argument, which she mounts against Young, that storytelling should not be incorporated into democratic deliberative theory (Benhabib 1996, Young 1996). My contention is that while Benhabib does well to advance Habermas’s theory in her ethical discourse theory, particularly with reference to gender and other social differences, her democratic theory suffers from employing an overly-narrow conception of impartiality. By examining cases where individuals’ experiences of political legislation have led to legal challenges, and where personal stories have informed political debate, I demonstrate that the hard line Benhabib takes against narrative in deliberative democracy is unwarranted.

1. The principles of Habermas’s discourse theory

Habermas’s discourse theory is central to deliberative theory, because many deliberative theorists, including all of those I look at in depth in this thesis (Benhabib, Young and Dryzek), take Habermas’s model as foundational. In his book *Between Facts and Norms* (1996), Habermas sets out how his discourse theory, previously set out in *The Theory of Communicative Action* (1984), can be put to use in providing

principles for political legitimacy.¹⁵ I focus here on Habermas's later work because, although his earlier work on communicative action is important, it is in *Between Facts and Norms* that he looks specifically at how his communicative theory can be used as a basis for democratic theory. In *Between Facts and Norms* Habermas aims to provide a justification for the rule of law, given plurality. Without shared assumptions about the good, or another fact that answers the question of how we should live together and which laws we can justify, there is a necessary gap between the norms and laws that we live by, and our understanding of those norms and laws as legitimate. In other words we can't appeal to the law coinciding with one understanding of the good, as anyone who does not hold to that conception of the good could argue they are not legitimately bound by the law, and thus have no reason to adhere to it.

Habermas argues that we have background assumptions and reciprocal norms working as the validating basis of every communicative act. Our communication with others always rests upon the assumption that as speakers we can, if required, provide reasons for our statements:

Communicatively acting subjects commit themselves to coordinating their action plans on the basis of a consensus that depends in turn on their reciprocally taking positions on, and intersubjectively recognising, validity claims. From this it follows that only those reasons count that all the participating parties *together* find acceptable. (Habermas 1996, p.119)

If I am unable to accept or grasp the background assumptions for the statements you are making, I will likely disagree with you or misunderstand you. Thus, we are unable to act together unless we can communicate on a level where those assumptions are clear, or are at least tacitly agreed.

For Habermas, law is a kind of communicative action, in that it is the institutionalisation of an agreement that everyone who is bound by it should be able to understand and find acceptable: '[l]egitimate law is compatible only with a mode of

¹⁵ For more on Habermas's discourse ethics and theory of communicative action, see for example (Benhabib and Dallmayr 1990, Heath 2001). Further texts on Habermas's oeuvre include (White 1987, 1995, Outhwaite 1994, Finlayson and Freyenhagen 2011).

legal coercion that does not destroy the rational motives for obeying the law: it must remain possible for everyone to obey legal norms on the basis of insight.’ (Habermas 1996, p.121) In other words, in order to find myself legitimately following a law, I need to be able to understand the justificatory assumptions and reasons that compose the background of that law; the law needs to have a rational basis *for me*. Ideally, therefore, I obey the law when I can *understand and agree with* the reasons for the law being in place. If, by contrast, I obey the law only on the basis of coercion, for example because I fear the consequences of flouting the law—a fine or prison sentence for example—then I am not really bound by the law itself, but rather by the institutions that enforce it. Being legitimately bound means being able to understand that the law is *reasonably* constraining my actions.¹⁶ However, this does not in turn mean that should I flout a law, that the law in question is thereby delegitimised. As Habermas goes on to say, the point is to find a validating authority that preserves law-making as a ‘self-legislation by citizens’, but not one that is ‘reduced to the *moral* self-legislation of *individual* persons.’ (Habermas 1996, p.121) Again, here legislation is understood as a communicative act that citizens take together, rather than something pertaining to individuals one by one.¹⁷

Therefore, Habermas argues that the legitimacy of law must come from the fact that we choose it together in a process that adheres to strict norms. Habermas’s theory is thus in line with the main tenets of deliberative theory, which I discussed in the last chapter. Habermas’s discourse principle states that: ‘Just those action norms are valid to which all possibly affected persons could agree as participants in rational

¹⁶ However, it is possible that I understand that there is a reasonable justification for a law, and I still disagree with the justification. For example, I may be able to understand and accept the justificatory reasons for certain drugs laws (e.g. that they protect people from harm) but may in fact think that such laws are not the most appropriate way of dealing with this issue. In such circumstances, I can consider myself legitimately bound and yet argue for the law to be changed.

¹⁷ Habermas also argues against law being its own bearer of validity and the idea of natural rights being foundational for the validity of law (Habermas 1996).

discourses.’ (Habermas 1996, p.107) Habermas’s discourse principle is therefore a correlate of the principle of reasonability: we should only forward political policies that we believe all others can reasonably accept. One example, from chapter one, of an unreasonable request was the decree that all blue-eyed people should live as slaves, in the service of the rest of the population. The discourse principle therefore presupposes that there are some democratic principles or rights that are paramount to the process of law-making:

The citizens themselves become those who deliberate and, acting as a constitutional assembly, decide how they must fashion the rights that give the discourse principle legal shape as a principle of democracy... Hence the desired political rights must guarantee participation in all deliberative and decisional processes relevant to legislation and must do so in a way that provides each person with equal chances to exercise the communicative freedom to take a position on criticisable validity claims. (Habermas 1996, p.127)

In other words, creating legitimate laws depends on those laws being created through a democratic process that guarantees a basic right to equal political participation. The need for a legitimating force requires self-legislation by citizens together, which in turn grounds the need for basic rights to political emancipation, representation and equality. The validity of law comes from the process of law-making and therefore laws can be changed and revoked, except where they relate to the basic right to democratic participation. However, apart from these foundational rights to equal participation, and the limits of the discourse principle, the outcomes of deliberation are not pre-agreed. Thus, while the discourse principle provides a normative procedure, it ‘is *still neutral* with respect to morality and law, for it refers to action norms in general.’ (Habermas 1996, p.107) In sum, then, laws that follow from a democratic process that is open to all and tempered by the discourse principle are valid. This is because they have been enacted by citizens together, on the proviso that they are not unreasonable.

However, although participation must be open to all citizens, and legitimacy centres on a groundswell of democratic participation, Habermas argues that citizens cannot be compelled to take part in deliberation:

It is left to the addressees' free choice: whether or not they want to engage their free will as authors, shift their perspective from their own interests and success to mutual understanding over norms acceptable to all, and make public use of their communicative freedom. (Habermas 1996, p.130)

The legal rights to democratic participation therefore hold open a space for that participation to take place, but they don't compel subjects to deliberate. This is significant, because were Habermas to hold that these legal rights do coerce, he would not be able to maintain that legitimacy is conferred in the process of law-making through the democratic procedure. Instead, he would have to argue that the laws can force subjects to partake in political and civic action.¹⁸

Habermas uses the seventh chapter of *Between Facts and Norms* to demonstrate how his discourse theory and democratic principles should be put into practice. At this juncture, he makes it clear that there will always be a gap between the ideal theory and its implementation, even as he seeks to show how the theory could be put to work in the public sphere. The public sphere, for Habermas, comprises all of the public arenas in which ideas, validity claims and discourses can be contested; the sphere covers something as simple as two people discussing a social matter that affects them, through to the media at large, and to more formal spaces of civic participation. The public sphere also encompasses the political sphere, where law is debated and drawn up. Due to this interrelation between the spheres, Habermas argues that his model of democracy straddles communitarian and liberal views of government and democracy. On the one hand: 'In agreement with republicanism, it gives centre stage to the process of political opinion- and will- formation, but without

¹⁸ Furthermore, not being compelled to act or to communicatively reveal one's motives is a primary right for Habermas, which preserves the private sphere (Habermas 1996).

understanding the constitution as something secondary[.]’ (Habermas 1996, p.298) On the other:

Like the liberal model, discourse theory respects the boundaries between “state” and “society,” but it distinguishes civil society, as the social basis of autonomous public spheres, from both the economic system and public administration. (Habermas 1996, p.299)

So, for Habermas, democratic processes require a formal state apparatus, but one which is driven by an informal, multifarious and decentralised deliberative public sphere. For this reason, to be clear, I will henceforth refer to the sphere of informal opinion-formation as the civic-public sphere and that of deliberative politics that formalises law and policy as the political-public sphere.

Habermas considers that both of these spheres are paramount for a procedural politics. The laws made in the political-public sphere can only be legitimate on the basis of strong public opinion. This allows Habermas to widen the bounds of participation, without having to suggest that in order to secure legitimacy all citizens must participate in formal deliberation: such a requirement would make deliberation difficult, as it would simply take too much time in our large nation states to hear every citizen’s view on every political question. Nevertheless, at its best, this model requires a political-legal administration that enacts different laws and regulates institutions following deliberation by citizens in a multitude of venues in the civic-public sphere:

[T]he procedures and communicative presuppositions of democratic opinion- and will-formation function as the most important sluices for the discursive rationalization of the decisions of an administration bound by law and statute... The power available to the administration alters its aggregate condition as long as it remains tied in with a democratic opinion- and will-formation that does not just monitor the exercise of political power *ex post facto* but more or less programs it as well. (Habermas 1996, p.300)

In other words, Habermas’s political model takes the ‘will of the people’ and continually enforces that will through law and institutions. This ‘will’ is expressed through public-opinion and mood that follows public deliberation on each issue, which the political administration must then use when constructing law and policy.

Thus, political legitimacy does not sit with political law-makers or representatives, as they can enact laws only following the outcomes of civic-public deliberation.

However, for Habermas, the power of government does not sit determinately with the *individual* subjects who make up the civic-public sphere either:

Once one gives up the philosophy of the subject, one needs neither concentrate sovereignty concretely in the people nor to banish it in anonymous constitutional structures and powers. The “self” of the self-organising legal community disappears in the subjectless forms of communication that regulate the flow of discursive opinion- and will-formation in such a way that their fallible results enjoy the presumption of being reasonable. This is not to denounce the idea of popular sovereignty, but to interpret it intersubjectively. (Habermas 1996, p.301)

Thus, legitimacy can be found in the tussle of perspectives across a population, from which the most valid discourses can be taken up to the political-public sphere. The civic-public sphere allows a plurality of perspectives, and, Habermas hopes, the most reasonable standpoints will rise to the top. However, crucially, the political administration that employs these perspectives in creating policy and law must subject the perspectives to deliberative norms. Thus, Habermas agrees with adopting Cohen’s maxims of the deliberative procedure for the political-public administrative body: an exchange of reasons between citizens, formulated such that all could possibly reasonably accept them, with no exclusion from public participation, and no coercion between citizens (Cohen 1989). Additionally, Habermas specifies some political norms: deliberation can be concluded with a majority ruling (but this ruling can always be challenged); anything that ‘can be regulated in the equal interests of all’ can be deliberated, even traditionally private matters (more on which, below); and deliberation can probe assumptions and pre-existing attitudes and traditions (Habermas 1996, p.305-6).

However, as I have already indicated, while these procedural norms are salient for deliberation in the formal political-public sphere, Habermas argues that such norms are not required at the level of civic-public deliberation:

The publics of parliamentary bodies are structured predominantly as *the context of justification*. These bodies rely not only on the administration's preparatory work and further processing but also on the *context of discovery* provided by a **procedurally unregulated public sphere** that is borne by the general public of citizens. (Habermas 1996, p.307, my emphasis in bold)

So, while the procedural norms hold for the political body, and for formal political debate in the political-public sphere (e.g. parliamentary debates), the norms are not required for opinion-formation in the civic-public sphere. Habermas argues that to enforce deliberative norms in the civic-public sphere would nullify the ability of the sphere to act as a spontaneous domain for the identification of new political issues and solutions, as well as dull the sphere's ability to criticise political institutions (Habermas 1996, p.308). Thus, although the neutrality of deliberative procedure is protected in the political sphere, this does not hold for the general civic-public sphere where speech is rather more free.¹⁹

This civic-public sphere, free from procedural norms, also forms a link between the private and the public spheres for Habermas; for example, two subjects discussing a political or cultural issue in private counts as part of the civic-public sphere. Such a “weak” public’ may inform political debate, but only where the conversation forms part of the wider communicative deliberations in the civic-public sphere. The civic-public sphere is thus made up of overlapping weak publics deliberating about politically salient matters, which may or may not form into discourses that inform deliberation in political-public sphere. Yet, given that Habermas thinks that the civic-public sphere should not be governed by deliberative norms, deliberation in that sphere arguably remains open to inequalities, violence and abuses of power. Habermas suggests that the inequalities in this civic-public sphere can be reduced only by cultural, rather than political change, such that: ‘Only in an

¹⁹ However, it is important to note that Habermas argues that our moral decision-making should be done according to some of his discourse principles, particularly that we should try to universalise moral maxims in order to consider how to proceed ethically. I will discuss this concept of universalisation in ethics when I consider Benhabib's discourse ethics, below (Habermas 1990, Benhabib 1992).

egalitarian public of citizens that has emerged from the confines of class and thrown off the millennia-old shackles of social-stratification and exploitation can the potential of an unleashed cultural pluralism fully develop[.]’ (Habermas 1996, p.308) Such a plural public will continue to be agonistic, Habermas attests, as even where such an egalitarian ‘cultural pluralism’ exists, it would not result in consensus. However, unlike Mouffe, who, as I briefly discussed in chapter one, argues that we should foreground the adversarial aspect of democracy rather than rational agreement, Habermas believes that we can achieve non-violent cooperation and communication based on a democracy that aims towards obtaining legitimacy. In other words, Habermas believes that an agonistic civic-public sphere is a solid basis for a rationalistic democracy.

Thus, to recap, Habermas’s discourse theory is one that aligns well with the deliberative theories of democracy advanced in chapter one, particularly Cohen’s. It is a theory that espouses equal participation and the giving of reasons that all may reasonably accept. However, rather than being a theory that understands deliberation as an epistemic good *per se*, Habermas argues that political deliberation is best when it draws content from the broad base of the civic-public sphere, where the deliberative norms hold no force. While Habermas agrees that this process will work best when there is an absence of structural inequalities in the civic-sphere, he does not hold that inequality disbars the use of deliberative norms at the political level. It is the fact that Habermas does not guard against the possibility of inequality in the civic-public sphere that forms the basis of my criticism of his theory. I will argue that Habermas’s theory fails on this count: he cannot hold that the deliberative norms of the political-public sphere will be sufficient in the face of such inequality. I couch my arguments in view of Fraser’s critique of Habermas, which I now turn to.

2. Fraser's criticisms of Habermas

In two papers written prior to the publication of *Between Facts and Norms*, Nancy Fraser criticises Habermas's work in *The Theory of Communicative Action* (1984) and *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (1989) for failing to provide the tools to tackle gender inequality (Fraser 1985, 1990). Fraser's criticisms have been well-rehearsed in the literature, so I concentrate here on the three related issues that she identifies in his work that I think can still be raised, as well as partially responded to, in the context of *Between Facts and Norms*.²⁰ First, Fraser argues that there are two problems with the distinction Habermas makes between the different public spheres, specifically that the theory too-clearly preserves the public/private split, and relatedly, that the theory is unable to deal with social power-imbalances.²¹ Second, Fraser argues that Habermas doesn't take into account that there are always many different publics vying for political attention, and that many of these may remain 'weak' publics due to their perspectives not being brought into the political sphere. Third, Fraser suggests that women may not gain full recognition in the political-public sphere because the sphere is aligned with the traditionally masculine subject-position. I will illustrate that Habermas provides a cogent account of how traditionally private issues can be considered in the public sphere in *Between Facts and Norms*. I will also demonstrate how Habermas's argument that women should always be represented where a law affects them provides a partial response to Fraser's criticisms. However, I argue simultaneously that Habermas does not sufficiently deal with the risks of exclusion that Fraser highlights with reference to the driving force of the civic-public sphere. I

²⁰ For further discussion of Fraser's criticisms see for example (Young 1990, Bickford 1997, Bohman and Rehg 1997).

²¹ For discussion of the public/private split in feminist and political theory see (Pateman 1989, Boyd 1997).

will therefore conclude that Habermas's theory does not take sufficient account of the impact social identity may have on the process of civic-opinion-formation and its consequent political legislation. Nor, I find, does Habermas sufficiently account for inequality in participation in the civic-public sphere.

In her 1985 essay 'What's Critical about Critical Theory? The Case of Habermas and Gender', Fraser argues that while Habermas contends that the delineation of the spheres of private, public and political is blurred and consistently informing one another, in reality, he treats them as discrete:

[O]n one side stand the institutional orders of the modern lifeworld, the socially integrated domains specializing in symbolic reproduction, that is, in socialisation, solidarity formation, and cultural transmission. On the other side stand the systems, the system-integrated domains specializing in material reproduction. On the one side, the nuclear family and the public sphere. On the other side, the (official) capitalist economy and the modern administrative state. (Fraser 1985, p.106)

For Fraser, such a stark split in how these spheres are conceived in Habermas's earlier work results in a failure on Habermas's part to theorise how they interact with one another.²² Fraser argues, for example, that the state of the economy has constitutive effects on socialisation and social-integration and she is critical of the fact that Habermas's model is unable to identify as work private labour that is not remunerated. Furthermore, Fraser argues that because at this earlier stage Habermas's work identifies power only in the systematised political and economic realms, the power struggles and inequalities that take place within the private and civic-public spheres risk being covered over; in particular women's private subordinations risk not finding public expression, because subjects are not recognised as socially located or stratified (Fraser 1985, p.107).

²² Note that Fraser is concerned here with Habermas's system/lifeworld distinction, which is a distinction between symbolic and material production, rather than the distinction that I have been highlighting between the civic-public and the political-public spheres. For Habermas, 'lifeworld' denotes the private and public communicative spheres (including the public-political communicative sphere); the 'system' is comprised of the instrumentally-focused realms of the state and economic administration.

I think that Habermas partially (albeit indirectly) responds to these particular criticisms from Fraser in *Between Facts and Norms* by suspending his discussion of the spheres as separate communicative systems. As we have seen, in *Between Facts and Norms*, the civic and political spheres are constantly informing one another, rather than distinct spheres. Although the political-public sphere should be regulated by the discourse principle, while the civic-public sphere should not, Habermas conceives of the civic sphere as the basis of political legitimacy. Thus, Fraser's criticism that the spheres are too distinct no longer holds for *Between Facts and Norms*.

Furthermore, Habermas responds to Fraser more directly when he considers whether traditionally private matters should be considered in the political sphere:

[There are] liberal objections directed against the opening of whatever questions and arguments any party wants to bring forward... [Whereas] feminist authors fear that the liberal version of the neutrality principle makes it possible to keep from the agenda precisely those concerns hitherto designated as "private" according to conventional standards. (Habermas 1996, p.312)

Habermas then falls firmly on Fraser's side, declaring that:

Making something that so far has been considered a private matter a topic for public discussion does not yet imply any *infringement* of individual rights... every affair in need of political regulation should be publicly discussed, though not every legitimate object of public discussion will in fact be politically regulated. (Habermas 1996, p.313)

Thus, Habermas recognises in *Between Facts and Norms* that the interrelation of the private and the public is crucial and that matters concerning the private spheres of life should be, at least in theory, open to deliberation in both the civic-public and political-public spheres. Habermas argues that as long as traditionally private topics are not discussed in such a way that a particular individual's private life is opened to the public without their consent, private matters can be discussed in general, while we can also create laws that relate to that sphere. However, it's worth noting that this does not change the *likelihood* of any matter traditionally considered private becoming a public or political one; it is only to say that such matters being publicly debated is a possibility within Habermas's theory.

Fraser's critique is extended in her later essay 'Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy' (1990). Here, Fraser argues that Habermas's theory of the public sphere is overly narrow and fails to highlight the potentially exclusionary workings of that sphere. Her main thesis is that Habermas fails to conceptualise the civic-public sphere in a wide and nuanced enough way to truly take account of the plurality within it. Instead, Fraser argues, Habermas presents a bourgeois conception of the civic-public sphere. By contrast, Fraser argues that the civic-public sphere (which she agrees with Habermas should be conceived of as a sphere separate from the private, market and political-public spheres) should be regarded as a sphere that is made up of many various, intersecting and competing publics:

[Habermas's] narrative, then, like the bourgeois conception itself, is informed by an underlying evaluative assumption, namely, that the institutional confinement of public life to a single, overarching public sphere is a positive and desirable state of affairs, whereas the proliferation of a multiplicity of publics represents a departure from, rather than an advance toward, democracy. (Fraser 1990, p.66)

Thus, Fraser takes aim at Habermas's notion that out of the civic-public sphere overarching discourses will result that will inform political debate. Fraser argues, in contrast, that Habermas's conception potentially limits democratic participation, as access to and participation in the formalised political-public sphere is likely to become unequal across a plural civic-public. This inequality results, she explains, because the political-public sphere operates on the basis of picking up the strongest discourses, such that it 'will tend to operate to the advantage of dominant groups and to the disadvantage of subordinates.' (Fraser 1990, p.66) In Fraser's view, the discourses of the most dominant groups in society, and their modes of expression, are likely to be continually reinforced by the political sphere, while other groups will see their viewpoints ignored (Fraser 1990, p.63-5).

By contrast, Fraser argues that democracy should aim to welcome a plurality of publics. Such a democracy would require a civic-public sphere that allows those who don't neatly fit the bourgeois-public mould to foster new discourses and 'expose modes of deliberation that mask domination[.]' (Fraser 1990, p.66-7) Such publics would also be provided the opportunity to become engaged in the political-public sphere. Thus, a truly plural civic-public, Fraser argues, is necessary in order for there to be a proliferation of discourses that can oppose dominant discourses, especially those that shore up oppressive politics, laws and personal relations. The problem with Habermas's model, Fraser argues, is that it cannot effectively foster such a plurality.

In view of such criticisms, Habermas does seek to highlight the necessity for politics to be sensitive to difference. As I explained above, in *Between Facts and Norms* the public sphere is a place of communication and action that is spontaneous, and that holds a space open for different publics' communication to overlap. Yet, I also put an emphasis on the fact that via this anarchic mix of conflicting discourses, there will emerge dominant discourses that will influence political decision-making. This does, indeed, sound like one public from which the political administration takes its cues, which is the focus of Fraser's critique. However, in the final chapter of *Between Facts and Norms* Habermas goes some way towards answering this critique. This final chapter is not concerned with dealing with Fraser's criticism directly and considers the issue from another perspective—namely how legal rights need to be materially brought into the public sphere such that the groups being targeted by them are not subordinated or excluded. Nevertheless, this area of the book is pertinent to Fraser's criticism. In the chapter, Habermas argues that the perspectives of those who receive unequal treatment are central to a successful institution of equality rights:

Rights can empower women to shape their own lives autonomously only to the extent that these rights also facilitate equal participation in the practice of civic self-determination,

because only women themselves can clarify the “relevant aspects” that define equality and inequality for a given matter. (Habermas 1996, p.420)

Under this view, rights legislation cannot of itself generate more equal material relations or more autonomy for women; rather rights are a guide or principle that must then be intersubjectively and institutionally realised through real-life practice. Habermas thereby argues that the populations affected by policy must be central to the institution of that policy. Any top-down attempt to implement rights will be not only paternalistic, but will likely result in unforeseen drawbacks for the people they are meant to help. This is in part due to the fact that without those affected guiding these material institutions, prejudiced and outmoded ideas about the groups in question will prevail. Such attempts are therefore likely to lead to further disenfranchisement of an already denigrated group.

However, this sounds as if Habermas is saying that these attempts fail because they lack the discourse-theoretic legitimacy of all those affected being involved in implementation. This in turn suggests, contrary to his discussions elsewhere in *Between Facts and Norms*, that there will often be good reasons for the norms of deliberation to be employed in the civic-public sphere. Habermas goes on to argue:

Today the discussion revolves around the appropriate definition of gender-dependent differences... Feminist critique misses its real target, however, if it locates the mistake in the “sameness/difference approach” as such and hence in the dialectic of legal and factual equality driven by the imperative of equal treatment... If one starts with an intersubjective concept of rights, the real source of the error is identified: *public discussions must first clarify* the aspects under which differences between experiences and living situations of (specific groups of) women and men become relevant for an equal opportunity to take advantage of individual liberties. (Habermas 1996, p.424-5)

Thus, the public sphere becomes a place wherein differently stratified groups need to constantly negotiate the terms by which their autonomy, what Habermas refers to as their ‘opportunities to utilize equally distributed individual liberties’, is established (Habermas 1996, p.415). However, it is hard to see how such public discussions will be able to progressively clarify these points without some adherence to the norms of

political discussion. At this point, perhaps it is sufficient to point out that Habermas would *prefer* civic publics to debate in this way; he is only concerned that those norms should not be enforced in the civic sphere, because, as I have indicated above, this sphere needs to remain open to new problems and ideas.

Therefore, Habermas's public is understood as a public marked by social difference, and arguably his public sphere is, very much in Fraser's terms, made up of various publics. For Habermas, as I have just considered, these publics give voice to differently-positioned persons in the service of finding solutions to inequalities:

[N]o regulation, however sensitive to context, can *adequately* concretize the equal right to an autonomous private life unless it simultaneously strengthens the position of women in the political public sphere and thereby augments participation in forms of political communication that provide the sole arenas in which citizens can clarify the relevant aspects that define equal status. (Habermas 1996, p.426)

Thus, by ensuring representation at the political-public level, Habermas suggests that his political structures leave a space open for women and other unequally treated groups to voice their concerns and to thereby change the structures of society. However, like adherence to the norms of deliberation in the civic-public sphere, Habermas's work suggests this is the best option for representative democracy, but does not suggest that it is a *necessary* basis for legitimacy. It could be argued that there is something lacking in this notion of mere *possibility*: although Habermas calls for greater representation at the public-political level, he doesn't give us concrete definitions of how exactly we start to do this. In other words, Habermas gives almost no indication of how underrepresented publics overcome the fact that they are excluded from the political sphere by not being able to create dominant discourses in the civic-public sphere.

I explored this difficulty of subjects who have been traditionally excluded from the civic and political spheres joining the deliberative sphere when I examined Irigaray's philosophy in chapter one. There I argued that Irigaray's work highlighted

that femininity is denigrated in the political sphere, meaning that feminine subjects are undermined unless they efface their femininity. Fraser detects this issue in Habermas's work specifically, and argues that Habermas's citizen—as a speaking subject who is recognised as a civic actor—is at odds with conceptions of the traditional feminine subject. For Fraser: 'there is a conceptual dissonance between femininity and the dialogical capacities central to Habermas's conception of the subject.' (Fraser 1985, p.116)²³ Fraser's point is that there is no gender-neutral power or mode of representation in the public realm, because the communicative acts that take place in the civic and political spheres are mired in historical structures that have been created by men. The argument is therefore much the same as Irigaray's argument that there is a problem of political representation for feminine subjects, owing to their lack of a positive subject-position. Fraser highlights the fact that those who do not meet the masculine ideal of citizenship tend to find themselves routinely dismissed as political actors. There has been much discussion in recent times of the effective silencing of women in public spaces, particularly online, through others trivialising their opinions, focusing on their appearance, or subjecting them to threats and abuse.²⁴ In the context of Fraser's argument, such examples can be understood as stemming from an underlying, often implicit, conviction that women do not have the right to be recognised as actors in the civic- and political- public spheres. Fraser's argument therefore also suggests that the easy openness and lack of democratic principles that Habermas wishes to preserve in the civic-public sphere in *Between Facts and Norms* is misguided: his argument is that the democratic principles should not be exercised in order to promote greater plurality, but he doesn't guard against a hierarchy of that

²³ Fraser also provides some examples of how women are silenced in societies (e.g. 'no means yes') and considers the concept of the citizen as soldier as explicitly masculine (Fraser 1985).

²⁴ See for example (Davies 2014, Carter and Sneesby 2017)

plurality, or suggest how that hierarchy must be overcome in order to preserve legitimacy.

If the structures of gender still favour masculine subjects as those who have the authority to speak, then Habermas deciding that deliberative norms should not be enforced in the civic-public sphere suggests that progress in this sphere is not a political question. This is problematic because in Habermas's theory the civic-public sphere is the place from which structural inequalities and political problems are first detected, but those inequalities need to gain some sort of critical majority support or recognition in order for political solutions to be found. Yet, it is simultaneously probable that those affected negatively by inequality are less likely to be recognised as civic actors and listened to. This lack of recognition, coupled with the fact that agitation at the civic level does not involve political debate or legislation, and therefore will not conform to the democratic principles, means that at best, the process is going to be slow; at worst, injustices will be completely overlooked. On the other hand, Habermas does argue, when discussing how equality law is instituted, as I have shown, that the groups affected should be at the forefront of establishing the law civically: 'According to this proceduralist understanding, the realization of basic rights is a process *that secures the private autonomy of equally entitled citizens only in step with the activation of their political autonomy.*' (Habermas 1996, p.426) This is all well and good, but without some attention to the need for equality in the civic-public sphere, as I have suggested, it's difficult to see how progress towards greater autonomy is made. I will return to this question of such vicious circles of exclusion in chapter three, when I consider Young's democratic theory. However, for now, let me note that, given Habermas is advancing an ideal theory of democracy, it is not sufficient to retort that it is too-heavy a burden to require actors in the civic-public and

political-public spheres to be mindful of inequalities and how they influence deliberation.

To conclude, Habermas only partially overcomes Fraser's criticisms. He deals effectively with Fraser's worry that his spheres obscure private injustices by dismissing the idea that private matters should not be discussed as public or political matters, as well as showing how such matters can be communicated between the spheres. He therefore agrees that traditionally private matters can and should become public and political matters for debate, discussion, legislation and institutionalisation, and quashes the idea that these matters becoming public always constitutes a violation of private lives. Furthermore, Habermas moves towards a notion of many publics in his later delineation of the public sphere; he therefore takes on the criticism that his earlier conception of the public sphere tends to assume one public, rather than many. However, there is a real danger that his conception of the civic-public sphere remains too romantically anarchic: Habermas shows how the plural public realm can form discourses and counter-discourses, but he doesn't tell us how likely or unlikely those discourses are to infiltrate the formal political discourse of the political realm. There is a certainly a strong sense in *Between Facts and Norms* that laws and their institutional implementation are problematically imbued with hegemonic discourses. However, Habermas does not explain how we overcome the problem of the voices and perspectives of people outside of the dominant culture being seen as less valuable and authoritative. Thus, while Habermas thinks that we should enter the political sphere with an open and democratic stance towards one other, it is problematic that he does not institute something in his civic-public sphere to guard against continuing bias.

Habermas's work is built on the notion that rational communication will prevail in the civic-public sphere, which will mean that we will identify injustice and

trample hierarchies. I am sympathetic to some of the reasons Habermas gives for leaving the civic-public sphere as a space that is not tied to deliberative norms, and I wholeheartedly agree with him that institutions imposing legislative structures upon publics without the affected publics' input will likely fail, or have unintended negative consequences. Yet, I simultaneously find that the underlying structural obstacles to these publics' voices being heard in the first instance are not adequately dealt with by his theory. By contrast, as I shall now discuss, Benhabib goes some way to bridging these gaps in Habermas's theory by putting emphasis on the importance of the positions of individuals and groups in the civic-public sphere.

3. Benhabib's discourse ethics: the concrete and the generalised other

Benhabib's view of deliberative democracy is similar in many ways to Habermas's in that she agrees that deliberation is key to democratic legitimacy, given the fact of plurality: as long as we are unable to agree on the hierarchies of our goods, we need a process that can provide legitimacy for our laws:

The deliberative theory of democracy transcends the traditional opposition of majoritarian politics vs. liberal guarantees of basic rights and liberties to the extent that the normative conditions of discourses, like basic rights and liberties, are to be viewed as rules of the game that can be contested within the game only insofar as one first accepts to abide by them and play the game at all. (Benhabib 1996, p.80)

Benhabib understands the procedural rules of deliberative theory as providing the basis for democratic legitimacy. It is only insofar as subjects take part in deliberation in accordance with the right principles and norms that democracy can function, even though, beyond the blanket rights to participation, all principles are up for debate. However, particularly in her discourse ethics, Benhabib explores the necessity for these norms to be operative on a micro level, subject-to-subject. Benhabib is

concerned in her discourse ethics with how differently socially-positioned subjects can relate to one another in deliberation, with their specific cultural and personal relations coming to the fore. While Habermas concentrates on the norms of communication in general and at the level of discourse, Benhabib often focuses on the participation of the subjects at the heart of deliberative exchanges. Therefore, while Benhabib's discourse ethics takes its cue from Habermas's discourse theory, it specifically attempts to show how respect for difference can be maintained through the application of deliberative norms, and ultimately suggests that all of our public relationships should take the norms of deliberation as a basis.

In this section I discuss Benhabib's theory of ethics, with particular reference to her discussions about how difference is relevant to deliberation. I will show how in her work *Situating the Self* (1992) Benhabib makes a convincing case for an 'interactive universal', through which she aims to preserve the notion of universal human rights and equality, but simultaneously charges us with putting these into practice in a way that is relevant to us as concrete individuals, with relational identities. However, I will also show, with reference to Benhabib's treatment of Young's deliberative theory, that Benhabib's later work on democratic discourse theory pulls back from the possibility of representing this difference in political deliberation. Specifically, Benhabib argues that democratic deliberation cannot admit individual stories or narrative. I will argue, in opposition to Benhabib's stance, that individual narrative accounts are politically viable, both in the realm of law and political debate, by considering some recent examples of political resistance to benefits policy in the UK (Benhabib 1996). I wish to argue that while Benhabib's theory goes some way to answering the question of how difference can be

incorporated into deliberative theory, her failure to conceive of this as a possibility for political discourse theory is mistaken.

Benhabib's focus on the relationships that form the basis of her discourse theory can be seen most clearly in her 1992 book *Situating the Self*, in which she explains that her work is:

[An] attempt to highlight, emphasize and even radicalize those aspects of discourse ethics which are universalist without being rationalistic, which seek understanding among humans while considering the consensus of all to be a counterfactual illusion, and which are sensitive to identity, needs and modes of reasoning without obliterating these behind some conception of uniform rational autonomy. (Benhabib 1992, p.8)

Thus, Benhabib's discourse ethics starts by accepting some points I have already argued for in this thesis: we can seek to legitimise our discourse outcomes without supposing that we will reach a complete consensus; and we need to be attentive to difference when we consider the deliberative subject. Furthermore, Benhabib eschews the notion of a subject who has complete independence, autonomy and self-knowledge: 'the subjects of reason are finite, embodied and fragile creatures, and not disembodied cogitos or abstract unities of transcendental apperception to which may belong one or more bodies.' (Benhabib 1992, p.5) In other words, we are socially located, relationally connected subjects with necessarily partial perspectives on ourselves and the world. However, Benhabib does consider that we retain a sense of self though maintaining a 'narrative unity', in that we tell ourselves stories about our place in the world so that we can derive meaning and sense from it.²⁵ This means, Benhabib argues, that we require a model of morality that allows people to reasonably decide how to act and react to others and that understands moral actors as embedded individuals in a range of relations. Benhabib therefore proposes a discursive model that emphasises our intersubjective and narrative positions.

²⁵ Although it's not clear that this narrative unity needs to be linear and fully formed at any one time for Benhabib (Benhabib 1992). See (Mishler 2006) for more on the subject and narrative unity. Other notable feminist works on narrative and the self include (Brison 1996, Cavarero 2000, Stone-Mediatore 2003).

Benhabib forwards a model of discursive ethics and politics that takes as its basis the Habermasian discourse theory analysed above: for example, justifications for ethical or political actions or resolutions must be given such that all can agree to them in principle (the reasonability requirement); while debate about ethics should be open, free and equal (the principle of inclusion). However, Benhabib supplements these basic requirements with two additional principles:

[W]e ought to *respect* each other as beings whose standpoint is worthy of equal consideration (the principle of universal moral respect)... [And we] ought to treat each other as concrete human beings whose capacity to express this standpoint we ought to enhance by creating, wherever possible, social practices embodying the discursive ideal (the principle of egalitarian reciprocity). (Benhabib 1992, p.31)

These two principles are intended to foster good relationships *between* deliberators, as much as to set the terms of their individual participation. Meeting one other with respect and openness, while considering that we have equal claim to gaining a good or just outcome, Benhabib suggests, is the only way to preserve the norms of equal participation and reasonability: we have to be receptive to others' views as much as we need to promote our own agenda in a reasonable way.²⁶

A central way in which we can cultivate such reciprocity, Benhabib argues, is by practising Arendtian 'enlarged mentality' (Arendt 1968). We are, clearly, unable to attain a subject-position outside of our own; however, Benhabib argues, we must nevertheless at least attempt to put ourselves in the position of the other when we deliberate with them. Our ability to enlarge our mentality depends upon us being able to take up a reflexive stance where we consider other subjects' positions and values, as well as being able to set aside the presupposition that our personal moral values have the highest validity (Benhabib 1992, p.42-4). In doing so, we enlarge our

²⁶ As Benhabib acknowledges, these principles are substantive moral principles for deliberation. However, these differ from the principles that Gutmann and Thompson argue for, which I explored in chapter one, because they are aimed at cementing our ability to achieve reciprocal deliberation, rather than limiting the content of deliberation, or its outcomes (Benhabib 1992, Gutmann and Thompson 2004).

mentality because we are incorporating others' values and perspectives. Yet, we are only able to do this when we consider our interlocutors as particular, relational and 'concrete' subjects:

The standpoint of the concrete other... requires us to view each and every rational being as an individual with a concrete history, identity and affective-emotional constitution. In assuming this standpoint, we abstract from what constitutes our commonality and focus on individuality. (Benhabib 1992, p.159)

Thus, Benhabib's ethical model steps beyond the realm of universal needs or rights: the personal desires, individual capacities and relational situation of each person must be recognised in a discursive model of ethics.

These differences can be recognised more readily when we understand and remember that other people do not have the same perspective we do; instead, every other person sits at the centre of a set of particular relations that go beyond the points of commonality between us. As such, the other becomes both 'embodied' and 'embedded' in such a way that their individuality is not violated in the exchange. This does not mean that agents will manage to resolve ethical dilemmas at every turn, for tensions remain inevitable. What it does mean, however, is that there is no minimal level of 'reason' (in the sense of being able to abstract from the specifics of a situation) to be attained before a subject can be said to be a moral actor. Instead, the moral subject principally needs at least some capacity to take on the perspective of their interlocutor in each individual situation.²⁷

Therefore, our task as deliberators is to try to take on board the narratives and connections of those around us by imaginarily taking up their socially embedded position. At first flush we may wish to question our ability to take up this standpoint: it could be argued that our culture has a tendency to overwrite otherness such that

²⁷ I stress *some* capacity here because it is not clear that we would all share such a capacity equally, nor is Benhabib clear on whether there is a minimal capacity we must achieve in order to meet the discourse principle of reciprocity. For more on politics and empathy, see (Gould 2004, 2014, Morrell 2010, Engster and Hamington 2015).

many subjects tend only to identify what is other to them in terms of surplus or lack. This was an issue that I discussed when considering Irigaray's work in chapter one: feminine subjects particularly, Irigaray argues, are understood only comparatively with their masculine counterparts. The traits attributed and expected of women, as we saw, tend to be the obverse of masculine traits that are received more positively in the public sphere. How we understand ourselves and others, Irigaray argues, is necessarily informed by the representative discourses of our culture; therefore, when we try to imagine another person's position, we are likely to reach, often unconsciously, for cultural tropes and stereotypes. Consequently, it may not be possible to take up the standpoint Benhabib expects of us except insofar as we relate an interlocutor's position to our own; we only understand the differences as a comparative exercise, as what the other has as lack or over-abundance compared to us; or else we understand them through the lens of cultural discourses. Thus, we can see how it may be difficult for us to incorporate the specific desires and values of the other into our reasoning.²⁸

However, Benhabib argues that in the context of discourse theory, this problem can be overcome, because communicative discourse broadens our understanding of others in a way that is always incomplete and that does not depend on us merely imagining their situation, values or feelings:

The standpoint of the 'concrete other' describes an open-ended phenomenological perspective, and hence can never be adequately captured by or stated from the standpoint of the theoretical observer, but always requires the articulation of the standpoint of the participants in social situations. The standpoint of the concrete other is situational and situated knowledge; it is narratively constructed, open-ended and always revisable. (Benhabib 1994, p.179)

Thus, a narrative is given by the speaker herself as she strives to express her position. We must respect this position when considering how we should resolve the moral issue before us, rather than simply trying to imagine how we would feel in our interlocutor's situation:

²⁸ This critique of Benhabib's discourse theory was first made by Young (Young 1994a).

[I]t is only in the course of the moral conversation that we can learn those aspects of the otherness of the other which the other wants us to respect and/or to take into account in our deliberations. The concreteness of the concrete other is established through first person self-descriptions. (Benhabib 1994, p.179)

So it is not that we can effectively wholly transplant ourselves into the position of the other. On the contrary, Benhabib argues, the other will be permitted to convey a relational and value-laden narrative that, while never complete, can add to our understanding of their position and thus to our decision-making process. Being a deliberator means listening to, respecting and trying to understand others' values and reasons, even if they conflict with our own.

For Benhabib, this conception of the 'concrete other' is a necessary correlate of what she terms the 'generalised other', which is the notion of the universal subject that we find in much political and ethical theory. When we consider other people from this universal perspective, we focus on commonalities and don't tend to consider the specificities of those others' lives: the generalised other encapsulates how we conceive of others when we consider them as the bearers of rights. The concrete other, in contrast, as I have explained, is the other we understand according to the specificities of their values, relations and situation. For ethical theory to focus on one conception of the subject at the cost of the other, Benhabib argues, is problematic. Specifically, Benhabib argues against Rawls's conception of the original position as the proper basis from which to make political and moral judgements:

[A]ccording to Kohlberg and Rawls, moral reciprocity involves the capacity to take the standpoint of the other, to put oneself imaginatively in the place of the other, but under the conditions of the "veil of ignorance" the *other as different from the self* disappear. Unlike in previous contract theories, in this case the other is not constituted through projection, but as a consequence of total abstraction from his or her identity. (Benhabib 1992, p.161)²⁹

So, in their attempt to find a moral standpoint, Benhabib argues, Kohlberg and Rawls understand subjects only as universal place-markers. The problem with this, Benhabib

²⁹ Benhabib presents her alternative standpoint to that of Rawls and Kohlberg by employing Gilligan (Rawls 1973, Kohlberg 1981, 1984, Gilligan 1982)

argues, is that it risks denying difference, to the point where the subject of ethics is not a subject at all, because our very subject-ness is formed through our relational ties. As ethical agents we are always already in a set of relations that cannot but form the basis of our choices and actions. To abstract from these relations thus hinders the decision-making process because we are unable to incorporate the possible real-life consequences of our preferred choices into our reasoning. In contrast, Benhabib argues, the procedure of discourse theory already presupposes our relational position: the theory is forwarded as providing procedural norms for resolving problems across contexts and between different groups, rather than providing guiding abstract principles for discourse outcomes (Benhabib 1992, p.169).

Yet, as I have highlighted, despite her argument that we should focus on the specificities of those involved when deciding between solutions to ethical conundrums, Benhabib maintains that the universal is absolutely paramount for discourse theory:

By universalism I mean the principle that all human beings, by virtue of their humanity, are entitled to moral respect from others, and that such universal moral respect minimally entails the entitlement of individuals to basic human, civil and political rights. (Benhabib 1994, p.173)

Benhabib's universal is thus non-essentialist; it does not concern subjects having particular capacities or faculties but refers to the principle that persons should be accorded rights only.³⁰ These rights, as far as discourse theory is concerned, are really the discourse principles I have previously defined: we must be permitted to participate, and thus recognised as subjects worthy of basic political and moral recognition. Such principles are the basis upon which the reciprocity and recognition of our exchanges can be built. In this sense, Benhabib argues, the universal, general

³⁰ It's non-essentialist because it does not concern any biological or mental attributes of a human being other than the fact that subjects have the capacity to create value and meaning for themselves (Benhabib 2002).

other is *interactive*; it acts as a placeholder for subjects to take up the position of deliberator. This model of universalism is interactive because it tasks us with appraising our interlocutors concretely while *simultaneously* understanding them as generalised others with certain overarching rights.

Thus, while Habermas's political discourse subject is embedded only in the communicative relations of competing discourses, Benhabib's ethical discourse subject is materially and narratively embedded in a specific set of relations. Benhabib argues that the concrete universal is not adequately brought to the fore in Habermas's ethical theory because of his commitment to preserving a universal that aims towards consensus:

The chief difference between my proposal and Habermas's is that for him "U" [the principle of universalizability] has the effect of guaranteeing consensus. As long as their interests are not violated, all could freely consent to some moral content... Consent alone can never be a criterion of anything, neither of truth nor of moral validity; rather, it is always the rationality of the procedure for attaining agreement that is of philosophical interest. We must interpret consent, not as an end-goal but as a process for the cooperative generation of truth or validity. (Benhabib 1992, p.37)³¹

Thus, Benhabib argues, the legitimacy of a deliberative outcome does not come from the fact that all have agreed to the outcome; rather it follows from the fact that the process itself was fair and generative of some criteria that can be considered mutually valid. However, the process cannot be fair unless we consider the very real impacts of our decisions and actions on others, as I have discussed above. Benhabib doesn't question the principle of reasonability, or universalizability *per se*, but she does argue that the bare fact of there being a reasonable justification for an action is not *sufficient* for the action to count as valid. This is because our universal reasoning may be sound, but may nevertheless impinge upon people's lives in particularly negative ways, or in ways that do not take account of their specific situation. Thus, Benhabib's discourse

³¹ The 'principle of universalizability' is close to 'the principle of reasonability' I outlined in the preceding section: it stipulates that all affected by a norm should be able to freely accept it (Habermas 1990).

ethics is aimed at generating a contextual analysis, while adhering to the deliberative principles of equality, inclusion and reasonability.

Benhabib's focus on the particular is the reason why her theory can respond to Fraser's criticisms of Habermas. To recap, I argued above that although Habermas meets some of Fraser's criticisms in *Between Facts and Norms*, because he thinks that the deliberative norms should not apply to deliberation in the civic-public sphere, his theory does not hold the likelihood of injustices being picked up at the political level. Under Habermas's theory, as we saw, while the political decisions made in the political-public sphere will be formed according to the principles of deliberative theory, the *content* of the deliberation, formed from the civic-public sphere, is not subject to deliberative procedural norms. Thus, injustices can be either ignored or our political responses to them may lack balance, because they are responded to using dominant discourses from the civic-public sphere. If political deliberation is not attentive to this fact, or if the perspectives of minorities are suppressed in the civic-public sphere, then the laws that follow from political deliberation are likely to lead to unequal results. However, this criticism need not be couched in such a consequentialist manner: it's equally possible to argue that the procedural commitment to equal participation is, at best, a chimera in Habermas's model, given that the content taken up into the political sphere from the civic sphere is likely to be from dominant discourses. Thus, minority participation could be argued not to 'count'. Benhabib's work both highlights this problem with Habermas's model, and, by asking us to try to consider the particularities of our interlocutors' positions, asks us to engage with one another contextually, such that a commitment to neutrality does not result in perspectives being ignored or overwritten. Thus, Benhabib seeks to preserve legitimacy while providing the means for greater inclusion in the democratic process.

4. Benhabib's deliberative democracy

In the preceding section I expounded Benhabib's ethical discourse theory, which values the narrative input of interlocutors as a way to securing greater understanding, and which seeks to promote the particularities of each person's position as central to ethical deliberation. In this section, I will consider and critique Benhabib's political discourse theory on the grounds that it steps back from this embrace of difference and instead promotes a problematic universal position. I start by considering the shift between Benhabib's ethical and political theory: while in *Situating the Self*, Benhabib endorses the concrete and generalised positions for politics, she later argues for a more Habermasian view of the public sphere in her essay 'Toward a Deliberative Model of Democratic Legitimacy' (Benhabib 1996). I will focus on the difference in Benhabib's views on narrative between these earlier and later works. In her later essay Benhabib claims, contra Young, that including narrative in political deliberation would undermine the legitimacy of democratic policy. I will show that Benhabib's argument against Young is over-drawn by forwarding some examples of the use of narrative in law and parliamentary deliberation in the UK. I will conclude that Benhabib need not step back so strongly from her notion of the concrete other in order to preserve political legitimacy, and argue that doing so leads her back to the universalistic position she so cogently argues against in *Situating the Self*.

In *Situating the Self* Benhabib endorses the Habermasian notion that most political deliberation will take place in the civic-public sphere:

The distinction between the "social" and the "political" makes no sense in the modern world, not because all politics has become administration and because the economy has become quintessentially public, as Hannah Arendt thought, but primarily because the struggle to make something public is a struggle for justice. (Benhabib 1992, p.94)

Here Benhabib argues that deliberative politics has its basis in the civic-public sphere. In other words, Benhabib endorses the notion, also found in Habermas's theory, that it is the civic-public sphere that drives the political-public sphere. Furthermore, on Benhabib's model, the notion of political participation is widened in scope:

The exclusive focus on "political" participation is shifted toward a much more inclusively understood concept of "discursive will formation." Participation is not seen as an activity that is only and most truly possible in a narrowly defined political realm, but as an activity that can be realized in the social and cultural spheres as well. (Benhabib 1992, p.104)

In other words, Benhabib argues, with Habermas, that our understanding of political participation should be widened because the civic-public sphere forms the basis of all political deliberation. On this model of democracy we expand our notion of the political to incorporate the spheres of day-to-day life and Benhabib goes on to argue that participation in local community clean-ups are just as political as more formal political debates about minority representation (Benhabib 1992, p.104). Thus, even though she does not make the point explicitly, Benhabib suggests that the discursive principles of participation, as well as the contextual specificities of that participation, are relevant to the civic-public sphere, as the line between it and the political sphere is at the very least heavily blurred, or, taking the argument at its strongest, non-existent.

Benhabib takes a similar view on this civic-public basis of democratic deliberation in her later essay on democratic legitimacy:

[T]he procedural specifications of this model privilege a plurality of modes of association in which all affected can have the right to articulate their point of view... *It is through the interlocking net of these multiple forms of associations, networks, and organisations that an anonymous "public conversation" results. It is central to the model of deliberative democracy that it privileges such a deliberation, contestation and argumentation.* (Benhabib 1996, p.73-4)

Benhabib thus forwards an understanding of the deliberative sphere as multifaceted and spanning lots of different publics (to borrow Fraser's concept). These publics and their conversations are the driving force of deliberative democracy, and it is in this civic-public conversation, rather than in formal representation, that most citizens have

the ability to participate in democratic deliberation. However, Benhabib now puts an emphasis, as Habermas does, on openness and freedom in this underlying deliberative sphere (Benhabib 1996, p.74). While deliberation is still understood to take place primarily in the civic-public sphere, there are no regulations of that sphere in terms of the discourse principles.

Furthermore, in the same essay, Benhabib mounts an argument against Young's contention that narrative is important to democratic deliberation (Young 1996). Benhabib argues therefore that narrative and storytelling should not form part of democratic discourse:

With respect to modes of communication like "greeting, rhetoric, and storytelling," I would say that each of these modes may have their place within the *informally structured process of everyday communication among individuals who share a cultural and historical life world...* [However, these forms of communication] cannot become the public language of institutions and legislatures in a democracy for the following reason: to attain legitimacy, democratic institutions require the articulation of the bases of their actions and policies in discursive language that appeals to commonly shared and accepted public reasons. Young's attempt to transform the language of the rule of law into a more partial, affective and situated mode of communication... would limit rather than enhance social justice. (Benhabib 1996, p.82-3)

Quite apart from the fact that I believe this constitutes a misrepresentation of Young's argument (which I will discuss in more detail in chapter three), it's clear from this passage that Benhabib thinks that the concrete other cannot be incorporated into political institutions and policy-making. Benhabib explicitly denies that policy should be concerned with concrete, relational individuals, thus shrinking from the plurality that was central to her discourse ethics, because, she argues, legitimacy requires it:

[S]ome ideal of impartiality is a regulative principle that should govern not only our *deliberations* in public but also the *articulation* of reasons by public institutions. What is considered impartial has to be "in the best interests of all equally." Without such a normative principle, neither the ideal of the rule of law can be sustained nor deliberative reasoning toward a common good occur. (Benhabib 1996, p.83)

Thus Benhabib argues, in line with Cohen's and Habermas's theories, that preserving the legitimacy of deliberation relies upon privileging the reasonability principle, in that all political decisions must be, at least in principle, capable of being endorsed by all those affected. However, here it is clear that Benhabib believes that a strong

commitment to reasonability means that narrative, and by extension concrete perspectives, cannot be admitted into deliberation.

However, this problematically returns Benhabib's democratic theory to a generalised, Rawlsian conception of the universal. As I explained above, Benhabib successfully argues in *Situating the Self* that being able to couch our moral deliberation reasonably is necessary but not sufficient to secure ethical validity—we can agree in principle to reasonable solutions that may nevertheless have damaging effects due to imbalances of perspectives in deliberation, or a failure to consider our interlocutors as embedded subjects. In her earlier work, therefore, an ethical consideration for the other as a concrete subject is considered central to the social and political spheres, where the narratives and embedded lives of those subjects are paramount. My contention has been that Benhabib's focus on the particular—the necessity of concrete subjects and contexts being foregrounded in our deliberations—could help to guard against the problems of dominant discourses excluding minority perspectives in the civic-public and, by extension, political-public spheres. However, with her argument against Young this basis is lost: once again political discourse is taken from the rational discourse of the civic-public sphere, and is then subjected to deliberative norms. By arguing that we cannot enter storytelling into formal political deliberation, Benhabib's political theory is thus subject to the same criticisms as Habermas's, which I made earlier in this chapter.

Therefore, this appears to be an odd turn from Benhabib: how is it that ethics can survive the narratives of embedded and embodied selves with specific relations, but democracy cannot? Why can political action be specific (e.g. a community working together to clean a river) but political discourse cannot? Furthermore, where does this leave others who feel that current discourses cannot account for their

cultures or lives: if we are asked only to consider what is good or reasonable for all, can those who are routinely excluded really make advancements? In opposition to Benhabib's argument against Young, I will argue here that the use of narrative does not necessarily harm democratic deliberation.

To start, let's go back to Benhabib's claims about Rawls, specifically that the veil of ignorance constitutes an untenable position from which to make moral decisions:

Can moral situations be individuated independently of our knowledge of the agents involved in these situations, of their histories, attitudes characters and desires?... Moral situations, like moral emotions and attitudes, can only be individuated if they are evaluated in light of our knowledge of the history of the agents involved in them. (Benhabib 1992, p.163)

The reasoning here, as I have discussed in detail above, appears to be sound: we cannot decide how to act morally, or decide what is right for others, unless we have a solid grasp of their values, relationships and wider situation. If we don't heed this, we run a greater risk of instituting solutions that, while seemingly in the common interest, harm or exclude.³² We also, from the perspective of Peter's pure proceduralist standpoint, curb the epistemic gain of deliberation, which as we saw in chapter one, came from the proliferation of standpoints and understanding across perspectives. Additionally, as I discussed earlier, Habermas argues cogently that when we make political decisions, although our legislation is created using universal language, how laws are implemented can take many different forms. Thus, Habermas argues, when we are deliberating about specific civic issues and how to combat them, we need to take into account not only how they are delineated in law, but how they are instituted. In fact, the acts of institutionalisation may require the perspectives of those affected *again* while they are put in place. Therefore, those affected by a specific law need to

³² Of course, Okin criticises Rawls for his assumption of a masculine gendered subject under the veil, the assumption of a just gendered hierarchy of the nuclear family, and Rawls's subsequent failure to apply his theory to the private sphere (Okin 1989).

be able to feedback on how policies and their implementations are impinging upon them, be it positively or negatively. This also suggests that different populations and institutions may enact the same law or policy differently. The main point here therefore, is that there is a continual feedback loop between social discursive mechanisms, political legislation and institutional implementation in a working democracy.

Examples of such feedback can be seen in challenges over the last few years to the UK government's social benefit policies, such as sanctions for benefits claimants who miss an appointment and government workfare schemes, which require claimants of jobseekers allowance to work for private companies without remuneration. There are certainly arguments that can be, and indeed have been, made for and against these policies in terms of their reasonability; however, many of the challenges to the policies have come from individuals who argue from the perspective of how the scheme has affected them personally. In 2012, for example, unemployed graduate Cait Reilly was required to work in a low-skilled 'volunteer' job in a shop in order to continue receiving her benefits payments, as part of a government workfare initiative. Reilly already had a more skilled volunteer position in a museum at the time she was put onto the workfare scheme and challenged the government policy through the courts, where she argued she was not gaining relevant experience, or a better chance of attaining a paying job, by being compelled into the workfare position. Reilly's legal team successfully argued that her human rights had been violated by the policy in successive legal battles with the UK government.³³ It may be objected that Reilly's choice of the formal legal route, as well as the courts' decisions to uphold the complaint on the basis of human rights law, shows that Reilly's particular narrative is

³³ See for example (Reilly 2012, Malik 2013, Dominiczak 2014, Butler 2016)

not relevant to this case. However, given that Reilly brought the case due to her specific experience of the policy, I don't think it is tenable to suggest her personal narrative is not central: we often do not see a change in policy until we see its effects on particular people, and it is Reilly's specific experience that was brought as a test case for the entire policy.

Additionally, there are countless instances of personal narratives being used to add weight to political discourse in the UK parliament. For example, in 2014 MPs argued against the government's employment of benefits sanctions, in part by using particular constituents' stories about being subject to the sanctions. In the cases relayed in parliament, individuals had had their benefits cut largely due to missing appointments unavoidably, often because they were ill in hospital, or, ironically, because they were attending job interviews.³⁴ The MPs' aim in using these examples was to show how the institutionalisation of legislation was adversely affecting concrete individuals. More recently this tactic has been employed by Labour leader and leader of the opposition Jeremy Corbyn, particularly when he addresses the prime minister during prime minister's questions (PMQs) in parliament.³⁵ During his first PMQs in 2015, Corbyn posed questions received from constituents affected by various issues. Thus, being able to see how a political decision is working, or not working as the case may be, for real individuals through those individuals sharing their story is surely politically viable. As we saw from Habermas, above, it's paramount for subjects to have a voice that carries through to the legislative body, in order to address how legislation should and should not be implemented. Personal narratives about how individuals are affected by decisions and policy are thus often extremely effective in

³⁴ See for example the debate in the House of Commons on 3rd April 2014, particularly columns 1072-3 (HCDeb 2014).

³⁵ See for example the debate in the House of Commons on 15th September 2016, particularly columns 1037-40 (HCDeb 2016).

improving our understanding of how institutions are working (or not). Arguably, this can't be done by taking a generalised position that looks at our general human needs: without understanding more concretely how institutions are impinging on people, we are unable to gauge the effectiveness of those institutions and the policies that underpin them.

I conclude therefore that Benhabib has, in her democratic theory, leaned too heavily towards the general universal, while the interactive universal, with its focus on the particularities of individuals, has been sadly lost. Benhabib succeeds in countering the notion that the veil of ignorance is the best place to start moral reasoning. Yet she does not consider that at the political level, narrative and personal perspectives continue to be important; narratives furnish political discourse with relevant content, and allow us to understand how political decisions are affecting communities and individuals.

5. Conclusion

In this chapter I have used the work of Habermas, Benhabib and Fraser to extend the understanding and critique of deliberative theory that I began in chapter one. In chapter one I used Irigaray's work to introduce a conceptual framework of social difference, and argued that this framework poses questions for deliberative theory about power, participation and representation. In this chapter, all of the philosophers I have focused on have considered social difference to some extent. Fraser argues that Habermas's theory is blind to the workings of power across the public and private domains, which she argues results in greater inequality. Fraser's main points are that Habermas does not consider how these spheres impact on one another, and that

traditionally private spheres have their own power relations and economies. Habermas clearly took such criticisms seriously, and goes some way to addressing them in *Between Facts and Norms*. He answers the criticisms by showing how private matters can and should become political issues, and by arguing that the institutionalisation of legislation aimed at promoting or protecting specific social groups can only be effective with participation from those groups. Habermas's theory is focused on communication rather than subjects, and discourses rather than action. It is perhaps due to this focus that he doesn't provide an account of the deliberative mechanisms or norms required for injustices or inequalities to be detected and resolved in the civic-public sphere. Overall, he leans too heavily towards this sphere being an anarchic public through which difference will be contested and re-made. Although I agree that we cannot force subjects to adhere to the deliberative norms in every act of deliberation, he should put more emphasis on norms being necessary in this sphere in order for deliberation in the political-public sphere to be legitimate. Otherwise, as I have shown, it is not clear that his political-public sphere has the mechanisms for recognising difference or combatting inequality, as it is likely that that sphere will only be concerned with majority discourses and issues.

By contrast, I find Benhabib's account of discourse ethics compelling, as the arguments in *Situating the Self* specifically aim to illustrate how we should regulate our interactions in order to create ethical validity. Benhabib argues coherently that a Rawlsian appeal to universal humanity is not sufficient for us to make ethical decisions, because all ethical conundrums must be decided upon given the facts of the situation as it manifests, as well as the context of those who are affected. Benhabib also argues that the ethical social realm and the political realm can't be neatly separated, which is something I will also argue for in greater depth in the following

chapters. Benhabib's argument that the spheres cannot be separated suggests that the discourse principles should be applied to both spheres. Benhabib is sensitive to the view that merely being included in deliberation does not guarantee that participation will be meaningful, and that different voices and narratives need to be introduced with care and consideration between interlocutors. Furthermore, as I have elucidated, the narratives of the people involved in an ethical dispute are paramount to how deliberators can uncover the relevant information regarding their treatment of one another and eventually, hopefully, find a resolution.

However, this theory is starkly contrasted with Benhabib's later criticism of Young's theory, which has storytelling at its heart. Narrative, Benhabib argues, has no place in democratic theory or practice, as the legitimacy of that theory depends upon invoking a general universal perspective with a view to what is good for all. I've argued through examples, and using Benhabib's earlier work, that Benhabib's argument against Young is untenable. While legislation must be produced within the constraints of what is 'good for all', and thus must be drawn up in universal terms, the institutionalisation and materialisation of our laws is always, as Habermas concedes, a step apart from their ideal formulation. As such, one critical and constant job for politics is to understand, criticise and reformulate how laws will be implemented, something that requires collating the stories of those affected, as we saw in the examples of criticism of UK benefit policy. I therefore conclude that Benhabib's position conflates the political realm with a realm that produces only ideal laws. Because Benhabib does not situate democratic deliberation cogently within the wider setting of the civic-public sphere, her argument leads her back to a problematic conception of the universal that she successfully argues against in her earlier work.

I will, in the following chapter, turn to Young's deliberative theory, in order to present her arguments in favour of narrative in greater depth and further show why Benhabib's argument against the political use of narrative is mistaken. Young focuses on how we can avoid exclusion in deliberation, and argues that narrative is a key way towards overcoming such marginalisation. Thus, Young's work provides a potential way of preserving democratic universalism while incorporating people and their differences more concretely into deliberative theory.

Chapter Three: Reassessing Young's Communicative Democracy

In the last chapter, I discussed how Habermas and Benhabib incorporate identity into their deliberative theory. I concluded that neither theorist sufficiently takes account of identity differentials. At the end of the chapter I discussed Benhabib's criticism of Young's proposal to admit narrative, and other forms of communication, into deliberative practice. I argued that Benhabib's criticism marked an unnecessary departure from her earlier focus on narrative in her ethical discourse theory. In this chapter I elucidate Young's deliberative theory with particular reference to the importance of narrative within it. I aim to show that Benhabib's criticisms stem from a misunderstanding of Young's argument about narrative's place in her theory: it is not that Young thinks that narrative should displace other forms of political communication, but only that it can be a helpful addition to them. I am interested in Young's model because she explicitly wants to highlight how political and social justice are interlinked and provide a theory that strengthens that link for the better. As I have previously emphasised, all theories of deliberative democracy have free and equal participation as a fundamental principle; that is, decisions should be made following the free and equal engagement of those whom the decision might affect. However, as I demonstrated throughout chapters one and two, social differences and the biases and the material inequalities associated with them means that achieving parity of participation is not as straightforward as formally pronouncing it as a right. At its strongest this problem for deliberative democracy can be formulated thus: if some deliberators' participation is limited relative to others (for example if they lack the time or money to participate, or if they are excluded from discussion because of a

failure of others to recognise them as equals) then deliberative democracy is illegitimate.

As I argued in chapter two, the social basis of political participation is key to a just democracy. In Habermas's discourse theory, for example, the public discourse in the civic-public sphere informs formal political debate and policy. In this chapter, I will discuss how Young recognises that Habermas's theory suggests that parity of social status between citizens must be achieved *before* deliberative democracy can work effectively. Yet, in her book *Inclusion and Democracy* (2000) Young argues that her version of deliberative democracy can and should be instituted even though we don't live in a social utopia. Young's thesis is that, with the right democratic norms in place, vicious cycles of inequality can be turned virtuous. The norms Young introduces include various modes of communication that promote equal participation between interlocutors during deliberation. I will endorse Young's arguments that narrative has the potential to alleviate inequality in deliberation, by working against the imposition of strict communication styles.

After detailing Young's model, I move on to consider Fricker's concept of hermeneutical injustice. Fricker argues that some groups or individuals lack the discursive content that would allow them to cogently represent their positions. I suggest that a lack of available discourses to explain a position or experience means there is a risk that groups will be internally excluded in deliberation in ways that cannot be fixed by simply introducing further communicative styles into the deliberative process. Young suggests that her addition of narrative goes some way to alleviating this problem. In addition, I argue that Young's contention that social groups constitute a political resource may be helpful. However, Young simultaneously asserts that social groups' political claims in a deliberative setting must necessarily be

made in terms of equality. My contention is that Young is mistaken to assert that although groups are a resource for democracy, they must only assert their specificity in politics in view of the inequality they face. One reason for my claim is based upon my arguments in chapter two that we cannot neatly separate the social and political spheres; another is that Young fails to take proper account of how identities are constituted, which I argue stems from her understanding of social difference as positionality. I therefore explain Young's stance with reference to her theory of gender as seriality, which suggests that we should understand social difference as a material position that subjects find themselves in. Using Stone's theory of gender as genealogy, I argue that Young's theory of social difference is overly narrow. Stone's work demonstrates that identity is non-linear and reflexive, rather than a position we simply find ourselves placed in. I therefore argue that there is a tension in Young's work between her commitment to social identity as a democratic resource and her understanding of social identity as an imposed position. Ultimately, I argue that Young misses how the creation of values, narratives and performances in relation to identities can in themselves be viewed and valued as political acts that are significant for an inclusive democratic theory.

1. Young on internal exclusions in democracy

In *Inclusion and Democracy* (2000) Young provides a deliberative model that, she argues, can break cycles of social exclusion and inequality. Young focuses on making deliberative procedures more inclusive in a bid to create a virtuous cycle between politics and social justice. As I explained in chapter one, some proceduralists, such as Cohen, believe that the norms of political inclusion and reasonability, which give all

those potentially affected by deliberation the right to take part and require deliberators to aim for a common good, are sufficient to uphold democratic standards of equal participation (Cohen 1989). However, I also argued, using Irigaray's work in chapter one, and Fraser and Benhabib's work in chapter two, that this ostensible parity of inclusion and participation does not guarantee participatory equality. Thus, although the right to inclusion is welcome progress, how women are (re)presented, and participate in politics remains marked by gender difference. In this section I focus on Young's deliberative theory, which she terms 'communicative democracy'.³⁶ Young's theory is particularly attentive to social difference and she aims to create a model that can meet problems arising from it. I will begin by explaining what Young considers to be the main problems for deliberative theory, as well as her arguments that deliberative theory can actively exacerbate exclusion: people or groups can find themselves on the fringes even where they are asked to contribute.

In the last chapter I argued that Habermas endorsed a civic-public sphere that was anarchic and left the distinct possibility for injustices to be ignored: it wasn't clear that injustice or exclusions would be identified and dealt with politically. Young identifies this issue in reverse order: she argues that the main problem with deliberative theory, at the macro level, is that it relies upon an already-existent just and equal basis between deliberators in order to promote just outcomes:

As ideal, [deliberative] theory expresses conditions that often operate as implicit regulative norms guiding social cooperation, but which are never perfectly realised... justice is nothing other than what the members of an inclusive public of equal and reasonable citizens would agree to under these ideal circumstances. The connection between democracy and justice appears circular. Ideal processes of deliberative democracy lead to substantively just outcomes because deliberation begins from a starting-point of justice. (Young 2000, p.33)

Here Young argues that because deliberative procedures rest on an ideal setting in which all actors are assumed to be equal, theorists often fail to pay attention to the

³⁶ Young terms her deliberative democracy 'communicative' to put emphasis on the sharing of ideas and less focus on the rationalistic and instrumentalist notions suggested by the term 'deliberative' (Young 2000).

power differentials that adhere in non-ideal settings.³⁷ Thus, for example, to go back to Peter's pure proceduralist model of deliberative democracy, which I considered in chapter one, Peter argues that justice is not verifiable independently of a deliberative procedure. However, for Peter's procedure to be epistemically optimum everyone must have the same power of testimony, otherwise there is a risk that deliberation will tend to promote some perspectives and positions, while ignoring or discounting others. In reality, because we live in stratified societies with different social identities and positions, we cannot assume a starting point of equality.

According to Young, failure to recognise social difference may result in the deliberative process reinforcing social inequality. For example, we tend to listen and give more clout to people in positions of authority, and to ascribe less value to the perspectives of people with a (real or perceived) lower social status. If there is no recognition of such social biases, inequality can be sustained easily, as the already-powerful use their influence to secure preferential outcomes at the expense of those with less authority. The impact of these differentiations need not be understood as overdetermined: it is not the case that this is the *necessary* outcome of deliberation in an unequal setting. However, it remains a fact that as socially stratified subjects, deliberators do not come to deliberation with the same level of power, which means that some are likely to meet obstacles in their attempts to persuade others to accept their point of view. Unfortunately, without perfect social justice, there is no guarantee that the inequalities that are found throughout society will not be imprinted back into the deliberative process, particularly if those power relations are disguised by the semblance of a free and equal right to speak.

³⁷ Again, for more on the ideal and nonideal in political and ethical theory see (O'Neill 1987, Mills 2005, Jaggard 2015).

However, although Young accepts that these imbalances of power and participation present a challenge to deliberative theorists, she maintains that democratic models can, if conceived correctly, work to alleviate this problem: 'because inclusion is a basic and widely accepted condition of legitimacy in democratic politics, it can be a tool to break the circle by which the political inequality produced by social and economic inequality reinforces those inequalities.' (Young 2000, p36) By making deliberation more inclusive and by monitoring inclusivity, Young argues, we can use the deliberative political process to overcome social injustices. However, to be successful, she contends, deliberative theory must be attentive to the constant potential for exclusion, and make inclusion its greatest marker of legitimacy. Thus, the challenge Young sets herself is to create a deliberative theory of democracy that will not be undermined by social inequality and will thereby hold true to the deliberative aim of creating an equal democratic process.

Young makes a distinction between internal and external exclusions in democracy. External exclusions are those that stop deliberators from participating at all: for example, if deliberations take place at a venue that's expensive to travel to, then it is likely people from lower income groups will be excluded. However, Young focuses on internal exclusions, which refers to exclusions that take place even where everyone is formally included:

Having obtained a presence in the public, citizens sometimes find that those still more powerful in the process exercise, often unconsciously, a new form of exclusion: others ignore or dismiss or patronize their statements and expressions. Though formally included in a forum or process, people may find that their claims are not taken seriously and may believe that they are not treated with equal respect. 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. (Young 2000)

In cases of internal exclusion then, the excluded participant is not recognised as a deliberator deserving of respect and equal consideration. They may not meet the standards of participation expected by the wider group, or their point of view may be

incomprehensible or trivial in the eyes of the dominant group. Young argues that these internal exclusions receive little attention in democratic theory, while also highlighting that the norms of deliberative theory can actively reinforce such exclusions.

For example, Young takes issue with deliberative models that, she claims, implicitly privilege argument, neutrality, order, and dispassion. Young endorses the reasonability requirement; however, she argues that reasonability should be understood as ‘a general norm of communicative action that aims to reach understanding’ rather than a norm requiring universal argumentation (Young 2000, p.38). A commitment to rationalistic discourse only, Young argues, is potentially exclusionary:

Some theorists of deliberative democracy maintain a Platonic distinction between rational speech and mere rhetoric, and in doing so they often denigrate emotion, figurative language, or unusual or playful forms of expression. Rational speech, on this view, the speech to which deliberative democracy should be confined, consists of universalistic, dispassionate, culturally and stylistically neutral arguments that focus the mind on their evidence and logical connections, rather than move the heart or engage the imagination. (Young 2000, p.63)

Thus, Young argues, some deliberative theory highlights the virtue of dispassionate argument, because this confines political discourse to universalism. As Young acknowledges, such appeals to rational argument and dispassion are aimed at circumventing rhetoric that is intended to manipulate deliberators without providing good reasons, with Hitler’s speeches given as an example.

However, Young identifies a potentially exclusionary norm in this appeal to universalism:

The privileging of allegedly dispassionate speech styles... often correlates with other differences of social privilege. The speech culture of white, middle-class men tends to be more controlled, without significant gesture and expression or emotion. The speech culture of women, racialized or ethnicized minorities, and working-class people on the other hand, often is, or is perceived to be, more excited and embodied[.] (Young 2000, p.41)

Thus, when the norm of rationality is explicitly defined or implicitly understood to be the same as dispassion, it can privilege those who naturally express themselves in a

detached or unemotional way. On the other hand, someone who finds that her speech-culture is not naturally dispassionate must reformulate her contributions and assume a mode of engagement that is unnatural to her, thus putting her at a disadvantage. Furthermore, if this norm is strictly policed, it can act as a reason for dismissal or exclusion: if an interlocutor is unable or unwilling to maintain an unemotional way of communicating, others may choose to exclude her from the discussion. Even where a subject is not formally expelled under such conditions, other deliberators may still deem her 'irrationally' engaged, and discount her position. Thus, Young's argument is that all speech has a rhetorical element and neutrality is in fact one particular rhetorical device: where dispassion is highly valued we are likely to give more credence to the same speech given dispassionately than one made emotively.³⁸

I agree with Young that dispassion (as well as articulateness, which she also identifies as a variable and often socially-stratified aptitude) should not act as a norm that limits inclusion in the democratic process. By working to exclude, or at least discredit, those who don't present their positions in a manner that is considered rationally sound by other participants, such a norm implicitly takes for granted that deliberators will be from a particular cultural background. In the last chapter, I presented Fraser's argument that Habermas's speaking subject is assumed to be masculine and that this assumption works against women's political participation. Young's argument is a correlate of Fraser's, which extends to the claim that the masculine subject in question is even more culturally specific, as a white, European, middle to upper class subject. According to this view, differences in education, race and class, which often influence our communicational style, are also highly likely to create internal exclusions, or imbalances of participation. A model that places

³⁸ This argument has more recently been both echoed and extended by Cheryl Hall (Hall 2007).

normative weight upon dispassion, or that privileges other modes of communication, risks repeating social imbalances within democratic deliberation.

As well as arguing that privileging such dispassionate argument in deliberation is problematic, Young contends that the deliberative goal of achieving or finding the ‘common good’ can also be exclusionary. Young discusses this with explicit reference to Mouffe’s argument, which I considered in chapter one, that reaching consensus relies upon agreement of the assumptions that underpin it. Thus, because we don’t hold the same values from the outset, consensus cannot be reached, or can be reached only at the expense of discounting some perspectives. In other words, people must have some explicit or implicit agreement of what constitutes the good prior to deliberation or, alternatively, they must aim for this agreement as a goal. Young argues that such up front agreement about the good is not a reality in pluralist societies; thus, if deliberative democracy can only take place where people already share a common good, the project will be extremely limited. The aim of finding agreement is also deemed problematic because, as Mouffe shows, such an aim requires that at least some interlocutors will set aside their perspectives in order that consensus can be reached.

Moreover, Young argues, aiming for consensus will tend to favour the already-powerful:

Assuming a discussion situation in which participants are differentiated by social position or culture, and where some groups have greater symbolic or material privilege than others, or where there are socially or economically weak minorities, definitions of the common good are likely to express the interests and perspectives of the dominant groups in generalized terms. The less privileged are asked to put aside the expression of their experience, which may require a different way of speaking, or their grievances and demands must be suspended for the sake of a common good whose definition is biased against them. (Young 2000, p.43)

There is therefore a danger that the common good can act as an exclusionary measure against open communication: when some interlocutors rely on what they regard as implicitly pre-agreed ‘universal’ social values, there is always the potential for

exclusion of a range of perspectives. For example, the absolute right to ownership of land when holding the title for that land is arguably held as a common good by a majority of people in the UK. However, this works against the culture, values and perspectives of travelling communities who do not share this viewpoint. This can (and travellers argue has) effected an exclusion of the perspectives of travelling communities when political bodies and institutions decide how to ‘deal’ with them.³⁹ Thus, where communities’ values conflict with pre-existing dominant conceptions of the good, their perspectives are often dismissed. That many commonly shared values reflect the perspectives of dominant or majority social groups also reinforces those values’ seemingly universal character, strengthening the risk of exclusion.⁴⁰ Therefore, as with the privileging of dispassionate argument, Young attests that the norm that we should aim for consensus can act as an exclusionary mechanism.⁴¹ I agree that having to frame our deliberative input in terms that conform to pre-set notions of the common good reduces the scope for deliberation considerably. Instead, what should be maintained in the deliberative process is the means to share all perspectives, irrespective of prior values, even as we seek to determine good outcomes for all.

To sum up, Young thinks that a key difficulty for deliberation is how the norms and assumptions of the procedures can institute the right to inclusion while simultaneously creating internal exclusions. Such norms risk exacerbating inequality in the process because they privilege particular types of deliberative actors: some actors might be seen as more credible because of the manner of their conduct, while

³⁹ See for example (Moore and Brindley 2011).

⁴⁰ I don’t mean to suggest here (and nor does Young) that we must accept all perspectives equally and agree with all of them: it is rather that we should not dismiss those perspectives out of turn.

⁴¹ Young discusses two other facets of deliberative theory that she thinks are exclusionary in chapter one of *Inclusion and Democracy*: the fact that deliberative theorists often assume face to face discussion, which she argues is untenable in today’s multi-lateral and global world; and the fact that the theory tends to discount the political value of public protest and disorder (Young 2000, p.44-50, Young 2001).

others may be badly served by the dominant notions of the good operative in deliberation, such that their claims are dismissed. The goal therefore, Young attests, should be to conceive of the democratic process such that these inequalities can be identified, recognised, and hopefully levelled.

2. Young on reasonableness and narrative

In response to her criticisms of deliberative theory, Young holds to the basic tenets of Habermas's deliberative democracy, that is, she believes it should be conceived of as having a decentralised civic-public basis, but also agrees to equal participation (or at least representation) of citizens at the political-public level.⁴² In addition, in response to some of the internal exclusions she identifies, Young advances some additional communicative norms, which she hopes can work to promote inclusion and which I will focus on in this section. Young provides a deliberative theory that is in many ways similar to Benhabib's discourse ethics: Young places emphasis on a reasonability norm aimed at promoting openness and reciprocity, as well as on narrative, greeting and rhetoric (Young 2000, p.57-70). In this section I elucidate Young's arguments about reasonability and narrative, while simultaneously showing that Benhabib's argument against Young on this point, which I criticised in the last chapter, is based on a misinterpretation of Young's ideas.

As I explained above, Young rejects the norm of reasonableness when it refers exclusively to arguing in universal terms, as for example we found in Habermas's deliberative theory in chapter two. Instead, for Young, reasonableness is defined as being open-minded:

⁴² Young explicitly deals with representation in chapter five of *Inclusion and Democracy* (Young 2000).

In the context of the model of deliberative democracy, I take reasonableness to refer *more to a set of dispositions that discussion participants have than to the substance of people's contributions to debate*. Reasonable people often have crazy ideas; what makes them reasonable is their willingness to listen to others who want to explain to them why their ideas are incorrect or inappropriate. People who think they know more or are better than others are sometimes too quick to label the assertions of others as irrational, and thereby try to avoid having to engage with them. Since reasonable people often disagree about what proposals, actions, groundings, and narratives are rational or irrational, judging too quickly is itself often a symptom of unreasonableness. (Young 2000, p.24, my emphasis)

As we can see from this quote, Young's conception of reasonableness is aligned with Benhabib's Arendtian idea of enlarged mentality, which I described in chapter two. According to this conception, what characterises reasonable practice in democracy is not limited to the manner in which we advance our personal positions, but includes our receptivity to others' ideas and criticisms. This does not mean that actors must always simply accept their interlocutors' ideas and criticisms, only that they must enter the process with the express intention of listening to others' positions and accepting that their own initial positions may have to change. With this Young need not drop the norm of reasonableness in the sense of coming to discussion with the intention of forwarding our position from a perspective that others might reasonably accept. Young still endorses the idea, which I clarified in chapter one, that it is *unreasonable* to ask someone to give up their basic rights in order that others may enjoy greater freedoms or goods. Young's aim here is to dislocate reasonableness from rational, dispassionate argument, rather than from respect for others' rights.

However, the idea that we should always take a universal stance is something that Young implicitly rejects when she puts a focus on narrative. As I illustrated above, for Young, focusing on reaching consensus through argument and/or relying upon a shared notion of the common good can create internal exclusions in the deliberative process:

Some internal exclusions occur because participants in a political public do not have sufficiently shared understandings to fashion a set of arguments with shared premises, or appeals to shared experiences and values. Too often in such situations the assumptions, experiences, and values of some members of the polity 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. Another mode of expression, narrative, serves important functions in democratic communication, to foster understanding among members of a polity with very different experience or assumptions about what is important. (Young 2000, p.71)

Thus, Young's solution is to argue for a place for personal and group narratives in democratic discourse, with the aim of increasing understanding amongst deliberators before a decision is taken. Young is therefore explicitly forwarding narrative as a means to restrain the power of dominant discourses.

Furthermore, where knowledge and understanding of differing perspectives doesn't exist, Young suggests, narrative can expand our comprehension of values, practices and norms that would otherwise be unintelligible:

Under such circumstances, narrative can serve to explain to outsiders what practices, places, or symbols mean to the people who hold them and why they are valuable. Values, unlike norms, often cannot be justified through argument. But neither are they arbitrary. Their basis often emerges from the situated narrative of persons or groups. Through narrative the outsiders may come to understand why the insiders value what they value and why they have the priorities they have. (Young 2000, p.75)

In other words, narrative can help us to enlarge our understanding in a way that argument cannot: if another perspective is simply alien to us, we can't incorporate it into our deliberation. On the other hand, through narrative we can at least potentially start to comprehend the premises that underlie a position that at first appears to be unintelligible. As a consequence, Young argues, narrative can help to improve social cohesion by debunking prejudice. Once we have entered into open narrative exchange, Young surmises, we cannot fail to dislodge false prejudices. Thus, what narrative can do is fashion a place where, despite wide-ranging values and lived experiences, deliberators might attempt to find solutions whilst paying heed to social difference. In chapter five, I will argue that far right activist Tommy Robinson's meetings and exchanges with Muslims in his community illustrate this phenomenon: faced with the realities of his interlocutors' lives, Robinson begins to feel uneasy about his strong prejudices against them.

Thus, Young's theory puts an emphasis on the generation of knowledge and understanding: narrative is central to this, because it is a fundamental mechanism for bridging epistemic divides and exposing prejudice and myth. It's therefore possible to see Young's theory as one that adheres to Peter's pure epistemic proceduralism (and Peter herself explicitly notes that Young's theory is an instance of this kind of model). To recap, Peter holds that there is no independent measure of correctness for deliberative outcomes and argues instead that a fundamental strength of deliberative democracy is that it increases the knowledge of all involved. I agree that this epistemic gain is certainly a strong component in Young's theory, but Young simultaneously forwards her model as one that can overcome exclusion and better identify and deal with injustice. Thus, in addition to putting an emphasis on the expansion of knowledge and enlargement of our mentalities, Young's theory is instrumentally focused on the potential for social change, and warding against cycles of inequality. Therefore, Young's theory incorporates Peter's emphasis on the epistemic value of deliberation, while also holding that we need to aim for good outcomes—something I argued was necessary in chapter one by amalgamating Peter and Cohen's models.

I'm now in a position to further demonstrate that Benhabib's argument against Young is misplaced. As I explained in chapter two, Benhabib contends that Young's focus on narrative brings her theory into irrevocable opposition with the necessary universalism of political legislation. I had argued that a strength of Benhabib's discourse ethics is its focus on narrative and openness to others, which is a strength that Young is explicitly importing into her democratic theory. However, as I discussed, Benhabib criticised Young for this move, arguing that politics could not support narrative deliberation. I subsequently demonstrated that Benhabib's stance

ignores the influential role that narrative commonly plays in political discourse and law. However, Young notes that an important strand of Benhabib's criticism is the claim that Young is privileging narrative, greeting and rhetoric over argument (Young 2000, chapter three, note 31). In response, Young explicitly argues that she sees these forms of communication as enhancing and supplementing rather than replacing argument:

I do not offer practices of greeting, rhetoric, and narrative as substitutes for argument. Normative ideals of democratic communication crucially entail that participants require reasons of one another and critically evaluate them. These modes of communication, rather, are important additions to argument in an enlarged conception of democratic engagement. (Young 2000, p.79)

Young goes on to reiterate that finding and accepting starting premises for argument may require other forms of communication. Thus, Young's argument is not that narrative should be the only, or even the most prevalent, form of democratic communication, but only that narrative can facilitate inclusion and reasonability. Neither does Young hold that our legislation and policy can be drawn up in partial and narratively-drawn ways; it's highly unlikely that Young sees narrative as something that should be written into legal documents.

To sum up, Young's focus on narrative and open-minded reasonability is forwarded as a way of dealing with social difference and internal exclusion in deliberation. Narrative has the ability to introduce a range of perspectives and convey the values and viewpoints of speakers in ways that argument cannot; whereas reasonability asks us to give credibility to others' arguments, narratives and viewpoints. As a result, we hopefully break down prejudices between groups and guard against dominant viewpoints overwriting difference in deliberation. This in turn, as I have explicated, fits Young's model into an amalgamated model incorporating Peter's emphasis on the deliberative procedure creating increased knowledge and understanding and Cohen's argument that we still must aim to reach good or just

outcomes. However, Young's focus on narrative doesn't mean that Young's democracy falls foul of the criticisms Benhabib makes of it, given that Young nowhere contends that narrative should be the form through which legislation should be parsed, and she is clear that argument is still important for deliberation. I agree with Young's arguments on these points: her deliberative theory thereby gains the means for highlighting where prejudice may exist and putting in place norms to help counter exclusion.

In the next section, I will move on to discuss narrative and reasonability in light of another problem of social difference, namely hermeneutical marginalisation, which captures how some injustices may be entirely absent from deliberation because there are insufficient narratives to explain them. I will argue that Young's concept of social groups as a political resource helps her theory to guard against this problem. However, I will finish the section by identifying a tension in Young's theory between this openness to groups, discourses and narrative, and her simultaneous assertion that groups must define their demands in deliberation only in terms of (in)equality.

3. Hermeneutical injustice

What Young provides, as we have seen, is an explanation of why formal access to the democratic sphere does not necessarily translate into equal participation, as well as an account of how the norms of deliberative theory can exacerbate such internal exclusions. Young forwards additional norms to counter these problems, which not only widen communication but ask interlocutors to consider narratives as well as arguments. In this section I consider how well Young's model can deal with the creation of deliberative content, rather than a widening of communicative styles.

Young is quite attentive to the fact that people and groups may be treated unequally not only because they don't meet the dominant norms of communication or face prejudice, but because they lack the language, or discursive content, to communicate their position. Young suggests two ways that this problem of a lack of discursive content can be alleviated: through her commitment to narrative and her argument that social groups are a political resource, which I will now consider.⁴³

Fricker has written comprehensively about injustice resulting from a lack of discursive frameworks in her book *Epistemic Injustice* (2007). Fricker differentiates between testimonial injustice and hermeneutic injustice. The former type of injustice is characterised by many of the traits I discussed in the previous section, namely the notion of the credibility accorded to a speaker by an audience: how much credence we give to a speaker given what we know, or assume, about them and how they present to us. Fricker similarly argues that social identity, prejudice and communicative styles have an effect on a speaker's perceived credibility, and can lead to testimonial injustice (Fricker 2007, chp 1). Thus, testimonial injustice is focused on patterns of prejudice that can make a hearer miss, downgrade or ignore testimony.

By contrast, what Fricker refers to as hermeneutical marginalisation focuses on a lack of discursive material for a speaker:

One way of taking the epistemological suggestion that social power has an unfair impact on collective forms of social understanding is to think of our shared understandings as reflecting the perspectives of different social groups, and to entertain the idea that relations of unequal power can skew shared hermeneutical resources so that the powerful tend to have appropriate understandings of their experiences ready to draw on as they make sense of their social experiences, whereas the powerless are more likely to find themselves having some social experiences through a glass darkly, with at best ill-fitting meanings to draw on in the effort to render them intelligible. (Fricker 2007, p.148)

What is at stake for Fricker under this concept of hermeneutical marginalisation is that discourses, as shared conceptual frameworks of understanding, may not be fitting for

⁴³ While I use Young, Lyotard and Fricker to elucidate hermeneutical injustice, it's worth noting that the concept of imbalances in discourse have a long history in feminist and critical race theory. See for example (Collins 1990, hooks 1994).

our experiences, or may not be available for our experiences at all. Speakers who are hermeneutically marginalised are not silenced or dismissed because of the credibility ascribed to them or their communicative styles, but because they lack the building blocks of language that allow them to communicate their experience or perspective. This means that a speaker might not only fail to communicate her experience to other interlocutors, but may not have a fully-fledged grasp of the experience for herself (in terms of having a coherent narrative grasp of the experience that she can relate to herself).

Young is already attentive to this potential problem in *Inclusion and Democracy* where she makes reference to Lyotard's concept of the *différend*:

[R]adical injustice can occur when those who suffer a wrongful harm or oppression lack the terms to express a claim of injustice within the prevailing normative discourse. Those who suffer this wrong are excluded from the polity, at least with respect to that wrong. Lyotard calls this situation the *différend*. (Young 2000, p.72)

For Lyotard, the *différend* refers to the conceptual mismatch between two discourses or frameworks of understanding (Lyotard 1988 [1983]). Under Lyotard's conception discourses may be so opposed to one another that speakers using the opposing frameworks will be unable to find a means of communicating with one another. Furthermore, injustice occurs when the wider discursive context or social institutions favour a framework that works against or renders unintelligible a person's or group's discourse or narrative. Between Young's and Fricker's accounts three separate notions of hermeneutic marginalisation can be discerned: firstly, there may simply be no conceptual content available to communicate a position or experience; secondly, the dominant discourse might mean that the content available is dismissed or treated as impossible or implausible; thirdly, there are cases where a relevant discourse exists but the speaker does not 'fit' the discourse and thus employing it does not result in meaningful communication with their interlocutor.

Fricker gives an example of Wendy Sandford, who suffered from postnatal depression and later experienced a revelatory moment when she realised her symptoms were due to her being ill. Suddenly, Sandford realises that something in her personal experience that she has blamed herself for and for which she has felt shame was in fact an illness over which she had no control. With exposure to such a new discourse something that has been incoherent in this person's experience is given new light:

The guiding intuition here is that as these women groped for a proper understanding of what we may now so easily name as post-natal depression, the hermeneutical darkness that suddenly lifted from Wendy Sandford's mind had been wrongfully preventing her from understanding a significant area of her social experience, thus depriving her of an important patch of self-understanding. (Fricker 2007, p.149)

Here the issue is that the subject could not reconcile her own experience due to not having the conceptual framework to explain it. Both Young and Fricker discuss the concept of sexual harassment and the discourses surrounding it as another case where an experience was illuminated and better understood through the creation of a discourse: 'Before the language and theory of sexual harassment was invented... women usually suffered in silence, without a language or forum in which to make a reasonable complaint.' (Young 2000, p.73, Fricker 2007, p.149-151) In such cases, Fricker argues, the experience is one of systematic hermeneutical marginalisation: there was in these cases not only the lack of a conceptual framework but also a counter-conceptual framework through which women's attempts to raise their discomfort in the face of harassment were routinely dismissed (Fricker 2007, p.52-3). Thus, both Young and Fricker are highly attentive to the fact that social discourses, and lack thereof, can and do exacerbate, as well as feed from, wider social inequalities.⁴⁴

⁴⁴ Fricker argues that hermeneutic marginalisation becomes injustice only when the marginalisation leads to a problem for the marginalised or person. For example a sexual harasser is helped by there

Fricker's concept of hermeneutical marginalisation therefore has implications for deliberative models of democracy. The concept underlines the point that I touched upon above, that there will inevitably be some notions of the good that are better served in the deliberative domain, due to those notions' ubiquity and apparent naturalness. Furthermore, the concept suggests that there are some experiences and perspectives that will be harder to voice and to understand. Thus, in some instances, actors who suffer injustice may not be able to voice their concerns in a manner that they themselves, let alone their interlocutors, can comprehensively understand. This leads to the possibility of a double-imbalance of power being imprinted into deliberative proceedings: while some interlocutors will have difficulty relating their positions and being understood by others, those well-served by the dominant narratives of the culture will have both an easier job forwarding their position and being understood by others, including those who are not well-served by the available narratives. Thus, potentially, an ever-widening chasm can appear between interlocutors on either side of such a hermeneutical divide: hermeneutical marginalisation thus becomes an injustice, and undermines legitimacy, at those points where it creates inequality in the deliberative process.

Both Fricker and Young are clear that this is a danger that is incredibly hard to uncover and correct. For Fricker: 'Hermeneutical inequality is inevitably hard to detect'; whereas for Young: 'Silencing some problem or experience is an ever-present danger in communication, and no general rules or practises of discussion can ensure against it.' (Young 2000, p.37, Fricker 2007, p.152) Hermeneutical marginalisation is a known unknown, something that we know we don't know, and yet do not know where it is lurking. Furthermore, it's not possible for us just to step outside of our own

being a lack of a sexual harassment discourse; whereas the victim is significantly wronged by it (Fricker 2007, p.151).

conceptual framework in order to inhabit or try to understand one that is radically different and, possibly, currently incoherent to us. Both theorists are aware of these challenges, and yet both argue that we cannot discharge ourselves from attempting to alleviate hermeneutical marginalisation: ‘Inclusive democratic communication... should be alert to the possibility that a public that appears to have shared understandings might exclude some needs which do not find expression within those shared understandings.’ (Young 2000, p.37) A first step, therefore, is to accept that such exclusions are possible.

Young’s norm of reasonableness, with its emphasis on people entering civic discussion with an open mind and willingness to be responsive to the positions of others, could also be forwarded as a potential way of meeting the problem of hermeneutical marginalisation. Being primed to listen to others’ positions with an open mind and with the possibility of changing our position is one way in which we can at least attempt to avoid dismissing our interlocutors’ deliberative positions. This means continually attempting to suspend our understandings of the world as we listen to others’ views, and remembering that much of our position is made up of partial perspectives, values and norms, rather than immutable facts. Furthermore, Fricker thinks that the listener has a duty to adopt a deep and reflexive way of listening:

In practical contexts where there is enough time and the matter is sufficiently important, the virtuous hearer may effectively be able to help generate a more inclusive hermeneutical micro-climate through the appropriate kind of dialogue with the speaker. In particular, such dialogue involves a more pro-active and more socially aware kind of listening than is usually required in more straightforward communicative exchanges. This sort of listening involves listening as much to what is *not* said as to what is said. (Fricker 2007, p.171)

Virtuous listening, Fricker suggests, asks the listener to try actively to understand their interlocutor’s position, to corroborate their experience where appropriate, and to reserve judgement where the listener cannot currently understand what is being said,

or is unable to take the time to understand due to other constraints (Fricker 2007, p.172).

I think that Fricker's reflexive listener extends the notion of reasonableness that Young requires within her model: in some cases, being reasonable may have to go beyond open-mindedness to include non-judgement; while at other times enlarged understanding will only be built upon some sensitivity to the power structures and inequalities that exist as the background to deliberation. However, this notion of listening is similar to the listener's position in Benhabib's discourse ethics, which I considered in chapter two, which tasks us with understanding the concrete position of the other. I therefore wish to add the caveat from that discussion that the listener must be careful not to align too-readily their interlocutor's position to their own. In other words, listeners must try to understand their interlocutor without overwriting their respective differences by constructing their understanding only as a comparative exercise (although some use of comparative analogy is likely useful). Fricker is clear that the listener's position here is fraught with difficulties as they take into account their own social position, that of the speaker and the context of the exchange. Despite this, Fricker calls for us to attempt to listen in this way, and to hone our skills to become better listeners where possible. Thus, while Young's reasonableness will not be sufficient to equalise hermeneutical imbalances between interlocutors, it may, perhaps with some additions from Fricker's virtuous listener, help to guard against us taking our norms and values as immutable or natural facts and dismissing interlocutors because of the *différend*.

However, this focus on the listener doesn't actively help those who lack discursive content to communicate their positions more cogently. In view of this, Young forwards her addition of narrative as a solution. For Young, cultivating

narrative within deliberative politics is a way in which injustices and differential experiences can first be identified and begin to be conceptualised:

How can a group that suffers a particular harm or oppression move from a situation of total silencing and exclusion with respect to this suffering to its public expression? Storytelling is often an important bridge in such cases between the mute experience of being wronged and political arguments about justice. Those who experience the wrong, and perhaps some others who sense it, may have no language for expressing the suffering as an injustice, but nevertheless they can tell stories that relate a sense of wrong. As people tell such stories publicly within and between groups, discursive reflection on them then develops a normative language that names their injustice and can give a general account of why this kind of suffering constitutes an injustice. (Young 2000, p.72)

Thus, we start to tell our stories without understanding them fully or being able to explain ourselves completely, but when we find that those experiences are shared, as a group we can start to hone those stories, or to identify the commonalities between them. Such sharing and honing results in the creation of frameworks that better capture our experiences. Here, as I have already discussed, Young is clear that we are expected and permitted to relay our feelings regarding an issue and not be limited to a set of reasonable arguments or justice-based statements. Instead, sharing our experiences with others, through often partial and difficult narratives, is the way in which new discourses can be produced, which can then, potentially, filter into the political process. In the example of sexual harassment that Fricker highlights this process is laid bare: one woman experiences sexual harassment, and assault, in her workplace but is unable to sufficiently explain this to her employer, who brushes the harassment off as a misunderstanding. However, later a group of women start to discuss the first woman's experience, and relate their own, with the eventual outcome that, after much further sharing, someone coins the expression 'sexual harassment', which suddenly fits together the range of experiences they have discussed (Fricker 2007, p.149-150).

Thus, Young forwards some norms that may help alleviate hermeneutical injustice. First of all, there is the norm of reasonableness, which asks interlocutors to

be open-minded and come to deliberation ready to try to understand other perspectives and values. I have suggested that this norm can be additionally qualified to ensure that opaque positions are not dismissed by interlocutors out of turn, in Fricker's sense of reflexive listening. Secondly, Young's admittance of storytelling appears to go some way towards expressing positions through which injustices might be uncovered. As I have already explained, Young argues that a space within the deliberative process that admits a relation of personal narrative can have the effect of fostering interest and focus around a previously unidentified injustice. Additionally, Young's focus on identity groups as a political resource provides a further way in which Young's theory is sensitive to the need for the creation of discourses, which I will turn to now in greater detail.

4. Group identity, seriality, and culture versus politics

Thus far in my discussion of hermeneutical marginalisation we have a listener on one side of the deliberative equation and a narrator on the other. I have discussed how Young's emphasis on reasonability and narrative in her deliberative theory can go some way to meeting the effects of hermeneutical marginalisation in the deliberative process. In this section, I move on to discuss further Young's understanding of how these narratives can be created and honed by social groups. In Fricker's example of sexual harassment the creation of the discourse began with a group of women discussing their experiences together. In order for this form of injustice to be brought to light, the hermeneutical content was required so that there could be a political and legal focus around it. It's therefore not principally through our personal narrativisation

of injustice that we can create new discourses that may be politically salient, but through *sharing* our position with others, particularly with others who have undergone similar experiences. In my view, Young's argument that identity groups are a political resource is attentive to this group-creation of discourses: the group acts as a bridge between the lone narrator grasping for sense and the creation of intersubjective discourses that frame experiences. I will discuss the mechanisms of discourse creation through group interaction in more depth when I consider Weir's work in chapter five—here I wish to highlight that although Young does not delve deeply into these mechanisms, she does hold that identity groups are an important site of the creation of knowledge. I start this section by explaining Young's concept of seriality, in order to show how she theorises social identity groups, before moving on to discuss how and why such groups can be considered a resource for democracy. I will conclude the section by looking at Young's differentiation between political and cultural identity group movements, which, I will argue, problematically and artificially creates a divide between the political and non-political in her theory.

In her 1994 essay 'Gender as Seriality' (1994b) Young argues that gender is socially and politically relevant, even though it is not made up of essential bodily or material properties. For Young, gender is a relationally-produced phenomenon that has overarching structural traits, but it does not overdetermine gendered subjects. In other words, no one is completely defined by their gender: given that gender intersects with age, race, sexual preference, class and an infinite number of other factors that create our personal identities, no individual can be said to be wholly determined or determined in the same way by how gender figures in their social lives or personal identity. Even those who share many similarities in their identities experience their body and their position in society uniquely. However, simultaneously, Young argues,

because people occupy similar positions within society according to their gender, class, or race, it's intelligible to talk about these social categories as having real effects on subjects. Young uses the concept of 'series' to explain gender as such a social category:

Unlike a group, which forms around actively shared objectives, a series is a social collective whose members are unified passively by the objects around which their actions are oriented or by the objectified results of the material effects of the actions of the others.' (Young 1994b, p.724)

Therefore, this concept of seriality, which Young borrows from Sartre, refers to a social positioning of subjects constituted by cultural practises and customs, particularly our material relationships in the world and with one another: 'Seriality designates a level of social life and action, the level of habit and the unreflective reproduction of ongoing historical social structure.' (Young 1994b, p.728) Thus, seriality does not refer to a conscious group-creation where members actively recognise one another as part of the group (Sartre 1976).

A serialised individual finds their actions both constrained and motivated by their societal position and its attendant relationships to objects and resources in the world. Gender is produced by certain objects (e.g. sexed bodies, clothes) being culturally defined and put to work through cultural identifications and norms. Thus we are serialised through complex relations and not through self-determination:

Thus, as a series *woman* is the name of a structural relation to material objects as they have been produced and organized by a prior history. But the series *women* is not as simple and one-dimensional as bus riders or radio listeners. Gender, like class, is a vast, multifaceted, layered, complex, and overlapping set of structures and objects. Women are the individuals who are positioned as feminine by the activities surrounding those structures and objects. (Young 1994, p.728)

Women are designated by the material and relational denotations that surround the notion of femininity. When designated as women, these relations converge in multifaceted but identifiable ways to promote and constrain women's actions and relations *as women*. Sex is designated at birth and our expected gender rolls out from

this initial designation. From then on gender labels affect how we access and use certain material objects (e.g. clothes), our habits (e.g. what children play with and how they play) and how we relate to our environment (e.g. using a gendered public toilet). Our social relationships with others are similarly directed through these complex structures relating to our gender, which Young argues is marked by heterosexist culture (Young 1994b, p.729).

This way of thinking about gender is helpful as it sidesteps the question of whether bodies are essentially sexed dimorphically, or whether sex and gender are cultural constructions. In chapter one, I discussed Irigaray's approach to gendered subjectivity as indicative of a gendered economy wherein women were necessarily devalued. Irigaray's solution, which I touched upon in that chapter, has been to attempt to recast the binary of masculine and feminine, in order to find new ways of representing these subject-positions without one being subordinate to the other. However, critics of Irigaray have, with some good reason, suggested that this approach entrenches the gender binary, by characterising it as essential and based on 'natural' bodies, rather than liberating us from it.⁴⁵ By contrast, Young's concept of gender as seriality, by focusing on the body as a site of external relations, rather than as the source of gender, provides a way of thinking about gender as a complex relation *between* bodies, and between bodies and other objects.

However, understanding gender as seriality does not, Young argues, suggest that women can be described as a homogenous group, any more than a particular age-group might be: it is not the case that all women take up their role in the series of feminine gender identically, or that they recognise their place within the series similarly. Rather, in the series, one is always anonymous and interchangeable, the

⁴⁵ See (Schor 1994) for an overview of these criticisms.

gender distinction simply names, ‘practico-inert necessities that condition [people’s] lives and with which they must deal.’ (Young 1994b, p.732) Yet, as Young acknowledges, without some notion that women form an identifiable group, political agitation on behalf of women becomes impossible, or at the very least arbitrary (Young 1994b, p.722). Thus, while Young argues that gender is not monolithic for the subjects who experience it, she simultaneously argues that the patterns of gender are such that it can be understood as a unified structure:

Social objects and their effects are the results of human action; they are practical. But as material they also constitute constraints on and resistances to action that make them experienced as inert. The built environment is a practico-inert reality. The products of human decision and action daily used by and dwelt in by people, the streets and buildings, are inert. Their material qualities enable and constrain many aspects of action. (Young 1994b, p.725-6)

Thus, being a serialised individual means being similarly positioned with reference to particular material objects or structures. As a gendered individual you may find that some parts of the material world are ‘for you’, while you are forbidden or dissuaded from others. Being labelled as a man or a woman has effects on how you move through the world, as well as others’ expectations of you.

It is this notion of overlapping experiences and expectations that Young argues makes feminism intelligible. Under Young’s understanding women constitute a ‘passive unity’ when we understand them as serialised; they need have no mutual regard for themselves or one another *as women*, they simply happen to be positioned along a continuum of femininity that affects their lives. However, so-positioned, women may find themselves facing similar difficulties or expectations, which mean they will find good reasons for coming together and agitating politically on the basis of their serialisation:

A relationship between series and groups does exist, however. As self-conscious collectives of persons with a common objective that they pursue together, groups arise on the basis of and in response to a serialized condition. The group in fusion is a spontaneous group formation out of seriality. (Young 1994b, p.734)

For Young, a group refers only to collections of people who regard one another specifically as belonging to the group and sharing a defined set of objectives; thus women only count as an identity group for Young where they regard their shared social identity as the basis of, say, a feminist collective. These groups may form spontaneously, Young advises, and may dissolve once a shared issue has been raised or resolved.

These group formations of serialised individuals are both politically viable and politically significant for Young because they harbour the potential for identifying shared issues and injustices that should be considered in the democratic process:

Any movements or organizations mobilizing politically in response to deprecating judgements, marginalisation, or inequality in the wider society, I suggest, need to engage in 'identity politics'... solidarity-producing cultural politics does consist in the assertion of specificity and difference towards a wider public, from whom the movement expects respect and recognition of its agency and virtues. (Young 2000, p.103)

According to Young, coming together as a political group on the basis of a serialised identity is both inevitable and important. It is through shared understandings and overlapping experiences that injustices that occur because of the mechanisms or expectations of serial positions can be brought into the public, and thus political, domain. Furthermore, 'the plurality of perspectives [different social groups] offer to the public helps to disclose the reality and objectivity of the world in which they dwell together.' (Young 2000, p.112) Thus, for Young, identity groups constitute a political resource, a mine of knowledge and information about how people within those groups find themselves positioned in society. Objectivity about social and political issues is not constituted by appealing to a view from nowhere, but is increased only with a proliferation of perspectives from across society. This is because no single group can have a representative voice for all, as I have already indicated with reference to Young's arguments regarding plurality and the common good, above.

We can see, therefore, how Young's argument that we should value identity groups in the deliberative process can be aimed at overcoming hermeneutical marginalisation: it provides a link between structural injustices experienced by those who are hermeneutically marginalised, the people who experience that injustice, and the political process:

An account of someone's life circumstances contains many strands of difficulty or difference from others that, taken one by one, can appear to be the result of decision, preferences, or accidents. When considered together, however, and when compared with the life story of others, they reveal a net of restricting and reinforcing relationships. (Young 2000, p. 93)

As we have seen, it is through open discussion and sharing with others who are similarly socially positioned that a new discourse often emerges, as people start to uncover commonalities in their experience and thus to understand how social structures play a part in those experiences. Thus, by valuing the formation of identity groups as an epistemic resource for deliberation, Young provides a base of inclusion that could combat hermeneutical marginalisation by encouraging groups to form that are aimed at uncovering and expounding structural issues. By doing so, Young is therefore also aiming to create an increasingly virtuous cycle between democratic deliberation and policy.

Thus, in line with Young's argument here, we can say that the creation of politically-motivated groups based upon social identities is valuable for democracy in order that those groups can: identify structural issues; create discourses that explain those structural issues; and propagate more diverse perspectives across a population. Furthermore, in order to do so, groups often need to be able to create and maintain values that do not bow to the dominant discourses of their society. However, Young simultaneously argues that projects of revaluation and exploration of the meaning of a serialised identity are not political exercises:

The exploration of positioned experience and cultural meaning is an important source of the self for most people. For this reason exploring the expressive and documentary possibilities especially of cultural meaning is an intrinsically valuable human enterprise, and one that

contributes to the reproduction of social groups. In themselves and apart from conflict and problems of political and economic privilege or civil freedom, however, these are not *political* enterprises. To the extent that social movements have mistaken these activities for politics, or to the extent that they have displaced political struggles in relation to structural inequalities, critics of identity politics may have some grounds for their complaints. (Young 2000, p.104)

Here, Young claims that groups that aim only to increase understanding and recognition of their group in ways that do not have a justice claim attached cannot be called political. Young also warns that conflating these activities with politics is mistaken and risks displacing political claims that hinge on inequality. Young appears to hold that such projects can be called political where we can determinately judge them to be in the service of political and resource inequality. For Young therefore, only claims of structural injustice or inequality can be called properly political when it comes to identity groups. Such groups are only politically salient or politically engaged where they can pinpoint inequality and seek to alleviate it.

I find this stance to be oddly matched with Young's arguments elsewhere about the role of groups and difference in democracy, particularly her arguments about the *différend* and the common good. As I explained above, for Young the common good is something that is intersubjectively realised (ideally at least), through deliberation. However, as I also recounted, the values and assumptions underpinning deliberation will sometimes be assumed and will often thereby need to be challenged. Thus, while values are created and maintained through social relationships, revaluation projects always have the potential to filter into deliberation in important ways, and particularly in ways that cannot be parsed in terms of equality or inequality: they are just different. Thus, social values and projects of revaluation can become political where those values feed into deliberation about political questions. Moreover, as I have already discussed, there is an imbalance between the available narratives that pervade our culture, which can reproduce structural inequality. We might therefore consider that hermeneutical marginalisation is always bound up with social and

political participatory inequality and thus is always political, even on Young's terms. The ways in which groups try to overcome hermeneutical marginalisation by working together to uncover, explore and revalue their experiences, is thereby arguably always political. Those who engage in such projects are, I submit, usually *already marginalised in some way*, which is why they are engaging in them. I conclude therefore that the creation of new meaning, as well as projects of revaluation between similarly positioned citizens, are always potentially political acts. Furthermore, I contend that Young's pull back from the political dimensions of such projects obstructs the crucial links between individuals, groups and narratives that I have discussed above. Without the 'cultural' projects, which Young argues should not be recognised as political, the proliferation of perspectives that stands at the heart of her communicative theory is unsupported. At the very least therefore, I would expect Young to see that the boundary between the cultural and the political is often extremely blurred, almost to the point of non-existence. However, her claim that we can distinguish the politically relevant cultural projects from those that have no political element suggests that she thinks these spheres are quite distinct. In consequence, as I shall argue in more detail throughout the rest of this thesis, the fact that Young limits political acts related to social identity to inequality diminishes her theory.⁴⁶

In order to argue for these conclusions in more depth, I'll now turn briefly to Fraser's work on recognition because I think Young's theorising about social identity can be deepened by looking at Fraser's arguments. Recognition theorists hold that others according us respect as human beings and as certain kinds of subjects is central

⁴⁶ Young's argument here is also a step away from her stance in 'Unruly Categories: A Critique of Fraser's Dual Systems Theory' (1997) where Young criticises Fraser for presenting political economy and culture as oppositional. Young argues that to separate these two lines of oppression risks oversimplifying issues of justice such that, for example, we are no longer able to see the links between cultural devaluation and material inequality.

to our social development and also an important impetus for political action where recognition fails. I will elucidate arguments for such a stance in greater depth when I consider Honneth's work in the following chapter (Honneth 1995). However, like Young, Fraser denies that social identity thought of as a process of self-realization is politically viable and argues instead that it is only the structural inequalities that result from social misrecognition or exclusion that can properly be deemed an issue of justice: 'To view recognition as a matter of justice is to treat it as an issue of *social status*. This means examining institutionalized patterns of cultural value for their effects on the *relative standing* of social actors.' (Fraser and Honneth 2003, p.29) For Fraser, the psychological and individualised phenomenology or psychology of a misrecognised subject is, although interesting, not a question of justice, just as for Young it is not an issue of politics. To make it so, Fraser thinks, risks attributing an essential state to all subjects and implies an overarching approach to the common good. Fraser sees such a move as potentially exclusionary: 'No approach of this sort can establish such claims as normatively binding on those who do not share the theorist's conception of ethical value.' (Fraser and Honneth 2003, p.30) Thus, Fraser argues, all claims of injustice can only be forwarded with reference to social inequality. For Fraser and Young therefore, politics and justice are never about the positive recognition of a particular identity, but are rather are about fostering a society that is characterised by a lack of inequalities for subjects that may arise because of their identity.

For Fraser, a deontological approach that focuses on possibilities for 'parity of participation' within the social sphere is preferable to one that equates justice with equal esteem for all. In order to claim injustice, a group or individual will need to claim that the arrangements of social and political life preclude them from

participating equally: 'Recognition claimants must show that the institutionalized patterns of cultural value deny them the necessary intersubjective conditions [for participatory parity].' (Fraser and Honneth 2003, p.39) In other words, groups can claim injustice, and thus make claims that are viable for political inclusion, only when they can show that a devaluation of their way of life impedes their participation in public life. Such claims should always aim at fighting inequalities of opportunity that arise from unequal structural positions. Again, here individuals or groups are serialised or determined by their placement within the social structure. On this view, therefore, groups can ask only that identity be abstracted from such that they are given parity with other actors, rather than their identity being recognised in order for parity to take place: these groups are asking to be treated in the same way as everyone else *regardless of their difference*. As Young writes:

Multicultural politics concerning freedom of expression, the content of curricula, official languages, and the like... can properly be called 'identity politics'. Most group-conscious political claims, however, are not claims to the recognition of identity as such, but rather claims for fairness, equal opportunity, and political inclusion. (Young 2000, p.107)

Thus, for Young, the issue at hand is not usually that identity groups want their culture or identity recognised, but that they want to be able to express themselves without repercussions either socially, economically or politically; groups don't want recognition for recognition's sake, but because it translates into parity of participation or access to resources.

Young's conclusion here springs from her notion of seriality, particularly from the fact that she denies that seriality should be conceived as identity in any way. Young argues that that an advantage of seriality is that it 'disconnects gender from identity' (Young 1994b, p.734). Young understands identity as individualistic traits, and thus argues that identity can't be captured by an overarching conception of 'gender identity':

Each person's identity is unique—the history and meaning she makes and develops from her dealings with other people, her communicative interactions through media, and her manner of taking up the particular serialized structures whose prior history position her. No individual woman's identity, then, will escape the markings of gender, but how gender marks her life is her own. (Young 1994b, p.734)

Thus, for Young identity *per se* should not, and really cannot, figure in political struggles, as identity refers only to our personal sense of identity, which is made up of infinite facets of our personal histories and individual responses to, and lived experiences of, our social identities. On the one hand, this is undeniable, given that when we deliberate politically we need to have some focus on the deliberators as a group, and our entirely personal identities therefore can't have a place in our debate: we cannot possibly listen to and cater for everyone's individual identity to an infinitesimal level when we make policy or law. On the other hand, in the last chapter I argued that as a basis for deliberation we should consider our interlocutors as embodied and socially embedded subjects who have particular relationships. I have also argued, in line with Young in this chapter, that the narratives of our interlocutors are, at least potentially, politically salient and that those narratives may include open-ended expositions of subjects' identity and experiences, which we may need in order to grope towards articulating marginalised experiences and perspectives. Thus, how far we need to delve into personal experiences, and how far those experiences are understood to be politically salient is not something that is possibly pre-set: in some instances, an exceedingly particular experience may have more general political implications.

Of course, Young agrees that individual experiences have a place in deliberation, as her focus on narrative shows; thus her point about identity and gender must be different from there being no call for personal stories in deliberation. As we have seen, Young wishes to pull back from the notion that gender (or any other social category) overdetermines subjects, such that when we talk about gender, we use it as

short-hand for all women's experiences. In place of gender identity then, as I have demonstrated, gender as seriality comes to denote a structural position, rather than something that is lived and responded to. In order to be serialised, Young attests, I only have to find myself in a particular structural position in relation to the material world and do not have to 'identify' with this position in any particular way. However, at its strongest this suggests that all identification with a gender is ultimately mistaken or irrelevant when one comes to political action: one can only make political claims based on social identity insofar as such claims relate to one's position being lower than others'. Thus, it is only the material structures that pertain to our social positioning that should be considered within democratic deliberation. However, as I explained with reference to Habermas's work in chapter two, how we institute gender policy *relies* on women, as the oft-targeted group, being at the forefront of its institution, because policy doesn't eradicate social difference. In seeking to alleviate injustices, the relational lives of individuals become salient, particularly their relational lives with reference to their social identity. Thus, although Young's notion of seriality is in some ways helpful, we can't evacuate the lived component of social identity for politics and political action: talking as if we can do politics without reference to this identity component is overly restrictive.

I conclude that the passive role of gendered actors in Young's serialised identities leads Young to differentiate too sharply between structural positioning and personal identity, something Stone has previously examined in her 2004 essay 'Essentialism and Anti-Essentialism in Feminist Philosophy'. The problem, Stone argues, is that Young's serial gender structures appear to be static, monolithic and linear, which conflicts with Young's simultaneous assertion that women find

themselves in highly different contexts, and with extremely different personal-gender identities:

Young's claim is plausible only if it acknowledges that the expectations which ultimately organise all women's lives are themselves varied; but, consequently, these expectations cannot be said to unify the structures by which women are serially positioned. (Stone 2004, p.145)

Thus, Stone finds an internal tension in Young's characterisation: the structures that serialise cannot be dominating, homogenising and varied all at once. If they are infinitely varied, as Young's discussion of identity suggests, then the notion of there being an overarching structure to gender identity is implausible. Furthermore, the fact that people congregate in groups around this structure spontaneously is also implausible: for if our experiences and identities are so highly diverse, how can we create groups and discourses surrounding our commonalities? Thus, this internal conflict leads to the detachment of the serialisation of individuals from those individuals' lived experiences and social group ties.

Furthermore, this detachment means that Young's theory leaves little room for understanding personal resistance to serial gender structures as political. Gender as seriality does not admit the possible political significance of being creative in one's responses to and lived experience of gender serialisation: while these forms of resistance are quite possible under Young's model, they can't count as political in any way, which is problematic, not least because political activists often understand personal and group resistances to be closely linked. Young does claim that agency is an important counter to serialisation in *Inclusion and Democracy*:

Subjects are not only conditioned by their positions in structured relation; subjects are also *agents*. To be an agent means that you can take the constraints and possibilities that condition your life and make something of them in your own way. (Young 2000, p101)

Even here, however Young still conspicuously avoids denoting this characterisation as identity, opting instead for an individualist characterisation of agency as personal choice, she continues:

Some women, for example, affirm norms of femininity and internalise them; others resist evaluations of their actions in such terms... How we fashion ourselves is also a function of our attitudes towards our multiple cultural and group memberships. (Young 2000, p.101)

Thus, one can choose to either internalise or reject the serialised position, but there is no way in which either of these acts inflect the structure itself; a subject only remains within or outside of the structure. Young claims, as I have already mentioned, that dislodging gender from identity is valuable because it can account for all those who claim that they don't feel their lived identity actively responds to or is created by gender serialisation. But Young's theory thereby unfortunately diminishes the possibility of recognising the potential role of actively cultivating our gender as a valuable part of our identity and using this cultivation as the ground or substance of our political resistance and agency.

In place of Young's serialisation, Stone argues that a genealogical conceptualisation of gender is preferable:

Nietzsche's idea that any chain of historically overlapping phenomena has a genealogy makes it possible to reconceive women as a determinate social group without reverting to the descriptive essentialist claim that all women share a common social position or mode of experience. Any such 'genealogical' analysis of women must start by recognising that concepts of femininity change radically over time, and that these changing concepts affect women's social position and lived experience. In particular, a genealogical analysis of women is premised on the view—articulated in Judith Butler's work— that women only become women, or acquire femininity, by taking up existing interpretations and concepts of femininity. (Stone 2004, p.19)

Thus, under Stone's reading of gender as Nietzschean genealogy, gender is conditioned by changes in the discursive content of gender concepts and our normative relationships, both of which are constantly re-evaluated and played out differently across space and time. Gender is also, according to Stone, something that is inherently linked to identity creation, as the performance of gender is played out in response to changing evaluations of gender. Furthermore, these performances and concepts are continually informing one another, such that the concepts are inflected by the performances and vice-versa. Thus, Stone marries the personal and structural

elements of social identity in such a way that neither is overdetermined by the other, but also such that both are interlinked and inform one another.

I wish to argue that Stone's conception allows us to see how individuals taking up or resisting gender tropes can have wider-ranging effects than are captured by the notion of agentic choice. Subjects have some ability to pick and choose aspects of gender concepts from throughout their genealogical history and to inflect them by using them and acting them out in new contexts and in new ways: 'Received meanings regarding gender continuously become subjected to practical reinterpretation, reinterpretation which individuals undertake with tacit reference to their differing personal and cultural experiences.' (Stone 2004, p.19) Here the very processes of interacting with femininity always involves the creation of new lived identities, because, 'the taking on of femininity consists not merely in a process of mental identification with existing concepts, but—more fundamentally—in a process of acquiring a feminine way of living one's body, of inhabiting one's physiology.' (Stone 2004, p.18-19) Thus, there is always the possibility of a creative personal reaction to one's positioning as gendered, and understanding gender as genealogy therefore makes it possible to draw links between personal identity and the assertion of political resistance in the experience of living out that identity.

I don't, however, mean to completely discard Young's idea that gender positioning is politically relevant, or that the structural and relational bases of our gender make political discourse about inequality paramount. Stone uses Nietzsche's genealogy of the birth of morality to show how concepts are reinterpreted by individuals and internalised to become part of an individual's identity (Stone 2004, p. 147-9). However, of course, Nietzsche also criticised the tyrannical nature of the dominance of particular moral concepts, which he argued limited individual

flourishing. Nietzsche's point in his *Genealogy of Morality* (1887) is that despite the creativity at the heart of the societal production of new values, the proliferation of particular values (those stemming from *ressentiment*)—and their installation across society through a vast array of norms and institutions—becomes unduly constraining for individuals. While this cannot lead us to deny that these values and social identities are constantly being revalued, inflected and resisted, it does point towards how individuals are always located within a social nexus that limits their possibilities for social, and thus political, action. However, this is also a strength of Stone's Nietzschean view of gender, because Stone's view suggests that there is another more insidious layer to gender positioning, and that is where gender itself is conceived as fixed and natural, where it is presented as the only way of constructing an identity as gendered, just as Nietzsche argues that the morals of good and evil are presented as natural and immutable. This potential problem of *ressentiment* and the fixity of identities is something I will discuss in further depth when I discuss Brown's critical understandings of gender politics in the following chapter.

For now, let me conclude that Stone's concept of gender as genealogy is stronger than Young's concept of gender as seriality because the former provides a way of conceptualising gender as structural, but also crucially provides a link between the individual, lived experiences of gender and the structural conditions of gender, such that *all* can be considered, at least potentially, in political ways. Stone's notion of genealogy is more coherent than the concept of seriality where gender is concerned, because it highlights that individuals perform their gender by assuming and inflecting notions of a discontinuous femininity. From this perspective, it's easy to see the political dimension in uncovering lost, and valuing new, standards of femininity: the two facets, personal identity and action, and the structural conditions of that action,

are constantly informing one another. Thus, personal action can inflect the structure and can open new perspectives for our groups, institutions and policy that cannot be neatly characterised under the rubric of equality. In other words, my issue with Young's eschewal of identity is that she does not correctly recognise the political power of personal and group identity and how this feeds into the political process. We cannot reduce the political power of those identities to the terms of structural injustices: without reconstructing a narrative identity to suit our own lives, we are utterly unable to influence the structural underpinnings of our serialisation by the practico-inert structures that surround us. This is because, despite Young's best intentions, we will be constantly faced with seeming natural or immovable practises that limit the notion of what can be done in the face of such structures.

Therefore, it is not only injustice-talk that focuses on a group's inability to access resources or political participation that can be identified as a political action; the dispersion of material that urges a revaluation is itself a potentially political act. Yet, once again, this can't be distributed without some basis of group recognition; it must be facilitated through declaring specificity. Thus, although Young is extremely attentive to issues of difference for deliberative democracy, and provides some frankly excellent additions to the norms of deliberative theory in order to combat exclusion, I find the fact that she so strongly differentiates individual identity and social structures unhelpful. There is a tension at the heart of Young's inclusive and deliberative democratic model in that she at once affirms and denies group identity within it: group identity is a resource, but it cannot form the basis of the political according to Young. In the following chapters, I will deepen, both theoretically and through examples, my argument that personal identity, social identity and group participation cannot be so neatly separated. I will also argue further that this conclusion requires that we

acknowledge that we cannot easily separate cultural and political projects, or the civic and political spheres. I will demonstrate that the bounds of political participation in particular cannot be limited to questions of parity, since these questions rest upon cultural and social relationships and understandings.

5. Conclusion

In view of social difference, Young's deliberative theory is the most comprehensive of those I will consider in this thesis. As I have clarified, Young provides a cogent critique of how deliberative theories often fail to consider, and may actively encourage, the exclusion of different groups in deliberation. Young highlights a number of significant ways in which our conception of the deliberator as a neutral and rational participant can reinforce inequality. Certain deliberators may find their natural modes of expression valued higher than others' due to such deliberative norms. As well as this, Young highlights inequalities that can occur because of biases, prejudices and problems with premises and language use in the deliberative fora. I have focused on how Young's introduction of narrative into deliberation may afford some relief from these problems: introducing narrative means that people can come to deliberation ready to impart their perspective in a way that doesn't take the form of a universal argument. Narrative, therefore, is an addition to deliberation aimed at fostering knowledge and understanding between participants. As well as fostering understanding, narrative provides a way of, potentially at least, overcoming the lack of a recognisable discourse for one's perspective, as I explained with reference to Fricker's concept of hermeneutic marginalisation. Hermeneutic marginalisation refers to inequities in the availability of discourses that we can use to frame or understand

our experiences. Being able to create frameworks of meaning was therefore identified as a necessity for democracy and Young suggested that narrative has a part to play in this process as it can provide a ‘bridge’ between a hermeneutical deficit and fully-fledged argumentation.

Yet, as I went on to elucidate, I found that Young’s theory simultaneously and problematically dislocated personal identity, group identity and structural social identity. By considering Young’s theory of seriality and examining Young’s assertion that identity can be politicised only if it is concerned with inequality, I argued that Young too-starkly differentiates between the civic and political spheres. Young’s theory cannot account for how inflecting the social structures of identity can have political effects. I argued that by focusing on structural inequality, Young dislocates our cultural and social pursuits from their impact on political participation and deliberation. This was not to say that such pursuits are *necessarily* political, but only to argue that they are always potentially political or potentially have political effects. Furthermore, Young’s position fails to take sufficient account of the link between social identity and personal identity and how personal responses to a social identity can form the basis for political participation. My argument here will be extended and clarified further at the end of the next chapter, when I discuss Alcoff’s theory that social identity can be a means to participation, as well as a barrier to it.

However, before I consider Alcoff’s theory, I will be interested in the next chapter to understand some critiques of identity, in order to contemplate why theorists such as Benhabib and Young pull back from fully embracing social identity in their political theories. I will use the work of Butler to show why Honneth’s wholly positive embrace of social identity recognition as a political concept is flawed. I extend this critique by detailing Brown’s theory that some political identities can be

marked by a problematic *ressentiment*. Brown argues that some political mobilisations of identity can work against emancipation for subjugated groups, and suggests that identity groups should focus on changing the limits of their position, rather than apportioning blame. Both Butler and Brown therefore, I suggest, provide some justification for Young's theory of gender as positional, as well as her focus on alleviating inequality. Nevertheless, by employing the work of Alcoff, I will argue that although such criticisms are salient, they do not represent the full view of identity in politics, and that, as such, we still need an alternative account in order to theorise identity cogently in deliberative theory.

Chapter Four: Social Identity, Identity Politics

In the last chapter, I critically re-assessed Young's theory of democracy. I concluded that Young makes a very strong case that deliberative democracy can help subordinated groups, as long as we value those groups' participation and ensure that we are not too prescriptive about the forms of communication we include in deliberation. I also discussed how, despite arguing that identity groups can be an important resource for democratic politics, Young's work belies a distrust of 'identity politics'. Specifically, Young states that groups exploring and representing the meaning of their identity in the public domain should not be counted as political. Political action by groups, Young argues, is always marked by a commitment to overcoming inequality.

I argued that Young's distrust of identity politics springs from her theory of social identity as an externally imposed subject-position. In other words, for Young, social identity refers to how we are denoted—as a man or woman, young or old, raced etc.—and such denotations change how our material environment and relationships are opened or constrained for us. I contrasted Young's notion of seriality with Stone's concept of gender as genealogy, which presents gender as a lived phenomenon that is not only imposed but is responded to, such that the response informs gender concepts. I argued from Stone's understanding that dislocating gender identity from how it is lived and experienced by subjects leads Young to present a false dichotomy between cultural and political identity.

In this chapter, I will step back from deliberative theory specifically in order to consider identity and politics more generally. I aim to do three things: first to explore

further the potentially negative aspects of identity representation in politics, in order to try to understand what might inform the distrust of identity I have found in deliberative theory so far. Second, I extend my argument that a conception of social identity as a relational, lived experience, and not only as structural imposition, is politically significant. Third, I conclude that once we consider the political implications of social identity as a lived, relational experience, we see that we must reconsider identity with reference to the links between the civic and political deliberative spheres. I will argue that identity has substantial political effects, which are overlooked when we understand it politically only as a means to identifying and overcoming inequality.⁴⁷

I start the chapter by considering Honneth's theory of social and political recognition, which puts identity at the very heart of political theory (Honneth 1995, Fraser and Honneth 2003, Honneth 2012, 2014). Honneth argues that identity is central and inextricable from politics and also purports that identity's role in politics is positive and progressive. Honneth's work therefore theorises and emphasises the links between the individual, social groups and categories, and politics such that he understands recognition, rather than resource inequality, to be the central feature of political agitation.⁴⁸ Honneth's theory is based upon a reading of early Hegel through the work of Mead.⁴⁹ Honneth endorses Mead's theory that our sense of self is produced through social interaction, and argues that, by extension, the structure of our personal identity is inevitably influenced by social identity categories. Our identity,

⁴⁷ I am not concerned in this chapter, or elsewhere in the thesis, with more 'traditional' rejections of identity politics, as I believe I have sufficiently argued, in the previous chapters, that some recognition that identity influences political participation is necessary for the theory to be considered sound. However, I will consider, in the next chapter, identities that are problematic because they are predicated upon seeing others as unequal, such as racist identities. For discussion and refutation of some of the more basic critiques of identity politics, see (Young 2000, p.83-86).

⁴⁸ Although I don't consider it here, Charles Taylor's work is also influential on the subject of recognition and politics (Taylor 1989, 1994).

⁴⁹ I'm not concerned in this chapter with looking at Mead's work directly, but rather consider Alcoff's and Honneth's uses of his work (Mead 1934).

Honneth argues, is split between our external social categories and social relationships, and a core sense of self as a unique individual. Honneth goes on to argue that all political struggles stem from this schism between the self and the social; in other words, from problems of social misrecognition. If Honneth's theory is correct, therefore, social identity is not something that should be considered in deliberation in terms of inequality only, but is the very basis of political participation. Thus, Honneth puts into question any stark division between the cultural and the political, such as the one I found in Young's theory in the previous chapter. Nevertheless, I raise a couple of doubts about Honneth's account at the end of this opening section. First, I surmise that the account rests upon a problematic understanding of the self as split between an external social self and an inner core that escapes culture. I also raise doubts about Honneth's view that greater recognition, and thus political progress, is inevitable and always positive.

I next contrast Honneth's very positive view of the role of identity in politics with Butler's and Brown's critiques of identity politics. Using Butler and Brown I draw out arguments about the possible problems that identity raises when it becomes the subject of politics, or political struggles. For both of these theorists, how social identity manifests in politics can have detrimental effects on the subjects involved, as well as on the political goals of identity groups. I start by considering Butler's argument that when feminist politics is predicated upon an idea of gender identity as an essential, unchangeable, inner core of self it can entrench gender norms and close down possibilities for emancipation. Butler is particularly critical of how our notions of identity come to be seen as natural, and how an emphasis on 'natural' identities can effect political exclusion. I then use Butler's work to extend my criticisms of Honneth. I argue that Butler's work undermines Honneth's notion that we have an authentic

inner self, because she argues cogently that we cannot posit a natural individual identity that escapes culture. Furthermore, I show how Butler's work challenges Honneth's notion that a proliferation of rights is necessarily progressive, because she shows that laws and rights can exclude as much as they recognise.

This leads next to an exploration of Brown's work on political identity as *ressentiment*. Brown argues that where social identity is understood as something that is inescapably hierarchized, a victim or slave mentality can pervade identity politics. This mentality, which Brown elucidates with reference to Nietzsche's slave morality, is perpetuated, she argues, because subjects gain (limited) power by apportioning blame and thus become committed to retaining their subordinated place. Brown argues that such *ressentiment* problematically results in policy that aims at the protection of subordinated groups, rather than greater freedoms and powers for those groups. However, Brown is simultaneously an advocate of radical democracy, where power is shared more equally across populations; she therefore suggests that there is a necessity for identity politics, but that such politics should be committed to changing social and political relationships. Brown's work thus presents a challenge to how we consider social identity in politics by highlighting how identity politics carry a risk of reinforcing cycles of subjection.

Thus, by elucidating some of the possible pitfalls of the politicisation of identity, both Butler and Brown raise the question of whether identity should be politically considered at all: if we take identity too readily into the heart of political theory, Butler's and Brown's theories suggest, we repeat and naturalise inequalities, rather than emancipating subordinated subjects. I briefly argue that these critiques may lend legitimacy to Young's focus on structural relations of inequality, because such a focus concerns changing external relationships, rather than concentrating on the

meaning of identities or group categorisations. However, I nevertheless conclude that Honneth's and Butler's works give us good reasons to be sceptical of this conclusion, because their works underscore the importance of political recognition as a basis for political participation and highlight the role of social categories for those processes of recognition.

Exploring further the links between the construction of social identity, recognition and participation is the reason I conclude the chapter by considering the work of Alcoff. My contention is that Alcoff retains a positive link between the personal, cultural and political, through her employment of Mead's work, but that she successfully avoids the problematic concepts of an authentic self or of inevitable progress that I criticise in Honneth's work. Alcoff also takes issue with Butler's and Brown's arguments that identity and its politicisation have necessarily negative effects. Alcoff instead posits that social relationships and the social identities they create are always potentially positive, because they are central to our capacities for cooperation, upon which our social and political lives are built. Alcoff recognises that identity categories have real effects on our social and political participation; however, her conclusion from this is that we need to better understand and more carefully incorporate identity into our political thinking. I will focus particularly on Alcoff's argument that participating politically as an identity group provides a basis for widening our shared conceptions of the political subject, such that the group can take part without having to efface their identity. Here, Alcoff theorises a fundamental role of identity politics that is not captured by the aims of resource equality or abstract parity of participation. I therefore conclude this chapter by further arguing, against Young, that conceiving of social identity as structural imposition is not sufficient for political theory. I argue that since identity is central to how we engage politically,

Young's consideration that identity groups engaged in cultural pursuits and projects of reevaluation cannot be properly called political is untenable. I further argue that when we understand identity's role in political participation in this way, the relationship between the civic and political spheres is highlighted as central to the role of identity in deliberative theory. Because identity can be an impetus and ground for participation, the ways in which identities are fostered in culture and the civic sphere have great political effects.

1. Honneth on recognition

Honneth employs the work of Mead in order to argue that social identity is an essential, yet infinitely variable, facet of human socialisation. Honneth surmises that social recognition is central to all subjects' psyches and that recognition of identity is the underlying impetus of all political progress. Honneth therefore takes identity recognition as a positive enterprise that gives form and content to the creation of just political outcomes; he argues that the proliferation of political rights are always, at base, recognition debates that constitute identity politics.⁵⁰ In this section, I examine Honneth's work because it provides a link between the individual, group socialisation and politics, which I argued that Young's concept of identity as seriality does not provide, but from a different perspective than Stone's conception of gender as genealogy.⁵¹ In the last chapter, I concluded that Young's notion of gender identity as seriality led to too-stark a split between groups and individuals and between the cultural and political spheres. I also concluded that Stone's notion of gender as

⁵⁰ This is in direct contrast to a Marxist position that would constitute material deprivation as the primary political motivator for progress. A discussion of these divergent positions is the topic of Fraser and Honneth's *Redistribution or Recognition* (2003).

⁵¹ For secondary perspectives on Honneth's work see for example (Petherbridge 2011, 2013, Zurn 2015).

genealogy was a better conception, because it highlighted the links between personal identity, the material world and our shifting social categories. I now turn to Honneth because he situates personal and social identity as a central facet of our political participation. I will argue that Honneth's theory places social and individual identity and personal sense of self at the centre of politics, such that, if Honneth is correct, the distinctions that Young creates cannot be maintained. However, by the end of this section I will also have begun to critique Honneth's assumption that there is an authentic self that escapes socialisation, as well as his Hegelian conclusion that we will inevitably progress politically towards greater recognition for all.

In his book *The Struggle for Recognition* (1995) Honneth argues that Mead's work provides a naturalistic way of understanding Hegel's early work on recognition (Hegel 1977 [1807], 1983, Mead 1934). Honneth argues, with Mead, that our sense of self is largely a product of social interaction. Hegel's focus in his early work, Honneth contends, is to theorise 'those forms of practical affirmation by which [a subject] gains a normative understanding of itself as a certain kind of person.' (Honneth 1995, p.76) Honneth is interested here in how we come to understand ourselves and gain a sense of identity as social beings. Specifically, according to Honneth, our identity is produced through others' condemnation or approval: 'By putting itself in the normative point of view of its interaction partner, the other subject takes over the partner's moral values and applies them to its practical relation to itself.' (Honneth 1995, p.77) In other words, when deciding how to act, we imagine (often unconsciously and automatically) the expected reaction of other people in order to decide how best to proceed. Our ways of acting and reacting are formed through our interactions with others; for example when as children we were scolded or praised this often affected our subsequent behaviour. Honneth further argues that through our

socialisation we gain a sense of self—by anticipating other people’s reactions to our behaviour we become self-reflexive and start to exercise control: ‘a subject can only acquire a consciousness of itself to the extent to which it learns to perceive its own action from the symbolically represented second-person perspective.’ (Honneth 1995, p.75) That is, we come to look upon ourselves as if we were another subject and thereby gain a sense that we can actively shape our actions.

However, Honneth goes on to explain that at a macro level our behavioural norms are furnished by society at large, as our social interactions overlap to form general societal norms. Our very first social interactions may provide us with a first cognitive sense of having a self but, according to Honneth, Mead shows us that this sense expands as our social interactions multiply. This extension of our interactions leads us to gain not only a sense of good or bad reactions from others, but a sense of our actions themselves being good or bad:

In learning to generalise internally an ever-larger number of interaction partners to such an extent that a sense of social norms is acquired, the subject gains the abstract ability to participate in the norm-governed interactions... What this means for the earlier question of how the ‘me’ changes in this process of social development is that individuals learn to conceive of themselves, from the perspective of a generalised other, as members of a society[.] (Honneth 1995, p.78)

Therefore, through ever increasing interactions we start to form general rules or norms for our action and social relationships. These interactions fuse to become for us a ‘generalised other’, an overarching normative guide in our psyche. Thus, our identity, under Honneth’s reading of Mead, is shaped by our interactions with others. This means that how we are identified by others, as well as the expectations that go along with those identifications, are important to our sense of self (though we may not be conscious of this fact). Although we have the capacity to resist social expectations, they nevertheless make up the landscape of our possibilities for action, because our interaction with others is governed by a process of mutual recognition: the individual

recognises the norms of the group and uses them to interact with others, who in turn recognise that individual as a ‘self’ because of their adherence to the norms (Honneth 1995, p.78).

Honneth argues from Mead’s thesis that recognition from others is a basic necessity for our quality of life. Gaining recognition here means being treated as a member of a community and being accorded respect from others. Thus, recognition denotes a mutual sense of respect between community members. Honneth goes on to argue that according people political rights is an important facet of this recognition process, as rights formally recognise the members of a society. Thus, for Honneth, political rights are a form of generalised, formal, societal recognition:

Rights are, as it were, the individual claims about which I can be sure that the generalised other would meet them [*sic*]. Insofar as this is the case, such rights can be said to be socially granted only to the extent to which a subject can conceive of itself as a fully accepted member of its community. For this reason, rights play an especially significant role in the formative process of the practical ego. (Honneth 1995, p.79)

Honneth argues that our sense of self-respect is produced through us experiencing positive interactions with others who recognise us as having capacities and value. Thus, although legal rights are an abstract declaration of recognition, they constitute a formalised instance of those general norms of the community, and as such, being accorded rights creates a sense of self-respect for subjects. Honneth argues that when we recognise other people as rights-bearers, we are taking up this general position. Thus, for Honneth, the power of rights does not come from an abstract statement of those rights, but from their concrete observation in interpersonal relationships (Honneth 1995, p.79-80).

Furthermore, for Honneth, the proliferation of rights is at the very heart of political struggles because through politics we principally negotiate which rights should be accorded, and to whom. Thus, for example, under Honneth’s understanding, identity politics, such as feminist political movements, have as their basis the aim of

securing basic social recognition, through gaining political rights. Honneth argues that identity politics are necessary where basic rights are not explicit or are not observed because of differences in how groups are recognised (Honneth 1995, p.117-118). A lack of recognition, Honneth argues, is found where others interact with us in ways which do not respect our generalised norms or rights: we can be nominally accorded personhood, but treated in such a way that we don't feel equally recognised as a member of the community. Honneth thus considers recognition as the overarching form of claims for justice; where a group or a particular identity is not accorded the same recognition as others there is always the potential for political agitation and progress.

However, additionally, Honneth's view of political progress is predicated upon his view, which he also takes from Mead, that there is a sense of self that is neither wholly encapsulated by, nor mere reaction to, the social world. This self is a bodily 'I' that is surplus to the identity created through social relationships and is potentially discordant with the social world. This particular sense of self is experienced consciously only through:

[T]he sudden experience of a surge of inner impulses, and it is never immediately clear whether they stem from pre-social drives, the creative imagination or the moral sensibility of one's own self... [Mead] wants this conception to call attention to a reservoir of psychical energies that supply every subject with a plurality of untapped possibilities for identity-formation. (Honneth 1995, p.81)

As with Young's notion of serialisation, under Honneth's understanding we are not overdetermined by our social identity. There is, Honneth suggests, a multiple reserve of possibilities for the self, some of which will be enhanced, some repressed, by different social configurations of recognition. Hence, in endorsing Mead's conception, Honneth suggests that the self must be conceived as both the internalisation of social norms and a core of individuality that potentially stands contrary to those wider norms and forms of recognition.

This potential dissonance between our core self and the social recognition we are accorded means, Honneth argues, that in addition to political claims made for equal recognition, claims can be made for the recognition of new rights for not yet recognised identities:

Mead thus introduces into the practical relation-to-self a tension between the internalised collective will and the claims of individuation, a tension that has to lead to a moral conflict between the subject and the subject's social environment. For in order to be able to put into action the demands surging within, one needs, in principle, the approval of all other members of society, since their collective will controls one's own action as an internalised norm. (Honneth 1995, p.82)

In other words, if a person wishes to express herself in a way that is taboo within her culture, she will feel a schism between her internal sense of self and the identity that has been produced by internalising the social norms of the generalised other. In reaction to this conflict, the subject may agitate for her society to change the norms such that her impulse is no longer taboo. Such an agitation becomes political where there needs to be an extension of the subject's legal rights in order for recognition to occur (Honneth 1995, p.83).

By creating political battles that fight for rigid norms to be relaxed and rights expanded, Honneth supposes that this tussle between the individual and society is how political progress is made:

[S]ince subjects can defend the claims of their 'I'—even after social reforms have been carried out—only by anticipating yet another community that guarantees greater freedoms, the result is a chain of normative ideals pointing in the direction of increasing personal autonomy. (Honneth 1995, p.84)

Thus, Honneth argues that identity politics produces a progressive loosening of restrictive norms, matched by an expansion in rights. It is because the subject wishes their inner spontaneity and identity to be approved and permitted by the generalised other, that the subject chooses to agitate for this recognition politically: 'The social praxis resulting from the collective effort to 'enrich the community' in this way is what can be called, within Mead's social psychology, the 'struggle for recognition'.'

(Honneth 1995, p.85) For Honneth's Mead, this is a struggle for a personal identity to be recognised and permitted by wider society.

Thus, Honneth understands the self and how our identity relates to political agitation and progress somewhat differently from Young. While Young focuses on the material, external structures of social identity, Honneth emphasises a struggle between our authentic self (which is at least partly made up of internal bodily and psychic urges or drives) and our sense of self as part of a community. Honneth's understanding therefore carves out a space where personal identity, group socialisation and political participation are inextricably interlinked. Honneth further distinguishes two ways in which people may agitate politically due to misrecognition: firstly, existing rights may not be accorded to them by others, so they may ask for equal recognition under the law or for existing laws to be better observed. Secondly, they may find that existing societal norms, values and rights do not accord with how they wish to live. Honneth therefore provides a link between the individual, social groups and society at large that recognises the individual as both particular and as affected by social group membership. This membership can be either harmonious or in discord, depending on the individual's drives and reactions, as well as our social norms.

To sum up then, for Honneth, social recognition is necessary for a positive construction of self and is thereby foundational for a good life: a life in which a subject is loved, legally protected and recognised for their capacities. This recognition is in turn paramount for Honneth's conception of political progress. Honneth's work suggests that separating the social and the political, as well as the individual and the group, is theoretically unwarranted. For Honneth, the self is shaped by the group, even though we all have a nugget of individuality that may not cohere with societal norms.

Rights are overlaid onto these social interactions as formalised understandings of how we should treat one another and what we can expect from society at large. In *Redistribution or Recognition* (2003), Honneth makes the case that recognition is the basic form of all political claims. Therefore, for Honneth, we can't easily distinguish the cultural and the political, because each informs the other and political agitation is grounded upon our cultural values and norms.

However, this picture relies upon a very particular notion of the self as essentially split between authentic inner urges and a socially-formed self. I shall argue in the following section, by taking up Butler's work, that we cannot attribute this sense of an authentic inner self to subjects. As well as this, perhaps more problematically, Honneth presents a progressive view of rights, where the creation and observance of new rights is understood as inherently valuable and inevitable. Butler's work also undermines this vision of rights as entirely positive and suggests that how we accord one another rights through laws is always potentially restrictive and exclusionary. Thus, although Honneth's work provides a valuable way of theorising the link between the individual, the social, and political rights, I will conclude that his very positive view of identity and its role in politics undermines his theory.

2. Butler and the production of identity

Butler's work on the production of gender identity is well known and commonly referred to in social identity literature. However, for the purposes of exploring deliberative theory's relation to identity, it's worth revisiting, not least because it's a theory of identity that considers both our individual sense of identity and how identity categories are employed in politics and law. Butler contends that gender identity is

created and maintained through categorisations that appear as natural and essential but are in fact consolidated by the expression of (changeable) norms. According to Butler, we perform our gender because we have been, both explicitly and implicitly, socially trained to follow gender norms. It is the double-edged nature of gender that Butler thinks is so dangerous for feminist politics: it is an external, relational manifestation, but one that presents as natural. If, Butler suggests, we base our feminist politics on the notion that gender is natural and essential, we risk reinforcing gender hierarchies, and thus, gender injustice.

In her 1990 work, *Gender Trouble*, Butler forwards a Foucauldian framework, which takes as its base the diffuse power of our relationships and their regulation through social norms and institutional discourses (Foucault 1977, 1979). Using this framework, Butler builds her case that social identity categories are always an effect of relations of power:

Foucault points out that juridical systems of power *produce* the subjects they subsequently come to represent. Juridical notions of power appear to regulate political life in purely negative terms—that is, through the limitation, prohibition, regulation, control, and even “protection” of individuals related to that political structure... But the subjects regulated by such structures are, by virtue of being subjected to them, formed, defined, and reproduced in accordance with the requirements of those structures. (Butler 1990, p.3)

Here Butler argues that how we refer to subjects in politics and law has the effect of actively creating those subjects. Each policy or law will, implicitly or explicitly, define who is bound and thus recognised by it. In Butler’s view, by creating and employing subject-categories within institutions and in politics, a power is created that actively produces our identity and regulates our intersubjective relations. This is because such institutions have a direct bearing on how we understand ourselves and relate to others: our role within institutions, as well as the relationships and hierarchies through which institutions work, are all defined prior to us taking a place within them. Thus, for example, for me to be recognisable as a student of Lancaster University, the

structures of the university, as well as the terms of what it means to be a student must be predetermined. The university functions as a pedagogical institution that recognises me as a student because I meet some pre-set criteria: I pay fees, have a research topic, attend supervisions etc. Thus, I am a student, not because I was born one, or made myself one or because I am a student at heart, but because I meet the regulative norms of studentship. All of our categories, Butler suggests, work in this way: what is defined and recognised comes into being through the terms of that recognition being set.

Whereas the terms of my being a student are quite explicit, as well as the possibility of opting out of this role, Butler argues that when it comes to our laws and institutions we often don't see this production at work. Subsequently, the notions of the subject that are created in law are often understood as natural and necessary, rather than arbitrary and changeable: 'In effect, the law produces and then conceals the notion of "the subject before the law" in order to invoke that discursive formation as a naturalised foundational premise that subsequently legitimates that law's own regulatory hegemony.' (Butler 1990, p.3) The law must first identify and delimit the subjects it recognises, but the law then masks its identification of those subjects and forwards the categorisations as natural or self-evident. Our legal institutions and laws do this, Butler argues, because this appeal to the 'natural' status of the subject lends them more legitimacy: rather than being an arbitrary conception (which can be, therefore, easily changed or resisted) the law pertains to facts that are unchangeable, thus the law itself appears unchangeable.

In *Gender Trouble* Butler focuses on how these workings of power create and maintain the categories of gender and the problem this poses for feminist politics. Butler begins by arguing that, because the category 'woman' is created through

relations of power, the category is difficult for feminism: 'If [Foucault's] analysis is right, then the juridical formation of language and politics that represents women as "the subject" of feminism is itself a discursive formation and effect of a given version of representational politics.' (Butler 1990, p.3) Butler argues that the category 'woman' is a juridical creation and not something that can be taken for granted. Thus, precisely because the category 'woman' is produced through its employment in law and politics, Butler argues, using the political system and the notion of the feminine subject that it has produced (and continues to produce) as the basis for a feminist politics will be 'self-defeating' as it will actively uphold those productions, even while it seeks emancipation from them (Butler 1990, p.3).

Furthermore, in feminism's deployment of 'woman', it too becomes a regulatory discourse, as it seeks to define which subjects count as women, as well as the elements of the category that are relevant to feminist politics:

The suggestion that feminism can seek wider representation for a subject that it itself constructs has the ironic consequence that feminist goals risk failure by refusing to take account of the constitutive powers of their own representational claims... By conforming to a requirement of representational politics that feminism articulate a stable subject, feminism thus opens itself to charges of gross misrepresentation.' (Butler 1990, p.6)

In other words, when feminism advances its political goal as that of representing and emancipating women, it is required to delineate its subject, just as juridical power does. Thus, unless we are mindful in the creation of feminist discourse that we are continually redefining the contours of the feminine subject, we risk falling into a trap of delineating that subject as a natural fixed entity. The plurality of women, as well as the changing bounds of who is recognised by the category, shows that the category is always at best incomplete, at worst exclusionary, because those who do not fit the category cannot be recognised (the exclusion of trans women in some feminist discourses and movements is an obvious example).

Therefore, one particular reason that our creation of social categories within politics is important is because it goes to the very heart of who is recognised by that politics. In her recent book *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly* (2015) Butler reiterates that how we categorise subjects, as well as the norms attributed to those categorisations, influence who is publicly and politically recognisable:

The question of recognition is an important one, for if we say that we believe all human subjects deserve equal recognition, we presume that all human subjects are equally recognizable. But what if the highly regulated field of appearance does not admit everyone, requiring zones where many are expected not to appear or are legally proscribed from doing so?... [E]mbodying the norm or norms by which one gains recognizable status is a way of ratifying and reproducing certain norms of recognition over others, and so constraining the field of the recognizable. (Butler 2015, p.35)

Here, Butler links our norms and their categorisation to the conditions of how we appear to one another publicly (and by extension politically). How we appear publicly is not similarly distributed in terms of social norms, values and law: a French woman wearing a niqab has no right to public appearance in her country; just as an undocumented worker in the USA has no right to protest. In both of these cases, there is a particular category at stake that regulates and differentiates between subjects: for example, the French citizen who does not wear a niqab has a right to appear and be recognised, while a French woman who wears the veil in public is not recognised as a citizen *because* of her mode of appearance. However, the double-bind is that when we conform to the norms of recognition, and are thereby recognised, as the end of the above quote suggests, we implicitly reproduce the boundaries of the recognisable. In other words, when we appear in recognisable ways, this reinforces the notion that such ways of appearing publicly are the natural or right ways to appear.

Thus, Butler's work seriously challenges Honneth's notion that a proliferation of rights is necessarily positive. Honneth, as I discussed above, argues that recognition from others is a fundamental facet of personal identity—it is the primary mode through which subjects can grow in self-respect. This means that for Honneth

increasing our rights in content and in application is always positive. However, Butler's work undermines this positivity: Butler shows that such a proliferation of rights may fix social relationships, rather than destabilizing them, and that with greater specificity about the types of subject who should be accorded rights we may be (re-)employing categories that are exclusionary, rather than widening our modes of recognition.

Furthermore, Butler's work can be used to question Honneth's notion of there being an inner, unique, identity at the centre of the subject that stands in opposition to society. Butler argues, by contrast, that our sense of personal identity is not created because we have a real separate inner self that is surplus to our social norms. When she discusses gender as a performance, Butler argues that gender is wholly constituted through the body's behaviour and other signs that are marked on the surface of the body (for example clothes, make up, mannerisms):

That the gendered body is performative suggests that it has no ontological status apart from the various acts which constitute its reality. This also suggests that if that reality is fabricated as an interior essence, that very interiority is an effect and function of a decidedly public and social discourse... In other words, acts and gestures, articulated and enacted desires create the illusion of an interior and organizing gender core[.] (Butler 1990, p.156-7)

Thus, Butler concludes that the very notion of gendered identity, as something internal and essential to an individual self, is false. According to Butler, the gendered subject, as a subject who 'feels' masculine or feminine is fictional, an effect of power. In fact, for Butler, the very notion of a core identity is an invention that follows from the regulations of power and is used to subject individuals more forcefully to that power: "the internal" is a surface signification[.]' (Butler 1990, p.192) Instead, Butler argues that the sense of fitting into one category or another is consistently produced and regulated by external norms. In her later work *The Psychic Life of Power* (1997) Butler extends this argument to incorporate any notion of an authentic self that escapes wider power relationships.

Thus, while Honneth is undoubtedly correct to claim that our desires and sense of self can be in tension with the wider norms of our society, I would argue that his argument that these possibly spring from a bundle of pre-social inner drives does not bear out: we simply cannot separate our so-called authentic self from our social self. Furthermore, there is a danger in Honneth's theory that when there is an expansion of such 'authentic' identities, these in fact become more restrictive, as subjects are asked to 'fit' into ever more constrictive types, rather than being able to express themselves in more varied ways. Butler's work on how our identities are produced underscores this potential pitfall for recognition politics, because it shows how our categorisations actively create our subject positions, and how these creations can lock us into relational modes because they seem natural and unchangeable. Butler may therefore question whether the propagation of a 'historical liberation of individuality', as Honneth puts it, may in fact be a proliferation of further restrictive norms. Honneth does concede that 'Mead does not sufficiently distinguish between the universalisation of social norms and the expansion of individual freedom.' (Honneth 1995, p.86) Yet, Honneth doesn't sufficiently answer this question in his own political philosophy, given that a 'progression' of recognition is still central to his view of politics, and the possibility of these different forms of recognition being or becoming restrictive disciplinary norms is not considered. In other words, Honneth's idea of progression undermines the strength of his position: all apparent loosening of normative restriction in his theory is viewed as positive and is not critiqued at the level of power.⁵² It is problematic that there appears to be no way, on Honneth's model, to distinguish between a loosening of identity prescriptions for subjects and the proliferation of ever more specific identities that are required to be internally coherent and possibly heavily

⁵² See, for example (McNay 2008) for a greater elucidation of this criticism.

policed. Such identities would require specific performances from the subjects who fall under that identity category, and deviance from these performances, or a failure to perform sufficiently, would be met with disapproval.

Nevertheless, it's possible that Butler could be sympathetic to Honneth's notion of recognition in the main. Butler is clear that there is a problem with the foreclosure of performance for different genders, specifically when certain acts and/or bodies are deemed deviant because they do not meet the norms of heterosexuality. Furthermore, Butler maintains that we can't simply circumvent identity and recognition; it's not the case that we can step out of the field of discursive power and its effects. Nor is Butler saying that because gender is produced by the effects of power we have the ability to *choose* who we will be and how we will act with others. Thus, she is clear that there is a necessity for there to be a feminist project:

Obviously the task is not to refuse representational politics—as if we could. The juridical structures of language and politics constitute the contemporary field of power; hence, there is no position outside this field but only its own legitimating practices... [T]he task is to formulate within this constituted frame a critique of the categories of identity that contemporary juridical structures engender, naturalize and immobilize. (Butler 1990, p.7)

For Butler, the task of identity politics is to be wise to the workings of identity formation and naturalisation, and to resist the temptation to institute these as foundational to identity politics (Butler 1990, p.194). Our gender categories are reproduced by us performing in ways that make our gender appear to one another, but those performances are always partial and do not meet the ideal. Thus, Butler argues, we are never overdetermined by our gender identity and there is always the possibility of reformulating it. The task of identity politics, as Butler sees it, is to imagine an open-ended, unstable field of identity formation. Under this understanding of gender identity it is an effect of power, produced through our discursive categories and norms, as well as an identity that we do not choose; but simultaneously, it is an identity we recognise as inessential, the boundaries of which are changeable.

Butler's theory poses important questions for how identity might come to be 'represented' at all within a deliberative context. Butler presents identity politics groups with the task of representing their group without reproducing the category pertaining to their group too rigidly, reproducing the boundaries of their own exclusion, or policing the boundaries of the group such that they exclude subjects. When this argument is taken at its strongest, we might say that Butler asks us to set aside the task of representing identity in favour of delineating power differentials and working to unbalance them. However, I think this is too strong a position to take: living as recognisable subjects is foundational to a liveable life according to Butler (Butler 2015, p.39). Thus, rather than play with our own gender norms (unless we want to!), Butler asks us to constantly extend our categories to be more inclusive. Nevertheless, a Butlerian identity politics would inhabit the deliberative sphere critically, questioning which subjects are being reified or marginalised through the discourses and laws that that politics employs and creates.

3. Brown and the *ressentiment* of identity politics

In the last section I elucidated Butler's stance on identity politics, in which she preserves the recognition of identity, while simultaneously arguing that that recognition must be fluid. For Butler, the boundaries of our categories and who is recognised as belonging to them is always in flux. Brown is similarly critical of certain forms of politicised social identity in her book *States of Injury* (1995), which is why I turn now to consider this work. According to Brown, politics of recognition are fraught with potential problems because the political identities that arise out of them

can be marked by victim mentality and *ressentiment*. Brown argues that by virtue of their ‘wounded attachments’ some political identities, including feminist identities, are inescapably committed to maintaining unequal power differentials for the groups they represent. She further contends that such identities can, paradoxically, give further power to the groups or institutions that subordinate them. My aim in outlining Brown’s work is therefore to explore further how identity can pose problems for politics and political theory.

Brown discusses identity politics by employing a Nietzschean framework. In his *Genealogy of Morality* (1994 [1887]) Nietzsche’s slaves construct their identity under oppressive conditions. Brown makes a direct comparison between Nietzsche’s slaves and modern identity politics activists, by highlighting how identity politics groups construct their political identity in the face of inequality or oppression today. Furthermore, Brown argues, some of those political identities are symptomatic of what Nietzsche terms slave-morality. For Nietzsche, slave-morality is created when the subjugated slaves create a discourse wherein their oppressed societal position is defined as good, and their subjugating masters’ position is seen as evil. The oppressed slaves have no way of fighting their oppression, thus, Nietzsche argues, they construct this discourse as a way of creating a more powerful position out of their oppressed state (Nietzsche 1994 [1887], I). In Nietzsche’s tale, therefore, the slave configures her set of values such that the external world, which inflicts pain upon her, is denoted as evil, while her own meekness and lack of retaliation comes to be seen as good. This becomes particularly problematic, according to Nietzsche, when these values come to be understood as fixed and natural, and where the values of the newly constructed identity are proliferated such that all powerful traits come to be viewed as evil, while meekness is seen as the highest good (Nietzsche 1994 [1887], III).

For Brown, identity politics are constituted through a similar reaction to a hostile world and have a tendency to perform the same valuation of the oppressor as evil and the oppressed as favourable:

Developing a righteous critique of power from the perspective of the injured, [identity politics pursued through the law] delimits a specific site of blame for suffering by constituting sovereign subjects and events as responsible for the “injury” of social subordination. It fixes the identities of the injured and the injuring as social positions, and codifies as well the meanings of their actions against all possibilities of indeterminacy, ambiguity, and struggle for resignification or repositioning. (Brown 1995, p.27)

Here Brown is concerned with identity politics that seek reparation for oppression through the courts. When identity politics takes this route, Brown argues, it frames the fight of identity politics in terms of oppressors and oppressed, as those who have been injured and those who are to blame for the injury. The issue with such forms of identity politics, for Brown, is that they tend to reify marginalised or structurally unequal identities.

The upshot for Brown is that such a reification of these subject-positions results in them being understood as essential and immovable, which thereby locks subjects into patterns of subordination. Rather than being active and creative, Brown argues, such political identities cannot overcome their oppression because they are fundamentally bound up with that oppression: ‘[P]oliticized identity... [is] an effect of domination that reiterates impotence, a substitute for action, for power, for self-affirmation that reinscribes incapacity, powerlessness and rejection.’ (Brown 1995, p.69) If we understand ourselves to be unavoidably oppressed, we do not move to change the boundaries of that oppression or to overturn it, instead we plead for protection from its worst elements. Brown attests that because such political identities are bound up inextricably with their powerless status, this kind of identity politics does not seek to overcome subordination.

Thus, such identity politics are highly problematic because, by presenting relations of oppression as inevitable, they risk increasing an acceptance of the societal structures that create oppression, rather than presenting them as contingent, historically produced sets of relations that can be reconfigured. This is what is at stake in Brown's consideration of MacKinnon's treatment of pornography.⁵³ According to Brown, MacKinnon views heterosexual pornography—which MacKinnon argues depicts a female body subordinated to male desire—as representational of how all feminine and masculine subjectivities are constructed in relation to one another. We have seen a similar assertion before, in Lacan's work, which I discussed in chapter one, where the feminine is *essentially* constructed as the correlate of, and basis for, masculine identity. As I demonstrated in chapter one, Irigaray criticises Lacan's theory for presenting masculine and feminine subject-positions as necessarily characterised by a relation of domination and subordination. Lacan's theory, Irigaray attests, forecloses the possibility of women being able to represent themselves positively, and thus closes down possibilities for different relationships between men and women.

Similarly, Brown takes issue with the fact that MacKinnon presents the relationship between the sexes as essentially marked by patriarchal domination:

MacKinnon's conceptual equivalent between the absolute domination of capital and the absolute domination of men... de-essentializes gender, by making it fully a production of power. At the same time, this conceptual equivalent unifies and universalizes gender by dehistoricizing it... exhaustively identifying it with respectively dominant and subordinate social positions[.] (Brown 1995, p.85)

In other words, on Brown's reading, MacKinnon understands gender as the product of a specifically (hetero)sexual relation. This production is not ontologically essential, in that 'woman' is not here understood to be a category that refers to a real, sexed body. However, because the sexual relation appears in MacKinnon's theory as a *necessary*

⁵³ In what follows I will not be engaged in evaluating whether Brown's treatment of MacKinnon is justified, but rather forward the elucidation as an example Brown's critique (MacKinnon 1987, 1989).

or *universal* relation—the only possible relation between gendered subjects—she concludes that heterosexual relationships and the very coexistence of men and women will always be marked by a relation of masculine domination and feminine subjection.

Brown further argues that MacKinnon's failure to recognise the moveable and contingent nature of gender relations reinforces masculine dominance. MacKinnon's work, for Brown, fails to provide a conceptual space in which reconfiguring gender relations as more equal is conceivable:

If gender is sexuality as it appears in heterosexual male pornography, then not only female sexuality but the totality of female consciousness consist solely of what men (now also unified as a consumer subject) require... Of course, this evacuation of female subjectivity of any element not transparent on the pornographic page renders any emancipatory project nearly impossible. (Brown 1995, p.89)

So, for Brown, if the relation between women and men is one of necessary dominance and subjection, feminism cannot aim for equality, because there is no possibility of creating equality between the two subject positions. As a result, feminism becomes a politics that is aimed at offering protection (Brown 1995, p.93-4). For Brown, therefore, there is a very real danger in giving credence to such a political identity because it will, by virtue of its necessity for injury, both naturalise and reinscribe relations of subjection. It runs the risk of reinforcing the relations of power that it emerges in opposition to, rather than undermining and reconfiguring those relations such that emancipation is achieved.

As with Butler, it's not the case, for Brown, that we thereby shouldn't *do* identity politics, it's rather that within democratic politics, we should be extremely cautious about the ways in which we employ identity:

Rather than opposing or seeking to transcend identity investments, the replacement—even the admixture—of the language of “being” with “wanting” would seek to exploit politically a recovery of the more expansive moments of identity formation... How might democratic discourse itself be invigorated by such a shift from ontological claims to these kinds of more expressly political ones, claims that, rather than dispensing blame for an unlivable present, inhabited a necessarily agonistic theatre of discursively forging an alternative future? (Brown 1995, p.76)

Therefore, for Brown, identity politics should be framed in terms of how things can be different, rather than in terms of apportioning blame and offering protection. Brown's ideal identity politics create a radical democratic freedom where people share power (Brown 1995, p.5).⁵⁴ In order to achieve this democracy, however, we have to be aware that our relationships can radically change: without this belief, we risk, Brown cautions, being locked into the relations we currently have.

Both Butler's and Brown's evaluations of politicised identity potentially provide a powerful critique of including identity in political theory, and deliberative models by extension. Both philosophers demand that we ask serious questions about how identity might be used within politics, with an emphasis on social categorisations and their links to power. It could be argued, therefore, that Butler's and Brown's works add legitimacy to Young's pronouncement that politics should be concerned with inequality only. By focusing on structural inequality, Young puts an emphasis on the possibility of changing relationships between groups, and also arguably prevents the problematic naturalisation of identity that Butler and Brown critique. Particularly, Brown's statement that we should emphasise wanting, rather than being, could be raised in Young's defence: by focusing on inequality, we choose to side-step the ontological status of social groups, and thus avoid the slave-mentality that Brown thinks we risk in identity politics aimed at apportioning blame and offering protection. Thus, Young could point to such difficulties with politicised identity as a reason for her pronouncement that uncovering the meaning of identity should be left in the civic or cultural domain: once identity *per se* is instituted in politics, we risk its meanings becoming powerful in a way that actively harms our political or social aims.

⁵⁴ A deeper account of Brown's views on democracy as ideally radical power-sharing can be gleaned from her more recent works on democracy and neoliberalism (Brown 2015, 2003, 2006, 2007, 2010).

However, I find that this line of argument is marred by Butler's and Honneth's arguments about the political dimension of recognition, which I elucidated above. Although I find elements of Honneth's theory problematic, I nevertheless conclude that his notion that rights are an important instantiation of recognition is compelling. How we are conceived of before the law impacts on our lives; thus we must concede that appealing for political recognition via rights is an unavoidable facet of identity politics. Furthermore, Butler's work highlights the importance of recognition as a *ground* for political participation. Since subjects must be recognised through the law and intersubjectively before they can participate politically, a lack of recognition can always be a reason for political agitation: Butler's examples of the French niqab wearer and the undocumented worker show how people can be socially and institutionally unrecognisable. Furthermore, Butler uses these examples to illustrate how such lack of recognition can be both a result and cause of social precarity (Butler 2015). Such an understanding of political recognition stretches beyond notions of inequality of resource and shows that an exclusive focus on inequality is not sufficient for political theory. A focus on inequality as solely political risks consigning such patterns of recognition to the civic realm as a cultural phenomenon, rather than recognising recognition's political effects.

In the next section I expand upon this conclusion that patterns of recognition have political effects, and will argue subsequently that holding a stark split between the civic and political spheres is untenable. I will begin to do so by discussing Alcoff's understanding of social identity. Alcoff provides a theory of social identity that presents it as inessential, but as having real social and political effects. Alcoff further argues that identity politics can be as much about opening the bounds of participation, as about fighting for resource equality or abstract participatory parity. I therefore

argue that Alcoff's work provides a framework for understanding political recognition that does not rely upon a notion of an authentic self, or progress, but that nevertheless allows us to understand some of the important mechanisms of recognition for political participation.

4. Alcoff: social identity as the basis of political participation

In the preceding sections I discussed Butler's and Brown's scepticism about certain forms of identity politics. Both of these thinkers challenge us to question how and when identity should be represented in political life and political theory. Butler and Brown both suggest that formulating politics upon a notion of essentialised identities, whether these are essentialised as the 'natural' subject (Butler), or refer to a universal relational structure between subjects (Brown), risks entrenching inequality and exclusion. I suggested that these criticisms could lead us to side with Young that identity politics proper should only be concerned with equality, as a focus on equality would be a focus on recreating external structural relationships. However, I ultimately concluded that Honneth's and Butler's works provide good reasons to think that recognition is still an important facet of politics quite apart from redistributive aims. However, Honneth's theory is marred by some assumptions about the nature of the self and political progress that are, in my view incorrect; while Butler's work, though mindful of the problems of a lack of recognition, does not, I find, provide a fully-fledged theory of the mechanisms of recognition.

The gaps left by looking at Honneth's and Butler's works on the subject of recognition is the reason I now turn to Alcoff, as Alcoff's work gives a cogent account

of the political dimensions of social identity that marries both the negative and positive accounts given above, while simultaneously accounting for the workings of recognition. Alcoff argues that identity is a socially configured construction of the self and is the inevitable consequence of social interaction. Alcoff also contends that theoretical distinctions between an inner and outer self, self and other, and individual and society can't be maintained. Instead, she argues, there are groups through which varying relations, perspectives and machinations of power manifest and produce hierarchies. Alcoff's work suggests that identity categories and how we fit into them can influence our political participation and that group political action based upon identity can open up participation for subordinated groups. However, this expansion of participation does not concern those groups' values and perspectives being recognised as a resource for political theory, but rather is about a cultural shift through which the groups' identities are recognised more fully. Therefore, I will conclude, Alcoff's work suggests that a space be left open for identity recognition within political procedures and theory, and demonstrates that such recognition can be the very basis for participation. I will use this conclusion as a basis from which to argue, contra Young, that we cannot neatly separate the cultural and the political.

Alcoff positions her view of social identity against those who conclude that the relation between self and other is necessarily a relation of subjection:

Social categories of identity make resistance possible but always fail to identify accurately, and thus by this very fact create the need for resistance. Accepting identities is tantamount to accepting dominant scripts and performing the identities power has invented. Identities are not and never can be accurate representations of the real self[.] (Alcoff 2006, p.77)

In this quote, Alcoff is forwarding her reading of Butler's work, which Alcoff reads as a critique of identity: the subject is an indeterminate site of power, and identity is given to the subject through the normative constraints of social interaction. As Alcoff notes, on Butler's understanding, one's lived identity and sense of self, as well as

one's social identity, are given through these social powers. The problem for Butler, Alcoff contends, is that because social identity is produced through categorisations that fix and simultaneously exclude, we cannot find freedom, or political emancipation, *through* our social categories. Alcoff also identifies a similar critique in Brown's work: 'In [Brown's] view, when we organise on the basis of social identities we are unwittingly, naively, remaining caught in power's clutches.' (Alcoff 2006, p.79) There is therefore, for Alcoff, a sense in Butler's and Brown's texts that political and social movements that represent social identities cannot escape their own subjection. As a consequence, Alcoff argues, both Butler's and Brown's works lead to the conclusion that freedom can only be practised by resisting these categories and their attendant norms, rather than gaining recognition for them.⁵⁵

However, in Alcoff's view, such understandings of social identity follow from some philosophical missteps:

At bottom, the critique of identity follows from some major metaphysical assumptions or claims, specifically, that the true nature of the self is indeterminate, a claim we found starting with Hegel, and that freedom is the ability to resist all that comes to the self externally... It also assumes a description of identity formation as having a necessary link to Power. (Alcoff 2006, p. 80-81)

On such accounts, Alcoff argues, social norms are imposed from the exterior of the subject and subjects are punished for not adhering to them; yet, following these norms means denying an authentic self that could manifest in the absence of such disciplinary social tyranny.⁵⁶ The problem with this position, Alcoff argues, is that it

⁵⁵ I think that Alcoff's reading here is entirely justified and related criticisms regarding the (im)possibility of political action on Butler's view can be found in, for example (McNay 1999, Jagger 2008). I have emphasised in my readings of Butler and Brown that their conclusions are more ambiguous and less totalising than these critiques suggest. I have thus attempted to underline that both Butler and Brown can be seen as trying to undermine *particular* forms of representational politics, rather than all representational politics. Nevertheless, I do agree that a more constructive approach concerning the subject and political action, such as that found in Alcoff's work, is necessary in order to conceive fully such politics, rather than the mere possibilities for positive ways forward that Butler's and Brown's works leave us with.

⁵⁶ Although I have presented Honneth as having a positive understanding of identity in my analysis above, his work can also be understood as falling into this category. Honneth, as we have seen, presents

puts too much emphasis on social interaction and categorisation as restrictive and negative:

But why assume that the source and effect of identity claims are nefarious? Why assume that the parent/community/society or the discourse/episteme/socius is, in every case, necessarily, psychically pernicious and enabling only at the cost of a more profound subordination? (Alcoff 2006, p.81)

Alcoff argues, in contrast to the critiques of identity, that it's disingenuous to suggest that individuals stand in inevitable opposition to social groups and categorisations. Alcoff contends that this mistake arises from the underlying notion in critiques of identity that self and other are opposed and that one imposes on the other during socialisation.

Instead of understanding self and other as inevitably oppositional, Alcoff argues that we should understand them as more reciprocally positioned. Under Alcoff's reading, self and other are fundamentally intertwined because each impacts and creates the other: 'the Other is not here the mere prompt for subjectivating processes that are essentially performed by the self; rather the Other is internal to the self's substantive content, a part of its own horizon, and thus part of its own identity.' (Alcoff 2006, p.82) Here Alcoff postulates that the self's inevitable dependence on others means that the relationship between self and other is more complicated than one of simple subjection and domination. Our identities are bound up with our interdependency in such a way that self and other not only inform one another, but are inextricably part of one another. In other words, we can't posit a self apart from others, because as humans we subsist as social beings. Thus, Alcoff's theory of the self and identity takes the inevitable relational and social aspects of our lives as its starting point.

the self and social norms and categories as potentially discordant, and poses political freedom as a way of overcoming such discord.

In order to explicate this understanding of self-other dependency, Alcoff, like Honneth, employs the work of Mead.⁵⁷ As I have already discussed, Mead postulates that the self comes to be structured as a self only within a social context. For Alcoff's Mead, it is the social world of shared perspectives that furnishes a subject with a social position and self-understanding; the subject first comes to understand herself by coming to understand the norms of interaction in the social world:

[F]or Mead it is less correct to say that the individual self "has" a perspective than that it "in" a perspective: the perspective, and thus group meanings and practices, precedes the individual and makes possible self-consciousness and self-knowledge... the shared meanings which make up our world and our subjectivity are broadly group-related and thus variable but also objective in that they exist in the world, not merely in our (collective) heads. (Alcoff 2006, p.117)

Here Alcoff extricates from Mead an understanding of the self as socially situated, wherein our very horizons for understanding ourselves and the world are furnished by the collective. According to this theory, there is an objective world; however, our ability to interpret and organise the world is gained through learning and employing social frameworks, which also allow us to communicate.⁵⁸

Thus, under Alcoff's reading, Mead's process of identity-formation is not a process where perspectives, meanings and norms are simply imposed upon the subject; instead the process of gaining an identity is a process of gaining frameworks of understanding. Alcoff holds that such frameworks are interpretive, they provide the building blocks for creating an understanding of the self, but they do not wholly determine the content or application of that understanding: [T]he individual has agency, but its agency operates from the beginning in a collective context... It is not that the self develops by a "blueprint" mapped out for him, but that its formative process occurs through a reality constructed and maintained by the social collective.

⁵⁷ Alcoff also discusses the work of Ricoeur, Brison and Code in building her relational concept of the self (Paul 1992, Code 1995, Brison 1996).

⁵⁸ Alcoff also considers Gadamer, Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty's theories of the self as interpretive beings with horizons of understanding (Gadamer 1975, Heidegger 1962, 1971, Merleau-Ponty 1962).

(Alcoff 2006, p.117) So, the collective is part of the self under this reading, as the very ground needed to construct an identity and meaning in the world. In other words, without social interaction and shared meanings, subjects have no basis for situating themselves as interpreters of and actors in the world, such that, ‘[i]ndividual agency is not intrinsic but made possible through certain kinds of social relations[.]’ (Alcoff 2006, p116) Our interpretive frameworks furnish us with the ability to consider different possible actions and their consequences, which is the ground of agency.

Furthermore, for Alcoff’s Mead, the subject not only gains a sense of self through processes of social interaction, but also gains an interpretive framework that is the basis of all social cooperation. This is because the generalised other furnishes us with rules for social interaction:

[I]t is not that I am constituted in terms of only intentional attitudes that originate in the other but in terms of the collective meanings, roles, and modes of perception made possible within a given context, implicitly agreed upon as the rules of a game everyone is playing. (Alcoff 2006, p.120)

Thus, a subject’s membership in a group both forms their self-consciousness and regulates their interaction with others. Such formations and regulations, however, are not *necessarily* negative because of this great *generative* capacity for individuals to ‘open’ different facets of the self and to create a reflexive self-consciousness, communication and shared action. Thus, for Alcoff, social interaction, identities and norms provide not just a sense of agency and self, but can create cooperative exchanges and bind subjects to one another in positive ways. Some of the effects of gaining a social identity may well be nefarious, but, it is also a positive process because it allows us to create and maintain our essential social interdependencies.

However, Alcoff is also mindful that there are differences in the ways various identity groups are related to and valued through our collective frameworks:

Mead recognises the multiplicity of the groups that constitute a given self and argues that it is nonetheless one’s group identity that makes social interaction possible, although he doesn’t consider the power relations that may determine the ways groups interact and how these affect

the formation of a given individual who operates in differentially empowered communities.
(Alcoff 2006, p.120)

The generalised other is made up of a various cultural views; it therefore contains representations, categorisations and norms pertaining to different social groups that regulate social interaction. There are differences in value structures across different sections of society and our sense of the generalised other, therefore, may change according to which groups we are relating to, or the context of those relations. For example, while some groups value material possessions and outward symbols of wealth, others disdain these, and we may be influenced by our connection to groups that take on these perspectives, even concurrently. Moreover, we may find that our links to different groups entail variable expectations for social interaction. For example, in our gendered culture it's generally expected that men will not cry, whereas women crying is deemed more acceptable. We cannot enter into social relationships without our group memberships and their attendant frameworks being implicit regulators of our social interaction.

Thus, Alcoff recognises that our social identity, especially when that identity is visible, such as our race or sex, is not wholly of our choosing. For example the allocation of our sex and how that allocation leads to particular orientations, descriptions and assumptions in the generalised other is never completely within our power; our relationships are therefore both predicated upon and infused with identity categories and their wider cultural determinations. Therefore, for Alcoff, '[i]dentities are relational both in the sense that their ramifications in one's life are context dependent and that the designations themselves are context dependent.' (Alcoff 2006, p.91) In other words, although we are active subjects who relate to one another in unique ways, we are also objects and bodies that are categorised in the general other. Such categorisations affect the frameworks we employ in order to regulate our

relationships. Due to this very complex impact of group membership and the identities fostered therein, Alcoff talks of social identities as ‘real entities’. As such, these identities are not something that individuals can easily step out of, even though they are shared constructions that have no fully objective basis. Alcoff also highlights that our social identities are often lived and felt as natural and therefore as something not inherently normatively constricting, even though some of our interactions with others can be experienced as restrictive. From this understanding of the variability between social groups, Alcoff argues that identity categorisations can be part of an inegalitarian value hierarchy wherein some groups are subjugated. Such subjugation can be compounded by the fact that we are unable to step out of our social identities easily. Thus, Alcoff argues that social categories can have real political consequences, because they may create the conditions under which political action becomes necessary, as well as forming the basis of and perspective from which that political action takes place (Alcoff 2006, p.126).

Moreover, this perspective is particularly important, Alcoff argues, when politically engaged subjects are from a minority group, or when their otherness calls attention to itself in a social or political setting. In such contexts, Alcoff argues, a sense of alienation that affects how subjects engage can manifest:

[N]onwhites have very much been made to feel their racial identity, and to be aware of a generalized other in which their own identity is peripheral... One then watches oneself performing, operating through a double perceptual relation to the environment: one which is first person but without integration into the dominant generalized other, and one which is third person from the point of view of the dominant generalized other, which is part of one’s own perspective or self but which involves a marginalization of one’s identity. (Alcoff 2006, p.118)

Alcoff here describes a distinct sense of alienation that comes from being in contexts where the operative generalised other shifts your identity to the periphery. Under such conditions, subjects are ‘forced to operate in terms that are weighted towards the dominant culture.’ (Alcoff 2006, p.119) In other words, subjects efface those parts of

themselves that are not recognised in or are peripheral to that culture. This is a more profound problem than the one I elucidated from Young's work in the last chapter, where Young argued that the communicative norms of dispassionate argument value a presentation-style that is tipped towards a certain type of political actor. Instead, using Mead's work, Alcoff discusses such contexts as more profoundly problematic from the point of view of the minority group, because they remove the very possibility of the group representing themselves in a way that does not align with the dominant general other. Under such conditions, subjects may find that they are unable to inhabit social spaces without experiencing a double sense of self. Here then, we have a clash between the power of representation in the generalised other between groups, rather than a sense that either group is 'authentic'. Nevertheless, when one group's modes of representation are more dominant, it can have the effect of members of other groups alienating those parts of themselves that do not conform to the dominant norms.

Alcoff contends that when we take this sense of alienation into account, we can start to understand that identity politics that start with people recognising and mobilising themselves as a group and forwarding their specificity positively is about more than mere cultural ideals and markers. Instead, mobilisations by a group claiming their social specificity can help such groups overcome this alienation and thus gain more full political participation. Whereas Young argued that identity groups can be a source of differing perspectives on a particular democratic problem, she shied away from the notion that declaring and valuing cultural specificity could be political; instead such moves, for Young, were cultural movements that were limited to the civic sphere. Yet Alcoff argues that without this cultural basis of specificity, participation can be an alienating experience for those political actors who do not meet the norm: 'This is more than just putting aside for the moment one's ethnic

habits; it is having to attempt to erase for the moment and even denigrate a fundamental aspect of one's self.' (Alcoff 2006, p.120) Thus, when people from the same social group come together to form a politically motivated base, they may create a space within the political sphere that allows them to participate *as particular kinds of people* without taking up this alienating position. Alcoff's analysis therefore shows us that identity groups and identity politics don't only provide a means towards new knowledge and perspectives, but can also be the vehicle through which more fully fledged participation takes place.

However, it is important to note that this widening of recognition in the political general other does not limit those actors to acting within the sphere of their particular group. In other words, Alcoff is not suggesting that, for example, a strictly feminine way of acting within the political sphere is opened that women must adhere to doggedly. It is rather that individuals and groups *can still* engage in ways that meet the conditions of the already-existing sphere if they choose, but the expanded version of that sphere removes the alienation that comes with being *forced* to meet those conditions. Nevertheless, I think we need to add this as a caveat, otherwise there is a danger Alcoff's theory could appear to legitimise an apartheid politics.

To recap, Alcoff holds that rather than social identity being the creation of external powers working on individuals in malignant ways, it is an inevitable and useful by-product of our socialisation. We cannot neatly separate the individual from their social relationships: each relies upon the other and there are social gains from these relationships. Alcoff therefore discards the notion of there being an inner authentic self that is kept back from our social self. We gain capacities for communication, understanding and agency through our socialisation; however we are not overdetermined by the collective. Alcoff does, however, accept that our social

identity constructions are not completely of our choosing, and also that, in certain contexts, social identity can be the basis of both inequality and alienation. Alcoff therefore shows that social identity is central to political action and that it can form the basis of such action in a more profound way than as the basis of redistributive struggles.

Thus, Alcoff provides a way of understanding social identity that does not hold it as inherently subjugating, but her theory can nevertheless account for problems of inequality and misrecognition. Alcoff argues that power differentiations and subjugation on the basis of social identity is about context and variations in the way the general other employs social categories. In contrast to Butler and Brown, Alcoff therefore retains a way of discussing these effects of social identity, without having to say that social identity *per se* is problematic, or holding that to fight for recognition of your identity is to acquiesce necessarily to power and thus to further subjugation. Instead, Alcoff retains the importance and inevitability of social identity, while also forwarding it as inessential. Alcoff also understands that the relations and constructions surrounding our identities may need to be modified. Simultaneously, Alcoff provides a critique of the strongest possible conclusions of Butler's and Brown's works, namely the notion that we should try to live in alterity and consistently push against the bounds of our categorisations as a means to freedom. Alcoff's work demonstrates how occupying such a position can be experienced as intense alienation and thus be politically damaging, because doing so may undermine the possibilities for forming a group basis for political mobilisation. This possibility of mobilising as a group is something I will consider further in the following chapter, when I discuss Allison Weir's work on group discourses and solidarity.

For now, we can conclude from Alcoff's theory that if political theory ignores or seeks to overcome identity it erroneously omits an understanding of the connections between people and how these inform political participation. It's my contention that, on this point, Alcoff illustrates the importance of understanding the fundamental links between our social relationships, our cultural understandings and our participation in politics. In view of this understanding, I will now conclude the chapter by arguing further that Young cannot maintain the stark split between the civic and political spheres, or between political and cultural participation, which I started to critique in chapter three.

5. Conclusion: cultural and social identity as a means to political participation

Honneth and Alcoff both make strong cases that social identity is important to political participation and political 'progress'; while Brown and Butler contend that a focus on identity can hamper emancipation by (re)producing identities that are normatively constraining. In conclusion to this chapter I use Alcoff's arguments to reconsider Young's contention that identity politics should be limited to alleviation of material (in)equality or achieving parity of participation. As I discussed in chapter three, Young is clear that identity can be an epistemic resource for democracy, and for this reason she suggests that political organising on the basis of identity is positive for democratic deliberation. However, Young also proposed that identity politics aimed at better recognition for an identity group or the increased understanding of the values of a particular identity, should not be called political, arguing instead that identity politics proper should be concerned only with claims of redistribution or parity of

participation. I argued that Young's argument on this point is consistent with her understanding of social identity as structurally imposed, such that identity politics comes to be construed as parity *regardless of difference*. However, as I discussed above, Alcoff's theory shows that our understanding of identity should not be limited to a theory of external structures. Instead, social identity is a necessary facet of our interdependency and we gain our ability to cooperate socially, our capacity for agency, and our understanding of ourselves and the world through our social relationships and identities. Furthermore, Alcoff's theory suggests that the centrality of our social identity in our lives means that our participation in politics is always marked by our identity-group membership. This suggests that when we think about identity politics we need to expand our understanding to incorporate that it is more than a resource for furnishing increased perspectives: organising on the basis of identity can be a means to participation without alienation. Thus, although Young carves out a space for projects aimed at undermining 'political and economic privilege' and for promoting 'civil freedom', her attempt to dislocate these from civic and cultural projects is what I ultimately find problematic in her theory. Young's perspective undermines the fact that the means towards participating without alienation is about more than mere respect, it concerns a deeper form of recognition, understanding and formation of relationships that is not inherently about the political process or 'identity politics' as she construes it.

I began this chapter by looking at Honneth's theory of the struggle for recognition, and his argument that recognition is central to the political process. Honneth argues that our very sense of self is created through our interdependence with others and that therefore, social recognition is paramount to living a good life. When we experience misrecognition, or we are treated by others in ways that show they do

not recognise us as a subject deserving of respect, such as when we are subjected to violence, exclusion or other social disrespect, we have the basis for agitating for a change in our social conditions (Honneth 1995, p.132-4). Honneth's notion that people seek recognition of their identity from others and that withheld recognition can have negative consequences upon people seems accurate: we've probably all felt, at one time or another, the burn of injustice from not being recognised as we would like, however fleetingly. Therefore, Honneth's suggestion that identity recognition can be an important impetus for political participation seems sound. However, Honneth also argues that the mechanisms for increased recognition and political rights can be based upon subjects having an identity that escapes or can be separated from culture. I found this reliance on the notion of an authentic, separate, identity suspect. I also argued that Honneth's faith in the progressive continuation of expanded recognition and rights was incorrect: it's just not the case that we can be sure recognition will continue progressively.

My discussion of Butler underlined these critiques of Honneth. Butler argues convincingly that holding to naturalised notions of gender identities reinforces the balances of power that regulate those identities and can hamper political progress. I argued, therefore, that an overly formal prescription of particular identities within the political process, or an understanding that we should recognise all identities without question, could lead to a political outcome of further restrictions and norms. What I'm considering with this point is the possibility that the political institutionalisation of norms and recognition surrounding specific identities, which at first glance seem to equate to greater emancipation, may in fact increase our normative restrictions, as we expect people to fit into increasingly tight identity forms. My contention is that this is a possible problem for Honneth's position. Butler also undermines the idea that we

have an inner core of identity that is set apart from culture; instead, Butler suggests that our very feeling of having a core identity is an effect of culture and power. Thus, Butler problematises the notion that greater identity recognition is a straightforwardly positive achievement for identity politics.

I went on to discuss how, like Butler, Brown is sceptical about identity politics' ability to emancipate subjugated subjects. For Brown, taking an identity as the basis for political participation can lead to stalemate: if we construct our political identity within the current social parameters, in such a way that those parameters are taken to be immutable, then we risk entrenching those relations, rather than moving towards emancipation. I questioned whether, in response to Butler's and Brown's works, Young's focus on inequality and structural relationships could be justified. If we focus on overcoming inequality, we immediately aim to change structural conditions. As a result, we potentially circumvent the problems that Butler and Brown elucidate. However, I dismissed this conclusion on the grounds that the critiques of identity I have considered do not void the need for social and political recognition. I concluded, therefore, that political theory requires an understanding of identity that can marry the need for recognition without resting on a conception of social identity as natural or essential.

My contention is that such a conception of social identity can be found in Alcoff's work. As I have shown, Alcoff argues that our social identities are produced through our relationships with others and that these relationships create the frameworks for our self-understanding and comprehension of the world. Furthermore, for Alcoff, our social identity categories are real, not because they are essential or fixed categories that pick out objective features of the world, but because they have real effects on how we organise the world and our social interactions. Our identity is

constructed partly by social categories that are (at least partially) outside of our control: our gender and race designation is not something we can always manipulate, given that the signs governing these identities are structured at a cultural level. Alcoff thus critiques concepts of the individual as a unique and impenetrable entity who is in opposition to the group. Alcoff's analysis therefore asks us to question seriously the very idea of the individual, especially given that agency is an interactive capacity that is constructed within our social group.

As I have shown, Alcoff further argues that our social identity, as well as our sense of self, is fundamental for our political participation. Where our identity is not valued or does not fit the modes of participation that are dominant in politics, people become disengaged or alienated from the political processes. Under such conditions, there may be good political reasons for individuals to form a group that not only seeks to change the context of subjection that they find themselves in, but also aims at exploring their specificity and modes of relating such that those modes *can then be accepted and understood by wider society in the social and political spheres*. As Alcoff argues, this recognition is built upon the generalised other being amended to include different identities. Alcoff is not forwarding such identities as fixed or natural, but is nevertheless arguing that they can form the basis for social and political participation. Thus, she argues, identity politics is always as much about changing the boundaries of participation and gaining recognition for an identity, as it is about changing the structural and participatory inequalities that may be faced because of that identity. I have endorsed Alcoff's theory, on the proviso that we understand it as a means to participation that is more open and less alienating, rather than the creation of more numerous narrow modes of representation for groups.

Young's argument that we should increase inclusion by expanding our modes of communication in political deliberation can certainly be raised in the face of Alcoff's arguments. As I discussed in the last chapter, Young argues that we should incorporate different forms of communication into deliberative theory, in order to increase inclusion and overcome the notion that there are set ways in which deliberators must present themselves. However, Young also argued that groups coming together on the basis of their identity is not political unless those groups are specifically fighting inequality. However, Alcoff's work suggests that Young's view here is problematic because it does not deal with the importance of recognition or how shifts in recognition are achieved. Such shifts rely not on the formal bounds of inclusion to political participation being expanded, nor strictly on the idea of expanded communication-modes. Rather, the expansion Alcoff considers is based upon being able to find a space for your identity more fundamentally in a political setting. Thus, Alcoff's work provides a theoretical framework for my argument in the last chapter that the cultural and the political cannot be neatly separated: the recognition needed to overcome the sense of alienation Alcoff illustrates is built upon a framework of relations that is inherently cultural. It is therefore the case that cultural representations of an identity can furnish the basis for political participation. Thus, to limit the political participation of identity groups to calls for equality, understood as access to resources or a universal parity, misses a fundamental aspect of those politics.

As such, although Young may be correct in saying that the greater part of identity politics will be concerned with resources and inequality, we should also recognise and account for the potentially political dimension of group representation and cultural projects as a means to recognition (of self and from others) that have political effects. The upshot of understanding identity through Alcoff's theory is that

we cannot consign identity politics to the political sphere in the form of politics aimed at eradicating inequality, and consign all other group identity organising to a separate cultural realm. Identity constitutes a particular case, where its cultural and social basis cannot be separated from its effects on political participation and action. With this, we have a configuration incorporating the relationship between the civic-public and political-public spheres, which I discussed in depth in chapter two, and the impacts and machinations of social identity across those spheres, which I began to argue for in chapter three.

I do not mean to suggest that processes of identity incorporation in the political sphere will always be positive however: as Butler and Brown show, there are always pitfalls where identity representation and political agitation become too static or self-defeating. Furthermore, there are social identities and values based upon the exclusion or denigration of others; greater recognition of and deeper participation from such individuals and groups do not easily equate to favourable outcomes. This is why, in the next chapter, I will consider the political participation of racist members of the English Defence League. However, my argument still stands that how we participate politically relies upon the operative general other, while shifts in the cultural frameworks of recognition impact participation and have political effects. Expanding this, I suggest, is a task that spans the cultural and political spheres; thus, trying to separate these spheres too-readily ignores this quite fundamental basis of political participation.

To conclude, identity is a non-essential social construction that is nevertheless 'real' in the sense that it is materially constitutive of how a subject relates to herself and to others. At its strongest, this suggests that social identity is always politically salient, as it is always operative as a ground for political participation. The

constitution of identity is always part-political, as how different groups are treated within the public domain actively produces their identities and regulates their political participation. This means that identity must always be an important topic of political discussion and agonism, as well as an important facet of political theory. The work of all of the philosophers considered in this chapter suggests that even where there are issues with how identity politics is conceived, social identity is always politically important in its own right. In the next chapter I will seek to cement this argument, by showing that even where we are concerned with problematic, inegalitarian identities, we should not seek to efface or overcome identity under the guise of political progress.

Chapter Five: Identity, Politics and Discourse

In the preceding chapters I have re-assessed contrasting positions concerning deliberative democracy in relation to theories of social identity, looking variously at the issues of power, participation and equality that social identity throws up for procedural theory. In the last chapter, after reviewing the critical works of Butler and Brown, I concluded that social identity cannot be hailed as purely positive: how identity categories are employed within politics can have detrimental effects and the categories employed do not refer to ontologically stable facts. However, I also concluded that although identity is an ambivalent concept when considered in relation to politics, it must still be accommodated within deliberative theory. I argued, using Alcoff's work, that while social identity and categories are not fixed or simply positive, they have real effects on how we relate to one another and therefore on deliberative participation. Thus, I have defined social identity as something that is materially and socially based, partly imposed, but often creatively responded to and resisted, and I have shown how identity categories can be both positive and negative to subjects (externally, internally and politically). I have also highlighted that another problem with social identity is the fact that some identities are predicated upon the devaluation of others. In chapter one this notion was advanced using Irigaray's feminist philosophy, wherein the feminine was shown to be the necessary Other of masculinity, with the masculine being forwarded as positive only on the basis of a devaluation of the feminine. However, since chapter one I have mentioned such problematic identities only in passing, while I have concentrated on social identities that are more likely to be excluded or to be a minority in deliberation.

In this chapter my intention is to focus on these problematic identities, and to ask how we can incorporate social identity into deliberative democracy without affirming such identities, or exacerbating tensions or divisions that arise because of them. In order to explore this problematic, I will focus on Dryzek's work on deliberative democracy and difference, in which he endorses and extends Young's deliberative democratic theory, while simultaneously putting a particular emphasis on problematic identities. Dryzek agrees with Young that deliberative theory needs to deal with identity and difference, particularly where such differences risk inequality in participation. Dryzek also agrees with Young's solution of admitting different kinds of communication into deliberation. However, Dryzek argues in addition to these points that the existence of problematic identities, e.g. racist, classist, or sexist identities, means that valuing and affirming difference and identity *simpliciter* in deliberative theory is not viable. Dryzek argues that in order to deal with this problem, deliberative theory should not be concerned with identity *per se* and should instead only consider identity as discourse. For Dryzek, 'a discourse is a shared set of assumptions that enable its adherents to assemble bits of sensory information into coherent wholes.' (Dryzek 2000, p.51) Thus, discourses are frames of reference that give (intersubjective) meaning to our world. Dryzek argues that understanding identities as discourses helps to work against the negative facets of social identity because it leaves those identities and their negative effects open to challenge. Dryzek also thinks that the diffuse and changeable nature of identity is best captured by the concept of discourse. In his view, using discourse takes seriously identity within the deliberative process, while leaving negative identities, like those mentioned above, open to challenge.

Dryzek's argument hinges upon the bulk of deliberation taking place in the civic-public sphere such that his discourses will informally influence the political sphere (the sphere of law and institutional policy) when appropriate. Thus, as part of my assessment of his position I will also explain how Dryzek seeks to formalise the political nature of the public sphere, and how his solution shows that discourses concerned with identity are not, or are often not merely, of cultural concern. Dryzek's work further helps in clarifying my argument, from chapters three and four, that we cannot easily distinguish the work of identity groups in responding to and exploring their identity from such groups' political equality claims. Dryzek's work underlines this argument because he shows how our cultural discourses directly (and indirectly) influence our political decision-making.

However, Dryzek equates social identity discourses with other discourses, such as those of environmental politics, which is problematic. I therefore extend Dryzek's theory of identity as discourse by looking at Weir's work, which emphasises social identity as a form of identification-with others, partly through the construction of discourses. Weir argues that social and political identities and shared action are only possible where subjects form a 'we', that is, a group in which members recognise one another as similarly socially-positioned. It is only through this process of identification-with others, Weir attests, that political and social action can be constructed. Weir's work thus suggests that Dryzek's account of identity as discourse is too thin, because it does not take account of the importance of identity discourses being produced by groups in particular contexts. I argue that it therefore isn't possible to straight-forwardly equate the discourses that inform social identity with other political or social discourses. My contention is that doing so risks reducing political discourse involving identities to discussion of equally-positioned discourses, which is

problematically ahistorical, and does not take into consideration the power imbalances across, or the relational bases of, different social identities. I argue that Dryzek's position is also unclear with regards to the representation of identity within democratic deliberation and that we still need to be able to distinguish identities *as identities* for the purposes of debate.

In order to explore further these competing conceptions of identity and how they might function politically, I go on to consider a couple of extended examples of political identities that are constructed out of social identities: those of Puerto Ricans in Hartford, as explored in Jose Cruz's book *Identity and Power* (1998), and that of the members of the English Defence League (EDL), by looking particularly at the former leader of the anti-Islam group, Tommy Robinson. These examples are intended to present 'positive' and 'negative' perspectives on identity in political discourse: the former concerns subjects fashioning their citizenship positively in relation to their ethnicity and group membership as Puerto Rican immigrants; the latter focuses on Robinson's racist identity and group membership. In his book, *Identity and Power* (1998), Cruz argues that without their ethnic group identification, the Puerto Rican politics that he investigates could not have happened. Cruz presents the group identity as central to the participation of Puerto Ricans in the US political process. I argue that this case highlights how political discourse and activism are linked with intra-group identification. On the other hand, identification between members of the activist group the English Defence League is premised upon members endorsing the narrative that they are under threat from their Muslim neighbours: thus, this identification is one that is built upon othering another group. However, by charting Tommy Robinson's apparent change of perspective, captured in the BBC documentary 'Quitting the English Defence League: When Tommy met Mo' (2013), I show how change can be

made, not only through attacking discourses, but through greater exposure to other groups. I argue that Dryzek's understanding of identity as discourse goes part of the way to providing the tools to undermine such identities, but that only a deep engagement with such groups' identity constructions will yield positive results. My aim, then, is to show that the consistent pull away from identity within deliberative theory, which I find once again in Dryzek's work, but which I have also diagnosed in earlier chapters, is not sufficient to create a workable theory.

1. Dryzek: identity as discourse

Dryzek has written extensively about deliberative theory (see e.g. Dryzek 2000, 2001, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2010). His theory builds on Habermas's theory, and he therefore favours a communicative model that is based on how we can effectively and democratically share information in order to make effective political decisions. Dryzek recognises the necessity of addressing identity in deliberative theory, but also believes that identity does not create an insurmountable problem for deliberative theorists. Dryzek endorses much of Young's theory on the subject of identity and democracy, agreeing with Young that deliberative democracy can be attuned to social identity and deal with issues arising because of it by admitting different forms of communication into the process. However, Dryzek argues that due to the fact that there are harmful identities (e.g. racist identities), as well as resistant identities (e.g. anti-racist identities), simply admitting the importance and value of all identities in the theory is not feasible. Therefore, he argues that we should, at the theoretical and practical levels, focus on discourses instead. For Dryzek, a discourse is a framework we use to understand the world, including our own identities. In this section I critically

assess Dryzek's understanding of discourse and why he favours a focus on discourse rather than identity, a position that constitutes a challenge to the more cautiously affirmative position on the contribution of identity groups to politics that I began to develop in the last chapter.

In the third chapter of his book *Deliberative Democracy and Beyond* (2000), Dryzek is concerned with arguments that deliberative democracy cannot include respect or space for difference. Dryzek suggests that the power of such differences in deliberation is 'an open question' given that much of the work done on the different speech styles and inter-group interactions of different social groups in the social sciences does not focus specifically on political deliberation. His conclusion here is somewhat naive in my view, given the amount of literature available regarding differences in speaking style and imbalances in inter-group communication: it's surely not such a leap to suggest that such work provides strong evidence that differences in group identity will bring challenges for deliberation.⁵⁹ Despite his doubts, however, Dryzek explicitly endorses Young's solution of forwarding different types of communication (as discussed in depth in chapter three) into deliberation because of social difference (Dryzek 2000, p.71-2) Thus, Dryzek is convinced by Young's argument that difference is an important consideration for deliberative theory.

However, Dryzek also argues that to simply open deliberation to different kinds of communication does not necessarily immediately make deliberation more open, less coercive or less hierarchical than when only rational argument is admitted. He argues that all forms of communication can be hierarchical between groups or individuals (e.g. some people may simply be better communicators than others) or coercive (e.g. may persuade by threatening violence). His solution is to argue that

⁵⁹ There are many relevant studies and pertaining to this question, and although there is not absolute consensus, most scholars agree that social group membership affects communication. On the issue of gender and communication for example, see (Cameron 1985, 1998, 2005, Hancock and Rubin 2015).

Young's additional forms of communication can be admitted to deliberation, but only where they are free of coercive force, and have some way of linking to 'the general'. Thus, rhetoric cannot be admitted where it contains an implicit or explicit threat of violence or other forms of intimidation; while narratives are of interest only if they can be linked to debate concerning society or laws more widely (Dryzek 2000, p.66-8). For example, as I discussed in the second chapter, MPs opposed to the UK government's benefits sanctions have used the stories of particular people to make the point that the sanctions are being deployed unjustly. The point was not simply to lament the use of sanctions for these particular people, but to show that how the sanctions are being applied *in general* is unjust and thereby requires governmental review. With this ratification of Young's theory, Dryzek demonstrates that he agrees that it is a necessity for deliberative democracy to take account of social difference and that the admittance of different forms of communication is one way in which this can be done. Yet, he simultaneously suggests that all deliberative communication should nevertheless be continually examined to ensure there is no coercion or problematic focus on individuals. In my view Dryzek's additions are correct.

However, Dryzek is simultaneously mindful that identity and the questions that it raises for deliberative theory are not vanquished by including these different forms of communication in deliberation. While the inclusion of different communicative styles aims to reduce the impact of testimonial inequalities between interlocutors who occupy different social positions, it doesn't deal directly with specific identities. How we discuss identity when we deliberate, and how we understand the role of identity in deliberation, is therefore a different matter. Dryzek therefore considers that: 'A serious response to the challenge of difference requires an account of democracy that can address difference across repressive and emancipatory

identities and discourse[.]’ (Dryzek 2000, p.75) Dryzek is highlighting here, albeit implicitly, the divergence in approaches to identity and difference in political theory: theorists tend to focus either on the necessity of valuing difference because of the oppression or marginalisation of some social groups, or to emphasise that a focus on difference entrenches discord and opposition to the detriment of political progress.

For example, in much of this thesis, I have invoked identity as something that can result in subjects facing political and social inequality or discrimination, and have also argued that, in light of such inequalities, there must be some focus on identity within deliberative theory. Such arguments can have the effect of making identity appear to us as a straightforwardly positive, or at least neutral, term for deliberative theory. Yet, I have also highlighted identities as potentially problematic where they are constructed out of a disdain for or subjugation of other groups, or where they are seen as fixed. For example, Irigaray’s elucidation of masculine and feminine identities, which I explored in the first chapter, is predicated on the notion that masculinity is positively ascribed only by its relative comparison with femininity, the latter of which comes to be devalued and obscured. Whereas Brown’s view of ‘victim identity’, which I discussed in the last chapter, highlighted that some politicised identities can be constrictive and counterproductive from the point of view of the person who holds that identity, because they can create cycles of subjection or a victim mentality.

Dryzek is likewise concerned about the different forms identity can take and therefore thinks that focusing on identity *per se* may lead to difficulties for deliberative theory. Dryzek argues that where identities ‘can only be validated or, worse, constituted by the suppression of another’ (Dryzek 2005, p.219) focusing on identity may actively reinforce divides and entrench hostility because, ‘if [such]

identities themselves are highlighted, exchange is more likely to freeze identities than convert them.’ (Dryzek 2005, p.221) This is particularly problematic, he argues, due to the fact that deliberative theory relies on interlocutors being able to change their views; therefore, if highlighting identities is likely to restrict this capacity, it could work against a central tenet of the theory, something I will expand upon below.

Despite his ambivalence about the role of identity in deliberation, in his paper ‘Deliberative Democracy in Divided Societies: Alternatives to Agonism and Analgesia’ (2005), Dryzek argues that deliberative democratic theory can and should consider social identity and situates his argument between the poles of agonism and consociational democracy. The former, proposed by Mouffe, which I assessed briefly in chapter one, purports that democracy is a continual contest between opposing groups or factions. For Mouffe, because certain differences, particularly social identity and cultural differences, cannot be resolved, identities must be examined and tempered through democratic engagement, but such that we never achieve consensus (Mouffe 1999, Dryzek 2005, p.220-1). Otherwise, Mouffe argues, democracy will ultimately overwrite difference. At the other end of the scale, Dryzek considers Lijphart’s consociational democracy (Lijphart 1969). Lijphart posits that where a society is deeply divided, representatives from each sect or group should be represented proportionally in government, but should generally avoid invoking their identities, in order to promote peace, such that, ‘contentious deliberation occurs only between the leaders of different blocs, and even then mostly in secret... The political communication of ordinary people is shepherded into within-bloc channels[.]’ (Dryzek 2005, p.222) Thus, deliberation and identity on Lijphart’s model is assumed to be potentially inflammatory in a way that risks political and/or social instability. Consociational democrats thus believe that, under such circumstances, we should

enforce limits on political action as well as the content of civic deliberation, so that divides are not exacerbated, with a view to avoiding, or at least limiting, violence.

Dryzek argues that although both of these standpoints must be answered, deliberation can meet the difficulties posed by difficult identities. It can do so, he proposes, by supplanting identity with the notion of discourses, specifically discourses that can be contested in the civic sphere. Dryzek understands a discourse as the following:

A discourse can be understood as a shared way of making sense of the world embedded in language. Thus any given discourse will be defined by assumptions, judgements, contentions, dispositions, and capabilities. These shared terms enable subscribers to a given discourse to recognize and convert sensory inputs into coherent accounts of situations. These accounts can then be shared in intersubjectively meaningful fashion. (Dryzek 2005, p.223)

Thus discourses are frameworks through which we understand the world—features of which become integrated, organised and differentially valued according to the discourse that is operative. Furthermore, discourses can act as a proxy for identity because, Dryzek argues, they are a vital ingredient for identity formation: ‘There is of course a tight connection between discourses and identities, which are constituted in part by discourses... One way of interpreting the whole idea of difference is therefore in terms of discourses rather than identities.’ (Dryzek 2000, p.75) Thus, how we frame the world and identify ourselves and others is inextricably linked to the discourses we employ, consciously or unconsciously. Furthermore, for Dryzek, discourses can be imposed undemocratically, but can also be subject to criticism, reflection and change. Dryzek therefore argues that his understanding of discourse is less totalising than that of Foucault. While Foucault suggests, according to Dryzek, that we are limited to moving between different disciplinary discourses that are not under our control, Dryzek argues that discourses can be both emancipatory and democratically contested (Foucault 1984, Dryzek 2005). Thus, Dryzek provides a couple of key arguments to support his view that a focus on discourses is preferable to a focus on identities in

deliberative theory: we can (more) easily contest discourses, whereas contesting identities is often inflammatory; focusing on identities where there is deep division results in those divisions becoming more entrenched, therefore looking at background discourses can avoid stalemate. At base, Dryzek purports that we can resolve issues more easily by focusing on discourses, because we deal with premises and arguments, rather than fixed identity labels.

Thus, Dryzek is proposing that discourse, in a discursive communicative setting, offers a way of retaining reflexivity *and* difference. Where subjects will be hostile to direct challenges to their identities, identities can be challenged indirectly during the democratic process of weighing up conflicting discourses:

An account of democracy grounded in communicative action in the public sphere and civil society highlights the degree to which engagement is possible across the boundaries of different discourses. While discourses do indeed help to condition the way people think, individuals are not necessarily prisoners of the discourses that have helped to create their identities. Instead, the essence of engagement and challenge across discourses is that individuals can be brought to reflect upon the content of the discourses in which they move. Thus the balance of discourses is amenable to democratic control; it is the (provisional) outcome of this contest that determines the meaning of 'public opinion' at any given time. (Dryzek 2000, p.163)

Therefore, a proliferation of discourses in the civic-public sphere provides us with various alternatives for identity formation and can enrich our deliberation and reflection. Dryzek's point is that discourses, presented as contestable entities, rather than essential facets of an identity, can be appraised and engaged with reflectively. This reflective judgement on discourses is a necessarily critical stance and is, Dryzek thinks, the fundamental basis of our authenticity as democratic deliberators: without the possibility of such reflection and criticism, public opinion and identities can be controlled and become static, meaning that democratic reflection and change would be impossible. Thus, for Dryzek, deliberation can deal with difference and identity, but only if we focus on the discourses that frame identities, rather than the identities themselves. Furthermore, putting the focus on a discourse as a contestable viewpoint

means that Dryzek can readily admit racist, sexist or elitist subjects into deliberation because: ‘A model of deliberative democracy that stresses the contestation of discourses in the public sphere allows for challenge of sectarian positions.’ (Dryzek 2000, p.169) In other words, by exposing and challenging the discourses that underlie those subjects’ identities, the identities themselves can be transformed.

Another central element of Dryzek’s model is that such a contestation of discourses takes place in the public-civic, rather than public-political, sphere. In other words, discourses should be debated by society at large through various communicative channels, but should not be debated at the political level. Dryzek argues that when such debates are linked to governmental power, the stakes simply become too high and, particularly where there is a stark opposition of identities, stances are likely to become entrenched, as different groups come to see themselves locked in a zero sum game for power (Dryzek 2005, p.229). However, Dryzek is quick to note that this is not intended to devalue identity or difference, for it is the civic-public sphere that drives the frameworks and decisions at the level of government in a properly functioning democracy: ‘The content of collective decisions depends roughly (but not exclusively) on the relative weight of competing discourses in a domain.’ (2005, p.223) Thus the main way in which laws and institutions are shaped, according to Dryzek, is through the civic-sphere creating the focus and framework for government:

For the moment it will suffice to emphasize the capacity of the public sphere and its actors to change the terms of political discourse, whose effects can extend to state actors. This transmission mechanism is discursive, rather than electoral... The balance of competing discourses matters a great deal; but there is never a vote on which discourse should prevail. (Dryzek 2000, p.51)

So discourses, propelled into the public-civic sphere through various forms of communication between actors on micro and macro levels, compete for primacy over time and filter into the political sphere. That is, the discourses may be operative, either

implicitly or explicitly, in forming assumptions and framing approaches to policy, for example: '[w]ithin family policy they might include feminism and a more traditional patriarchal discourse.' (Dryzek 2000, p.51) Therefore, Dryzek clearly recognises that identities, or at least the discourses that help to create them, are politically salient and thus, contra Young (although Dryzek doesn't specifically argue this in view of Young's work), group discourses that are not specifically aimed at making claims of equality can have political effects, as such discourses can feed into political policy and decision-making.⁶⁰

Simultaneously, Dryzek cautions that government policy and law need to be couched in non-partisan language, because: 'If there is advantage in being categorized as an oppressed minority, everyone will try to claim that status[.]' (Dryzek 2005, p.227) Dryzek therefore provides a way of understanding how cultural recognition and other non-equality-based actions by groups can have political effects, while maintaining that political decision-making must still be couched in universal discourse. Therefore, Dryzek believes that his focus on discourses is positive in that it allows us to factor in difference in deliberative theory, without exacerbating sectarian divisions; while also allowing us to challenge issues like racism and sexism without resorting to problematically excluding sexist or racist subjects. He also offers an account of how group discourse that is not specifically couched in terms of equality can have significant impacts on how policy is configured.

⁶⁰ Dryzek's deliberative model is therefore similar to Habermas's, which I discussed in chapter two, in that the public sphere in which political communication takes place is necessarily multifarious and drives the public-political sphere. However, Dryzek thinks that his notion of discourses is a better way of understanding the mechanisms between the spheres because it can 'give more purchase than Habermas's own formulation of fluid 'subjectless communication' that operates in large-scale, complex societies.' (Dryzek 2000, p.52) In Habermas's communicative theory, by contrast, discourse refers to debate about material points or assumptions. Dryzek also argues that the primary mechanism for how the civic and political spheres interact will be through this discursive framing of policy, rather than through, as Habermas attests, elections and voting by the public for policies already decided upon in the political sphere (Dryzek 2000, p.51).

However, Dryzek's work leaves a question over whether we should always avoid discussion of identity and move towards discourses that focus on shared solutions. It's not clear if Dryzek would go so far as to argue that we should avoid categorisations and identity labels completely, in favour of focusing on the discourses upon which they are constructed. It is probably true that in many situations negative labelling, for example calling people racist or sexist directly, will not garner a positive result, and that opting instead to point out the reasons why racist or sexist views or behaviour are problematic can be more fruitful. Similarly, Dryzek makes a compelling case that in circumstances where there is a sectarian divide, it is potentially more productive to avoid labelling identities and to try instead to foster shared goals and discourses. However, such pronouncements can only be the best course of action in particular instances and there are some sectarian divides where differences and identities need to be highlighted up front, such that a focus can be brought to bear on the exact discourse that is operative and requires challenge.

Dryzek's work also leaves a puzzle over whether we are required to dislodge the identity categories from those discourses that specifically aim towards emancipation for particular social groups: for example, it would be impossible to create feminist discourses that don't reference the social identity of 'women', even where that discourse understands the term to be problematic or unstable. Dryzek cites Martin Luther King Jr's framing of the civil rights movement as a constitutional issue, arguing that King's activism provides an example of an identity struggle that used a universal discourse to make its case. While Dryzek is right to highlight this, it's still the case that we can't dislodge King's activism from the fact it was concerned with creating a change of policy specifically for black people as an oppressed social group. In other words, while King's focus clearly emphasised access to rights for all, the

context of race discrimination perpetrated against black Americans remains central to the civil rights movement. Something similar is arguably seen today with the BlackLivesMatter campaign: the point is to put emphasis on structural racism by highlighting differences in institutional access and treatment, which falls below the universal standard of rights. However, the identity and lived experience of black people in the US (and beyond) is inextricable from this, as the title BlackLivesMatter makes clear.

Another potential problem with Dryzek's argument is that he makes no distinction between types of discourses: he equates, for example, ecology discourses with those based around social identity. I will argue below, using Weir's work, that holding no distinction between these discourses is untenable, because the discourses surrounding social identity are not created or available in the same way as other discourses. We can certainly argue politically about the crucial environmental issues facing us and how to tackle them; however, our identities, and the discourses through which they are constructed, are not simply chosen by us in a similarly logical manner. As I argued in the last chapter, our identity is something that is partly personally fashioned, partly given and partly a reaction. We live our identity through our relationships with other people and the world, and our identity is consequently not open to challenge in the same way as our positions on, say, environmental politics. Weir's thesis is that rather than there being identity discourses readily available in the world for individuals to choose between, identity discourses are produced out of group recognition. I will argue that when we accept the complexities of identity discourse, the idea that discourses surrounding identity are free-forming, anarchic and dislocated is undermined. As a result, I will conclude that Dryzek's account of discourse is not a comprehensive enough account of social identity for deliberative theory.

In sum, there are some unanswered questions that come out of Dryzek's shift from identity to discourse, namely questions about how exactly discourse (in)forms identity, whether we can *equate* discourse and identity and whether, by following Dryzek's model, we can still invoke identity in political discussion. There is also a question of whether levelling social identity categories and their workings to something that is the same as, say, environmental discourse, risks us losing something that is significant for political theory.

2. Becoming a 'we': Weir on identity groups and discourse formation

Weir's recent work considers how identities are partially, but importantly, constructed out of discourses. In her book *Identities and Freedom* (Weir 2013) Weir is not interested in the workings of deliberative theory, or even specifically democracy, but she is interested in the how social identity and identity theory have impacts socially and politically. Because Weir discusses how being exposed to different discourses can affect our sense of identity, as well as how these discourses are often fashioned through group interaction, her theory can be used to correct Dryzek's work on this issue. Moreover, because Weir places these discourses into a relational setting of lived experience, her work can act as a bridging theory between that of Alcoff and Dryzek. As I have shown, Alcoff focuses on the relational aspects of identity formation, while Dryzek focuses on how identity is constructed by discourses in the communicative soup of the public sphere. Weir, by comparison, focuses on both of these aspects of identity, and moreover, does so in a way that is specifically aimed at understanding these aspects of identity politically. For Weir, discourses are crucial to our self-

understanding, but can only be understood politically, and become politically fruitful, when considered in a context of group relationships. Weir also puts emphasis on the possible transformative nature of these relationships and the discourses they create, both for individuals and political movements, something that is not drawn out specifically by any of the other thinkers I have drawn on so far.

There are some broad similarities between Weir's characterisation of the role of discourse and Dryzek's; for example, Weir writes:

If I am a black single mother on welfare trying to understand who I am and who I want to be, it will be difficult for me to escape an understanding of myself as a dependent person... [But] my questions about who I am and who I want to be will also be framed by competing and conflicting social interpretations—for instance, black communities' valuations of black cultures, Afro-centric models of community, black women's cultures of resistance, images of strong black women, popular idealizations of motherhood, feminist arguments that mother work is deserving of social support, left critiques of the capitalist welfare state. (Weir 2009, p.539)

Weir's point is that our identities are continually shaped and focused by various, and at times quite contradictory, discourses. And from this understanding of discourses Weir deduces that where there is a hegemonic discourse that shapes a subject's identity negatively, the only way of overcoming it is by aligning with a discourse that challenges that view: 'My capacity to criticize dominant social constructions of myself will depend to a large extent on my capacity to access alternative interpretations. Those alternative interpretations *frame alternative identities*.' (Weir 2009, p.539, my emphasis) Thus, for Weir, as for Dryzek, discourses mould the subject but crucially also leave room for transformation: it is the proliferation of competing discourses that allows us to transform our identities and this process can also be politically transformative. For Weir, then, reflexivity across different discourses is important to us as we negotiate the world: 'Central to self-identity, then, is the capacity to sustain and in some sense reconcile multiple, often conflicting identities, and to understand, criticize, and reconcile multiple and often conflicting

interpretations of those identities.’ (Weir 1996, p.186)⁶¹ Here, Weir is speaking of this reflexive capacity as something that is a basic necessity for subjects to live a good life and gain self-understanding. This has been a common theme throughout the preceding chapters of this thesis: identity is a socially-embedded form of self-understanding and the basis for relationships, which always includes some capacity for reflexivity and resistance. Weir is picking up here that discourses actively shape us and can also provide a basis for collective action and change.

Weir further argues that positional or categorial theories of social identity cannot capture the full functioning of identity politics (particularly feminist politics). While I argued in chapters three and four that Young’s positional identity theory failed to capture the links between the personal, cultural and political in identity politics, Weir argues that positional understandings of identity miss the importance of solidarity for (feminist) identity politics:

[A] model of women’s identity as category is not a sufficient basis for politics. This understanding of identity cannot possibly account for global feminist solidarity around shared issues—or indeed, for any kind of solidarity at all. Women do not feel solidarity with other women because we belong to the same category... shared interests are not simply given and discovered, but are to a large extent constructed through our attention to what is significant and meaningful to us as feminists and through our orientation to solidarity. (Weir 2013, p.114)

For Weir, the fact that we act in solidarity with others when we are politically engaged is paramount to the form and content of our political engagement. Moreover, Weir attests that such processes of identification foster our resistant discourses (and thus political identities): ‘Resistant identities are often the *result* of a recognition and critique of oppression, and these identities often emerge out of solidarity, out of a desire for association and relationship, rather than the other way round.’ (Weir 2013, p.31) So, according to Weir, we shouldn’t only conceive of discourses as identity-forming, but should understand that discourses themselves are fostered through group

⁶¹ Weir also puts emphasis on the availability of competing discourses as a source of freedom in this earlier work (Weir 1996).

relationships; discourses flow out of people being with one another and understanding one another, rather than being Platonic forms that pre-exist those links, such that: 'Identity politics are politics of identification.' (Weir 2013, p.63)

Weir thus contends that identity politics is only made possible when people can identify with one another socially and build upon this shared identification to construct a political identity. On this view, an identity is not imposed on the group, the identity and discourse is created by the group. Thus, through a continual negotiation of the meanings and values of the group, such groups gain existential substance:

Communities and social movements can be sustained only through continual rebuilding of relationships, rethinking of meanings and goals, and practices of identification with each other, with a we, with some kind of meaning or significance (which can change over time). (Weir 2013, p.117)

Through processes of relating to one another, a 'we' is formed; this connection is not created by the recognition between the members of the group that they share a positional category, but comes out of the recognition that other members are people to whom they can relate, which *then* transforms into a move towards something new together, discursively and/or politically. Thus, while Dryzek's theory of identity as discourse puts emphasis on reflexivity as a deliberative necessity, Weir highlights that the process of meaning-making with others *constitutes the ground upon which political identity is possible*. Political change, then, Weir's theory suggests, requires that we understand, criticise and eventually shift discourses, which follows from group interaction and recognition.⁶²

Furthermore, Weir argues that we must understand this process of identification as something that sits in a wider context of power relations: subjects and groups don't simply create insular discourses for themselves, but instead are continually responding to a wider context:

⁶² Weir also uses this chapter to examine how intersubjectively held and personal value-hierarchies are a pivotal part of identity formation (Weir 2013).

Mohanty, with Reagon, argues that identity politics too often emerge out of a desire for home, for nurturance, and for comfort in sameness. Identities become “barred rooms,” places where we can huddle together, safe and protected... Reagon and Mohanty are absolutely right to criticize the desires for control, for appropriation and sameness, and for the policing of boundaries that produce “barred rooms.” At the same time, a disturbing trend is emerging here: identity politics are based on desires for home and nurturance, on feelings, on the romantic, idealistic, and lyrical; coalition is based on action, struggle, hardheaded acceptance of power relations and engagement in the risk and danger of politics. We need to be wary of this too-simple repudiation of qualities that are soft and feminized, and affirmation of the tough, masculine world of power. (Weir 2013, p.76)⁶³

Thus, groups can be a positive place of identification-with, of a feeling of being ‘one’s self’ and being accepted, but, politically, groups must be able to criticise power relations both internally and externally to the group. Weir here convincingly argues that to see this as an either-or conundrum presents a false dichotomy, while accepting that group status and intergroup relationships can still be an issue: ‘The best feminist theory, along with other critical theories, has recognized the coexistence and interaction of power and oppression with sociality and connection... primary relations of power and oppression coexist and interact with mutuality and connection.’ (Weir 2013, 75-6) Thus identification-with others does not take the group out of their wider power relations, which will continue to bear upon the group’s dynamics. In other words, just because we become a ‘we’ does not mean that such imbalances of power and social position are removed, inside or outside of our groups, and therefore being mindful of these relations and critical of their exploitation is always important.

Weir moves beyond Dryzek’s understanding of how identity should be theorised politically in two important ways. First, Weir highlights how discourses come to be created and proliferated through connections between subjects, such that identifying with others is the very basis of entering and contributing to the civic-public field of discourse that Dryzek describes. For Weir, it is this identification with others that can provide the basis for political action. Weir’s work therefore debunks the notion that deliberation, at least where identity is concerned, can be reduced to a

⁶³ See (Reagon 1983, Mohanty 2003).

wholly rational reflexive musing on a range of available discourses. While Dryzek argues that a positive feature of his theory is that he has moved from Habermas's subjectless communication in the civic-public sphere to more concrete mechanisms of discourse; following Weir's work, I want to argue that Dryzek's understanding is still not sufficient, as it misses the fact that the identifications between us are a significant aspect of how we engage with discourses. We don't engage in a rational vacuum, but instead always do so with others, with our already-existing discourses and identities in play. Thus, by reducing identity to discourse like any others, Dryzek is arguably losing a fundamental facet of how subjects gain a reflexive, democratic identity: namely through a process of constructing such an identity with others.

Secondly, as I've explained, Weir argues that this identification with others always happens in a context of power relations, which have an effect on how the discourses are created, proliferated and responded to. Power is certainly something that Dryzek takes into account when he discusses the need for discourse to be only loosely tied to the sovereign power of the state, particularly where sectarian lines exist. Furthermore, as I've discussed, Dryzek acknowledges that discourse itself can be powerful when it is operative in the formation of policy. However, what Dryzek does not do is discuss the power imbalances *between* existing discourses and discuss how this influences, for example, political participation; he tends to present discourses and identities as evenly matched and all equally available. He does consider that there is an importance to the 'balance of discourses' being under democratic control (Dryzek 2000, p.163), but he doesn't countenance that some discourses may be dominant, and that those dominant discourses may have detrimental effects upon particular subjects' or groups' participation. Of course, Dryzek could reply that, given the anarchic and open-ended nature he has attributed to discourse-formation in the

public-civic sphere, such discourses can always be subject to criticism and change. Thus, we can see how Dryzek uncritically endorses a view of the civic-public sphere that I uncovered in Habermas's work in chapter two: both theorists suggest that there will be an ongoing tussle between different discourses, with the most 'rational' or 'correct' rising to the top. However, it's unsettling that this ability of discourses to be challenged and changed is presented as a simple abstract change of selection; it belies the fact that, as Weir highlights, social change often comes through an arduous, possibly painful, process of identification-with others.

As I have discussed, Dryzek's emphasis here is on problematic and difficult inter-group relations. Indeed, even when recognising consciousness-raising groups as a possible locus of positive identification, Dryzek puts emphasis on the propensity of such groups to become restrictive, rather than concentrating on the mechanisms of their generative capacity:

For Young... the paradigm of a forum hospitable to storytelling is the consciousness-raising group, in which members 'identify one another, and identify the basis of their affinity' through telling stories about their own experience. But there is a danger that such groups will require correct storylines, and punish incorrect ones which cannot easily withstand the normalizing gaze of the group. The storyline must begin with oppression whose character is not recognized by the victim, and proceed through recognition of the oppression to the search for a need to contextualize that realization in a more general framework. (Dryzek 2000, p.68-9)

So, while Weir references Mohanty's characterisation of the identity group as a cosy, homely place wherein deep criticism is not found and there is a propensity to isolationism; Dryzek emphasises that identity groups are potentially dangerously constraining for the individual. I detect a couple of problems with Dryzek's position here: first, perhaps trivially, in saying that his description of consciousness-raising groups describes how people *must* present themselves in such groups, Dryzek suggests that he is pinpointing how these groups essentially operate. Dryzek suggests that the individual is necessarily constrained by the group's normalising gaze. This can't be the case, for the group clearly must start from some mutual recognition of a similar

problem or experience in order to form as a group.⁶⁴ Second, and more problematically in my opinion, in his treatment of this example as novel, Dryzek fails to admit that *all* groups tend to close around particular discourses and to privilege some frameworks and narratives above others, which inevitably produce norms that individuals may find constraining. In doing so, he falsely sets apart consciousness-raising and political identity groups from other groups, and this is perhaps because he does not have sight of the link between the individual's identity-formation through discourse and their relationships with others.

Thus, Weir and Dryzek are clearly engaged with a similar problematic with regards to how identity works and should work within politics, but from different perspectives. Dryzek often implicitly, but consistently, sounds caution about the restrictive nature of identity connections and the dire political consequences that come about when such identities become politically engaged specifically *against* one another, along sectarian lines. In contrast, in the arguments I have focused on here, Weir theorises the possibilities of politically positive outcomes, particularly solidarity, that can come from our identity-formation with others, and highlights that we cannot conceive of identity politics without understanding such relationships. It's not clear that Dryzek and Weir's accounts are mutually exclusive, and I'm not arguing that they are. However, Dryzek's reduction of identity to discourse in deliberative theory misses too much of how identity groups can operate in emancipatory ways to be of theoretical use.

I now turn to two examples of political identities that are based on social identities with the hope of fleshing out further some of the intricacies of Weir's and Dryzek's positions. I will be looking at the Puerto Rican mobilisation into local

⁶⁴ Furthermore, as we saw in Fricker's example of post-natal depression, which I discussed in chapter three, it was not a subject being *made* to narrativise, but hearing the narratives of others that led the individual in question to a greater understanding and recognition of their own experiences.

politics discussed in Jose Cruz's book *Identity and Power* (1998) as a positive example of how something like Weir's solidarity and identity-with resulted in democratic participation. I will then look at a sectarian example by discussing members of the English Defence League—an anti-Muslim activist organisation—and particularly its founder and former leader Tommy Robinson.

3. Cruz on Puerto Rican politics in Hartford, USA

In his book *Identity and Power* (1998) Cruz charts, in some depth, the political mobilisation of Puerto Ricans in Hartford, USA throughout the latter half of the twentieth century.⁶⁵ Cruz's main thesis is that the Puerto Rican ethnic identity was a mobilising factor for the community during this time. The Puerto Rican community's foray into politics, according to Cruz, was based around them understanding their exclusion from power as Puerto Ricans specifically and working towards political recognition and representation. I therefore use Cruz's narrative about this group to explore more deeply how social identity can create solidarity and political movements in a positive sense. I chart some of the ways in which Cruz's study constitutes an example of positive identity politics. However, because Cruz makes the background assumption that the Puerto Ricans' politics is that of an interest group, I am not wholly taking on Cruz's view, I am rather supplanting the example into the context of the position I am developing here for deliberative theory and identity.⁶⁶ This is possible because Cruz continually recognises that Puerto Rican identity was central to the

⁶⁵ This case study is used in Alcoff's work. Alcoff uses it to illustrate her argument that the general other needs to be expanded in order for specific identities to gain access to political spaces, without having to efface their identity to meet the norms of inclusion (Alcoff 2006).

⁶⁶ I broadly agree with Young that identity groups cannot be characterised in the same way as interest groups (Young 2000, p.81-2).

political progress and outcomes he charts: the group's political agitation was a reaction to the structural disadvantages they experienced as well as cultural differences related to their ethnicity. Cruz holds that the social and cultural solidarity of the community was the base upon which political organising was raised. Thus, even though the political milieus within which the groups operated were not specifically deliberative, the example can be used to show how social-political groups can operate to the benefit of the community they serve, and allows us to develop an understanding of the factors that are at play in the formation of such groups. It's therefore fruitful to look at Cruz's case in the context of the issues I have raised throughout this thesis, even though Cruz primarily discusses the reality of the Puerto Ricans' participation in politics proper as a series of bargaining, power plays and instrumental attempts, rather than as a deliberative pursuit.

Using Cruz's example, I will ultimately argue that reducing identity to discourse, as Dryzek proposes, is unhelpful because an exclusive focus on discourse leaves much of the mechanisms of this particular group-formation undertheorised. For example, the Puerto Rican identity is formed of social and cultural life, habits and geographical milieus (both of Puerto Rico and the neighbourhoods Puerto Ricans tended to live in Hartford during the years studied). Cruz's example illustrates that identity is both an inevitable force in our political participation, as well as a potential force for good in political settings, even where those settings are charged with factional lines. This intersection of social identity and politics therefore requires a deeper understanding of identity as something created through many different material and social relationships, rather than through a democratic interplay of discourses.

For Cruz, Puerto Rican ethnicity in Hartford came to constitute an identity for many people as something historically, geographically and culturally grounded, but

crucially relied upon subjects recognising in themselves and each other these shared factors:

Ethnic awareness depended on the construction of a self-image in the context of place, an image that conveyed the following understanding: "I am a Puerto Rican in Hartford." The construction of this image was determined by personal and group background but also by social, economic, and political relationships in the city. In this sense, the resulting self-image was an "invention," although there is no evidence to indicate that it was a fictitious or purely symbolic category, as some have characterised ethnicity in the United States. Instead, ethnic awareness was both a process and outcome charged with deeply felt personal and historical meaning. (Cruz 1998, p.11)

Thus, for Cruz, ethnic identity is something that is constructed out of material relationships, however the construction itself has, in turn, a definite impact on relationships, actions and daily lives; the identity is not simply an epiphenomenal effect of its underlying material structures. Such a view of ethnicity does not recognise it as being constructed out of a material organisation that is foisted upon subjects in a top-down fashion, but understands it is nevertheless impacted by these structures. Thus, Cruz's understanding of ethnic identity aligns well with the understanding of social identity that I have been arguing for throughout this thesis, which culminated in my discussion of Alcoff's work in chapter four. For Cruz, the subjects' reflexive recognition of their ethnicity is important because it is the foundation upon which Puerto Rican political organisation was built: *'the closing of ranks is not a precondition of incorporation but the precise way in which incorporation takes place... Puerto Ricans in Hartford did this at the very moment in which they asserted themselves as "the Other."*' (Cruz 1998, p.10, emphasis original) Thus, in this case shared discourses and recognition were a way of social relationships being consolidated: Cruz argues that a discourse that emphasised Puerto Ricans' experience of otherness, as a migrant population, in relation to the existing, predominantly white, population in Hartford, had a solidifying effect on the community.

Cruz charts the rise of the Puerto Rican political movement as a series of gains and losses made via various political and social groupings, organisations and

campaigns. For example, Cruz points to the formation of social and political associations—Liga Civica Puertorriquena de Hartford, the Puerto Rican Association of Connecticut, Puerto Rican Democrats of Hartford, to name just a few—that were expressly set up to improve opportunities, enfranchise the community by registering them to vote, and find civic and political solutions to some of the problems Puerto Ricans faced. Cruz highlights that in the mid-1960s such community and political organising ran in tandem with political parties becoming aware of the fact that the Puerto Rican community represented a potential resource for crucial electoral votes. Thus, in 1964, a Puerto Rican parade took place in the city, during which the main political parties touted for Puerto Rican support:

The celebration was not just a momentary escape from the grim facts of life in poverty and isolation. It was also a signal that, as a group, Puerto Ricans were developing a sense of political self... [T]he rally was evidence of identification with the local parties, and the parties in turn were struggling with the realisation that Puerto Ricans needed to be given greater recognition. (Cruz 1998, p.53)

However, from this first political recognition of the community, there would be continual strife in the bid for political gains and outcomes. Cruz highlights opportunity, bargaining and other political power-plays as the main ways in which Puerto Ricans gained and maintained political ground during this time.⁶⁷ However, the point, for the purposes of this thesis, is that Cruz's example provides us with a study of how an identity group can progress from intra-recognition, through to civic and social organisation and solidarity, to political organisation and recognition.

One of Cruz's central arguments is that it was the bond of particularity between Puerto Ricans in Hartford that led to them organising together, as they came to associate their cultural and ethnic heritage with the structural (often economic) issues they faced:

⁶⁷ It is also important to note that the study highlights civil unrest and rioting during the period studied (Cruz 1998)

Power awareness... was articulated as a proposition establishing a cause-effect relationship: "I am disadvantaged in Hartford because I am Puerto Rican." This was an objective realisation insofar as it coincided with experiences of prejudice, discrimination, underrepresentation, and poverty. (Cruz 1998, p.11)

Therefore for Cruz, a rising awareness of the links between being Puerto Rican, and experiencing a lack of power, is a key ingredient in the group recognising the need for change. However, Cruz simultaneously highlights that this is not a sufficient ingredient for political organisation, as such awareness, he realises, can lead to the assumption that nothing can be changed and thus, to apathy (Cruz 1998, p.12). Cruz therefore argues that although such awareness can motivate people to become political activists, the awareness itself cannot be called political. For Cruz, it is only at the point that people organise towards a set of goals that identity politics is begun:

The notion of interests is based on the recognition of a distinct community with social, cultural, political and economic needs. In addition to organization and willingness to mobilize, crucial to the notion of interest group is the idea that action will focus on the process as the arena of mobilization and government as its target. (Cruz 1998, p.12)

Thus it is clear that Cruz considers the Puerto Ricans' otherness as the ground upon which political organisation was built. Cruz argues that in this case ethnicity provides 'an alternative set of moorings securing a voice for a marginal group, structuring their agenda, and facilitating their incorporation' (Cruz 1998, p.207). It's clear that in this case difference was used as a way into power while retaining specificity, rather than grounds upon which difference was emphasised in the service of causing division.

Cruz puts emphasis on the social and cultural aspects of Puerto Rican political organisation in Hartford. Moreover, he is explicit about the fact that although one of the main aims of gaining political representation was to alleviate the low economic status of the Puerto Rican population, solidarity with other economically challenged groups would not have yielded such organisation or advances: 'identity structures the process of empowerment by prompting and organising mobilization around cultural, linguistic and political issues' (Cruz 1998, p.213). It was due to the fact that the group

was socially bound, and recognised their social likenesses, that political work was possible: ‘Although community and political groups were distinct, the line that separated politics from cultural, recreational, and self-help activities and especially from the provision of social services was at times somewhat thin.’ (Cruz 1998, p.86-7)

Throughout the book, Cruz credits a number of extra-political activities as being central to the organisation and success of political progress: the Puerto Rican parade, community groups and associations, provision of services, or pressure groups. Such groups and associations, he argues, constituted a base where a community voice, as well as leadership skills, could be fostered. Thus, Cruz’s study puts emphasis on the links between the group’s social organisation, discourses, and the group’s political mobilisation: the latter would not exist, he suggests, without the two former elements. Very much in line with Weir’s theory, in Cruz’s Puerto Rican case, recognition and creation of a shared identity led to recognition of the structural issues facing Puerto Ricans, and a definitive discursive link was forged between their identity and the issues they faced. This in turn led to organisation around political (and social) goals.

Cruz’s case-study should lead us to seriously question Dryzek’s call for us to theorise only about discourses, in place of identity, in deliberative theory. To recap, Dryzek argues that focusing on discourse is ameliorative because concentrating on identity can result in factionalism, which in turn can entrench subjects either against one another, or in their own discourses. This cementing of positions is particularly problematic because it works against the deliberative norm that we should be able to appraise and amend our positions when we are democratically engaged. Dryzek also argues that an emphasis on discourses allows us to challenge more easily problematic identities that are predicated upon the denigration of other groups, because we focus on the discourses underlying such identities, rather than labelling and excluding those

with such problematic views. However, Cruz's example serves to show that these undesirable outcomes are not the necessary upshot of identity in politics—here what might be commonly construed as factionalism was generative of participation, as well as, in some cases at least, favourable advances and outcomes. Thus, although Cruz highlights that there was discord at times between the Puerto Ricans and other social groups, this does not debase the fact that the Puerto Ricans basing their politics on their ethnic identity worked as a positive impetus for political participation.

Cruz's example suggests that we lose something crucial by discussing only discourse and not identities: the ethnicity at work in this example was not principally the result of a discourse *per se*, but emerged from the relational recognition, geographical place, and structural and political obstacles facing the group. This suggests both that identity politics is more complicated than Dryzek's notion of discourse can capture and that being able to interrogate political participation in this way, as something that is predicated on identity, is useful, even where the identities themselves may not be positive. Identity is not simply a discourse amongst many that can be swapped readily for another, but instead identity discourses are raised from a particular set of relations, historical and present. Thus, Weir's theory that the creation of new discourses can come through solidarity, or recognition of a shared identity, and that such discourses can be positive in the face of structural inequities or other political problems, adds something significant that Dryzek has stripped from his theory. For Weir, as I explained above, identity discourses come through the instantiation of a 'we'. For Weir, such discourses do not need to be created around something essential, but there does need to be some mutual recognition across the group in order for new discourses to abound. By contrast, as I have already argued, Dryzek's theory suggests that we only have to choose between discourses in

deliberation. Dryzek's theory doesn't sufficiently recognise that our identity discourses are multiple, contextual and cannot be intersubjectively validated or criticised as directly as other discourses. This is not to say that those discourses and/or identities are static, but to recognise that limiting deliberative theory to discussion of discourses, as Dryzek construes them, does not really help us to escape the necessity for understanding social identity, its formation and its impact on political participation.

4. Racist identity: Tommy Robinson and the English Defence League

As a comparison to Cruz's case study, in this section I discuss Stephen Yaxley-Lennon, more commonly known by his chosen alias Tommy Robinson, the name by which I will refer to him throughout. I've chosen Robinson as he constitutes a prime example of someone who actively cultivates their identity against an Other, in Robinson's case, a Muslim Other.⁶⁸ Between 2009 and 2013 Robinson was leader of the anti-Islam activist group The English Defence League (EDL). Robinson is a political activist engaged in what he understands to be a struggle against 'Islamism': he believes there is a problematic propensity towards the proliferation of Islamic faith, 'ideology' and extremism in the UK. I've chosen Robinson because he is someone who throughout the years has been both politically engaged, by staging protests and

⁶⁸ It was suggested to me by Dr Mark Garnett that Robinson is possibly too strange a figure (psychologically) to be considered a good case study for this thesis. But, I submit, it's common for far right racist people, or indeed anyone who actively cultivates their identity and politics against others, to be considered odd. Robinson is a well-known public figure who has been interviewed many times; while he and the EDL have also appeared as the subject of many newspaper articles and been the feature of academic studies. I therefore think this makes him a good candidate for discussion here, even though he is, I agree, rather bizarre and clearly occupies his position in anti-Islam groups for personal gain and self-aggrandisement.

marches, and who has engaged in the media. I begin this section by discussing Robinson's views and showing how he has constructed an identity and discourse that pits him and his supporters against Muslims: the EDL consider themselves to be victims of the latter's purported nefarious ideological aims. My intention is to discuss, in line with other theorists on this topic, how this narrative is closely bound up with Robinson's understanding of his own (white, British, working class, male) social identity, particularly how the identity of the EDL as a group was constructed in such a way that the members believe themselves to be the defenders of 'British values'. I then discuss briefly, in agreement with Dryzek, that labelling Robinson prejudiced or racist will likely lead to stalemate: he posits that he and his followers are victims, and any attempt to label them as a racist is summarily dismissed as an attempt to silence and further victimise them. I then turn to Robinson's purported change in approach and beliefs, which culminated in his resignation as leader of the EDL in 2013, with particular reference to the context of the change: dialogue with Muslims, as well as institutional recognition from anti-extremist think tank Quilliam. However, as I shall show, Robinson's 'transformation' was short-lived and he has since retreated back to a stance which is openly (culturally) racist against Muslims. I will conclude by arguing that while Dryzek is correct that focusing on Robinson's identity may be counterproductive in some instances—particularly where he is accused by others of being a racist, Islamophobe or xenophobe—ignoring his social identity when putting pressure on his discourse is also counterproductive.

Robinson came to media attention in 2009 as one of the founding members of the EDL. The organisation was set up in response to a small protest staged at a military parade in Luton that year. The protest was an anti-Iraq-war demonstration and had been sanctioned by the police. The protesters held placards and chanted against

the soldiers on parade. Five of the protesters later received convictions for using abusive and threatening language while protesting.⁶⁹ Following the parade and protest, the EDL was formed as an informal activist group that mobilised against Islam in the UK. In their mission statement, they make this clear:

Under [the EDL] umbrella all people in England, whatever their background or origin, can stand united in a desire to stop the imposition of the rules of Islam on non-believers. In order to ensure the continuity of our culture and its institutions, the EDL stands opposed to the creeping Islamisation of our country, because that presents itself as an undemocratic alternative to our cherished way of life. (EDL 2011)⁷⁰

It's clear from the mission statement and various speeches and interviews given by Robinson, that the EDL believes that Islam is proliferating in the UK, and that they believe this increase in Islamic faith is leading to an erosion of 'English values and culture' (which are left undefined). According to the EDL, English values are in peril because Islam stands in fundamental opposition to them. To Robinson and his group, Islam is an 'ideology' that cannot be reconciled with 'Englishness', unless Islam itself is reformed (the form of this reformation too, is left undefined). Throughout their discourses, the EDL claim to be able to identify the 'true' Islam, as something that is necessarily out of step with modern British values.

As Kassimeris and Jackson have argued in their paper 'The Ideology and Discourse of the English Defence League: "Not Racist, Not Violent, Just No Longer Silent"' (2015) the EDL form their discourse by consistently seizing upon criminal incidents involving Muslims (or those assumed to be Muslim) and arguing that such criminality is a direct consequence of the Islamic faith. Events such as the public beheading of Lee Rigby and the grooming of and sexual violence against girls by Pakistani men (assumed to be Muslim), are presented as evidence to support the

⁶⁹ See, for example (BBC 2011). There were also EDL reports of physical abuse towards the parade's bystanders by the protesters but this is not corroborated by media reports, or by arrests or convictions.

⁷⁰ This mission statement was completed under Robinson's leadership and can be found in full online at URL: <http://gatesofvienna.blogspot.co.uk/2011/01/edl-mission-statement.html> (last accessed 13/04/2017).

EDL's conclusion that Islam is the underlying cause of such criminality. Thus a discourse emerges, Kassimeris and Jackson argue, that constructs British Muslims as Other in three distinct ways:

First, Muslims were seen as uniquely problematic posing a distinctive threat to British people and to 'British values'. Second, the problems caused by Muslims were thought to be traceable to Islam itself: through scripture, the example of the Prophet and 'Islamic ideology'. Finally, Muslims were believed to be responsible, for both the actions of their co-religionists and reform of Islam. (Kassimeris and Jackson 2015, p.176)

Kassimeris and Jackson thus argue that the EDL's discourse is suffused with 'cultural racism'. Cultural racism, the authors explain, sets up the culture of the Other as the difficult 'outside' of the main or higher culture. In the case of the EDL's discourse, 'Muslim culture' is constructed as deviant in the context of 'English values'. It becomes clear from a cursory look at Robinson's various interviews and speeches that he continually keeps to this narrative: 'Islam is not a religion of peace, Islam is fascist and it's violent', 'Islam is failing to integrate', 'Islam needs to evolve, it needs to modernise' (Quitting the English Defence League 2013). Thus, the group construct their Other in very specific ways and they view their construction as a monolith which applies to all Muslims living in the UK.

Identity and the feelings, values and group-membership that surround it appear to be a key ingredient and motivating factor in Robinson's activism. Robinson highlights the fact that he is from a British white working class community frequently, and often presents this community as under threat:

No one from the English Defence League would care about a Muslim living their life peacefully, praying, doing his Ramadan, doing this, doing that, if we didn't see all the hate. And we didn't see our culture under attack, we didn't see our existence at threat in this country—but we do. (Quitting the English Defence League 2013)

Thus, Robinson sees himself as both a victim of the machinations of a repressive Islamic religion that is aimed at engulfing his white, Christian (although it's not clear he means practising), working class community; as well as a protector of that community, a role he cultivates through his activism: '[W]e have to keep this country

as a Christian country: to me it is being overtaken. And when does diversity and tolerance become take-over?’ (Quitting the English Defence League 2013) I think it is therefore safe to say that Robinson’s activism comes from a deeply held feeling that his identity, his values and the very existence of his community, is under threat from the presence of Muslims in the UK. In his paper ‘The cult of the victim: an analysis of the collective identity of the English Defence League’ (2014) Oaten agrees that the discourse upon which the EDL is founded presents its members as a collective of victims. On the other hand, in their paper ‘Masculinity, Marginalization and Violence: A Case Study of the English Defence League’ (2011) Treadwell and Garland emphasise social masculine identities, coupled with experiences of material inequality as pivotal to the psychology of those joining the group.⁷¹

Therefore, the EDL constitutes a ‘we’ in many of the same ways that Cruz’s Puerto Rican community does, and we can understand the group, at least in part, by using Weir’s work: the relationships within the group are produced concurrently with their creation of a discourse—specifically the discourse that they are threatened by Islam and the Muslim community. They transform into a group by forming a ‘we’ that is hostile to an Islamic Other. Through this transformation the individuals involved can claim both victim status, and the status of social and political champion: they are victims of what they see as Islamic aggression/oppression, but are heroes because they are taking a stand against that oppression on behalf of their community. Furthermore, taking to the streets in protest shows the group is keen to give itself a public voice—something Robinson often refers to as central to the group’s activism. There are of course significant differences to note, however: while Weir focuses on groups that are intent on creating recognition and freedom following direct experience of oppression

⁷¹ Oaten argues that this sense of victimhood extends not only to Robinson’s views of the Muslim Other but also to his dealings with the police, local authorities, government, and even EDL members (Oaten 2014).

and inequality, the EDL is not borne out of a real experience of oppression at the hands of Muslims.⁷² Thus, the EDL's discourse is a fabrication that is likely a reaction to a perception of loss of power (e.g. as the concentration of Muslims in some areas of the city appears to leave non-Muslim whites living there as a minority), and/or offence (e.g. at the anti-war protest).⁷³

Dryzek may argue that in this instance group identification has created intractability, as the group members are unable to dislocate themselves from, and continually reinforce, their prejudiced rhetoric. Like Brown's victim or slave subjects, which I discussed in chapter four, the EDL's identity is inherently based around the Muslim Other as oppressive. As I've mentioned, the members of the group gain a feeling of power by positing themselves as the saviours of their community from that oppressive other. Thus, like the slave subjects Brown discusses, the EDL's members' identities are solidified by the discourse they have created and moving towards a better understanding of, or working with, their Muslim neighbours seems a remote possibility.

Yet, in 2013, Robinson resigned from the EDL following a series of meetings with Mo Ansar, a political and social commentator and Muslim who is also from Luton. These meetings were captured in a BBC documentary titled 'Quitting the English Defence League: When Tommy met Mo' (2013). Throughout the film, Ansar and Robinson meet with members of the EDL as well as many Muslims from their local community in Luton and beyond. During the course of the film Robinson can be seen grappling with his beliefs as he is confronted with the reality of Muslim plurality.

⁷² Although, as mentioned, Treadwell and Garland suggest that the EDL have manifested as a (clearly misdirected) reaction to real experiences of structural inequality, and I agree that this aspect is also likely to be an important factor in the creation of the group (Treadwell and Garland 2011).

⁷³ Alcoff focuses on understanding this perception of loss of power as whites become a smaller proportion of the population in her recent book *The Future of Whiteness* (2015). This theme is also explored in another recent book by sociologist Arlie Hochschild *Strangers in Their Own Land: Anger and Mourning on the American Right* (2016).

The film culminates in an apparent shift in Robinson's position, and he resigns from his position as leader of the EDL. During a press conference where Robinson announces his resignation, Robinson states that one reason for his resignation is that the 'us and them' stance that the EDL had created between themselves and their Muslim neighbours was more likely to increase Muslim extremism, rather than to help combat it. Robinson states:

I then realised that marching through the streets saying "Allah, Allah, who the fuck is Allah", what we were actually doing is giving any moderates, any people who are willing to speak up against extremist voices, we're actually giving them... something to align themselves with extremists on the same issue, because we're offending all of them. (Quitting the English Defence League 2013)

Thus, Robinson resigned, at least in part, because he believed that 'moderate' Muslims could potentially come to identify themselves with extremists by identifying themselves against the EDL. Moreover, Robinson appears to recognise in this statement that Muslims are not an undifferentiated community with a monolithic culture, as his previous discourse purported.

However, dissecting this change in views, which was in many ways (notwithstanding the ruckus of the public resignation itself) somewhat subtle, and the reasons for it, is not easy. On the one hand, it could be argued that the way in which Robinson changed his views can be understood in view of Young's discussion of narrative and cross-cultural meetings quelling prejudice, which I discussed in chapter three: Robinson's change of stance followed dialogue with Muslims, and it is certainly the case that Robinson found it difficult to retain all of his prejudices in the face of reality. For example, at one point, Robinson is shown to be clearly uncomfortable when he refuses to eat a meal that has been prepared for him as a guest at a mosque he is visiting. At many other junctures Robinson is party to debate between Muslims on articles of faith, politics and culture, and the documentary even highlights that one such debate is a 'revelation' to Robinson. Thus, Robinson is confronted throughout

with the inevitable reality that Islam is not a monolithic ideology, as he has previously contended, but an interpretive and lived religion that does not define its adherents.

On the other hand, this revelatory narrative is disrupted somewhat by the fact that, even at the time of his resignation, Robinson refused to consider that his issues with Islam and Muslims were largely fabricated:

What's happened with the English Defence League has had to happen. I believe the debate has had to be had, and I believe that for the last four years, I've seen it as part of the solution. I believe the underswell and the feeling has had to get out there. (Quitting the English Defence League 2013)

Thus, although Robinson renounced the EDL's tactics, there was little in his speech to suggest that he renounced his beliefs about Islam *per se*. It's also possible that Robinson's resignation was an astute move to distance himself from the label 'racist', which was, by this time, almost permanently affixed to the EDL. By doing so, it could be argued, he was vying for recognition as a moderate respectable subject of middle England with legitimate concerns about extremism. There is power in adopting such a position and Robinson's invitation to speak at Oxford University Union in 2014, as well as the fact that the government-funded anti-extremist think tank, Quilliam, endorsed and publically promoted Robinson's resignation, suggests that he succeeded in gaining such a position.⁷⁴ Furthermore, this apparent transformation didn't last: Robinson has recently given speeches at rallies organised by the culturally racist group Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamisation of the West (PEGIDA) during which he once again conflates Islam with criminality, and invites Muslims to break free from their 'slavery' to find 'true freedom and peace' (Bachmann 2015).⁷⁵

In sum, Robinson's changes of attitude around the time of the documentary can be shown to be a de-escalation from his previously hard-line racism. He seems to

⁷⁴ Quilliam is no longer funded by the UK government.

⁷⁵ Robinson's speech at the rally begins at 2:27:17 on the Youtube video. There is also an edited transcript of the speech at URL: <http://4freedoms.com/group/press/forum/topics/pegida-and-tommy-robinson-in-dresden-germany> (last accessed 13/04/2017)

realise at the time of his resignation that his racist views do not wholly reflect reality, and to be moving towards a more moderate and democratic approach. This conclusion is also evident in the period following his resignation from the EDL: he is more careful in speeches and interviews to state that it is only extremist ideology and not Muslims or Islam in general that he finds problematic. He also tends during this period to highlight that he is aware of problems, criminality and extremism involving whites (although he does fail to explain why he continues to keep his attention on Muslim criminality only, or why he does not focus on his own criminal convictions). Thus, it could be argued that, while initially identities were polarised in this case, the Robinson's meetings with different people led to better recognition of a plurality of identities, including a reflection on his own identity and public persona, which in turn led to positive changes. On the other hand, Robinson presents us with a good case-study illustrating the instability of identities. While he appears to show that change is possible by confronting conflicts of identity head-on, it also appears that his personal identity as the 'saviour' of the white Christian community that is being persecuted by the Muslim community was not itself challenged in this case. This lack of a challenge to Robinson's identity arguably meant that his recent slide back into prejudiced discourse was, if not inevitable, quite likely. Moreover, it's possible that the documentary reinforced Robinson's identity in this regard, to the extent that it legitimised his call for Muslims to be responsible for how they are perceived by the wider community, rather than calling for Robinson to be held accountable for his racism. Although Robinson does clearly struggle with his beliefs throughout the documentary, he is rarely challenged (on camera at least) to defend his identity directly; whereas Muslims are repeatedly presented to him so that they can defend their own identity and faith as non-threatening.

However, it's still the case that challenging the discourse of Robinson and the EDL, in such non-confrontational ways, appeared to have a good (if temporary) effect in this instance. This success might therefore be forwarded in support of Dryzek's view that you can change or undermine a problematic discourse without broaching it antagonistically or directly. On the other hand, Robinson's construction of the deviant Muslim Other, which justified his actions and provided his sense of self as both victim and protector, was arguably not sufficiently challenged as a false construction in this case. What was needed here was arguably more of a direct challenge to Robinson's victim status, so that his fictitious relation to the Other the EDL's discourse had created could be shown to be bogus. In other words, Robinson perhaps needed to be challenged on why he takes Muslim extremism so personally that he finds sharing his city with his Muslim neighbours unbearable. This could have helped to undermine more forcefully Robinson's prejudice, but would have required his interlocutors to challenge Robinson's racist identity more directly. I therefore submit that, while Dryzek's solution of avoiding the questions of identity in favour of a focus on shared issues and solutions is certainly a valuable tactic in some instances where oppressive identities exist, such a process will not undermine all such identities. It may be the case that in some circumstances it is better to analyse and challenge the formation of that identity itself. Robinson, I believe, constitutes one of those cases. Documentary maker Simon Winkler asks in a recent short documentary he has made on Robinson: 'I wondered if Tommy Robinson's persona was unable to exist without something to rally against' (Winkler 2016). It seems that in this case, Robinson's identity was not directly challenged, with the result that his rallying racism continues.

5. Conclusion: configuring identity through democracy

In this chapter I have argued that a focus on identity is not always a barrier to democratic deliberation, even where there is polarisation between deliberators. I have considered Dryzek's arguments that favouring discourse over identity in deliberative theory allows the theory to incorporate difference without risking stalemate between interlocutors. As I have discussed, Dryzek thinks that a shift to discourse can retain the deep engagement with difference that Mouffe favours, while maintaining the stability that Lijphart fears comes under attack in sectarian contexts. I have agreed with Dryzek that approaching peoples' identities in inflammatory and oversimplified ways is certain to undermine democratic discussion and increase division. I also agree with Dryzek that discourses constitute a key component in the creation of identities. However, I have argued simultaneously that Dryzek's understanding of identity as discourse is too thin to be useful for political theory. Dryzek's conception is not sufficient because the discourses that make up our identities are not readily available models that we can choose between. Instead, as I argued using Weir's work, the discourses that underpin personal and social identities are interpretive, social creations that are produced through group relationships. Therefore, reducing our conception of identity to discourses like any others is an oversimplification. Dryzek's theory also leaves a question mark over whether and how we might deal directly with identity in deliberation, as we must still be able to deliberate about social identities and their impact in ways that call upon those categories directly.

In the two extended examples I discussed in light of Dryzek's and Weir's theories, I began to further clarify my stance. Using Cruz's example, I argued that

identity can be a positive impetus for political participation: mobilising politically as part of a social group can be positive for those groups. Group identity can act as a ground for understanding shared issues and finding political solutions that would not be possible otherwise. Weir's argument that groups create political discourses and action through group solidarity is shown to be salient in this example: here group recognition actively shaped the Puerto Rican public and political identity and action. I have argued that the example therefore shows group membership to be important to political action, such that the example highlights, but also complicates and deepens, Dryzek's notion of discourse. That is, in view of this case study, I have argued that the material and social conditions of identity formation can't simply be disposed of in favour of discourses for political theory: if we want deliberation to be able to account for social identity and identity politics, we need to understand the context of our identities and how they affect our political stances and relationships. Such an understanding, I have argued in this chapter and the last, means understanding that the ways in which we construct our identities with others has important implications for political theory, in terms of participation and in terms of the discourses that are created and employed by different groups.

On the other hand, when looking at the case of the EDL, and Tommy Robinson in particular, I argued that Dryzek has hit upon something substantial in terms of polarisation and how we approach our interlocutors, particularly those with whom we share an antagonistic relationship. Labelling Robinson a racist will do nothing, it appears, to change his views; in fact, perversely, it can harden them. Robinson often argues that those who call him racist are only trying to silence his truth, which plays into his perception of himself as victim and as valiant defender of his community against the odds. As I made clear, following the intervention of the

BBC documentary, Robinson did make some moves away from his culturally racist views. However, at the same time, the transformation was incomplete, which I have argued may be in part due to facets of Robinson's identity and the discourses that underlie his view not being fully comprehended or directly challenged by his interlocutors. Thus, this case highlighted the difficulties inherent in understanding and dealing with identities that are built upon othering another group. I have concluded that while undermining such a group's discourses by presenting the reality of the othered group can be effective, understanding how such racist groups' discourses also relate to their own group members and the groups' contexts is indispensable.

In sum, I submit that a strong claim that discourse can *replace* all discussion of identity in deliberation is untenable. The content of the discourses in deliberation must surely leave room for us to discuss our identities and those of others. Moreover, understanding identity as a field of equally-distributed discourses is unworkable. As I have shown in the previous chapters and this chapter, identity is not merely a talking point that is available for constant deliberative review: it is a social construction, built with others in particular contexts. Furthermore, the availability of discourses pertaining to our identity and our contexts is highly variable, and marked with inequities in power and representation. Thus, because identity is so fundamental, and affects our modes of participation, as well as the content of debate, we cannot only deal with it under the guise of discourse understood as a readily-available framework. Such an understanding does not give us a sufficient toolkit for responding to problems of identity, for as we saw in Robinson's case, liberal democratic engagement, while somewhat temporarily successful, may have in fact reinforced some of the structure of Robinson's and the EDL's self-perceived identity as victims and heroes.

Dryzek's work fits a familiar pattern in deliberative theory, namely a tendency to minimise the functioning of social identity within it. Many of the theorists I have considered in this thesis argue that how identity is incorporated into political theory should be set within strict limits, because at base they consider (often implicitly) that identity is fundamentally problematic for democratic politics. In opposition to this trend, I've been concerned throughout this thesis with underscoring the problems inherent in limiting our understanding of social identity in democratic theory. I have also demonstrated why we should more positively, if cautiously, embrace social identity as paramount for political theory. As far back as chapter one I was concerned with theorising how social identity is never neutral in our political lives: how we relate to and understand ourselves and one another as social beings affects our political relationships and outcomes. Throughout the thesis, I have considered this problematic from a variety of perspectives, using deliberative theory as a basis. However, throughout each foray into deliberative theory, I have found that the attempts to efface, overcome, or draw back from social identity in deliberative theory has been achieved only by minimising or ignoring the workings of social identity in our politics. The problems I have found with such a curtailing of the role of identity have been multiple, we risk: losing an understanding of political actors as social beings; lifting political deliberation out of the machinations of power (whether the power of institutions, categories or groups); theoretically creating ideal, but unsustainable, strict boundaries between the civic and the political spheres; and being unable to theorise the fundamental role social identity plays in our political participation. I have shown that identity has often been seen as a 'problem' to overcome, and specifically as something that deliberative democratic theory must conquer in order to work effectively.

But what if we accepted that our social identity is central to how we come to be citizens, and understood the relationships and discourses that run through them as creative and potentially positive, rather than as necessarily problematic? Identity is central to our democracies: we work out our identities with others in the cultural and civic sphere, and our politics does not escape those workings.⁷⁶ Politically, we have a duty to understand this, and to understand how democratic strife is often underpinned by those workings. As I've made clear throughout the preceding chapters, identity can come hand in hand with exclusion, alienation and imbalances of power. Social identity, however, is also bound closely with our ways of recognising one another, forming relationships and thus, participating politically. Although we are more than the sum of our group ties and identity categories, those ties and categories are an important means to our political participation. Thus, taking identity seriously in democratic theory is necessary, not least because potential problems lurk where we cannot find the means to participation, or our participation leads to alienation. In order to expand participation, we must enlarge our understanding of group membership, and highlight the value it brings us. We must find ways of pushing open the bounds of participation such that those who find themselves alienated in the democratic process may take part in ways that they find authentic and meaningful. Yet, we must do so without reducing such group participation to a limited and negative understanding of 'identity politics' such that it can be dismissed as unimportant to, or completely separate from, the 'hard' politics of the majoritarian democratic process.

Thus, democratic theory must be able to incorporate the workings of identity in our civic sphere and recognise the impact of these workings in our political process. Recent political debates, such as those surrounding the UK leaving the EU (and

⁷⁶ Noelle Mcafee makes a similar claim in her recent book *Democracy and the Political Unconscious* (2008).

particularly who voted for this outcome and why), surely highlight the ways in which our civic debates, contexts and group-ties come to influence our political debate, cleavages and decisions. My conclusion is that we cannot hope for a politics that is dislocated from these civic and cultural foundations. Therefore, we cannot simply theorise under the guise of a humanist ideal of universal respect, because once we are faced with the realities of deliberating, our lines of identity construction will always reappear. The actualities of being with one another in the world mean we have to continually strive for equality and increased participation through a respect for difference, rather than by overcoming it. This is a key function of our democracy and deliberation, and thus, we must understand and employ our democratic norms in the service of creating justice together, in a way that does not overwrite our identities or seek to minimise them, but that rather strives to understand and value them.

Such a conclusion may seem odd given the last section of this chapter concerned a racist person who proliferates lies and hate, and who incites violence towards his fellow citizens. However, to understand social identity as central to our political lives does not mean that we need to deem all identities and their attendant discourses and actions as equally acceptable. We can still undermine racist discourses, fight against inequality and injustice, and argue against those who espouse problematic views. However, to do so without trying to understand the position of those with hateful views, or by trying to invoke only the universal perspective, will find us again falling short where identities conflict. We have a better chance for resolution and change where we try to work with the relationships that underlie division, rather than ignoring them.

A couple of further caveats need to be outlined: first, my focus on social identity in democratic theory does not mean I accept that all we can hope for from

democracy is agonism. While my conclusion is that we should retain a complex conception of social identity in order to be able to understand its workings in our democracies, both for understanding current political trends and for ideal theory, I am not arguing that this is because democracy is inherently factional. We don't only contest one another in democracy, and there is space within my understanding of social identity to capture the possibilities for reparation, creativity and solidarity both within and across groups. As I have argued, social identity is relationally and contextually constructed, and we sit at a nexus of various group-memberships and discourses. Our identity, whether personal, group or categorial, is therefore more porous and unstable than an agonistic approach recognises. Furthermore, I agree with all of the deliberative theorists I have discussed in this thesis that the principles of equality, justice, and equal recognition before the law are not rendered defunct when we affirm difference as an important basis of our political participation and democratic processes. I do not wish our laws and processes to become increasingly stratified to account for our ever-burgeoning identities in a way that codifies these specifically. And yet, because the processes of justice and politics are relationally-based, we must accept that our identities and relationships have a major part to play in how we institute these.

This may seem like something of a trivial conclusion: and yet, in each case the deliberative theories I have considered in this thesis have not been clear about this point; instead each theorist has added 'limits' to social identity in a bid to quash its force in the political process, and edge closer to the universal norm, or else has dispersed identity into the civic sphere as something that is merely 'worked out' there, and requires little further thought. I hope to have shown that both of these strategies impose unnecessary confines on our theory and cover over the ways social identity

works through democracy. Identity is neither good nor bad in itself and it is not something we will overcome with the advent of a 'true' democracy: rather social identity shapes democracy and democracy in turn reflects and further shapes our relationships and identities.

Conclusion

This thesis has been concerned with both explicating and critiquing the place afforded to social identity within deliberative democratic theory. Throughout the thesis I have discussed the ways in which social identity presents problems for deliberative theory, as well as some of the solutions put forth by various theorists on how we might incorporate identity and alleviate these problems. The abiding conclusion of this thesis is that the theorists I have discussed tend to look at too-narrow a conception of social identity when they are discussing its impact and inclusion in deliberative theory, with most of the theorists concentrating on it as merely bound up with structural inequalities, or as leading to problematic sectarianism. Furthermore, the understandings and employments of social identity tend to be maintained at a cost of preserving a view of the civic and political spheres as distinct, which I have shown to be untenable. In contrast, I have argued that social identity as both potentially problematic *and* as an impetus for participation should be given consideration in political theory and in deliberative theory in particular. I have also concluded that once we understand social identity and its role in politics in this more fundamental way, we cannot make strict cleavages between the civic and political spheres, but must understand these as constantly informing one another such that the boundaries between them are difficult to maintain theoretically.

In chapter one, I set the scene by discussing Irigaray's theory of difference alongside some competing theories of deliberative democracy. I opened by explaining how Irigaray's theory of difference stems from her critique of the work of Freud and Lacan: both of these thinkers, Irigaray attests, correctly describe issues of gender difference, but the causes they attribute to these differences are erroneous. For

Irigaray, one of the main problems with these theories is that they present the issues that women face in their representation, self-relation and public participation, as necessary and unchangeable. For Irigaray, the political universal is marked by masculinity because it assumes an independent rational subject that has been the preserve historically of men. Irigaray argues therefore that women participating in the public, and particularly political, sphere are faced with the challenge of being viewed as feminine while trying to occupy a traditionally masculine space. Therefore, Irigaray's work was presented as a means of asking questions about how we might frame and represent social identity politically, as well as how our modes of representation affect our possibilities for political participation.

I turned next in chapter one to a discussion of deliberative democratic theory. I forwarded deliberative theory as a possible candidate for a form of democracy that Irigarayans might endorse, because the theory holds to norms of inclusion, justification, and political equality, while also being open to competing hierarchies of value. However, as I discussed, the fact that some procedural models are inattentive to the workings of social identity and power leaves democratic theory open to criticism from an Irigarayan perspective. I argued in particular that the norm of reasonableness could stifle difference in its bid to find neutrality and consensus. Thus, the formative question that came from this first chapter was the question of how we might reconcile a deliberative theory grounded in the norms of universal equality with the fact that social identity impacts democracy beyond the question of formal equal access.

In chapter two I discussed the deliberative theories of Habermas and Benhabib. I started the chapter by discussing Habermas's discourse theory. Habermas conceives of the political subject primarily as a communicative subject: one who is embedded in a set of communicative relations through which she must continually account for her

statements and actions. Habermas conceives of legitimate political decision-making as founded upon justifications that everyone can, at least in principle, reasonably accept. However, these justifications must be tested in a civic-public sphere that is free from the strict norms and universal language of the formal political sphere. Habermas argues for this on the basis that the civic sphere should have the reflexivity for new identities to be created, as well as for the identification of problems and solutions.

However, as I discussed, Fraser criticises Habermas's earlier communicative theory on the grounds that it retains a problematic split between the public and private spheres and does not sufficiently account for problems related to power imbalances across them. I argued that Habermas partially meets these criticisms when he contends that there are mechanisms that allow for the public-civic and public-political spheres to impact one another and further argues for the representation of the 'private' across both spheres. He also contends that the implementation of law must be done with the direct contribution from potentially affected groups. However, I also argued, using Fraser's concept of 'weak publics', that Habermas fails to consider how power differentials and dominant discourses may influence his civic-public sphere. If political discourse in civic-public sphere is not regulated in any way, but the dominant discourses from that sphere are those taken up by the political administration, problems may arise: specifically, injustice may be overlooked, and minorities excluded, due to being rendered invisible by dominant discourses. Habermas, I argued, leaves overcoming injustice almost entirely to chance. Thus, although he embraces a positive formal democratic agenda, I concluded that Habermas does not sufficiently consider how his theory should deal with social difference.

Benhabib's discourse ethics was forwarded next as a Habermasian theory that seeks to account for social difference. Benhabib argues that our ethical theory must

include a concept of the Other that retains a universal humanist perspective alongside an understanding of subjects as particular, embodied, unique individuals with relational ties. Only through recognising the particularities of our interlocutors and according them respect, Benhabib argues, can the procedures of deliberation lead us to more legitimate ethical answers. However, I demonstrated that Benhabib's contention in her later work on democratic theory—that democratic discourse theory should only be concerned with universal language—is problematic. The notion of impartiality upon which Benhabib's claim for universal language hinges is a misnomer: no democratic mandate or law, no matter how universally drafted, will be impartially instituted. Therefore, I argued, we need particular narratives in democratic deliberation, as a means to show how people experience laws. My conclusion was that Benhabib's discourse ethics provides some promising theoretical possibilities for including difference in deliberative theory, but that her political theory stops short of applying these. Thus, chapter two delved more deeply into questions of difference and deliberative theory from micro and macro perspectives, and considered how we delineate the public sphere(s) in relation to these questions. I started to argue there that drawing stark distinctions between our civic and political spheres leads to us lacking the tools to pursue and resolve injustice.

In chapter three I discussed Young's communicative democracy, which aims to retain democratic legitimacy while dealing with possible problems of political exclusion resulting from social difference. Young argues that, with the correct procedures in place, vicious cycles of exclusion and inequality can be reduced continually. Young focuses on the internal exclusions that may occur in deliberation: even with formal access to political fora some deliberators may have their views more readily accepted due to their perceived social identity, or communicative style. In

order to counteract these problems, Young argues, we should privilege a notion of reasonableness that is not based on rationality but on openness to others and their values and should be open to non-traditional or informal communication styles. Furthermore, Young attests that personal and group narratives should be admitted into deliberation as a way of bridging argument and personal and group perspectives, as a means of overcoming prejudice. Narrative also, Young argues, helps to bridge the gaps where we cannot find the words for our position, an idea I explained using Fricker's concept of hermeneutical marginalisation, which underscores how injustices can be perpetuated when we do not have the language to explain them. I then argued that Young's contention that identity groups constitute a resource for democracy may also provide a partial answer to the problem of hermeneutical marginalisation.

I next deepened my examination of Young's theory, by discussing her notions of social group membership with reference to her thesis of gender identity as a type of Sartrean seriality. By employing the concept of seriality, Young argues that gender is a structural and material position, and that by extension, people of different genders will have good reasons to identify with one another and form groups to change those problematic structures. Young contends that because these groups can identify the structural difficulties that affect them, they are an important resource for democracy. However, Young subsequently argues that fostering and exploring the meanings and values of such groups is not political unless it is determinately linked to problems of material inequality or parity of participation. I argued that this conclusion is in line with Young's notion of gender as an external structure.

I concluded the chapter by arguing, against Young, that the notion of gender as seriality puts too much emphasis on gender as a structural imposition. I also contended that Young's theory suggests that personal resistance and creative responses to gender

structures cannot count as political. I forwarded Stone's theory of gender as genealogy as a more successful theory that holds that gender is both a structural imposition and a relational and individually reflexive position. I argued that Stone's theory of gender underscores that the cultural and political cannot be neatly separated, because our personal and social identities are closely interlinked. I therefore concluded this chapter with two key claims: that the bounds between the cultural and the political cannot be neatly drawn, and that our account of identity in politics needs to be able to recognise the important links between our personal, social and political identities, so that we can properly configure political participation and the importance of social identity within it.

My aim in chapter four was to consider more deeply identity in relation to politics and build upon the conclusions of chapter three, in a bid to understand better how social identity functions politically and to explore further some critiques of this functioning. I began the chapter by discussing Honneth's embrace of the political dimension of social identity, particularly focusing on how Honneth provides a theoretical framework that links the personal, cultural and political facets of social identity. For Honneth, politics is primarily a means through which our social interaction and esteem finds formal acknowledgement and as such, Honneth contends that all political struggles are, at base, recognition struggles. Honneth's contention that our social ties underpin both our sense of self and our political participation provides a model for understanding the important links between identity and politics that I began to argue for in chapter three. However, I found Honneth's reliance on a concept of an authentic self, set apart from culture, as well as his assumption that recognition would inevitably lead to increased political progress, problematic. Honneth's notion that our politics is geared towards a wholly positive recognition of different types of subjects, I

suggested, did not have a sound enough basis: it seems that under Honneth's model we can have a wider variety of identities recognised, but with more policing and restrictions upon subjects who fall under such categories. Nevertheless, Honneth's discussions of disrespect, esteem and recognition can help to illustrate why some groups will fight politically for recognition.

I deepened my critique of Honneth's work by forwarding Butler's critique of identity. Butler argues that discourses and relations of power produce as well as describe categories of identity. Butler aims to show that how identity is configured and employed in law both creates subjects' identities, while masking its hand in this creation, such that the resulting identity comes to be seen as natural. Butler cautions that all fights for equality or recognition of an identity must therefore be careful not to replicate this pattern towards naturalisation. A focus on the essence of the identity limits our capacity to reformulate relationships through politics, and potentially excludes subjects who do not fit the understanding employed but who would benefit from the same political recognition. Thus, Butler's work suggests that a straightforward acceptance of the positive nature of political recognition is unfounded. I further argued, in light of Butler's work, that we should refute Honneth's notion that there exists an authentic inner core of identity. I therefore contended that Butler's work shows that recognition *per se* is not necessarily positive: particularly where it is used to stabilise or exclude identities, it can lead to political, and social, difficulties. It could be, I suggested, that a proliferation of different forms of recognition leads to greater pernicious policing of different identities and their employment in politics, rather than greater freedoms.

I next moved on to consider Brown's work on identity politics, which is similarly critical of how identity politics can restrict rather than emancipate. For

Brown, politicised identities can become locked into cycles of subjection when they present the relationships of subjection as fixed. Such identities also, Brown attests, provide a psychological impetus for oppressed subjects to remain in a subjugated position, because subjects find they can wield some power over their oppressors from this position. Brown argues that a focus on oppression as unchangeable leads to political action that mitigates, rather than destroys, subjugation. Brown further argues that, in favour of such an approach, identity politics should be concerned with reformulating relations and taking power. My contention was that we should take these problems seriously when trying to theorise social identity in political theory; the forms of our self-representation and the discourses that formulate our understandings of subjugation have definite effects on how we mobilise against exclusion, inequality and problems of recognition.

However, while Butler and Brown paint fairly bleak pictures of our possibilities for emancipation through the recognition of our social identity, neither of their works led me to conclude that we should avoid recognition in politics. Both Butler and Brown attest that the goal of politics should be to change the material and social structures surrounding subjugated identities, and find that this can be undermined when recognition politics is misused; yet neither go so far as to shun identity politics completely. I therefore concluded the chapter by discussing Alcoff's work on identity and political participation, as I believe Alcoff provides an account that marries the negative and positive accounts, while also going further to explain how identity has a fundamental place in political participation. Alcoff argues that critiques of identity, such as those found in Butler's and Brown's works, place too much emphasis on identity as resulting from pernicious external powers. Alcoff uses the work of Mead to underscore the productive and positive ramifications of identity

creation, including our ability to cooperate with others, as well as our capacity to make autonomous decisions. Alcoff further contends that because our social identity is so central to how we move through the world and relate to others, when we ignore identity in the political process we ask people who have minority identities, or identities not usually recognisable in political life, to efface their identities in order to adopt a way of relating that is recognisable. Thus, what is needed for the full participation of such groups, is not a focus on parity per se, but requires that the archetype of the citizen expands, such that those groups are recognised politically.

I argued that Alcoff's work shows how identity politics can be the very means to political participation, rather than simply a political resource. I therefore concluded the chapter by expanding my argument from chapter three that Young's structural understanding of social identity is insufficient for political theory. I argued that once we understand that social identity constitutes an important basis, motivation and regulator for political participation, we must conclude that participation in group actions that relate to the values and meanings of a social identity must also be understood to be salient to the political sphere: oftentimes cultural activism has a political dimension and vice versa. I further concluded that because of the important links between social group relationships in the civic sphere, and our participation in the political sphere, we must be able to account for the impacts these spheres have on one another in our political theory, such that we can identify the positive and negative impacts our modes of recognition can have on our political action.

In chapter five I further clarified my argument that we need a positive embrace of social identity as a contextual and relational phenomenon in our democratic theory, with particular reference to the problems of accepting difference in political theory where there is engagement by those with repressive identities, or in sectarian contexts.

I began the chapter by assessing Dryzek's contention that identity should be considered in deliberative theory as discourse. As I elucidated, Dryzek defends a focus on discourse rather than identity in deliberation on the grounds that a focus on identity can have detrimental effects. Dryzek highlights the existence of identities that are constructed through the subjugation of others, such as racist identities, as well as problems of sectarianism. Dryzek argues that, in view of such problems arising from social identity, treating identities as discourses is preferable to focusing on identity *per se*, because discourses are less contentious and more easily challenged than identity. I argued that Dryzek's argument is perplexing: it suggests, at its strongest, that we should make no reference to identities in deliberation. Dryzek also equates the discourses that underwrite identity with those concerning other matters, such as the environment. I argued that we cannot evacuate discussion of social identity from political debate, nor can we understand identities and the discourses surrounding them to be straightforwardly rationally validated in the same way as other discourses.

To further explore the problem with reducing identity to discourse in deliberation, I employed Weir's work on the production of discourses. I explained how Weir emphasises the ways in which discourses are foundational for our identities and shows how such discourses are produced *through* group interaction, rather than as a precursor for it. I subsequently argued that social identity is not best conceived under the rubric of discourses for political theory, because the discourses related to our identities are not available for us to pick and choose, but make sense only when we are already in particular contextual settings and relationships. Therefore, if we don't embrace an understanding of how identities are formed through group interaction, and instead opt for identity as discourse, we risk underestimating the effects that our identities have on our participation in politics. In other words we risk

failing to capture the importance of context and relationship at the heart of our identities and their attendant discourses.

I further explored these arguments by looking at two case studies of social identity in political settings. My discussion of Cruz's case study of Puerto Rican political organising in the US underscored how identity and group participation can be an impetus for political participation. As I argued, this case undermines Dryzek's understandings of identity as discourse because Cruz shows how social participation and intra-group recognition can provide the basis for political participation. In this case, the political discourses and actions of the group relied on a basis of social relationships and recognition, which in turn created their political discourse and action. I then moved on to discuss the racist activist group the English Defence League, particularly its founder and former leader Tommy Robinson. My conclusion was that although Dryzek was right to suggest that labelling Robinson and his group racist would lead to stalemate in deliberation, ignoring Robinson's personal, group and social identity in favour of focusing on the errors and unrealities in his discourse led to only partial and temporary positive outcomes. It seemed that although the fringes of Robinson's rhetoric had been challenged, the core of his racist identity had been largely left untouched, such that Robinson ultimately felt vindicated for his beliefs.

My focus on Robinson underlines how the appearance of social identity in political life, as well as political theory, can be difficult to negotiate. Nevertheless, the arguments made in this thesis show that we should not abandon an understanding or promotion of social identity in our political theory, in order to try to gain a 'neutral' ground. Putting identity firmly into deliberative theory does not mean that we cannot criticise identities that are problematic, nor does it mean that we must accept agonism

as the logical consequence of difference. Instead, understanding that identity is a motivating factor in political deliberation and action, as well as a possible stymie to political participation, gives us a more complex, yet sounder, basis for political theory. The exact bounds of how that basis should impact the norms of deliberation are beyond the bounds of this thesis. Suffice to say, it would be built upon a relational concept of the citizen as having a social identity that at once does not pre-determine how they will enter into deliberation, but that is salient to how they participate and are received.

This broad view of social identity and its impacts on political relationships and debate has also highlighted that the civic and political spheres are interlinked in complex ways that make it impossible to draw strict lines between them. I hope to have shown that cultural and political organising around a social identity can legitimately form the basis of political action and can be transformative of our notion of citizenship in subtle, but important, ways. Moreover, when groups form against one another, or in the service of nefarious ends, as in the case of the EDL, we should be mindful of the role identity plays, and need a deep capacity to be able to understand it in our theory. This is not to say that we must doggedly consider identity at every turn: there are no doubt many cases of political deliberation where identity is not required to be a central focus, even though the participation will still be marked by social identity and difference. There may also be extreme cases where actively ignoring our identities is preferable to a violent alternative. However, focusing on such extreme examples means we miss the subtle ways in which social identity works through our politics, culture and institutions, such that deliberative theory, as a theory that aims to gain the greatest amount of perspectives and more legitimate outcomes, cannot ignore it.

Thus, the conclusion of this thesis may seem to bring more nebulosity and less clarity to our concept of social identity for the purposes of deliberative theory and political theory more generally. However, I have shown that the consequence of not taking seriously the wide-ranging facets and effects of social identity in our political lives leads to some theoretical missteps. I have described these throughout the chapters of this thesis as: underestimating the impact of social identity on how we relate to one another socially and politically; the sense of alienation felt by groups who find they are not fully recognised as citizens because their social identity does not fit the expectations of the wider group; grossly underestimating the porousness of the political and civic spheres; holding fast to static understandings of identity that can be exclusionary and politically limiting. All of these problems mean we must stress the importance of social identity in our politics and political theory; bearing in mind that those identities are context- and relationally- dependent, unstable (and thus changeable) and produced through group relationships. Thus, while the norms of deliberation can guide us generally on how we should conduct our reasoning in the civic and political spheres, I have shown that deliberative theory also needs to be attentive to social identity's impact on the norms and our forms of communication in democracy. When we fully embrace these workings in political theory, we have the mechanisms for understanding, and working to reduce, social strife as well as overcoming the problems of injustice, exclusion and alienation that social identity can create in the political process and wider social contexts.

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